

## **Partition of India**

We know that the joy of our country's independence from colonial rule in 1947 was tarnished by the violence and brutality of Partition. The Partition of British India into the sovereign states of India and Pakistan (with its western and eastern wings) led to many sudden developments. Thousands of lives were snuffed out, many others changed dramatically, cities changed, India changed, a new country was born, and there was unprecedented genocidal violence and migration. This chapter will examine the history of Partition: why and how it happened as well as the harrowing experiences of ordinary people during the period 1946-50 and beyond. It will also discuss how the history of these experiences can be reconstructed by talking to people and interviewing them, that is, through the use of oral history. At the same time, it will point out the strengths and limitations of oral history. Interviews can tell us about certain aspects of a society's past of which we may know very little or nothing from other types of sources. But they may not reveal very much about many matters whose history we would then need to build from other materials. We will return to this issue towards the end of the chapter.

### **Why and How Did Partition Happen? Culminating point of a long history?**

Some historians, both Indian and Pakistani, suggest that Mohammad Ali Jinnah's theory that the Hindus and Muslims in colonial India constituted two separate nations can be projected back into medieval history. They emphasise that the events of 1947 were intimately connected to the long history of Hindu-Muslim conflict throughout medieval and modern times. Such an argument does not recognise that the history of conflict between communities has coexisted with a long history of sharing, and of mutual cultural exchange. It also does not take into account the changing circumstances that shape people's thinking.

Some scholars see Partition as a culmination of a communal politics that started developing in the opening decades of the twentieth century. They suggest that separate electorates for Muslims, created by the colonial government in 1909 and expanded in 1919, crucially shaped the nature of communal politics. Separate electorates meant that Muslims could now elect their own representatives in designated constituencies. This created a temptation for politicians working within this system to use sectarian slogans and gather a following by distributing favours to their own religious groups. Religious identities thus acquired a functional use within a modern political system; and the logic of electoral politics deepened and hardened these identities. Community identities no longer indicated simple difference in faith and belief; they came to mean active opposition and hostility between communities. However, while separate electorates did have a profound impact on Indian politics, we should be careful not to over-emphasise their significance or to see Partition as a logical outcome of their working. Communal identities were consolidated by a host of other developments in the early twentieth century. During the 1920s and early 1930s tension grew around a number of issues. Muslims were angered by "music-before-mosque", by the cow protection movement, and by the efforts of the Arya Samaj to bring back to the Hindu fold (shuddhi) those who had recently converted to Islam. Hindus were angered by the

rapid spread of tabligh (propaganda) and tanzim (organisation) after 1923. As middle class publicists and communal activists sought to build greater solidarity within their communities, mobilising people against the other community, riots spread in different parts of the country. Every communal riot deepened differences between communities, creating disturbing memories of violence.

Yet it would be incorrect to see Partition as the outcome of a simple unfolding of communal tensions. As the protagonist of *Garm Hawa*, a film on Partition, puts it, "Communal discord happened even before 1947 but it had never led to the uprooting of millions from their homes" Partition was a qualitatively different phenomenon from earlier communal politics, and to understand it we need to look carefully at the events of the last decade of British rule.

The provincial elections of 1937 and the Congress ministries

In 1937, elections to the provincial legislatures were held for the first time. Only about 10 to 12 per cent of the population enjoyed the right to vote. The Congress did well in the elections, winning an absolute majority in five out of eleven provinces and forming governments in seven of them. It did badly in the constituencies reserved for Muslims, but the Muslim League also fared poorly, polling only 4.4 per cent of the total Muslim vote cast in this election. The League failed to win a single seat in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and could capture only two out of 84 reserved constituencies in the Punjab and three out of 33 in Sind.

In the United Provinces, the Muslim League wanted to form a joint government with the Congress. The Congress had won an absolute majority in the province, so it rejected the offer. Some scholars argue that this rejection convinced the League that if India remained united, then Muslims would find it difficult to gain political power because they would remain a minority. The League assumed, of course, that only a Muslim party could represent Muslim interests, and that the Congress was essentially a Hindu party. But Jinnah's insistence that the League be recognised as the "sole spokesman" of Muslims could convince few at the time. Though popular in the United Provinces, Bombay and Madras, social support for the League was still fairly weak in three of the provinces from which Pakistan was to be carved out just ten years later – Bengal, the NWFP and the Punjab. Even in Sind it failed to form a government. It was from this point onwards that the League doubled its efforts at expanding its social support.

The Congress ministries also contributed to the widening rift. In the United Provinces, the party had rejected the Muslim League proposal for a coalition government partly because the League tended to support landlordism, which the Congress wished to abolish, although the party had not yet taken any concrete steps in that direction. Nor did the Congress achieve any substantial gains in the "Muslim mass contact" programme it launched. In the end, the secular and radical rhetoric of the Congress merely alarmed conservative Muslims and the Muslim landed elite, without winning over the Muslim masses. Moreover, while the leading Congress leaders in the late 1930s insisted more than ever before on the need for secularism, these ideas were by no means universally shared lower down in the party hierarchy, or even by all Congress ministers. Maulana Azad, an important Congress leader,

pointed out in 1937 that members of the Congress were not allowed to join the League, yet Congressmen were active in the Hindu Mahasabha – at least in the Central Provinces (present-day Madhya Pradesh). Only in December 1938 did the Congress Working Committee declare that Congress members could not be members of the Mahasabha. Incidentally, this was also the period when the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) were gaining strength. The latter spread from its Nagpur base to the United Provinces, the Punjab, and other parts of the country in the 1930s. By 1940, the RSS had over 100,000 trained and highly disciplined cadres pledged to an ideology of Hindu nationalism, convinced that India was a land of the Hindus.

### **The “Pakistan” Resolution**

The Pakistan demand was formalised gradually. On 23 March 1940, the League moved a resolution demanding a measure of autonomy for the Muslim majority areas of the subcontinent. This ambiguous resolution never mentioned partition or Pakistan. In fact Sikandar Hayat Khan, Punjab Premier and leader of the Unionist Party, who had drafted the resolution, declared in a Punjab assembly speech on 1 March 1941 that he was opposed to a Pakistan that would mean “Muslim Raj here and Hindu Raj elsewhere ... If Pakistan means unalloyed Muslim Raj in the Punjab then I will have nothing to do with it.” He reiterated his plea for a loose (united), confederation with considerable autonomy for the confederating units.

The origins of the Pakistan demand have also been traced back to the Urdu poet Mohammad Iqbal, the writer of “Sare Jahan Se Achha Hindustan Hamara”. In his presidential address to the Muslim League in 1930, the poet spoke of a need for a “North-West Indian Muslim state”. Iqbal, however, was not visualising the emergence of a new country in that speech but a reorganisation of Muslim-majority 387 areas in north-western India into an autonomous unit within a single, loosely structured Indian federation.

### **The suddenness of Partition**

We have seen that the League itself was vague about its demand in 1940. There was a very short time – just seven years – between the first formal articulation of the demand for a measure of autonomy for the Muslim-majority areas of the subcontinent and Partition. No one knew what the creation of Pakistan meant, and how it might shape people’s lives in the future. Many who migrated from their homelands in 1947 thought they would return as soon as peace prevailed again.

Initially even Muslim leaders did not seriously raise the demand for Pakistan as a sovereign state. In the beginning Jinnah himself may have seen the Pakistan idea as a bargaining counter, useful for blocking possible British concessions to the Congress and gaining additional favours for the Muslims. The pressure of the Second World War on the British delayed negotiations for independence for some time. Nonetheless, it was the massive Quit India Movement which started in 1942, and persisted despite intense repression, that brought the British Raj to its knees and compelled its officials to open a dialogue with Indian parties regarding a possible transfer of power.

## Post-War developments

When negotiations were begun again in 1945, the British agreed to create an entirely Indian central Executive Council, except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, as a preliminary step towards full independence. Discussions about the transfer of power broke down due to Jinnah's unrelenting demand that the League had an absolute right to choose all the Muslim members of the Executive Council and that there should be a kind of communal veto in the Council, with decisions opposed by Muslims needing a two-thirds majority. Given the existing political situation, the League's first demand was quite extraordinary, for a large section of the nationalist Muslims supported the Congress (its delegation for these discussions was headed by Maulana Azad), and in West Punjab members of the Unionist Party were largely Muslims. The British had no intention of annoying the Unionists who still controlled the Punjab government and had been consistently loyal to the British.

Provincial elections were again held in 1946. The Congress swept the general constituencies, capturing 91.3 per cent of the non-Muslim vote. The League's success in the seats reserved for Muslims was equally spectacular: it won all 30 reserved constituencies in the Centre with 86.6 per cent of the Muslim vote and 442 out of 509 seats in the provinces. Only as late as 1946, therefore, did the League establish itself as the dominant party among Muslim voters, seeking to vindicate its claim to be the "sole spokesman" of India's Muslims. You will, however, recall that the franchise was extremely limited. About 10 to 12 per cent of the population enjoyed the right to vote in the provincial elections and a mere one per cent in the elections for the Central Assembly.

### **A possible alternative to Partition**

In March 1946 the British Cabinet sent a three member mission to Delhi to examine the League's demand and to suggest a suitable political framework for a free India. The Cabinet Mission toured the country for three months and recommended a loose three-tier confederation. India was to remain united. It was to have a weak central government controlling only foreign affairs, defence and communications with the existing provincial assemblies being grouped into three sections while electing the constituent assembly: Section A for the Hindu majority provinces, and Sections B and C for the Muslim-majority provinces of the north-west and the north-east (including Assam) respectively. The sections or groups of provinces would comprise various regional units. They would have the power to set up intermediate-level executives and legislatures of their own.

Initially all the major parties accepted this plan. But the agreement was short-lived because it was based on mutually opposed interpretations of the plan. The League wanted the grouping to be compulsory, with Sections B and C developing into strong entities with the right to secede from the Union in the future. The Congress wanted that provinces be given the right to join a group. It was not satisfied with the Mission's clarification that grouping would be compulsory at first, but provinces would have the right to opt out after the constitution had been finalised and new elections held in accordance with it. Ultimately, therefore, neither the League nor the Congress agreed to the Cabinet Mission's proposal.

This was a most crucial juncture, because after this partition became more or less inevitable, with most of the Congress leaders agreeing to it, seeing it as tragic but unavoidable. Only Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan of the NWFP continued to firmly oppose the idea of partition.

### **Towards Partition**

After withdrawing its support to the Cabinet Mission plan, the Muslim League decided on "Direct Action" for winning its Pakistan demand. It announced 16 August 1946 as "Direct Action Day". On this day, riots broke out in Calcutta, lasting several days and leaving several thousand people dead. By March 1947 violence spread to many parts of northern India. It was in March 1947 that the Congress high command voted for dividing the Punjab into two halves, one with Muslim majority and the other with Hindu/Sikh majority; and it asked for the application of a similar principle to Bengal. By this time, given the numbers game, many Sikh leaders and Congressmen in the Punjab were convinced that Partition was a necessary evil, otherwise they would be swamped by Muslim majorities and Muslim leaders would dictate terms. In Bengal too a section of bhadralok Bengali Hindus, who wanted political power to remain with them, began to fear the "permanent tutelage of Muslims" (as one of their leaders put it). Since they were in a numerical minority, they felt that only a division of the province could ensure their political dominance.

### **The Withdrawal of Law and Order**

The bloodbath continued for about a year from March 1947 onwards. One main reason for this was the collapse of the institutions of governance. Penderel Moon, an administrator serving in Bahawalpur (in present-day Pakistan) at the time, noted how the police failed to fire even a single shot when arson and killings were taking place in Amritsar in March 1947.

Amritsar district became the scene of bloodshed later in the year when there was a complete breakdown of authority in the city. British officials did not know how to handle the situation: they were unwilling to take decisions, and hesitant to intervene. When panic-stricken people appealed for help, British officials asked them to contact Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel or M.A. Jinnah. Nobody knew who could exercise authority and power. The top leadership of the Indian parties, barring Mahatma Gandhi, were involved in negotiations regarding independence while many Indian civil servants in the affected provinces feared for their own lives and property. The British were busy preparing to quit India. Problems were compounded because Indian soldiers and policemen came to act as Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs. As communal tension mounted, the professional commitment of those in uniform could not be relied upon. In many places not only did policemen help their co-religionists but they also attacked members of other communities. The one-man army

Amidst all this turmoil, one man's valiant efforts at restoring communal harmony bore fruit. The 77-year-old Gandhiji decided to stake his all in a bid to vindicate his lifelong principle of non-violence, and his conviction that people's hearts could be changed. He moved from the villages of Noakhali in East Bengal (present-day Bangladesh) to the villages of Bihar and

then to the riot-torn slums of Calcutta and Delhi, in a heroic effort to stop Hindus and Muslims kill each other, careful everywhere to reassure the minority community. In October 1946, Muslims in East Bengal targeted Hindus. Gandhiji visited the area, toured the villages on foot, and persuaded the local Muslims to guarantee the safety of Hindus. Similarly, in other places such as Delhi he tried to build a spirit of mutual trust and confidence between the two communities. A Delhi Muslim, Shahid Ahmad Dehlavi, compelled to flee to a dirty, overcrowded camp in Purana Qila, likened Gandhiji's arrival in Delhi on 9 September 1947 to "the arrival of the rains after a particularly long and harsh summer". Dehlavi recalled in his memoir how Muslims said to one another: "Delhi will now be saved". On 28 November 1947, on the occasion of Guru Nanak's birthday, when Gandhiji went to address a meeting of Sikhs at Gurdwara Sisganj, he noticed that there was no Muslim on the Chandni Chowk road, the heart of old Delhi. "What could be more shameful for us," he asked during a speech that evening, "than the fact that not a single Muslim could be found in Chandni Chowk?" Gandhiji continued to be in Delhi, fighting the mentality of those who wished to drive out every Muslim from the city, seeing them as Pakistani. When he began a fast to bring about a change of heart, amazingly, many Hindu and Sikh migrants fasted with him.

The effect of the fast was "electric", wrote Maulana Azad. People began realising the folly of the pogrom they had unleashed on the city's Muslims but it was only Gandhiji's martyrdom that finally ended this macabre drama of violence. "The world veritably changed," many Delhi Muslims of the time recalled later.

### **Preserving "honour"**

Scholars have also shown how ideas of preserving community honour came into play in this period of extreme physical and psychological danger. This notion of honour drew upon a conception of masculinity defined as ownership of *zan* (women) and *zamin* (land), a notion of considerable antiquity in North Indian peasant societies. Virility, it was believed, lay in the ability to protect your possessions – *zan* and *zamin* – from being appropriated by outsiders. And quite frequently, conflict ensued over these two prime "possessions". Often enough, women internalised the same values.

At times, therefore, when the men feared that "their" women – wives, daughters, sisters – would be violated by the "enemy", they killed the women themselves. Urvashi Butalia in her book, *The Other Side of Silence*, narrates one such gruesome incident in the village of Thoa Khalsa, Rawalpindi district. During Partition, in this Sikh village, ninety women are said to have "voluntarily" jumped into a well rather than fall into "enemy" hands. The migrant refugees from this village still commemorate the event at a gurdwara in Delhi, referring to the deaths as martyrdom, not suicide. They believe that men at that time had to courageously accept the decision of women, and in some cases even persuade the women to kill themselves. On 13 March every year, when their "martyrdom" is celebrated, the incident is recounted to an audience of men, women and children. Women are exhorted to remember the sacrifice and bravery of their sisters and to cast themselves in the same mould.

For the community of survivors, the remembrance ritual helps keep the memory alive. What

such rituals do not seek to remember, however, are the stories of all those who did not wish to die, and had to end their lives against their will.

### Regional Variations

The experiences of ordinary people we have been discussing so far relate to the north-western part of the subcontinent. What was the Partition like in Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Central India and the Deccan? While carnages occurred in Calcutta and Noakhali in 1946, the Partition was most bloody and destructive in the Punjab. The near-total displacement of Hindus and Sikhs eastwards into India from West Punjab and of almost all Punjabi-speaking Muslims to Pakistan happened in a relatively short period of two years between 1946 and 1948. Many Muslim families of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh continued to migrate to Pakistan through the 1950s and early 1960s, although many chose to remain in India. Most of these Urdu-speaking people, known as muhajirs (migrants) in Pakistan moved to the Karachi- Hyderabad region in Sind.

In Bengal the migration was even more protracted, with people moving across a porous border. This also meant that the Bengali division produced a process of suffering that may have been less concentrated but was as agonising. Furthermore, unlike the Punjab, the exchange of population in Bengal was not near-total. Many Bengali Hindus remained in East Pakistan while many Bengali Muslims continued to live in West Bengal. Finally, Bengali Muslims (East Pakistanis) rejected Jinnah's two-nation theory through political action, breaking away from Pakistan and creating Bangladesh in 1971-72. Religious unity could not hold East and West Pakistan together. There is, however, a huge similarity between the Punjab and Bengal experiences. In both these states, women and girls became prime targets of persecution. Attackers treated women's bodies as territory to be conquered. Dishonouring women of a community was seen as dishonouring the community itself, and a mode of taking revenge.

### **Help, Humanity, Harmony**

Buried under the debris of the violence and pain of Partition is an enormous history of help, humanity and harmony. Many narratives such as Abdul Latif's poignant testimony, with which we began, reveal this. Historians have discovered numerous stories of how people helped each other during the Partition period, stories of caring and sharing, of the opening of new opportunities, and of triumph over trauma. Consider, for instance, the work of Khushdeva Singh, a Sikh doctor specialising in the treatment of tuberculosis, posted at Dharampur in presentday Himachal Pradesh. Immersing himself in his work day and night, the doctor provided that rare healing touch, food, shelter, love and security to numerous migrants, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu alike. The residents of Dharampur developed the kind of faith and confidence in his humanity and generosity that the Delhi Muslims and others had in Gandhiji. One of them, Muhammad Umar, wrote to Khushdeva Singh: "With great humility I beg to state that I do not feel myself safe except under your protection. Therefore, in all kindness, be good enough to grant me a seat in your hospital."

We know about the gruelling relief work of this doctor from a memoir he entitled *Love is Stronger than Hate: A Remembrance of 1947*. Here, Singh describes his work as "humble

efforts I made to discharge my duty as a human being to fellow human beings". He speaks most warmly of two short visits to Karachi in 1949. Old friends and those whom he had helped at Dharampur spent a few memorable hours with him at Karachi airport. Six police constables, earlier acquaintances, walked him to the plane, saluting him as he entered it. "I acknowledged (the salute) with folded hands and tears in my eyes."

### **Oral Testimonies and History**

Have you taken note of the materials from which the history of Partition has been constructed in this chapter? Oral narratives, memoirs, diaries, family histories, first-hand written accounts – all these help us understand the trials and tribulations of ordinary people during the partition of the country. Millions of people viewed Partition in terms of the suffering and the challenges of the times. For them, it was no mere constitutional division or just the party politics of the Muslim League, Congress and others. For them, it meant the unexpected alterations in life as it unfolded between 1946 and 1950 and beyond, requiring psychological, emotional and social adjustments. As with the Holocaust in Germany, we should understand Partition not simply as a political event, but also through the meanings attached to it by those who lived it. Memories and experiences shape the reality of an event.

One of the strengths of personal reminiscence – one type of oral source – is that it helps us grasp experiences and memories in detail. It enables historians to write richly textured, vivid accounts of what happened to people during events such as Partition. It is impossible to extract this kind of information from government documents. The latter deal with policy and party matters and various state-sponsored schemes. In the case of Partition, government reports and files as well as the personal writings of its high-level functionaries throw ample light on negotiations between the British and the major political parties about the future of India or on the rehabilitation of refugees. They tell us little, however, about the day-to-day experiences of those affected by the government's decision to divide the country.

Oral history also allows historians to broaden the boundaries of their discipline by rescuing from oblivion the lived experiences of the poor and the powerless: those of, say, Abdul Latif's father; the women of Thoa Khalsa; the refugee who retailed wheat at wholesale prices, eking out a paltry living by selling the gunny bags in which the wheat came; a middle-class Bengali widow bent double over road-laying work in Bihar; a Peshawari trader who thought it was wonderful to land a petty job in Cuttack upon migrating to India but asked: "Where is Cuttack, is it on the upper side of Hindustan or the lower; we haven't quite heard of it before in Peshawar?"

Thus, moving beyond the actions of the well off and the well known, the oral history of Partition has succeeded in exploring the experiences of those men and women whose existence has hitherto been ignored, taken for granted, or mentioned only in passing in mainstream history. This is significant because the histories that we read often regard the life and work of the mass of the people in the past as inaccessible or unimportant.

Yet, many historians still remain sceptical of oral history. They dismiss it because oral data

seem to lack concreteness and the chronology they yield may be imprecise. Historians argue that the uniqueness of personal experience makes generalisation difficult: a large picture cannot be built from such micro-evidence, and one witness is no witness. They also think oral accounts are concerned with tangential issues, and that the small individual experiences which remain in memory are irrelevant to the unfolding of larger processes of history. However, with regard to events such as the Partition in India and the Holocaust in Germany, there is no dearth of testimony about the different forms of distress that numerous people faced. So, there is ample evidence to figure out trends, to point out exceptions. By comparing statements, oral or written, by corroborating what they yield with findings from other sources, and by being vigilant about internal contradictions, historians can weigh the reliability of a given piece of evidence. Furthermore, if history has to accord presence to the ordinary and powerless, then the oral history of Partition is not concerned with tangential matters. The experiences it relates are central to the story, so much so that oral sources should be used to check other sources and vice versa. Different types of sources have to be tapped for answering different types of questions. Government reports, for instance, will tell us of the number of "recovered" women exchanged by the Indian and Pakistani states but it is the women who will tell us about their suffering.

### **Timeline**

1930 - The Urdu poet Mohammad Iqbal speaks of the need for a "North-West Indian Muslim state" as an autonomous unit within a single, loose Indian federation

1933 - The name Pakistan or Pak-stan is coined by a Punjabi Muslim student at Cambridge, Choudhry Rehmat Ali

1937-39 - Congress ministries come to power in seven out of 11 provinces of British India

1940 - The Muslim League moves a resolution at Lahore demanding a measure of autonomy for the Muslim-majority areas

1946 - Elections are held in the provinces. The Congress wins massively in the general constituencies. The League's success in the Muslim seats is equally spectacular

March to June - The British Cabinet sends a three-member Cabinet Mission to Delhi

August - The Muslim League decides on "Direct Action" for winning Pakistan

16 August - Violence breaks out between Hindus-Sikhs and Muslims in Calcutta, lasting several days and leaving several thousand people dead

March 1947 - The Congress high command votes for dividing the Punjab into Muslim-majority and Hindu/Sikh-majority halves and asks for the application of a similar principle to Bengal; the British begin to quit India

14-15 August, 1947 - Pakistan is formed; India gains independence. Mahatma Gandhi tours

Noakhali in East Bengal to restore communal harmony

### **Mahatma Gandhi**

In January 1915, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi returned to his homeland after two decades of residence abroad. These years had been spent for the most part in South Africa, where he went as a lawyer, and in time became a leader of the Indian community in that territory. As the historian Chandran Devanesan has remarked, South Africa was "the making of the Mahatma". It was in South Africa that Mahatma Gandhi first forged the distinctive techniques of non-violent protest known as satyagraha, first promoted harmony between religions, and first alerted upper-caste Indians to their discriminatory treatment of low castes and women. The India that Mahatma Gandhi came back to in 1915 was rather different from the one that he had left in 1893. Although still a colony of the British, it was far more active in a political sense. The Indian National Congress now had branches in most major cities and towns. Through the Swadeshi movement of 1905-07 it had greatly broadened its appeal among the middle classes. That movement had thrown up some towering leaders – among them Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal, and Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab. The three were known as "Lal, Bal and Pal", the alliteration conveying the all-India character of their struggle, since their native provinces were very distant from one another. Where these leaders advocated militant opposition to colonial rule, there was a group of "Moderates" who preferred a more gradual and persuasive approach. Among these Moderates was Gandhiji's acknowledged political mentor, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, as well as Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who, like Gandhiji, was a lawyer of Gujarati extraction trained in London. On Gokhale's advice, Gandhiji spent a year travelling around British India, getting to know the land and its peoples. His first major public appearance was at the opening of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in February 1916. Among the invitees to this event were the princes and philanthropists whose donations had contributed to the founding of the BHU. Also present were important leaders of the Congress, such as Annie Besant. Compared to these dignitaries, Gandhiji was relatively unknown. He had been invited on account of his work in South Africa, rather than his status within India.

When his turn came to speak, Gandhiji charged the Indian elite with a lack of concern for the labouring poor. The opening of the BHU, he said, was "certainly a most gorgeous show". But he worried about the contrast between the "richly bedecked noblemen" present and "millions of the poor" Indians who were absent. Gandhiji told the privileged invitees that "there is no salvation for India unless you strip yourself of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India". "There can be no spirit of selfgovernment about us," he went on, "if we take away or allow others to take away from the peasants almost the whole of the results of their labour. Our salvation can only come through the farmer. Neither the lawyers, nor the doctors, nor the rich landlords are going to secure it."

The opening of the BHU was an occasion for celebration, marking as it did the opening of a nationalist university, sustained by Indian money and Indian initiative. But rather than adopt a tone of self-congratulation, Gandhiji chose instead to remind those present of the peasants and workers who constituted a majority of the Indian population, yet were unrepresented in the audience.

Gandhiji's speech at Banaras in February 1916 was, at one level, merely a statement of fact – namely, that Indian nationalism was an elite phenomenon, a creation of lawyers and doctors and landlords. But, at another level, it was also a statement of intent – the first

public announcement of Gandhiji's own desire to make Indian nationalism more properly representative of the Indian people as a whole. In the last month of that year, Gandhiji was presented with an opportunity to put his precepts into practice. At the annual Congress, held in Lucknow in December 1916, he was approached by a peasant from Champaran in Bihar, who told him about the harsh treatment of peasants by British indigo planters.

### **The Making and Unmaking of Non-cooperation**

Mahatma Gandhi was to spend much of 1917 in Champaran, seeking to obtain for the peasants security of tenure as well as the freedom to cultivate the crops of their choice. The following year, 1918, Gandhiji was involved in two campaigns in his home state of Gujarat. First, he intervened in a labour dispute in Ahmedabad, demanding better working conditions for the textile mill workers. Then he joined peasants in Kheda in asking the state for the remission of taxes following the failure of their harvest.

These initiatives in Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda marked Gandhiji out as a nationalist with a deep sympathy for the poor. At the same time, these were all localised struggles. Then, in 1919, the colonial rulers delivered into Gandhiji's lap an issue from which he could construct a much wider movement. During the Great War of 1914-18, the British had instituted censorship of the press and permitted detention without trial. Now, on the recommendation of a committee chaired by Sir Sidney Rowlatt, these tough measures were continued. In response, Gandhiji called for a countrywide campaign against the "Rowlatt Act". In towns across North and West India, life came to a standstill, as shops shut down and schools closed in response to the bandh call. The protests were particularly intense in the Punjab, where many men had served on the British side in the War – expecting to be rewarded for their service. Instead they were given the Rowlatt Act. Gandhiji was detained while proceeding to the Punjab, even as prominent local Congressmen were arrested. The situation in the province grew progressively more tense, reaching a bloody climax in Amritsar in April 1919, when a British Brigadier ordered his troops to open fire on a nationalist meeting. More than four hundred people were killed in what is known as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. It was the Rowlatt satyagraha that made Gandhiji a truly national leader. Emboldened by its success, Gandhiji called for a campaign of "non-cooperation" with British rule. Indians who wished colonialism to end were asked to stop attending schools, colleges and law courts, and not pay taxes. In sum, they were asked to adhere to a "renunciation of (all) voluntary association with the (British) Government". If noncooperation was effectively carried out, said Gandhiji, India would win swaraj within a year. To further broaden the struggle he had joined hands with the Khilafat Movement that sought to restore the Caliphate, a symbol of Pan-Islamism which had recently been abolished by the Turkish ruler Kemal Attaturk.

Knitting a popular movement

Gandhiji hoped that by coupling non-cooperation with Khilafat, India's two major religious communities, Hindus and Muslims, could collectively bring an end to colonial rule. These movements certainly unleashed a surge of popular action that was altogether unprecedented in colonial India. Students stopped going to schools and colleges run by the government. Lawyers refused to attend court. The working class went on strike in many towns and cities: according to official figures, there were 396 strikes in 1921, involving 600,000 workers and a loss of seven million workdays. The countryside was seething with discontent too. Hill tribes in northern Andhra violated the forest laws. Farmers in Awadh did not pay taxes. Peasants in Kumaun refused to carry loads for colonial officials. These protest movements were sometimes carried out in defiance of the local nationalist leadership. Peasants, workers, and others interpreted and acted upon the call to "non-cooperate" with colonial rule in ways that best suited their interests, rather than conform to the dictates laid

down from above. "Non-cooperation," wrote Mahatma Gandhi's American biographer Louis Fischer, "became the name of an epoch in the life of India and of Gandhiji. Non-cooperation was negative enough to be peaceful but positive enough to be effective. It entailed denial, renunciation, and self-discipline. It was training for self-rule." As a consequence of the Non-Cooperation Movement the British Raj was shaken to its foundations for the first time since the Revolt of 1857. Then, in February 1922, a group of peasants attacked and torched a police station in the hamlet of Chauri Chaura, in the United Provinces (now, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal). Several constables perished in the conflagration. This act of violence prompted Gandhiji to call off the movement altogether. "No provocation," he insisted, "can possibly justify (the) brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenceless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob."

During the Non-Cooperation Movement thousands of Indians were put in jail. Gandhiji himself was arrested in March 1922, and charged with sedition. The judge who presided over his trial, Justice C.N. Broomfield, made a remarkable speech while pronouncing his sentence. "It would be impossible to ignore the fact," remarked the judge, "that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that, in the eyes of millions of your countrymen, you are a great patriot and a leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of even saintly life." Since Gandhiji had violated the law it was obligatory for the Bench to sentence him to six years' imprisonment, but, said Judge Broomfield, "If the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I".

### **A people's leader**

By 1922, Gandhiji had transformed Indian nationalism, thereby redeeming the promise he made in his BHU speech of February 1916. It was no longer a movement of professionals and intellectuals; now, hundreds of thousands of peasants, workers and artisans also participated in it. Many of them venerated Gandhiji, referring to him as their "Mahatma". They appreciated the fact that he dressed like them, lived like them, and spoke their language. Unlike other leaders he did not stand apart from the common folk, but empathised and even identified with them.

This identification was strikingly reflected in his dress: while other nationalist leaders dressed formally, wearing a Western suit or an Indian bandgala, Gandhiji went among the people in a simple dhoti or loincloth. Meanwhile, he spent part of each day working on the charkha (spinning wheel), and encouraged other nationalists to do likewise. The act of spinning allowed Gandhiji to break the boundaries that prevailed within the traditional caste system, between mental labour and manual labour. In a fascinating study, the historian Shahid Amin has traced the image of Mahatma Gandhi among the peasants of eastern Uttar Pradesh, as conveyed by reports and rumours in the local press. When he travelled through the region in February 1921, Gandhiji was received by adoring crowds everywhere.

Wherever Gandhiji went, rumours spread of his miraculous powers. In some places it was said that he had been sent by the King to redress the grievances of the farmers, and that he had the power to overrule all local officials. In other places it was claimed that Gandhiji's power was superior to that of the English monarch, and that with his arrival the colonial rulers would flee the district. There were also stories reporting dire consequences for those who opposed him; rumours spread of how villagers who criticised Gandhiji found their houses mysteriously falling apart or their crops failing. Known variously as "Gandhi baba", "Gandhi Maharaj", or simply as "Mahatma", Gandhiji appeared to the Indian peasant as a saviour, who would rescue them from high taxes and oppressive officials and restore dignity

and autonomy to their lives. Gandhiji's appeal among the poor, and peasants in particular, was enhanced by his ascetic lifestyle, and by his shrewd use of symbols such as the dhoti and the charkha. Mahatma Gandhi was by caste a merchant, and by profession a lawyer; but his simple lifestyle and love of working with his hands allowed him to empathise more fully with the labouring poor and for them, in turn, to empathise with him. Where most other politicians talked down to them, Gandhiji appeared not just to look like them, but to understand them and relate to their lives.

While Mahatma Gandhi's mass appeal was undoubtedly genuine – and in the context of Indian politics, without precedent – it must also be stressed that his success in broadening the basis of nationalism was based on careful organisation. New branches of the Congress were set up in various parts of India. A series of "Praja Mandals" were established to promote the nationalist creed in the princely states. Gandhiji encouraged the communication of the nationalist message in the mother tongue, rather than in the language of the rulers, English. Thus the provincial committees of the Congress were based on linguistic regions, rather than on the artificial boundaries of British India. In these different ways nationalism was taken to the farthest corners of the country and embraced by social groups previously untouched by it. By now, among the supporters of the Congress were some very prosperous businessmen and industrialists. Indian entrepreneurs were quick to recognise that, in a free India, the favours enjoyed by their British competitors would come to an end. Some of these entrepreneurs, such as G.D. Birla, supported the national movement openly; others did so tacitly. Thus, among Gandhiji's admirers were both poor peasants and rich industrialists, although the reasons why peasants followed Gandhiji were somewhat different from, and perhaps opposed to, the reasons of the industrialists.

While Mahatma Gandhi's own role was vital, the growth of what we might call "Gandhian nationalism" also depended to a very substantial extent on his followers. Between 1917 and 1922, a group of highly talented Indians attached themselves to Gandhiji. They included Mahadev Desai, Vallabh Bhai Patel, J.B. Kripalani, Subhas Chandra Bose, Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Govind Ballabh Pant and C. Rajagopalachari. Notably, these close associates of Gandhiji came from different regions as well as different religious traditions. In turn, they inspired countless other Indians to join the Congress and work for it.

Mahatma Gandhi was released from prison in February 1924, and now chose to devote his attention to the promotion of home-spun cloth (khadi), and the abolition of untouchability. For, Gandhiji was as much a social reformer as he was a politician. He believed that in order to be worthy of freedom, Indians had to get rid of social evils such as child marriage and untouchability. Indians of one faith had also to cultivate a genuine tolerance for Indians of another – hence his emphasis on Hindu-Muslim harmony. Meanwhile, on the economic front Indians had to learn to become self-reliant – hence his stress on the significance of wearing khadi rather than mill-made cloth imported from overseas.

### **The Salt Satyagraha**

For several years after the Non-cooperation Movement ended, Mahatma Gandhi focused on his social reform work. In 1928, however, he began to think of re-entering politics. That year there was an all-India campaign in opposition to the all-White Simon Commission, sent from England to enquire into conditions in the colony. Gandhiji did not himself participate in this movement, although he gave it his blessings, as he also did to a peasant satyagraha in Bardoli in the same year. In the end of December 1929, the Congress held its annual session in the city of Lahore. The meeting was significant for two things: the election of Jawaharlal Nehru as President, signifying the passing of the baton of leadership to the

younger generation; and the proclamation of commitment to "Purna Swaraj", or complete independence. Now the pace of politics picked up once more. On 26 January 1930, "Independence Day" was observed, with the national flag being hoisted in different venues, and patriotic songs being sung. Gandhiji himself issued precise instructions as to how the day should be observed. "It would be good," he said, "if the declaration [of Independence] is made by whole villages, whole cities even ... It would be well if all the meetings were held at the identical minute in all the places."

Gandhiji suggested that the time of the meeting be advertised in the traditional way, by the beating of drums. The celebrations would begin with the hoisting of the national flag. The rest of the day would be spent "in doing some constructive work, whether it is spinning, or service of 'untouchables', or reunion of Hindus and Mussalmans, or prohibition work, or even all these ? together, which is not impossible". Participants would take a pledge affirming that it was "the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil", and that "if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it".

### **Dandi**

Soon after the observance of this "Independence Day", Mahatma Gandhi announced that he would lead a march to break one of the most widely disliked laws in British India, which gave the state a monopoly in the manufacture and sale of salt. His picking on the salt monopoly was another illustration of Gandhiji's tactical wisdom. For in every Indian household, salt was indispensable; yet people were forbidden from making salt even for domestic use, compelling them to buy it from shops at a high price. The state monopoly over salt was deeply unpopular; by making it his target, Gandhiji hoped to mobilise a wider discontent against British rule.

Where most Indians understood the significance of Gandhiji's challenge, the British Raj apparently did not. Although Gandhiji had given advance notice of his "Salt March" to the Viceroy Lord Irwin, Irwin failed to grasp the significance of the action. On 12 March 1930, Gandhiji began walking from his ashram at Sabarmati towards the ocean. He reached his destination three weeks later, making a fistful of salt as he did and thereby making himself a criminal in the eyes of the law. Meanwhile, parallel salt marches were being conducted in other parts of the country.

As with Non-cooperation, apart from the officially sanctioned nationalist campaign, there were numerous other streams of protest. Across large parts of India, peasants breached the hated colonial forest laws that kept them and their cattle out of the woods in which they had once roamed freely. In some towns, factory workers went on strike while lawyers boycotted British courts and students refused to attend government-run educational institutions. As in 1920-22, now too Gandhiji's call had encouraged Indians of all classes to make manifest their own discontent with colonial rule. The rulers responded by detaining the dissenters. In the wake of the Salt March, nearly 60,000 Indians were arrested, among them, of course, Gandhiji himself.

The progress of Gandhiji's march to the seashore can be traced from the secret reports filed by the police officials deputed to monitor his movements. These reproduce the speeches he gave at the villages en route, in which he called upon local officials to renounce government employment and join the freedom struggle. In one village, Wasna, Gandhiji told the upper castes that "if you are out for Swaraj you must serve untouchables. You won't get Swaraj merely by the repeal of the salt taxes or other taxes. For Swaraj you must make amends for

the wrongs which you did to the untouchables. For Swaraj, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Sikhs will have to unite. These are the steps towards Swaraj." The police spies reported that Gandhiji's meetings were very well attended, by villagers of all castes, and by women as well as men. They observed that thousands of volunteers were flocking to the nationalist cause. Among them were many officials, who had resigned from their posts with the colonial government. Writing to the government, the District Superintendent of Police remarked, "Mr Gandhi appeared calm and collected. He is gathering more strength as he proceeds." The progress of the Salt March can also be traced from another source: the American newsmagazine, Time. This, to begin with, scorned at Gandhiji's looks, writing with disdain of his "spindly frame" and his "spidery loins". Thus in its first report on the march, Time was deeply sceptical of the Salt March reaching its destination. It claimed that Gandhiji "sank to the ground" at the end of the second day's walking; the magazine did not believe that "the emaciated saint would be physically able to go much further". But within a week it had changed its mind. The massive popular following that the march had garnered, wrote Time, had made the British rulers "desperately anxious". Gandhiji himself they now saluted as a "Saint" and "Statesman", who was using "Christian acts as a weapon against men with Christian beliefs".

### **Dialogues**

The Salt March was notable for at least three reasons. First, it was this event that first brought Mahatma Gandhi to world attention. The march was widely covered by the European and American press. Second, it was the first nationalist activity in which women participated in large numbers. The socialist activist Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay had persuaded Gandhiji not to restrict the protests to men alone. Kamaladevi was herself one of numerous women who courted arrest by breaking the salt or liquor laws. Third, and perhaps most significant, it was the Salt March which forced upon the British the realisation that their Raj would not last forever, and that they would have to devolve some power to the Indians.

To that end, the British government convened a series of "Round Table Conferences" in London. The first meeting was held in November 1930, but without the pre-eminent political leader in India, thus rendering it an exercise in futility. Gandhiji was released from jail in January 1931 and the following month had several long meetings with the Viceroy. These culminated in what was called the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact", by the terms of which civil disobedience would be called off, all prisoners released, and salt manufacture allowed along the coast. The pact was criticised by radical nationalists, for Gandhiji was unable to obtain from the Viceroy a commitment to political independence for Indians; he could obtain merely an assurance of talks towards that possible end. A second Round Table Conference was held in London in the latter part of 1931. Here, Gandhiji represented the Congress. However, his claims that his party represented all of India came under challenge from three parties: from the Muslim League, which claimed to stand for the interests of the Muslim minority; from the Princes, who claimed that the Congress had no stake in their territories; and from the brilliant lawyer and thinker B.R. Ambedkar, who argued that Gandhiji and the Congress did not really represent the lowest castes.

The Conference in London was inconclusive, so Gandhiji returned to India and resumed civil disobedience. The new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, was deeply unsympathetic to the Indian leader. In a private letter to his sister, Willingdon wrote: "It's a beautiful world if it wasn't for Gandhi ... At the bottom of every move he makes which he always says is inspired by God, one discovers the political manoeuvre. I see the American Press is saying what a wonderful man he is ... But the fact is that we live in the midst of very unpractical, mystical, and superstitious folk who look upon Gandhi as something holy, ..."

In 1935, however, a new Government of India Act promised some form of representative government. Two years later, in an election held on the basis of a restricted franchise, the Congress won a comprehensive victory. Now eight out of 11 provinces had a Congress "Prime Minister", working under the supervision of a British Governor.

In September 1939, two years after the Congress ministries assumed office, the Second World War broke out. Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru had both been strongly critical of Hitler and the Nazis. Accordingly, they promised Congress support to the war effort if the British, in return, promised to grant India independence once hostilities ended. The offer was refused. In protest, the Congress ministries resigned in October 1939. Through 1940 and 1941, the Congress organised a series of individual satyagrahas to pressure the rulers to promise freedom once the war had ended.

Meanwhile, in March 1940, the Muslim League passed a resolution committing itself to the creation of a separate nation called "Pakistan". The political landscape was now complicated: it was no longer Indians versus the British; rather, it had become a three-way struggle between the Congress, the Muslim League, and the British. At this time Britain had an all-party government, whose Labour members were sympathetic to Indian aspirations, but whose Conservative Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was a diehard imperialist who insisted that he had not been appointed the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. In the spring of 1942, Churchill was persuaded to send one of his ministers, Sir Stafford Cripps, to India to try and forge a compromise with Gandhiji and the Congress. Talks broke down, however, after the Congress insisted that if it was to help the British defend India from the Axis powers, then the Viceroy had first to appoint an Indian as the Defence Member of his Executive Council.

### **Quit India**

After the failure of the Cripps Mission, Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch his third major movement against British rule. This was the "Quit India" campaign, which began in August 1942. Although Gandhiji was jailed at once, younger activists organised strikes and acts of sabotage all over the country. Particularly active in the underground resistance were socialist members of the Congress, such as Jayaprakash Narayan. In several districts, such as Satara in the west and Medinipur in the east, "independent" governments were proclaimed. The British responded with much force, yet it took more than a year to suppress the rebellion.

"Quit India" was genuinely a mass movement, bringing into its ambit hundreds of thousands of ordinary Indians. It especially energised the young who, in very large numbers, left their colleges to go to jail. However, while the Congress leaders languished in jail, Jinnah and his colleagues in the Muslim League worked patiently at expanding their influence. It was in these years that the League began to make a mark in the Punjab and Sind, provinces where it had previously had scarcely any presence. In June 1944, with the end of the war in sight, Gandhiji was released from prison. Later that year he held a series of meetings with Jinnah, seeking to bridge the gap between the Congress and the League. In 1945, a Labour government came to power in Britain and committed itself to granting independence to India. Meanwhile, back in India, the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, brought the Congress and the League together for a series of talks. Early in 1946 fresh elections were held to the provincial legislatures. The Congress swept the "General" category, but in the seats specifically reserved for Muslims the League won an overwhelming majority. The political polarisation was complete. A Cabinet Mission sent in the summer of 1946 failed to get the Congress and the League to agree on a federal system that would keep India together while allowing the provinces a degree of autonomy. After the talks broke down, Jinnah called for a "Direct Action Day" to press the League's demand for Pakistan. On the designated day, 16

August 1946, bloody riots broke out in Calcutta. The violence spread to rural Bengal, then to Bihar, and then across the country to the United Provinces and the Punjab. In some places, Muslims were the main sufferers, in other places, Hindus. In February 1947, Wavell was replaced as Viceroy by Lord Mountbatten. Mountbatten called one last round of talks, but when these too proved inconclusive he announced that British India would be freed, but also divided. The formal transfer of power was fixed for 15 August. When that day came, it was celebrated with gusto in different parts of India. In Delhi, there was "prolonged applause" when the President of the Constituent Assembly began the meeting by invoking the Father of the Nation – Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Outside the Assembly, the crowds shouted "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai".

### **The Last Heroic Days**

As it happened, Mahatma Gandhi was not present at the festivities in the capital on 15 August 1947. He was in Calcutta, but he did not attend any function or hoist a flag there either. Gandhiji marked the day with a 24-hour fast. The freedom he had struggled so long for had come at an unacceptable price, with a nation divided and Hindus and Muslims at each other's throats. Through September and October, writes his biographer D.G. Tendulkar, Gandhiji "went round hospitals and refugee camps giving consolation to distressed people". He "appealed to the Sikhs, the Hindus and the Muslims to forget the past and not to dwell on their sufferings but to extend the right hand of fellowship to each other, and to determine to live in peace ..."

At the initiative of Gandhiji and Nehru, the Congress now passed a resolution on "the rights of minorities". The party had never accepted the "two-nation theory": forced against its will to accept Partition, it still believed that "India is a land of many religions and many races, and must remain so". Whatever be the situation in Pakistan, India would be "a democratic secular State where all citizens enjoy full rights and are equally entitled to the protection of the State, irrespective of the religion to which they belong". The Congress wished to "assure the minorities in India that it will continue to protect, to the best of its ability, their citizen rights against aggression".

Many scholars have written of the months after Independence as being Gandhiji's "finest hour". After working to bring peace to Bengal, Gandhiji now shifted to Delhi, from where he hoped to move on to the riot-torn districts of Punjab. While in the capital, his meetings were disrupted by refugees who objected to readings from the Koran, or shouted slogans asking why he did not speak of the sufferings of those Hindus and Sikhs still living in Pakistan. In fact, as D.G. Tendulkar writes, Gandhiji "was equally concerned with the sufferings of the minority community in Pakistan. He would have liked to be able to go to their succour. But with what face could he now go there, when he could not guarantee full redress to the Muslims in Delhi?" There was an attempt on Gandhiji's life on 20 January 1948, but he carried on undaunted. On 26 January, he spoke at his prayer meeting of how that day had been celebrated in the past as Independence Day. Now freedom had come, but its first few months had been deeply disillusioning. However, he trusted that "the worst is over", that Indians would henceforth work collectively for the "equality of all classes and creeds, never the domination and superiority of the major community over a minor, however insignificant it may be in numbers or influence". He also permitted himself the hope "that though geographically and politically India is divided into two, at heart we shall ever be friends and brothers helping and respecting one another and be one for the outside world". Gandhiji had fought a lifelong battle for a free and united India; and yet, when the country was divided, he urged that the two parts respect and befriend one another.

Other Indians were less forgiving. At his daily prayer meeting on the evening of 30 January,

Gandhiji was shot dead by a young man. The assassin, who surrendered afterwards, was a Brahmin from Pune named Nathuram Godse, the editor of an extremist Hindu newspaper who had denounced Gandhiji as "an appeaser of Muslims". Gandhiji's death led to an extraordinary outpouring of grief, with rich tributes being paid to him from across the political spectrum in India, and moving appreciations coming from such international figures as George Orwell and Albert Einstein. Time magazine, which had once mocked Gandhiji's physical size and seemingly non-rational ideas, now compared his martyrdom to that of Abraham Lincoln: it was a bigoted American who had killed Lincoln for believing that human beings were equal regardless of their race or skin colour; and it was a bigoted Hindu who had killed Gandhiji for believing that friendship was possible, indeed necessary, between Indians of different faiths. In this respect, as Time wrote, "The world knew that it had, in a sense too deep, too simple for the world to understand, connived at his (Gandhiji's) death as it had connived at Lincoln's."

### **Knowing Gandhi**

There are many different kinds of sources from which we can reconstruct the political career of Gandhiji and the history of the nationalist movement.

#### Public voice and private scripts

One important source is the writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi and his contemporaries, including both his associates and his political adversaries. Within these writings we need to distinguish between those that were meant for the public and those that were not. Speeches, for instance, allow us to hear the public voice of an individual, while private letters give us a glimpse of his or her private thoughts. In letters we see people expressing their anger and pain, their dismay and anxiety, their hopes and frustrations in ways in which they may not express themselves in public statements. But we must remember that this private-public distinction often breaks down. Many letters are written to individuals, and are therefore personal, but they are also meant for the public. The language of the letters is often shaped by the awareness that they may one day be published. Conversely, the fear that a letter may get into print often prevents people from expressing their opinion freely in personal letters. Mahatma Gandhi regularly published in his journal, *Harijan*, letters that others wrote to him. Nehru edited a collection of letters written to him during the national movement and published *A Bunch of Old Letters*.

#### Framing a picture

Autobiographies similarly give us an account of the past that is often rich in human detail. But here again we have to be careful of the way we read and interpret autobiographies. We need to remember that they are retrospective accounts written very often from memory. They tell us what the author could recollect, what he or she saw as important, or was keen on recounting, or how a person wanted his or her life to be viewed by others. Writing an autobiography is a way of framing a picture of yourself. So in reading these accounts we have to try and see what the author does not tell us; we need to understand the reasons for that silence – those wilful or unwitting acts of forgetting.

#### Through police eyes

Another vital source is government records, for the colonial rulers kept close tabs on those they regarded as critical of the government. The letters and reports written by policemen and other officials were secret at the time; but now can be accessed in archives. Let us look at one such source: the fortnightly reports that were prepared by the Home Department from the early twentieth century. These reports were based on police information from the

localities, but often expressed what the higher officials saw, or wanted to believe. While noticing the possibility of sedition and rebellion, they liked to assure themselves that these fears were unwarranted. If you see the Fortnightly Reports for the period of the Salt March you will notice that the Home Department was unwilling to accept that Mahatma Gandhi's actions had evoked any enthusiastic response from the masses. The march was seen as a drama, an antic, a desperate effort to mobilise people who were unwilling to rise against the British and were busy with their daily schedules, happy under the Raj.

From newspapers

One more important source is contemporary newspapers, published in English as well as in the different Indian languages, which tracked Mahatma Gandhi's movements and reported on his activities, and also represented what ordinary Indians thought of him. Newspaper accounts, however, should not be seen as unprejudiced. They were published by people who had their own political opinions and world views. These ideas shaped what was published and the way events were reported. The accounts that were published in a London newspaper would be different from the report in an Indian nationalist paper.

We need to look at these reports but should be careful while interpreting them. Every statement made in these cannot be accepted literally as representing what was happening on the ground. They often reflect the fears and anxieties of officials who were unable to control a movement and were anxious about its spread. They did not know whether to arrest Mahatma Gandhi or what an arrest would mean. The more the colonial state kept a watch on the public and its activities, the more it worried about the basis of its rule.

### **Timeline**

- 1915 - Mahatma Gandhi returns from South Africa
- 1917 - Champaran movement
- 1918 - Peasant movements in Kheda (Gujarat), and workers' movement in Ahmedabad
- 1919 - Rowlatt Satyagraha (March-April)
- 1919 - Jallianwala Bagh massacre (April)
- 1921 - Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements
- 1928 - Peasant movement in Bardoli
- 1929 - "Purna Swaraj" accepted as Congress goal at the Lahore Congress (December)
- 1930 - Civil Disobedience Movement begins; Dandi March (March-April)
- 1931 - Gandhi-Irwin Pact (March); Second Round Table Conference (December)
- 1935 - Government of India Act promises some form of representative government
- 1939 - Congress ministries resign
- 1942 - Quit India Movement begins (August)
- 1946 - Mahatma Gandhi visits Noakhali and other riot-torn areas to stop communal violence

### **Myths of Aryan Invasion**

One of the main ideas used to interpret and generally devalue the ancient history of India is the theory of the Aryan invasion. According to this account, India was invaded and conquered by nomadic light-skinned Indo-European tribes from Central Asia around 1500-100 BC, who overthrew an earlier and more advanced dark-skinned Dravidian civilization from which they took most of what later became Hindu culture. This so-called pre-Aryan civilization is said to be evidenced by the large urban ruins of what has been called the "Indus valley culture" (as most of its initial sites were on the Indus river). The war between

the powers of light and darkness, a prevalent idea in ancient Aryan Vedic scriptures, was thus interpreted to refer to this war between light and dark skinned peoples. The Aryan invasion theory thus turned the "Vedas", the original scriptures of ancient India and the Indo-Aryans, into little more than primitive poems of uncivilized plunderers.

This idea totally foreign to the history of India, whether north or south has become almost an unquestioned truth in the interpretation of ancient history Today, after nearly all the reasons for its supposed validity have been refuted, even major Western scholars are at last beginning to call it in question.

In this article we will summarize the main points that have arisen. This is a complex subject that I have dealt with in depth in my book "Gods, Sages and Kings: Vedic Secrets of Ancient Civilization", for those interested in further examination of the subject.

The Indus valley culture was pronounced pre-Aryans for several reasons that were largely part of the cultural milieu of nineteenth century European thinking As scholars following Max Mullar had decided that the Aryans came into India around 1500 BC, since the Indus valley culture was earlier than this, they concluded that it had to be preAryan. Yet the rationale behind the late date for the Vedic culture given by Muller was totally speculative. Max Muller, like many of the Christian scholars of his era, believed in Biblical chronology. This placed the beginning of the world at 400 BC and the flood around 2500 BC. Assuming to those two dates, it became difficult to get the Aryans in India before 1500 BC.

Muller therefore assumed that the five layers of the four 'Vedas' & 'Upanishads' were each composed in 200 year periods before the Buddha at 500 BC. However, there are more changes of language in Vedic Sanskrit itself than there are in classical Sanskrit since Panini, also regarded as a figure of around 500 BC, or a period of 2500 years. Hence it is clear that each of these periods could have existed for any number of centuries and that the 200 year figure is totally arbitrary and is likely too short a figure.

It was assumed by these scholars many of whom were also Christian missionaries unsympathetic to the 'Vedas' that the Vedic culture was that of primitive nomads from Central Asia. Hence they could not have founded any urban culture like that of the Indus valley. The only basis for this was a rather questionable interpretation of the 'Rig Veda' that they made, ignoring the sophisticated nature of the culture presented within it.

Meanwhile, it was also pointed out that in the middle of the second millennium BC, a number of Indo-European invasions apparently occurred in the Middle East, wherein Indo-European peoples the Hittites, Mit tani and Kassites conquered and ruled Mesopotamia for some centuries. An Aryan invasion of India would have been another version of this same movement of Indo-European peoples. On top of this, excavators of the Indus valley culture, like Wheeler, thought they found evidence of destruction of the culture by an outside invasion confirming this.

The Vedic culture was thus said to be that of primitive nomads who came out of Central Asia with their horse-drawn chariots and iron weapons and overthrew the cities of the more

advanced Indus valley culture, with their superior battle tactics. It was pointed out that no horses, chariots or iron was discovered in Indus valley sites.

This was how the Aryan invasion theory formed and has remained since then. Though little has been discovered that confirms this theory, there has been much hesitancy to question it, much less to give it up. Further excavations discovered horses not only in Indus Valley sites but also in pre-Indus sites. The use of the horse has thus been proven for the whole range of ancient Indian history. Evidence of the wheel, and an Indus seal showing a spoked wheel as used in chariots, has also been found, suggesting the usage of chariots.

Moreover, the whole idea of nomads with chariots has been challenged. Chariots are not the vehicles of nomads. Their usage occurred only in ancient urban cultures with much flat land, of which the river plain of north India was the most suitable. Chariots are totally unsuitable for crossing mountains and deserts, as the so-called Aryan invasion required.

That the Vedic culture used iron & must hence date later than the introduction of iron around 1500 BC revolves around the meaning of the Vedic term "ayas", interpreted as iron. 'Ayas' in other Indo-European languages like Latin or German usually means copper, bronze or ore generally, not specially iron. There is no reason to insist that in such earlier Vedic times, 'ayas' meant iron, particularly since other metals are not mentioned in the 'Rig Veda' (except gold that is much more commonly referred to than ayas). Moreover, the 'Atharva Veda' and 'Yajur Veda' speak of different colors of 'ayas'(such as red & black), showing that it was a generic term. Hence it is clear that 'ayas' generally meant metal and not specifically iron.

Moreover, the enemies of the Vedic people in the 'Rig Veda' also use ayas, even for making their cities, as do the Vedic people themselves. Hence there is nothing in Vedic literature to show that either the Vedic culture was an ironbased culture or that their enemies were not.

The 'Rig Veda' describes its Gods as 'destroyers of cities'. This was used also to regard the Vedic as a primitive non-urban culture that destroys cities and urban civilization. However, there are also many verses in the 'Rig Veda' that speak of the Aryans as having having cities of their own and being protected by cities upto a hundred in number. Aryan Gods like Indra, Agni, Saraswati and the Adityas are praised as being like a city. Many ancient kings, including those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, had titles like destroyer or conquerer of cities. This does not turn them into nomads. Destruction of cities also happens in modern wars; this does not make those who do this nomads. Hence the idea of Vedic culture as destroying but not building the cities is based upon ignoring what the Vedas actually say about their own cities.

Further excavation revealed that the Indus Valley culture was not destroyed by outside invasion, but according to internal causes and, most likely, floods. Most recently a new set of cities has been found in India (like the Dwaraka and Bet Dwaraka sites by S.R. Rao and the National Institute of Oceanography in India) which are intermediate between those of the Indus culture and later ancient India as visited by the Greeks. This may eliminate the so-called dark age following the presumed Aryan invasion and shows a continuous urban occupation in India back to the beginning of the Indus culture.

The interpretation of the religion of the Indus Valley culture -made incidently by scholars such as Wheeler who were not religious scholars much less students of Hinduism was that its religion was different than the Vedic and more likely the later Shaivite religion. However, further excavations both in Indus Valley site in Gujarat, like Lothal, and those in Rajsthan, like Kalibangan show large number of fire altars like those used in the Vedic religion, along with bones of oxen, potsherds, shell jewelry and other items used in the rituals described in the 'Vedic Brahmanas'. Hence the Indus Valley culture evidences many Vedic practices that can not be merely coincidental. That some of its practices appeared non-Vedic to its excavators may also be attributed to their misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of Vedic and Hindu culture generally, wherein Vedism and Shaivism are the same basic tradition.

We must remember that ruins do not necessarily have one interpretation. Nor does the ability to discover ruins necessarily gives the ability to interpret them correctly.

The Vedic people were thought to have been a fair-skinned race like the Europeans owing to the Vedic idea of a war between light and darkness, and the Vedic people being presented as children of light or children of the sun. Yet this idea of a war between light and darkness exists in most ancient cultures, including the Persian and the Egyptian. Why don't we interpret their scriptures as a war between light and dark-skinned people? It is purely a poetic metaphor, not a cultural statement. Moreover, no real traces of such a race are found in India.

Anthropologists have observed that the present population of Gujarat is composed of more or less the same ethnic groups as are noticed at Lothal in 2000 BC. Similarly, the present population of the Punjab is said to be ethnically the same as the population of Harappa and Rupar 4000 years ago. Linguistically the present day population of Gujrat and Punjab belongs to the Indo-Aryan language speaking group. The only inference that can be drawn from the anthropological and linguistic evidences adduced above is that the Harappan population in the Indus Valley and Gujrat in 2000 BC was composed of two or more groups, the more dominant among them having very close ethnic affinities with the present day Indo-Aryan speaking population of India.

In other words there is no racial evidence of any such Indo-Aryan invasion of India but only of a continuity of the same group of people who traditionally considered themselves to be Aryans.

There are many points in fact that prove the Vedic nature of the Indus Valley culture. Further excavation has shown that the great majority of the sites of the Indus Valley culture were east, not west of Indus. In fact, the largest concentration of sites appears in an area of Punjab and Rajsthan near the dry banks of ancient Saraswati and Drishadvati rivers. The Vedic culture was said to have been founded by the sage Manu between the banks of Saraswati and Drishadvati rivers. The Saraswati is lauded as the main river (naditama) in the 'Rig Veda' & is the most frequently mentioned in the text. It is said to be a great flood and to be wide, even endless in size. Saraswati is said to be "pure in course from the mountains to the sea". Hence the Vedic people were well acquainted with this river and

regarded it as their immemorial homeland.

The Saraswati, as modern land studies now reveal, was indeed one of the largest, if not the largest river in India. In early ancient and pre-historic times, it once drained the Sutlej, Yamuna and the Ganges, whose courses were much different than they are today. However, the Saraswati river went dry at the end of the Indus Valley culture and before the so-called Aryan invasion or before 1500 BC. In fact this may have caused the ending of the Indus culture. How could the Vedic Aryans know of this river and establish their culture on its banks if it dried up before they arrived? Indeed the Saraswati as described in the 'Rig Veda' appears to more accurately show it as it was prior to the Indus Valley culture as in the Indus era it was already in decline.

Vedic and late Vedic texts also contain interesting astronomical lore. The Vedic calendar was based upon astronomical sightings of the equinoxes and solstices. Such texts as 'Vedanga Jyotish' speak of a time when the vernal equinox was in the middle of the Nakshtra Aslesha (or about 23 degrees 20 minutes Cancer). This gives a date of 1300 BC. The 'Yajur Veda' and 'Atharva Veda' speak of the vernal equinox in the Krittikas (Pleiades; early Taurus) and the summer solstice (ayana) in Magha (early Leo). This gives a date about 2400 BC. Yet earlier eras are mentioned but these two have numerous references to substantiate them. They prove that the Vedic culture existed at these periods and already had a sophisticated system of astronomy. Such references were merely ignored or pronounced unintelligible by Western scholars because they yielded too early a date for the 'Vedas' than what they presumed, not because such references did not exist.

Vedic texts like 'Shatapatha Brahmana' and 'Aitareya Brahmana' that mention these astronomical references list a group of 11 Vedic Kings, including a number of figures of the 'Rig Veda', said to have conquered the region of India from 'sea to sea'. Lands of the Aryans are mentioned in them from Gandhara (Afghanistan) in the west to Videha (Nepal) in the east, and south to Vidarbha (Maharashtra). Hence the Vedic people were in these regions by the Krittika equinox or before 2400 BC. These passages were also ignored by Western scholars and it was said by them that the 'Vedas' had no evidence of large empires in India in Vedic times. Hence a pattern of ignoring literary evidence or misinterpreting them to suit the Aryan invasion idea became prevalent, even to the point of changing the meaning of Vedic words to suit this theory.

According to this theory, the Vedic people were nomads in the Punjab, coming down from Central Asia. However, the 'Rig Veda' itself has nearly 100 references to ocean (samudra), as well as dozens of references to ships, and to rivers flowing in to the sea. Vedic ancestors like Manu, Turvasha, Yadu and Bhujyu are flood figures, saved from across the sea. The Vedic God of the sea, Varuna, is the father of many Vedic seers and seer families like Vasishta, Agastya and the Bhrigu seers. To preserve the Aryan invasion idea it was assumed that the Vedic (and later Sanskrit) term for ocean, samudra, originally did not mean the ocean but any large body of water, especially the Indus river in Punjab. Here the clear meaning of a term in 'Rig Veda' and later times verified by rivers like Saraswati mentioned by name as flowing into the sea was altered to make the Aryan invasion theory fit. Yet if we look at the index to translation of the 'Rig Veda' by Griffith for example, who held to this idea that samudra didn't really mean the ocean, we find over 70 references to ocean or sea.

If samudra does not mean ocean why was it translated as such? It is therefore without basis to locate Vedic kings in Central Asia far from any ocean or from the massive Saraswati river, which form the background of their land and the symbolism of their hymns.

One of the latest archeological ideas is that the Vedic culture is evidenced by Painted Grey Ware pottery in north India, which appears to date around 1000 BC and comes from the same region between the Ganges and Yamuna as later Vedic culture is related to. It is thought to be an inferior grade of pottery and to be associated with the use of iron that the 'Vedas' are thought to mention. However it is associated with a pig and rice culture, not the cow and barley culture of the 'Vedas'. Moreover it is now found to be an organic development of indigenous pottery, not an introduction of invaders.

Painted Grey Ware culture represents an indigenous cultural development and does not reflect any cultural intrusion from the West i.e. an Indo-Aryan invasion. Therefore, there is no archeological evidence corroborating the fact of an Indo-Aryan invasion.

In addition, the Aryans in the Middle East, most notably the Hittites, have now been found to have been in that region at least as early as 2200 BC, wherein they are already mentioned. Hence the idea of an Aryan invasion into the Middle East has been pushed back some centuries, though the evidence so far is that the people of the mountain regions of the Middle East were Indo-Europeans as far as recorded history can prove. The Aryan Kassites of the ancient Middle East worshipped Vedic Gods like Surya and the Maruts, as well as one named Himalaya. The Aryan Hittites and Mittani signed a treaty with the name of the Vedic Gods Indra, Mitra, Varuna and Nasatya around 1400 BC. The Hittites have a treatise on chariot racing written in almost pure Sanskrit. The IndoEuropeans of the ancient Middle East thus spoke Indo-Aryan, not Indo-Iranian languages and thereby show a Vedic culture in that region of the world as well.

The Indus Valley culture had a form of writing, as evidenced by numerous seals found in the ruins. It was also assumed to be non-Vedic and probably Dravidian, though this was never proved. Now it has been shown that the majority of the late Indus signs are identical with those of later Hindu Brahmi and that there is an organic development between the two scripts. Prevalent models now suggest an Indo-European base for that language. It was also assumed that the Indus Valley culture derived its civilization from the Middle East, probably Sumeria, as antecedents for it were not found in India. Recent French excavations at Mehrgarh have shown that all the antecedents of the Indus Valley culture can be found within the subcontinent and going back before 6000 BC. In short, some Western scholars are beginning to reject the Aryan invasion or any outside origin for Hindu civilization.

Current archeological data do not support the existence of an Indo Aryan or European invasion into South Asia at any time in the preor protohistoric periods. Instead, it is possible to document archeologically a series of cultural changes reflecting indigenous cultural development from prehistoric to historic periods. The early Vedic literature describes not a human invasion into the area, but a fundamental restructuring of indigenous society. The Indo-Aryan invasion as an academic concept in 18th and 19th century Europe reflected the cultural milieu of the period. Linguistic data were used to validate the concept that in turn

was used to interpret archeological and anthropological data.

In other words, Vedic literature was interpreted on the assumption that there was an Aryan invasion. Then archeological evidence was interpreted by the same assumption. And both interpretations were then used to justify each other. It is nothing but a tautology, an exercise in circular thinking that only proves that if assuming something is true, it is found to be true!

Another modern Western scholar, Colin Renfrew, places the IndoEuropeans in Greece as early as 6000 BC. He also suggests such a possible early date for their entry into India.

As far as I can see there is nothing in the Hymns of the 'Rig Veda' which demonstrates that the Vedic-speaking population was intrusive to the area: this comes rather from a historical assumption of the 'coming of the Indo-Europeans.

When Wheeler speaks of 'the Aryan invasion of the land of the 7 rivers, the Punjab', he has no warranty at all, so far as I can see. If one checks the dozen references in the 'Rig Veda' to the 7 rivers, there is nothing in them that to me implies invasion: the land of the 7 rivers is the land of the 'Rig Veda', the scene of action. Nor is it implied that the inhabitants of the walled cities (including the Dasyus) were any more aboriginal than the Aryans themselves.

Despite Wheeler's comments, it is difficult to see what is particularly non-Aryan about the Indus Valley civilization. Hence Renfrew suggests that the Indus Valley civilization was in fact Indo-Aryan even prior to the Indus Valley era:

This hypothesis that early Indo-European languages were spoken in North India with Pakistan and on the Iranian plateau at the 6th millennium BC has the merit of harmonizing symmetrically with the theory for the origin of the IndoEuropean languages in Europe. It also emphasizes the continuity in the Indus Valley and adjacent areas from the early neolithic through to the flourish of the Indus Valley civilization. This is not to say that such scholars appreciate or understand the 'Vedas' their work leaves much to be desired in this respect but that it is clear that the whole edifice built around the Aryan invasion is beginning to tumble on all sides. In addition, it does not mean that the 'Rig Veda' dates from the Indus Valley era. The Indus Valley culture resembles that of the 'Yajur Veda' and the reflect the pre-Indus period in India, when the Saraswati river was more prominent.

The acceptance of such views would create a revolution in our view of history as shattering as that in science caused by Einstein's theory of relativity. It would make ancient India perhaps the oldest, largest and most central of ancient cultures. It would mean that the Vedic literary record already the largest and oldest of the ancient world even at a 1500 BC date would be the record of teachings some centuries or thousands of years before that. It would mean that the 'Vedas' are our most authentic record of the ancient world. It would also tend to validate the Vedic view that the Indo-Europeans and other Aryan peoples were migrants from India, not that the Indo-Aryans were invaders into India. Moreover, it would affirm the Hindu tradition that the Dravidians were early offshoots of the Vedic people through the seer Agastya, and not unarian peoples.

In closing, it is important to examine the social and political implications of the Aryan invasion idea:

- First, it served to divide India into a northern Aryan and southern Dravidian culture which were made hostile to each other. This kept the Hindus divided and is still a source of social tension.
- Second, it gave the British an excuse in their conquest of India. They could claim to be doing only what the Aryan ancestors of the Hindus had previously done millennia ago.
- Third, it served to make Vedic culture later than and possibly derived from Middle Eastern cultures. With the proximity and relationship of the latter with the Bible and Christianity, this kept the Hindu religion as a sidelight to the development of religion and civilization to the West.
- Fourth, it allowed the sciences of India to be given a Greek basis, as any Vedic basis was largely disqualified by the primitive nature of the Vedic culture.

This discredited not only the 'Vedas' but the genealogies of the 'Puranas' and their long list of the kings before the Buddha or Krishna were left without any historical basis. The 'Mahabharata', instead of a civil war in which all the main kings of India participated as it is described, became a local skirmish among petty princes that was later exaggerated by poets. In short, it discredited the most of the Hindu tradition and almost all its ancient literature. It turned its scriptures and sages into fantasies and exaggerations.

This served a social, political and economical purpose of domination, proving the superiority of Western culture and religion. It made the Hindus feel that their culture was not the great thing that their sages and ancestors had said it was. It made Hindus feel ashamed of their culture that its basis was neither historical nor scientific. It made them feel that the main line of civilization was developed first in the Middle East and then in Europe and that the culture of India was peripheral and secondary to the real development of world culture.

Such a view is not good scholarship or archeology but merely cultural imperialism. The Western Vedic scholars did in the intellectual sphere what the British army did in the political realm discredit, divide and conquer the Hindus. In short, the compelling reasons for the Aryan invasion theory were neither literary nor archeological but political and religious that is to say, not scholarship but prejudice. Such prejudice may not have been intentional but deep-seated political and religious views easily cloud and blur our thinking.

It is unfortunate that this this approach has not been questioned more, particularly by Hindus. Even though Indian Vedic scholars like Dayananda saraswati, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Arobindo rejected it, most Hindus today passively accept it. They allow Western, generally Christian, scholars to interpret their history for them and quite naturally Hinduism is kept in a reduced role. Many Hindus still accept, read or even honor the translations of the 'Vedas' done by such Christian missionary scholars as Max Muller, Griffith, MonierWilliams and H. H. Wilson. Would modern Christians accept an interpretation of the Bible or Biblical history done by Hindus aimed at converting them to Hinduism? Universities in India also use the Western history books and Western Vedic translations that propound such views that denigrate their own culture and country.

The modern Western academic world is sensitive to criticisms of cultural and social biases.

For scholars to take a stand against this biased interpretation of the 'Vedas' would indeed cause a reexamination of many of these historical ideas that can not stand objective scrutiny. But if Hindu scholars are silent or passively accept the misinterpretation of their own culture, it will undoubtedly continue, but they will have no one to blame but themselves. It is not an issue to be taken lightly, because how a culture is defined historically creates the perspective from which it is viewed in the modern social and intellectual context. Tolerance is not in allowing a false view of one's own culture and religion to be propagated without question. That is merely self-betrayal.

### **Aryans, Harappa Civilization and Conquest of Alexander**

They called themselves the "noble ones" or the "superior ones." Their names are lost; their tribal names are lost. But when they found themselves conquerors, they gave themselves the name "superior" or "noble."

They were a tribal and nomadic peoples living in the far reaches of Euro-Asia in hostile steppe lands barely scratching out a living. They were unquestionably a tough people, and they were fierce and war-like. Their religion reflects it dominated as it is by a storm-god or sky-god that enjoins warfare and conquest. This god was called something like "Dyaus," a word related to "Zeus," "deus" (the Latin word for "god"), "deva" (the Sanskrit word for "god"), and, of course, the English word "divine." Their culture was oriented around warfare, and they were very good at it. They were superior on horseback and rushed into battle in chariots. They were a tribal people ruled over by a war-chief, or raja (the Latin word "rex" (king) comes from the same root word, along with the English "regal"). Somewhere in the early centuries of the second millennium BC, they began to migrate southwards in waves of steady conquest across the face of Persia and the lands of India.

There, they would take on the name "superior" or "noble" to distinguish themselves from the people they conquered. Their name is derived from the Indo-European root word, "ar," meaning "noble." In Sanskrit, they were the "Aryas" ("Aryans"); but that root, "ar," would also serve as the foundation of the name of the conquered Persian territories, "Iran." This concept of nobility, in fact, seems to lie at the heart of Indo-European consciousness, for it appears in another country's name, "Ireland," or "Eire." You can bet, however, that when a people go around calling themselves superior that it spells bad news for other people.

And there is no question that they were bad news for the southern Asians. They swept over Persia with lightening speed, and spread across the northern river plains of India. Their nature as a warlike, conquering people are still preserved in Vedic religion, the foundation of Hinduism. In the Rig Veda, the collection of praises to the gods, the god Indra towers over the poetry as a conquering god, one that smashes cities and slays enemies. The invading Aryans were originally nomadic peoples, not agricultural. They penetrated India from the north-west, settling first in the Indus valley. Unlike the Harappans, however, they eventually concentrated their populations along the Ganges floodplain. The Ganges, unlike the Indus, is far milder and more predictable in its flooding. It must have been a paradise to a people from the dry steppes of central Asia and Iran, a paradise full of water and forest. When they arrived, the vast northern plains were almost certainly densely forested. Where now bare fields stretch to the horizon, when the Aryans arrived lush forests stretched to those very same horizons. Clearing the forests over the centuries was an epic project and one that is still preserved in Indian literature.

The Aryans, or Vedic civilization were a new start in Indian culture. Harappa was more or less a dead end (at least as far as we know); the Aryans adopted almost nothing of Harappan culture. They built no cities, no states, no granaries, and used no writing. Instead they were a warlike people that organized themselves in individual tribal, kinship units, the jana. The jana was ruled over by a war-chief. These tribes spread quickly over northern India and the Deccan. In a process that we do not understand, the basic social unit of Aryan culture, the jana, slowly developed from an organization based on kinship to one based on geography. The jana became a janapada, or nation and the jana-rajya, or tribal kingdom, became the jana-rajyapada, or national kingdom. So powerfully ingrained into Indian culture is the jana-pada, that Indians still define themselves mainly by their territorial origins. All the major territories of modern India, with their separate cultures and separate languages, can be dated back to the early jana-padas of Vedic India.

The earliest history of the Aryans in India is called the Rigvedic Period (1700-1000 BC) after the religious praise poems that are the oldest pieces of literature in India. These poems, the Rig Veda, are believed to represent the most primitive layer of Indo-European religion and have many characteristics in common with Persian religion since the two peoples are closely related in time. In this early period, their population was restricted to the Punjab in the northern reaches of the Indus River and the Yamuna River near the Ganges. They maintained the Aryan tribal structure, with a raja ruling over the tribal group in tandem with a council. Each jana seems to have had a chief priest; the religion was focused almost entirely on a series of sacrifices to the gods. The Rigvedic peoples originally had only two social classes: nobles and commoners. Eventually, they added a third: Dasas, or "darks." These were, we presume, the darker-skinned people they had conquered. By the end of the Rigvedic period, social class had settled into four rigid castes: the caturvarnas, or "four colors." At the top of the caturvarnas were the priests, or Brahmans. Below the priests were the warriors or nobles (Kshatriya), the craftspeople and merchants (Vaishya), and the servants (Shudra), who made up the bulk of society. These economic classes were legitimated by an elaborate religious system and would be eventually subdivided into a huge number of economic sub-classes which we call "castes." Social class by the end of the Rigvedic period became completely inflexible; there was no such thing as social mobility.

In the early centuries of Later Vedic Period or Brahmanic Period (1000-500 BC), the Aryans migrated across the Doab, which is a large plain which separates the Yamuna River from the Ganges. It was a difficult project, for the Doab was thickly forested; the Aryans slowly burned and settled the Doab until they reached the Ganges. While the Rig Veda represents the most primitive religion of the Aryans during the Rigvedic Period, the religion of the Later Vedic period is dominated by the Brahmanas, or priestly book, which was composed sometime between 1000 and 850 BC. Later Vedic society is dominated by the Brahmans and every aspect of Aryan life comes under the control of priestly rituals and spells. In history as the Indians understand it, the Later Vedic Period is the Epic Age; the great literary, heroic epics of Indian culture, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, though they were composed between 500 and 200 BC, were probably originally formulated and told in the Later Vedic Period. Both of these epics deal with heroes from this period and demonstrate how Aryan cultural values, as we can understand them from the Rig Veda, are being transformed by mixing with Indus cultures.

What did the Aryans do with their time? They seem to have had a well-developed musical culture, and song and dance dominated their society. They were not greatly invested in the visual arts, but their interest in lyric poetry was unmatched. They loved gambling. They did not, however, have much interest in writing even though they could have inherited a civilization and a writing system when they originally settled India. We do not know exactly when they became interested in writing, but it may have been at the end of the Brahmanic period somewhere between 650 and 500 BC. Still, there are no Aryan writings until the

Mauryan period—from Harappa (2500-1750 BC) to Maurya (300 BC) is quite a long time. The script that the Mauryans used is called "Brahmi" script and was used to write not only the religious and literary language of the time, Sanskrit, but also the vernacular languages. This script, Brahmi, is the national alphabet of India.

The Vedic period, then, is a period of cultural mixing, not of conquest. Although the Aryans were a conquering people when they first spread into India, the culture of the Aryans would gradually mix with indigenous cultures, and the war-religion of the Aryans, still preserved in parts of the Rig Veda, slowly became more ritualized and more meditative. By 200 BC, this process of mixing and transforming was more or less complete and the culture we call "Indian" was fully formed.

### **HARAPPA AND INDUS CIVILIZATION**

Although agriculture seems to have come late to India, arriving sometime around 5000 BC, India was one of the first regions to give birth to civilization. Only a few centuries after the first Mesopotamian cities sprang up, a people living along the northern reaches of the Indus River discovered urbanization, metalwork, and writing. It is a mysterious civilization and one with no discernible continuity, for it thrived for just several centuries and then disappeared. The Indo-European immigrants who settled the region did not adopt most of the aspects of this civilization, and what precisely they did adopt is difficult to ascertain. So while Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Yellow River civilizations lasted for millenia and left their mark on all subsequent cultures, the Indus River civilization seems to have been a false start.

For the overwhelming majority of human history, this early culture was truly a lost civilization. The mounds which stood where great cities once thrived excited interest in observers, but no one in their wildest dreams could have imagined that beneath those large mounds lay cities that had been lost to human memory.

In the 1920's, excavations began on one of these mounds in Harappa in Pakistan. While the archaeologists expected to find something, they did not imagine that a city lay beneath the earth. Archaeologists would later discover another large city to the recovery of at least eighty villages and towns related to this newly discovered civilization. They named it Harappan after the first city they discovered, but it is more commonly called the Indus River civilization. While we have stones and tools and fragments and bones, we really have no one's voice or experience from the bustling days of the great Harappan cities. We don't know who the people were who built and lived there. We don't know, either, when they first built their cities; some scholars argue that Harappan civilization arises around 2250 BC, while others argue that it can be dated back to 2500 BC or earlier.

Like the civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece, Harappa grew on the floodplains of a rich and life-giving river, the Indus. The original cities and many of the towns seemed to have been built right upon the shores of the river. The Indus, however, is destructive and unpredictable in its floods, and the cities were frequently levelled by the forces of nature. Mohenjo-Daro in the south, where the flooding can be fairly brutal, was rebuilt six times that we know about; Harappa in the north was rebuilt five times.

The Harappans were an agricultural people whose economy was almost entirely dominated by horticulture. Massive granaries were built at each city, and there most certainly was an elaborate bureaucracy to distribute this wealth of food. The Indus River valley is relatively dry now, but apparently it was quite wet when the Harappans thrived there. We know this because the bricks that they built their cities with were fired bricks; since sun-dried bricks are cheaper and easier to make, we can only assume that over-abundant humidity and precipitation prevented them from taking the cheaper way out. In addition, many of the

Harappan seals have pictures of animals that imply a wet and marshy environment, such as rhinoceroses, elephants, and tigers. The Harappans also had a wide variety of domesticated animals: camels, cats, dogs, goats, sheep, and buffalo.

Their cities were carefully planned and laid out; they are, in fact, the first people to plan the building of their cities. Whenever they rebuilt their cities, they laid them out precisely in the same way the destroyed city had been built. The pathways within the city are laid out in a perpendicular criss-cross fashion; most of the city consisted of residences.

Life in the Harappan cities was apparently quite good. Although living quarters were cramped, which is typical of ancient cities, the residents nevertheless had drains, sewers, and even latrines. There is no question that they had an active trade with cultures to the west. Several Harappan seals have been found in excavations of Sumerian cities, as well as pictures of animals that in no way could have existed in Mesopotamia, such as tigers. There is not, however, a wealth of Mesopotamian artifacts in Harappan cities.

We know nothing of the religion of the Harappans. Unlike in Mesopotamia or Egypt, we have discovered no building that so much as hints that it might be a temple or involve any kind of public worship. The bulk of public buildings in the city seemed to be solely oriented towards the economy and making life comfortable for the Harappans. We do, however, have a number of tantalizing figures on various seals and statues. What we gather from these figures (and we can not gather much), is that the Harappans probably exercised some sort of goddess worship. There is, however, some sort of male god (maybe) that has the head of a man with the horns of a bull. In addition, we believe from various artifacts that the Harappans also may have worshipped natural objects or animistic forces, but the circumstances of this worship can only be guessed at.

We know that the Harappans were eventually supplanted by waves of migrations of Indo-Europeans. These new peoples, however, did not seem to adopt the religious practices of the Harappans, so it is not possible to reconstruct Harappan religion through the religion of the Vedic peoples, that is, the Indo-Europeans who constructed the rudimentary Indian religion represented by the Vedas.

Right at the heart of the mystery, like a person speaking behind sound-proof glass, are the numerous writings on the artifacts that have been unearthed. Harappan writing was a pictographic script, or at least seems to be; as of yet, however, no one has figured out how to decipher it or even what language it might be rendering. The logical candidate is that the Harappans spoke a Dravidian language, but that conclusion, which may not be true, has not helped anybody decipher the script. Like the rest of Harappan civilization, the writing was lost to human memory after the disappearance of the Harappans.

And finally they disappeared. And they disappeared without a trace. Some believe that they were overrun by the war-like Aryans, the Indo-Europeans who, like a storm, rushed in from Euro-Asia and overran Persia and northern India. Some believe that the periodic and frequently destructive flooding of the Indus finally took its toll on the economic health of the civilization. It is possible that the periodic changes of course that the Indus undergoes also contributed to its decline. All we know is that somewhere between 1800 and 1700 BC, the Harappan cities and towns were abandoned and finally reclaimed by the rich soil they had sprung from.

## **THE CONQUEST OF ALEXANDER**

In 331 BC, Alexander the Great of Macedon began one of the greatest conquests in human

history. After conquering Egypt and defeating the Persian Empire Alexander had pushed his army to the very limits of the world as the Greeks knew it. But he wanted more; he saw that the world extended further. By conquering the ancient lands of the Mesopotamians, he came into contact with cultures to the east, such as Pakistan and India. After almost a millenium and a half, from the period of Harappa (2500-1750 BC), to the end of the Brahmanic period, the peoples of India entered into no commerce or trade with the Mesopotamians. But starting around 700 BC, the Indians began to trade again with the Mesopotamian cities, and by the time of Alexander, that trade was dyanmic. Partly out of curiosity, and partly out of a desire to conquer the enitre world within the boundaries of the river Ocean (the Greeks believed that a great river, called Ocean, encircled all the land of the world), Alexander and his army pushed east, through northern Iran and all the way to Pakistan and India. He had conquered Bactria at the foot of the western Himalayas, gained a huge Bactrian army, and married a Bactrian princess, Roxane. But when he tried to push on past Pakistan, his army grew tired, and he abandoned the eastward conquest in 327 BC.

Alexander only made it as far as the region of Gandhara, the plain which lies directly west of the Indus River. Alexander himself seems to have had literally no effect on Indian history, for he left as soon as he reached the Indus. Two important results, however, arose because of Alexander's conquests: first, from this point onwards Greek and Indian culture would intermix. But most importantly, the conquest of Alexander may have set the stage for the first great conqueror of Indian history, Chandragupta Maurya (reigned 321-297 BC), who, shortly after Alexander left, united all the kingdoms of northern India into a single empire. practices of the Harappans, so it is not possible to reconstruct Harappan religion through the religion of the Vedic peoples, that is, the Indo-Europeans who constructed the rudimentary Indian religion represented by the Vedas.

Right at the heart of the mystery, like a person speaking behind sound-proof glass, are the numerous writings on the artifacts that have been unearthed. Harappan writing was a pictographic script, or at least seems to be; as of yet, however, no one has figured out how to decipher it or even what language it might be rendering. The logical candidate is that the Harappans spoke a Dravidian language, but that conclusion, which may not be true, has not helped anybody decipher the script. Like the rest of Harappan civilization, the writing was lost to human memory after the disappearance of the Harappans.

And finally they disappeared. And they disappeared without a trace. Some believe that they were overrun by the war-like Aryans, the Indo-Europeans who, like a storm, rushed in from Euro-Asia and overran Persia and northern India. Some believe that the periodic and frequently destructive flooding of the Indus finally took its toll on the economic health of the civilization. It is possible that the periodic changes of course that the Indus undergoes also contributed to its decline. All we know is that somewhere between 1800 and 1700 BC, the Harappan cities and towns were abandoned and finally reclaimed by the rich soil they had sprung from.

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### **Foreign Relations of Ashoka and Decline of Mauryans**

Diplomacy and geographical proximity primarily determined the foreign relations maintained by Asoka. Particularly, the century in which, Asoka lived was one of continued interactions between the Eastern Mediterranean and South Asia. That is why most of Asoka's contacts were with South Asia and the West. It appears that this interest was not one sided. A fair number of foreigners lived in Pataliputra to necessitate a special committee under the municipal management to look after the needs of welfare of the visitors. Apart from these major factors determining the foreign relations of Asoka, one more parameter was the desire of Asoka to spread his policy of dhamma to distant lands.

To begin with, Asoka in his foreign relations was a realist defeat and annexation of Kalinga. Also his realism is to be seen in Asoka not annexing the southern kingdoms (Cholas, Pandvas, Satyaputras and Keralaputras) while being satisfied with their acknowledgement of his suzerainty. He probably felt that it was not worth the trouble to annex the small territories too.

In other foreign relations Asoka reveals as an idealist or a monarch who wore the robes of a monk. He sent various missions, though not embassies, to various countries. Their main purpose was to acquaint the countries they visited with his policies, particularly that of dhamma. They may be compared to modern goodwill missions helping to create an interest in the ideas and peoples of the country from which they came. Also, the fact that they are quite unheard of in contemporary literature or in later sources would suggest that they made only a short-lived impression.

In spite of the above reservations, the missions must have opened a number of channels for the flow of Indian ideas and goods. It is unlikely that Asoka expected all the kings who had received missions to put the policy of dhamma into practice, although he claims that his did happen. It is curious to observe that there is no reference to these missions in the last important public declaration of Asoka, the seventh pillar edict. In this edict Asoka mentions the success he had with his welfare services and the widespread propagation of dhamma but all within the empire.

The territory immediately adjoining the empire of Asoka on the West and that of Antiochus. There is ample evidence of contacts of similarity in cultures. The use of Kharoshti in the Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra edicts in the north is evidence of strong contact with Iran. The fragmentary Aramaic inscription at Taxila and another of the same kind from Kashmir point to continue inter communication between the two areas.

Apart from contacts with Iran, Asoka Empire was close to various Greek kingdoms. There are references to the Greeks in the rock edicts of Asoka. On certain occasions the word used refers to the Greek settlements in the north-west and on others to the Hellenic Kingdoms. Antiochus II these of Syria is more frequently mentioned. The other Hellenic Kings where missions were sent were Ptolemy-II Philadelphus of Egypt, Magas of Cyrene, Antigonus

gonatas of Messedonia, and Alexander of Eorius.

Apart from these western contacts, tradition maintains that Asoka visited Khotan. This cannot be substantiated. On the other hand, Asoka maintained close relations with modern Nepal. Tradition states that his daughter, Charumati was married to Devapala of Nepal. On the East, the Mauryan empire included the province of Vanga, Since Tamralipti was the principal port of the area, Indian missions to and from Ceylon are said to have traveled via Tamaralipti.

The extent of the influence of Asoka's power in South India is better documented than in north India. The edicts of Asoka are found at Gavimathi, Palkignuda, Brahmagiri, Maski, Yerragudi and Siddapur, Tamil poets also make references to the Mauryas.

More important were the contacts with Ceylon. Information is available in the Ceylonese Chronicles on contacts between India and Ceylon. Coming of Mahindra to Ceylon was not the first official contact. Earlier, Dhamma missions were sent. A Ceylonese king was so captivated by Asoka that he called himself as Devanampiya. Asoka maintained close relations with Tissa, the ruler of Ceylon. Relationship between Asoka and Tissa was based on mutual admiration for each other.

What interests of the country or the aims of Asoka were served through his missions? Asoka primarily tried to propagate his dhamma and may be incidentally Buddhism. He claimed that he made a spiritual conquest of all the territories specified by him as well as a few more territories beyond them. This claim definitely appears to be an exaggeration. There is no historical evidence to show that Asoka's missions did succeed in achieving their aim particularly when the dhamma happened to be highly humanistic and ethical in nature. After all, Asoka was neither a Buddha nor a Christ to appeal to various people. Neither a St. Peter nor an Ananda to successfully spread the message of their Masters. Not did he possess fighting men to spread his message just as the followers of prophet Mohammed. Thus, when there is no follow up action after the missions visited the various parts of the world, it is understandable that no one paid any heed to his message.

Nevertheless, there is one intriguing point about the success of his foreign missions. In likelihood, the history of the Buddha and his message must have spread to the various parts. What did they need to? Although it is difficult to answer this question, it is of importance to observe that there are certain similarities between Christianity and Buddhism - suffering of man, Mara & Satan, Sangha Monasteries with Bikshus and Monks, and the use of rosary by Buddhist and Christian's monks.

### **DECLINE OF THE MAURYS**

The decline of the Maurya Dynasty was rather rapid after the death of Ashoka/Asoka. One obvious reason for it was the succession of weak kings. Another immediate cause was the partition of the Empire into two. Had not the partition taken place, the Greek invasions could have been held back giving a chance to the Mauryas to re-establish some degree of their previous power.

Regarding the decline much has been written. Haraprasad Sastri contends that the revolt by Pushyamitra was the result of brahminical reaction against the pro-Buddhist policies of Ashoka and pro-Jaina policies of his successors. Basing themselves on this thesis, some maintain the view that brahminical reaction was responsible for the decline because of the following reasons.

- (a) Prohibition of the slaughter of animals displeased the Brahmins as animal sacrifices were esteemed by them.
- (b) The book Divyavadana refers to the persecution of Buddhists by Pushyamitra Sunga.
- (c) Asoka's claim that he exposed the Budheveas (brahmins) as false gods shows that Ashoka was not well disposed towards Brahmins.
- (d) The capture of power by Pushyamitra Sunga shows the triumph of Brahmins.

All these four points can be easily refuted. Asoka's compassion towards animals was not an overnight decision. Repulsion of animal sacrifices grew over a long period of time. Even Brahmins gave it up by the book Divyavadana, cannot be relied upon since it was during the

time of Pushyamitra Sunga that the Sanchi and Barhut stupas were completed. Probably the impression of the persecution of Buddhism was created by Menander's invasion who was a Buddhist. Thirdly, the word 'budheva' is misinterpreted because this word is to be taken in the context of some other phrase. Viewed like this, this word has nothing to do with brahminism. Fourthly, the victory of Pushyamitra Sunga clearly shows that the last of the Mauryas was an incompetent ruler since he was overthrown in the very presence of his army, and this had nothing to do with brahminical reaction against Asoka's patronage of Buddhism. Moreover, the very fact that a Brahmin was the commander in chief of the Mauryan ruler proves that the Mauryas and the Brahmins were on good terms.

After all, the distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism in India was purely sectarian and never more than the difference between saivism and vaishnavism. The exclusiveness of religious doctrines is a Semitic conception, which was unknown to India for a long time. Buddha himself was looked upon in his lifetime and afterwards as a Hindu saint and avatar and his followers were but another sect in the great Aryan tradition. Ashoka was a Buddhist in the same way as Harsha was a Buddhist, or Kumarapala was a Jain. But in the view of the people of the day he was a Hindu monarch following one of the recognized sects. His own inscriptions bear ample witness to the fact. While his doctrines follow the middle path, his gifts are to the brahmins, sramans (Buddhist priests) and others equally. His own name of adoption is Devanam Priya, the beloved of the gods. Which gods? Surely the gods of the Aryan religion. Buddhism had no gods of its own. The idea that Ashoka was a kind of Buddhist Constantine declaring himself against paganism is a complete misreading of India conditions. Asoka was a kind of Buddhist Constantine declaring himself against paganism is a complete misreading of India conditions. Asoka was essentially a Hindu, as indeed was the founder of the sect to which he belonged.

Raychaudhury too rebuts the arguments of Sastri. The empire had shrunk considerably and there was no revolution. Killing the Mauryan King while he was reviewing the army points to a palace coup d'état not a revolution. The organization was ready to accept any one who could promise a more efficient organisation. Also if Pushyamitra was really a representative of brahminical reaction he neighbouring kings would have definitely given him assistance. The argument that the empire became effete because of Asokan policies is also very thin. All the evidence suggests that Asoka was a stern monarch although his reign witnessed only a single campaign. He was shrewd enough in retaining Kalinga although he expressed his remorse. Well he was worldly-wise to enslave and-and-half lakh sudras of Kalinga and bring them to the Magadha region to cut forests and cultivate land. More than this his tours of the empire were not only meant for the sake of piety but also for keeping an eye on the centrifugal tendencies of the empire. Which addressing the tribal people Asoka expressed his willingness to for given. More draconian was Ashoka's message to the forest tribes who were warned of the power which he possessed. This view of Raychoudhury on the pacifism of the State cannot be substantiated.

Apart from these two major writers there is a third view as expressed by Kosambi. He based his arguments that unnecessary measures were taken up to increase tax and the punch-marked coins of the period show evidence of debasement. This contention too cannot be upheld. It is quite possible that debased coins began to circulate during the period of the later Mauryas. On the other hand the debasement may also indicate that there was an increased demand for silver in relation to goods leading to the silver content of the coins being reduced. More important point is the fact that the material remains of the post-Asokan era do not suggest any pressure on the economy. Instead the economy prospered as shown by archaeological evidence at Hastinapura and Sisupalgarh. The reign of Asoka was an asset to the economy. The unification of the country under single efficient administration the organization and increase in communications meant the development of trade as well as an opening of many new commercial interest. In the post - Asokan period surplus wealth was used by the rising commercial classes to decorate religious buildings. The sculpture at Barhut and Sanchi and the Deccan caves was the contribution of this new bourgeoisie.

Still another view regarding of the decline of Mauryas was that the coup of Pushyamitra was a peoples' revolt against Mauryans oppression and a rejection of the Maurya adoption of foreign ideas, as far interest in Mauryan Art.

This argument is based on the view that Sunga art (Sculpture at Barhut and Sanchi) is more earthy and in the folk tradition that Maruyan art. This is more stretching the argument too far. The character of Sunga art changed because it served a different purpose and its donors belonged to different social classes. Also, Sunga art conformed more to the folk traditions because Buddhism itself had incorporated large elements of popular cults and because the donors of this art, many of whom may have been artisans, were culturally more in the mainstream of folk tradition.

One more reasoning to support the popular revolt theory is based on Asoka's ban on the samajas. Asoka did ban festive meetings and discouraged eating of meat. These too might have entagonised the population but it is doubtful whether these prohibitions were strictly enforced. The above argument (people's revolt) also means that Asoka's policy was continued by his successors also, an assumption not confirmed by historical data. Further more, it is unlikely that there was sufficient national consciousness among the varied people of the Mauryan empire. It is also argued by these theorists that Asokan policy in all its details was continued by the later Mauryas, which is not a historical fact.

Still another argument that is advanced in favour of the idea of revolt against the Mauryas is that the land tax under the Mauryas was one-quarter, which was very burden some to the cultivator. But historical evidence shows something else. The land tax varied from region to region according to the fertility of the soil and the availability of water. The figure of one quarter stated by Magasthenes probably referred only to the fertile and well-watered regions around Pataliputra.

Thus the decline of the Mauryan empire cannot be satisfactorily explained by referring to Military inactivity, Brahmin resentment, popular uprising or economic pressure. The causes of the decline were more fundamental. The organization of administration and the concept of the State were such that they could be sustained by only by kings of considerably personal ability. After the death of Asoka there was definitely a weakening at the center particularly after the division of the empire, which inevitably led to the breaking of provinces from the Mauryan rule.

Also, it should be borne in mind that all the officials owed their loyalty to the king and not to the State. This meant that a change of king could result in change of officials leading to the demoralization of the officers. Mauryas had no system of ensuring the continuation of well-planned bureaucracy.

The next important weakness of the Mauryan Empire was its extreme centralization and the virtual monopoly of all powers by the king. There was a total absence of any advisory institution representing public opinion. That is why the Mauryas depended greatly on the espionage system. Added to this lack of representative institutions there was no distinction between the executive and the judiciary of the government. An incapable king may use the officers either for purposes of oppression or fail to use it for good purpose. And as the successors of Asoka happened to be weak, the empire inevitably declined.

Added to these two factors, there is no conception of national unity of political consciousness. It is clear from the fact that even the resistance against the greeks as the hated miecchas was not an organized one. The only resistance was that of the local rulers who were afraid of losing their newly acquired territory. It is significant that when Porus was fighting Alexander, or when Subhagasena was paying tribute to Antiochus, they were doing so as isolated rulers in the northwest of India. They had no support from Pataliputra, nor are they even mentioned in any Indian sources as offering resistance to the hated Yavanas. Even the heroic Porus, who, enemy though he was, won the admiration of the Greeks, is left unrecorded in Indian sources.

Another associated point of great importance is the fact that the Mauryan Empire which was highly centralized and autocratic was the first and last one of its kind. If the Mauryan

Empire did not survive for long, it could be because of the failure of the successors of Asoka to hold on to the principles that could make success of such an empire. Further, the Mauryan empire and the philosophy of the empire was not in tune with the spirit of the time because Aryanism and brahminism was very much there. According to the Brahmin or Aryan philosophy, the king was only an upholder of dharma, but never the crucial or architecture factor influencing the whole of life. In other words, the sentiment of the people towards the political factor, that is the State was never established in India. Such being the reality, when the successors of Asoka failed to make use of the institution and the thinking that was needed to make a success of a centralized political authority. The Mauryan Empire declined without anyone's regret.

Other factors of importance that contributed to the decline and lack of national unity were the ownership of land and inequality of economic levels. Land could frequently change hands. Fertility wise the region of the Ganges was more prosperous than northern Deccan. Mauryan administration was not fully tuned to meet the existing disparities in economic activity. Had the southern region been more developed, the empire could have witnessed economic homogeneity.

Also the people of the sub-continent were not of uniform cultural level. The sophisticated cities and the trade centers were a great contrast to the isolated village communities. All these differences naturally led to the economic and political structures being different from region to region. It is also a fact that even the languages spoken were varied. The history of a sub-continent and their casual relationships. The causes of the decline of the Mauryan empire must, in large part, be attributed to top heavy administration where authority was entirely in the hands of a few persons while national consciousness was unknown.

## **Ashoka's Dharma and Post-Mauryan Period**

### **NEED OF DHARMA**

1. There was considered intellectual ferment around 600 B.C. healthy rivalry was apparent among the number of sects such as the Charvaks, Jains and Ajivikas, whose doctrines ranged from bare materialism to determinism. This intellectual liveliness was reflected in the elected interests of the Mauryan rulers. It was claimed by the Jainas that Chandragupta was supporter and there is evidence that Bindusara favoured the Ajivikas.

Thus, the Empire of Asoka was inhabited by peoples of many cultures who were at many levels of development. The range of customs, beliefs, affinities, antagonisms, tensions and harmonies were galore. True, Magadha and the fringes of these areas. The north was in close contact with the Hellenized culture of Afganistan and Iran. The far south was on the threshold of a creative efflorescence of Tamil culture. The ruler of such as Empire required the perceptions were addressed to the public at large. It is in these inscriptions that the king expounds his ideas on dhamma.

It appears, Asoka aimed at creating an attitude of mind among his subjects in which social behavior was accorded the highest place. The ideology of dhamma can be viewed as a focus of loyalty and as a point of convergence for the then bewildering diversities of the Empire. In a way, Asoka's dhamma was akin to the preamble in the constitution of India.

2. A centralized monarchy demands oneness of feeling on the part of its people. The ethics of the dhamma was intended to generate such a feeling, comparable to the preamble of the Indian Constitution.

3. The Mauryan Society with its heterogeneous elements and with economic, social and religious forces working against each other posed the threat of disruption. Asoka, therefore, needed some binding factor to allow the economic activity to proceed on an even keel and thereby ensure the security of his state.

4. Also as the commercial classes gained economic importance and resented the inferior social status as per the sanctions of the Brahmins, they went over to Buddhism, which

preached social equality. Their support to the Mauryan king was very vital for the peace and prosperity of the Empire. Asoka thought that he could attract them by the propagation of this dhamma by weaning them away from too closely identifying themselves with Buddhism.

5. Asoka felt that the aforesaid forces of contrary pulls would threaten the peace of the realm not in the general interest of his Empire. Asoka's dhamma therefore, was intended to serve a practical purpose.

The dhamma was not meant to be a religion but what behoves a man of right feeling to do, or what man of sense would do. Such being the nature of his dhamma, it is primarily an ethic of social conduct.

Asoka's Moral code is most concisely formulated in the second Minor Rock Edict.

Thus saith His Majesty:

'Father and mother must be obeyed; similarly respect for living creatures must be enforced, truth must be spoken. These are the virtues of the law of Duty (or "Piety". Dhamma) which must be practised. Similarly, the teacher must be revered by the pupil, and proper courtesy must be shown to relations.

This is the ancient standard of duty (or "Piety") - leads to length of days and according to this men must act.

The three obligations - of showing reverence, respecting animal life, and telling the truth - are inculcated over and over again in the edicts.

Besides, it was meant for all - Buddhists, brahmins, Jains and Ajivikas, In the way, it was the sara or the essence of the good principles of all religions. Also, while pleading on behalf of his dhamma, Asoka passionately appealed for toleration towards all religions and a reverence for each other.

Had this dhamma got anything to do with Buddhist principles, Asoka would have openly stated so in his edicts since he never sought to hid/his support for Buddhism. For that matter, Asoka did not incorporate any of the fundamental tenets of Buddhist faith such as the Four Noble Truths, the chain of casualty the sacred eight-fold path, and the Nirvana. The omissions, also with repeated reference to the concept of svarga or heaven (a Hindu belief) show that his dhamma cannot be identified with Buddhism.

Since Asoka's dhamma was not intended for the cause of Buddhims during his dharama-atras, he not only visited various places of Buddhist importance, but also gave gifts to sramanas and Brahmins. Most of all, even after entrusting the propagation of dhamma to the Dharma Mahamatras, Asoka continued to style himself as the beloved of the devas, a Hindu concept, since there were no Gods in Buddhism at that time.

### **SUCCESS OF HIS DHARMA**

Asoka specifically states that his missions were sent to various places (Ceylon and various Western countries) and maintains that they were all successful. It is difficult to accept this claim because historical evidence shows that his officials overshot the mark. Definitely, there was resentment against their way of doing things. It is known from evidence that Asoka presumed that not only he was a seeker of truth but also he did reach the truth. Such convictions are always harmful. Most of all, it is important to note that there is no authentic proof that his missions were a success. Significantly, none of Asoka's successors continued the propagation of dhamma. Far worse is the fact that in the later ages, his pillar inscriptions came to be misunderstood as symbols of phallus.

The splendour of the 'Dark Centuries'

The five centuries which passed between the decline of the first great Indian empire of the Mauryas and the emergence of the great classical empire of the Guptas has often been described as a dark period in Indian history when foreign dynasties fought each other for short-lived and ephemeral supremacy over Northern India. Apart from Kanishka's Indo-Central Asian empire which could claim to be similar in size and importance to has china, the parthians of Persia and to the contemporary Roman empire this period did lack the glamour of large empires. But this 'dark period' particularly the first two centuries AD was a

period of intensive economic and cultural contact among the various parts of the Eurasian continent. India played a very active role in stimulating these contacts. Buddhism which has been fostered by Indian rulers since the days of Ashoka was greatly aided by the international connections of the Indo-Greeks and the Kushanas and thus rose to prominence in Central Asia. South India was establishing its important links with the West and with Southeast Asia in this period. These links especially those with Southeast Asia, proved to be very important for the future course of Asian history.

But India itself experienced important social and cultural changes in this period. For centuries Buddhism had enjoyed royal patronage. This was partly due to the fact that the foreign rulers of India found Buddhism more accessible than orthodox Hinduism. The Vedic Brahmins had been pushed into the background by the course of historical development although Hinduism as such did not experience a decline. On the contrary new popular cults arose around gods like Shiva, Krishna and Vishnu-Vasudeva who had played only a marginal role in an earlier age. The competition between Buddhism which dominated the royal courts and cities and orthodox Brahminism which was still represented by numerous Brahmin families everywhere left enough scope for these new cults to gain footholds of their own, of great importance for the further development of Hinduism and particularly for the Hindu idea of kingship was the Kushana rulers' identification with certain Hindu gods - they were actually believed to attain a complete identity with the respective god after their death. Religious legitimation was of greater importance to these foreign rulers than to other Indian kings. Menander's ashes had been distributed according to the Buddhist fashion and Kanishka was identified with Mithras but Wima Kadphises and Huvishka were closer to Shiva as shown by the images on their coins. Huvishka's coins provide a regular almanac of the iconography of the early Shiva cult. The deification of the ruler which was so prevalent in the Roman and Hellenistic world as well as among the Iranians was thus introduced into India and left a mark on the future development of Hindu Kingship.

Another feature of crucial importance for the future political development of India was the organization of the Shaka and Kushana Empires had been, but were based on the large-scale incorporation of local rulers. In subsequent centuries many regional Empires of India were organized on this pattern.

The most well-known contribution of the 'dark-period' was a course, to Indian art. After the early sculptures of the Mauryas which were greatly influenced by the Iranian style, a new Indian style, a new Indian style has first emerged under Shungas and their successors in the Buddhist monuments of Bharhut and Sanchi which particularly showed a new style of relief sculpture. The merger of the Gandhara school of art, with its Graeco-Roman style and the Mathura school of art which included 'archaic' Indian elements and became the center of Indo-Kushana art, finally led to the rise of the Sarnath school of art. This school then set the pattern of the classical Gupta style.

Less-well-known, but much more important for the future development of Hindu society, was the compilation of the authoritative Hindu law books (dharmaśāstra), the foremost of them being the code of Manu which probably originated in the second or third century AD. After the breakdown of the Maurya and Shunga Empires, there must have been a period of uncertainty, which led to renewed interest in traditional social norms. These were then codified so as to remain inviolate for all times to come. If we add to this the resurgence of Sanskrit, as testified by Rudradaman's famous rock inscription of the second century AD. We see that this 'dark-period' actually contained all the elements of the classical culture of the Gupta age, Thus the many splendored and much maligned 'dark-period' was actually the harbinger of the classical age.

### **POST-MAURYAN PERIOD (200 BC - 300 AD) ECONOMY AND SOCIETY**

In the post-Mauryan era (200 BC. To 300 A.D.) the economy moved at an accelerated tempo. Society witnessed structural reorientation as significant groups of foreigners penetrated into India and chose to be identified with the rest of the community.

The occupation of craftsmen was an important segment of the day's socio-economic milieu. The craftsmen were not only associated with the towns but also villages like Karimnagar in the Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh. The categories of craftsmen who were known in this period bear out the truth that there was considerable specialization in mining and metallurgy. A large number of iron artifacts have been discovered at various excavated sites relating to the Kushan and Satavahans Periods. It is surprising to notice that the Telengana region appears to have made special progress in iron artifacts - not only weapons but also balance rods, sickles, ploughshares, razors and ladles have been found in the Karimnagar and Nalgonda districts. Also, cutlery made out of iron and steel was exported to the Abyssinian ports.

Equally significant was the progress made in cloth-making and silk-weaving. Dyeing was a craft of repute in some south Indian towns like Uraiyur, a suburb of Tiruchirapalli, and Arikamedu. The use of oil was also high because of the invention of oil wheel. The inscriptions of the day mention weavers, goldsmiths, dyers, workers in metal and ivory, jewelers, sculptors, fishermen, perfumers and smiths as the donors of caves, pillars, tablets, cisterns etc. Among the luxury items the important ones were ivory and glass articles and bead cutting. At the beginning of the Christian era the knowledge of glass-blowing reached India and attained its peak. Coin minting also reached a high level of excellence made out of gold, silver, copper, bronze, lead and potin. A coin mould of the Satavahans period shows that through it half a dozen coins could be turned out at a time.

In urban handicrafts the pride of place goes to the beautiful pieces of terracotta produced in profuse quantities. They have been found in most of the sites belonging to the Kushan and Satavahans periods. In particular, terracotta figures of great beauty have been found in the Nalgonda district of Telengana. The terracotta figures were mostly meant for the use of upper classes in towns.

This immense manufacturing activity was maintained by guilds. At least to dozen kinds of guilds were there. Most of the artisans known from inscriptions hailed from the Mathura region and the western Deccan which lay on the trade routes leading to the ports on the western coast.

The guilds, coming from the days of the Mauryan period, became a more important factor in the urban life both in being instrumental to increase in production and moulding public opinion. The primary guilds of the day were those of the potters, metal workers and carpenters. Some guilds organized their own distribution system while owning a large number of boats to transport goods from various ports on the Ganges.

The guilds of the day fixed their own rules of work and the standards of the finished products. They exercised care regarding price also to safeguard the interest of both the artisan and the customer. They controlled the price of the manufactured articles. The conduct of the guild members was regulated through a guild court. The customary uses of the guilds had the same force as those of laws.

The extensive activity of the guilds can be known from their seals and emblems. The banners and insignia of each guild were carried in procession of festive occasions. These prosperous guilds in addition, donated large sums of money to religious institutions and charitable causes.

Since the activity of the guilds was so buoyant, it appears that they attracted the attention of kings too. It is said that kings had financial interests in guilds. Royalty invested its money in commercial activities. This naturally led to protection being provided by State to the guilds. Regarding the activities of guilds, it appears from inscriptions that they acted as bankers, financiers and trustees although these activities were carried out by a separate class of people known as sresthins. Usury was a part of banking and the general rate of interest was around 15% loans extended to sea-trade carried higher interest rate. An authority of the day states that the rate of interest should vary according to the caste of the man to whom money is lent.

Interestingly, apart from the guilds, there were workers bodies also. The workers co-

operative included artisans and various crafts associated with a particular enterprise. The classic example of this activity was the co-operative of builders, which has its members drawn from specialized workers such as architects, Engineers, bricklayers etc. The immense commercial activity was bolstered by the thriving trade between India and the Eastern Roman Empire. With the movement of Central Asian people like Sakas, Parthians and Kushans, trade came to be carried across the sea. Among the ports, the important ones were Broach and Sopara on the western coast, and Arikamedu and Tamralipti on the eastern coast. Out of these ports Broach was the most important as not only goods were exported from here but also goods were received. Across land, the converging point of trade routes was Taxila, which was connected with the Silk Route passing through Central Asia. Ujjain was the meeting point of good number of trade routes.

The trade between India and Rome mostly consisted of luxury goods. To begin with Rome got her imports from the southern most portions of the country. The Roman imports were Muslims, pearls, jewels and precious stones from Central and South India. Iron articles formed an important item of export to the Roman Empire. For certain articles India became the clearing house, as for example, silk from China because of impediments posed by the Parthian rule in Iran and the neighboring areas.

The Romans, in return, exported to India various types of potters found in excavations at places like Tamluk in West Bengal, Arikamedu near Pondicherry and a few other places. Probably lead was important from Rome. It is also presumed that the Kushans had brisk trade with the Romans as they conquered Mesopotamia in 115 A.D. At a place close to Kabul, glass jars made in Italy, Egypt and Syria have come to light, apart from small bronze statues of Greko-Roman style, And the most significant Roman export to India was the gold and silver coins - nearly 85 finds of Roman coins have been found. There is nothing surprising in the lamentation of the Roman writer Pliny in the 1st century A.D. that Roman was being drained of gold on account of trade with India.

Indian kingdoms sent embassies to Rome the best known being the one sent about 25 B.C. Which included strange collection of men and animals-tigers, snakes, tortoises a monk and an armless boy who could shoot arrows with his toes. This mission reached Rome during the days of Emperor Augustus in 21 B.C.

In the southern kingdoms maritime trade occupied the pride of place. The literature of the day refers to harbours, docks, light houses and custom offices. Large variety of ships were built, both for short distance as well as long distance voyages. According to Pliny the largest Indian ship was 75 tons. Other sources mention higher figures.

In the self-same period there was a boom in trade with south-East Asia. This was first occasioned by the Roman demand for spices. Gradually this trade grew in dimensions. The growing number of strangers in the port towns and trade centers led to their absorbing Indian habits as their numbers grew, social laws of the day became rigid as to be seen from the law code of Manu. Further as conversions to Hinduism was technically impossible the non-Indian groups gradually grew into separate sub-castes. After all the conversion of a single individual was a problem but the device of caste made such absorption easier. Moreover the foreigners found it easier to become Buddhists instead of Aryans. Faced one theoretical knowledge confined to Brahmins and the other practical and technical knowledge which became the preserve of the professionals.

It was during this period Dharmashastras came to be written. These Shastras made the social structure to be rigid. Apart from these writings poetry and drama were also popular. The outstanding poem in Tamil was Shilappadigaram. Another poem in Tamil was Manimegalai. In Sanskrit, Asvaghosa and Bhasa were the two great dramatists. The manuscripts of Asvaghosa were found in a monastery in Turdan in Central Asia. Both of his plays deal with Buddhist themes. Bhasa appeared a couple of centuries later. His plays are based on the incident from the spics or historical romances around the exploits of King Udayan in Avanti.

In the field of plastic art. Great were the achievement of this period like the stupas at

Sanchi and Barhut the caves at Karlelora and Ajanta. At Amravati the great age of painting began. Also the sculptures at Amravati show a mastery of stone sculpture and with the Mathura school of sculpture the Indian tradition of sculpture began.

The booming trade and commerce of the period was at the base of the urban settlements that came into existence. The important towns of northern India were Vaishali, Pataliputra, Varanasi, Kausambi, Sravasti, Hastinapur, Mathura and Indraprastha. Most of the towns flourished in the Kushan period as revealed by excavations. The excavations at Sonkh in Mathura show as many as seven levels of the Kushan but only one of the Gupta period. Again in Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Ropar also several sites show good Kushan structures. The Satavahana kingdom also witnessed thriving towns like Tagar, Paithan, Dhanyakataka, Amravati, Nagarjunakonda, Broach, Sopara, Arikamedu and Kaveripattanam.

## **Indo-Greeks, Sungas and Kushans**

### **OF Indo-Greeks**

After Alexander the Great, the Greek Seleucid dynasty of Persia held on to the trans-Indus region. After Seleukos Nikator was defeated by Chanragupta Maurya in 303 B.C. the trans-Indus region was transferred to the Mauryas. In mid third century B.C. the Seleucid rule was ended by two peoples. In Iran the Parthians became independent and their Sassanians in 226 A.D. In like manner the Greeks of Bactria rose in revolt under the leadership of Diodotus. These Greeks were later known as Indo-Greeks when they gained a foothold in the Indian sub-continent.

Bactria situated between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus, was a fertile region and it controlled the trade routes from Gandhara to the West. The Greek settlement in Bactria began in the 5th century B.C. when Persian emperors settled the Greek exiles in that area.

Bactria figured in history with the revolt of Diodotus against Antiochus the Seleucid king. This breakaway of Bactria was recognised by the Seleucids when the grandson of Diodotus, Euthydemus, was given a Seleucid bride in about 200 B.C.

About the same time the Seleucid king defeated King Subhagasena after crossing the Hindu Kush in 206 B.C. This defeat reveals the unguarded nature of northwestern India. Thus begins the history of Indo-Greeks. The history of the Indo-Greeks is mainly gathered from their coins. This evidence is very often confusing because many kings had identical names.

The son of Euthydemus, Demetrius, conquered modern southern Afghanistan and the Makran area he also occupied some parts of Punjab. Then around 175 B.C. the homeland of Bactrians came to be ruled by Eukratides, another branch of the Bactrians. His son Demetrius-II penetrated deep into the Punjab proceeding along the Indus, he penetrated till Kutch.

The most known Indo-Greek was Menander, whose claim rests on the Buddhist treatise the Questions of King Milinda - discussion between Menander and the Buddhist philosopher, Nagasena and he ruled the Punjab from c. 160 to 140 B.C.

Menander not only stabilized his power but extended his frontiers. His coins are to be found in the region extending from Kabul to Mathura near Delhi. He attempted to conquer the Ganges valley but in vain. Probably he was defeated by the Sungas.

After Menander one Strato ruled. At that time Bactria was ruled by a different group of Bactrians. Probably Mithradates - I of Persia annexed the region of Taxila during the third quarter of the second century B.C.

A little later, Antialkidas ruled from Taxila as known from the inscription from Besnagar near Bhilsa. This inscription was incised on the order of Heliodoros, who was the envoy of Antialkidas in the court of Besnagar. Heliodoros got a monolithic column built in honour of Vasudeva. Thus began the Bhakti cult of Vasudeva.

The last known Greek kings were Hippostratos and Hermaeus, the former defeated by Moga

and the latter by khadphesus.

Indo-Greek influence declined from the time Bactria itself was attacked by the nomadic tribes from central Asia, the scythians.

The penetration of Indo-Greeks, as well as of sakas pahlavas and Kushana influenced the government, society, religion literature and art of ancient India. The very fact that India absorbed influences of these foreigners speaks for the then youthful nature of Indian civilization.

The extent of Greek influence of Indian Civilisation is a most point. Whatever the Greek influence that was felt by India came in the wake of Alexander's invasion of the east and the settlement of Greeks in the Bactrian region. Alexander himself cannot be regarded as the standard bearer of the heritage of ancient Greece. By the time Alexander and his soldiers marched towards the east the culture of Greece was on the decline hence at the most Alexander and his men could have spread a debased version of the great Greek civilization represented by Socrates, Plato, Phidia, Aristotle, Sophocles, Pythagoras and others. Despite the fact that Alexander and his men could not be the true torch bearers of Greek culture to the east, the traces of Greek influence could be definitely found on India civilization.

Talking of social life, a number of Greeks figure as donors in the inscription of the Karle caves. The Greek mode of wearing hair and the habit of eating in a lying posture came into vogue. Also when some of the Indo-Greeks settled in India, they took to trade and they became affluent merchants. Even Tamil literature refers to Greek ships bringing cargoes, and the Greek section of Kaveripatnam was very prosperous. And some of the Tamil kings kept Greek body-guards.

Regarding science, contemporary writers admit the greatness of the Greek scientists. The Gargi Samhita admits that the Greeks were like gods in science and they penetrated into India as far as Pataliputra. Varahmihira, during the Gupta age was in the know of Greek science and used a number of Greek technical terms in his works, It is also argued that Charaka was influenced by the works of Hippocrates, the father of Medicine, but there is not evidence to confirm this view. Thus it is difficult to conjecture the extent to which ancient scientists of India were influenced by the scientific knowledge of Greeks.

In the field of art, first the Indo-Greeks did contribute to die cutters' art. They showed a remarkable skill in making the portraits of rulers. Also the Greek kings adopt some of the indigenous methods of minting the coins. Although Indians did not fully learn the fine art of die-cutting, the coins of Indian rulers were influenced by the Greeks. Indian adopted the art of striking coins with two dies, the obverse and the reverse. Secondly, the curious open air theatre that came into being in this period was directly a Greek legacy. The term Yavanika for curtain shows that Indian drama, at least on one point, was influenced by the Greek model, Thirdly, the Greek form of sculpture influenced the Gandhara art of the Kushan period. The school began in the Kabul valley where the Greek influence was the maximum. Accordingly tone author, the terracottas of toys and plaques were all influenced by the Greeks.

In the religious field too, the Greek influence was felt, as borne out by Millinda-Panho and the Besnagar inscription. Legions of Greeks were converted into Indian religions of the day. One Greek officer, Theodorus, got the relics of the Buddha enshrined in the Swat valley. Besides, Hindu iconography was greatly changed because of the Indo-Greek influences. It is difficult to say how many Babylonian and Iranian Gods were incorporated in Hindu religions. A few deities were taken over by the Parthians and they were adopted by the Kushans. But it is doubtful to say as to which of the Greek deities were incorporated in the Pantheon of Indian gods.

All told, the Greek influence was mostly felt in art (the Gandhara sculptures, which probably influenced the later day Mathura sculptures) and in religion (gave a fillip to Mahayana Buddhism and popularized the Bhakti aspect of religion as pioneered by the vasudeva cult).

**SUNGAS**

The Sunga rule, extending a little over a century, is an interlude in the history of India. There is nothing extraordinary about the political events associated with the Sungas. The significance of their history, on the other hand, primarily consists in the place they occupy in the social and cultural history of India.

The founder of the dynasty, Pushyamitra Sunga, overthrew the Mauryas; either in 187 B.C. or 184 B.C. After him there were nine other rulers. Among them, Agnimitra, Vasumitra, Bhagvata and Devabhumi were the prominent ones. The names of the first two were associated with some events in political history, whereas the latter two were known for their long rule, they being 32 and 10 years respectively.

There is some controversy about the identity of Pushyamitra Sunga. It was stated in a Sutra that he belonged to a family of teachers. Patanjali claims that he was a brahmin of the Bhardwaja gotra. Iyavadata stated that the Sungas were related to the Mauryas. A Malavikagnimitram refers to them as brahmins belonging to Kashyap gotra.

After the overthrow of Brihadrata, Pushyamitra Sunga waged a few wars to consolidate his position. Evidence shows that Pushyamitra Sunga defeated the Yavanas. This is confirmed by Patanjali's Mahabhashya. And the claim made in the Hathigumpha inscription that Kharavela of Kalinga defeated Pushyamitra Sunga cannot be sustained because Kharavela ruled in the second half of the first century B.C. Later, Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra Sunga, defeated the Yavanas. This is confirmed by the Malavikagnimitram and Gargi Samhita. Both Agnimitra and Veerasena fought against Vidarbha rule of the Sungas ended c. 75 B.C.

Some scholars regard that the establishment of Sunga dynasty was symbolic of the brahminical reaction to the Mauryan bias towards Buddhism. Pushyamitra Sunga performed the vedic sacrifices of asvamedha, and the others like Agastya, Rajasuya and Vajpeya. But some facts of his reign clearly show that he did not persecute Buddhists. The claim of Iyavadata, that Pushyamitra Sunga destroyed 84,000 Buddhist stupas and slaughtered 80,000 Brahmins, has no corroborative evidence. Interestingly, the sculptured stone gateway and the massive stone railing around the Sanchi stupa were executed during the time of Pushyamitra Sunga. Also the Bharhut stupa and the sculpture relating to Jataka stories around it came into existence during the same period. One of the donors of Bharhut stupa was Champadevi wife of the Idisha King, who was a worshipper of Vishnu. This fact bears testimony to the high degree of tolerance prevailing during the period. (And some minor works of Sunga art are to be found at Mathura, Kausambi and Sarnath).

If at all there was anything like persecution of Buddhists during the days of Pushyamitra Sunga, it could be in the context of Menander's invasion. Maybe, the Buddhists of India welcomed the invasion of Menander and this might have resulted in Pushyamitra Sunga's wrath falling on the Buddhists. Or, maybe withdrawal of royal patronage with the coming of the Sungas apparently enraged the Buddhists and thus the Buddhist writers present an exaggerated account of their troubles.

The importance of the Sungas, therefore, was primarily in the context of cultural and social development. In the social field, the emergence of Hinduism had a wide impact. The Sungas attempted to revive the caste system with the social supremacy of the brahmins. This is more than evident in the work of Manu (Manusmriti) wherein he reassures the position of the brahmins in the fourfold society. Even then, the most significant development of the Sunga era was marked by various adjustments and adaptations leading to the emergence of mixed castes and the assimilation of the foreigners in India society. Thus we notice that Brahminism gradually transformed itself in a direction towards Hinduism.

In the field of literature Sanskrit gradually gained ascendancy and became the language of the court. Patanjali was patronized by Pushyamitra Sunga and he was the second great grammarian of Sanskrit. Patanjali refers to a Sanskrit poet, Vararuchi, who wrote in the Kavya style and which was later perfected by Kalidasa. Some Buddhist works of this age were written in Sanskrit.

In the field of art, there was immediate reaction against the Buddhist era of the Mauryas.

Nevertheless, there were certain differences. The Sunga art reflects more of the mind, culture, tradition and ideology than what the Mauryan art did. During the Sunga period, stone replaced wood in the railings and the gateways of the Buddhist stupas as noticed at Bharhut and Sanchi. Bharhut stupa is replete with sculptures - apart from floral designs, animal, figures, Yakshas and human figures. Even the stone railing around the Sanchi Stupa is in rich relief work. This age definitely witnessed the increasing use of symbols and human figures in architecture. Besides, the Sungas art is a manifestation of popular artistic genius - the artistic activity was because of the initiative of individuals, corporations or villages. A part of the gateway of Sanchi was constructed by the artisans of Vidisha. Even temple building began in this period. A Vishnu temple was built near Vidisha. There was an increase in the construction of rock-cut temples as noticed in the Chaitya Hall. In the temples and household worship we find the idols of Shiva and Vishnu.

All that the importance of the Sunga dynasty lies in the restoration of Realpolitik while abandoning the Asokan approach. In the cultural field the beginnings as well as accomplishments in sculpture and architecture are of tremendous significance. In the field of religion too they not only revived the earlier tradition but also gave an impetus to new approaches combative towards the heterodox sects the cult of Katakana the god of war the resurgence of Bhagvata cult and the supremacy of Vasudeva in the Hindu pantheon.

## **KUSHANS**

In the post-Mauryan era, central Asia and north-western India witnessed hectic and shifting political scenes. The Great Yuehi-chi driven out of fertile land in Western China migrated towards the Aral Sea. There they encountered the Sakas near Syr Darya river and evicted them. The Great Yuehi-Chi tribes settled in the valley of Oxus and with the occupation of the Bactrian lands the great hordes were divided into five principalities. A century later the Kushan section or sect of Yuehi-Chi attained predominance over the others. Their leader was Kadphises. Thus began the history of Kushans.

The unique geographical position of the Kushans empire made it a colossus astride on the spine of Asia uniting the Greco-Roman civilization in the west the Chinese civilization in the east and Indian civilisation in the south-east.

The leader of the Kushans was Kadphises and his rule probably began in 40 A.D. He attacked the regions south of Hindu Kush, conquered Kabul and annexed Gandhara including the kingdom of Taxila. Kadphises died in 77 A.D. or 78 A.D. By then the Kushans had supplanted the princes belonging to the Indo-Greek Saka and Indo-Parthian communities along the frontiers of India. The successor of Kadphises was Vima-Kadphises. He conquered large parts of northern India. His coins show that his authority extended as far as Banaras and as well as the Indus basin. In all likelihood his power extended as far as Narbada and the Saka satraps in Malwa and Western India acknowledged his sovereignty. By that time the Chinese reasserted their authority in the north and this led to a collusion with the Kushans. The Chinese general Pan-Chao conquered Chinese Turkistan and established the Chinese authority in Parthia that is on the territory south of the Caspian sea. These advances frightened the Kushans. In 87 AD Kadphises II, claimed the hand of a Chinese princess, an acknowledgement of his equality with the son of Heaven. The proposal was rejected and Kadphises, dispatched a large army, but the army was decimated because of the difficult terrain. And it was easily defeated by the Chinese. The Kushan ruler was compelled to pay tribute to China and the Chinese records so that the Kushans continued to send missions to China till the close of the century. Possibly the reign of Kadphises II ended c. 110 A.D.

The next ruler, Kanishka probably belonged to the little Yuehi-chi section of the horde. His capital was Purushapura and here he erected a large number of Buddhist buildings. In his early years he annexed Kashmir and consolidated his rule in the Indus and the Gangetic basin. His army crossed the Pamirs and inflicted a defeat on the Chinese. The chief of Khotan, Yarkand and the Kshghar were made to pay tribute. Tradition states that while

Kanishka was on his return from the Chinese Turkistan, he was soothered to death by his officers who had got weary of his campaigns. Most of his time was spent on waging wars. A large number of inscriptions were incised during the times of Kanishka and his successor. According to evidence, Kanishka became an active patron of the Buddhist Church during the later part of his reign. Although the Buddhist records gloat over this fact and regard him as the second Asoka, his coins prove that he honoured a medley of gods - Zoroastrian, Greek, Mitraic, and Indian. The prominent Indian deity on the coins was Shiva. The peculiar assembly of deities by the Kushans offers a great deal of speculation. May be Kanishka followed a loose form of Zoroastrianism and freely venerated the deities of other creeds. Also, Kanishka convened a council of Buddhist theologians to settle disputes relating to Buddhist faith and practices. The conclusions of this council were engraved on copper sheets and preserved in the stupa of the capital. The delegates to the council primarily belonged to the Hinayana sect.

The Buddhism of this period was definitely a lax one. The Mahayana sect was popular. But early Buddhism was an India product and was based on the Indian ideas of rebirth, transmigration of souls and the blessedness of escape from the pains of being. This Buddhism was supported by a practical system of ethics inculcating a stoic devotion to duty for its own sake. Such a teaching needed fundamental changes to attract the sturdy mountaineer, the nomad horseman and the Hellenized Alexandrian. The veneration for a dead teacher passed into a worship of living saviour.

Soon the Kushan power declined. Within the Kingdom, harm was done to the Kushan Empire by the Nagas and Yaudheyas. A Naga ruler probably performed ten ashvamedha sacrifices. Apart from these two communities, a few other tribes also, like the Malavas and the Kunindas, probably regained their importance at the expense of the Kushan empire. Apart from the weaknesses to the successors of Kanishka, developments in the Persia influenced the history of North western India. The Parthians were overthrown by Artashir in 226 A.D. who established the Sassanian dynasty. His successors annexed Peshawar and Taxila during the middle of the 3rd century. And Kushan kings in the north-west became the vassals of the Sassanians. The successors of Kanishka, as established today, are the following : Vashiska (102-106), Huvishka (106-138), and Vasudeva (c. 152-176). The history after this period is extremely vague. Over the ruins of the empire, in Central Asia and the west, rose the Sassanian empire of Persia and in India. The Gupta empire. Speaking in general about the achievement of the Kushans, the first is the economic prosperity. As the Kushan empire was situated in a crucial geographical region. There was brisk trade. Moreover, the very area covered by the Kushan empire helped the flow of trade between the east and the west. Some trade routes which came into existence in this period continued to serve the future also. Gold coins of great complexity were issued by the Kushans.

These coins speak of the prosperity of the people. The coins of Kanishka usually show the figure of Kanishka standing and sacrificing at altar, and on the obverse, deities belonging to various religions. The coins of the Kushans also show that the Kushans were in contact with the Romans - the weight of the Kushan coins has certain similarities with the Roman coins. According to the author of the Periplus gold and silver species were imported at Barygaza (Broach).

As regards art and literature, we have to state that their greatest contribution was the Gandhara art. It was in this period that the stone images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattavas were carved out. The chief of quality of this art is the blending of Buddhist subjects with Greek forms. Images of the Buddha appear in the likeness of Apollo, and the Yakshakuber is posed in the fashion of Zeus. The imprint of this school of art is still to be found in Mathura and Amarvati. Indeed, the carving of images and the building of temples was not neglected in earlier days, but under the Kushans they attained a refinement. The Chaitya built at Peshawar was as high as four storeys. Fa-Hien, passing through Gandhara, during the fifth century, praised the images of the Buddha, Bodhisattavas and numerous

other deities. The early rulers fostered the Hellenistic art of Gandhara and also the Bhikshu Bela, and from this place artistic products were sent to Sarasvati and Sarnath. Kanishka was a great builder - tower at Peshawar, a new city in Taxila, a town in Kashmir and fine buildings and sculptures at Mathura. It was at the last place a portrait stature of Kanishka has been found but its head is not there. Further, the die-engravers employed by the Kushans were far from negligible. A special note is to be taken of coinage. The Kushan coins became the prototypes for many varieties of coins of Yadheyas, the imperial Guptas, some kings of Nepa and several Kings of Chedi. Eminent Buddhist writers - Nagajuna, Asvaghosha and Vasumitra were the names associated with Kanishka. The first was a poet, musician, scholar and a zealous Buddhist monk. Charaka was the court physician of Kanishka.

## **Satavahana**

### **ORIGIN :**

- (a) Aitrareya Brahmana puts the Adhras beyond the pale of Aryanism.
- (b) Nasik Prasasti lays claim to Gautmi as a brahamana.
- (c) Puranas called them their services to Aryanism they were - admitted to the Aryan folk after their services to Aryanism - there is a reference to them in the Asoka inscriptions as well as by Megasthenes.
- (d) Some call them Brahmins - some, mixed Brahmins of Naga origin, and some, protectors of Brahmins,
- (e) Numismatic evidence points to the origin in Western Deccan and Madhya Pradesh. Epigraphic and literary evidence points to their western origin - the figure of the founder of the dynasty is found in paition in western Deccan.
- (f) Epigraphic evidence refers to them as Satavahanas, not as Andhras.
- (g) Possibly, Andhra is the Tribal name : Satavahana, the dynastic name, and satakarni, the Surname.

### **SOURCES :**

- (a) Puranas - mention 30 kings,.
- (b) Aitrareya Brahmina.
- (c) Literary sources -- Gunadhya's Brihatkatha. And Leelavati, which deals with the military exploits of Hala.
- (d) Nasik inscription of Gautami Balsari.
- (e) Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela for inferring the date of the first ruler.
- (f) Sanchi inscription extent of the Satavahanas kingdom till Malwa.

### **CHORONOLOGY:**

- (a) The founder was one Simukha - probably the first century B.C. - supplanted the lingering Sunga and Kanva rulers - rule of the dynasty was for 300 years. Simuka was succeeded by Krishna or Kanha.
- (b) The next known king was Satakarni - the kingdom expanded - probably defeated by

Kharavela - performed Ashvamedha Pratishthana was the capital - confusion after him. Kshaharatas or sakas occupied parts of Maharashtra.

(c) Hala is the 17th in the list of Puranas - his book is saptasataka - deals with both erotic and philosophical themes. Gundhaya's Brihatkatha deals with the rivalry between Prikrit and Sanskrit.

(d) Beginning from 25 A.D. to 75 A.D. there was confusion - saka eruption.

(e) The greatest ruler was Gautamiputra Satakarni. He was the 23rd according to Puranas - around 72 A.D. the Nasik inscription of his mother talks of his being the destroyer of Sakas, Yavanas and Kshaharata - also says that he crushed the pride of Kshatriyas - overran Konkan, Saurashtra, Bihar and Malva. A Philanthropist, he maintained Arya Dharma - put an end to Varna - Sankara - some regard him to be Vikramaditya. Built the city of Banavasi and assumed the titles of Raja Raja and Svamin.

(f) The next known ruler was Pulumayi II around 96 A.D. - first ruled Andhra country - Vijayanti and Amaravati famous cities - Satavahanas a naval power - probably overseas colonisation - large number of inscriptions.

(g) The next known ruler was Vasishtiputra Satakarni of Sri Pulumayi - married the daughter of Rudradaman, a Saka ruler -- however Rudradaman twice defeated him. Also, Sri Pulumayi lost to Chastana, son of Bhosmotika.

(h) Next known ruler was Yajna Sri Satakarni - around 160 A.D. - Malva, Kathiawad and North Konkan - inscription found in Konkan and Krishna - coins found in Gujarat and Kathiawad - defeated Kshatrapas.

(i) After the declined Salankeyanas ruled over the Satavahana territory.

**Significance:**

(1) The Very area over which they ruled was important connecting link between northern and southern India - Andhras were instrumental in spreading Aryan culture to the south.

(2) Their colonizing activities spread to South-East Asia - influence of Amaravati sculptures on South-East Asian sculptures.

(3) They did maintain contact between India and the Western world in matters of trade.

(4) They were instrumental in curbing the penetration of Sakas further into south.

(5) Some of the later southern dynasties like Ikshvakus, Kadambas, Tarikutakas and Abhiras continued the Satavahana tradition and the Pallavas and the Chalukyas claimed the tradition of Satavahanas.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

The government of the Satavahana kingdom was organized on the traditional lines. The kingdom was divided into Janapadas, which were further sub-divided into aharas. Each ahara was under an Amataya. The basic unit of the ahara was the grama with the village headman called gamika. Central control was maintained over the provinces. Princes were generally made viceroys. And the kings did not assume high-sounding titles. They were expected to maintain dharma.

Taxation was not burdensome. The state derived its income from crown lands, court fees, fines and ordinary taxes on lands. The extraordinary taxes of the Mauryan period were not

imposed. In general, Central control was not high because feudal traits emerged in the Satavahana period. The feudal chiefs like maharathas mahasenapatis and mahabhojas issued their own coins.

The area under the satavahanas in general witnessed considerable prosperity. There was brisk trade. Broach was the most important port and it had a vast and rich hinterland. Pratishthana produced cotton cloth. Tagara and Ujjain produced muslin. The chief imports were wines, copper, tin, lead and gold and silver coins. Another important port was kalyan mentioned in the Perilus. The other ports were Sopara, Goa and pigeon islands. Within the kingdom there were important cities like Tagara, Prathishthana, Nasik, Junnar and Dhanyakataka. Koddura and Chinnaganjam were the important ports on the east. The general life led by the people was similar to the one portrayed in Vatsayana's Kama-Sutra. Evidence also shows that a good number of people emigrated from the Deccan to colonize the regions in South-East Asia

The Satavahanas and Shiva were worshipped. Saptasataka reveals the worship of many Hindu deities. Vaishnavism and Shavism grew popular. Gautamiputra-Satakarni claimed himself to be the protector of brahmins. The Naisk prasasthi states that Varnashrama Dharmawas maintained.

Buddhism too was popular. Both the sakas and Satavahanas encouraged Buddhism. Ushavadata made several grants to Buddhist monks. Some of these grants were renewed by Guatamiputra Satakarni. Buddhist monuments and stupas came into existence at Nasik, Vidisa, Bhattiprolu, Goli, Ghantasala and Amaravati. It was at the last place that most probably human figures were carved out for the first time. And the stupa at this place had a marble railing with relief sculptures. A vaijayanti merchant was responsible for enriching Karle and Kanheri Buddhist caves. Merchants from Nasik contributed to the caves at Vidisa and Bharhut. In brief cave architecture and building of stupas witnessed certain development under the auspices of the satavahanas; and the donations or the merchants belonging to the guilds prove the commercial prosperity of the area.

Encouraged by wealth the kings patronized literature and architecture. Hala was an authority on the Puranas. He was the author of Sapta-Sataka. It is said that Hala paid as much as 40 million pieces of gold for four kavyas. Leelavati deals with the military campaigns of Hala.

The kings encouraged architecture. The five gateways at Sanchi the rock-cut Chaity-halls of Bhaja, Karle, Nasik and Kanheri and the stupas at Amaravati, Bhattiprolu, Goli and Ghantasala were built in this period. The capitals of the pillars in Karle caves are elaborately sculptured. The dome and the base of the Amaravati stupa is elaborately sculptured. Jataka stories were incised on marble slabs. The upper part of the dome is a beautiful floral design. It is generally said that its construction began during the time of Gautamiputra Satakarni and was completed during the time of Yajna Sri Satakarni. Most probably two Ajanta Frescoes (9th and 10th) came into existence during this period.

The satavahanas were great excavators of cave temples and the magnificent temples of Ellora and Ajanta were the continuation of the Satavahana tradition to which all Middle Indian dynasties in succeeding ages claimed historic relationship. The basic tradition in Middle India is of the Satavahana empire. As in the north it is of the Mauryan. From the point of view of historic continuity it is important to remember this primary fact as up to quite recent times the traditions flowing from the satavahanas were living factors in Indian history.

### **Administration**

The Satavahana administration was very simple and was according to the principle laid down in Dharmashastras. The king laid no claim of divine right. They had only the most modest title of rajan. They had no absolute power. Their power was checked in practice by customs and shastras. The king was the commander of war and of threw himself into the thickest of the fray.

A peculiar feature of the Satavahana administration was the presence of feudatories of

different grade. The highest class was that of petty princes bearing the kingly title raja and striking coins in their own names. Next in rank was the maharathi and mahabhoja. Both titles from the beginning were hereditary and restricted to a few families in a few localities. Probably mahabhoja ranked higher than that of maharathi.

The mahabhojas were the feudatories of Satavahanas. They were primarily located in western Deccan. They were related by blood to the feudatory maharathi. It is definitely known that the maharathis were the feudatories of Satavahanas. They also granted in their own name villages with physical immunities attached to them. The maharathis of the chitaldrug enjoyed the additional privilege of issuing coins in their own name.

Towards the close of the Satavahana period two more feudatories were created Mahasenapathi and them mahataralavara.

Barring districts that were controlled by feudatories, the empire was divided into janapadas and aharas, the latter corresponding to modern districts. The division below that of ahara was grama. Non-hereditary governors were subject to periodical transfers. There were other functionaries like great chamberlain store-keepers treasurers and dutakas who carried royal orders.

The government lived from hand to mouth. The taxes were neither heavy nor many. The sources of income were proceeds from the royal domain, salt monopoly ordinary and extraordinary taxes both soldiers and officials were paid in kind. The Satavahana administration was very simple and was according to the principle laid down in Dharmashastras. The king laid no claim of divine right. They had only the most modest title of rajan. They had no absolute power. Their power was checked in practice by customs and shastras. The king was the commander of war and of threw himself into the thickest of the frays.

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**Importance:**

(1) It was the emergence of Vakataka power in the Vindhya area some where about the middle of the third century that brought about the downfall of the Satavahanas. But an empire so firely established in its home domains does not break down with the fall of a dynasty. The Rastrakutas and the Chalukyas in the Godavari valley and the Pallavas in the south originally the viceroys of the Satavahanas, claimed successtion to the empire with in their own territorial limits as the Vakatakas claimed it to the north of the Vindhyas. The Gangas and the Kadambas were also the inheritors of the tradition and as the Vijayanagar emperors claimed in time to be Chalukya Chudamanis, or the crest jewels of the Chalukya

dynasty and as the great kings of Gujarat equally claimed succession from the Chalukyas, the imperial tradition of the Satavahanas may be said to have been carried forward at least to the beginning of the seventeenth century.

(2) The rise of the Satavahanas signified that the economic revolution of the Gangetic region was repeated all over India. Added to this because of the peculiar geographical terrain of the Deccan peninsula a number of small kingdoms came into existence but not any big empire.

(3) Since the Satavahanas had controlled part of the Deccan and part of northern India, they acted as the couriers of Aryanism to southern India.

(4) It is intriguing to note that the Satavahana inscriptions were primarily in Pali but not in Sanskrit indicating it took long time to establish Sanskrit language as the language of the elite although people professed Aryanism much earlier.

(5) The administrative structure of the Satavahana is a revealing one because it was not a highly centralized administration and it conceded the emergence of feudalism. Feudal chiefs like Mahara this mahasenapatis and mahabhojas issued their own coins.

(6) The artistic excellence that was achieved under the aegis of the Satavahanas had a tremendous significance. Buddhist monuments came into existence at Nasik, Vidisha, Bhattiprolu, Goli, Ghantasala and Amaravati. Most probably human figure was first carved out at Amaravati and Amaravati's sculptures influenced South-east Asian sculptures.

(7) Under the aegis of the Satavahanas trade was given a boost. The important ports were Koddura and Chinnaganjam on the east and Kalyan, Sopara, Goa and Pigeon islands on the West coast. And some of the important commercial centers were Tagara, Pratishthana, Nasik, Junnar and Dhanyakataka.

## **Gupta and Post-Gupta Period**

### **Before the Guptas**

When the last of the Mauryan kings was assassinated in 184 BC, India once again became a collection of unfederated kingdoms. During this period, the most powerful kingdoms were not in the north, but in the Deccan to the south, particularly in the west. The north, however, remained culturally the most active, where Buddhism was spreading and where Hinduism was being gradually remade by the Upanishadic movements, which are discussed in more detail in the section on religious history. The dream, however, of a universal empire had not disappeared. It would be realized by a northern kingdom and would usher in one of the most creative periods in Indian history.

### **The Gupta Dynasty (320-550)**

Under Chandragupta I (320-335), empire was revived in the north. Like Chandragupta Maurya, he first conquered Magadha, set up his capital where the Mauryan capital had stood (Patna), and from this base consolidated a kingdom over the eastern portion of northern India. In addition, Chandragupta revived many of Asoka's principles of government. It was his son, however, Samudragupta (335-376), and later his grandson, Chandragupta II (376-415), who extended the kingdom into an empire over the whole of the north and the western Deccan. Chandragupta II was the greatest of the Gupta kings; called Vikramaditya ("The Sun of Power"), he presided over the greatest cultural age in India.

This period is regarded as the golden age of Indian culture. The high points of this cultural creativity are magnificent and creative architecture, sculpture, and painting. The wall-paintings of Ajanta Cave in the central Deccan are considered among the greatest and most powerful works of Indian art. The paintings in the cave represent the various lives of the Buddha, but also are the best source we have of the daily life in India at the time. There are

forty-eight caves making up Ajanta, most of which were carved out of the rock between 460 and 480, and they are filled with Buddhist sculptures. The rock temple at Elephanta (near Bombay) contains a powerful, eighteen foot statue of the three-headed Shiva, one of the principle Hindu gods. Each head represents one of Shiva's roles: that of creating, that of preserving, and that of destroying. The period also saw dynamic building of Hindu temples. All of these temples contain a hall and a tower.

The greatest writer of the time was Kalidasa. Poetry in the Gupta age tended towards a few genres: religious and meditative poetry, lyric poetry, narrative histories (the most popular of the secular literatures), and drama. Kalidasa excelled at lyric poetry, but he is best known for his dramas. We have three of his plays; all of them are suffused with epic heroism, with comedy, and with erotics. The plays all involve misunderstanding and conflict, but they all end with unity, order, and resolution.

The Guptas tended to allow kings to remain as vassal kings; unlike the Mauryas, they did not consolidate every kingdom into a single administrative unit. This would be the model for later Mughal rule and British rule built off of the Mughal paradigm.

The Guptas fell prey, however, to a wave of migrations by the Huns, a people who originally lived north of China. The Hun migrations would push all the way to the doors of Rome. Beginning in the 400's, the Huns began to put pressure on the Guptas. In 480 they conquered the Guptas and took over northern India. Western India was overrun by 500, and the last of the Gupta kings, presiding over a vastly diminished kingdom, perished in 550. A strange thing happened to the Huns in India as well as in Europe. Over the decades they gradually assimilated into the indigenous population and their state weakened.

Harsha, who was a descendant of the Guptas, quickly moved to reestablish an Indian empire. From 606-647, he ruled over an empire in northern India. Harsha was perhaps one of the greatest conquerors of Indian history, and unlike all of his conquering predecessors, he was a brilliant administrator. He was also a great patron of culture. His capital city, Kanauj, extended for four or five miles along the Ganges River and was filled with magnificent buildings. Only one fourth of the taxes he collected went to administration of the government. The remainder went to charity, rewards, and especially to culture: art, literature, music, and religion.

Because of extensive trade, the culture of India became the dominant culture around the Bay of Bengal, profoundly and deeply influencing the cultures of Burma, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka. In many ways, the period during and following the Gupta dynasty was the period of "Greater India," a period of cultural activity in India and surrounding countries building off of the base of Indian culture. This medieval flowering of Indian culture would radically change course in the Indian Middle Ages. From the north came Muslim conquerors out of Afghanistan, and the age of Muslim rule began in 1100.

#### **DECLINE OF THE GUPTA EMPIRE**

The last great king of the Gupta was Skanda Gupta was ascended the throne about 455 A.D. Even during the later years of Kumar Gupta's reign, the empire was attacked by a tribe called Pushyamitra but it was repulsed, And immediately after the accession of Skanda Gupta, Hunas made inroads, but they too were repelled.

However, fresh waves of Invaders arrived and shattered the fabric of the Gupta Empire. Although in the beginning the Gupta king Skanda Gupta tried effectively to stem the march of the Hunas into India, his successors proved to be weak and could not cope with the Huna invaders, who excelled in horsemanship and who possibly used stirrups made of metal, Although the Huna power was soon overthrown by Yasodharman of Malwa, the Malwa prince successfully challenged the authority of the Guptas and set up Pillars of victory

commemorating his conquest (AD 532) of almost the whole of northern India. Indeed Yasodharman's rule was short lived, but he dealt a severe blow to the Gupta empire. The Gupta empire was further undermined by the rise of the feudatories. The governors appointed by the Gupta kings in north Bengal and their feudatories in Samatata or south-east Bengal broke away from the Gupta control. The later Gutpas of Magadha established their power in Bihar. Besides, the Maukharis rose to power in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and had their capital at Kanauj. Proably by AD 550 Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and passed out of gupta hands. And the rulers of Valabhi established their authority in Guajarat and Western Malw

#### ANOTHER CAUSE :

After the reign of Skanda Gupta (467 AD) any Gupta coin or inscription has been found in western Malwa and Saurashtra. The migration of guild of Silk weavers from Gujarata to Malwa in AD 473 and their adoption of non-productive professions show that there was not much demand for cloth produced by them. The advantages from Gujarat trade gradually disappeared. After the middle of the fifth century the Gupta kings made desperate attempts to maintain their gold currency by reducing the content of pure gold in it. The loss of western India complete by the end of the fifth century, must have deprived the Gutpas of the rich revenues from trade and commerce and crippled them economically, and the princes of Thaneswar established their power in Haryana and then gradually moved on to Kanauj.

The causes of the downfall of disappearance of the Guptas were basically not different from those that brought the end many ancient and medieval dynasties. Over and above the usual causes of administrative inefficiency, weak successors and stagnant the fall of the Guptas: dynastic dissensions, foreign inassions and some internal rebellions.

#### DYNSTIC DISSENSIONS AND WEAK RULERS :

There is evidence to show that following the death of Kumaragupta and Skandagupta, there were civil wars and struggles for the throne. For instance, we have the successors of Buddhagupta, highlighting the rule of more than just one king. Those were Vinayagupta in Bengal and Bhanugupta in Iran.

Absence of law of primogeniture along with strong centralized authority in ancient and medieval periods led to chaos. Thus we see that the resources of the empire were frittered away in petty squabbles and wars for the throne.

Besides circumstances weakening the Gupta monarchy, the very personalities of the later Gupta Kings contributed to the ultimate fall of this dynasty. They were not only men of weak character but also some of them followed pacifies that affected other spheres of administration, particularly that of military efficiency.

#### FOREIGN INVASIONS:

Foreign invasions was the second major factor in the decline and disappearance of the Gutpas. The invasion of barbaric tribe Pushyamitra was not the decisive. A far more important invasion was that of the White Huns, who, after settling in the Oxus vally, invaded India. First appeared during the reign of Budhagupta. Again they reappeared under the command of Toramana who annexed a large portion of the north-western region including parts of Moder U.P. He followed by hisson, Mihirakula, who became the overlord of north India. Indeed he was defeated by Yashodharman of Malwa but the repercussions of these invasions were disastrous for the Gupta Empire.

#### INTERNAL REBELLIONS :

As a result of the weakning of Central Authoriy a number of feudal chieftans, principally those of the north-western region, assumed the status of independent rulers might more some names in this regard such as Maitrakas (of Kathiawar), Panivarajaks (of Budndhelkhand), Unchkalpas, Laxman in Allahabad. Etc.

After the reign of Buddhagupta, the status of certain, governors of North Bengal and Yamuna - Narmada area around Magadh too assumed independence and became to be known as the later Guptas.

By far one of the most important rebellions was that of Yashodharman of western Malwa who became independent and established his kingdom. He defeated Mihirakula and seems to have made extensive conquests from the Himalayas to Brahmaputra. However, his empire did not last very long. Nevertheless, it set a pattern for other feudal chieftans, who in due course, broke away from Central authority.

Last but not the least, we might note that the change in the Gupta polity from one of militancy to that of pacifism greatly affected the composition of the empire. We do have instance some of the later Gupta kings who changed from Hinduism to Buddhism and this was reflected in the total military inefficiency of the later Guptas.

Apart from these three major groups of causes, that led to the final disappearance of the Gupta empire, it is to be borne in mind that no empire after the Mauryas was a reality. Very often they were total fictions. With the disappearance of the Mauryan empire no empire in its full connotation came into existence in India since we had no tradition like that of the Greeks where it is held that the State comes into existence for the necessities of life but continues to exist for the good of life, and man, by nature, is a political animal. Somehow, after the Mauryan era the thinking of India became apolitical. The first factor that contributed for this outlook of Indians was the emergence of feudalism about which evidence is there from the days of the Satavahanas. This tendency grew in the Christian era and was firmly established by the seventh century AD.

Along with this development one more saboteur of political consciousness was the religious perception of ancient Indians. Beginning before the Christian era it came to be gradually established that the kingship has its own dharma known as rajya-dharma while the people had a handful of dharmas like varnashrama dharma and the grihadharma. All these dharmas led the individual loyalty or perception towards a non-political entity. This thinking is given religious sanction by the priestly order. This thinking is given religious sanction by the priestly order of the day. Thus the State never was the architectonic factor in the life of ancient India except during the Mauryan era. It is this perception of ancient India that made the emergence and disappearance of hundreds of States mere non-events.

#### **POST-GUPTA PERIOD (500-750 A.D.)**

The political scene in India from the decline of the Guptas until the rise of Harsha was bewildering. Large scale displacement of peoples continued for some time. Small kingdoms vied with each other for the heritage of Guptas. Northern India was divided into four kingdoms of later Guptas of Magadha, the Maukharis, the Pushyabhutis and the Maitrakas. The Maukharis first held the region of western U.P. around Kanauj. Gradually they ousted the later Guptas and made them move to Malwa. The Pushyabhuti is ruled to Thaneshwar north of Delhi. They had a marriage alliance with the Maukharis. After the death of the last Maukhari king, probably the Maukhari kingdom and that of Pushyabhuti were united into one kingdom. Probably the Maitrakas were of Iranian origin and ruled in Gujarat. They developed Vallabhi as their capital which became an important center of learning. On the periphery of these four kingdoms a number of small principalities were continuously fighting with each other. All the kingdoms came into prominence after the Hun invasion since it left a political vacuum in northern India.

Although the political picture was discouraging, there were a few formative trends in this period. The Gupta imperial tradition seems to have continued. Numerous inscriptions of kings reveal that the kings claimed descent from the Gupta-Vakataka dynasties. In the same period even the character of the Hun invaders underwent change. Toramana was no savage but a Hinduised frontier king attacking a decaying empire. He ceased to be a foreigner. His successor, Mihirakula, was undoubtedly one of the known tyrants of history. Led by Baladitya Gupta, the last great monarch of the imperial dynasty, the rulers of north India combined to attack him and overthrow his power in a great battle of 528 A.D. The Hun dynasty ended with it.

After this event the kingdoms of the age carried on the traditions of the empire. In and around the Vindhyas the Vakatakas ruled with effective authority. In the Gangetic valley the

Maukhari kings consolidated their rule. True, the imperial tradition was under eclipse, but the country, as a whole was peaceful and prosperous and it was not subject to anarchical disruption.

The university of Nalanda flourished in the sixth century. Saintly Sthiramati was its head in the middle of the sixth century. Dharmapala, who extended his patronage to the university in the latter half of the century was an eminent scholar. As a matter of fact, Nalanda witnessed its golden period in this period.

It is also to be kept in mind that classical Sanskrit reached its perfection in the sixth century. Bharavi, Kumaradasa and Dandin among the poets and Vishkhadatta among the dramatists lived in the sixth century A.D. Some historians ascribe the development of Indian mathematics and astronomy to the sixth century. Varahamira is said to have died in 587 A.D. Aryabhata was born in 476.

It can equally be said that philosophy, logic and mimamsa matured during this period. Buddhist and Hindu systems of logic witnessed their golden age. It is also noteworthy that vernacular literatures began to grow. Prakrit evolved into a literary language possessing its own grammars. It was this development that enabled Rajasekhara and other to create classical literature of Prakrit in the next century.

Thus the old view that the sixth century was a period of anarchy and the age of Harsha that followed it was the last glow of ancient period, cannot be sustained. On the other hand the sixth century was a germinal period which sowed the seeds of later developments.

### **Places of Ancient India**

1. AIHOLE near Badami with rock cut and structural temples of Western Chalukya period, is famous for the temples of Vishnu, Lakshmi and Durga. It furnishes examples of a well developed Deccan style of architecture. The other three styles of ancient India being Nagar Dravidian and Vesara. It is also famous for its inscription or Prasasti composed by Ravikirti, the court poet of Pulakesin II. This prasasti mentions the defeat of Harsha by the Chalukya king, Pulakesin II, a rare event of a Northern emperor or ruler being defeated by a ruler south of Narmada.
2. ACHICHHATRA identified with modern Ramnagar in Bareilly district of U.P. was the capital of North Panchala in the first half of first millennium B.C. Excavation shows that it had moats and ramparts around it, it has revealed terracottas of the Kushan period, and also remarkable series of coins of second century A.D. Its importance lies in the fact that it was on the important ancient Indian northern trade route linking Taxila and Indraprastha with Kanyakubaj and Sravasti, Rajgriha and Pataliputra indicating that trade could be one of the reasons for its prominence.
3. AJANTA near Aurangabad (Maharashtra), is famous for wonderful Buddhist caves, and also paintings probably executed only by the Buddhist monks. Paintings of exceptional skill belong to the period between 2nd century B.C. and 7th Century A.D. One of the cave walls depicts the reception of a Persian mission in the Chalukya court of Pulakesin II indicating cultural and commercial contacts with the Persian empire.
4. ANUPA in Narmada valley mentioned in the Nasik inscription (dated 115 A.D.) of Gautami Balasri, mother of the Satvahana ruler Sri Satakarni (Circa 72-95 A.D.) was conquered by the latter from the Sakas, and was a bone of contention for long between the Sakas and the Satvahanas. The Sakas were responsible for driving the Satvahanas into the south-eastern and western direction. In other words, Anupa signifies the earlier homeland of the Satvahanas.

5. APARNTAKA (Aparanta), identified with Konkan, i.e. North western region of the Deccan, was a bone of contention between the Sakas and the Satavahanas and is mentioned in Nasik Inscription (dated circa 155 A.D.) of Gautami Balasri. Gautamiputra Satakarni conquered it from the Sakas. According to the Mahavamsa, the third Buddhist council deputed Great elder Dharmarakshita to do missionary work in Aparantaka region. Literary evidence locates the Abhiras in this region, who probably were responsible for identifying Lord Krishna as the deity of cowherd and milk-maids.

In matters relating to trade and commerce it was famous for the production of cotton textiles in ancient times and acted, as the hinterland for the ancient ports of Bharukachchha and Sopara.

6. ARIKAMEDU near Pondicherry, known to the Periplus as Poduka, was a port of call in Sangam Times (200 B.C.) on the route of Malaya and China. Recent excavation during which a very rich treasure of Roman beads, glass and coins, and of Roman and South Indian Pottery were found have proved that it was once a prosperous settlement of Western trading people, including the Romans.

The favourable balance of Payments position enjoyed by India in its trade with Rome is amply revealed by the rich haul of Roman gold coins.

7. AYODHYA also known as A-yu-te or Abhur of Saketa on the river Saryu (Modern Ghaghra) in Faizabad district of U.P. was the earliest capital of the Kosala Janapada and was the seat of the epic hero, Rama. It is also known for its short Sanskrit inscription of King Dhandeva of Kosal (belonging probably to the first century B.C.) which refers to the conducting of two Asvamedha sacrifices by King Pushyamitra. From the economic view-point it was located on the important trade of Tamralipti-Rajagriha-Sravasti which passed via Ayodhya.

8. AMRAVATI near modern Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), is famous for its stupa and as an art center flourishing under the Satavahanas and the Pallavas. Second century works of art show mastery of stone sculpture. Amravati bas-reliefs have the representation of ancient Indian vehicles - the boat or the ship or the cart, and of a foreign mission (like the Ajanta cave paintings) of merchants being received by a king. In ancient times it was an important center of trade, and ships from here sailed to Burma and Indonesia.

It is maintained by some scholars that a human figure, for the first time, that a marble stone relief was executed.

9. ASIKA (Probably on the left bank of the river Krishna), is mentioned in the Nasik inscription (dated circa 115 A.D.) of Gautami Balasri, it was conquered by the Satavahana ruler Gautamiputra Satakarni (.....) The latter fact reveals that Gautamiputra Satakarni gained a stronger hold of southern India which proved beneficial because of the continuing Saka pressure even after his victory against the Sakas. King Kharavela of Kalinga also made a claim of its conquest.

10. AVANTI (western Malva) one of the 16 Janapadas of 6th century B.C. with its capital at Ujjain; struggled hard against Magadhan imperialism but in vain. According to Buddhist traditions, Asoka, the Mauryan ruler, served as the Viceroy of Avanti, while he was a prince.

Since Malwa region is important politically, and economically it became a bone of contention between the Sakas. And the Satavahanas, Rashtrakutas and Pratiharas in

ancient India. It is through this region that the important trade routes from eastern and western India passed via Ujjain to the important Western ports Bharukachchha (Broach) and Soparaka (Sopara).

11. ANGA one of the 16th Janapadas of 16th century B.C. lay to the east of Magadha with Champa, near Bhagalpur, as its capital. Some of the Anga monarchs, like Brahmadatta, appear to have defeated their Magadha contemporaries. Subsequently, however, Magadha emerged supreme leading to the establishment of the first empire of ancient India. In other words, the conquest of Anga by Magadha was one of the stepping stones for the Magadhan Empire.

12. BARHUT in central India is famous for Buddhist Stupa and stone railings which replaced the wooden ones in the Sunga period. Barhut sculptures depict the visit of King Ajatasatru to the Buddha. Barhut along with Sanchi and Bodh-Gaya represent the first organized art activity of the Indian people as a whole. Furthermore, all these clearly indicate the transition of sculpture from wood to stone.

13. BARYGAZA OR BHARUKACHCHA (Broach) was the oldest and largest northernmost entrepot on the mouth of the Narmada river in modern Maharashtra. It handled the bulk of the trade with western Asia (Jataka stories and the Periplus mention it). It was also one of the district headquarters of the Saka rulers. According to Jain traditions, it was the capital of the Saka empire. It was international trade that made Barygaza important in ancient India.

14. BARBARICUM was an important port in the Indus delta, receiving Chinese furs and silks through Bactria for export to the West. It added to the growing prosperity of India in the first century A.D.

15. BADAMI (MODERN NAME FOR VATAPI) in Bijapur district was founded by Pulkesin I as an early capital of the Western Chalukyas. It was a hill-fort and an exquisite cave temple of Lord Vishnu excavated during the rule of Mangalesh, the Chalukya ruler. Huen-tsang visited it.

16. BODH-GAYA situated six miles south of Gaya in Bihar on the western bank of the Nalanda river, was the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment. It was part of the Magadha Janapada.

17. BANAVASI (north Kanara in Karnataka) also known as Vijayanti, was the capital of the Kadambas who were defeated by the Chalukya king Kirtivarman during the last quarter of the 6th century A.D. According to the Ceylonese chronicles Ashoka sent a mission to Deccan with the Monk Rkshita who went as far as Banavasi.

18. BRAHMAGIRI in Chitaldurg district of Karnataka, is remarkable for its continuity of cultural heritage extending from Neolithic (stone-age culture) to megalithic (early historic culture-3rd century B.C. to 1st century B.C. with possible links with Mediterranean and Caucasian Megaliths) revealing ancestor worship and animism pointing to the practice of cist and pit burials. It is the site of one of the two minor rock edicts of Ashoka. These edicts suggest the possibility of Ashoka entering the Sangha as a full monk after two and a half years of his conversion to Buddhism.

19. BURZAHOM in Kashmir Valley near Srinagar, is associated with megalithic settlements (dating 2400 B.C.) where the people lived on a plateau in pits using tools and weapons of stone (axe) and bones. (The only other site which has yielded considerable bone implements is Chirand, 40 km. West of Patna on the northern bank of the Ganges and using coarse grey pottery. The information that we gather

from the two places, recently discovered, throws light on the proto-history of India).

20. BAMIYAN an important Buddhist and Gandhara Art center in Afghanistan in the early Christian centuries, has tall rock-cut Buddha statues. The ancient trade route linking north western India with China passed through it. It was the capital of the Hunas in the 5th and the 6th centuries A.D.

21. BELUR with a group of Hoysala monuments including the famous Chennakesava temple (built around 1117 A.D.) represents an art which applies to stone the technique of the ivory worker or the goldsmith.

22. CHIDAMBARAM a town in south Arcot district in Tamilnadu is famous for its great Hindu Siva Temple dedicated to Nataraja, i.e. Siva in his aspects of cosmic dance. The Nataraja sculptures are esteemed as the greatest specimens of sculpture in the world. Also, Chidambaram bears evidence to the birth as well as the development of Shaivism to begin with in southern Indian and its consequential spread to the whole of India.

23. CHEDI OR CHETI one of the 16 Janapadas of 6th century B.C. roughly corresponds to modern Bundelkhand and adjacent tracts. It lay near the Kanuna, its metropolis was Suktimati to Sottihivatinagar.

24. CAAMPA the capital city of the Anga Janapada on the border of Bengal was of great commercial importance in ancient times; for it was a river port from which ships would sail down the Ganges and the coast the south India, returning with jewels and spices which were much in demand in the North. By Mauryan times, with the eastward expansion of Aryan culture, Tamralipti replaced in importance. An interesting feature of this is the fact that a Hindu Kingdom with the same name came into existence in the mainland of South east Asia. Indeed it is difficult to say how exactly this name came to be transplanted in South-east Asia.

25. DASAPURA modern Mandasor in western Malwa, was disputed between the Sakas and the Satavahanas. Its famous Siva temple of the guild of Silk weavers, was built during the reign of Kumar Gupta I (414 A.D.-455 A.D.) the institution that is responsible for building the Siva temple indicates the climax of Indian trading and commercial activities in ancient India. It also reveals that manufacture of silk was no longer the secret monopoly of China and it had taken roots in India by the 5th century A.D.

26. DEVAKA modern Dokak in Nowgong district in Assam, a frontier country which paid tribute to Samudragupta claiming the payment of tribute by Kamarupa goes along with Devaka. However, it is to be borne in mind that Harisena's Prasasti is of doubtful historical validity. The one significant thing that is known is the fact that no ruler of the northern India could ever conquer the Assam region but instead Burma conquered it and it was wrenched from Burma by the British in 1829 by the Treaty of Yandavoo.

27. DEOGARH in Jhansi district of U.P. is famous for its Dasvatara Vishnu temple belonging to the Gupta period. The temple may be considered as most representative and well known example of the early shikhara style of temple architecture in example of the early shikhara style of temple architecture on the panels of its walls. Deogarh is one of the temples with which began the temple architecture of India. In particular, the Shikhara is the unique feature of the northern temples compared to those of southern Indian.

28. DWARAKA Legends associate this place to Yadavas after the battle of Kurukshetra. According to mythology Dwaraka was destroyed by the huge tidal wave as per the forewarning of Lord Krishna. In very recent times Dr. S.R.Rao with the cooperation of the Department of Oceanography, did carry out under-sea explorations. Some artifacts including stone anchors have been found dating back to the Harappan period. The exploration is still continuing.
29. ELLORA With three distinct groups of rock-cut architecture associated with Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanical Hinduism, is famous for its temple of Kailash (Siva) "an entire temple complex completely hewn-out of the live rock in imitation of a distinctive structural form". The temple was built by the Rashtrakuta king Krishna I (758-773 A.D.) and is one of the most magnificent examples of Dravida architecture with its four principal characteristic components, viz. Vimana, Mandapa, nandi mandapa and gopuram. The Ellora sculptures are famous for their liveliness.
30. ERAN Besnagar district (Madhya Pradesh) is famous on account of Eran Inscriptions dated 510 A.D. This inscription mentions the practice of Sati, first of its kind. It is also famous for its colossal board, the zoomorphic incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
31. ELEPHANTA beautiful little island off Bombay, with latest cave temples in Ellora style was famous for their sculpture, especially the great Trimurti figure of Siva, emblem of the Maharashtra Govt. representing the highest plastic expression of the Hindu concept of divinity.
32. GANDHARA with Taxila and Peshwar as two capitals, in earlier and later ancient periods was one of the 16 Janapadas (6th century B.C.) on the north-western frontier of India. Under the Kushans it became a popular center of Mahayana Buddhism and Gandhara art- Indian images both secular and religious (the Buddha and Lord Krishna) but in long floating garments, as is the tradition of early Greek sculpture. It was a meeting ground for several civilizations and mercantile communities belonging to different countries.
33. GORATHAGIRA A hill fortress on the modern Barabar hills in the Gaya district of Bihar, was attacked by King Kharavela of Kalinga in the 8th year of his reign. This fact is known from the Hathigumpha Inscription of King Kharavela.
34. GANGAIKOND-CHOLA-PURAM was capital city of the greatest Chola ruler Rajendra Chola I (1012-1044 A.D.) who built it after the successful Chola military campaign up to the bank of the river Ganges in 1021-22. Currently the city lies in ruins and its enormous tanks have dried up.
35. GIRNAR hill near Junagarh in Gujarat, where a Mauryan governor is said to have built an artificial lake, known as Sudarsana lake which Rudradaman, the Saka ruler renovated. Rudradaman's Sanskrit Inscription was located here and it is the first Sanskrit inscription. It had been a sacred place to the Jainas since remote times because Jain shrines are also located here.
36. HASTINAPURA in Meerut district in U.P. (known as Hastinapura) was the capital of the ancient tribe of the Kurus. Later the floods destroyed it. Recent excavations prove that the people of this region used iron by about 700 B.C. that is the Aryans had learnt the art of making iron which revolutionized the whole socio-economic pattern of Aryan communities. It was this fact that lay at the base of the Economic Revolution that India passed through between 1000 B.C. to 600 A.D. with far too

many consequences like the emergence of an empire, various kinds of guilds, brisk trade both with in and with out the country and links with both South-east Asia and the Roman empire.

37. HATHIGUPHA on Udaigir hill, three miles from Bhuvaneshwar in the puri district of Orissa, is famous for an inscription in post-ashokan character, engraved inside the elephant cave. It depicts the meteoric and dazzling career of Jaina king Kharavela, the 3rd ruler of the Cate dynasty. It also refers to the building of an equeduct in Kalinga by one of the Nanda rulers of Pataliputra. The importance of this inscription lies in the fact that it is the first important sign-post in fixing the chronology of ancient India.

38. HAILBID is famous for Hoysalesvara temple (Hoysala period) designed and built by Kedoraja, the master-builder of Narasimha I. The infinite wealth of sculpture over the exterior of this temple makes it one of the most remarkable monuments of the world. Known as Dwaramudra it was the capital of the Hoysalas.

39. INDRAPRASTHA identified by Jain scholars with the site around the enclosure of the Purana Oila (Delhi) one of the sites of painted Grey Ware (10th century B.C.) finda, was the legendary capital of the Pandava brothers of the epic Mahabharata, which they lost to the Kauravas having been defeated in the gambling match. After the second battle of Tarain (1192) Moh. Gauri appointed Outbuddin Aibak as his deputy at Indraprastha which became a base for Aibak's successful operations against north Indian states.

40. KURA one of the 16 Janapadas of 6th century B.C., was in the neighbourhood of Delhi. Among its towns may be mentioned Indraprastha and Hastinapur. This place clearly brings home the truth to us that Mahabharata was not purely fictional story but some amount of historical evidence is embedded in the story. As a matter of fact, Vasudeva Krishna is now known as a historical personality as borne out by the writings of patanjali and other sources of evidence.

41. KAJANGALA in Raj mahal district in Eastern Bihar, where king Harsha (606-647 A.D.) held his court while campaigning in eastern India. The Chinese pilgrim Huen-Tsang first saw Harsha here.

42. KAPISA It is the region near Kabul, probably Kipin as referred to by Chinese writers. The presiding deity of the city according to Chinese writers was Zeus. The Greek god. The gold and silver coins issued by the Greek kings have been discovered from this region in big numbers. The Greeks were the first to issue gold coins in India. These coins testify to the growing trade links between India and Central Asia and China and also with the Roman world. Far more important is the fact that these coins testify to the growing worship of Vasudeva-Krishna or the Bhagavata cult which later reformed as Vaishnavism.

43. KIPIN is identified with Kapisa or Kafirstan in Kashmir. It indicated the wide region known in earlier times as the Mahajanapada of Kamboja. It was ruled by the Sakas, the Kushans and the Hunas in succession. The name Kamboja reappears as the name of kamboja, an important part of the mainland of South-East Asia.

44. KAMPILYA was the capital of southern Panchalas, one of the tribal communities of the Aryans. This fact proves that the Aryans, to begin with in India, lived as various tribes. The tribes were in constant war with each other culminating in the emergence of the Magadha Empire.

45. KUSAMDHVALA (Patliputara) Gargi-Samhita alludes that in the 2nd century B.C. the Yavanas (Indo-Bacterians) having reduced Saketa, Panchala, and Mathura reached kusumdhvana. Demetrios, was, most probably, the Yavana leader. He was defeated or he retired without fighting.
46. KASI one of the 16 Janapadas of the 6th century B.C. with its capital of the same name. It was also called Varanasi (69). It greatly prospered under the rule of Brahmadata.
47. KOSAL one of the 16 janapadas of the 6th century B.C. had three different capitals (Saketa, Ayodhya and Sravasti) in three different periods. Its region roughly corresponded to modern Udh.
48. KUSINAGAR (Kusinara ?) modern Kasia, in Gorakhpur district in UP was a small town where the Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana. It was one of the two capitals of the Mall Janapada in pre-Buddhist times. It was visited by Ashoka and the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien.
49. KANYAKUBJA (Kanauj) on the bank of river Ganges in UP rose to prominence during the time of Mukharis, Harsha and Gujara-Pratiharas. Under the Pratiharas, Kanauj successfully resisted the Arabs. In the 9th century A.D. it was disputed among the Palas of Bengal, Pratiharas, and the Rashtrakutas. It was situated on a very important trade-route linking north-western regions of India with Prayaga, Kasi, Vaishali, Pataliputra, Rajagriha, Tamralipti.
50. KAUSAMBI identified with the village of Kosam near Allahabad was one of the earliest cities, so prominent that Anand, the Buddhist monk, though it was important enough for a Buddha to die in. Recent excavation here unearthed historically and culturally important terracotta figures. It was built in the shape of a trapezium and was the capital of the Vastse Janapada. One of the Ashokan Pillars was located here. It was also an inscription of the Kushan monarch.
60. KARNA-SUVARNA : refers to the region of Bengal and some parts of Bihar and Orissa, ruled by Sasanka in the early 7th century A.D. Harsha conquered the region from him after 619 A.D.
61. KANHERI In Thana district near Bombay, has rock cut Chaitya shrines with elaborately decorated railings belonging to the third century A.D. One inscription of the last great ruler of the Satavahana dynasty, Yajnasri Satakarni is found here. Kanheri Buddhist Tank inscription makes mention of matrimonial relationship between the Sakas and the Satavahanas. It was the chief center of Buddhism in Rashtrakuta times. Faint traces of the art of paintings may be traced in the caves of Kanheri.
62. KANCHI modern Kanchi, south-west to Madras is reckoned among the seven sacred cities of the Hindus. It was an important center of Jain culture in the first half of the first millennium A.D. It was one of the south Indian kingdoms conquered by Samudragupta. It was visited by Huen-Tsang. It rose to prominence in the 7th century A.D. Under the Pallava king. It possesses the famous Kailashnath temple (built by Pallava King Narsimhavarman - II) and Vaikuntha Perumalla (constructed sometime after the Kailashnath). The Kailashnath temple is a landmark in the development of Dravidian temple style with its characteristic components - vimana, mandapa, gopuram and an array of vimanas along the walls of the court, i.e. peristyle cells.

63. KAVERIPATTANAM known as Puhar, was the Chola capital and chief port in Sangam period (200 B.C.- 300 A.D.) with a large colony of foreigners. It was an important trade center. Ships sailing from here to South-East Asia. A long poem on this Chola capital is the part of the famous Sangam work pattupattu (Ten Idylls).
64. KURUKSHETRA near Thaneswar, to the north of Delhi in Haryana, was the site of the great battle of Mahabharata. This battle fought between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, formed the basis of the story of the greatness of India epics the Mahabharata. It is in this great war that Krishna preached his gospel of the Gita, to the Pandava hero Arjuna who saw his own elders and kishmen arranged himself for the fith and then early decided to renounce and retire. Krishna gave him the message of disinterested performance of duty i.e. renunciation in action but no renunciation of action. That a great war was fought between the cousin brothers - Kauravas and Pandavas is quite possible.
65. MANYAKHET (modern Malkhed in Hyderabad region) was the capital of Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha I in the 9th century A.D.
66. MAHABALIPURAM is today a tiny coastal village 65 kms. south of Madras. This port-city was founded by Pallava king Narasimhavarman in the 7th century A.D. Pallava kings created an architecture of their own which was to be the basis of all the styles of the south. In fact Mahabalipuram, the Pallava art with its monolithic temples (rathas) and rocks sculptured in the shapes of animals with a wonderfully broad and powerful naturalism, with whole cliffs worked in stone frescoes, immenspictures unparalleled at the time in all Indian in their order movement and lyrical value. The Descent of the Ganges, the unique masterpiece of Pallava art was surely one of the most remarkable compositions of all time (in which is portrayed the Ganges coming down to earth, with gods, animals men and all creation in adoration). The shore temple built by Rajasimha represents one of the earliest examples of structural temples. the Pallava monuments at Mahabalipuram symbolize not only the transition from rock-architecture to structural stone temples but also significantly the completion of the "Aryanisation" of South India during the Pallava period.
67. MADHYAMIKA is identified with Nagari near Chitor in Rajasthan. Patanjali alludes to Yavana (Indo-Bactrian) invasion of Madhyamika.
68. MUSHIKAS on the lower Indus with its capital at Alor. Was the greatest principality at the time of Alexander's invasion. Its king Mousikana submitted to Alexander after brave resistance.
69. MATIPUR modern Mandawar in district Bijnor of UP was a center of Hinayana Buddhist studies in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. Huen-Tsang stayed here for some time.
70. MADURAI popularly known as the city of festivals, was the seat of the 3rd Sangam and was till the 14th century the capital of the Pandyan kingdom which had sea-borne trade with Rome and Greece. It is famous for the Minakshi temple.
80. MACCHA or Matsya, was one of the 16 janapads. The Matsyas ruled to the west of the Jamuna and south of the Kurus. Their capital was at Viratnagar (modern Bairrat near Jaipur).
81. MALLA was one of the 16 Janapadas of the 16th century B.C. The territory of the Mallas was on the mountain slopes probably to the north of the Vajjain confederation. They had to branches with their capitals at Kusinagar and Pawa. But in pre-Buddhist

time the Mallas were a monarchy.

82. MUZIRIS modern canganors in Kerala at the mouth of the river Periyar, an important port in Sangam period (20 B.C. - 300 A.D.) abounded in ships with cargoes from Arabia and Roman world. Later literature speaks of Roman settlements and a temple was built here in honour of Augustus.

83. NAGARJUNAKONDA is Krishna Valley, harboured a Neolithic community with stone-axe-culture and primitive mode of agriculture. With a few classical accidental looking sculptures in proves trade and culture contacts with the Roman world. Survival of a Buddhist stupa proves it to be a Buddhist center in early Christian centuries. The beginning of Hindu temple architecture in south India are best traced in the remains of the early brick temples of the Ikshvakus excavated here anticipating the Nagara, Dravida and Vasars styles.

84. NASIK (also known as Naiskya and Govardhan) is famous for exquisite rock-cut Buddhist temple (of the period 2nd BC - 1st A.D.) with an engraved inscription of Gautami Balsari recording the achievement of the Satavahanas ruler Gautamiputra Satakarni). A large hoard of silver coins bearing the name, the titles of Nahapana were discovered at Jogalthambi very close to the Nasik suggesting the defeat of the Saka ruler by the Satavahana king. It is also famous for the Chaitya and Vihar as Pan-du-lonea.

85. PITHUNDA on the Godavari, was the capital of the Avapeople or the Avamukta which was conquered by Samudragupta.

86. PADMAVATI was Nag capital in Gwalior region. Its king Ganapati Naga was defeated by Samudragupta.

87. PRATISHTHANA (Paithan) at the mouth of the river Godavari in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra, was the capital of Satavahana kings. It was an important commercial mart linked with Sravasti.

88. PURUSHPURA (modern Peshawar) was the capital of Kanishka's vast empire and the center of Gandhara art. It became the chief center of Buddhist activity and studies with building of number of huge Chaityas and viharas and with one stupa. The Chinese pilgrims refer to a many storied relic-tower in which some relics of Buddha were enshrined. It is here that the icons of Buddha and other Hindu gods were first finely carved. It provided the meeting place of the merchants of India, China, central Asia, Persia, and the Roman world.

89. PATTADAKAL near Aihole Badami is famous for magnificent rock-cut and sculptures temples in Chalukya and Pallava style. The number of such temples is ten - four in the northern style and six in southern. Most famous of these temples is lokesvara temple (now called Virupaksha).

90. PANCHALA was one of the 16 janapadas of the 6th century B.C. Its area correspondent to modern Bundelkhand and the portion of the Central Doab. It had two divisions northern and southern, the Ganges forming the boundary line. Their capitals were Ahichchatra and Kampilya respectively. One of the early Panchalas kings, Durmukha, is credited with conquests in all directions.

91. PUSHKALAVATI i.e. the "city of lotuses" in Afghanistan to the north of the river Kabul (modern Charasadda) in the district of Peshawar was conquered by Alexander. It was the old capital of western Gandhara. A gold coin (belonging to the 2nd century B.C.) with the city goddess (Lakshmi) holding a lotus in her right hand and an

appropriate Kharoshthi legend "Pakhalavati devata" had been discovered here pointing to the popularity of Indian goddess. It remained under the rule of the Indo-Greeks, the sakas and the Kushana. It was an important link in India's trade relations with central Asia and China.

92. RAJAGRIHA modern Rajgir, near Patna in Bihar was an ancient capital of Magadha under Bimbisara and Ajatsatru. It was here that first Buddhist council was held after the death of Buddha. The cyclopean walls of the this old commercial town are among the most remarkable finds in India.

93. SAKALA modern Sialkot, capital of Menander, was the refuge of Buddhist monks. It was here, according to Buddhist tradition, that Pushyamitra Sungha declared to give an award of 199 dinars for the head of a Buddhist monk.

94. SANCHI :near Bhopal famous for a Buddhist stupa and for one of Ashoka's Minor Pillar Edicts. Sanchi sculptures along with Bharhut Godh-Gaya represent the first organized art activity of the Indian People. There are reliefs of the Jatkas on the stone walls around the stupa. Sanchi revealed historically important inscription of the Satavahanas and the Gupta kings. Kakanobota probably was the ancient name for Sanchi, which was inhabited by the tribal people Kakar, and was conquered by the Samudragupta.

95. SRAVASTI modern Saket-Mahet on the borders of the Gonda and the Bahraich districts of U.P. On the river Rapti - It was a famous center of trade in ancient times, from where three important trade routes emanated linking it with Rajagriha, Pratihthana, and Taxila. It was one of the early capitals of the Janapad of Kosal. Later, it served as the provincial headquarters of the Gupta kings. Fa-hien visited it.

96. SAKETA region around Ayodhya, was invaded by Yavanas (Indo-Bactrian) is attested to by Patanjali.

97. SARNATH near Varanasi, is the place where the Buddha delivered his first sermon in the Deer park, this event being known as the "Turning of the Wheel of Law". It is the site of the famous Ashokan Pillar of Polished sand-stone whose lion capital was adopted by the people of Free India as the state emblem. It was also the famous seat of Gupta sculpture. Gupta plastic art reached its perfection e.g. the seated Buddha in preaching posture.

98. SRAVANA-BELGOLA in Hasan district of Karnataka, is famous for the monolithic statue of Gometeswara- 85ft. High, erected in 980 A.D. by Chemundya Rai, the chief minister of the Ganga king Rachmal.

99. SOPARA port town known to the Periplus and Ptolemy, carried most of the ancient Indian trade with foreign countries; gradually it began to lose its importance to Berygaza and Barharium- 1st century A.D. onwards. It has survived as a village 40 miles north of Bombay.

100. TOSALI (Dhuli) near Bhubaneswar in Puri district of Orissa, was the seat of one of the Mauryan viceroys as well as one of the fourteen major rock edicts of Ashoka. The Tosali rock edict refers only to the conquered province.

101. TRIPURI now village near Jabalpur, was the capital of the Kalachuri dynasty. The Kalachuri kings became independent in 10th century A.D. In 1939, Tripuri had the distinction of being the venue of the 54th session of Indian National Congress.

102. TAMRALIPTI Tamruk in the Midnapur district of Western Bengal was one of the most important port-towns of ancient India. Outlet to south-east Asia when there

was trade boom.

103. TANJORE is famous for Rajarajeswara or Brihadeswara temple of lord Shiva which is the largest and tallest of all India temples with its vimana towering to a height of nearly 200 feet over the Garbhagriha with Pyramidal body in thirteen tiers. It was the seat of Chola government in the 9th century A.D. and later of an independent kingdom after the fall of their Vijayanagar Empire. Weight of the cap 80 tonnes. Conceived on a gigantic scale. Stone relief as minute as that of jewelers.

104. THANESWAR near Kurukshetra, to the north of Delhi in the province of Haryana, was the capital of the Pushyabhuti dynasty. The kingdom of thanesar emerged into a powerful state under Harsha's (606-647 A.D.) father, Prabhakarvardhan who was in constant warfare against the Huns on the frontier and with the rulers of Malwa. Harsha shifted his capital from Thaneswar to Kannauj. According to Heun-Tsang the people of this city were specially inclined to trade. Thus thanesar was a principal center of trade. It was attacked by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1014 A.D. it is here that Ahmad Shah Abdali first defeated the Maratha army in 1759 leading to the Maratha collapse at Panipat in 1761.

105. UJJAIN in Madhya Pradesh was the capital of Avanti (6th century B.C.) and Chandragupta II, and was one of the provincial capitals of the Mauryas. It was the nodal point of two ancient trade routes, one from Kausambui and the other from Mathura, its chief exports being agate, jasper and carnelian. It has an observatory built by Maharaja Savai Jai Sing II (1686-1743).

106. URAIYUR also known as Aragaru, on the river Kavari, was for some time the Sangam Chola capital, was famous for its pearls and muslin, the latter being as thick as the slough of the snake.

107. UTTARMERUR is a village of Tamil Nadu where nearly two hundred inscriptions belonging to Pallava and Chola periods indicating the nature and working of the village administration have been found. According to Uttarmerur inscriptions Pallava and Chola villages enjoyed maximum of autonomy in administrative matters with popular village assemblies like the Ur, Sabha, Mahasabha or Nagaram looking after the village affairs without any interference from royal officers. The village of Uttarmerur was divided in thirty wards.

108. VATSGULMA modern Basim in the Ahoka district in the South of Ajanta, was the capital of a Junior branch of the Vakatakas who are mentioned in the Ajanta cave inscription No. XVI.

109. VIDISA modern Besnagar, near Bhilsa, in East Malwa, was a part of Sunga empire with Agnimitra, the son of Pushyamitra Sunga as viceroy. The Vidisa guild of ivory worker was famous for these workers carved the stone sculpture on the gateways and railings surrounding the Sanchi Stupa. It indicates commercial prosperity. It was also famous for the Garuda Pillar Inscription which testified its erection by a Greek ambassador named Heliodorus in honour of Vasudeva Krishna, the god of the Bhagavatas.

110. VAISHALI identified with modern Basali in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar, was a wealthy and prosperous town in the Buddhist period. The second Buddhist Council was held here. It served as the capital of Licchavis. Later, Ajatsatru annexed it to this kingdom. Ambapali, the famous charming courtesan, lived here and hosted to the Buddha at one time and later she became a convert to Buddhism.

111. VENGI (in Andhra Pradesh) one of the south Indian kingdoms probably joined the Sangha conquered by Samudragupta. It was the capital of the eastern Chalukyas, and was disputed between the Chalukyas and the Pallavas.

## **Sanskrit, Prakrit and Tamil Languages**

### **Sanskrit**

Sanskrit is a remote cousin of all the language of Europe excepting the Finnish, Hungarian, Turkish and basque. Around 2000 B.C. an ancestral group of dialects arose among the tribesmen of South Russia.

With Panini (probably 4th century B.C.) the Sanskrit language reached its classical form. It developed a little thense forward except in its vocabulary. The grammer of Panini, Asthadhyayi, pre-supposes the work of may earlier grammarians. Latter grammars are mostly commentaries on Panini, the chief being Mahabashya by Patanjali (second century B.C.) and the Banaras-commentary of Jayaditya and Vamana (seventh century A.D.).

It was from the time of Panini onwards that the language began to be called Samskarta, perfected or refined, as opposed to Prakras (natural), the popular dialects which had grown over time. In all probability, Panini bsd his work on the languages as it was spoken in the north west. Beginning as the lingua franca of the priestly class, it gradually became that of the governing class also. The first important dynasty to use Sanskrit was that of the Sakas of Ujjain and the inscriptions of Rudraman at Girnar. Otherwise, the Maurya and the other important dynasty till the Guptas used Prakrit for their official pronouncements.

The Language of the Rig Veda was already archaic when the hymns were composed and the ordinary Aryan spoke a sompler tongue, moer closely akin to classical Sanskrit. By the time of the Buddha themasses were speaking languages which were much simpler than Sanskrit. These were the prakrits. The ordinary speech of Ancient India has been preserved forus largely throughthe unorthodox religions. Most inscriptions of pre-Gupta time are in Prakrit. The women and humbler characters of the Sanskrit drama are made to speak in formalized prakrit of various dialects. A few of secular literary works were composed in Prakrit.

Classical Sanksrit increasing became thelanguage of brahmins and the learned few. Its use was restricted to certainoccasions such as issuing of proclamations and during the performance of Vedic ceremonies. In the towns and villages a popular form of Sanksrit, known as Prakrit, came into the existence. There were a breat number of local variations. The chief western variety was called Shuraseni and the eastern variety, Magadhi, Pali was another popular language based on Sanksrit. It, too, was used in the same religions as Prakrit. The Buddha, to reach more people, taught in Magadhi.

Speaking of literature, the four Vedas and the Brahmins and Upnishadas have some literary qualities. Some hymns of the Rig Veda and some parts of the early Upnishadas have some merit. Otherwise, they are mostly dry and monotonous.

In the 1028 hymns of the Rig Veda there is a great variety of styled and merit. The hymns contain many repetitions and the majority of them have the sameness of outlook. A number of hymns show deployment feeling for nature, as for example, the hymns to Ushas. A few vedic hymns are primarily secular, as for example the Gamester's Lament.

Very tittle of livery quality is there in the later Vedic literature the Atherva veda mostly a monotonous collection contains a few poems of great merit. The prose Brahmanas, though written in simple and straight forward language have little literary merit.

Thus the earliest Indian literature is to be found in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Mahabharata consisting of 90,00 stanzas, is probably the longest single poem in the world's literature. Ignoring the interpolations, the style of the Mahabharata is direct and vivid though consisting of repeated clinches and stock epithets, typical of epic literature every

where. The chief characters are delineated in a very simple outline but with an individuality which makes them real persons.

The other epic Ramayana also contains interpolations but they are much briefer and are mostly didactic. The main body of the poem gives the impression of being the work of one author whose style was based on that of the other epic to show some kinship to that of classical Sanskrit poetry. The style of the Ramayana is less rugged than that of the Mahabharata. It is a work of greater art and it contains many dramatic passages and beautiful descriptive writing.

The earliest surviving Sanskrit poetry is that of the Buddhist writer Ashvaghosa who probably lived in the 1st century A.D. He composed the Buddha-Charitra in a comparatively simple classical style. The Girnar inscription of Rudradaman, dated 150 A.D. is the earliest surviving example of Sanskrit prose.

The earliest surviving prose stories are a few narrative episodes in the Brahmanas followed by the Pali Jatakas. It was in the Gupta period that ornate Sanskrit prose was developed. The chief writers in this style were Dandin, Subandhu and Bana.

### **Prakrit**

Chronologically Pali is the first Sanskrit language and various Prakrits appeared later. Even the meaning of the word 'Pali' underwent changes. In the final stages the word "Pali" meant language of the texts of Theravada Buddhism. The Tripitaka meaning three baskets are books which consist of the canons of the Theravada sect. One part of it deals with the monastic discipline. The second part lays down principles of Buddhism. And the last part deals with various subjects like ethics psychology theories of knowledge and metaphysical problems.

Besides the canonical literature, there was also non-canonical literature in Pali. In Pali literature the earliest works relate to the Jataka stories. The early poetry consisted of a few verses from the songs of the older monks and Nuns, a collection of poems ascribed wrongly to the great disciples of the Buddha in the early days of the order. The style of these is simpler than Sanskrit literature and suggests influence of popular song. The book Milinda Panha is the most important one. Its subject matter is the dialogue between Milinda and monk Nagasena over some problems of the Buddhist faith. This particular kind of canonical literature in Pali was practised in Ceylon also. The classical works Depavamsa and Mahavamsa, the two great chronicles of Ceylon and also some grammatical metrical and lexicographical texts were written in Pali.

Now for the word "Prakrit". It stands for all the middle Indo-Aryan speeches which belong to an era between Sanskrit on the one hand and Aryan languages on the other. It has sectarian value since it was exclusively used as the speech of the Hinayana Buddhism.

From the earliest times to the first century A.D. inscriptions were composed exclusively in Prakrit. Asoka left behind 30 inscriptions in Prakrit. Even in literature Prakrit came to be used particularly in plays. And Prakrit itself consists of different dialects. There were several other Prakrits of lesser importance. By the time of the Guptas the Prakrits were standardized and had lost their local character. The vernaculars had already developed beyond them. What Panini did for Sanskrit others did for the Prakrits and they began to resemble more the languages actually were based on the conventions of dramatic theory and they never represented popular life. Now they reflect in any way the linguistic conditions of society. Some plays are composed exclusively in Prakrit and they are technically called stakas. The Karpuramanjari (about 900 A.D.) by Rajasekhara depicting love between man and woman is the most important work of this type.

Continuing the secular aspect of Prakrit language a number of stanzas were written both on love and maxims. The most remarkable amongst such texts is the Gatha Saptasati of Hala one of the Satavahana rulers. This book consists of 700 stanzas about love depicting the varied phases of South Indian rural life. The king probably ruled in the 1st century A.D. The poems are notable for their conciseness and for their great economy of words and masterly

use of suggestions. Some poems contain simple and natural descriptions and references to the lives of peasants and the lower class. More important is the fact that narrative literature and epic poems are fairly extensive in Prakrit. The most noteworthy among them are the Brihatkatha of Gunadhya composed in Paisachi dialect and Setubandha of Pravarasena. Apart from secular literature Prakrit was used for religious literature also like the Jaina canonical works. It was during the 5th century A.D. that most of the Jaina canons were written down. In Prakrit literature the Jaina writings have very little literary the poetry of the Jainas is better than prose. Its poetry is written in lively vernacular style. Furthermore it is to be stated here that scholars treated Apabhramas as a kind of Prakrit. It boasts of extensive literature particularly narrative stories. The first writer to make use of it was Asvaghosa. The others who followed the example were Bhasa (3rd century A.D.) and later Visakhadatta and Kalidasa.

In the Apabhramsa the meter doha was adopted as powerful form of expression of religious and philosophical thoughts. Both Jaina monks and contemporary writers of Tantrik Bhuddism utilized this meter. Incidentally stray poems dealing with morals maxims ethics religious discourses and legends were commonly written in Apabhramsa. Among the Jainas the voluminous texts on the life and activities of Jaina heroes were written in Apabhramsa. It may be noted here in the end that Apabhramsa, Sanskrit and Prakrit had a great influence both on Gujarati and Hindi as late as the 16th century.

Furthermore Prakrit is of linguistic importance since it is illustrative of the linguistic evolution from Prakrit to Apabhramsa and finally to a new regional language. Apabhramsa meaning falling down was a corrupt form of Prakrit dialect. It is believed to have originated in the north-west and traveled from that region along with the migrant people who scattered and settled in central and western India after the Huna invasions. The Prakrit as used by Jainas was greatly influenced by Apabhramsa. It is here that the link between the older and the new languages of Maharashtra and Gujarati is evident.

### **Tamil**

Tamil was the oldest spoken literary language of south India that is South of Nilgiris. Evidence as it is shows that there was a body of literature in Tamil which has had unbroken development over 20 centuries the first period of that literature is associated with the sangam ara. Tamil tradition refers to three literary Academic (Sangams) which met at Madurai. The first was attended by gods and legendary sages but all its works have perished. Of the second only one survives-Tolkappiyam the earliest surviving Tamil grammar. Much of the literary writings of this period have perished. Legendry and traditional accounts mention the loss of many texts on the occasion of a deluge. Today's extant body of sangam literature is but a fraction of a vast literature.

The book Agattiyam presumed to be written by St. Agattiyar is present in small shreds of sutras here and there as quoted by medieval commentators.

The second well-known work was Tolkappiyam. It was written by Tolkappiyar who was supposed to be a disciple of Agattiyar along with eleven other scholars. It is a work on Tamil grammar literature tradition and sociology. Tolkappiyam lays down grammatical rules governing the literary compositions. This book is the fountain of all literary conventions in Tamil literature. All later changes and innovations occurred only under the sanction of permissive clauses incorporated in due places in that work.

The poets of the third Sangam wrote Ettutogai (eight anthologies). These anthologies contain well over 2,00 poems ascribed to more than 200 authors.

The other major collection of the Sangam works is the pattuppattu of Ten dyle. They are long poems.

After the period of the eight anthologies Tamil literature reveals the influence of Sanskrit. It also reveals Jaina influence. The classical work revealing these features is Tiru Kural sometimes called the Bible of Tamil land. It consists of series of metrical proverbs and many aspects of life and religion.

And by the 6th century A.D. Aryan influence had penetrated the whole of Tamil land. Her

kings and chiefs worshipped and supported the gods of Hinduism Jainism and Buddhism. Tamil poets took to writing long poems which they called by the Silappadikaram (the Jewelled anklet). A little later appeared Manimekalai attributed to the poet Sattanar of Madurai. This book reveals Buddhist influence.

And the books Silappadikaram and Manimekalai belong to the early centuries of the Christian era. They were attributed to Ilango Adigal and Sattanar. The former book has been referred to by King Gajabahu of Ceylon who ruled in the second half of the second century A.D.

Manimekalai abounds in fine poetry and its dramatic element is handled with mastery. Also this book gives us glimpses of the development of fine art in the Angam age.

Probably Sattanar the author of Manimekalai was a Buddhist. A good deal of social and historical information is found in this work just as in Silappadikaram. Added to this book has a peculiar grace which makes it unique in the books of Tamil literature.

And it is also held by scholars that in the age prior to the imperial Pallavas many Tamil works were written like Kural. The chief quality of the Sangam works is their adherence to standards and literary conventions. Kural by Thiruvalluvar has been translated into many languages both Indian and foreign.

The end of the Sangam era may be said to herald the birth of a new Tamil literature. This new age witnessed devotional poetry on Shiva and Vishnu. The age of the Sangam literature was religious but stranger to the Bhakti cult. The writings of the Alvars and Nayanars are in the later period were quite distinct. Both of them began some where in the 5th or the 6th century A.D.

## **Buddhism**

### **The Buddha:**

- The Buddha also known as Sakyamuni or Tathagata.
- Born in 563 BC on the Vaishakha Purnima Day at Lumbini (near Kapilavastu) in Nepal.
- His father Suddhodana was the Saka ruler.
- His mother (Mahamaya, of Kosala dynasty) died after 7 days of his birth. Brought up by stepmother Gautami.
- Married at 16 to Yoshodhara. Enjoyed the married life for 13 years and had a son named Rahula.
- After seeing an old man, a sick man, a corpse and an ascetic, he decided to become a wanderer.
- Left his palace at 29 in search of truth (also called 'Mahabhinishkramana' or The Great Renunciation) and wandered for 6 years.
- Attained 'Enlightenment' at 35 at Gaya in Magadha (Bihar) under the Pipal tree.
- Delivered the first sermon at Sarnath where his five disciples had settled. His first sermon is called 'Dharmachakrapracartan' or 'Turning of the Wheel of Law'.
- Attained Mahaparinirvana at Kushinagar (identical with village Kasia in Deoria district of UP) in 483 BC at the age of 80 in the Malla republic.

### **Buddhist Councils:**

- First Council: At Rajgriha, in 483 BC under the Chairmanship of Mahakassapa (king was Ajatshatru). Divided the teachings of Buddha into two Pitakas-Vinaya Pitaka and Sutta Pitaka.
- Second Council: At Vaishali, in 383 BC under Sabakami (King was Kalasoka). Followers divided into Sthavirvadins and Mahasanghikas.
- Third Council: At Pataliputra, in 250 BC under Mogaliputta Tissa (King was Ashoka) In

this, the third part of the Tripitaka was coded in the Pali language.

- Fourth council: At Kashmir (Kundalvan), in 72 AD under Vasumitra (King was Kanishka, Vice-Chairman was Ashwaghosha). Divided Buddhism into Mahayana and Hinayana sects. Buddhist Literature: In Pali language.

Vinaya Pitaka: Rules of discipline in the Buddhist monasteries.

Sutta Pitaka: Largest, contains collection of Buddha's sermons.

Abhidhamma Pitaka: Explanation of the philosophical principles of the Buddhist religion

## **Jainism**

- Jainism founded by Rishabha.
- There were 24 Tirthankaras (Prophets or Gurus), all Kshatriyas. First was Rishabh Nath (Emblem: Bull).
- The 23rd Tirthankar Parshwanath (Emblem: Snake) was the son of King Ashvasena of Banaras.
- The 24th and the last Tirthankar was Vardhman Mahavira (Emblem: Lion). He was born in kundagram (Distt Muzaffarpur, Bihar) in 599 BC.
- His father Siddhartha was the head of Jnatrika clan.
- His mother was Trishla, sister of Lichchavi Prince Chetak of Vaishali.
- Mahavira was related to Bimbisara.
- Married to Yashoda, had a daughter named Priyadarsena, whose husband Jamali became his first disciple.
- At 30, after the death of his parents, he became an ascetic.
- In the 13th year of his asceticism (on the 10th of Vaishakha), outside the town of Jrimbhikgrama, he attained supreme knowledge (kaivalya).
- From now on he was called Jaina or Jitendriya and Mahavira, and his followers were named Jains. He also got the title of Arihant, i.e., worthy.
- At the age of 72, he attained death at Pava, near Patna, in 527 BC.
- Mahavira preached almost the same message as Parshvanath and added one more, Brahmcharya (celibacy) to it.

## **Socio-Cultural Uprise**

### **Brahmo Samaj:**

- Founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828.
- Criticized Sati Pratha, casteism and advocated widow remarriage.
- He was opposed to Sanskrit system of education, because he thought it would keep the country in darkness.
- Other important leaders were Devendranath Tagore (father of Rabindranath Tagore) and Keshap Chandra Sen.

### **Arya Samaj:**

- Founded by Swami Dayanand (or, Moolshankar) in 1875.
- His motto was 'Go back to the vedas' & 'India for the Indians'. He disregarded Puranas, idol worship, casteism and untouchability. He advocated widow remarriage.

- Dayanand's views were published in his famous work, Satyarth Prakash. He also wrote Veda Bhashya Bhumika and Veda Bhashya.

#### Ramakrishna Mission:

- Founded by Vivekanand (earlier, Narendranath Dutta) (1863 – 1902) in 1897, 11 years after the death of his guru Ram Krishna Paramhans.
- Vivekanand attended the Parliament of Religion at Chicago in 1893.
- Irish woman Margaret Nobel (Known as sister Nivedita) popularized it.

#### Young Bengal Movement:

- Founded by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-31). He was a teacher in Hindu College in Calcutta.
- He urged the students to live and die for truth. He also supported women's education and their rights.

#### Veda Samaj:

- Veda Samaj called Brahmo Samaj of South. Started by Sridharalu Naidu.
- He translated books of Brahmo Dharma into Tamil and Telegu.

#### Dharma Sabha:

- Initiated by Radhakant Deb in 1830.
- Was opposed to reforms and protected orthodoxy, but played an active role in promoting western education even to girls.

#### Lokahitawadi:

- Started by Gopal Hari Deshmukh. Advocated western education and a rational outlook. He advocated female education for the upliftment of women.
- As a votary of national self-reliance, he attended Delhi durbar in 1876, wearing handspun khadi cloth.

#### Servants of India Society:

- Formed by Gopal Krishna Gokhale in 1915.
- It did notable work in providing famine relief and in improving the condition of the tribal.

#### Radhaswami Movement:

- Founded in 1861 by a banker of Agra, Tulsi Ram, popularly known as Shiv Dayal Saheb or Swami Maharaj.
- The sect preached belief in one supreme being, the Guru's supreme position and a simple social life for the believers (the Satsangis).

#### Theosophical Society:

- Founded by Westerners who drew inspiration from Indian thought and culture.
- Madam H P Blavatsky laid the foundation of the movement in US in 1875. Later, Col.M.S. Olcott of the US Army joined her.
- In 1882, it was shifted to India at Adyar (Tamil Nadu).
- Annie Besant was elected its president in 1907. She founded the Central Hindu College in 1898, which became Banaras Hindu University in 1916.

## **Governor Generals of India**

### **Lord William Bentinck (1828 – 1835):**

- Carried out the social reforms like Prohibition of Sati (1829) and elimination of thugs (1830).
- Made English the Medium of higher education in the country (After the recommendations of Macaulay).
- Suppressed female infanticide and child sacrifice.
- Charter Act of 1833 was passed; made him the first Governor General of India. Before him, the designation was Governor General of Bengal.

**Sir Charles Metcalfe (1835 – 1836):** Abolished all restrictions on vernacular press (called Liberator of the Press).

**Lord Auckland (1836 – 1842):** The most important event of his reign was the First Afghan War, which proved to be a disaster for the English.

**Lord Ellenborough (1842 – 1844)**

**Lord Hardinge I (1844 – 1848)**

### **Lord Dalhousie (1848 – 1856):**

- Opened the first Indian Railway in 1853 (from Bombay to Thane).
- Laid out the telegraph lines in 1853 (First was from Calcutta to Agra).
- Introduced the Doctrine of Lapse and captured Satara (1848), Jaipur and Sambhalpur (1849), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854).
- Established the postal system on the modern lines through the length and breadth of the country, which made communication easier.
- Started the Public Works Department. Many bridges were constructed and the work on Grand Trunk Road was started. The harbors of Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta were also developed.
- Made Shimla the summer capital.
- Started Engineering College at Roorkee.
- Encouraged science, forestry, commerce, mineralogy and industry.
- In 1854, "Wood's Dispatch" was passed, which provided for the properly articulated system of education from the primary school to the university.
- Due to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's efforts, remarriage of widows was legalized by Widow Remarriage Act, 1856).

## **Viceroy of India**

### **Lord Canning (1856 – 1862):**

- The last Governor General and the first Viceroy.
- Mutiny took place in his time.
- On Nov, 1858, the rule passed on to the crown.
- Withdrew Doctrine of Lapse.
- The Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were established in 1857.
- Indian Councils Act was passed in 1861.

### **Lord Elgin (1862 – 1863)**

#### Lord Lawrence (1864 – 1869):

- Telegraphic communication was opened with Europe.
- High Courts were established at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1865.
- Expanded canal works and railways.
- Created the Indian Forest department.

#### Lord Mayo (1869 – 1872):

- Started the process of financial decentralization in India.
- Established the Rajkot college at Kathiwar and Mayo College at Ajmer for the Indian princes.
- For the first time in Indian history, a census was held in 1871.
- Organised the Statistical Survey of India.
- Was the only Viceroy to be murdered in office by a Pathan convict in the Andamans in 1872.

#### Lord Northbrook (1872 – 1876):

#### Lord Lytton (1876 – 1880):

- Known as the Viceroy to reverse characters.
- Organised the Grand 'Delhi Durbar' in 1877 to decorate Queen Victoria with the title of 'Kaiser – I – Hind'.
- Arms Act(1878) made it mandatory for Indians to acquire license for arms.
- Passed the infamous Vernacular Press Act (1878).

#### Lord Ripon (1880 – 1884):

- Liberal person, who sympathized with Indians.
- Repeated the Vernacular Press Act (1882)
- Passed the local self – government Act (1882)
- Took steps to improve primary & secondary education (on William Hunter Commission's recommendations).
- The I Factory Act, 1881, aimed at prohibiting child labour.
- Passed the libert Bill (1883) which enabled Indian district magistrates to try European criminals. But this was withdrawn later.

#### Lord Dufferin (1884 – 1888):

- Indian National Congress was formed during his tenure.

#### Lord Lansdowne (1888 – 1894):

- II Factory Act (1891) granted a weekly holiday and stipulated working hours for women and children, although it failed to address concerns such as work hours for men.
- Categorization of Civil Services into Imperial, Provincial and Subordinate.
- Indian Council Act of 1892 was passed.
- Appointment of Durand Commission to define the line between British India and Afghanistan.

#### Lord Elgin II (1894 – 1899):

- Great famine of 1896 – 1897. Lyall Commission was appointed.

#### Lord Curzon (1899 – 1905):

- Passed the Indian Universities Act (1904) in which official control over the Universities was increased.
- Partitioned Bengal (October 16, 1905) into two provinces 1, Bengal (proper), 2. East Bengal & Assam.
- Appointed a Police Commission under Sir Andrew Frazer to enquire into the police administration of every province.
- The risings of the frontier tribes in 1897 – 98 led him to create the North Western Frontier Province(NWFP).
- Passed the Ancient Monuments Protection Act (1904), to restore India's cultural heritage. Thus the Archaeological Survey of India was established.
- Passed the Indian Coinage and Paper Currency Act (1899) and put India on a gold

standard.

- Extended railways to a great extent.

#### Lord Minto (1905 – 1910):

- There was great political unrest in India. Various acts were passed to curb the revolutionary activities. Extremists like Lala Laipat Rai and Ajit Singh (in May, 1907) and Bal Gangadhar Tilak (in July, 1908) were sent to Mandalay jail in Burma.
- The Indian Council Act of 1909 or the Morley – Minto Reforms was passed.

#### Lord Hardinge (1910 – 1916):

- Held a durbar in Dec, 1911 to celebrate the coronation of King George V.
- Partition of Bengal was cancelled (1911), capital shifted from Calcutta to Delhi (1911).
- A bomb was thrown at him; but he escaped unhurt (Dec 23, 1912).
- Gandhiji came back to India from S.Africa (1915).
- Annie Besant announced the Home Rule Movement.

#### Lord Chelmsford (1916 – 1921):

- August Declaration of 1917, whereby control over the Indian government would be gradually transferred to the Indian people.
- The Government of India Act in 1919 (Montague – Chelmsford reforms) was passed.
- Rowlatt Act of 1919; Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (April 13, 1919).
- Non – Cooperation Movement.
- An Indian Sir S.P.Sinha was appointed the Governor of Bengal.
- A Women's university was founded at Poona in 1916.
- Saddle Commission was appointed in 1917 to envisage new educational policy.

#### Lord Reading (1921 – 1926):

- Rowlatt act was repealed along with the Press act of 1910.
- Suppressed non-cooperation movement.
- Prince of Wales visited India in Nov.1921.
- Moplah rebellion (1921) took place in Kerala.
- Ahmedabad session of 1921.
- Formation of Swaraj Party.
- Vishwabharati University started functioning in 1922.
- Communist party was founded in 1921 by M.N.Roy.
- Kakory Train Robbery on Aug 9, 1925.
- Communal riots of 1923 – 25 in Multan, Amritsar, Delhi, etc.
- Swami Shradhanand, a great nationalist and a leader of the Arya Samajists, was murdered in communal orgy.

#### Lord Irwin (1926 – 1931):

- Simon Commission visited India in 1928.
- Congress passed the Indian Resolution in 1929.
- Dandi March (Mar 12, 1930).
- Civil Disobedience Movement (1930).
- First Round Table Conference held in England in 1930.
- Gandhi – Irwin Pact (Mar 5, 1931) was signed and Civil Disobedience Movement was withdrawn.
- Martyrdom of Jatin Das after 64 days hunger strike (1929).

#### Lord Willington (1931 – 1936):

- Second Round Table conference in London in 1931.
- On his return Gandhiji was again arrested and Civil Disobedience Movement was resumed in Jan 1932.
- Communal Awards (Aug 16, 1932) assigned seats to different religious communities. Gandhiji went on an epic fast in protest against this division.
- Third Round Table conference in 1932.
- Poona Pact was signed.
- Government of India Act (1935) was passed.

#### Lord Linlithgow (1936 – 1944):

- Govt. of India Act enforced in the provinces. Congress ministries formed in 8 out of 11 provinces. They remained in power for about 2 years till Oct 1939, when they gave up offices on the issue of India having been dragged into the II World War. The Muslim League observed the days as 'Deliverance Day' (22 December)
- Churchill became the British PM in May, 1940. He declared that the Atlantic Charter (issued jointly by the UK and US, stating to give sovereign rights to those who have been forcibly deprived of them) does not apply to India.
- Outbreak of World War II in 1939.
- Cripps Mission in 1942.
- Quit India Movement (August 8, 1942).

#### Lord Wavell (1944 – 1947):

- Arranged the Shimla Conference on June 25, 1945 with Indian National Congress and Muslim League; failed.
- Cabinet Mission Plan (May 16, 1946).
- Elections to the constituent assembly were held and an Interim Govt. was appointed under Nehru.
- First meeting of the constituent assembly was held on Dec. 9, 1946.

#### Lord Mountbatten (Mar.1947 – Aug.1947):

- Last Viceroy of British India and the first Governor General of free India.
- Partition of India decided by the June 3 Plan.
- Indian Independence Act passed by the British parliament on July 4, 1947, by which India became independent on August 15, 1947.
- Retired in June 1948 and was succeeded by C.Rajagopalachari (the first and the last Indian Governor General of free India).

### Newspapers

#### Newspaper Journals

Newspaper/Journal Founder/Editor

Bengal Gazette(1780) (India's first newspaper) J.K.Hikki

Kesari B.G.Tilak

Maharatta B.G.Tilak

Sudharak G.K.Gokhale

Amrita Bazar Patrika Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh

Vande Mataram Aurobindo Ghosh

Native Opinion V.N.Mandalik

Kavivachan Sudha Bhartendu Harishchandra

Rast Goftar (First newspaper in Gujarati) Dadabhai Naoroji

New India (Weekly) Bipin Chandra Pal

Statesman Robert Knight

Hindu Vir Raghavacharya and G.S.Aiyar

Sandhya B.B.Upadhyaya

Vichar Lahiri Krishnashastry Chiplunkar

Hindu Patriot Girish Chandra Ghosh (later Harish Chandra Mukherji)

Som Prakash Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Yugantar Bhupendranath Datta and Barinder Kumar Ghosh

Bombay Chronicle Firoze Shah Mehta

Hindustan M.M.Malviya

Mooknayak B.R.Ambedkar

Comrade Mohammed Ali

Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq Sir Syyed Ahmed Khan  
Al-Hilal Abdul Kalam Azad  
Al-Balagh Abdul Kalam Azad  
Independent Motilal Nehru  
Punjabi Lala Lajpat Rai  
New India (Daily) Annie Besant  
Commonweal Annie Besant  
Pratap Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi  
Essays in Indian Economics M.G.Ranade  
Samvad Kaumudi (Bengali) Ram Mohan Roy  
Mirat-ul-Akhbar Ram Mohan Roy (first Persian newspaper)  
Indian Mirror Devendra Nath Tagore  
Nav Jeevan M.K.Gandhi  
Young India M.K.Gandhi  
Harijan M.K.Gandhi  
Prabudha Bharat Swami Vivekananda  
Udbodhana Swami Vivekananda  
Indian Socialist Shyamji Krishna Verma  
Talwar (in Berlin) Birendra Nath Chattopadhyaya  
Free Hindustan (in Vancouver) Tarak Nath Das  
Hindustan Times K.M.Pannikar  
Kranti Mirajkar, Joglekar, Ghate

### **Constitutional Development**

#### **Regulating Act, 1773:**

- End of Dual govt.
- Governor of Bengal to be the Governor – General of British territories of India.
- Establishment of Supreme Court in Calcutta.

#### **Pitts Act of 1784:**

This Act gave the British Government a measure of control over the company's affairs. In fact, the company became a subordinate department of the State.

#### **Act of 1786:**

- Governor General given the power to over-ride the Council and was made the Commander-in-chief also.

#### **Charter Act of 1793:**

- Company given monopoly of trade for 20 more years.
- It laid the foundation of govt. by written laws, interpreted by courts.

#### **Charter Act of 1813:**

- Company deprived of its trade monopoly in India except in tea and trade with China.

#### **Charter Act of 1833:**

- End of Company's monopoly even in tea and trade with China. Company was asked to close its business at the earliest.

- Governor General of Bengal to be Governor General of India (1st Governor General of India was Lord William Bentinck).

#### Charter Act of 1853:

- The Act renewed the powers of the Company and allowed it to retain the possession of Indian territories in trust of the British crown.
- Recruitment to Civil Services was based on open annual competition examination (excluding Indians).

#### Government of India Act, 1858:

- Rule of Company in India ended and that of the Crown began.
- A post of Secretary of State (a member of the British cabinet) for India created. He was to exercise the powers of the Crown.
- Secretary of State governed India through the Governor General.
- Governor General received the title of Viceroy. He represented Secretary of State and was assisted by an Executive Council, which consisted of high officials of the Govt.

#### Indian Council Act, 1861:

- The Executive Council was now to be called Central Legislative Council.

#### Indian Council Act, 1892:

- Indians found their way in the Provincial Legislative Councils.

**Indian Council Act, 1909 or Morley-Minto Act:** It envisaged a separate electorate for Muslims.

#### Government of India Act, 1919 Or Montague-Chelmsford Reforms:

- Dyarchy system introduced in the provinces. The Provincial subjects of administration were to be divided into 2 categories: Transferred and Reserved. The Transferred subjects were to be administered by the Governor with the aid of ministers responsible to the Legislative Council. The Governor and the Executive Council were to administer the reserved subjects without any responsibility to the legislature.
- Indian legislature became bicameral for the first time, it actually happened after 1935 Act.

#### Government of India Act, 1935:

- Provided for the establishment of All-India Federation consisting of the British Provinces and the Princely States. The joining of Princely States was voluntary and as a result the federation did not come into existence.
- Dyarchy was introduced at the Centre (Eg, Department of Foreign Affairs and Defence were reserved for the Governor General). Provincial autonomy replaced Dyarchy in provinces. They were granted separate legal identity.
- Burma (now Myanmar) separated from India.

### **Indian National Movement Part 1**

#### National Activities Part I

### The Indian National Congress:

- Formed in 1885 by A.O.Hume, an Englishman and a retired civil servant.
- First session in Bombay under W.C.Banerjee in 1885 (72 delegates attended it).
- In the first two decades (1885 – 1905), quite moderate in its approach and confided in British justice and generosity.
- But the repressive measures of the British gave rise to extremists within Congress like Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai (Lal, Bal, Pal).

### Partition of Bengal:

- By Lord Curzon on Oct 16, 1905, through a royal Proclamation, reducing the old province of Bengal in size by creating East Bengal and Assam out of rest of Bengal.
- The objective was to set up a communal gulf between Hindus and Muslims.
- A mighty upsurge swept the country against the partition. National movement found real expression in the movement against the partition of Bengal in 1905.

### Swadeshi Movement (1905):

- Lal, Bal, Pal, and Aurobindo Ghosh played the important role.
- INC took the Swadeshi call first at the Banaras Session, 1905 presided over by G.K.Gokhale.
- Bonfires of foreign goods were conducted at various places.

### Formation of Muslim League (1906):

- Setup in 1906 under the leadership of Aga Khan, Nawab Salimullah of Dhaka and Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk.
- It was a loyalist, communal and conservative political organization which supported the partition of Bengal, opposed the Swadeshi movement, demanded special safeguards to its community and a separate electorate for Muslims.

### Demand for Swaraj:

- In Dec 1906 at Calcutta, the INC under Dadabhai Naoroji adopted 'Swaraj' (Self-govt) as the goal of Indian people.

### Surat Session of Indian National Congress (1907):

- The INC split into two groups – The extremists and The moderates, at the Surat session in 1907. Extremists were led by Bal, Pal, Lal while the moderates by G.K.Gokhale.

### Indian Councils Act or Minto Morley Reforms (1909):

- Besides other constitutional measures, it envisaged a separate electorate for Muslims.
- Aimed at dividing the nationalist ranks and at rallying the Moderates and the Muslims to the Government's side.

### Ghadar Party (1913):

- Formed by Lala Hardayal, Taraknath Das and Sohan Singh Bhakna.
- HQ was at San Francisco.

### Home Rule Movement (1916):

- Started by B.G.Tilak(April, 1916) at Poona and Annie Besant and S.Subramania Iyer at Adyar, near Madras (Sept, 1916).
- Objective: Self – government for India in the British Empire.
- Tilak linked up the question of Swaraj with the demand for the formation of Linguistic States and education in vernacular language. He gave the slogan: Swaraj is my birth right and I will have it.

### Lucknow Pact (1916):

- Happened following a war between Britain and Turkey leading to anti-British feelings

among Muslims.

- Both INC and Muslim League concluded this (Congress accepted the separate electorates and both jointly demanded for a representative government and dominion status for the country).

## **Indian National Movement Part II**

### **National Activities Part II**

#### **August Declaration (1917):**

- After the Lucknow Pact, a British policy was announced which aimed at “increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration for progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British empire”. This came to be called the August Declaration.

#### **Rowlatt Act (March 18, 1919):**

- This gave unbridled powers to the govt. to arrest and imprison suspects without trial for two years maximum. This law enabled the Government to suspend the right of Habeas Corpus, which had been the foundation of civil liberties in Britain.
- Caused a wave of anger in all sections. It was the first country-wide agitation by Gandhiji and marked the foundation of the Non Cooperation Movement.

#### **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (April 13, 1919):**

- People were agitated over the arrest of Dr. Kitchlu and Dr. Satyapal on April 10, 1919.
- General O’ Dyer fires at people who assembled in the Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar.
- As a result hundreds of men, women and children were killed and thousands injured.
- Rabindranath Tagore returned his Knighthood in protest. Sir Shankaran Nair resigned from Viceroy’s Executive Council after this.
- Hunter Commission was appointed to enquire into it.
- On March 13, 1940, Sardar Udham Singh killed O’Dyer when the later was addressing a meeting in Caxton Hall, London.

#### **Khilafat Movement (1920):**

- Muslims were agitated by the treatment done with Turkey by the British in the treaty that followed the First World War.
- Two brothers, Mohd.Ali and Shaukat Ali started this movement.

#### **Non-cooperation Movement (1920):**

- It was the first mass-based political movement under Gandhiji.
- Congress passed the resolution in its Calcutta session in Sept 1920.

#### **Chauri –Chaura Incident (1922):**

- A mob of people at Chauri – Chaura (near Gorakhpur) clashed with police and burnt 22 policemen on February 5, 1922.
- This compelled Gandhiji to withdraw the Non Cooperation movement on Feb.12, 1922.

#### **Simon Commission (1927):**

- Constituted under John Simon, to review the political situation in India and to introduce further reforms and extension of parliamentary democracy.
- Indian leaders opposed the commission, as there were no Indians in it.
- The Government used brutal repression and police attacks to break the popular

opposition. At Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai was severely beaten in a lathi-charge. He succumbed to his injuries on Oct.30, 1928.

#### Lahore Session (1929):

- On Dec.19, 1929 under the President ship of J.L.Nehru, the INC, at its Lahore Session, declared Poorna Swaraj (Complete independence) as its ultimate goal.
- On Dec.31, 1929, the newly adopted tri-colour flag was unfurled and an.26, 1930 was fixed as the First Independence Day, was to be celebrated every year.

#### Revolutionary Activities:

- The first political murder of a European was committed in 1897 at Poona by the Chapekar brothers, Damodar and Balkishan. Their target was Mr.Rand, President of the Plague Commission, but Lt.Ayerst was accidentally shot.
- In 1907, Madam Bhikaiji Cama, a Parsi revolutionary unfurled the flag of India at Stuttgart Congress (of Second international).
- In 1908, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla chaki threw a bomb on the carriage of kingford, the unpopular judge of Muzaffapur. Khudiram, Kanhaiyalal Dutt and Satyendranath Bose were hanged. (Alipur Case).
- In 1909, M L Dhingra shot dead Col.William Curzon Whyllie, the political advisor of "India Office" in London.
- In 1912, Rasbihari Bose and Sachindra Nath Sanyal threw a bomb and Lord Hardinge at Delhi. (Delhi Conspiracy Case).
- In Oct, 1924, a meeting of revolutionaries from all parts of India was called at Kanpur. They setup Hindustan Socialist Republic Association/Army (HSRA).
- They carried out a dacoity on the Kakori bound train on the Saharanpur-Lucknow railway line on Aug. 9, 1925.
- Bhagat Singh, with his colleagues, shot dead Saunders (Asst. S.P. of Lahore, who ordered lathi charge on Lala Lajpat Rai) on Dec.17, 1928.
- Then Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw a bomb in the Central Assembly on Apr 8, 1929. Thus, he, Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged on March. 23,1931 at Lahore Jail (Lahore Conspiracy Case) and their bodies cremated at Hussainiwala near Ferozepur.
- In 1929 only Jatin Das died in Lahore jail after 63 days fast to protest against horrible conditions in jail.
- Surya Sen, a revolutionary of Bengal, formed the Indian Republic Army in Bengal. In 1930, he masterminded the raid on Chittagong armoury. He was hanged in 1933.
- In 1931, Chandrashekhar Azad shot himself at Alfred Park in Allahabad.

### **Indian National Movement Part III**

#### National Activities Part III

##### Dandi March (1930):

- Also called the Salt Satyagraha.
- Along with 78 followers, Gandhiji started his march from Sabarmati Ashram on March 12, 1930 for the small village Dandhi to break the salt law.
- He reached the seashore on Apr.6, 1930.
- He picked a handful of salt and inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement.

##### First Round Table conference (1930):

- It was the first conference arranged between the British and Indians as equals. It was held

on Nov.12, 1930 in London to discuss Simon commission.

- Boycotted by INC, Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Liberals and some others were there.

#### Gandhi Irwin Pact (1931):

- Moderate Statesman, Sapru, Jaikar and Srinivas Shastri initiated efforts to break the ice between Gandhiji and the government.
- The two (government represented by Irwin and INC by Gandhiji) signed a pact on March 5, 1931.
- In this the INC called off the civil disobedience movement and agreed to join the second round table conference.
- The government on its part released the political prisoners and conceded the right to make salt for consumption for villages along the coast.

#### Second Round Table Conference (1931):

- Gandhiji represented the INC and went to London to meet British P.M. Ramsay Macdonald.
- However, the session was soon deadlocked on the minorities issue and this time separate electorates was demanded not only by Muslims but also by Depressed Classes, Indian Christians and Anglo – Indians.

#### The Communal Award (Aug 16,1932):

- Announced by Ramsay McDonald. It showed divide and rule policy of the British.
  - Envisaged representation of Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo Indians, women and even Backward classes.
  - Gandhiji, who was in Yeravada jail at that time, started a fast unto death against it.
- Poona Pact (September 25, 1932):
- After the announcement of communal award and subsequent fast of Gandhiji, mass meeting took place almost everywhere.
  - Political leaders like Madan Mohan Malviya, B.R.Ambedkar and M.C.Rajah became active.
  - Eventually Poona pact was reached and Gandhiji broke his fast on the sixth day (Sept 25, 1932).
  - In this, the idea of separate electorate for the depressed classes was abandoned, but seats reserved to them in the provincial legislature were increased.

#### Third Round Table Conference (1932):

- Proved fruitless as most of the national leaders were in prison. The discussions led to the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935.

#### Demand For Pakistan:

- In 1930, Iqbal suggested that the Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sindh and Kashmir be made the Muslim State within the federation.
- Chaudhary Rehmat Ali gave the term Pakistan in 1923.
- Mohd. Ali Jinnah of Bombay gave it practicality.
- Muslim League first passed the proposal of separate Pakistan in its Lahore session in 1940.

#### The Cripps Mission – 1942:

- In Dec. 1941, Japan entered the World War – II and advanced towards Indian borders. By March 7, 1942, Rangoon fell and Japan occupied the entire S E Asia.
- The British govt. with a view to getting co-operation from Indians sent Sir Stafford Cripps, leader of the House of Commons to settle terms with the Indian leaders.
- He offered a draft which proposed dominion status to be granted after the war.
- Rejected by the Congress as it didn't want to rely upon future promises.
- Gandhiji termed it as a post dated cheque in a crashing bank.

## **Indian National Movement Part IV**

### **Indian National Congress**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>President</b>
1885, 1882	Bombay,Allahabad	W.C.Bannerji
1886	Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji
1893	Lahore	"
1906	Calcutta	"
1887	Madras	Badruddin Tyyabji (fist Muslim President)
1888	Allahabad	George Yule (first English President)
1889	Bombay	Sir William Wedderburn
1890	Calcutta	Sir Feroze S.Mehta
1895, 1902	Poona, Ahmedabad	S.N.Banerjee
1905	Banaras	G.K.Gokhale
1907, 1908	Surat, Madras	Rasbehari Ghosh
1909	Lahore	M.M.Malviya
1916	Lucknow	A.C.Majumdar (Re-union of the Congress)
1917	Calcutta	Annie Besant (first woman President)
1919	Amritsar	Motilal Nehru
1920	Calcutta(sp.session)	Lala Lajpat Rai
1921,1922	Ahmedabad,Gaya	C.R.Das
1923	Delhi(sp.session)	Abdul Kalam Azad (youngest President)
1924	Belgaon	M.K.Gandhi
1925	Kanpur	Sarojini Naidu (first Indian woman President)
1928	Calcutta	Motilal Nehru (first All India Youth Congress Formed)
1929	Lahore	J.L.Nehru (Poorna Swaraj resolution was passed)
1931	Karachi	Vallabhbhai Patel (Here, resolution on Fundamental rightsand the National Economic Program was passed)
1932, 1933	Delhi,Calcutta	(Session Banned)

1934	Bombay	Rajendra Prasad
1936	Lucknow	J.L.Nehru
1937	Faizpur	J.L.Nehru (first session in a village)
1938	Haripura	S.C.Bose (a National Planning Committed set-up under J.L.Nehru).
1939	Tripuri	S.C.Bose was re-elected but had to resign due to protest by Gandhiji (as Gandhiji supported Dr.Pattabhi Sitaramayya). Rajendra Prasad was appointed in his place.
1940	Ramgarh	Abdul Kalam Azad
1946	Meerut	Acharya J.B.Kriplani
1948	Jaipur	Dr.Pattabhi Sitaramayya.