

Revision Notes

Class- 6 Social Science(History)

Chapter 9- Traders, Kings, and Pilgrims

Fine pottery, bowls, plates, and similar things were found in numerous archaeological sites throughout the subcontinent. Traders carry different items, such as gold, gems, spices, and pepper, and sell them in other parts of the subcontinent.

Various goods were carried across the sea and by land in caravans. Several instances reflect different items from different parts of the world found in the Indian subcontinent.

Chapter 9 of Category 6 Social Sciences (History) of the CBSE focuses on important events related to the merchants, kings, and pilgrims of the Indian subcontinent.

The New Kingdom along the Coasts

- Long coastlines are marked by the subcontinent's southern half, hills, plateaus, and river valleys. The banks of the Kaveri River are the most fertile.
 - In the poem "Shanggan," Mu Wenda is mentioned in the three ruling families' three heads.
 - The ruling clans were the Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas, who came to power in southern India about 2300 years ago.
 - The two centers of power were Puhar or Kaveripattinam and Madurai, one on the mainland and the coast.
 - The chiefs received gifts from the people in the form of taxes and went on military expeditions.
 - The chief's wealth was distributed among his family, followers, poets, and soldiers.
 - Two hundred years later, the Satavahanas dynasty came to power in western India.
 - Gautmiputra Shri Satkarni was the most famous and most powerful as well as the most important ruler. He took this name after his mother, Gautmi Balashri, and it is her writings that we come to know of him from.
 - The Satvahanas ruled the "Dakshinapatha," i.e., the route or road to the vast southern part of India, and were rightfully called the lords of this region. However, the Satvahana army reached the western and eastern coasts also.
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- The main reason behind this was that India was successfully doing business with foreign countries through the ports and waterways. So, keeping the coasts in control meant maintaining control of the company or the trade, which, in turn, would mean becoming rich and powerful than others.

The Story of the Silk Route

- Silk is one of the famous fabrics in most societies. It is rich, vibrant in color, and has a smooth texture.
- Silk production is very complicated. It must be taken from the silkworm cocoons, made into yarn, and then woven into fabric.
- About 7000 years ago, the silk-making process was invented in China, and the silk-making method remains a secret. They returned to distant lands carrying silk, and the path they followed was known as the Silk Road.
- About 2000 years ago, silk became a fashion item among the ruling class and the wealthy in Rome.
- The rulers who controlled the Silk Road were Kushanas. They ruled over central Asia and northwestern India.

The Spread of Buddhism

- Kanishka, the most famous Kushan ruler, organized a Buddhist council to discuss important matters and events.
- Ashvaghosha and other Buddhist scholars began writing, which led to a new form of Buddhism called Mahayana Buddhism.
- Some of the changes in this period were like the transformation of Buddha's presence as depicted in pictures or statues.
- Bodhisattvas came into existence. These were persons who attained enlightenment.
- Buddhism spread to western and southern India.

The Quest of Pilgrims

- Pilgrims are the men and women who travel to the holy places to offer worship to their deities.
- Fa Xian and Xuan Zang were Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who came to the subcontinent about 1600 and 1400 years ago, respectively.
- Pilgrims left behind a narrative of their journey that included dangers, adventures, and stories about the countries and monasteries they visited.
- Nalanda was a unique and most famous center of Buddhist learning.

The Beginning of Bhakti

- The worship of goddesses such as Shiva, Vishnu, and Durga became a central feature of later Hinduism.
- Anyone can follow Bhakti, regardless of gender, caste, or wealth.
- The concept of Bhakti is evident in the Hindu holy book "Bhagavad Gita."
- The idea stresses the worship of individual gods and Goddesses and does not insist on elaborate sacrifices.
- Derived from the Sanskrit word "bhaj," meaning to divide or share, implying a two-way relationship between God and devotee.

Interesting Facts:

- The use of carts along the Silk Road is an option cut off at a very primitive level. This route crosses hills, deserts, and flat roads. Additionally, residents who live along the way often require merchants to pay additional fees. Also, bandits and pirates frequently attacked merchants. Therefore, using a cart is never a good option.
- It is advantageous to choose silk shipping because the transportation route is short, and the ruler cannot collect taxes like the residents of the Silk Road.
- However, transporting silk through the seas had its disadvantages also. There was always the risk of attacks by pirates. Furthermore, natural calamities, storms at sea, rough waters also opposed the smooth business performance.

Important Questions and Answers**1. How traders and sailors used sea routes in the old age and impacted exploration?**

Ans: In ancient times, every sailor and trader made a massive contribution to exploring new places by using sea routes. While traveling from one country to another, I explored numerous sea routes to reach the coast and discover new places. The traders coming from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea used the monsoon winds to cross the seas quickly. The traders from East Africa or Arabia sailed with the southwest monsoon if they wanted to reach the western coast of the subcontinent. This also led to an exchange of goods and products from various lands. For example, they took black pepper, sandalwood, pearls, and other such things to the critical port of Puhar on the east coast.

2. Give some evidence about the trade of goods in Puhar.

Ans: There is much evidence in the verses of Sangam's poems, which show the exchange of goods and trade in Puhar. Puhar is a major port on the east coast. For example, this poem describes packages of black pepper in a car, horses galloping in the sea in a boat, sandalwood in the western hills, various food workers in Sri Lanka, the crops of Kaveri, and the outlet of the Ganges. Furthermore, there is also evidence that corals in the east are traded for pearls in the south. Finally, we also deal with abundant and rare imported materials. For example, Burmese pottery is very popular.

3. Define the idea of Bhakti.

Ans: The idea of devotion towards a chosen deity is referred to as Bhakti. It is presented in the Bhagavad Gita, the sacred book of Hindus. The epic of Mahabharata represents the idea of devotion in various instances; like Krishna, God asked Arjuna to take refuge in him and abandon all Dharmas to set himself free from evil. Thus, those who believed in this ideology worshipped individual gods and goddesses. The concept of devotion is what attracted people and also

was an essential feature of Hinduism. The deities that were worshipped through the method of Bhakti included goddesses like Durga, Kali, Laxmi, and gods Shiva and Vishnu.

4. Why were people attracted to Bhakti?

Ans: The most potent part of the concept of Bhakti was that the saints used the language of ordinary people; it was not complicated and could be understood easily. This is a fundamental reason why it gained the attention of ordinary people. Further, the saints emphasized worshipping specific deities like Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, and other such gods and goddesses. This later became a central feature of Hinduism. Also, anyone could follow the path of Bhakti. A person could be of high caste or low caste, rich or poor, man or woman, and could come from any background to be a part of this ideology. The simplicity of the concept drew a considerable number of people to follow this religion.

5. Why do Chinese pilgrims come to India?

Ans: FaXian, Xuan Zang, and IQing were Chinese pilgrims who came to India around 1600 years ago. They visited places in India related to the teachings and life of the Buddha. They also visited Buddha's famous monasteries. The pilgrims were greatly interested in the study of Buddhism, and therefore they collected Buddhist text, books, and statues of Buddha from India. Pilgrims like Xuan Zang spent a considerable amount of time studying in the most famous Buddhist Monastery of the period, Nalanda in Bihar. Books were carried by all the Pilgrims back with them. They also contributed significantly to the spread of Buddhism in parts of China and certain parts of the world.