

There existed total four great nations - China, Iran, Rome and India in the world during Gupta Age of ancient India. There was great anarchy in the first three nations at that time. Vehement, barbarian races like the Hun had disrupted the life of Rome and other Europe on countries to the extent that dark age was prevalent in all sectors like religion, literature, learning and safety. At the same time, there had been a great progress in the field of knowledge, culture, peace, prosperity, architecture, sculpture, religion, spirituality, trade and business in India. On the other hand major part of Asia, from China to desert of middle Asia and from West Asia to Indonasia Island, has been inspired by the thoughts of peace and tolerance and became united under incantation of 'Buddham Sharanam Gachchhami.' Hence, India has become 'Vishwabandhu' and 'Vishwaguru' by promotion and circulation of Lord Buddha's thoughts and Bhagavata and Shaiva religion. That is why historians have termed this duration of approximately 275 years of Gupta age of all sector and universal progress as 'Golden Age' of history. Civilization of Gupta age and post Gupta age is a very important phase of history of Indian civilization. In this chapter we will discuss it in detail.

### Contemporary Society and Culture

There are two main languages of India - 1) Sanskrit 2) Dravidian. Immortal literature had been created in Sanskrit and its branch like Prakrit languages in Northern India, Southern India has given distinguished literary texts in languages like Tamil, Kannad, Telugu and Malayalam.

Sanskrit is one of the most ancient languages of the world. It has been national language of India in ancient times. No language in the world is as rich as Sanskrit. Grammar of this language is the most scientific and perfectly accomplished one. The repository of books in Sanskrit language is priceless. Inestimable books have been written in Sanskrit language on many subjects like astronomy and astrology, literature and fine arts, anatomy and medicine, science and mathematics as well as economics. The great poet of Sanskrit language, Kalidas lived in this era. He had written many great books 'Abhigyan Shakuntalam' is considered the best dramatic piece of Indian and world literature. (Sir William Jones did the first translation of it in English). Promotion and spread of Sanskrit language is a distinguished feature of this time. It was common to use Sanskrit as official language and as language used by civilized society. The higher education was also provided in Sanskrit. The status enjoyed by Hindi in our time had been given to Sanskrit at that time.

Emperor Harshavardhana had written three plays - 'Priyadarshika', 'Ratnavali' and 'Nagananda'. His court was embellished by scholar poets like Mayur, Matang, Diwakar and Jaysen. They were counted as the brightest gems like the nine gems of the court of Ujjain in the time of Chandra Gupta II (Vikramaditya). Famous play writer Bhavbhooti was the courtier poet of king Yashoverman of Kanauj. Bharatmuni had written 'Natyashastra' on dramatics in 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus, some of the immortal books of Sanskrit language had been created in this time. Buddhist and Jain people had also adopted this language. A pilgrim from abroad going to Kashi pilgrimage had never faced any problem in communication all over India. Wherever he had gone, he could talk in Sanskrit and would not need any translators. The foreigners coming to India like Greek and Shakas also had adopted Sanskrit language. The Sun of Sanskrit language and literature had been at its peak shining bright in Gupta Age.

**The best literary creation of Sanskrit literature in Gupta and Harshwardhan Age**

Creation	Creator	Times of Creation	Origin of Story	Type
'Dashkumar Charit'	Dandi	320 to 475 AD	Prose poem, story of gallantry of Dashkumar	Prose story
'Swapnavasavdattam'	Bhas	4 to 5 <sup>th</sup> century	Vdyan in dreams of Vasavdatta	Play
Abhigyan-Shakuntalam	Kalidas	5 <sup>th</sup> century	Play - about love between Dushyant and Shakuntala	Play
Kumarsambhav	Kalidas	5 <sup>th</sup> century	Love of Shiv and Parvati story of 'Kartikeyr's birth	Epic
Raghuvansh	Kalidas	5 <sup>th</sup> century	Glorious story of king Dilip, Aja Dashrath and Rama	Epic
Vikramorvashiy	Great Poet Kalidas	5 <sup>th</sup> century	Romance of Vikram & Urvashi	Play
Meghdoot	Great Poet Kalidas	5 <sup>th</sup> century	Story of Yaksha - Description of nature	Poem
Ritusamhar	Great Poet Kalidas	5 <sup>th</sup> century	Sentimental description of seasons	Poem
Malvikagni mitram	Great Poet Kalidas	5 <sup>th</sup> century	Romance of Malvika and Agnimitra	Play
Panchtantra	Great Poet Kalidas	5 <sup>th</sup> century	Bauddha fables	Collection of stories
Mahaveercharit	Bhavbhooti	6 <sup>th</sup> century	From marriage of Rama to war of Ram-Ravan war	Play
Malti Madhav	Bhavbhooti	6 <sup>th</sup> century	Love story	Play
Kiratarjuniyam	Bharvi	634 AD	Penance of Arjuna to get divine weapons (Kirat-robbers)	Minor poem
---	---	---	(Interesting story of his trial by Shiva)	---
Shishupalvadh	Magh	645 to 784 AD	Story of Shree Krishna Killing Shishupal	Epic
Uttar Ramcharit	Bhavbhooti	6 <sup>th</sup> century	Rama left sita and reunion	Century
Jankittaran	Kumardas	6 - 7 century	Story of sita's kidnapping	Poem
Harshcharit	Ban Bhatt	645 to 784 AD	Life and poetry of emperor Harsh	Life story
Kandambari	Ban Bhatt	645 to 784 AD	Story of romance of chandrappeed and Kadambari	Epic
Mrichchhakatik	Shudrak	650 AD	Love story of poor Brahmin Charudatta and rich courtesan	Play
Nitishatak	Bhartruhari	7 <sup>th</sup> century	Stress of how to make human life happy	Poem
Mudrarakshas	Vishakha Datt	8 <sup>th</sup> century	Story of destruction of Nanda dynasty, victory of	
			Chandra Gupta Maurya - Kautilya	Play
Devichandraguptam	Vishakha Datt	8 <sup>th</sup> century	Story of Gupta king Chandragupta and Dhruvswamini Devi	Play

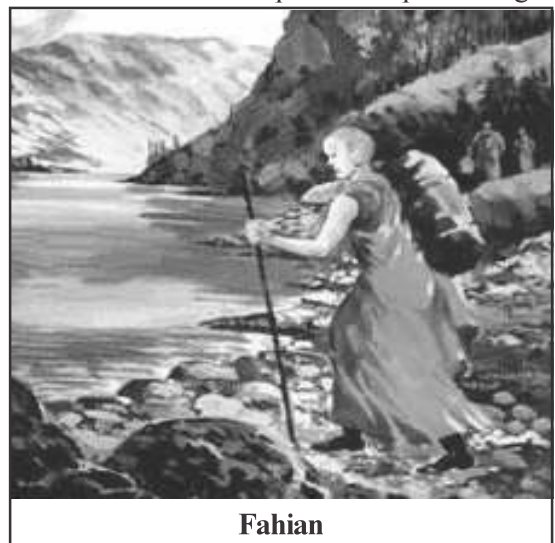
## Tamil Literature

It is believed that Tamil literature had begun from confluence books. The belief is that they had been created between 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century. A grammar book named 'Tolkappiyam' (meaning - old book) was written. Poet Thiruvalluvav had written a book named 'Kural'. 'Silappdikaram' is considered the oldest epic in Tamil language. It means an epic of Anklet which is a story which justifies God or destiny's creation to human beings. The sequel of this epic is also in existence named 'Manimekhalai'. The Tamil poetry written between 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century had been mainly devotional poetry.

Along with the rise of Chola Empire of Tamil and its colonial expansion and victories overseas an age of epic writing had begun on those themes. Many secondary epics were written during this time. Notable among them are 'Jeevak', 'Chintamani', 'Periya' and 'Puranam'. But Kamban's 'Ramayanam' epic was supreme and grand expression of Tamil genius and intellect. After Kamban's age, three initial Tamil empires - Chera, Chola and Pandya had become obsolete and with that Tamil poetic output also got weakened.

## Reports of Foreign Travellers

Detailed description of India's political, social, religious and economical condition has been from the books of following foreign travellers. Among them (1) Fahien (399 - C. 414) who visited India during reign of Chandra Gupta II, his book 'Foguoji' (record of the Buddhist kingdom) (2) Hiuen Tsang who visited India in emperor Harshawardhana's time, his book 'Si-yu-Ki' (records of eastern world). (3) Itsing (AD 673 - 688). His main book is 'Kau-fa-kao-sang-chun'.



**Fahian**

These travellers carried a deep impact of the free atmosphere of India. They got many new things to see in India. They had been surprised to see that no government officer had restrained them, interrogated or registered their name in government registers. They had observed that there had been honest and righteous administration in India. They had not noticed capital punishment anywhere. They had not seen one class of the society exploiting the other one.

It seems that Fahian was impressed with the hospitality of India. Describing in his words, whenever he went to any monastery the hosts would go to welcome him. They would carry his luggage and begging bowl. They would offer him water to wash his feet and oil of body massage. He had been provided all facilities during his stay in monasteries.

It is seen in descriptions of Hiuen Tsang that India was very enthusiastic in reception of scholars. King of Kashmir welcomed him by spreading flowers and rosewater on his path. While more than 200 monks and 1000 gentlemen had gathered to welcome him at the gate of Nalanda Vidyapith.

The knowledge and religion summit had met under leadership of Hiuen Tsang and carried out its work for three weeks. Scholars participated in the discussions enthusiastically. The common people also attended the sessions. It is a matter of pride for that seventh century India had participated in such higher level of discussions with full involvement. It can be safely said that due to this special quality, Asian people have developed liking for India.

## Religion

Ancient India had gifted 3 great religions to the world. (1) Hinduism, (2) Buddhism, (3) Jainism. With advancement of time, Hindu dharma had been divided into Vaishnav and Shaiv sects, Buddha religion into Mahayan and Heenyan sects and Jain religion into Shwetamber and Deegambar sects. Majority of these religion and sects have contributed in notable manner in religions as well as art and architectural fields.

### Jainism

Contribution of Jain religion is memorable in the field of Indian sculpture, architecture and art. Jain temples hold a notable place in the history of Indian temple architecture. Some of the temples are at the peak of this. Jain people had started tradition of building temples on mountains. Not one but a group of temples had been built on mountains in Western India. This tradition had been developed to a major extent.

Reminiscence of the oldest Jain temple were found in Lohanipur near Patna in Bihar. These temples are said to be as old as Gupta age. Such temples carved from rocks were found on 'Khandigiri' and 'Udaygiri' hills in Orissa. In addition to that, reminiscence of a Jain Vihar is also found near Mathura.

Bhadrabahu is considered to be the first Acharya of Jain sect. He had established Digambara idol of Mahavirswami in Shravanbelagoda near Mysore and popularized Jain sect in South. In year 512, a great conference of Jain sect had met at Vallabhipur, Saurashtra and the discussions held there had brought much clarity to the fundamental principles of Jain religion. It is called Tirth in Jain religious books. And its creators are called 'Tirthankar'.

### Buddhist Religion / Buddhism

The outsiders (like Greek, Shak and Kushan) coming to India had started living with people here. They tied marriage knots with the local people and accepted Buddhism. They had not understood Buddhist principle of 'Karma' and 'Rebirth'. So they started worshipping and adoring Buddha idol.

Mahayan sect had been more prevalent in this time. This sect had developed the concept of 'Bodhisattwas'. The belief that if we adore 'Bodhisattwas', we get 'Nirvana' (salvation) made Buddhism include idol worship which did not exist before.

Hinyan sect was spread only in Kashmir and Gandhar (Afghanistan). Mahayan sect had been more prevalent in rest of India.

In brief, Jain and Buddhism - both religions got separated from Vedic religion and did not accept supremacy of Brahmins or Vedas but they include major concepts of Vedic Dharm like rebirth, karma, salvation and mundanity of the world. Looking into these details, born with the opposition of Vedic dharma these both sects are different currents of a great cultural flow.

### Shaivism

Shaivite ruled states Vidisha and Padmavati of central India had a king named Bharshic. His kingdom had been spread over Mathura to Banaras. They worshipped 'Shivling' and put tilak on their heads. So they had been called Bharshivas.

Thus, there was a difference between Shaivite and other sects due to different methods of worship. Number of yagnas (sacrifice) had increased during this time. Most of the kings felt proud to perform 'Ashwamegha Yagna'. Prayag and Benaras had become the main centre of Shaivite religion.

Different sects like Lakulish, Pashupat, Maheshwar and Lingayat are seen in Shaivite religion of that time. From these sects also, creeds like Kapalik or Aghorpanth or Kalmuk and 'Veershipanth' in South had developed. Moreover, worship of Ganpati, Kartikeya, Sun as well as different manifestations of power (Shakti) like Amba, Harsidhi, Kali and Bhavani had also begun. Adoration of snakes and trees also had been prevalent. King Harsh Wardhana worshipped Lord Shiva, Sun and Buddha. Grand temples of all three gods had been built by Harshwardhana.



## **Vaishnavism**

In the same duration of spread of Buddhist and Jain religion, Vaishnav religion also known as Bhagat sect got hold on the hearts of people. This sect was older than the Buddhism or Jainism. The roots of this sect were in candles of deities in original Vedas. To love god, surrender to god, consider god as everything in life - all these sentiments were the base of this sect. The simplicity and sentimentality of this sect made it immensely popular in common people. The priests also started singing songs of Kshatriya dharma as against non-violence of the Buddhists.

## **Zoroastrianism**

This religion was founded by Iranian prophet Zoroaster in 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (628 - 521 BC). Before that people of Iran worshipped the Sun.

Arabs invaded and took over Iran in the year 641 and spread Islam till then Zoroastrian religion had been major religion of Iran. Some Zoroastrians emigrated to India to avoid religious persecution by Muslims and landed to Sanjan port of Gujrat. Thus, this religion entered India in 7<sup>th</sup> century. These people were called 'Parsi' as they came from Persia (Iran).

Parsis came to India and as the legend says mingled in to the national life of India like sugar in milk as they had promised to the king of Sanjan. They are able to follow their religion with complete satisfaction and freedom in India. They have contributed significantly to India's political, social, industrial and business as well as literary, social and cultural sectors. They have founded Atash Baharam.

## **Christianity**

Saint Peter and Saint Paul had played an important role in promoting Christian religion. Saint Thomas had got the responsibility to popularize Christian religion in India. He founded the first Christian church in Malabar. But he had been killed in strife with local people. Yet he sowed the seeds of Christianity in India which burgeoned after his death. When Britisher came to India they started founding their Kothis and built a church at a place where St. Thomas was martyred. Pahlav king Gondofarnis had adopted Christian religion when St. Thomas came to India. Moreover, no other notable things are found regarding Christian religion before European people came and started living in India in 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## **India as described by Fahien (399 - 415)**

Chinese traveller Fahien visited India in time of emperor Chandra Gupta II. His original name was Sehi. After becoming a Buddhist Monk, his name was changed to Fahien meaning 'a religious priest'. He came to India to know more about Lord Buddha - the originator of the Buddhist religion. He visited important centres of Buddhism like Gandhar, Peshavar and Takshshila in India and collected some Sanskrit and Buddhist texts. He translated 'Mahaparinirvansutra' and 'Vinaypitak' in Chinese language.

In the time when there was no railway and cars Fahien entered Patliputra after six years' long and tiresome journey passing through Gobi desert and glacier region of the Himalayas. Out of his five co-travellers, two died on the way and two returned on midway to China. This shows the hardship faced by him in the journey. He spent 3 years in Pataliputra during which he learnt Sanskrit language and copied Buddhist books. From here, he went to Tamralipti (Tamluk) near origin of Hoogli river and stayed there for two years. He copied more Buddhist text there. He collected relics of Lord Buddha. Taking all these along with him, he returned to his country on the way to Shrilanka. He confronted terrible marine storm on the way. All the travellers of the ship had to throw their luggage in the sea. But Fahien preserved and kept everything he collected from India. He returned to his country after 15 years.

Fahien writes describing India that the espionage system was powerfully spread along with whole administrative system in India. Officers and other staff were honest. There had been no corruption. Emperor

himself was concerned with welfare of people. The biggest punishment for a great crime was to cut the right hand of the offender. This shows that the people were happy and prosperous. Right hand was considered the most sacred part of the body. So It is believed that this type of punishment would have been introduced as atonement of the crime.

### Emperor Harshvardhan



Harshvardhan was born in 590 AD. He got military training in his childhood. He became king of Thaneshwar at tender age of 16 years. His ambition was to establish a big empire in India by winning smaller states and kingdoms.

Chalukya king Pulakeshi II was contemporary of Harshvardhan. He too was ambitious. Harshvardhan with his predominant hard work won the states of Malwa and Magadha to establish a great empire in Northern India during his reign of 41 years. He is considered to be the last emperor of ancient India.

Literary texts like 'Kadambari' and 'Harshcharit' by poet Ban, travelogues of Chinese travellers Fahian and Hiuen-Tsang, inscriptions and copper plates provide useful information about this age and its social, economical and cultural achievements.

### Hiuen-Tsang



He decided to visit India to know the real mystery of Buddhist religion and its basic principles as well as to get authentic texts of Buddhist religion.

When Hiuen-Tsang came to India (630 AD) Shri Harsh ruled in Kanauj. He visited almost every region of India and came in to contact with large mass of people as well as many kings. He got massive knowledge about India. He returned to China in 645 AD. He had taken around 150, pieces of relics of Lord Buddha, many statues idols of Lord Buddha in gold, silver and sandalwood and 657 copies of handwritten manuscripts with him to china carried on twenty horses.

Later part of his life was spent in translation of these books. He translated 74 books and upon insistence of his emperor, he wrote a travelogue of his journey to India. Scholars used to call him 'Buddha of their time'. Today also Hiuen-Tsang's idol is found in many Chinese temples.

Proportion of religious festival was quite huge. Emperors donated on large scale. Emperor Harsh organized 'Mahamoksha Parishad' every five years in Prayag. Five lac people participated in that. Hiuen-Tsang had noted that this celebration continued for 75 days. Harsha was considered a great Philanthropist (Daneshwari). He had built more than 1000 Baudhavihars in Kanauj.

## Art and Architecture

Architecture of Gupta age has been divided into 5 types (1) Temples (2) Cave Architecture (3) Stupas (4) Pillar (column architecture) and (5) Statue architecture.

Great many Vishnu and Shiva temples have been built during this age. They were built with bricks and stones. Majority of them built on high platforms with stairs and pinnacles. An ambulatory (pradakshinapath) is also seen around sanctum (Garbhagriha). Dashavtar Vaishnav temple in Devgarh of 'Jhanse' district is considered to be a beautiful specimen of the art of this transition period. Its summit is 40 feet high. The special Characteristics of this temple is sculpture of incarnation of Ganga and Yamuna on its door frames.

The work of the caves of Nasik, Bhaj, Bhilsa and Karla is also done during this time. Also temple of Tigwa, Etery temple of Bhitargam (Kanpur),

Shiva temple of Bhumra (Nagod) and Gop Sun temple near Porbandar, Laskhan temple of Eran (Maddhya Pradesh) as well sculpture of Amravati - all this work is done during this time.

The first Hindu temple of the world had been built in this era. Idols had been made of metal. Statues were made Sculpture had been developed completely in Takshashila. Harshvardhan had built viharas, dispensaries, Inn, and tempels. Excellent samples of sculpture and painting - caves of Ajanta and Bagh and Kailash cave temple had been made during this era.



**Dashavtar Temple**

### Golden Era of Art

**Sculpture :** Baudhisattva idols, Buddhist and Jain idols of Mathura, idols of Nagarjauna - Konda and Sarnath

**Caves :** Ajanta, Ellora, Bagh, Udayagir, in Gujarat - caves of Khambhalida, Junagadh and Dhank

**Metal Art :** Nalanda, (Sultanganj) Bronze statue of Lord Buddha weighing 1 ton

**Stupa :** Sarnath, Nalanda

**Temples :** Bheetargam, Devgarh, Mahabalipuram, Shiv temple of Bhumra

**Painting :** Cave paintings of Ajanta, Bagh, Ellora

## Music

Arts like music, dance and drama had been developed in Indian society. Samudra Gupta was Chivalarous conqueror and a poet and musician. He is seen playing Veena found on of his coins. His court poet was Harisen. He performed drama. Famous plays of celebrated sanskrit dramatists of the time were performed on the ocassion of religious festivals.

## Sculpture

In this, stone metal and wooden sculpture is included. A specific kind of structure of temples, palaces, stupa, gateways made of stone arches at temples surprise engineers of the world even today. Sarnath stambha is considered to be the supreme work of sculpture art. Mathura was the center of the art of sculpture. The idols of Mahavirswami, Vishnu, Statue of Vishnu, Shiv, Sun, Indra are the best specimens of the art of sculpture.



**Padmapani**

Cave number 29 of Ajanta caves is the most ancient one. In cave 16 Buddhist worshippers have been painted going to the stupa. Figure of Padmapani Buddhisattva painted in cave number 1, holds a unique position in art of painting of Asia. Vihar and Chaitya of Ellora caves, Jain, Hindu and Buddhist temples were constructed during the reign of Rashtrakut dynasty.



**Bagh Cave**

## Caves of Ajanta-Elora

These grand caves are formed by carving the mountain ridges of Western Ghats in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra. During British reign (1819), British army captain John Smith went on a tiger hunt and his attention was drawn towards these caves. There are total 30 caves here. Where pictures were drawn from 2<sup>nd</sup> century to 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. At present, there are 24 caves here. In cave number 16 and 17, frescos (mural) are drawn in which incidents from Lord Buddha's life and Jatak tales are painted. In addition to this, pictures of gods, gandharvas, Bhiksha, Apsara, Dancers are real and look fresh as if they are drawn only yesterday.



**Trimurti - Sculpture**



**Ajanta Cave**

## Bagh Caves

These caves are located near Gwalier in Madhya Pradesh. Paintings of Bagh caves, engraved during this time look attractive even today. Figures of Buddhisattva engraved on both the sides of gateway are still fresh. Scenes of music and dance have been created on the walls of the caves. We can see women dancing and playing different musical instruments. This shows the liking of women of that time for music and dance scenes of leaders of horse riders and procession of elephants are painted very vividly.





**Baked (Terekota) Earthen Statues**

### Coins

Most of the coins belonging to Gupta age are made up of gold and silver. Both the side of the coins carry pictures. These coins are found during excavation at different regions of India like Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bengal and Odisha.

Figures like king in Samudragupta coins and different and horse performing Ashwamedha Yagna, king playing veena, king with bow and arrow, holding danda, king wearing coat and pajama's are seen. Coins from time of Chandragupta I holds images of Kumardevi, Lakshmi on the throne and gold coins give an idea of economic scenario of India at that time. Although no authentic coins from emperor Harshvardhan's time are available till date.

### Currency

Royal stamps also were in use in Gupta age. Most of the stamps were made of baked (terakota) clay at this time. These stamps were written in Sanskrit. They were found in Vaishali and Nalanda during archaeological excavation. The royal stamp in the time of Kumar Gupta II was made from silver. Religious pictures were bloated on these stamps. Stamps of Samudragupta's time carry an eagle on it.



**State Emblems of Gupta Period**

### Achievements in Science and Technology

This age has offered huge contribution in development of mathematics, science, astrology, Vedicshastra, metallurgy, chemistry and many other branches of knowledge.

### Mathematics



**Aryabhata**

The mathematics of world today has actually begun with Indian numbers. Father of mathematics, Aryabhata had revolutionized the field by inventing zero. He has given calculations and methods of multiplication, division, addition, root and cube root in his book 'Aryabhatiyam'. The value of Pi 3.14 is given by counting area of a place by its sides.

Brahmagupta had created the principle of Brahmasphuta. He invented methods of equations. Any number divided by zero gets answer in infinity - this is mentioned in the book of this mathematician. Al Beruni has written that India has achieved magnitude by counting till trillion and ahead where no other country had advanced ahead to thousand in counting.

### Astronomy and Astrology

Astrology is in existence from Vedic age. Astronomers and astrologers like Brahmagupta, Varahmihir and Aryabhata were born in ancient India. In Gupta age, Aryabhata had declared that the

earth revolves around the Sun and causes day and night. After Aryabhata, we had Varahmihir who had been an astronomer. He was one of nine scholars in the court of emperor Vikramaditya. In his book 'Brihad Samhita' he had divided astrology into three sections (1) Tantra (2) Hora (3) Samnita. Here, he has given details of the effects of stars and planets on future of a person's life and auspicious timings (muhurtas) for events wedding, Vastu, sowing seeds, digging wells. One of the important section of astrology is Hora. Parashar muni was the first contributor on his branch of knowledge. His book 'Bhṛigu Samhita' is considered the best in astrology. In those times, rishis were not monks with beard but they were great scientists, inventors and creators of new knowledge.

### **Chemistry**

The principal (acharya) of Nalanda Vishwa Vidyapith Nagarjuna had written a book named 'Rasotrakar' in the subject of Chemistry. He had recommended to use ashes of mercury as medicine. He had known the method of converting common metals into gold. The sample of pinnacle of the knowledge held by ancient Indians is Vijay Stambh in Delhi near Qutubminar built by emperor Vikramaditya. Its height is 24 feet and weight is 7 ton standing by the years in cold, rain and sunshine, it has not got any rust till date. Juice of iron and Somras were used as medicine in 7<sup>th</sup> century. The craftsmen of this time were familiar with refining the iron. They used to make military weapons like swords, armour, spears which became very famous all over the country.

### **Social Condition**

There had been many changes in food, clothes and lifestyle of Indians after coming in contact with foreigners. Although the life style of people was easy and simple the standard of life was quite high. People had to walk on the left side of road for convenience. Most of the people were barefoot. People played board games for entertainment. Ghatikayantra (clock of sand and water) had been used to know time. Life of people was full of joy by drama and fairs. Such happy and strong social life had been reflected well in literature. Hiuen-Tsang has noted that people don't cheat each other for money. People have started wearing high heel shoes. But later on, our original national dress - dhoti and kamarbandh regained its place. They used to wear a sash or a scarf above waist. There was a custom to wear a turban or headdress on the head. Buddhist monk used to wear white, unstitched clothes. Men used to wear ear rings, necklaces and bracelets known as keyur and armlets.

### **Status of Women**

There are some interesting facts regarding the status of women in the Gupta age. The practice of choosing her own husband (swayamwar) was prevalent. Women had started using scented materials for their body. Women could move around with freedom. They used to wear beautiful clothes and ornaments. Necklace and the waist ornament were the most popular among all.

The fascinating style of combing and styling the hair of women is visible in Ajanta paintings. Material was available to paint lips and for face make up. The tradition of lying different type of beautiful clothes on waist was also prevalent. Five arts like beautifying body with sandalwood paste and colouring palm, heels and nails were extremely popular among women. There had been endless variety in ornaments of women.

### **Economic Condition**

During this age, plentiful gold, silver and valuable had been coming to India from abroad due to trade and business. Therefore, India had become an economically prosperous country. Due to contact with foreign people, India's business relation with Iran, China, Middle Asia, Egypt and European countries had become strong. As a result, cities like Prayag, Kashi, Ujjain, Mathura and Takshashila, Vaishali had developed as trade

centres. Proportion of furniture had increased in the houses of people. Ports like Khambhat (Stambhirth), Bharuch (Bhrigukachch), Tamralipti (Tamluk), Sopara (Surparak) were very important at that time.

Most of the people lived in villages. They were doing agriculture and animal herding. The state used to promote agriculture by introducing different schemes of irrigation. The dam of Sudarshan lake of Junagadh was broken and got repaired in the time of Skand Gupta.

Hiuen-Tsang notes in his book 'Si-Yo-Ki' about economic condition of Harsha's time that administration of the government is generous. The laws are in favour of the citizens. Farmeres are never forced to work without wages. The agricultural laborers were called for work if needed by the state but they are paid wages for the work. There had been very less number of taxes. People farming on the land of the state used to pay 6<sup>th</sup> part of the income to the state so people used to live comfortably. Businessmen used to travel for their trade. They used to pay nominal charges to cross the river and at custom posts.

Unions and associations of businessmen were founded because of development of trade and business. People invested their deposit in these unions and got interest. There had been a great demand of diamonds, pearls, spices, ivory and cotton cloth in Rome. Roman ships used to come to India on the way of mediterranean and red sea. They used to offer abundant gold for all these goods. Other things like dry-fruits, fragrant scents and valuable things used to come to India. The art of making glass objects, cutting and shaping hard stones had developed. Craft based industry like clothes of silk, jute and cloth printing had developed. Industry to build ship and boat had also flourished. Huge ships with capacity to accomodate more than 200 people had been built. Bullock-cart, camels, horses, elephants, boats and ships had been used for conveyance. Thus, economic administration of Gupta age and Harshwardhan's time was oriented to wellbeing and welfare of people.

### **Religious Life**

Gupta kings and emperor Harsh were secular. Their religious policy was quite generous. They respected other religious and their schoolar and offered generous help to the scholars members of one family sometimes used to follow different religions. Overall people used to live ethical lives.

Emperor Harsha was called 'Maheshwari' because he was a shaivite. Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang followed Mahayan sect of the Buddhist religion. Therefore, Harsha organised on all religion conference in Kanoj. It's procession was carried every day for 21 days. Harsha had also built thousnads of Buddhist stupas of 100 feet height on the bank of river Ganga. He had helped more generously to Buddhist religion than Hindu and helped to make it more scholars call Harshwardhan a 'Royal Propagandist' of Buddhist religion. He spared fourth part of his state's income to donate to all the religion prevalent in his state. He used to spare two parts for religious work. The Prayag 'Moksha Mahotsav' organized by him was for people from all religions where he worshipped all three gods - Buddha, Shiva and Sun.

Increased importance was attached to Trikal Sandhya, Penance and fasting. There had been extraordinary unity among people of India. If Mathura belonged to Hindus, in a similar way it also belonged to Buddhist and Jain. The legacy of culture and literature was shared by all.

### **Education**

In ancient India, a lonely place had been chosen for centre of education. Students were given education of different brances of knowledge. Main cities of the states and cities like Banaras, Mathura and Kanchi were hubs of education. Monopoly of Takshshila Vidyapitha had ended. Instead Nalanda and Valbhi Vidyapitha were coming to light. Ujjain also had become hub of education. Characteristics of culture and refinement were visible in people due to education available in these vidyapiths. The education imparted by this vidyapithas had performed the great work of transforming a person in to an ideal citizen. By destruction of these Veedyapiths, Buddhist educational institutes came to an end in India.



## **Takshashila**

Ancient Vidyapith Takshashila was located at the west to Rawalpindi of today's Pakistan. It was capital of ancient Gandhar region. According to the legend, Takshashila was founded by Bharat - younger brother of Lord Shri Ram on the name of his son Taksha who had been appointed king here, Vidyapeeth is named as Takshashila. Developed as an important hub of ancient Indian education, this vidyapith offered education of 64 vidyas (branches of knowledge). Most of the students here studied by living in ashrama of their gurus. Jeevak - disciple of Lord Buddha has learnt lessons of Ayurveda there 'Kautilya' - the writer of 'Arthashastra' had also studied there.

## **Nalanda**

Located in the north of ancient Rajgriha near Badganv village of Patan district of Bihar, this Vidyapith had become a Jainirth because Mahavir Swami had spent fourteen chaturmas in this ancient Vidyapith. It was main centre of Buddhist Mahayan sect. Kumargupt had constructed one vihar here in 5<sup>th</sup> century after which its popularity had increased. Nalanda had been a university where, repository of thousands of valuable handwritten manuscripts was stored. It was a pilgrimage of Indian civilization. Students from many countries came to study here. Great traveller Hiuen-Tsang also studied here. Today we see only ruins of this great university. Eventhough these ruins also provide a glimpse of the grand civilization of our country. In the present time also an international university is established here.

There were 300 big and small rooms available for classroom lectures and for discussions. There had been great rush of students for admission here. The level for admission was kept quite high. Only 2-3 students used to succeed in admission test out of 10. Here, 1510 teachers used to teach more than 8500 students.

Students graduated from Nalanda were considered to be the ideal students of India. Nalanda had been on the highest position in the field of education during 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century. During times of king Dharmapal Pal dynasty of Bengal, Vikramshila Vidyapith got much encouragement due to which influence of Takshashila started decreasing. In the beginning of 13<sup>th</sup> century, Vikramshila was attacked by Bakhtyar Khalji who destroyed and the valuable repository of books had been burnt.

During this time, India had some of the best libraries of the world. Students all over the world used to visit libraries of Takshashila and Nalanda for study and research. Among them, only Hiuen-Tsang brought 657 handwritten manuscripts along with him to China. There had been one more great Vidyapith in Udayapuri also.

## **India and Other Countries of the World**

From very ancient times, shipping and overseas adventure had developed in India. Indian sailors, businessmen and spiritual teachers facing many difficulties travelled to countries of Asia like Java, Sumatra, Shrilanka, Bali, Borneo, Siam and collected and brought plentiful money. So these countries of whole South East Asia are referred to as 'Island of gold' or 'Land of gold' in Indian literature.

## **Central Asia**

There was a time when Indian civilization had spread in entire region of central Asia and the responsible element of it was Buddhist religion. India was connected politically with central Asia in time of emperor Ashoka, Menander and Kanishka. Due to this Indian colonies had developed in these regions when Fahian and Hiuen-Tsang passed from these regions to come to India, Buddhist religion was strongly prevalent here. Buddhist monasteries, stupas and unions of Buddhist monks and nuns were visible almost everywhere. Gomati vihar in Khotan had become famous for study of Buddhist religion all over central Asia. Some Chinese traveller



had preferred to stop at Gomati vihar for study instead of coming to India. Similarly in Rajgruha, capital Magadha had of 100 monasteries. The best monastery here, 'Mavsangharam' was a great centre of Buddhist scholars. In these Buddhist monasteries, Sanskrit grammar, astrology and Vaidak was studied. In 1908, when a vihar in central Asia was repaired, a repository of 20 thousand manuscripts, 3000 Sanskrit books and 554 paintings had been discovered. Among Chinese travellers visiting India, Fahien and Hiuen-Tsang have noted that they had seen numberless such viharas on their way to India.

### **China**

Similarly, Buddhist religion has become instrumental in connecting China and India with cultural relations and Buddhist religion entered China in 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Chinese emperor Ming-ti had offered patronage to Buddhist religion and declared it religion of the state. Buddhist religion propagandists like Dharmaratna and Kashyap Matang had worked to promote Buddhist religion in China. This religion had secured a special place among kings, landlords and common people of China by 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Acharya Kumarjeev Dharmamitra, Gunbhardar, Upshunya, Dharmagupta and many acharyas and scholars from India had translated Buddhist books in China. Also 'Amitabh' sect founded by scholars like Buddhish and Buddhish is preserved in present time in China and far East countries. Similarly, many Chinese travellers had come to India facing many difficulties for pilgrimage of holy land of Buddha, for studying Buddhist literature and getting copies of Buddhist religious books. Remarkable among them are Fahian, Hiuen-Tsang and Itsing. The most ancient pagoda named Songyue had been constructed in Henan province of China which had 15 floors.

### **Tibet**

India did not have much connection with Tibet till 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. In 7<sup>th</sup> century king of Tibet Songtsen Gampo had two queens (one from Nepal, one from China) who followed Buddhist religion. So the king also adopted the religion and it got asylum in Tibet. This king had got 900 monasteries built in Tibet. He had also invited Buddhist acharyas and scholars from India. So famous Buddhist acharya of Nalanda Shantrakshit went to Tibet. Scholar of Nalanda Padmasambha also travelled to Tibet and founded 'Tantrik' sect there. Furthermore, many monks from Tibet also came to India for studying Buddhist religion.

### **South East Asian Countries**

Credit of spreading Indian culture to places situated at thousands of kilometers far away in South East direction of India, like Ind-China, Siam, Java, Sumatra, Balim Borneo (Indonasia), Cambodia, Champa goes to Indian traders and religion promoters. This activity of spreading Indian culture to South East Asian countries had started long back as 1<sup>st</sup> century and after this, Muslim invaders and western people had destroyed those countries and with that a grand episode of world history came to an end.

Java is mentioned as Yavadvip in Indian Scriptures. On his return journey from India Fahien stayed in Java. He had provided some information in his report. Even today books like 'Harivansh', 'Ramayan', 'Puran' are read in Java. The plays based on Ramayan and Mahabharat are played very enthusiastically in form of dance. A unique idol of the world Pragyaparmita has also been found in Java. Promoter of ancient Arya civilization - Rishi Agastya's temple is also there in Java.

### **Sumatra (Shreevijay)**

Shailendra dynasty is very famous among heroic dynasty of South East Asia. Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Borneo were part of this large empire. King of this dynasty have encouraged overseas trade. Shailendra dynasty kings have ruled for 400 years over the islands of Java, Sumatra, Bali, Siam and Philipines from 8<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Borobadure Stupa**

This world famous Buddhist Stupa located in Java is considered one of the wonders of the world. It is one of the biggest Buddhist building of the world. The whole Stupa is created by carving a mountain summit. Wonderful work of sculpture is done from base to the summit. A famous sculpture 'Jalashay' becomes memorable for the visitors of Burobadur. Beautiful statues of Lord Buddha with sentiment of friendship is in all the four direction of Stupa. Apporoximately 432 such idols are there. Brobudure is a gift of Shaliendra kings to Java. There are 504 small temples of Lord Buddha in this Stupa.



**Brobudure Stupa**

## **Cambodia**

This region was known as Khmer, Funan and Kamboj in ancient time. A brahmin from Kaundilya branch had founded a colony here in third century. It's name was Funan. It had been famous in all ways for 700 years from 7<sup>th</sup> century to 14<sup>th</sup> century. Capital of Kamboj, Ankorwar had been the grandest city of this time. Jayaverman was a great king of Kamboj. He won the kingdoms of Hindichine and Champa and made his capital in Ankor Thom. He built high stone walls around it to protect this capital Which had five gateways. Kamboj kings have ruled their kingdoms based on Indian values. Their government buildings carried Sanskrit names for example Arogyashala (hospital), Sarasvati (School), Pustakashram (Library), Viprashala (Prayerhall). These names are used even today. These kings followed Hindu religion and worshipped Shiv and Vishnu. World famous temples in the field of sculpture, architecture and vastu - Ankorvat temple had been built by then king Suryaverman II.

## **Temple of Ankorvat**

There had been a great sensation all over the world by the news based on reports of a French nature scientist named Henry Mauhaut. He informed that he had found out a temple in forests of Cambodia grander than buildings found out in Rome or Greece. He added that this temple known as Angkorvat could have been compared to the world famous church of Solomon and it would have been built by a genius creator like Michael Angelo. Within short period of five, it was known that Angkorvat is not only one temple but part of wide grand temple



**Angkorvat Temple**

complex built between 800 to 1200 century in the area of 45 square kilometers. Angkorvat is a huge complex of temples in Asia. Many such temples have been found out in jungles around Angkorvat seeing them, It can be said that Angkorvat had been the biggest city of the world in duration of year 1000. It is to our imagination that people then had marvellous art and sculpture knowledge to built a city with such grand temples.

## **Champa (Annam)**

This state existed in today's Vietnam. During 300 years between 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century, the kings of Indian roots had gained economic prosperity here. There were two kingdoms and sections like Vijaya, Panduranga and Amravati. National language of Champa was sanskrit. Documents and rock inscriptions were written in sanskrit. Shaivite religion was their main religion. Shivalinga was worshipped as national god. God Shiva had been considered defender god of the state and capital. Grand Shiva temples singing songs of Indian civilization still exists in cities of mison and poe. India possesses very remarkable geographical position which made Indian civilization spread in western, central, eastern and south east Asian countries very easily. Moreover, by Buddhist religion and trading activities. Indian people had established business relations with Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Greece and Rome since the period of Indus civilization time.

## **Trade and Commerce with the World**

The present Indonesian Islands were not unknown for people of ancient India. Indian seafarer businessmen used to visit Java, Sumatra and Bali to earn plentiful money. Of course, travelling for 2 and half thousands kilometer to Java island and return crossing the ocean to India was quite risky. So there is a famous saying in our country.

**"If a person goes to Java, never returns,  
If he returns from Java, he's rich enough to  
feed his generations and generations."**

(Those people used to spend some years in Java, Indonesia and come back would get so much money as to feed their many generations. The traveller going to Java would seldom return. The journey was very dangerous. This saying provides an idea that India had overseas trade on a very massive scale.

### **Affluent India**

**Trade :** Rome, Java, Sumatra, China, Lanka

**Ports :** East-Tamralipti, East-Bhrigukachch, Kalyan, Khambhat, South-Sopara, Kaveripattam

**Import :** Valuable objects, Fragrant materials, glass vessels, gold (sold cheaper)

**Export :** Malmal, cotton, diamond, precious stones, ivory, spices, silk, jewellery (sold costly)

**Centres of Industry :** Vidisha, Nasik, Vajjanti

**Thriving Cities :** Patliputra, Kanoj, Prayag, Vaishali, Gaya, Stambhirth (Khambhat), Vallabhai

## **Influence on global civilization with special reference to other countries of the world**

Indian emperor had ruled for long period of time on various regions of Indonesia (Suvarnadwip in ancient time) found under influence of Indian civilization. There are many words of Sanskrit in Indonesian national language. The pronunciations are little bit different. But the meaning of the word is not changed. Sakti (Shakti), Vanita (Waman), Sutradhari (Sutradhar), Gajah (elephant), Narak (Nark), Boomi (Bhomi), Putri (Putri), Brat (Vrat), Garud (Garuda). The name of 'Indonesia Airlines' is a Garuda Airways. Before 1300 years from today, Java, Bali, Sumatra and Borneo were independent and different regions. Emperor Shailendra went there from India and won over all of them to build a single empire. This empire had been known as Shri Vijay Empire with the time. As noted by Arabian businessmen that annual income of this empire was equal to 200 mounds of gold. And this emperor used to give away one brick of gold in to the

lake near by his palace after performing his daily worship as offering. Shailendra dynasty ruled in Indonasia till the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century. Afterwords, emperor Rajendra from Chaula dynasty attacked it many times with his navy and weakned the country. Today also, in Indonesian plays based on Ramayana like Sita-Swayamvar, Rama going to forest, meeting Bharat, abduction of Sita, killing Jatayu, burning of Lanka, Ram Ravan war are played every year. Indonesia today is following Islam to a major extent. Still on this Island, Ramayan is performed and Incantation, chanting, verses are sung. This can be seen as influence of Indian civilization.

### EXERCIS

#### 1. Answer the following questions in detail :

- (1) Write about Sanskrit literature during Gupta age and Harsha's time.
- (2) Give details of achievements of Aryabhatta and Varahmihira.
- (3) Discuss in detail - 'Nalanda Vidyapith was a University.'
- (4) Select a specimen of sculpture, architecture and metalwork and describe each in five sentences.
- (5) Review status of women in society during the time of Harshavardhana.

#### 2. Answer the following questions briefly :

- (1) Which books were written by the great poet Kalidas ?
- (2) In which countries of the world, Indian civilization had spread in ancient time ?
- (3) Which caves had been constructed in ancient India ?
- (4) Who recommended to use mercury ashes as medicine ?
- (5) By what name Cambodia was known in ancient time ? How do we find influence of Indian culture time ?

#### 3. Choose the correct option from the given alternatives and give answers :

- (1) Who was the last great king of ancient India ?  
 (A) Pruthviraj Chauhan (B) Samrat Harshwardhan  
 (C) Emperor Ashoka (D) Samudra Gupta
- (2) Who is considered father of Mahtematics ?  
 (A) Varah Mihir (B) Bhaskaracharya (C) Aryabhata (D) Brahmagupta
- (3) Where is Vijayastambh built by emperor Chandra Gupta (Vikramaditya) located ?  
 (A) Delhi (B) Kanoj (C) Sarnath (D) Nalanda
- (4) Which Chinese traveller visited India in emperor Harshwardhana's time ?  
 (A) Hiuen-Tsang (B) Fahiyana (C) Itsing (D) Al Berani
- (5) What was the ancient name of present Vietnam ?  
 (A) Champa (B) Comodia (C) Java (D) Sumatra

