

9. SANGAM AGE

THE PANDYAS

- Their capital was Madurai.
- First mentioned by Megasthenes who says that their kingdom was famous for pearls and was ruled by a woman.
- The Pandya kings profited from trade with the Roman Empire and sent embassies to the Roman emperor Augustus. All expenditure were bared by Pandyas.
- Their emblem was Fish.

THE CHERAS

- Emblem was Bow and Arrow.
- Also called keralaputra.
- Their capital was Vanji (also called Kerala country)
- It owed its importance to trade with the Romans.
- Fought against the Cholas about 150 AD.
- Greatest king was Senguttuvan, the Red Chera.

THE CHOLAS

- Emblem was tiger.
- The Kingdom was called Cholamandalam or Coromondal. The chief centre was Uraiyur famous for cotton.
- Capital was Kaveripattanam/Puhar.
- A Chola king named Elora conquered Sri Lanka and ruled it over for 50 years. Bay of Bengal also called Chola Lake.
- Karikala was their famous king.
- Main source of wealth was trade in cotton cloth. They also maintained an efficient navy.
- Information about Cholas “Uttanamerur Inscription”.
- Kudovallai system means Election system.
- Admn system runs through Variyam.
- Chola Admn Unit.
Provinces divided in to Mandal.
Mandal divided in to Venadu.
Venadu divided in to Taniyer and ur (villages)
- Chola Temple was largest temple made by cholas.
- Chola’s Temple had a large Gate called “Gopuram”

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE THREE KINGDOM

- All the gathered information is based on Sangam Literature. Sangam was a college assembly of Tamil poets held probably under Royal Patronage (esp. Pandyas).
- Sangam age corresponds to the Post-Mauraya and the Pre-Gupta period.
- Three Sangams were held.
First Sangam – Madurai, Chairman – Agastya
Second Sangam – Kapatpuram, Chairman – Tolkkpiyar
Third Sangam – Madurai, Chairman – Nakkirar
- It was the third Sangam from which the entire corpus of Sangam literature came down to us.
- Silappadikaram by Ilango Adigal (story of a married couple) and Manimekalai by Sattanar are the famous epics of this time.
- Other books are Tolkkappium by Tolkkappiyar.
- Jivikachintamani by Tirukkakkdewar.
- Kurool by Tiruvalluvar (Kurool called the fifth Veda/ The Bible of the Tamil land).
- The chief local god was Murugan who was also called Sabramanya.
- ‘Pariyars’ – agricultural laborers who used to work in animal skin.
- Civil and military offices held by Vellalas (Rich peasants).
- The ruling class was called “Arasar”.
- Captains of the army were given the title ENADI in formal functions.

GUPTA DYNASTY

- The first two kings of Dynasty were Sri Gupta and Ghatotkach.

CHANDRAGUPTA – I, AD 319-335

- First important king of Gupta Dynasty.
- Started the Gupta era in 319-320 AD.
- He enhanced his power and prestige by marriage with Kumar Devi, Princess of the Lichchhavi clan of Nepal.
- He acquired the title of Maharajadhiraj (first to get title).
- Struck coins in the joint names of himself, his

queen and the Lichchavi nation, there by acknowledging marriage alliance.

- First Iron Pillar Edict of Gupta Age gives first evidence of Sati.

SAMUDRAGUPTA (AD 335-375)

- The Gupta kingdom was enlarged enormously by Chandragupta's son and successor Samudragupta.
- His court poet Harisena wrote a glowing account of the military exploits of his pattern.
- In a long inscription at the Prayag Prashasti Pillar (Allahabad).
- Samudragupta also called Napoleon of India (by V.A. Smith) because of his bravery and generalship.
- V.A. Smith book – Oxford History of India.
- Samudragupta is said to have composed numerous poems of high merit. Some of his coins represent him playing Vina.
- He also performed Asvamedha sacrifice. He believed in Vedic Age.
- Vasubandhu, a celebrated Buddhist Scholar was his minister. Mean he believes in Boddh Dharam. Then he was liberal.
- Though a follower of the Brahmanical religion, he was tolerant of other faiths.
- Received a missionary from Meghavarman, the ruler of Sri Lanka, seeking his permission to build Buddhist temple at Gaya, which he granted.

CHANDRAGUPTA II (AD – 380-413)

- Samundragupta was succeeded by Ramgupta but Chandragupta II killed him and married his queen Dhruvadevi.
- He entered into matrimonial alliance with the Nagas (of upper and the central provinces) by marrying princess Kubernaga whose daughter Prabhawati married to Rudrasena-II of the Vakataka family.
- Took the title of Vikramaditya by defeating Rudrasimha III, a Kshatarp king of Ujjain.
- He also took the title of Simhavikrama.
- He was the first ruler to issue silver coins also issued copper coins.
- The Iron pillar inscription, fixed near Qutab Minar in Delhi mention a king Chandra (considered by many as Chandragupta II).
- His court was adorned by celebrated nine gems

(Navaratna) including Kalidasa, Amarsimha, Varahmihir and Dhanvantri, Aryabhata.

- Chinese pilgrim Fahien visited India at this time.

KUMARAGUPTA – I (AD 413-455)

- He adopted the title of Mahendraditya.
- Founded Nalanda University (a renowned university of ancient India).
- He was worshipper of Lord Kartikeya.
- In the last years of his region, the peace and prosperity of empire was distributed due to the invasion of Turko-Mongol tribe, Hunas Mihirkula was the most famous king of Huna. Hieun Tsang mentions him as a fierce persecutor of Buddhism. He was defeated by Yashodharma.
- During the war with the Hunas, Kumargupta died.

SKANDAGUPTA (AD 455-467)

- Kumargupta-I was followed by Skandagupta. He faced Hunas effectively.
- Restored Sudarshana Lake.
- After his death, the great days of the Gupta were over.

REASON OF FALLING OF GUPTA EMPIRE

- Weak successor of Skandagupta could not check the growing Huna power.
- Feudatories rose in Bihar, Bengal, MP, Vallabhi etc.

ADMINISTRATION OF GUPTA

- Kings were called Parameshwara/Maharajadhiraj/Paramabattaraka.
- Most important officers were Kumaramatyas.
- They issued the largest number of gold coins in Ancient India, which were called Dinars.
- Silver coins were called Rupyakas.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- The castes were further divided into sub-caste.
- Position of woman declined further.
- First instance of Sati took place of Eran, MP.
- The position of Shudras improved substantially.
- The practice of untouchability intensified (especially hatred for Chandalas). Faihen mentions that the Chandolas lived outside the village and were distanced by the upper class.

RELIGION

- Bhagavad-Gita was written during this time only Buddhism declined.

- Bhagavatism centered around worshipping Vishnu or Bhagvat. History was presented as a cycle of 10 incarnations of Vishnu.
- Idol worship became a common feature.
- Vishnu temple at Deogarh (near Jhansi) a small Temple near Sanchi and brick temple at Bhitragaon (near Kanpur) belong to the Gupta architecture.

ART OF GUPTA AGE

- 2 meter high bronze image of Buddha belonging to the Mathura school the Gandhara Buddha represents mask-like coldness, while the Buddha from the Mathura school imports a feeling of warmth and vitality.
- The Buddha sitting in his Dharam Chakra mudra belongs to Sarnath.
- Buddha images of Bamiyan belonged to Gupta period.
- Ajanta Paintings and paintings at Bagh near Gwalior in MP are of this time, they belong to Buddhist art.

LITERATURE

Kalidasa the great Sanskrit dramatist belonged to this period. His books are Abhigyanashakuntalam, Ritusamhara, Meghadutam, Kumarambhava, Malavikamitram, Raghuvansha.

- It is earliest among translation of Sanskrit into English Abhigyanashakuntalam.
- Sanskrit was the language of rich people.
- Apart from Kalidasa other were Sudraka (author of Mrichchakatikam), Bharavi (Kiratarjuniya), Dandin (Kavyadarshna) and Dasakumaracharita. To this period belong 13 plays written by Bhasa.
- Most famous of these was Charudatta.
- Vishakhadatta wrote Mudrarakshasa and Devi-Chandraguptam.
- Vishnu Sharma wrote Panchatantra and Hitopadesh.

- Development of Sanskrit grammar based on Panini and Patanjali. This period is particularly memorable for the compilation of Amarakosha by Amarsimha.
- Ramayana and Mahabharata were almost completed by the 4th century AD.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- Aryabhatta, the great mathematician wrote Aryabhatiya and Suryasiddhanta.
- In Aryabhatiya, he described the place value of the first nine number and the use of Zero.
- He also calculated the value of Pie and invented Algebra.
- In Suryasiddhanta, he proved that the earth revolves round the sun and rotates on its axis.
- In this was he discovered the cause of the solar and lunar eclipses and the methods for calculating the timing of their occurrence.
- He also said that the heavenly bodies, like the moon, were spherical and they shone by reflecting the light.
- Varahamihira wrote Panchasi dhankita and Brihatsamhita. He said that the moon moves round the earth and earth, together with the moon move round the sun.
- Brahmagupta was a great mathematician. He wrote – Brahma-sphutic siddhanta in which he hinted at the law of Gravitation First person who introduce gravity.
- In the field of astronomy, Romakasidhanta were compiled.
- Vagbhatta was the most distinguished physician of Ayurvedic system of medicine.
- Palakapya wrote Hastyagarveda a treatise on the disease of elephants.
- Court language was Sanskrit.
- Dhanvantri – famous for Ayurveda knowledge.

9. HARSHA VARDHAN (AD 606-647)

- Belonged to Pushyabhuti family and son of Prabhakar Vardhan originally the feudatories of the Gupta.
- Originally belonged to Thanewar, but shifted to Kannauj (after Harsha's death Kannauj was won from Harsha's successors by the Pratiharas).
- Pajyavardhan succeeded Prabhakarvardhan.
- Grahavarman, the Maukhari ruler of Kannauj and husband of Rajyasri (daughter of Prabhakara) was murdered by Devgupta (the ruler of Malwa) who in alliance with Sasanka (ruler of Gauda or Bengal) now occupied Kannauj and imprisoned Pajyasri. Rajyavardhan undertook a campaign against Devgupta and killed him but he was deceived and killed by Sasanka.
- Harsha now succeeded his brother at Thanewar.
- Harsha brought most of north India under his control and assumed the title of "Siladitya".
- In his first expedition, Harsha drawn away Shashanka from Kannauj.
- Pulakesin – II the great Chalukya king. He bestowed the title of "the lord of the entire north" on him.
- Chinese pilgrim Hieun Tsang (Prince of Travelers) visited during his reign. He spent about eight years (635-643) in the dominions of Harsha and earned his friendship.
- Hieun Tsang has left a detailed account of a grand assembly held at Kannauj in 643 attended by representatives of Hinduism and Jainism.
- Harsh was a great patron of learning. He established a large patron of learning. He established a large monastery at Nalanda.
- Banabhatta, who adorned his court, wrote Harshacharita, Parvatiparinay and Kadambari.
- Harsha himself wrote 3 plays Priyadarshika, Ratnavali and Nagananda.
- After the death of Harsha in 647, the empire once again broke up into petty states.
- I-tsing, another Chinese pilgrim, visited in 670 AD.

THE VAKATAKAS

- The founder of this Brahmin Dynasty was

Vindhyasakti.

- Most important king was Pravarsen – I who performed 4 Ashvamedha yagyas.
- Rudrasena II was succeeded by Divakarasena, Damodrasena or Pravarasena, who composed a Prakrit work titled Setubandha in glorification of Rama, though he was a devotee of lord Shiva.

CHALUKYAS OF VATAPI (BADAMI)

- Founder Pulakesin – I.
- Pulakesin – II was their most famous king, who was a contemporary of Harsha. He sent an embassy to the Persian king, Khusro – II. His court poet, Ravikirti wrote Aihole inscription. Hiuen Tsang visited his kingdom.
- Much of the painting and sculpture of the Ajanta and Ellora cave were completed during the Chalukyan reign. They built several magnificent temples in Aihole and other places.
- Aihole is called the cradle of Indian temple architecture.
- Vengi dynasty was founded by Pulakesin II's brother Kubja-Vishnu-Vardhana.
- The greatest ruler of Kalyani Chalukyas was Vikramaditya II Tribhuvanmalla. He was Hero of Bilhana's Vikramankadeva Charita. He introduced the Chalukya-Vikrama era (1076 AD).

THE RASTRAKUTAS

- Founder Dantidurga.
- Their king Krishna – I is remembered for constructing the famous rock-cut Kalisha temple at Ellora.
- Their king Amoghvarsha is compared to Vikramaditya in giving patronage to men of letters.
- He wrote the first Kannada poetry named Kaviraj marg and Prashnottar Malika. He built a city of Manyakheta as his capital.
- Their king Krishna – III set up a pillar of victory and a temple at Rameshwaram after defeating the Cholas.

THE GANGAS

- Also called Chedagangs of Orissa.
- Their king Narsimhadeva constructed the Sun

temple at Konark.

- Their king Anantvarman Ganga built the famous Jagannath temple at Puri.

THE PALLAVAS

- Founder Simhavishnu. They setup their capital at Kanchi. He bore the title Avanisimha (lion of the earth).
- Narasimhavarman I Mahamalla. He was the greatest king of the dynasty. He defeated and killed Pulakesin II and assumed the title Vatapikonda.

THE CHOLAS AD 846-1279

- Founder Vijayalaya capital was Tanjore.
- Parantaka I captured Madurai but was defeated by Rashtrakuta ruler. Krishan III at the battle of Takkolam. Although the Rashtrakutas were later defeated.
- Rajaraja founded the largest dominion in south India.
- He annexed northern Sri-Lanka and named it Mummadi – Cholamandalam. Also conquered Maldives islands.

- He constructed Rajrajeshwari temple (also called Brihadeshwar Shiva temple) at Thanjavur.
- His son Rajendra – I annexed the whole of Sri Lanka. In the North went as far as Ganga and the dominions of the Pala king Mahipale. He took the title of ‘Gangaikonda’ after that and founded a capital Gangaikonda Cholapuram.

THE PALAS OF BENGAL

- Founder was Gopala (750 AD) who was elected to the throne as he had proved his valor and capability as a leader.
- Suleimon, an Arab merchant has termed the Pala Empire as Rhuni.
- Gopala was an ardent Buddhist.
- He was succeeded by Devapala. He extended his control over Pragjyotishpur (Assam). He was a Buddhist.
- Ballalasena was written Danasagara and Adbhutsagara.
- Founder Samantasena.