

Civil Services Main Examination 2010

SPECIAL STUDY PACKAGE

Indian History

India is home to one of the richest and the most ancient civilizations in the world, which existed over 5,000 years ago. This civilization originated in the Indus River Valley, hence the name given to it was Indus Valley civilization. It was the origin of many of the ideas, philosophies and movements which have shaped the destiny of mankind. Its people are thought to be Dravidians, whose descendants still inhabit the far south of India.

History of India

India is home to one of the richest and the most ancient civilizations in the world, which existed over 5,000 years ago. This civilization originated in the Indus River Valley, hence the name given to it was Indus Valley civilization. It is the origin of many of the ideas, philosophies and movements which have shaped the destiny of mankind. The civilization with its main cities Mohenjodaro and Harappa flourished for over eight centuries. Its people thought to be Dravidians, whose descendants still inhabit the far south of India.

Aryan and Greek Invasions

The country was influenced by many invasions, the Arya or Aryans (1500BC) as they are known today, are the first invaders. Aryans were a group of nomadic tribes who had originally inhabited the steppes of Central Asia, in particular the region between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. Tall, fair haired, with clear cut features, they spoke a group of languages which have become known as Indo-European. They settled in the region to the north west of India, known as the Punjab. They brought with them new ideas, new technology and new gods, this is one of the most important epochs in Indian history. With time, the Aryans were engaged in struggle with the dark skinned people or Dasyus. The Dasyus were the Dravidians. The superiority of the Aryans resulted in the Dravidian submission.

The second great invasion into India occurred around 500 BC, when the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius, pushing their empire eastward, conquered the prized Indus Valley. After centuries of obscurity, doubt and conjecture, India came into the full light of recorded history with the invasion of Alexander the Great of Macedonia in 327 BC. Although

Alexander crossed the Indus and defeated an Indian king, he turned back without extending his power into India.

Maurya and Gupta Periods

The receding tide of Greek power led to a period of confusion and uncertainty in northern India as various rulers tried to make capital of the vacuum that Alexander had left behind. These circumstances saw the rise of Mauryas, India's first imperial dynasty, founded by Chandragupta Maurya. Maurya dynasty reached its peak around 260 BC under the Emperor Ashoka, the most famous figures in Indian History. He left a series of inscriptions on pillars and rocks across the sub-continent. But after his death, the Mauryan empire gradually fell apart because his descendants were not as strong rulers as he was.

At the beginning of the fourth century AD, India was fragmented into a lot of small kingdoms. They were often invaded by stronger neighbors like Greeks. They conquered Indus Valley again but they didn't stay for long. Out of this seeming Chaos, King Chandragupta II united all of northern India into a great empire again.

The Gupta period has been

described as the golden age of Indian history and under their rule of northern India, arts, including poetry and literature, flourished. The exquisite Ajanta and Ellora caves were excavated in this period. Gupta period extended from 320AD to 480AD. But in 455 AD the Huns invaded India from the north and destroyed the Guptan Empire. Again India was split into small kingdoms until the Muslim invasions around 1000 AD.

In South India, great empires rose, entirely independently from those of the north. These included the Kalachuris, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Yadavas, Hoysalas, Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, Cheras and the Vijayanagar kingdom.

Muslim Invasions

The Medieval Period in Indian history began with the Muslim Invasions. While the Hindu kingdoms ruled in the south and Buddhism was fading in the north, Muslim invasions from the Middle East began, towards the end of the 12th century. The Muslim period in India began with the Turkish conquests under Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori. Many famous dynasties such as the Slave Dynasty, Khilji Dynasty, Tughlaq Dynasty, Saiyyid and Lodhi, Bahmani Dynasty, and Others followed. In the 16th century, Babur from Fergana (Uzbekistan), a descendant of Genghis Khan swept across the Khyber Pass, defeated Ibrahim Lodi the last ruler of the Delhi Sultanate at the battle of Panipat and established the Great Mughal Dynasty which lasted for 200 years.

The Mughal (Mogul) period saw a remarkable blend of Indian,

Persian and Central Asian influences manifested in an impressive legacy of magnificent palaces, forts, tombs and landscaped gardens-including India's magnificent edifice, the Taj Mahal. The golden era of the Mughal period was under the rule of Akbar the great.

European Invasions

The country's riches in different cultures, wealth in spices and minerals - made it a target for invasion and colonisation by European powers from the fifteenth century onwards.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to settle in India, in Goa, in the fifteenth century (1498). The Europeans arrived even before the Mughals. The Dutch East India company was chartered in 1602 and they established spice trade and factories in Cochin, Nagapatinam and Agra. They did not have any military ambitions for India. In 1613, the British East India Company, a trading company, started its first trading post in Gujarat. Later in the century, the East India Company opened permanent trading stations at Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta, each under the protection of native rulers.

Meanwhile around 1644, the French established trade with India. Pondicherry was the hub of French settlements. Other French factories and settlements were at Surat, their first trading post in 1666, then Masulipatanam, Karikal, Chandernagore in Bengal and Mahe at the Malabar coast. The struggle for establishing supremacy in trade resulted in wars between the English and the French in the Deccan. The latter

of the three successive Carnatic wars between them, from 1746-48, 1748-54 and 1758-63 more-over sealed the fate of the French possessions in India

In 1757, at the Battle of Plassey, Robert Clive, an employee of the British East India Company, defeated the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daulah and established their political sovereignty in India. It was an important step towards the eventual British dominance of the country. The First War of Independence (Sepoy Mutiny) or the first major Indian rebellion against the British after the battle of Plassey took place in 1857. Although the rebels succeeded in capturing territories in the Gangetic plain, it was recaptured by the British and the rebellion was completely crushed by mid 1858. The British government took over control of India from the East India Company. Britain then ruled India with local rulers for over three hundred years.

Indian Independence

Eventually demand grew for Indian independence. The socio-religious movements brought forth by various social reformers all over the country inspired national consciousness to improve their social condition and invoked the spirit of patriotism among the Indian masses. A national movement for independence was created. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Subhash Chandra Bosh, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Mahamana, Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Chander Shekhar Azad were the notable people of the movement. But the most relevant leader of the movement was Mohandas

Karamchand Gandhi, a lawyer who believed in non violent protest (civil disobedience). Gandhi worked with Jawaharlal Nehru, the secretary of the Indian National Congress and transformed the Indian National Congress political party into a mass movement to campaign against the British colonial rule. After several years of struggle, Britain decided to quit India.

But a major problem had arisen. A large Muslim minority doubted that an independent India would also mean a Hindu-dominated India. The Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah began to call for an independent Muslim region- Pakistan. On 15th of August, 1947, India became completely independent from colonial rule, ending nearly 350 years of British presence in India. Nehru became the first Prime Minister of independent India.

Following independence India was divided, to create Pakistan, which initially also included present-day Bangladesh where there were Muslim majorities. The separation escalated the brewing violence into a blood-bath. It is estimated that over one million people were killed in sectarian violence as up to six million Muslims moved towards Pakistan and up to five million Hindus and Sikhs moved towards India. Mahatma Gandhi opposed partition and in 30th January 1948 he himself was gunned down by a Hindu fundamentalist, enraged by his support for the Muslims.

On January 26, 1950 India became a republic. The country adopted a new constitution based on the British parliamentary model. Newly independent, India worked to establish strong

institutions of justice, media and bureaucracy.

Sources of Indian History

The sources of Indian history can be classified under the following heads:

1. Inscriptions
2. Numismatics
3. Archaeology
4. Literature
5. Foreign Sources
6. Traditions

1. Inscriptions

Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions. Epigraphic evidences form the most reliable source of ancient history. They are engraved on stone tablets, metal plates, pillars, walls of caves, etc. The inscriptions represent various languages at different places and period of time. Some inscriptions give details about the political and religious activities of that time. Others are official, commemorative and historical.

The edicts of Ashoka, the pillars of Samudragupta and Rudradaman I are religious and administrative inscriptions. Sanskrit plays at Dhar and Ajmer and musical rules found in the Pudukottai, treaties on architecture inscribed on a tower at Chittor are examples of inscriptions.

Inscriptions on metal plates also cast light on the period during the Mauryans. The Mandasor copper plates, the Sohgaora plate from Gorakpur district, the Aihole inscription of Mahendra-Varman, the Uttiramerur inscriptions of Parantaka Chola I cast light on trade, taxes, currency. Some of these are dated in the Saka and Vikrama era reflects the condition of India. It gives knowledge

about the boundaries of kingdoms and empire.

2. Numismatics

Numismatics is the study of coins. Coins yield information on the condition of country. The coins made of gold, silver and copper speak of the economic situation of that place in the period. Coins gives us chronological information. It also gives us knowledge about the extent of influence of that a particular ruler or kingdom and its relation with the distant areas. Roman coins discovered in India gives us an idea about the existence of contacts with the Roman empire. Coins are the only source of idea knowledge of the Bactarian; Indo-Greeks and Indo-Parthian dynasty. The coins of this period brings to light an improvement in the coin artistry of India. Portraits and figures, Hellenistic art and dates on the coins of the western straps of Saurashtra are remarkable sources for reconstructing this period. The Puranic accounts of the Satavahanas is ascertained from the Jogalthambi hoard of coins.

The circulation of coins in gold and silver during the Gupta empire imparts an idea of the healthy economic condition during the rule of the Guptas.

3. Archaeology

Archaeology is the scientific study of the remains of the past. They include buildings monuments and other material relics that the inhabitants of that period were associated with. The Department of Archaeology was set up by Lord Curzon under the Director Generalship of Dr Marshal.

Excavations conducted at various sites in the valley of the

river Indus, Lothal in Gujarat, Kalibangan in Rajasthan, at Sind and Punjab gives us knowledge of the civilization during about 2700 BC.

Excavations at Taxila gives an idea about the Kushanas.

Similarity in monuments excavated in India and abroad establish a relations between various areas of the globe, besides this it express the Indian migration beyond India. The fine example of this is the temple of Angkor vat in Cambodia.

Excavations at south Indian sites such as Adichana llur, Chandravalli, Brahmagiri highlights the prehistoric periods.

The rock cut temples of Ajanta and Ellora with its sculptures and paintings express the artistic finery of that period

Besides all these pots, pottery, seals, skeletal remains all are inseparable parts of the reconstructing history.

4. Literature

This can be classified into

- Indigenous literature
- Foreign literature

Literature in the ancient period was not fuelled by the urge to preserve history but was a complication of experiences and rules of worship. Most of the literature of this period was religious.

(a) The Indigenous literature includes the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aryankas, the Upanishads, the Epics Ramayana and Mahabharatha, the Brahmashastras, the Puranas.

The Buddhist and Jain literature gives knowledge of the traditions prevalent in those periods. The literature of this period are in Sanskrit Pali Prakrit. It gives us a knowledge about

music, dance, painting architecture and administration of various kings.

Kautilya's Arthashastra is a remarkable work on the system of administration.

The Sangam literature in south is an elaborate record of life in South India.

Though these literature lacks historical sense yet they are the main sources to venture into the facts of Indian history.

(b) Foreign Literature

The loop holes in the indigenous literature is supported by the numerous account by foreigners who were either pilgrims, travellers, traders or ambassadors in the court of various kings.

The writings of Herodotus helped in scattering the knowledge of India to Europe before the invasion by Alexander. He highlights the features of the Indo-Persian relations.

Megasthenes the Greek ambassador in the court of Chandragupta gives us an idea about India in his book 'Indica'.

Accounts of Fa-Hien and Hieun-Tsang who toured India as a pilgrim during the rule of Harshavardhana and the Guptas gives us a detailed idea about the country.

Accounts by Muslims personalities also add a great insight into the history of India.

'Tarikh - e - Hind' ('an enquiry into India') by Alberuni a learned mathematician and astronomer is a remarkable document about the country. The composition of Firishta, the Ceylonese chronicle Deepavamsa of Mahavamsa of Ceylon portrays the life in the ancient period. Accounts of Pliny in the first century AD, accounts of Ptolemy in the second century AD and the Accounts of Taranath

of Tibet is an insight into the religion and history of the India in that period.

5. Foreign sources

The existence of details in the literature of the Greeks, Chinese, Persians, Romans and Europeans gives an account of the condition of the country then. It also speaks the truth about the conditions under which they came in contact India. The presence of various artifacts and materials of Indian origin has added to the study of Indian history.

The histories of the Chinese from 120BC to 400AD and 700AD, the accounts of Abul-Fazl in his 'Ain - i - Akbari' are a few examples of the foreign sources to know about the Indian history.

In many cases where there was a need to fill in the vagueness caused by the lack of evidence in the study of Indian history these foreign sources have proved handy.

6. Traditions

Traditions have modulated and synthesized the Indian life. These were practiced from the dome of civilizations and practiced through generations. Songs, dramas, fairs and festivals besides rituals are an inalienable part of the society. These are living sources of history.

Indus Valley Civilization

Human inhabitation in the Indian subcontinent is traced to the Paleolithic and Neolithic period. Dated from about 2500 to 1500 BC. This civilization is considered to be at par with the other civilizations of the world .

Sir John Marshal, the director

general of archaeology with his team excavated sites at Sind and Punjab. The ruins at Mohenjodaro in the Larkana district of Sind in the lower Indus and at Harappa on the banks of the Ravi has brought to light the existence of the Indus valley civilization. These excavations were further supported by the discovery in 1931 at Chanhudaro near Mohenjodaro. Traces of the Indus valley civilization was discovered at Rupar in Ambala district and Rangpur, and Lothal in Saurashtra, Bharatpur in Rajasthan, Kalibangan in the Burdwan district of West Bengal are a proof of the existence of the Indus valley civilization. Harappa being the main source of knowledge about the civilization historians also call this civilization as the Harappan culture.

Features of the Indus Valley Civilization

a) Town Planning

The ruins of Mohenjodaro provides evidence to confirm the existence of a system of planning in the city. The streets were broad and straight cutting each other at right angles. The drains were lined with bricks and manholes to facilitate regular cleaning. This speaks highly of the civilization's advanced nature.

The citadel was the main part of the city built on a raised platform. It consisted of public buildings, a bath, granaries and quarters for providing shelter to the persons propagating religion. The planning of the city brings to light the existence of an active and efficient bureaucracy to administer the activities of the city.

Around the citadel was

spread the remaining part of the city where the common people dwelt and pursued their profession. Houses were well planned and was built on both sides of the street. it had flat roofs and were connected by stairs to the upper storeys. They had thick walls and windows were few. Every house had a kitchen with a fireplace and large jars for storing grains or keeping other articles of use. The roofs of houses were flat. each house had bathrooms with a system of covered drains connected to the main drain of the street. A courtyard and a well were the special features that brings to light the system of planning existing then.

(b) Society

Society in the Indus valley civilization is said to have comprised of three distinct social groups. One group ruled and administered the city, the other group included the merchants who were associated with trade and other business activities in the city. The third group were the labourers who worked in the city. They also included the farmers who cultivated wheat and barley as their main crops. Animals like the buffaloes, sheeps and pigs and the humped bull were bred. Fish, mutton, beef, poultry and pork consisted the food they ate. Animals like the elephant, camels and dogs were also domesticated. The discovery of a large number of clay spindles suggest the use of cotton besides woolen and linen fabrics.

Men also seemed to have worn ornaments like fillets, necklaces, finger rings and armlets. Women were fond of ornaments like earrings, bangles, bracelets, necklaces, girdles and anklets

made of shell, beads, gold and silver and copper. Razors, bronze mirrors and combs made of ivory speaks of the people interest in personal upkeep. Toys like the whistle and carts besides puppets, rattles and dolls made of terracotta speaks greatly about the attitude of the people in child care. People enjoyed playing in dice and marble. Gambling was a favourite past time of the elder members in the society.

(c) Occupation

The discovery of various equipments such as axes, knives, spears and daggers made of bronze and copper suggest metal work as a major profession commonly pursued in the towns. Copper was used for making weapons and utensils besides ornaments. Spinning, weaving and pottery also formed important occupation. Pottery in red with designs painted in black resembling shapes such as interesting circles, pipal, leaves, peacocks were on it. The discovery of numerous seals made of clay with figures of animals like the tiger, rhinoceros, elephant and crocodile gives us more information of the significance of these animals in the Harappan society. These seals also have inscriptions in pictographic script.

Agriculture with domesticating animals was a major occupation. The location of granaries near river, where the civilization itself flourished was an important feature. The ornaments of these period worn by both men and women reflects the skilled craftsmanship of the people in the Harappan culture.

(d) Trade

The Indus valley people

maintained commercial contacts with Egypt and Crete, Mesopotamia and the towns in the Persian Gulf. Excavations at Lothal reveals the existence of a dock supporting the activities of trade in that period. Trade also existed with Northern Afghanistan from where the Harappans bought the famous blue gemstones, 'Lapiz Lazuli'.

(e) Religion

The clay seals discovered during excavation reveals the presence of a male god. The figure of a female god also suggest their beliefs on the female was source of creation. The seal with a male god wearing a head dress surrounded by various animals exhorts the belief in the male symbol of strength. The Indus valley people cremated their death. This idea has been established owing to the discovery of many urns containing human bones and ashes. In general it can be derived that worship of the forces of nature in its lively forms such as stones, strong animals was the religion they followed. This must have been the principles upon which the present day Hinduism has prescribed as its principles.

Age, Origin and Decline of the Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus valley civilization is believed to belong to the copper stone age as the presence of iron tools and implements has not yet been established at any part of this civilization.

Archaeological excavation indicates that the Indus valley civilization could have flourished in about 300 BC much before the existence of other West Asian civilization. Contacts with the civilization of Mesopotamia, Elam and Babylon can be deduced by

the discovery of the Indus valley clay seals, pottery there. This suggests that the civilization flourished from about 3000 BC to 1500 BC.

Anthropological investigation and examination of the human remains shows that four racial types existed in this civilization. They were the proto - Australoid, Mediterranean, Alpine and the Mongoloid. Archaeological excavation reveal the existence of various racial types. Of all these the existence of the Dravidian race holds its relevance owing to its wide spread acceptance.

Decline of the Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus valley culture though existed in its modern form else where it had to submit to the ultimate ravages of time which is the universal law. The physical existence of the civilization ended due to various factors.

- (a) Changes in the climate leading to the decline of land and agriculture, thereby enforcing the need to evacuate to other area might have been the reason for the disintegration of the Indus valley.
- (b) Increase in population, excessive deforestation decline in agriculture etc might have created economic problems leading to the gradual decay of the culture.
- (c) Frequent floods may have led to the devastation of the city
- (d) The invasion of the Aryans is the other view that is said to be another reason which might have also led to the extinction of the life in the Indus valley.

The Indus valley civilization has put India at par with the other civilization of the world, which is said to be the foundation on which the present cultures of nations are built.

Period Under the Aryans

Origin of the Aryans

Opinions Areas under Aryan influenced regarding the original home of the Aryans. The most accepted view is that the region between Poland to the Central Asia might have been of the Aryans. They were said to be semi-nomadic people, who started moving from their original home towards the west, south and east. The branch which went to Europe were the ancestors of the Greeks, Romans, Celts and Teutons. Another branch went to Anatolia. The great empire of the Hittites evolved from the mixture of these immigrants with the original people. The branch which remained were the ancestors of the Slavonic people. The group which moved south came to conflict with the west Asian civilization. In course of their journey towards the east or south a group of Aryans had settled in Iran. They crossed the Hindukush and entered India through Afghanistan and captured the greater part of the northern India. They came to be known as Indo-Aryans to distinguish them from the others who spoke a language different from those who settled in western Asia and Europe.

The Indo-Aryans entered Punjab and the other north-western part of India. They moved towards south-east and eastwards into the Ganga Valley. The Aryans were pastoral Nomads. They set-

tled in villages. The region which the Aryans occupied was known as Sapta Sindhu. Moving further eastwards they settled along the Ganga and Jamuna. In due course of time the whole of northern India were under the Aryans and it was called Aryavarta or the land of the Aryans. The period of Aryan settlement was between 2500 and 1500BC. The early Aryans were divided into many tribes. A few among them are Anus, Druhyus, Yadus, Turvasas and Purus. They settled on either side of the river Saraswati. They were involved in fighting among themselves. Besides these tribal warfare the Aryans were engaged in struggles with the dark skinned people or Dasyus. The Dasyus were the Dravidians who occupied the regions of the Indus valley civilization. The superiority of the Aryans resulted in the Dravidian submission and retirement to the south.

Political Organization

Family served as the basis of the both social and political organization. Families together formed the grama. Villages together formed is and they turn formed the janas. The community was patriarchal and each tribe was under the chief whose position was hereditary. The rastra was ruled by the king which was normally hereditary. The king led the tribe in battle, and protected the people. The Purohita was one of the important signatory. He was the sole associate of the king his friend, philosopher and guide. The Senani the leader of the army, and Gramani the head of the village. The main duty of the king was the protection of his

subjects, property, defence and maintenance of peace. The king was not an autocrat he was controlled by two popular assemblies Sabha and Samiti. These assemblies brought forth the people's view on various issues. The Sabhas also discharged legal duties like providing justice. Individual ownership of property was recognized. The land was a property owned by the family. The property passed on in a hereditary manner from father to son.

Economic Condition

The Aryans who were semi-nomadic people also domesticated animals which helped them in the activities of agriculture and other pastoral and hunting acts. Agriculture consisted the major share of their economy. Canals to provide irrigation was a significant feature of this occupation. Coins were unknown and trade was through the Barter system. Craft was not a popular profession. The lack of good roads might have hampered trade, but river navigation was existing. Specialization in areas such as carpentry, smithy, weaving, pottery, etc had been taking place.

Aryan Society

Family being the basis of the Aryan social life needed to be a healthy bond. Monogamy was the usual rule but polygamy was also practiced. Women played an important role in the family. They also excelled in education. Apata Visvara and Ghosa were a few who even composed mantras. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food were common. Wheat

and barley was the common food grains. Drinks included the Soma and Sura which were intoxicating and was drunk during festivals. The dress consisted of two or three garments- an under garment, garment and a cloak. These were made of wool or skin and colored yellow and red. Gold ornaments such as necklaces, earrings, anklets, and bracelets were common and was worn by both men and women. Women enjoyed equal status and received education with the men. They also freely participated in public life.

Religion

The Aryans worshipped many gods and goddess. Most of the objects they worshipped were the personification of the forces of nature. The religious beliefs of the Aryans and its essential elements were contained in the Rig Veda. It was based on the beliefs that

The numerous gods and goddess were personifications of whatever that was noble splendid and striking in nature. The common people sought refuge under these powers who did good answer as evil. To get the good offerings as food and drinks has to be made.

Fire was the means of messengers who carried the offerings to the gods. This was done amidst the chanting of hymns of praise.

There were numerous deities, classified under terrestrial, atmospheric, and celestial group. Agni, Indra and varuna were the chief deities. They also included Agni, vayu, surya, prithivi, etc. Gods and goddess

were worshipped with simple ceremonials known as Yajna or sacrifices.

Extent of Aryans in India

The Aryans were said to have been spread into four divisions of the country as portrayed by Manu

- Brahmavarta
 - Braharishi Desha
 - Madhya Desha
 - Aryavarta
- (a) The Brahmavarta or the land of Gods was the region lying between the rivers Saraswati and Drishadwati. It also included parts of Kurukshetra as mentioned in the Mahabharatha.
- (b) The Braharishi Desha or the country of the holy sages. Comprised the territories of the Kurus, Matsya, Panchalas and Swsenas. Today they are known as Thaneshwar, Eastern Rajputana, the Doab and Mathura district.
- (c) The Madhya Desa or the middle country occupied the region lying between the Himalayas and Vindhya.
- (d) The Aryavarta occupied the region between the Himalayas and the Vindhya from the east to west.

Though a physical terrain segregated North and South India and resulted in the development of a Dravidian culture, yet the Aryans influenced the religious thoughts of the Dravidians.

Later Aryan Period (Vedic Period)

The later vedic period is said to have begun after the composing of the Atharva Veda, Yajur veda

and Sama veda. This period indicated changes in the political, social economic and religious conditions of the life of the Aryans. These changes were different from those in the early vedic period during the composition of the Rig Veda.

Political Condition

The Rig vedic Aryans were divided into several tribes. Their was frequent internal strife among them. The weaker tribes were absorbed into the stronger ones and thus the kingdoms and larger areas of residence emerged. The political influence of the Aryans extended towards the east and south. The Aryan now established a powerful kingdom in the Deccan, to the north of the river Godavari. The mode of succession continued to be hereditary. The expansion of the territory also resulted in the increased domination of the king assisted by a hierarchy of nobility. These nobles were assigned official duties. Thus an administrative machinery developed. The king now had a council of advisers which included the kings relatives, his courtiers, heads of various departments. The purohita (the priest), the senani (the commander), the suta (the charioteer), the Samgrahitr (the treasurer), tax collector, etc. were the individuals which assisted in the kings activities. The role of the popular assemblies was important. A notable feature of this period was the extinction of the Samiti. The sabha transformed from being a popular village assembly, continued as a court or judicial assembly.

Social Condition

The need to perform the ceremonial yajnas required the services of a highly trained priests who were skilled in the religious matters. This group came to assume the title of the Brahmanas. They occupied a high status and were respected and honoured by the king.

The constant inter tribal fighting for establishing supremacy, and struggle with the original inhabitants gave birth for the need of persons skilled in the warfare. Thus arose the new class of the Kshatriyas. Remaining people in the Aryan society were called Vaisyas. The group who were not Aryans were called Sudras. These separation in the society was on the basis of the profession they pursued. Gradually the Aryans were divided into the four varnas, succession to these in course of time became hereditary. The caste system became rigid, Education was confined to the upper classes. An Aryan's life was divided into stages which began with Upanayana, which was the inception of the pupil to education. After a period of 12 years study of the Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads, Ithihasa, Puranas, Grammer, Ethics etc. the individual could chose one of the four ashramas i.e. Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Sanyasa, Vanaprastha.

Religious Condition

Religion and philosophy in the later Vedic period became more confirmed with elaborate sacrifices. The doctrines of Karma, Maya, soul, Mukti were estab-

lished. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara became the important gods who were worshipped.

Literature in the Vedic Period

The Vedas

The vedas were the sources of reconstructing the vedic period. The oldest being the Rigveda, The Samaveda, Yajurveda and Adharaveda had their own significance. The sama veda contains the verses from the Rigveda. The hymns in it were relevant to the soma sacrifice .

The Yajurveda also consist of hymns from the Rig Veda, more than half of this is in prose to facilitate the performance of sacrifices. It depicts the social and religious condition of this period. The Atharva Veda contains philosophic speculations, popular cults and superstitions.

The Brahmanas

They are prose of the sacrificial ceremonies. These explanatory treatises lay emphasis on ritualism. They mark the transition from Vedic to classical Sanskrit. It also marks the period which marks the advance of the Aryans from the Panchala country to the Vidha (North Bihar).

The Vedangas and the Upavedas

These are said to be supplementary sections of the Vedic literature. These gives us idea about Jotish (Astronomy), Medicine

(Ayurveda), Dhanurveda (war), Gandharvaveda, (music) etc.

The Vedanta

It is the philosophy taught in most of the Upanishads.

The Upanishads

This contains the main idea that constitute the intellectual aspect of the Hindu philosophy. They do not lay emphasis to rites, ceremonies and austerities. The Upanishads are dated between 800 BC and 500 BC. The Upanishads are about 100 in number. The Brahadaranyaka Upanishads, Chandogva Upanishad, Aitreya Upanishad are a few. The Upanishads reflects the richness and universality of the Indian Culture. They are said to be the thinking power of the Brahmana and the Kshatriyas.

Literature in the Later Vedic Period

The Epics

They are the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha. They introduce us to a period of transformation in the social and religious institutions of the Vedic age

The Ramayana written by Valmiki is said a poetic legend based on mythology. It portrays the ideal man- god Rama and the ideal woman Sita. The sacrifices made by the characters for the preservation of truth appealed to the people. This was edited by the Brahmanas in course of time to convert it a book of devotion.

The Mahabharatha which consist of 18 parvas (sections)

contains about 100,000 verses. This is an encyclopedia of history, morals and religion.

Puranas

These are legends connected with epics and law books. They are 18 in number and are mostly recognized in North India . The Vishnu Purana, for example, should treat of five subjects namely primary creation, secondary creations, Genealogies of gods and patriachs reigns of various Manus and history of ancient dynasties. The Vayupurana is one of the oldest the Puranas. It was edited during the age of Guptas when there was a great revival of the Sanskrit language. The other Puranas include Matsya and Brahmanda which gives us account of the kings up to the imperial Gupta dynasty with other contemporaries.

Laws of Manu

Also known as Manav Dhramshastra in Sanskrit, it comprises of 2684 couplets arranged in twelve chapters. It is the earliest of law books. The laws of Manu forms the foundation of the court of law in India under the name of Hindu law. The book makes a distinction between varna and jatis. The varnas were in the order of the occupations pursued by the people. This was given as below,

- the learned, literate and priestly order
- the fighting or the governing class
- the trading and agricultural group

- the common folk, labourers
The composition of this may be between 200BC and 200AD by a sage named Bhrihu.

Pre Mauryan Period

Indian history before the seventh century was not dated. The lack of written records and other material certainly breaks the continuity at several points yet the practices of the ancient and the Vedic periods exists till today as traditions. The first recorded date is considered as 326BC, the year of Alexander's invasion. The Mauryan period dates slightly later and historical traditions recorded in literature gives us some information of the kingdoms of Northern India in the seventh century BC.

Vast territories in the northern part of India were covered by forest and inhabited by tribes. Civilized settlements existed in the plains of the Indus and the Ganga. Four important kingdoms of this period were the Magadha, the Avadh, the Vatsa and the Malwa. The other small kingdoms were Kasi, Matsya, Kuru and Panchala. Besides these kingdoms there were many non - monarchical clans. The most important was the Virji confederation of eight clans, of which the Licchavis, who ruled from Vaisali as their capital was prominent. The others were Sakyas of Kapilavastu and the Mallas. These clans had no hereditary rules. An assembly was in charge of administration helped by a council and an elected chief. The four kingdoms maintained matrimonial relation, though fighting among themselves for supremacy was common. Magadha emerged as the

strongest power with an able line of rulers.

While Magadha was establishing their way over northern India, the regions of west, Punjab, Sind and Afganistan were divided into many states. Kamboja and Gandhara are two of the sixteen Mahajanapadas mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures.

Magadha

The history of the Magadha kingdom was unleashed in south Bihar in the 4th century BC and the drama commenced in the Saisungha dynasty by a chieftain named Sisunga in about 642BC. Bimbisara was the fifth king of this kingdom. He contributed extending his dominions by the conquest of Anga the modern Bhagalpur and Monghyr district. He is said to reigned for twenty eight years, according to the puranas. He is regarded as the person who laid the foundation of Magadhan greatness. His policy of diplomacy and war, and able administration made Magadha a great empire.

Sixteen Mahajanapadas

The literal meaning of Mahajanapadas is great kingdoms. They flourished in the north/north western parts of India before the rise of Buddhism. Aryans have migrated into India long time back and there were regular friction between them and the non aryan tribes concerning, cattle, fodder, land etc. These tribes of Aryans were called as Janas by many Vedic texts. Later on there was a merger of the Vedic Janas into Janapadas. Different regions

of the Indian subcontinent were previously divided into Janapadas, this was a clear demarcation by boundaries. Many Janapadas by 600 BCE further developed into bigger political bodies. These kingdoms came to be known as Mahajanapadas in the Buddhist traditions.

Sixteen great kingdoms as they are referred to by buddhist and other texts. The sixteen mahajanapadas include Kasi, Kosala, anga, Magadha, Vajji, Malla, Chedi, Vatsa, Kuru, Panchala, Machcha, Surasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhara and Kamboja.

Kasi

The name Kasi is the tribe who settled in the region around Varanasi where itself the capital was located. There is a belief that Varanasi got its name from the rivers that surround the city, namely Varuna and Asi. Kasi occupied a predominant position among the sixteen Mahajanapadas, before the rise of Buddha. We come to know a lot about Kasi from the Jatakas which were a voluminous body of myths and folklore revolving about previous births of the buddha. This supremacy called for a long drawn conflict for mastery between other cities, like Kosala, Anga and Magadha with Kasi. Kasi was no doubt influential that is the reason why we get a mention of Kasi in the Vedic texts. Matsya Purana and Alberuni are the texts where we read Kasi as Kausika and Kaushika, others read it as Kasi.

Kosala

Among the sixteen Maha-

janapadas, Kosala is one, which comprised of Shravasti, Kushavati, Saket and Ayodhya. Kosala constituted of the territories of modern Oudh or Awadh which is located in Uttar Pradesh. The state capital of Kosala was Ayodhya which was under the command of Prosenjit the Kosala King, a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. The southern side it was bordered by the Ganges, the east had river Gandhak encircling it. Magadha was a neighbouring state to Kosala, and there were conflicts between them. Ajatshatru who was the king of Magadha and Prasenjit were in continuous struggle for power which finally came to an end with the alignment of the confederation of Licchavis with Magadha. After Prasenjit, Vidudabha rose into power and Kosala ultimately amalgamated into Magadha.

Anga

India's earliest empire was evolving around the Gangetic plains, which included the Mahajanapadas. Anga was one of these evolving states, which is one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas that prospered during that period. Malini, Champapuri, Champa Malini, Kala Malini etc were the different names by which this state was called. The Angas were first referred to in the Atharva Veda as the detested people. Atharva Veda considers Anga an unholy place and some even condemned it as a place where wives and children were sold. Mahabharata, testifies the people of Anga to be of noble birth or 'Sujati' proclaiming the sanctity of the place Champa as a pilgrimage. During the reign of

Bimbisara, this Mahajanapada was usurped and taken over by Magadha. Champa was also a major seat for the spread of Jainism and Buddhism.

Magadha

Magadha emerged as a powerful kingdom in the reign of Bimbisara and his son Ajatshatru. The earliest ruling dynasty according to Mahabharata and Puranas seems to be founded by king Brihadratha. The Vedas have a mention of the Magadhas as semi 'brahmanised' and this was a reason for the not so good impression of the people. Kikata was a non Aryan country according to Yasaka and the king Pramaganda is said to be the ruler of Kikata. Kikata on the other hand was considered a synonym for Magadha in later Vedic literature.

The city was known by many other names like Magadhapura, Brihadrathapura, Vasumati, Kushagrapura and Bimbisarapuri. Buddhism and Jainism were in vogue in the religious scenario during that time, and Magadha became a dynamic center of Jainism along with the first Buddhist Council being held in Rajagriha in the Vaibhara Hills.

Vajji or Vriji

Sixteen Mahajanapadas of ancient India includes Vajji as one of them. The Vajji was a confederation a many clans of which the Licchavis, the Vedehans, Jnatikas and the Vajjis were the most important. It was actually known as the Vajji Sangha or the union of Vajji, which comprised of many janapadas, gramas (vil-

lages), gothas (groups). The eminent people were chosen from each khandas (districts) to represent on their behalf in Vajji gana parishad (people's council of Vajji). The chairman of the council was called Ganapramukh (head of the democracy), but often he was addressed as the king. The other executives were Mahabhadrikrit (equivalent to the minister of internal security), binishchayatya (chief justice), dandadhikrit (other justices) etc. Vajji had its capital at Vaishali.

Malla

Malla was an ancient dynasty in India and is one of the sixteen mahajanapadas. Epics like Mahabharata mentions that the Mallas were considered along with the tribes of the Angas, Vangas and Kalingas. Buddhist and Jain works have the mention of the Mallas who existed in a republic that consisted of nine territories. In a more original context it is evident that they actually had a monarchical form of government in the beginning but later they transformed into the republic form (Samgha). The Mallas were very warlike and brave people and have been mentioned and referred as Vrtaya Kshatriyas by Manusmriti, as Vasishthas in the Mahapparnibbana Suttanta. Mallas have also suffered domination by the Magadha empire after Buddha's death.

Chedi or Cheti

The Chedis were group of ancient people of India living on the south of the river Yamuna. They are mentioned in the Rigveda,

and city called Suktimati is mentioned as the capital of Chedi. Chedi kingdom was one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas, and was ruled by Sisupala, an ally of Jarasandha of Magadha and Duryodhana of Kuru. Prominent Chedis during Kurukshetra War included Damaghosha, Shishupala, Dhrishtaketu, Suketu, Sarabha, Bhima's wife and so on. Chedi was the place that was chosen for spending the 13th year of exile by the Pandavas.

Vamsa

The Vamsa or the Vatsa was the kingdom that followed the monarchical form of government. This kingdom is one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas, and the capital of this was located at Kausambi. One very important aspect of this city was that it formed the hub of all economic activities and had a prosperous trade and business relations. 6th century Bc has the account of Udayana to be the ruler of the kingdom at the time of Buddha. About Udayana it is said that earlier there were resentments on his side regarding Buddhism as he was very warlike and aggressive but in the later years became more tolerant and finally a follower of Buddha. So much he was affected by his teachings that he made Buddhism his state religion.

Kuru

The kuru janapada is one of the sixteen mahajanapadas. Regarding the origin of the Kurus it has been said that they belong to the Puru-Bharata family. Kurus were the specific origin of people

living in the Kurukshetra and according to the Buddhist text Sumangavilasini, the kurus came from the Uttarakuru. Testified by the Vayu Purana, the founder of Kurukshetra or kuru janapada was Kuru who was the son of Samvarsana of the Puru lineage. During sixth/fifth century BCE, the Kurus are believed to have shifted to republic form of government.

Panchala

Panchala was divided into Uttara-Panchala and Dakshina-Panchala. Counted among the sixteen Mahajanapadas, the northern Panchala had Chhatravati as its capital and the south had its capital at Kampilya. In Panchala is situated the renowned city of Kanyakubja. Like many other kingdoms it was seen that the Panchals too had shifted to a republican form of government in sixth and fifth century BCE from being a monarchy.

Machcha or Matsya

The Kingdom of Matsya was again an important part of the sixteen mahajanapadas. This lay south of the Kurus and west of the Yamuna which separated them from the Panchalas. The Machcha tribe inhabited this region which had its capital at Viratanagara. The Matsyas are generally linked up with the Surasenas in Pali literature. The Matsya tribe in comparison to the other janapadas were of not much political eminence during the age of Buddha. Matsyas and the chhedis have a connection here when we see that they

were once ruled by the same king Sujata, and Matsya was a part of the kingdom of Chedi.

Surasena

The kingdom of Surasena, underwent a lot of metamorphosis in terms of religion. The capital which was Mathura, was the centre of Krishna worship at the time of Megasthenes. Whereas Avantipura who was the king of Surasena was one of the first disciples of Buddha, and it gained prominence ever since then in Mathura. The geographical location of this kingdom among the sixteen mahajanapadas was south west of Matsya and west of the river Yamuna. There were various tribes that inhabited the region and they were headed by a chief.

Assaka or Ashmaka

Kingdom of Assaka or Ashmaka was situated in the southern part of India and one of the sixteen mahajanapadas. The Ashmaka had its capital located at Potana or Potali which have resemblances of Paudanya of Mahabharata. The Assakas are placed in the north-west in the Markendeya Purana and the Brihat Samhita. There are numerous associations regarding the identification of Assakas. That is why we have different views on this. Like the commentator of Akutilya's Arthashastra identifies it with Maharashtra.

Avanti

Avanti was an important

kingdom of the sixteen mahajanapadas, and it lay in the western part of India. Buddhism rose to its prominence in this kingdom and this was one of the other kingdoms which initiated Buddhism in a larger manner. The kingdom was divided as north and south Avanti and the north had its capital at Ujjaini. Mahissati was the capital of Avanti in the beginning which was integrated into Ujjaini during the period of Mahavira and Buddha. Avanti in the later stages of history was amalgamated into the Magadha empire under the reign of Shishunaga.

Gandhara

The Gandhara kingdom comprised of the Gandharas who were highly trained in the art of war and they have a mention in the Atharva Veda as well. Though in the Vedas they are mentioned as the despised people along with some others due to their allegiance to non Aryan group. Puranic and Buddhist tradition included Gandharas in Uttarapatha. The Gandhara kingdom of the sixteen mahajanapadas was founded by Gandhara, son of Arudha who was the son of Yayati. It was also believed once according to Gandhara Jatakas that they were a part of Kashmir. Gandhara was an important seat of international commercial activities, and provided communication with other countries like Iran and Central Asia.

Kamboja

Kamboja was believed to have composed of parts that

were on either side of the Hindukush. Whereas originally they were located somewhere else. The Kamboja Mahajanapada of the Buddhist traditions refers to the 'cis-Hindukush branch' of ancient Kambojas. The Kamboja being one of the sixteen mahajanapadas were a republic since ages. There are many evidences from the Mahabharata, Kautilya's Arthashastra and Ashoka's Edict No. XIII which affirms that the Kambojas were a republic people. Magadha emerged as a very powerful mahajanapada with time and this marked the annexation of several janapadas of the 'Majjhimadesa'. The Kasis, Kurus, Panchalas, Vatsyas etc were certainly among the exterminated clans which had no trace in the folklore, poetry and so on. The sixteen Mahajanapadas were in fact distinguished as the ones belonging to the Majjhimadesa or mid India, or Uttarapatha or the north-west region.

Alexander's Invasion of India

As remarked by V. A. Smith, "Alexander the great having completed the subjugations of Bactria, resolved to execute the cherished purpose of emulating and surpassing the mythical exploits of Dionysos, Herakles, and Semiramis by effecting the conquest of India." By that time on the eve of Alexander's invasion India was divided into small kingdoms, which fought among themselves. During Alexander's fight with the Persians, Shashi Gupta, a Hindu king helped Persians against Alexander. When Alexander defeated the Persians, Shashi Gupta entered into friend-

ship with Alexander and helped him in his invasion of India. When Alexander was at Nikai, Ambhi, the king of Taxila sent many costly presents and elephants to Alexander as gifts and accepted his sovereignty. Ambhi was the first traitor in the history of India who for his own self-interest sent an invitation to Alexander to visit India. Certain other kings of frontier kingdoms followed Ambhi and accepted the sovereignty of Alexander.

Alexander's Fight with hill tribes

Alexander had to face many races living on hills. They were very brave and freedom loving. After a terrible fight with them Alexander first conquered the Aspasiens and the Guraeans. After the fight Alexander captured 40,000 prisoners and 2,30,000 oxen. After this Alexander attacked Nysa. After little opposition, the Nysaens submitted to Alexander. Being encouraged with these successes Alexander attacked the Assakenoi state. The people of this state fought with an army of 20,000 cavalry, 30,000 infantry and thirty elephants. The fort Massaga was regarded impregnable. Because of this reason Alexander became a little disappointed but it so happened that a chance arrow killed the chief of Assakenoi. This created chaos and confusion among the people and they ultimately surrendered to Alexander. There were 7,000 mercenary soldiers in the garrison of Massaga who were guaranteed safe passage by Alexander but as and when they retreated to a distance, Alexander got all of them slaughtered through

treachery. Diodoros and Plutarch condemn Alexander for this breach of trust. After the conquest of Massaga in which a large number of persons were massacred, Alexander captured the free cities of Aorons Bazira, Ora or Dyrta.

War with Puru

After Taxila, Alexander advanced towards Jhelum and sent a messenger to Puru to accept his overlordship. Puru sent the reply that he would see him in the battlefield. The armies of Alexander and Poras faced each other on either banks of the river of Jhelum. Puru had a very big army consisting of 50,000 infantry, 3,000 cavalry, 1,000 chariots and 130 elephants. The armies of Alexander consisted of different races and there were also some mercenary soldiers. Alexander was a great diplomat and knew before hand the strength of Puru. He knew that it would be difficult to cross the river, which was in spate, in front of the army of Puru. As pointed out by Arrian, Alexander made up his mind to steal passage. He took 11,000 soldiers 16 miles up the river from his camp and crossed the river. Puru was under the impression that Alexander would not cross the river in the night and hence he did not take any precautions. All this prevented Puru from resting and concentrating his preparations at any one point selected in preference to any other as the best for defending the passage.

The battle of Jhelum

As soon as Puru knew that the

enemy had crossed the river, he sent his son with 2,000 horses and 120 chariots. Alexander easily routed this army and Puru's son along with 400 Indian soldiers was killed in this battle. Hearing the news of the rout, Puru moved with 203 elephants and a huge army. Puru mainly relied upon the elephants. Indians fought with great courage. Indians obstinately maintained their ground till the eight hour of the day, but eventually the luck did not favour them. The main strength of Puru lay in the chariots that became useless due to utter rains. The rain and storms had made the ground slippery and unfit for horses to ride over, while chariots kept sticking in the muddy sloughs formed by the rains and proved almost immovable from their great weight." Moreover due to slippery ground, the Indian archers proved to be ineffective. In the beginning the elephants of Puru terrorized the enemy but due to narrow space and being injured by the arrows they turned back and trampled their own soldiers.

As observed by Arrian, "The elephants being now cooped up within a narrow space did no less damage to their friends than to their foes, trampling them under their feet as they wheeled and pushed about" Thus ultimately all the chariots were destroyed, elephants were either killed or captured and himself was taken a prisoner in fainting condition,

However, Alexander was pleased with the bravery and valour of Puru. On being asked as to how he wished to be treated, Puru replied, "Treat me, O Alexander as befits a king." Alexander was very much impressed with this answers and he

not only returned the territory of Puru but also gave him certain conquered states. To commemorate his victory Alexander founded two cities of 'Bonkephala' and 'Nikaia'

Other conquests of Alexander

After having defeated Puru, Alexander marched into the territory of Gausai and conquered 37 cities there. Thereafter he crossed river Chenab and defeated Kanishka or Chhota Poras and included his kingdom in that of the Puru's. Towards the end of 326 B.C. Alexander crossed river Ravi and captured the fort of Pimarama. After this, Alexander captured San-goala, which was the stronghold of Kathas, the Kathas fought with great bravery and made the cavalry of Alexander ineffective. Ultimately Poras came to the help of Alexander with 5,00 Indian soldiers and with his help Alexander conquered the Kathas.

Departure of Alexander to the homeland

After conquering the Katha, the soldiers of Alexander refused to proceed further. Alexander wanted to conquer the Nanda Empire about which he had heard but despite his persuasion, encouragement and even command his army refused to proceed further. When Alexander failed to convince his army and the soldiers who had not the courage to speak openly to Alexander, Koinos came up with the courage and said, "Seek not to lead them against their inclina-

tion, for you will not find them the same men in the face of dangers, if they enter without heart into their contests with the enemy." These words of Koinos had the full support of the army.

Reason for the refusal of army to proceed further

There were some specific reasons for which the army of Alexander refused to proceed further and these reasons are

- It was a long time since Greek soldiers were away from home and they wanted to go back to their homes. As pointed out by Plutarch, "It is true that the Greek soldiers were war worn and homesick, disease stricken and destitute. They had lost many of their friends and relations in the battle and needed a well-earned rest as well.
- Another reason, which discouraged the Greek soldiers from proceeding, further was the bravery and fighting capacity of the Indians. It can be understood as remarked by Plutarch, "The battle with Poras depressed the spirits of the Macedonians and made them very unwilling to advance further into India." Regarding the heroism and skill of Indian soldiers Arrian also observes that, "In the art of war they were far superior to the other nations by which Asia was at that time inhabited."
- Yet another reason, which depressed the spirits of the Greek soldiers was that, the state conquered by them raised their head in revolt.
- Greek soldiers had heard of

several independent and material races living in the east of Vyas. Moreover, in the middle of India there was the mighty empire of the Nandas. Already depressed by the heroism of Poras and the skill of Indian soldiers, they had "No stomach for further toils in India."

In view of the reasons mentioned above, all the appeals made by Alexander proved to be ineffective and ultimately he had to order the retreat.

Retreat

Though quite reluctantly, Alexander divided his army into three parts and ordered the retreat. He made Puru the master of 15 republics consisting of 5,000 cities. He gave northwestern provinces Jhelum to Ambhi and Kashmir and Uarsha to Abhisara.

Alexander's Difficulties in the way back

During the retreat Alexander had too many difficulties, which can be briefly described as below

The Siboi and Agalassians :

At the confluence of Ravi and Chenab, Alexander had to face the Siboi and Agalassians who had gathered 40,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry. They fought bravely but were defeated by Alexander.

The Malavas and Kshudrakas :

The next encounter that Alexander had to face was against the warlike tribes of Malavas and Kshudrakas. The Malavas and the

Kshudrakas were at daggers drawn but forgot their differences and combined to give a strong resistance to the Greek soldiers. Their combined army consisted of 90,000 infantry 10,000 cavalry and 900 war chariots. Greek soldiers were fed up with wars and began to reproach the king. Alexander appealed to his soldiers to permit him to return from India with known and not to escape from it like a fugitive. Greek soldiers responded to the appeal of Alexander and attacked the enemy and killed a large number of enemy troops and men and women mercilessly at Malloi. As pointed out by Dr. R. S. Tripathi, "The indiscriminate slaughter of women and children was undoubtedly an act of wanton cruelty which casts a slur on the war codes of the Greeks in India." After appointing Philippos as governor over them, Alexander reached the junction of Chenab and Sind and waited for Peridikkasas who had gone to conquer and subjugate the Abastaroi.

Conquest of lower Sindh:

The ruler of the Brahmins, Musecanons submitted to the Alexander. Alexander also conquered Patalre.

Other difficulties:

As regards other difficulties which Alexander had to encounter, Arrian writes, "The blazing heat and the want of water destroyed a great part of the army and specially the beasts of burden, which perished from the great depth of sand and the heat which scorched like fire while many of them died of thirst."

Death of Alexander

Alexander left India in 325 B.C. He divided his army into two parts. One part of the army, led by Niparkas went through water whereas the other part led by Alexander marched from Baluchistan. In 323 B.C Alexander fell ill at Babylonia and expired. As remarked by a scholar, "Into thirteen years he had compressed the energies of many life and times."

After Alexander's Death

Just after the retreat of Alexander, the conquered states raised their heads in revolt. The Greek satrap, commandant Philippos was murdered. The king of Taxila extended his empire from Kabul valley to Hindukush. Eudamus remained the sole Greek representative in India. In 323 B.C. after the death of Alexander, there ensued a lot of contusion and his generals partitioned the empire among themselves. In 321 B.C. The empire was again partitioned. Eudamus was totally ignored and in 317 B.C. he returned to his home country where he died. Peithon also returned to his home country. Ultimately Chandragupta Maurya drove away all the Greeks from India.

Causes of defeat of Indians

There were many causes of defeat of Indians but the main causes can be mentioned as follows

- Differences and dissension of Indians,

- Lack of able leadership,
- Lack of organization, and of course
- The personality of Alexander.

Besides this, Greek soldiers were more skillful in modern warfare. V. A. Smith remarks, "The triumphant progress of Alexander from the Himalayas to the sea demonstrated the weakness of the greatest Asiatic armies when confronted with European skill and discipline."

Maurya Empire

The Maurya Empire was a geographically extensive and powerful empire in ancient India, ruled by the Mauryan dynasty from 321 to 185 BC. Originating from the kingdom of Magadha in the Indo-Gangetic plains (modern Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bengal) in the eastern side of the Indian subcontinent, the empire had its capital city at Pataliputra (modern Patna). The Empire was founded in 322 BC by Chandragupta Maurya, who had overthrown the Nanda Dynasty and rapidly expanded his power westwards across central and western India taking advantage of the disruptions of local powers in the wake of the withdrawal westward by Alexander the Great's Greek and Persian armies. By 320 BC the empire had fully occupied Northwestern India, defeating and conquering the satraps left by Alexander.

It was one of the world's largest empires in its time. At its greatest extent, the empire stretched to the north along the natural boundaries of the Himalayas, and to the east stretching into what is now Assam. To the west, it probably reached be-

yond modern Pakistan, annexing Balochistan and much of what is now Afghanistan, including the modern Herat and Kandahar provinces. The Empire was expanded into India's central and southern regions by the emperors Chandragupta and Bindusara, but it excluded a small portion of unexplored tribal and forested regions near Kalinga (modern Orissa). Its decline began 60 years after Ashoka's rule ended, and it dissolved in 185 BC with the foundation of the Sunga Dynasty in Magadha.

Under Chandragupta, the Mauryan Empire conquered the trans-Indus region, which was under Macedonian rule. Chandragupta then defeated the invasion led by Seleucus I, a Greek general from Alexander's army. Under Chandragupta and his successors, both internal and external trade, and agriculture and economic activities, all thrived and expanded across India thanks to the creation of a single and efficient system of finance, administration and security. After the Kalinga War, the Empire experienced half a century of peace and security under Ashoka. Mauryan India also enjoyed an era of social harmony, religious transformation, and expansion of the sciences and of knowledge. Chandragupta Maurya's embrace of Jainism increased social and religious renewal and reform across his society, while Ashoka's embrace of Buddhism has been said to have been the foundation of the reign of social and political peace and non-violence across all of India. Ashoka sponsored the spreading of Buddhist ideals into Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, West Asia and Mediterranean Europe.

Chandragupta's minister

Chanakya wrote the Arthashastra, one of the greatest treatises on economics, politics, foreign affairs, administration, military arts, war, and religion ever produced in India. Archaeologically, the period of Mauryan rule in South Asia falls into the era of Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW). The Arthashastra and the Edicts of Ashoka are the primary sources of written records of the Mauryan times. The Lion Capital of Asoka at Sarnath, is the national emblem of India.

Nanda Dynasty

The Nanda Empire originated from the kingdom of Magadha in Ancient India during the 5th and 4th centuries BC. At its greatest extent, the Nandas extended from Bengal in the east, Punjab in the west and as far south as the Vindhya Range. The Nanda Empire was later conquered by Chandragupta Maurya, who founded the Maurya Empire.

Establishment of the dynasty

Mahapadma Nanda has been described as the destroyer of all the Kshatriyas. He defeated the Panchalas, Kasis, Haihayas, Kalingas, Asmakas, Kurus, Maithilas, Surasenas, Vitihotras, etc. He expanded his territory till south of Deccan. Mahapadma Nanda died at the age of 88 and, therefore, he ruled the bulk of the period of this dynasty, which lasted 100 years. The Nandas who usurped the throne of the Shishunaga dynasty were of low origin. Some sources state that the founder, Mahapadma, was the son of a

Shudra mother, others that he was born of a union of a barber with a courtesan. Nandas were the first of a number of dynasties of northern India who were of non-Kshatriya origin.

Nanda Rule

The Nandas are sometimes described as the first empire builders in the recorded history of India. They inherited the large kingdom of Magadha and wished to extend it to yet more distant frontiers. To this purpose they built up a vast army consisting of 200,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 2,000 war chariots and 3,000 war elephants (at the lowest estimates). According to Plutarch however, the size of the Nanda army was even larger, numbering 200,000 infantry, 80,000 cavalry, 8,000 war chariots, and 6,000 war elephants. However, the Nandas never had the opportunity to see their army up against Alexander, who invaded India at the time of Dhana Nanda, since Alexander had to confine his campaign to the plains of Punjab, for his forces, frightened by the prospect of facing a formidable foe, mutinied at the Hyphasis River (the modern Beas River) refusing to march any further. This river thus marks the easternmost extent of Alexander's conquests:

"As for the Macedonians, however, their struggle with Porus blunted their courage and stayed their further advance into India. For having had all they could do to repulse an enemy who mustered only twenty thousand infantry and two thousand horse, they violently opposed Alexander when he insisted on

crossing the river Ganges also, the width of which, as they learned, was thirty-two furlongs, its depth a hundred fathoms, while its banks on the further side were covered with multitudes of men-at-arms and horsemen and elephants. For they were told that the kings of the Ganderites and Praesii were awaiting them with eighty thousand horsemen, two hundred thousand footmen, eight thousand chariots, and six thousand fighting elephants."

The Nandas made the methodical collection of taxes by regularly appointed officials a part of their administrative system. The treasury was continually replenished, the wealth of the Nandas being well-known. The Nandas also built canals and carried out irrigation projects. The possibility of an imperial structure based on an essentially agrarian economy began to germinate in the Indian mind.

The Fall

The last of the Nandas was Dhana Nanda (called Xandrames or Aggrammes in ancient Greek and Latin sources). Dhana Nanda was dethroned after he was defeated by Chandragupta Maurya, a young adventurer born of a Nanda prince and a maid named "Mura". He had a great potential to rule. Dhana Nanda was murdered which finally signaled the advent of the Maurya Empire in 321 BC.

Plutarch records that Chandragupta Maurya had stated that he was able to overthrow Dhana Nanda since he was hated and despised by his subjects on account of the wickedness of his disposition:

List of Nanda rulers

- Mahapadma Nanda (c. 424 BC – ?)
- Pandhuka
- Panghupati
- Bhutapala
- Rashtrapala
- Govishanaka
- Dashasidkhaka
- Kaivarta
- Mahendra
- Dhana Nanda (Argames) (? – c. 321 BC)

Chanakya

Chānakya (c. 350–283 BCE) was an adviser to the first Maurya Emperor Chandragupt (c. 340–293 BCE), and was the chief architect of his rise to power. Kautilya and Vishnugupta, the names by which the ancient Indian political treatise called the Arthaśāstra identifies its author, are traditionally identified with Chanakya. Chanakya has been considered as the pioneer of the field of economics and political science. In the Western world, he has been referred to as The Indian Machiavelli, although Chanakya's works predate Machiavelli's by about 1,800 years. Chanakya was a teacher in Takṣāśīla, an ancient centre of learning, and was responsible for the creation of Mauryan empire, the first of its kind on the Indian subcontinent. His works were lost near the end of the Gupta dynasty and not re-discovered until 1915.

Identity

He is generally called Chanakya (derived from his father's name "Chanak") but, in his capacity as author of the Arthaśhāstra, is

generally referred to as Kautilya derived from his gotra's name "Kotil" (Kautilya means "of Kotil"). He was the master of shrewd act of diplomacy. He believed in four ways, namely, Treating with Equality, Enticement, Punishment or War and Sowing Dissension. The Arthaśhāstra identifies its author by the name Kautilya, except for one verse which refers to him by the name Vishnugupta. One of the earliest Sanskrit literatures to explicitly identify Chanakya with Vishnugupta was Vishnu Sarma's Panchatantra in the 3rd century BC.

K.C. Ojha puts forward the view that the traditional identification of Vishnugupta with Kautilya was caused by a confusion of editor and originator and suggests that Vishnugupta was a redactor of the original work of Kautilya. Thomas Burrow goes even further and suggests that Chanakya and Kautilya may have been two different people.

Kautilya's role in the formation of the Mauryan Empire is the essence of a historical/spiritual novel The Courtesan and the Sadhu by Dr. Mysore N. Prakash.

Works

Two books are attributed to Chanakya: Arthashastra and Neetishastra which is also known as Chanakya Niti. The Arthashastra discusses monetary and fiscal policies, welfare, international relations, and war strategies in detail. Neetishastra is a treatise on the ideal way of life, and shows Chanakya's in-depth study of the Indian way of life. Chanakya also developed Neeti-Sutras (aphorisms - pithy sentences) that tell people how they should behave.

Of these well-known 455 sutras, about 216 refer to raaja-neeti (the do's and don'ts of running a kingdom). Apparently, Chanakya used these sutras to groom Chandragupt and other selected disciples in the art of ruling a kingdom.

Legend

Thomas R. Trautmann lists the following elements as common to different forms of the Chanakya legend:

* Chanakya was born with a complete set of teeth, a sign that he would become king, which is inappropriate for a Brahmin like Chanakya. Chānakya's teeth were therefore broken and it was prophesied that he will rule through another.

* The Nanda King throws Chānakya out of his court, prompting Chānakya to swear revenge.

* Chānakya searches for one worthy for him to rule through. Chānakya encounters a young Chandragupt Maurya who is a born leader even as a child.

* Chānakya's initial attempt to overthrow Nanda fails, whereupon he comes across a mother scolding her child for burning himself by eating from the middle of a bun or bowl of porridge rather than the cooler edge. Chānakya realizes his initial strategic error and, instead of attacking the heart of Nanda territory, slowly chips away at its edges.

* Chānakya changed his alliance with the mountain king Parvata due to his obstinacy and non-adherence to the principles of the treaty as agreed.

* Chānakya enlists the serv-

ices of a fanatical weaver to rid the kingdom of rebels.

* Chānakya adds poison to the food eaten by Chandragupt Maurya, now king, in order to make him immune. Unaware, Chandragupta feeds some of his food to his queen, who is in her ninth month of pregnancy. In order to save the heir to the throne, Chānakya cuts the queen open and extracts the fetus, who is named Bindusara because he was touched by a drop (bindu) of blood having poison.

* Chānakya's political rivalry with Subandhu leads to his death.

Chanakya was an astute brahmin and shrewd observer of nature. Once, it is said that Mauryan forces had to hide in a cave. There was no food, and the soldiers were starving. They could not come out of the cave either, as there was a threat to their lives. Chanakya saw an ant taking a grain of rice, whereas, there was no sign of food or grain anywhere. Moreover, the rice grain was cooked. He ordered the soldiers to search and they found that their enemies had been dining under the cave. Indeed, they were eating at the ground floor. As soon as they saw this, they escaped and were thus saved.

Death

According to the Jain texts, Chanakya lived to a ripe old age and died around 275 BC and was cremated by his disciple Radhagupta who succeeded Rakshasa Katyayan (great-grand son of Prabuddha Katyayan, who attained Nirvana during the same period as Gautam Buddha) as Prime Minister of the Maurya

Empire and was instrumental in backing Ashoka to the throne.

According to a Jaina tradition, while Chanakya served as the chief administrator of Chandragupt Maurya, he started adding small amounts of poison in Chandragupta's food so that he would get used to it. The aim of this was to prevent the Emperor from being poisoned by enemies. One day the queen, Durdha, shared the food with the Emperor while she was pregnant. Since she was not used to eating poisoned food, she died. Chanakya decided that the baby should not die; hence he cut open the belly of the queen and took out the baby. A drop (bindu in Sanskrit) of poison had passed to the baby's head, and hence Chanakya named him Bindusara. Bindusara would go on to become a great king and to father the greatest Mauryan Emperor since Chandragupt - Asoka.

When Bindusara became a youth, Chandragupta gave up the throne and followed the Jain saint Bhadrabahu to present day Karnataka and settled in a place known as Shravana Belagola. He lived as an ascetic for some years and died of voluntary starvation according to Jain tradition.

Chanakya meanwhile stayed as the administrator of Bindusara. Bindusara also had a minister named Subandhu who did not like Chanakya. One day he told Bindusara that Chanakya was responsible for the murder of his mother. Bindusara asked the nurses who confirmed this story and he became very angry with Chanakya.

It is said that Chanakya, on hearing that the Emperor was angry with him, thought that anyway he was at the end of his life.

He donated all his wealth to the poor, widows and orphans and sat on a dung heap, prepared to die by total abstinence from food and drink. Bindusara meanwhile heard the full story of his birth from the nurses and rushed to beg forgiveness of Chanakya. But Chanakya would not change his mind. Bindusara went back and vented his fury on Subandhu, and killed him.

Chanakya after this incident, renounced food and shortly died thereafter. Bindusara revered Chanakya and the loss of his advisor was a considerable blow to him.

Pali Version

Chanakya is a Brahmin from Takshila.

Other Versions

The classical Sanskrit play by Vishakhadatta, Mudrarakshasa, is one popular source of Chanakya lore. (The play has been dated between 4th and 9th century CE). According to one tradition, Chanakya was a native of Dravida. One of Chanakya's various names was Dramila, the Sanskrit form of "Tamilian". ("Dramila" is believed to be the root of the word "Dravida" by some scholars). Chozhiars, a sub-sect of Iyers, hold that Chanakya was one of them.

There is also a claim that Chanakya belonged to the Brahmin group from the present day Kerala and believed to be resident of present day Ernakulam. In true Hindu tradition he is said to have persuaded King Chandragupt Maurya to forsake his

throne and to join him in moving to the last phase of one's life viz. Vanaprastha. Accordingly, he took the King along with him to South India where both of them carried prolonged meditation and finally achieved Moksha.

Kautilya was educated at Taxila or Takshashila, in present day Pakistan. The new states (in present-day Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) by the northern high road of commerce along the base of the Himalayas maintained contact with Takshashilā and at the eastern end of the northern high road (uttarapatha) was the kingdom of Magadha with its capital city, Pataliputra, now known as Patna. Chanakya's life was connected to these two cities, Pataliputra and Taxila.

In his early years he was tutored extensively in the Vedas - Chanakya memorized them completely at a very early age. He was also taught mathematics, geography and science along with religion. Later he travelled to Takshashila, where he became a teacher of politics. Chanakya taught subjects using the best of practical knowledge acquired by the teachers. The age of entering the University was sixteen. The branches of study most sought after around India at that time ranged from law, medicine, warfare and other disciplines. Two of his more famous students were Bhadrabhatta and Purushdutta.

Political turmoil in Western India at that time caused by Greek invasion forced Chanakya to leave the University environment for the city of Pataliputra (presently known as Patna, in the state of Bihar, India), which was ruled by the Nanda king Dhanananda. Although Chanakya initially prospered in his relations

with the ruler, being a blunt person he was soon disliked by Dhanananda. This ended with Chanakya being removed from an official position he enjoyed.

According to the Kashmiri version of his legend, Chāṇakya a thorn had pricked his foot. He uprooted the tree and poured buttermilk in the roots.

Chandragupta Maurya

Chandragupta Maurya, (born c. 340BCE, ruled c. 320, – 298 BCE died about 298 BCE) was the founder of the Maurya Empire. Chandragupta succeeded in conquering most of the Indian subcontinent. Chandragupta, the first Mauryan king, claimed descent from Shakya clan of the Kshatriya varna. Having defeated the Greek satrap in the Khyber mountains around 303 BC, Chandragupta was crowned King at Taxila. As a result, Chandragupta is considered the first unifier of India and its first genuine emperor. In foreign Greek and Latin accounts, Chandragupta is known as Sandrokyptos, Sandrokottos or Androcottus.

Prior to Chandragupta's consolidation of power, small regional kingdoms dominated the northwestern subcontinent, while the Nanda Dynasty dominated the middle and lower basin of the Ganges. After Chandragupta's conquests, the Maurya Empire extended from Bengal and Assam in the east, to Afghanistan and Balochistan in the west, to Kashmir and Nepal in the north, and to the Deccan Plateau in the south.

His achievements, which ranged from conquering Mace-

donian satrapies in the northwest and conquering the Nanda Empire by the time he was only about 20 years old, to achieving an alliance with Seleucus I Nicator and establishing centralized rule throughout South Asia, remain some of the most celebrated in the history of India. Over two thousand years later, the accomplishments of Chandragupta and his successors, including Ashoka the Great, are objects of great study in the annals of South Asian and world history.

Origins

While many Indian historians held the view that Chandragupta was an illegitimate child of the Nanda Dynasty of Magadha in eastern India, born to a Nanda prince and a maid named "Mura", later literary traditions imply that Chandragupta may have been raised by peacock-tamers (Sanskrit: Mayura-Poshaka), which earned him the Maurya epithet. Both the Buddhist as well as Jain traditions testify to the supposed connection between the Moriya (Maurya) and Mora or Mayura (Peacock). Yet there are other literary traditions according to which Chandragupta belonged to Moriyas, a Kshatriya clan of a little ancient republic of Pippalivana located between Rummindei in the Nepali Terai and Kasia in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh. A kshatriya people known as the "Mauryas" who had received the relics of the Gautama Buddha are also mentioned in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta of the Digha Nikaya: "Then the Moriyas of Pippalivana

came to know that at Kusinara the Blessed One had died. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara, saying: "The Blessed One was of the warrior caste, and we are too. We are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Blessed One. We will erect a stupa over the relics of the Blessed One and hold a festival in their honor.

Others claim that the Mauryas were the Muras or rather Mors. Jat authors such as B. S. Dahiya also propose an Indo-Scythian lineage common to the Mauryas and the Jats. Another school of thought, including scholars such as B. M. Barua, J. W. McCrindle, D. B. Spooner, H. C. Seth, Hari Ram Gupta, Ranajit Pal, Gur Rattan Pal Singh and Kirpal Singh have connected Chandragupta to Gandhara (or Kamboja) in modern day Pakistan. Based on interpretations of Plutarch and Appian's writings, these scholars assert that Chandragupta Maurya may have belonged to the north-west frontier region, possibly to the Assakenoi or Ashvaka (q.v.) Kshatriya clan of Swat/Kunar valley (modern Koh-I-Mor or Mer-coh — the Meros of the classical writings; probably Meru of Sanskrit texts and Mor and Mer in Prakritic). It has been claimed by several scholars that Chandragupta belonged to the Ashvaka tribe of this region (known as Mor), and thus, the dynasty founded by him was called Moriya or Maurya. The Ashvakas were a section of the Kambojas, who were exclusively engaged in horse-culture and were noted for providing mercenary cavalry. H.C. Raychaudhuri noted that the name Priyadarshi was adopted also by Chandragupta as also noted by W. W. Tarn.

Early life

Very little is known about Chandragupta's youth. Much of what is known about his youth is gathered from later classical Sanskrit literature, as well as classical Greek and Latin sources which refer to Chandragupta by the names "Sandracottos" or "Andracottus". He was paragon for later rulers.

According to traditional accounts, Chanakya, a teacher at Takshasila University at the time of Alexander's invasion, found the boy Chandragupta from the Magadha kingdom in eastern India. As the story goes, Chandragupta was playing as a king with his friends and was giving justice to another boy playing criminal. He also saw the kindness inside him to help others. Chanakya saw this and was impressed with Chandragupta's sense of justice. Chanakya asked his mother about him. His mother told him that his father used to work as a servant of the Nanda king who ruled over the kingdom of Maghada and due to some fault he was sent into the prison. Chanakya told her to take him to the king and ask him to give some education to Chandragupta. Then she went to his court. There Chandragupta solved a problem for the king. The king was impressed and told his minister to join him in the best university at that time, The Vishvavidhyalay of Takshasila [often known as the Takshasila University]

Plutarch reports that he met with Alexander the Great, probably around Takshasila in the northwest, and that he viewed the ruling Nanda Empire in a negative light:

Foundation of the Maurya Empire

Chandragupta Maurya with the help of Chanakya defeated the Magadha kings and the bulk army of Chandravanshi clan and defeated generals of Alexander settled in Gandhara (Kamboja kingdom of Aryan Mahajanpad) which is called as Afghanistan now. At the time of Alexander's invasion, Chanakya was a teacher at Takshasila University. The king of Takshasila and Gandhara, Ambhi (also known as Taxiles), made a treaty with Alexander and did not fight against him. Chanakya saw the foreign invasion against the Indian culture and sought help from other kings to unite and fight Alexander. Porus (Parvateshwar), a king of Punjab, was the only local king who was able to challenge Alexander at the Battle of the Hydaspes River, but was defeated.

Chanakya then went to Magadha further east to seek the help of Dhana Nanda, who ruled a vast Nanda Empire which extended from Bihar and Bengal in the east to eastern Punjab in the west, but he denied any such help. After this incident, Chanakya began sowing the seeds of building an empire that could protect Indian territories from foreign invasion into his disciple Chandragupta.

Chandragupta later adopted Jainism. It is said he died fasting which was according to Jainism a holy way of sacrificing mortal life.

Kautilya's role in the formation of the Mauryan Empire is the essence of a historical/spiritual novel *The Courtesan and the Sadhu* by Dr. Mysore N. Prakash.

Nanda Army

According to Plutarch, at the time of Alexander's Battle of the Hydaspes River, the size of the Nanda Empire's army further east numbered 200,000 infantry, 80,000 cavalry, 8,000 chariots, and 6,000 war elephants, which was discouraging for Alexander's men and stayed their further progress into India:

"As for the Macedonians, however, their struggle with Porus blunted their courage and stayed their further advance into India. For having had all they could do to repulse an enemy who mustered only twenty thousand infantry and two thousand horse, they violently opposed Alexander when he insisted on crossing the river Ganges also, the width of which, as they learned, was • thirty-two furlongs, its depth • a hundred fathoms, while its banks on the further side were covered with multitudes of men-at-arms and horsemen and elephants. For they were told that the kings of the Ganderites and Praesii were awaiting them with eighty thousand horsemen, two hundred thousand footmen, eight thousand chariots, and six thousand fighting elephants. And there was no boasting in these reports. For Androcottus, who reigned there not long afterwards, made a present to Seleucus of five hundred elephants, and with an army of six hundred thousand men overran and subdued all India.

"Plutarch, Parallel Lives, "Life of Alexander" 62.1-4

In order to defeat the powerful Nanda army, Chandragupta needed to raise a formidable

army of his own.

Conquest of Macedonian Territories in India

After Alexander's death in 323 BC, Chandragupta, turned his attention to Northwestern India (modern Pakistan), where he defeated the satrapies (described as "prefects" in classical Western sources) left in place by Alexander (according to Justin), and may have assassinated two of his governors, Nicanor and Philip. The satrapies he fought may have included Eudemus, ruler in western Punjab until his departure in 317 BC; and Peithon, son of Agenor, ruler of the Greek colonies along the Indus until his departure for Babylon in 316 BC. The Roman historian Justin described how Sandrocottus (Greek version of Chandragupta's name) conquered the northwest: "Some time after, as he was going to war with the generals of Alexander, a wild elephant of great bulk presented itself before him of its own accord, and, as if tamed down to gentleness, took him on its back, and became his guide in the war, and conspicuous in fields of battle. Sandrocottus, having thus acquired a throne, was in possession of India, when Seleucus was laying the foundations of his future greatness; who, after making a league with him, and settling his affairs in the east, proceeded to join in the war against Antigonus. As soon as the forces, therefore, of all the confederates were united, a battle was fought, in which Antigonus was slain, and his son Demetrius put to flight.

—Junianus Justinus, *Historiarum Philippicarum libri XLIV*, XV.4.19

Having consolidated power in

the northwest, Chandragupta pushed east towards the Nanda Empire.

Conquest of the Nanda Empire

Chanakya had trained Chandragupta under his guidance and together they planned the destruction of Dhana Nanda. The *Mudrarakshasa* of Visakhadutta as well as the Jaina work *Parisishataparvan* talk of Chandragupta's alliance with the Himalayan king Parvatka, sometimes identified with Porus.

It is noted in the *Chandraguptakatha* that the protagonist and Chanakya were initially rebuffed by the Nanda forces. Regardless, in the ensuing war, Chandragupta faced off against Bhadrāsala – commander of Dhana Nanda's armies. He was eventually able to defeat Bhadrāsala and Dhana Nanda in a series of battles, ending with the siege of the capital city Kusumapura and the conquest of the Nanda Empire around 321 BC, thus founding the powerful Maurya Empire in Northern India by the time he was about 20 years old.

Expansion

By the time he was only about 20 years old, Chandragupta, who had succeeded in defeating the Macedonian satrapies in India and conquering the Nanda Empire, had founded a vast empire that extended from the Bay of Bengal in the east, to the Indus River in the west, which he would further expand in later years.

Conquest of Seleucus' eastern territories

Seleucus I Nicator, a Macedonian satrap of Alexander, reconquered most of Alexander's former empire and put under his own authority eastern territories as far as Bactria and the Indus (Appian, History of Rome, The Syrian Wars 55), until in 305 BC he entered in a confrontation with Chandragupta:

"Always lying in wait for the neighboring nations, strong in arms and persuasive in council, he acquired Mesopotamia, Armenia, 'Seleucid' Cappadocia, Persis, Parthia, Bactria, Arabia, Tapouria, Sogdia, Arachosia, Hyrcania, and other adjacent peoples that had been subdued by Alexander, as far as the river Indus, so that the boundaries of his empire were the most extensive in Asia after that of Alexander. The whole region from Phrygia to the Indus was subject to Seleucus. He crossed the Indus and waged war with Sandrocottus [Maurya], king of the Indians, who dwelt on the banks of that stream, until they came to an understanding with each other and contracted a marriage relationship. Some of these exploits were performed before the death of Antigonus and some afterward."

—Appian, History of Rome, The Syrian Wars 55

The exact details of engagement are not known. As noted by scholars such as R. C. Majumdar and D. D. Kosambi, Seleucus appears to have fared poorly, having ceded large territories west of the Indus to Chandragupta. Due to his defeat, Seleucus surrendered Arachosia, Gedrosia,

Paropamisadae, and Aria.

Mainstream scholarship asserts that Chandragupta received vast territory west of the Indus, including the Hindu Kush, modern day Afghanistan, and the Balochistan province of Pakistan. Archaeologically, concrete indications of Mauryan rule, such as the inscriptions of the Edicts of Ashoka, are known as far as Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

"After having made a treaty with him (Sandrakotos) and put in order the Orient situation, Seleucus went to war against Antigonus."

—Junianus Justinus, *Historiarum Philippicarum libri XLIV*, XV.4.15

It is generally thought that Chandragupta married Seleucus's daughter, or a Greek Macedonian princess, a gift from Seleucus to formalize an alliance. In a return gesture, Chandragupta sent 500 war-elephants, a military asset which would play a decisive role at the Battle of Ipsus in 302 BC. In addition to this treaty, Seleucus dispatched an ambassador, Megasthenes, to Chandragupta, and later Deimakos to his son Bindusara, at the Mauryan court at Pataliputra (modern Patna in Bihar state). Later Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the ruler of Ptolemaic Egypt and contemporary of Ashoka the Great, is also recorded by Pliny the Elder as having sent an ambassador named Dionysius to the Mauryan court.

Classical sources have also recorded that following their treaty, Chandragupta and Seleucus exchanged presents, such as when Chandragupta sent various aphrodisiacs to Seleucus:

"And Theophrastus says

that some contrivances are of wondrous efficacy in such matters. And Phylarchus confirms him, by reference to some of the presents which Sandrakottus, the king of the Indians, sent to Seleucus; which were to act like charms in producing a wonderful degree of affection, while some, on the contrary, were to banish love." "

—Athenaeus of Naucratis

Southern Conquests

After annexing Seleucus' eastern Persian provinces, Chandragupta had a vast empire extending across the northern parts of Indian Sub-continent, from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. Chandragupta then began expanding his empire further south beyond the barrier of the Vindhya Range and into the Deccan Plateau. By the time his conquests were complete, Chandragupta succeeded in unifying most of Southern Asia. Megasthenes later recorded the size of Chandragupta's acquired army as 400,000 soldiers, according to Strabo:

"Megasthenes was in the camp of Sandrocottus, which consisted of 400,000 men"

— Strabo, *Geographica*, 15.1.53

On the other hand, Pliny, who also drew from Megasthenes' work, gives even larger numbers of 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, and 9,000 war elephants:

"But the Prasii surpass in power and glory every other people, not only in this quarter, but one may say in all India, their capital Palibothra, a very large and wealthy city, after which some call the people itself the Pali-

bothri,--nay even the whole tract along the Ganges. Their king has in his pay a standing army of 600,000-foot-soldiers, 30,000 cavalry, and 9,000 elephants: whence may be formed some conjecture as to the vastness of his resources." "

—Pliny, Natural History VI, 22.4

Jainism

Chandragupta gave up his throne towards the end of his life and became an ascetic under the Jain saint Bhadrabahu, migrating south with them and ending his days in sallekhana at Shravanabelagola, in present day Karnataka; though fifth-century inscriptions in the area support the concept of a larger southern migration around that time. A small temple marks the cave (Bhadrabahu Cave) where he is said to have died by fasting.

Successors

Chandragupta Maurya renounced his throne to his son, Bindusara, who became the new Mauryan Emperor. Bindusara later became the father of Ashoka the Great, who was one of the most influential kings in history due to his important role in the history of Buddhism.

Bindusara

Bindusara was the second Mauryan emperor (Born c. 320 BC, ruled: 298 - c.272 BC) after Chandragupta Maurya the Great. During his reign, the empire expanded southwards. He had

two sons, Susima and Ashoka, who were the viceroys of Taxila and Ujjain. The Greeks called him Amitrochates or Allitrochades - the Greek transliteration for the Sanskrit word 'Amitraghata' (Slayer of enemies). He was also called 'Ajatashatru' (Man with no enemies) in Sanskrit.

Life

The son of Chandragupta the Great, by a woman named Durdhara, Bindusara inherited a large empire that consisted of what is now, Northern, Central and Eastern parts of India along with parts of Afghanistan and Baluchistan. Bindusara extended this empire to the southern part of India, as far as what is now known as Karnataka. He brought sixteen states under the Mauryan Empire and thus conquered almost all of the Indian peninsula (he is said to have conquered the 'land between the two seas' - the peninsular region between the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea). Bindusara didn't conquer the friendly Dravidian kingdoms of the Cholas, Pandyas, and Cheras. Apart from these southern states, Kalinga (the modern Orissa) was the only kingdom in India that didn't form the part of Bindusara's empire. It was later conquered by his son Ashoka, who served as the viceroy of Ujjaini during his father's reign.

Bindusara's life has not been documented as well as that of his father Chandragupta or of his son Ashoka. The philosopher Chanakya served as prime minister during his reign. During his rule, the citizens of Taxila revolted twice. The reason for the first revolt was the maladministration of Susee-

ma, his eldest son. The reason for the second revolt is unknown, but it could not be suppressed by Bindusara due to his death; it was later crushed by Ashoka.

Ambassadors from Seleucid Empire (such as Deimachus) and Egypt visited his courts. He maintained good relations with the Hellenic World. Unlike his father Chandragupta (who was a Jain), he believed in the Ajivika (an ancient Indian sect that preached equality for all people).

Bindusara died in 272 BC (some records say 268 BC) and was succeeded by his son Ashoka the Great. Bindusara is known as "Born out of Blood drops", reason being Chanakya had to cut Chandragupta's wife Durdhara's stomach who was in death bed.

Bindusara's Empire

Bindusara extended his empire further as far as south Mysore. He conquered sixteen states and extended the empire from sea to sea. The empire included the whole of India except the region of Kalinga (modern Orissa) and the Dravidian kingdoms of the south. Kalinga was conquered by Bindusara's son Ashoka.

Early Tamil poets speak of Mauryan chariots thundering across the land, their white pennants brilliant in the sunshine. Bindusara campaigned in the Deccan, extending the Mauryan empire in the peninsula to as far as Mysore. He is said to have conquered 'the land between the two seas', presumably the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal.

Administration during Bindusara's Reign

Bindusara maintained good relations with Seleucus Nicator and the emperors regularly exchanged ambassadors and presents. He also maintained the friendly relations with the Hellenic West established by his father. Ambassadors from Syria and Egypt lived at Bindusara's court. He preferred the Ajivika philosophy rather than Jainism.

Apparently he was a man of wide interest and taste, since tradition had it that he asked Antiochus I to send him some sweet wine, dried figs and a sophist:

“ But dried figs were so very much sought after by all men (for really, as Aristophanes says, There's really nothing nicer than dried figs), that even Amittrochates, the king of the Indians, wrote to Antiochus, entreating him (it is Hegesander from Delphi who tells this story) to buy and send him some sweet wine, and some dried figs, and a sophist; and that Antiochus wrote to him in answer, The dry figs and the sweet wine we will send you; but it is not lawful for a sophist to be sold in Greece Athenaeus, "Deipnosophistae" XIV.67

Ashoka

Ashoka (304–232 BC), popularly known as Ashoka the Great, was an Indian emperor of the Maurya Dynasty who ruled almost all of the Indian subcontinent from 269 BC to 232 BC. One of India's greatest emperors, Ashoka reigned over most of present-day

India after a number of military conquests. His empire stretched from present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan in the west, to the present-day Bangladesh and the Indian state of Assam in the east, and as far south as northern Kerala and Andhra. He conquered the kingdom named Kalinga, which no one in his dynasty had conquered starting from Chandragupta Maurya. His reign was headquartered in Magadha (present-day Bihar, India). He embraced Buddhism from the prevalent Vedic tradition after witnessing the mass deaths of the war of Kalinga, which he himself had waged out of a desire for conquest. He was later dedicated to the propagation of Buddhism across Asia and established monuments marking several significant sites in the life of Gautama Buddha. Ashoka was a devotee of ahimsa (nonviolence), love, truth, tolerance and vegetarianism. Ashoka is remembered in history as a philanthropic administrator. In the history of India Ashoka is referred to as Samraat Chakravartin Ashoka- the Emperor of Emperors Ashoka.

His name "aśoka" means "without sorrow" in Sanskrit. In his edicts, he is referred to as Devānāmpriya and Priyadarśin or "He who regards everyone with affection". Another title of his is Dhamma, "Lawful, Religious, Righteous".

Renowned British author and social critic H. G. Wells in his best-selling two-volume work, *The Outline of History* (1920), wrote of emperor Ashoka:

In the history of the world there have been thousands of kings and emperors who called themselves 'their highnesses,' 'their majesties,' and 'their ex-

alted majesties' and so on. They shone for a brief moment, and as quickly disappeared. But Ashoka shines and shines brightly like a bright star, even unto this day.

Along with the Edicts of Ashoka, his legend is related in the later 2nd century *Aśokāvadāna* ("Narrative of Asoka") and *Divyāvadāna* ("Divine narrative"), and in the Sinhalese text *Mahāvamsa* ("Great Chronicle").

After two thousand years, the influence of Ashoka is seen in Asia and especially the Indian subcontinent. An emblem excavated from his empire is today the national Emblem of India. In the History of Buddhism Ashoka is considered just after Gautama Buddha.

Biography

Early life

Ashoka was born to the Mauryan emperor Bindusara and his Queen 'Dharma' (although she was a Brahmin or Shubhadra, she was undervalued as she wasn't of royal blood). Ashoka had several elder siblings (all half-brothers from other wives of Bindusara). He had just one younger sibling, Vitthashoka (a much loved brother from the same mother). Because of his exemplary intellect and warrior skills, he was said to have been the favorite of his grandfather Chandragupta Maurya. As the legend goes, when Chandragupta Maurya left his empire for a Jain living, he threw his sword away. Ashoka found the sword and kept it, in spite of his grandfather's warning. Ashoka, in his adolescence, was rude and naughty. He was a fearsome hunter. He was a kshatriya and was given all royal

military trainings and other Vedic knowledge. According to a legend, he killed a Lion with just a wooden rod. Ashoka was very well known for his sword fighting. He was very adventurous and this made him a terrific fighter. Ashoka was a frightening warrior and a heartless general. Because of this quality he was sent to destroy the riot of Avanti.

Rise to Power Developing into an impeccable warrior general and a shrewd statesman, Ashoka went on to command several regiments of the Mauryan army. His growing popularity across the empire made his elder brothers wary of his chances of being favored by Bindusara to become the next emperor. The eldest of them, Susima, the traditional heir to the throne, persuaded Bindusara to send Ashoka to quell an uprising in Taxshila, a city in the north-west District of Pakistani Punjab region, for which Prince Susima was the Governor. Taxshila was a highly volatile place because of the war-like Indo-Greek population and mismanagement by Susima himself. This had led to the formation of different militias causing unrest. Ashoka complied and left for the troubled area. As news of Ashoka's visit with his army trickled in, he was welcomed by the revolting militias and the uprising ended without a conflict. (The province revolted once more during the rule of Ashoka, but this time the uprising was crushed with an iron fist) Ashoka's success made his step-brothers more wary of his intentions of becoming the emperor and more incitements from Susima led Bindusara to send Ashoka into exile. He went into Kalinga and stayed there incog-

nito. There he met a fisher woman named Kaurwaki, with whom he fell in love. Recently found inscriptions indicate that she would later become either his second or third queen.

Meanwhile, there was again a violent uprising in Ujjain. Emperor Bindusara summoned Ashoka out of exile after two years. Ashoka went into Ujjain and in the ensuing battle was injured, but his generals quelled the uprising. Ashoka was treated in hiding so that loyalists of the Susima group could not harm him. He was treated by Buddhist monks and nuns. This is where he first learned the teachings of the Buddha, and it is also where he met Devi, who was his personal nurse and the daughter of a merchant from adjacent Vidisha. After recovering, he married her. It was quite unacceptable to Bindusara that one of his sons should marry a Buddhist, so he did not allow Ashoka to stay in Pataliputra but instead sent him back to Ujjain and made him the governor of Ujjain.

The following year passed quite peacefully for him, and Devi was about to deliver his first child. In the meanwhile, Emperor Bindusara died. As the news of the unborn heir to the throne spread, Prince Susima planned the execution of the unborn child; however, the assassin who came to kill Devi and her child killed his mother instead. Ashoka beheads his elder brother to ascend the throne. In this phase of his life, Ashoka was known for his unquenched thirst for wars and campaigns launched to conquer the lands of other rulers and became known as Chandashok (terrible Ashoka), the Sanskrit word chanda meaning cruel, fierce, or

rude, Chandi-devi being associated with Kali.

Ascending the throne, Ashoka expanded his empire over the next eight years, from the present-day boundaries and regions of Burma–Bangladesh and the state of Assam in India in the east to the territory of present-day Iran / Persia and Afghanistan in the west; from the Pamir Knots in the north almost to the peninsular of southern India (i.e. Tamilnadu / Andhra Pradesh).

Conquest of Kalinga

While the early part of Ashoka's reign was apparently quite bloodthirsty, he became a follower of the Buddha's teaching after his conquest of Kalinga on the east coast of India in the present-day state of Orissa. Kalinga was a state that prided itself on its sovereignty and democracy. With its monarchical parliamentary democracy it was quite an exception in ancient Bharata where there existed the concept of Rajdharma. Rajdharma means the duty of the rulers, which was intrinsically entwined with the concept of bravery and Kshatriya dharma.

The pretext for the start of the Kalinga War (265 BC or 263 BC) is uncertain. One of Susima's brothers might have fled to Kalinga and found official refuge there. This enraged Ashoka immensely. He was advised by his ministers to attack Kalinga for this act of treachery. Ashoka then asked Kalinga's royalty to submit before his supremacy. When they defied this diktat, Ashoka sent one of his generals to Kalinga to make them submit.

The general and his forces

were, however, completely routed through the skilled tact of Kalinga's commander-in-chief. Ashoka, baffled at this defeat, attacked with the greatest invasion ever recorded in Indian history until then. Kalinga put up a stiff resistance, but they were no match for Ashoka's brutal strength. The whole of Kalinga was plundered and destroyed. Ashoka's later edicts state that about 100,000 people were killed on the Kalinga side and 10,000 from Ashoka's army. Thousands of men and women were deported.

Buddhist Conversion

As the legend goes, one day after the war was over, Ashoka ventured out to roam the city and all he could see were burnt houses and scattered corpses. This sight made him sick and he cried the famous monologue:

What have I done? If this is a victory, what's a defeat then? Is this a victory or a defeat? Is this justice or injustice? Is it gallantry or a rout? Is it valor to kill innocent children and women? Do I do it to widen the empire and for prosperity or to destroy the other's kingdom and splendor? One has lost her husband, someone else a father, someone a child, someone an unborn infant.... What's this debris of the corpses? Are these marks of victory or defeat? Are these vultures, crows, eagles the messengers of death or evil?

The brutality of the conquest led him to adopt Buddhism and he used his position to propagate the relatively new religion to new heights, as far as ancient Rome and Egypt. He made Buddhism

his state religion around 260 BC, and propagated it and preached it within his domain and worldwide from about 250 BC. Emperor Ashoka undoubtedly has to be credited with the first serious attempt to develop a Buddhist policy.

Prominent in this cause were his son Venerable Mahindra and daughter Sanghamitra (whose name means "friend of the Sangha"), who established Buddhism in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). He built thousands of Stupas and Viharas for Buddhist followers. The Stupas of Sanchi are world famous and the stupa named Sanchi Stupa was built by Emperor Ashoka. During the remaining portion of Ashoka's reign, he pursued an official policy of non-violence (ahimsa). Even the unnecessary slaughter or mutilation of people was immediately abolished. Everyone became protected by the king's law against sport hunting and branding. Limited hunting was permitted for consumption reasons but Ashoka also promoted the concept of vegetarianism. Ashoka also showed mercy to those imprisoned, allowing them leave for the outside a day of the year. He attempted to raise the professional ambition of the common man by building universities for study, and water transit and irrigation systems for trade and agriculture. He treated his subjects as equals regardless of their religion, politics and caste. The kingdoms surrounding his, so easily overthrown, were instead made to be well-respected allies.

He is acclaimed for constructing hospitals for animals and renovating major roads throughout India. After this transformation, Ashoka came to be known as

Dhammashoka (Sanskrit), meaning Ashoka, the follower of Dharma. Ashoka defined the main principles of dharma (dhamma) as nonviolence, tolerance of all sects and opinions, obedience to parents, respect for the Brahmans and other religious teachers and priests, liberality towards friends, humane treatment of servants, and generosity towards all. These principles suggest a general ethic of behaviour to which no religious or social group could object.

Some critics say that Ashoka was afraid of more wars, but among his neighbors, including the Seleucid Empire and the Greco-Bactrian kingdom established by Diodotus I, none could match his strength. He was a contemporary of both Antiochus I Soter and his successor Antiochus II Theos of the Seleucid dynasty as well as Diodotus I and his son Diodotus II of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom. If his inscriptions and edicts are well studied one finds that he was familiar with the Hellenic world but never in awe of it. His edicts, which talk of friendly relations, give the names of both Antiochus of the Seleucid empire and Ptolemy III of Egypt. The fame of the Mauryan empire was widespread from the time that Ashoka's grandfather Chandragupta Maurya defeated Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the Seleucid Dynasty.

The source of much of our knowledge of Ashoka is the many inscriptions he had carved on pillars and rocks throughout the empire. Emperor Ashoka is known as Piyadasi (in Pali) or Priyadarshi (in Sanskrit) meaning "good looking" or "favored by the gods with good blessing". All his inscriptions have the imperial

touch and show compassionate loving. He addressed his people as his "children". These inscriptions promoted Buddhist morality and encouraged nonviolence and adherence to Dharma (duty or proper behavior), and they talk of his fame and conquered lands as well as the neighboring kingdoms holding up his might. One also gets some primary information about the Kalinga War and Ashoka's allies plus some useful knowledge on the civil administration. The Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath is the most popular of the relics left by Ashoka. Made of sandstone, this pillar records the visit of the emperor to Sarnath, in the 3rd century BC. It has a four-lion capital (four lions standing back to back) which was adopted as the emblem of the modern Indian republic. The lion symbolizes both Ashoka's imperial rule and the kingship of the Buddha. In translating these monuments, historians learn the bulk of what is assumed to have been true fact of the Mauryan Empire. It is difficult to determine whether or not some actual events ever happened, but the stone etchings clearly depict how Ashoka wanted to be thought of and remembered.

Ashoka's own words as known from his Edicts are: "All men are my children. I am like a father to them. As every father desires the good and the happiness of his children, I wish that all men should be happy always." Edward D'Cruz interprets the Ashokan dharma as a "religion to be used as a symbol of a new imperial unity and a cementing force to weld the diverse and heterogeneous elements of the empire".

Also, in the Edicts, Ashoka

mentions Hellenistic kings of the period as converts to Buddhism, although no Hellenic historical record of this event remain:

The conquest by Dharma has been won here, on the borders, and even six hundred yojanas (5,400–9,600 km) away, where the Greek king Antiochos rules, beyond there where the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander rule, likewise in the south among the Cholas, the Pandyas, and as far as Tamraparni (Sri Lanka).

—Edicts of Ashoka, Rock Edict 13 (S. Dhammika)

Ashoka also claims that he encouraged the development of herbal medicine, for human and nonhuman animals, in their territories:

Everywhere within Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi's [Ashoka's] domain, and among the people beyond the borders, the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Satiyaputras, the Keralaputras, as far as Tamraparni and where the Greek king Antiochos rules, and among the kings who are neighbors of Antiochos, everywhere has Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, made provision for two types of medical treatment: medical treatment for humans and medical treatment for animals. Wherever medical herbs suitable for humans or animals are not available, I have had them imported and grown. Wherever medical roots or fruits are not available I have had them imported and grown. Along roads I have had wells dug and trees planted for the benefit of humans and animals.

—Edicts of Ashoka, Rock Edict 2

The Greeks in India even seem to have played an active role in the propagation of Bud-

dhisim, as some of the emissaries of Ashoka, such as Dharmarakshita, are described in Pali sources as leading Greek (Yona) Buddhist monks, active in spreading Buddhism (the Mahavansa, XII).

Death and Legacy

Ashoka ruled for an estimated forty years. After his death, the Mauryan dynasty lasted just fifty more years. Ashoka had many wives and children, but many of their names are lost to time. Mahindra and Sanghamitra were twins born by his first wife, Devi, in the city of Ujjain. He had entrusted to them the job of making his state religion, Buddhism, more popular across the known and the unknown world. Mahindra and Sanghamitra went into Sri Lanka and converted the King, the Queen and their people to Buddhism. They were naturally not handling state affairs after him.

In his old age, he seems to have come under the spell of his youngest wife Tishyaraksha. It is said that she had got his son Kunala, the regent in Takshashila, blinded by a wily stratagem. The official executioners spared Kunala and he became a wandering singer accompanied by his favourite wife Kanchanmala. In Pataliputra, Ashoka hears Kunala's song, and realizes that Kunala's misfortune may have been a punishment for some past sin of the emperor himself and condemns Tishyaraksha to death, restoring Kunala to the court. Kunala was succeeded by his son, Samprati, but his rule did not last long after Ashoka's death.

The reign of Ashoka Maurya could easily have disappeared

into history as the ages passed by, and would have had he not left behind a record of his trials. The testimony of this wise king was discovered in the form of magnificently sculpted pillars and boulders with a variety of actions and teachings he wished to be published etched into the stone. What Ashoka left behind was the first written language in India since the ancient city of Harappa. The language used for inscription was the then current spoken form called Prakrit.

In the year 185 BC, about fifty years after Ashoka's death, the last Maurya ruler, Brhadrata, was assassinated by the commander-in-chief of the Mauryan armed forces, Pusyamitra Sunga, while he was taking the Guard of Honor of his forces. Pusyamitra Sunga founded the Sunga dynasty (185 BC-78 BC) and ruled just a fragmented part of the Mauryan Empire. Many of the northwestern territories of the Mauryan Empire (modern-day Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan) became the Indo-Greek Kingdom.

When India gained independence from the British Empire it adopted Ashoka's emblem for its own, placing the Dharmachakra (The Wheel of Righteous Duty) that crowned his many columns on the flag of the newly independent state. In 1992, Ashoka was ranked #53 on Michael H. Hart's list of the most influential figures in history. In 2001, a semi-fictionalized portrayal of Ashoka's life was produced as a motion picture under the title *Asoka*. King Ashoka, the third monarch of the Indian Mauryan dynasty, has come to be regarded as one of the most exemplary rulers in world history. The British historian H.G. Wells has written:

"Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history ... the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star."

Buddhist Kingship

One of the more enduring legacies of Ashoka Maurya was the model that he provided for the relationship between Buddhism and the state. Throughout Theravada Southeastern Asia, the model of ruler ship embodied by Ashoka replaced the notion of divine kingship that had previously dominated (in the Angkor kingdom, for instance). Under this model of 'Buddhist kingship', the king sought to legitimize his rule not through descent from a divine source, but by supporting and earning the approval of the Buddhist sangha. Following Ashoka's example, kings established monasteries, funded the construction of stupas, and supported the ordination of monks in their kingdom. Many rulers also took an active role in resolving disputes over the status and regulation of the sangha, as Ashoka had in calling a conclave to settle a number of contentious issues during his reign. This development ultimately lead to a close association in many Southeast Asian countries between the monarchy and the religious hierarchy, an association that can still be seen today in the state-supported Buddhism of Thailand and the traditional role of the Thai king as both a religious and secular leader. Ashoka also said that all his courtiers were true to their self and governed the people in a moral manner.

Historical Sources

Western sources – Ashoka was almost forgotten by the historians of the early British India but James Prinsep contributed in the revelation of historical sources. Other important historian was British archaeologist Sir John Hubert Marshall who was director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India. His main interests were Sanchi and Sarnath besides Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Sir Alexander Cunningham, a British archaeologist and army engineer and often known as the father of the Archaeological Survey of India, unveiled heritage sites like the Bharhut Stupa, Sarnath, Sanchi, and the Mahabodhi Temple; thus, his contribution is recognizable in realms of historical sources. Sir Mortimer Wheeler who was a British archaeologist also exposed Ashokan historical sources, especially the Taxila.

Eastern Sources :

Information about the life and reign of Ashoka primarily comes from a relatively small number of Buddhist sources. In particular, the Sanskrit *Ashokavadana* ('Story of Ashoka'), written in the 2nd century, and the two Pāli chronicles of Sri Lanka (the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*) provide most of the currently known information about Ashoka. Additional information is contributed by the Edicts of Asoka, whose authorship was finally attributed to the Ashoka of Buddhist legend after the discovery of dynastic lists that gave the name used in the edicts (*Priyadarsi* – 'favored by the Gods') as a title or additional

name of Ashoka Mauriya. Architectural remains of his period have been found at Kumhrar, Patna, which include an 80-pillar hypostyle hall.

Edicts of Ashoka :

The Edicts of Ashoka are a collection of 33 inscriptions on the Pillars of Ashoka, as well as boulders and cave walls, made by the Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty during his reign from 272 to 231 BC. These inscriptions are dispersed throughout the areas of modern-day Pakistan and India, and represent the first tangible evidence of Buddhism. The edicts describe in detail the first wide expansion of Buddhism through the sponsorship of one of the most powerful kings of Indian history. It gives more information about Ashoka's proselytism, Moral precepts, Religious precepts, Social and animal welfare .

Ashokavadana :

The Ashokavadana is a 2nd century CE text related to the legend of the Maurya Emperor Ashoka. The legend was translated into Chinese by Fa Hien in 300 CE.

Mahavamsa :

The Mahavamsa ("Great Chronicle") is a historical poem written in the Pali language, of the kings of Sri Lanka. It covers the period from the coming of King Vijaya of Kalinga (ancient Orissa) in 543 BC to the reign of King Mahasena (334–361). As it often refers to the royal dynasties of India, the Mahavamsa is also valuable for historians who wish to date and relate contemporary royal dynasties in the Indian subcontinent. It is very important in

dating the consecration of the Maurya emperor Ashoka.

Dipavamsa :

The Dipavamsa, or "Deepavamsa", (i.e., Chronicle of the Island, in Pali) is the oldest historical record of Sri Lanka. The chronicle is believed to be compiled from Atthakatha and other sources around the 3–4th century, King Dhatusena (4th century CE) had ordered that the Dipavamsa be recited at the Mahinda (son to Ashoka) festival held annually in Anuradhapura.

The use of Buddhist sources in reconstructing the life of Ashoka has had a strong influence on perceptions of Ashoka, as well as the interpretations of his edicts. Building on traditional accounts, early scholars regarded Ashoka as a primarily Buddhist monarch who underwent a conversion to Buddhism and was actively engaged in sponsoring and supporting the Buddhist monastic institution. Some scholars have tended to question this assessment. The only source of information not attributable to Buddhist sources are the Ashokan edicts, and these do not explicitly state that Ashoka was a Buddhist. In his edicts, Ashoka expresses support for all the major religions of his time: Buddhism, Brahmanism, Jainism, and Ajivikism, and his edicts addressed to the population at large (there are some addressed specifically to Buddhists; this is not the case for the other religions) generally focus on moral themes members of all the religions would accept.

However, there is strong evidence in the edicts alone that he was a Buddhist. In one edict he belittles rituals, and he banned

Vedic animal sacrifices; these strongly suggest that he at least did not look to the Vedic tradition for guidance. Furthermore, there are many edicts expressed to Buddhists alone; in one, Ashoka declares himself to be an "upasaka", and in another he demonstrates a close familiarity with Buddhist texts. He erected rock pillars at Buddhist holy sites, but did not so for the sites of other religions. He also used the word "dhamma" to refer to qualities of the heart that underlie moral action; this was an exclusively Buddhist use of the word. Finally, the ideals he promotes correspond to the first three steps of the Buddha's graduated discourse.

Important years in the life of Ashoka

Birth	– 304 BC
Marriage with Maharani devi	– 286 BC
Mahindra's birth	– 284 BC
Sanghamitta's birth	– 281 BC
Reign BC to his Nirvana / Death	– 272/273 (232 BC)
Rajyabhisheka	– 270 BC
Tending to Buddhism	– 266 BC
Building Chaityas	– 266/263 BC
Mahindra and	– 264 BC

Sanghamitta Become Buddhist

Kalinga Vijaya	– 262/263 BC
Converted to buddhism	– 263 BC
Dharmayatra	– 263–250 BC
Third Buddhist council	– 250–253 BC
Mahindra's Sri Lanka Yatra	– 252 BC
Buddhist	– 250 to his De-

Proselytism ath/Nirvana
Edicts – 243/242 BC
Death / Nirvana
of Sanghamitta – 240 BC
Rani Tishyaraksha
becomes Pattarani – 236 BC
Prince Kunal
becomes Upraja – 233 bc
Ashoka's Death /
Nirvana – 232 BC
(Note – There are some historians according to whom Ashoka embraced Buddhism in 266 BC but became a true follower of Buddhism after the Conquest of Kalinga 262 BC or 263 BC)

CONTRIBUTIONS

Global Spread of Buddhism

Ashoka, now a Buddhist emperor, believed that Buddhism is beneficial for all human beings as well as animals and plants, so he built 84,000 stupas, Sangharama, viharas, Chaitya, and residences for Buddhist monks all over South Asia and Central Asia. He gave donations to viharas and mathas. He sent his only daughter Sanghamitta and son Mahindra to spread Buddhism in Sri Lanka (ancient name Tamraparni). Ashoka also sent many prominent Buddhist monks (bhikshus) Sthaviras like Madhyamik Sthavira to modern Kashmir and Afganistan; Maharaskshit sthavira to Syria, Persia / Iran, Egypt, Greece, Italy and Turkey; Massim Sthavira to Nepal, Bhutan, China and Mongolia; Sohn Uttar Sthavira to modern Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (old name Suvarnabhumi for Burma and Thailand), Thailand and Vietnam; Mahadhhamarakhita sthavira to Maharashtra

(old name Maharatthha); Maharakhhit Sthavira and Yavandhammarakhita Sthavira to South India. Ashoka also invited Buddhists and non-Buddhists for religious conferences. Ashoka inspired the Buddhist monks to compose the sacred religious texts, and also gave all types of help to that end. Ashoka also helped to develop viharas (intellectual hubs) such as Nalanda and Taxila. Ashoka helped to construct Sanchi and Mahabodhi Temple. Ashoka never tried to harm or to destroy non-Buddhist religions, and indeed gave donations to non-Buddhists. As his reign continued his even-handedness was replaced with special inclination towards Buddhism. Ashoka helped and respected both Sramans (Buddhists monks) and Brahmins (Vedic monks). Ashoka also helped to organize the Third Buddhist council (c. 250 BC) at Pataliputra (today's Patna). It was conducted by the monk Moggaliputta-Tissa who was the spiritual teacher of the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka.

As an Administrator

Ashoka's military power was so strong that he was able to crush those empires that went to war against him still, he was on friendly terms with kingdoms in the South like Cholas, Pandya, Keralputra, the post Alexandrian empire, Tamraparni, and Suvarnabhumi who were strong enough to remain outside his empire and continued to profess Hinduism. According to his edicts we know that he provided humanitarian help including doctors, hospitals, inns, wells, medical herbs and engineers to his neighboring coun-

tries. In his neighboring countries Ashoka helped humans as well as animals. Ashoka also planted trees in his empire and his neighboring countries. Ashoka was perhaps the first emperor in human history to ban slavery, hunting, fishing and deforestation. Ashoka also banned the death sentence and asked the same for the neighboring countries. Ashoka commanded his people to serve the orders of their elders parents) and religious monks (shramana and Brahmin). Ashoka also recommended his people study all religions and respect all religions. According to Ashoka, to harm another's religion is a harm to someone's own religion. Ashoka asserted his people to live with Dharmmacharana. Ashoka asked people to live with harmony, peace, love and tolerance. Ashoka called his people as his children, and they could call him when they need him. He also asked people to save money and not to spend for immoral causes. Ashoka also believed in dharmacharana (dhammacharana) and dharmavijaya (dhammavijaya). According to many European and Asian historians the age of Ashoka was the age of light and delightment. He was the first emperor in human history who has taught the lesson of unity, peace, equality and love. Ashoka's aim was not to expand the territories but the welfare of all of his subjects (sarvajansukhay).