

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 Kaveripattnam/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 – Tolkppiyar
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 Tolkappium by Tolkappiyar.
- Jivikachintamani by Tirukakkdewar.
- 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



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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 Bodhi Dharm.
- Then he was liberal.
- Though a follower of the Brahmanical religion, he was tolerant of other faiths.
- Received a missionary from Meghavarmā, 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 Kshatrapa 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 reign, the peace and prosperity of empire was distributed due to the invasion of Turko-Mongol tribe, Hunas Mihirkula was the most famous king of Hunas. 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 Hunas power.
- Feudatories rose in Bihar, Bengal, MP, Vallabhi etc.

ADMINISTRATION OF GUPTA

- Kings were called Parameshwara/Maharajadhiraj/Paramabhattaraka.
- 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). Fahien 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.



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- Bhagvatism 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 Bhitragan (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 Dharmachakra 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, Raghuvarsha.

- 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 Mricchakatika), Bharavi (Kiratarjuniya), Dandin (Kavyadarshna) and Dasakumaracharita). To this period belong 13 plays written by Bhasa.
- Most famous of these was Charudatta.
- Vishakhadatta wrote Mudraraksasa and Devichandraguptam.
- 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 Pi 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 Hastiyagarva a treatise on the disease of elephants.
- Court language was Sanskrit.
- Dhanvantri – famous for Ayurveda knowledge.

