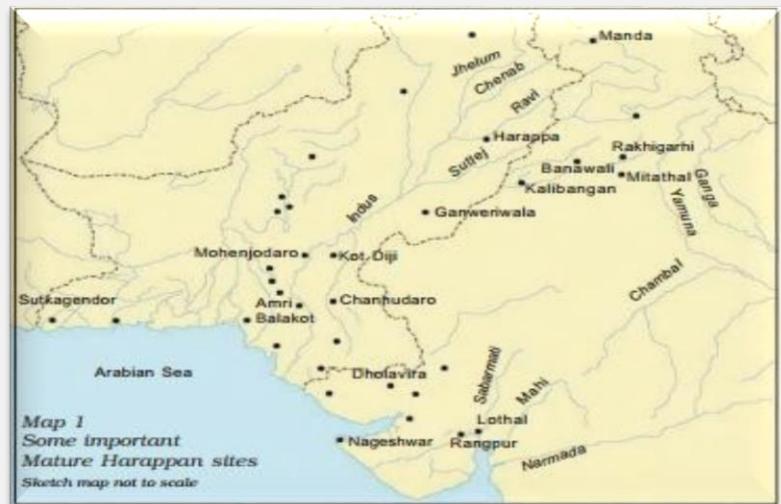
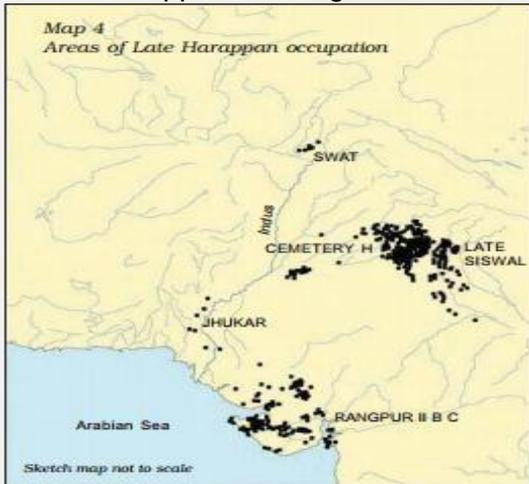


## CHAPTER 1: BRICKS, BEADS & BONES

### THE HARAPPAN CIVILISATION

- The distinctive artefact of Harappan or Indus valley civilisation is the Harappan seal made of steatite containing animal motifs and signs of an undeciphered script.
- Indus valley civilisation is also called as Harappan culture.
- Culture: term used by archaeologists for a group of objects, distinctive in style, that are usually found together within a specific geographical area and period of time.
- Indus valley civilisation- the items found are seals, beads, weights, stone blades and even baked bricks.
- The culture is named after its first site that was discovered i.e. Harappa
- Civilisation is dated between 2600BCE – 1900BCE
- There were earlier and later cultures in the same area which now are called as Early Harappan and Late Harappan to distinguish from Harappan culture which is also called as Mature Harappan culture.



It appears that there was a break between the Early Harappan and the Harappan civilisation, evident from large-scale burning at some sites, as well as the abandonment of certain settlements.

### Food items ate by Harappan:

- wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea and sesame.
- Millets found in Gujarat.
- Finds of Rice are relatively rare.
- Animal bones found at Harappan sites include those of cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo and pig indicating that these animals were domesticated.

### Agricultural Technologies:

- Prevalence of agriculture is indicated by the discovery of grain.

- Representations on terracotta sculptures and seals indicate that Bull was known. Archaeologists extrapolate from this that oxen might have been used for ploughing.
- terracotta models of the plough have been found at sites in **Cholistan** and at **Banawali** (Haryana).
- Archaeologists have also found evidence of a ploughed field at **Kalibangan** (Rajasthan), associated with Early Harappan levels.
- Semi-arid locations: Most Harappan sites are located in semi-arid areas where irrigation was required for agriculture. Traces of canals have been found in Shortughai in Afghanistan but not in Punjab & Sind (Mostly due to silting up of canals)
- Dholavira: Water reservoirs found.

### **Mohenjodaro: A planned Urban centre:**

- The most unique feature of Harappan civilisation was the development of urban centres;
- Mohenjodaro is the most famous of them.

Divided into two parts,

- ✓ Citadel: smaller but higher (Western Part)
- ✓ Lower town: larger but lower (Eastern Part)

### **Citadel:**

- ✓ Buildings were constructed on mud brick platforms so its height was greater than of lower town.
- ✓ It was walled from all sides.
- ✓ Citadel at Lothal was not walled off but was built at a height.
- ✓ Citadel had structures that were used for special public purposes. Examples of such structures are, Warehouse, The Great Bath.

### **Laying out drains**

- ✓ planned drainage system
- ✓ roads and streets were laid out along an approximate "grid" pattern, intersecting at right angles.

### **The Great Bath:**

#### **Features:**

- ✓ The Great Bath was a large rectangular tank in a courtyard surrounded by a corridor on all four sides.
- ✓ There were two flights of steps on the north and south leading into the tank, which was made watertight by setting bricks on edge and using a mortar of gypsum.
- ✓ There were rooms on three sides, in one of which was a large well.
- ✓ Water from the tank flowed into a huge drain.
- ✓ Across a lane to the north lay a smaller building with eight bathrooms, four on each side of a corridor, with drains from each bathroom connecting to a drain that ran along the corridor.
- ✓ The uniqueness of the structure, as well as the context in which it was found (the Citadel, with several distinctive buildings), has led scholars to suggest that it was meant for some kind of a special ritual bath

**Lower town:** It was also walled like the citadel. Several buildings were built on platforms.

### **Signs of planning:**

- The platforms indicate that the architecture was planned beforehand and then implemented.
- Use of standardised ratio in the bricks used in all the Harappan settlements i.e. length = 4\*Height, Breadth=2\*Height
- Carefully planned drainage system

### **Domestic architecture:**

Residential buildings:

- Centered around a courtyard with rooms on all sides
- Cooking and weaving done in the courtyard
- An apparent concern for privacy: there are no windows in the walls along the ground level
- Each house had drains connected to the main drainage.
- Many houses had wells, often in a room that could be reached from the outside and perhaps used by passers-by.

### **Social differences:**

Whether any social or economic differences were prevalent during Harappan civilisation?

### Burials during Harappan period:

- Dead were laid in pits. Sometimes the inner lining of the pits was lined with Bricks.
- Some pits contained jewellery, ornaments indicating a belief in afterlife

### **From burials it is not clear whether the social or economic differences existed.**

Another method to verify is to study the artefacts which are classified into

- Utilitarian: Objects of daily use made out of stone or clay like pottery, querns etc
- Luxurious: Objects made out of costly, non-local materials or from complex methods like faience pottery.
- Such objects are found in large settlements like Harappa and Mohenjodaro but not in small settlements

### Finding Out About Craft Production:

#### Chanhudaro:

- Centre of craft production bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working, seal-making and Weight-making.
- The variety of materials used to make beads is remarkable: stones like carnelian (of a beautiful red colour), jasper, crystal, quartz and steatite; metals like copper, bronze and gold; and shell, faience and terracotta or burnt clay.
- Steatite, a very soft stone
- red colour of carnelian was obtained by firing the yellowish raw material

#### Nageshwar & Balakot:

- Located on coast. Specialised centres of shell-making including bangles, ladles and inlay and transported to other settlements.

#### Chanhudaro and Lothal:

- finished products like beads from here were taken into large urban centres like Mohenjodaro and Harappa.

### **How are the craft production centres identified?**

- Raw materials like stone nodules, whole shells, copper ore; tools; unfinished objects; rejects and waste material.
- waste is one of the best indicators of craft work.
- larger wastepieces were used up to make smaller objects, but minuscule bits were usually left in the work area

### Procuring of materials for craft:

- Clay was available locally
- Stone, timber, metal etc had to be procured from outside.

### Methods of Harappans:

- ✓ Harappans procured materials for craft production in various ways, such as;
- **Nageshwar and Balakot where shell was easily available,**
- **Shortughai** in Afghanistan where lapis lazuli (a highly valued blue stone) was available
- **Lothal** which was near sources of carnelian (from Bharuch in Gujarat),
- steatite (from **south Rajasthan** and **north Gujarat**)
- metal (from **Rajasthan**)
- Another method used was to send expeditions to areas like **Khetri** in Rajasthan for Copper & **South India** for Gold. Steatite micro beads found in such areas corroborates the fact.
- There is evidence in the **Khetri** area for what archaeologists call the **Ganeshwar-Jodhpura** culture, with its distinctive non-Harappan pottery and an unusual wealth of copper objects.
- possible that the inhabitants of this region supplied copper to the Harappans

### Modes of Transportation:

- Terracotta models of bullock cart suggest it was a popular method for transportation
- Riverine routes across Indus and tributaries were also used
- ✓ Copper was also brought from Oman as is indicated by the Harappan artefacts found there.
- ✓ Both Omani and Harappan artefacts contain traces of Nickel indicating common origin.

### Mesopotamian texts mention the following places,

Magan: Oman

Dilmun: Bahrain

Meluha: Harappa. Products mentioned are carnelian, lapis lazuli, copper, gold, and varieties of wood.

- ✓ **Seals & Sealings were used to facilitate long distance communication**
- ✓ **Harappan script was written from right to left**

### Weights:

- ✓ Exchanges were regulated by precise system of cubical weights made from stone called **chert**.
- ✓ **The lower denominations were Binary while Higher denominations were in decimal system.**

### Ancient authority:

The theory that there was a single state looks plausible because of following,

- ✓ The extraordinary uniformity of Harappan artefacts notably in bricks from Jammu to Gujarat
- ✓ Setting up of settlements in specific locations
- ✓ Planned settlements
- ✓ Such complex decisions could not have been taken by large communities.

### End of the Civilisation:

- ✓ By **1800BCE** most of the Mature Harappan civilisations had been abandoned. Simultaneously, there was an expansion of population into new settlements in Gujarat, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh.

It can be observed from those settlements that remained after **1900BCE** that,

- ✓ Disappearance of distinctive artefacts of the civilisation like weights, seals, special beads,
- ✓ Writing, long-distance trade, and craft specialisation also disappeared.
- ✓ House construction techniques deteriorated and large public structures were no longer produced.

### What caused these changes?

- ✓ range from climatic change, deforestation, excessive floods, the shifting and/or drying up of rivers, to overuse of the landscape.
- ✓ Some of "causes" may hold for certain settlement but still they do not explain the disappearance of an entire civilisation.

### So what could have been the reason?

- ✓ Collapse of the Harappan state which acted as a strong unifying element which is evidenced by the disappearance of seals, the script, distinctive beads and pottery, the shift from a standardised weight system to the use of local weights; and the decline and abandonment of cities

### **TIMELINE 1 MAJOR PERIODS IN EARLY INDIAN ARCHAEOLOGY**

2 million BP (BEFORE PRESENT)	Lower Palaeolithic
80,000	Middle Palaeolithic
35,000	Upper Palaeolithic
12,000	Mesolithic
10,000	Neolithic (early agriculturists and pastoralists)
6,000	Chalcolithic (first use of copper)
2600 BCE	Harappan civilisation
1000 BCE	Early iron, megalithic burials
600 BCE-400 CE	Early Historic

*(Note: All dates are approximate. Besides, there are wide variations in developments in different parts of the subcontinent. Dates indicated are for the earliest evidence of each phase.)*



- ✓ Development of coinage
- ✓ Growth of diverse system of thought including Jainism & Buddhism
- ✓ Brahmanas began composing “*Dharmasutras*”. These laid down norms for the rulers (and all other social categories) who were expected to behave like Kshatriyas

**Early Buddhist and Jaina texts mention of 16 Mahajanapadas.**

**Janapada:**

- ✓ A land where jana (people, clan or a tribe) sets its foot or settles.
- ✓ It is a word used in both Prakrit and Sanskrit

**Important mahajanapadas:**

- 1) Vajji
- 2) Koshala
- 3) Gandhara
- 4) Magadha
- 5) Kuru
- 6) Panchala
- 7) Avanti

**Characteristics of Mahajanapadas:**

- 1) Most were ruled by kings but some, *ganas or sanghas* were oligarchies.
- 2) Each mahajanapada had a capital city which was fortified.
  - ✓ Raids on neighbouring states were considered a legitimate way of acquiring wealth so some states began maintaining armies.

**Magadha:**

- ✓ Emerged as the most powerful of the 16 mahajanapadas during periods between 6<sup>th</sup> century and 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.
- ✓ Its capital initially was Rajagaha (prakrit for present day Rajgir in Bihar) a fortified settlement but was later shifted to Pataliputra (patna) in 400BCE to command routes of communication along Ganga.

**Reasons attributed for Magadha’s power**

- ✓ Very productive area for agriculture
- ✓ Iron-mines (in present Jharkhand) provided tools and resources for manufacturing weapons.
- ✓ Elephants, an important component of the army those days, was found in the forest regions of Magadha.
- ✓ Ganga and its tributaries provided an easy mode of communication
- ✓ Early Jaina and Buddhist texts attribute this power to the individual policies of the ruthlessly ambitious kings like Ajatasattu, Bimbisara and Mahapadma Nanda

**An Early Empire:**

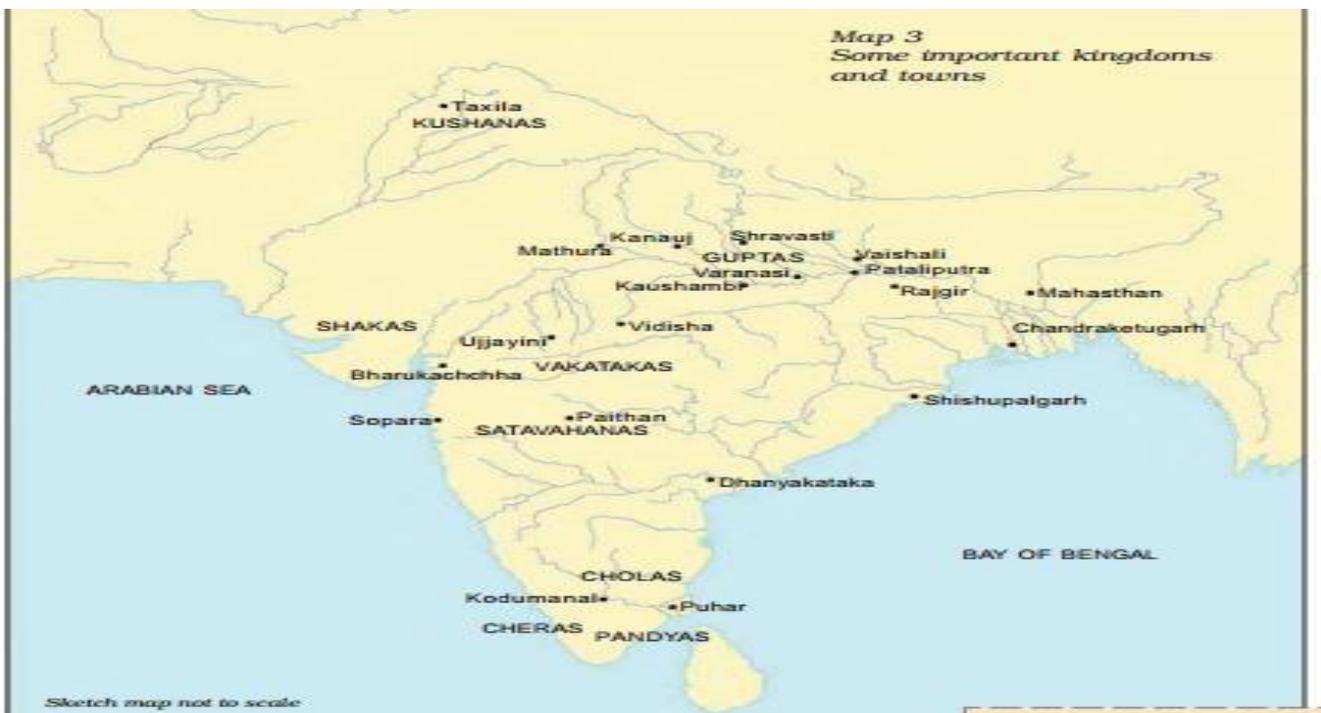
- ✓ The growth of Magadha led to the culmination of Mauryan Empire.
- ✓ Founded by Chandragupta Maurya in 321BCE.
- ✓ Extended as far as Afghanistan and Baluchistan in the NW.

**Sources used by the historians to reconstruct Mauryan History:**

- ✓ Archaeological finds such as sculptures
- ✓ Contemporary works such as the account of *Megasthenes* (a Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya), arthashastra parts of which were written by Chanakya (Kautliya)
- ✓ Mauryas find their mention in the Buddhist, Jaina & Puranic literature and Sanskrit works.
- ✓ Inscriptions of Asoka on rocks & pillars are often regarded as the most valuable sources of info on Mauryan empire.

**Inscriptions of Asoka:**

- ✓ Most were written in Prakrit language
- ✓ Script: Brahmi
- ✓ In the NW script is Kharosthi & language is Aramaic or Greek



### Empire's Administration:

- ✓ Mauryan Empire was vast extending from NW Pakistan to Andhra Pradesh and Orissa in India.
- ✓ The administrative control was not uniform.
- ✓ More prominent in the areas around the capital and the provincial centres.
- ✓ 5 major political centres, namely,
  - Taxila
  - Ujjayini
  - Tosali
  - Suvarnagiri
  - Pataliputra (Capital)
- ✓ These political centres were chosen carefully for eg: Taxila and Ujjayini were on situated on long-distance trade routes, Suvarnagiri was important for its gold mines in Karnataka.
- ✓ Armies were maintained with the help of committee which had 6 sub-committees to look into the different aspects of managing the military activity.

### Importance of the Mauryan Empire for the national struggle for the freedom of India:

- ✓ Archaeological finds associated with the Mauryas, including stone sculpture, were considered to be examples of the spectacular art typical of empires.
- ✓ Many of the historians found the message on Asokan inscriptions very different from that of most other rulers, suggesting that Asoka was more powerful and industrious, as also more humble than later rulers who adopted grandiose titles.
- ✓ So, nationalist leaders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (when the history of Mauryan Empire began to be reconstructed) considered Asoka to be an inspiration.
- ✓ By the 200BCE, new chiefdoms and kingdoms emerged in several parts of the subcontinent.

### New ideas of Kingship:

- ✓ Kingship means dignity, position or rank of a King.
- ✓ New kingdoms emerged in the Deccan and further south like chiefdoms of Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas in **Tamilkam** (Tamil country that included parts of AP, Kerala and Tamilnadu).

### Chief:

- ✓ Powerful man whose position may or may not be hereditary.
- ✓ He derives support from his kinfolk.

- ✓ His functions may include performing special rituals, leadership in warfare, and arbitrating disputes.
- ✓ He receives gifts from his subordinates (unlike kings who usually collect taxes) and often distributes these amongst his supporters.
- ✓ Generally, there are no regular armies and officials in chiefdoms.

### **Kushanas (200BCE – 200CE):**

- ✓ Ruled over kingdom stretching from Central Asia till NW India.
- ✓ Adopted the strategy of identifying with deities to claim high status.

### **Sources of their historic reconstruction:**

- ✓ Textual traditions and Inscriptions
- ✓ Finding of colossal statues of Kushana rulers in a shrine in Mathura in India and in Afghanistan indicate that Kushanas considered themselves as godlike.
- ✓ Possibly inspired by Chinese rulers they named themselves as “Devaputra” meaning son of god.
- ✓ By the 400CE Gupta Empire emerged.

### **Sources of reconstruction:**

- ✓ Prashastis, literature, coins and inscriptions.

### **The Prayaga Prashasti(also known as the Allahabad Pillar Inscription)**

- ✓ was composed in Sanskrit by Harishena, the court poet of Samudragupta, arguably the most powerful of the Gupta rulers (c.fourth century CE)

### **Sudarshana lake :**

- ✓ was an artificial reservoir.
- ✓ We know about it from a rock inscription (200CE) in Sanskrit, composed to record the achievements of the Shaka ruler Rudradaman.

### **Popular perception of Kings:**

#### **How did the common people felt about their kings?**

- ✓ Ordinary people rarely left the accounts of their thoughts & experiences.
- ✓ So, historians have tried to solve this problem by examining stories contained in the anthologies such as *jatakas* and *panchtantra*.
- ✓ *Jatakas* written around 500BCE.
- ✓ As per the *jatakas* kings tried to fill their coffers while peasants finding the rule oppressive left for the forests.

### **To meet the growing demands for taxes new modes of cultivation were also adopted like,**

- ✓ Plough agriculture which spread in the fertile alluvial plains of Ganga and Kaveri from 600BCE.
- ✓ In some parts of Ganga valley through transplantation yield of paddy was increased. Iron ploughshare didn't spread to semi-arid areas such as Punjab and Rajasthan while those living in hilly tracts of NE and central parts of the subcontinent practised hoe agriculture.
- ✓ Another strategy adopted to increase agricultural production was the use of irrigation, through wells and tanks, and less commonly, canals

### **Differences in rural society:**

- ✓ Though the agricultural production increased but its benefits were not evenly distributed due to growing differentiation between those who were engaged in agriculture like landless agricultural labourers, small peasants, as well as large landholders.
- ✓ Large landholders and the village headman (hereditary position) emerged as powerful figures & often exercised control over other cultivators.
- ✓ Early Tamil literature (the Sangam texts) also mentions different categories of people living in the villages – large landowners or *vellalar*, ploughmen or *uzhavar* and slaves or *adimai*.
- ✓ It is likely that these differences were based on differential access to land, labour and some of the new technologies.

### **Gahapati:**

- ✓ A gahapati was the owner, master or head of a household, who exercised control over the women, children, slaves and workers who shared a common residence.

- ✓ also the owner of the resources – land, animals and other things – that belonged to the household.
- ✓ Sometimes the term was used as a marker of status for men belonging to the urban elite, including wealthy merchants.

### Land grants and new rural elites:

- ✓ From early centuries of CE there were instances of land grants being made and recorded on inscriptions. Most inscriptions were on copper plates, some on stone, given as a record of the transaction to those who received the land.

### Language:

- ✓ Sanskrit. From 700 CE onwards a part of inscription was in Sanskrit and part in local language like Tamil or Telugu.

### Why were these land grants given?

- ✓ Some feel that land grants were part of a strategy adopted by ruling lineages to extend agriculture to new areas.
- ✓ Others suggest that land grants were indicative of weakening political power: as kings were losing control over their **samantas**, they tried to win allies by making grants of land.
- ✓ They also feel that kings tried to project themselves as supermen (as we saw in the previous section) because they were losing control and they wanted to present at least a facade of power.

### Agrahara:

- ✓ A land grant given to a Brahmana.

### Trade in subcontinent and beyond:

- ✓ From the sixth century BCE, land and river routes criss-crossed the subcontinent and extended in various directions – overland into Central Asia and beyond, and overseas, from ports that dotted the coastline – extending across the Arabian Sea to East and North Africa and West Asia, and through the Bay of Bengal to Southeast Asia and China.
- ✓ Rulers often attempted to control these routes, possibly by offering protection for a price.
- ✓ Various merchants, peddlers and seafarers travelled through these routes.
- ✓ Successful merchants, were designated as **masattuvan** in Tamil and **setthis** and **sattavahas** in Prakrit
- ✓ Spices, especially pepper, were in high demand in the Roman Empire, as were textiles and medicinal plants, and these were all transported across the Arabian Sea to the Mediterranean.

### Coins and Kings:

- ✓ To some extent these trade exchanges were facilitated through the introduction of the coinage. Punch-marked coins made of silver and copper (600 BCE onwards) were amongst the earliest to be minted and used.
- ✓ These were issued by the Kings. It is also likely that merchants, bankers and townspeople issued some of these coins.
- ✓ The first coins to bear the names and images of rulers were issued by the **Indo-Greeks**, who established control over the NW part of the subcontinent 200 BCE.
- ✓ The first gold coins were issued 100 CE by the Kushanas. These gold coins have been found from several sites in north India and Central Asia. The widespread use of gold coins indicates the enormous value of the transactions that were taking place.
- ✓ Hoards of Roman coins have been found in South India indicating trade connections
- ✓ Coins (Cu) were also issued by tribal republics such as that of the **Yaudheyas** of Punjab and Haryana (100 CE)
- ✓ Gupta rulers also issued gold coins and they were of very high purity.

### From 600 CE onwards the finds of gold coins taper off. Does this indicate an economic crisis?

- ✓ Some suggest that with the collapse of the Western Roman Empire long-distance trade declined, and this affected the prosperity of the states, communities and regions that had benefited from it.
- ✓ Others argue that new towns and networks of trade started emerging around this time.
- ✓ They also point out that though finds of coins of that time are fewer, coins continue to be mentioned in inscriptions and texts. Could it be that there are fewer finds because coins were in circulation rather than being hoarded?

## TIMELINE 1 MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

c.600-500 BCE	Paddy transplantation; urbanisation in the Ganga valley; <i>mahajanapadas</i> ; punch-marked coins
c. 500-400 BCE	Rulers of Magadha consolidate power
c. 327-325 BCE	Invasion of Alexander of Macedon
c. 321 BCE	Accession of Chandragupta Maurya
c. 272/268-231 BCE	Reign of Asoka
c. 185 BCE	End of the Mauryan empire
c. 200-100 BCE	Indo-Greek rule in the northwest; Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas in south India; Satavahanas in the Deccan
c. 100 BCE-200 CE	Shaka (peoples from Central Asia) rulers in the northwest; Roman trade; gold coinage
c. 78 CE?	Accession of Kanishka
c.100-200 CE	Earliest inscriptional evidence of land grants by Satavahana and Shaka rulers
c. 320 CE	Beginning of Gupta rule
c. 335-375 CE	Samudragupta
c. 375-415 CE	Chandragupta II; Vakatakas in the Deccan
c. 500-600 CE	Rise of the Chalukyas in Karnataka and of the Pallavas in Tamil Nadu
c. 606-647 CE	Harshavardhana king of Kanauj; Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang comes in search of Buddhist texts
c. 712	Arabs conquer Sind

### Chapter-3-Kinship, Caste and Class (Early Societies)

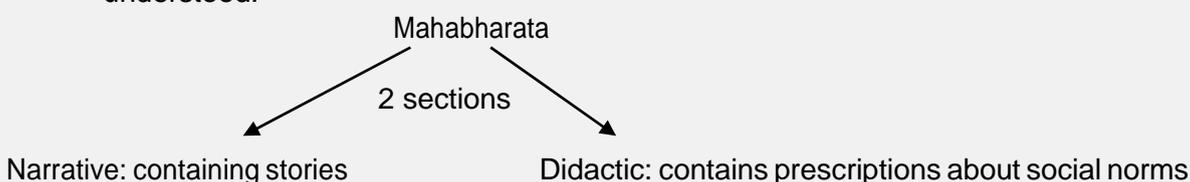
#### Kinship and Marriages:

##### Many rules and different practices

- ✓ For early societies retrieving information about the elite families is easy but the reconstruction of the familial relationships of ordinary people is difficult.
- ✓ Attitude towards family and kinship often provide an insight into their thinking.

#### Sanskrit Mahabharata:

- ✓ *Adi Parvan* – literally means the 1<sup>st</sup> section of Mahabharata.
- ✓ Sanskrit used in Sanskrit version is far simpler than the Vedas or of prashastis and hence it was widely understood.



- ✓ The original story was probably composed by charioteer-bards known as **sutas** who generally accompanied Kshatriya warriors to the battlefield and composed poems celebrating their victories and other achievements.
- ✓ These compositions circulated orally.
- ✓ Then, from the 500BCE, Brahmanas took over the story and began to commit it to writing.
- ✓ Between 200BCE and 200CE, a period when worship of Vishnu was growing in importance and Krishna one of the important figures of the epic was coming to be identified with the Vishnu.
- ✓ Between 200CE and 400CE large didactic sections resembling Manusmriti were added to Mahabharata thereby increasing the number of verses to 100,000

- Kula: Sanskrit term to designate families
- Jati: Large network of kinfolk (relatives)
- Patriliney: It means tracking descent from father to son to grandson. IT was prevalent before Mahabharata. Most ruling dynasties (600BCE onwards) claimed to follow this system.
- Matriliney: Term used when descent is traced through mother

### Rules of Marriage:

#### Position of Son

- Sons were important for the continuity of patrilineage.

#### Position of Daughter

- They had no claims to the resources of the household.
- At the same time, marrying them into families outside the kin was considered desirable.
- This system, called exogamy (literally, marrying outside), meant that the lives of young girls and women belonging to families that claimed high status were often carefully regulated to ensure that they were married at the “right” time and to the “right” person.
- This gave rise to the belief that *kanyadana* or *the gift of a daughter* in marriage was an important religious duty of the father.
- As societies evolved and people from far and wide came into contact they began to question these beliefs and practices so Brahmanas laid down the codes of social behaviour in great detail from 500BCE as Sanskrit texts known as Dharamashastra or Dharmasutras.
- 8 forms of marriage were listed in them and only first 4 were considered good while the next four were deemed to be bad.
- The 6<sup>th</sup> form of marriage is voluntary union of maiden and her lover out of desire indicating that “Love marriages” were considered to be bad even during that times

### Manusmriti:

- A dharamashastra which was compiled between 200BCE and 200CE.
- Brahmanas claimed that these rules had universal applicability while its clear that it could not have been followed universally because of the diversity of the subcontinent and the difficulties in communication.

### The gotra of women:

- The Brahmanical practice of classifying people into gotras started from 1000BCE onwards.
- Each **Gotra** was named after Vedic seers and people having same gotra were regarded as his descendants.

#### **Two rules about gotra were particularly important:**

- ✓ women were expected to give up their father’s gotra and adopt that of their husband on marriage
- ✓ members of the same gotra could not marry. A look at the lineages of Satavahana (200BCE-200CE) rulers clearly shows that gotra system was followed among elite.

#### **Traits of Satavahana rulers that went against the prescribed system in Dharmashastras:**

- some rulers were polygynous (had more than 1 wife)
- Some women who married Satvahana rulers, retained their names instead of adopting their husband’s gotra name.
- Some of these women belonged to same gotra i.e. endogamy instead of exogamy was prevalent as an alternative practice in South India.
- Though Satavahana rulers were identified through metonymics, it doesn’t means that mothers were accorded a special place at that time because even in Satavahana rulers succession was patrilineal.

### **Social Differences:**

- Caste, hierarchically ordered social categories were listed in Dharmashastras. Brahmanas placed themselves at the top of the ladder and “Shudras” and “Untouchables” were placed at the lowest rung.
- Positions were determined by birth meaning a son or daughter of Shudra was also deemed a Shudra by caste.

#### **Ideal occupations as per Dharmashastras:**

- Brahmanas were supposed to study and teach the Vedas, perform sacrifices and get sacrifices performed, and give and receive gifts.

- Kshatriyas were to engage in warfare, protect people and administer justice, study the Vedas, get sacrifices performed, and make gifts.
- The last three “occupations” were also assigned to the Vaishyas, who were in addition expected to engage in agriculture, pastoralism and trade.
- Shudras were assigned only one occupation – that of serving the three “higher” varnas.

#### How did Brahmanas got these standards enforced?

- By asserting that the Varna order was of divine origin
- Advised kings to make sure that these norms are followed within their kingdoms
- By attempting to persuade people that their status is determined by their birth. As this was not easy so prescriptions were often re-enforced through stories told in Mahabharata and other texts.

#### Non-Kshatriya King:

- As per shastras only Kshatriyas could become kings but this was not true as anyone who could muster resources and support became king.
- Social background of Mauryas is a highly debated topic as Buddhist texts designated them as Kshatriyas while Brahmanical texts designated them as of “Low” origin.
- Shakas who came from Central Asia were regarded as **mlechchas** or Barbarians or outsiders by Brahmins. However they were familiar with Sanskritic traditions.
- The most famous ruler of Satavahana dynasty gotami putasatakani considered himself to be a unique Brahmana (eka bahmana) and a destroyer of the pride of Kshatriyas.
- Hence, integration within a framework of a caste was a complicated process.
- The Satavahanas claimed to be Brahmanas, whereas according to the Brahmanas, kings ought to have been Kshatriyas.
- They claimed to uphold the fourfold varna order, but entered into marriage alliances with people who were supposed to be excluded from the system.
- And, as we have seen, they practised endogamy instead of the exogamous system recommended in the Brahmanical texts.

#### Jatis and social mobility:

- These complexities are reflected in another term used in texts to refer to social categories – jati.
- In Brahmanical theory, jati, like varna, was based on birth.
- However, while the number of varnas was fixed at four, there was **no restriction on the number of jatis**.
- In fact, whenever Brahmanical authorities encountered new groups – for instance, people living in forests such as the nishadas – or wanted to assign a name to occupational categories such as the goldsmith or suvarnakara, which did not easily fit into the four fold varna system, they classified them as a jati. Jatis which shared a common occupation or profession were sometimes organised into shrenis or guilds.
- One interesting stone inscription (500CE), found in Mandasor (Madhya Pradesh), records the history of a guild of silk weavers who originally lived in Lata (Gujarat), from where they migrated to Mandasor, then known as Dashapura.
- It states that they undertook the difficult journey along with their children and kinfolk, as they had heard about the greatness of the local king, and wanted to settle in his kingdom.

#### Vanik:

- Sanskrit term for merchant.
- Given the diversity of the subcontinent there were and always have been populations whose social practices were not influenced by Brahmanical ideas and whenever they are mentioned in Sanskritic texts they are referred to as odd, uncivilised and animal-like.
- For eg: Forest dwellers, nomadic pastoralists.

#### Beyond the four varnas:

- Brahmanas developed a sharper social divide by classifying some social categories as untouchables.
- Performance of rituals was considered a sacred task and so certain activities were avoided like taking food from the Untouchables.

- Chandalas who handled dead corpses and dead animals were placed at the very bottom of the hierarchy.
- Their touch and even seeing them was regarded as polluting.
- The Manusmriti laid down the “duties” of the chandalas.
- They had to live outside the village, use discarded utensils, and wear clothes of the dead and ornaments of iron.
- They could not walk about in villages and cities at night. They had to dispose of the bodies of those who had no relatives and serve as executioners.
- Much later, the Chinese Buddhist monk Fa Xian (c. fifth century CE) wrote that “untouchables” had to sound a clapper in the streets so that people could avoid seeing them.
- Another Chinese pilgrim, Xuan Zang (c. seventh century), observed that executioners and scavengers were forced to live outside the city.

### **Beyond Birth: Resources and Status**

#### **Gendered access to property:**

- As per Manusmriti paternal estate had to be divided amongst sons with a special share for the eldest but women could not claim a share of these resources.
- Women were however allowed to keep the gifts they received during their marriage (stridhana).
- These gifts could be inherited by their children and husband would have no claim on them.
- At the same time Manusmriti warned women against hoarding any valuables or property without the permission of their husbands.
- All in all, land, resources and cattle were generally controlled by men and this discriminatory access to resources endorsed by Manusmriti created or rather sharpened the already present social differences between men and women.

#### **Varna and access to property:**

- Another criterion of regulating access to the property was “Varna”.
- Shudras could only engage in servitude while other 3 varnas could engage in variety of jobs. So evidently priests and kings were the wealthiest while Shudras were the poorest without any access to property whatsoever.
- Early Buddhists (600 BCE onwards) criticised this system and developed their own wherein they rejected the idea of claim to status by birth.
- A system where sharing of the resources and wealth was considered to be respectful was prevalent in the ancient Tamilakam.

### **Explaining social differences: Buddhist theory of social contract**

- Buddhists developed an alternative understanding of the social inequalities and the social institutions to regulate social conflict.
- In a myth found in a text known as the **Sutta Pitaka** they suggested that originally human beings did not have fully evolved bodily forms, nor was the world of plants fully developed.
- All beings took only what they needed from the nature.
- Gradually as people became greedy they decided to appoint a mahasammatta (the great elect) who was to be chosen by them.

#### **This suggests,**

- the institution of kingship was based on human choice, with taxes as a form of payment for services rendered by the king.
- recognition of human agency in creating and institutionalising economic and social relations

### TIMELINE 1 MAJOR TEXTUAL TRADITIONS

c. 500 BCE	<i>Ashtadhyayi</i> of Panini, a work on Sanskrit grammar
c. 500-200 BCE	Major Dharmasutras (in Sanskrit)
c. 500-100 BCE	Early Buddhist texts including the <i>Tripitaka</i> (in Pali)
c. 500 BCE-400 CE	<i>Ramayana</i> and <i>Mahabharata</i> (in Sanskrit)
c. 200 BCE-200 CE	<i>Manusmriti</i> (in Sanskrit); composition and compilation of Tamil Sangam literature
c. 100 CE	<i>Charaka</i> and <i>Sushruta Samhitas</i> , works on medicine (in Sanskrit)
c. 200 CE onwards	Compilation of the <i>Puranas</i> (in Sanskrit)
c. 300 CE	<i>Natyashastra</i> of Bharata, a work on dramaturgy (in Sanskrit)
c. 300-600 CE	Other Dharmashastras (in Sanskrit)
c. 400-500 CE	Sanskrit plays including the works of Kalidasa; works on astronomy and mathematics by Aryabhata and Varahamihira (in Sanskrit); compilation of Jaina works (in Prakrit)

## Chapter-4-Thinkers, Beliefs and Buildings-Cultural Developments

- Mid 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE is regarded as a turning point in the history of the world.

Because:

- saw the emergence of thinkers such as Zarathustra in Iran, Kong Zi in China, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in Greece, and Mahavira and Gautama Buddha, among many others, in India.
- tried to understand the mysteries of existence and the relationship between human beings and the cosmic order.
- also the time when new kingdoms and cities were developing and social and economic life was changing in a variety of ways in the Ganga valley.

### Buddha & Buddhism:

- Buddha aka Siddhartha was son of a chief of sakya clan.
- His visit to city one day led him to believe in the frugality of this life and he left the palace in search of his own truth.
- Siddhartha explored several paths including bodily mortification which led him to a situation of near death. Abandoning these extreme methods, he meditated for several days and finally attained enlightenment.
- After this he came to be known as the Buddha or the Enlightened One. For the rest of his life, he taught ***dhamma*** or the path of righteous living.

- Researchers have found that 64 schools of thought in Buddhism were there. Debates took place in ***kutagarshala*** (a hut with a pointed roof).
- Born at Lumbini
- Attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya
- Gave his first sermon at Sarnath
- Attained nibbana (Nirvana) at Kusinagara

### **Teachings of Buddha:**

Buddha's teachings have been reconstructed using stories, mainly from **sutta pitaka**.

- According to Buddhist philosophy, the world is transient (*anicca*) and constantly changing;
- it is also soulless (*anatta*) as there is nothing permanent or eternal in it.
- Within this transient world, sorrow (*dukkha*) is intrinsic to human existence.
- It is by following the path of moderation between severe penance and self-indulgence that human beings can rise above these worldly troubles.
- In the earliest forms of Buddhism, whether or not god existed was irrelevant.
- The Buddha regarded the social world as the creation of humans rather than of divine origin.
- Therefore, he advised kings and gahapatis() to be humane and ethical. Individual effort was expected to transform social relations.
- The Buddha emphasised individual agency and righteous action as the means to escape from the cycle of rebirth and attain self-realisation and ***nibbana***, literally the extinguishing of the ego and desire – and thus end the cycle of suffering for those who renounced the world.

### **Followers of Buddha:**

Buddha's disciples grew and he founded a ***sangha***, an organisation of monks. These monks later became teachers of **Dhamma**.

- They lived only on what they needed through alms and were therefore known as ***Bhikkhus***.
- Buddha's followers came from diverse backgrounds like kings, gahapatis, slaves etc and once they were within sangha they were all treated equal.
- The internal functioning of the sangha was based on the traditions of ganas and sanghas, where consensus was arrived at through discussions.
- If that failed, decisions were taken by a vote on the subject.

### **Women & sangha**

- At first women were not allowed into sangha but one of his disciples named ananda persuaded him to allow women into sangha.
- The Buddha's foster mother, Mahapajapati Gotami was the first woman to be ordained as a ***bhikkhuni***.
- Many women who entered the sangha became teachers of dhamma and went on to become ***theris***, or respected women who had attained liberation.

### **How Buddhist texts were prepared and preserved?**

- The Buddha and other teachers taught orally. None of his speeches were written during his lifetime.
- After his death (500-400BCE) his teachings were compiled by his disciples at a council of "elders" or senior monks at ***Vesali*** (Pali for Vaishali in present-day Bihar).
- These compilations were known as ***Tipitaka*** – literally, three baskets to hold different types of texts.
- ***Vinay pitaka***: included rules and regulations for those who joined the *sangha* or monastic order;
- ***Sutta Pitaka***: contained Buddha's teachings;
- ***Abhidhamma Pitaka***: dealt with philosophical matters.
- Each pitaka comprised a number of individual texts.

### **Spread of Buddhism:**

Buddhism grew rapidly both during the lifetime of the Buddha and after his death.

Because,

- it appealed to many people dissatisfied with existing religious practices and confused by the rapid social changes taking place around them.

- Of the importance it attached to conduct and values rather than claims of superiority based on birth, the emphasis placed on **metta** (fellow feeling) and **karuna** (compassion), especially for those who were younger and weaker than oneself
- As, Buddhism travelled to new regions like Srilanka, other texts such as **Dipavamsa** (chronicle of the island) and **Mahavamsa** (Grea chronicle) were written containing regional histories of Buddhism. Buddhist texts were preserved in manuscripts for several centuries in monasteries in different parts of Asia.
- Modern translations have been prepared from Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan texts.
- Over the centuries, Buddha's message spread across the subcontinent and beyond – through Central Asia to China, Korea and Japan, and through Sri Lanka, across the seas to Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia.

### Hagiographies

- (Biography of a religious saint or a leader.
- They tell us about the beliefs of the followers of that particular tradition) have been helpful in reconstructing details of his life.

### Mahavira & Jainism:

- The basic philosophy of Jainism was already present in North India before Vardhamana (Mahavira)'s arrival on the scene in 600 BCE.
- There were 23 teachers or literally **Tirthankaras** before Mahavira who guided men and women across the river of existence.
- Central idea of Jainism -The entire world is animated.

### Teachings of Jainism:

- even stones, rocks and water have life.
- Non-injury to living beings, especially to humans, animals, plants and insects, is central to Jaina philosophy.
- In fact the principle of ahimsa, emphasised within Jainism, has left its mark on Indian thinking as a whole.
- According to Jaina teachings, the cycle of birth and rebirth is shaped through karma.
- Asceticism and penance are required to free oneself from the cycle of karma.
- This can be achieved only by renouncing the world; therefore, monastic existence is a necessary condition of salvation.

### 5 Vows of Jain monks and nuns:

Jaina monks and nuns took five vows:

To abstain

- ✓ from killing,
- ✓ stealing
- ✓ lying
- ✓ to observe celibacy
- ✓ to abstain from possessing property

### STUPAS:

- ✓ From earliest times, people tended to regard certain places as sacred.
- ✓ These included sites with special trees or unique rocks, or sites of awe inspiring natural beauty.
- ✓ These sites, with small shrines attached to them, were sometimes described as **chaityas**.
- ✓ Apart from the places like Sarnath, Lumbini etc there were some other places where relics of Buddha such as his bodily remains or the things he used were buried.
- ✓ Such places were mounds known as Stupas.

### Why were stupas built?

- ✓ The tradition of building stupas may have been pre-buddhist but they came to be associated with Buddhism.
- ✓ Whole stupa was venerated as an emblem of both Buddha and Buddhism.
- ✓ According to a Buddhist text known as the **Ashokavadana**, Asoka distributed portions of the Buddha's relics to every important town and ordered the construction of stupas over them.

- ✓ By the 200BCE a number of stupas, including those at Bharhut, Sanchi (Sanchi was discovered in 1818) and Sarnath had been built

### How were stupas built?

- ✓ Railings and pillars of stupas have records of donations by kings and guilds such as ivory workers who financed part of one of the gateways at Sanchi.
- ✓ Ordinary men and women also contributed towards building of stupas

### Architectural features of Stupa:

- ✓ The stupa (a Sanskrit word meaning a heap) originated as a simple semi-circular mound of earth, later called **anda**. Gradually, it evolved into a more complex structure, balancing round and square shapes.
- ✓ Above the anda was the **harmika**, a balcony like structure that represented the abode of the gods.
- ✓ Arising from the harmika was a mast called the **yashti**, often surmounted by a **chhatra** or umbrella.
- ✓ Around the mound was a railing, separating the sacred space
- ✓ The early stupas at Sanchi and Bharhut were plain except the stone railings unlike the stupas elaborately carved with niches and sculptures that were built much later on Amravati (Andhra Pradesh), and Shah-ji ki Dheri in Peshawar (Pakistan)
- ✓ Scrolls – Charanachitras

### Symbols of Worship:

- ✓ Many early sculptors did not show the Buddha in human form – instead, they showed his presence through symbols.
- ✓ The empty seat was meant to indicate the meditation of the Buddha, and the stupa was meant to represent the **mahaparinibbana**.
- ✓ Another frequently used symbol was the wheel. This stood for the first sermon of the Buddha, delivered at **Sarnath**.

### Shalabhanjika:

- ✓ A woman shown in sculptures at Sanchi.
- ✓ She is swinging by the edge of the gateway while holding on to a tree.
- ✓ This was a woman whose touch caused trees to flower and bear fruit.
- ✓ It is likely that this was regarded as an auspicious symbol and integrated into the decoration of the stupa.

### What does Shalabhanjika motif (a unifying idea that is a recurring element in the literary or artistic work) suggest?

- ✓ The shalabhanjika motif suggests that many people who turned to Buddhism enriched it with their own pre-Buddhist and even non-Buddhist beliefs, practices and ideas.
- ✓ Some of the recurrent motifs in the sculpture at Sanchi were evidently derived from these traditions.

### Gajalakshmi motif:

- ✓ A woman surrounded by lotuses and elephants which seem to be sprinkling water on her as if performing an **abhisheka** or consecration.
- ✓ Some historians identify her as Maya (the mother of Buddha) while some identify it as **Gajalakshmi** (literally the goddess of fortune).

### New religious traditions:

#### Emergence of Mahayana:

- ✓ By 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE the practices and ideas of Buddhism changed.
- ✓ The original idea of Buddhism gave great importance to self effort in attaining nibbana like Buddha did through his own effort but gradually the idea of saviour emerged.
- ✓ Saviour was the one who could ensure salvation. Simultaneously, the idea of **Bodhisattas** also developed.

#### Who were Bodhisattas?

- ✓ Bodhisattas were perceived as deeply compassionate beings who accumulated merit through their efforts but used this not to attain nibbana and thereby abandon the world, but to help others.
- ✓ The worship of Buddha and Bodhisattas became an important part of this tradition called as **Mahayana** (literally the greater vehicle).

- ✓ Those who practiced this tradition regarded the other Buddhists as followers of **Hinayana** (lesser vehicle).
- ✓ Followers of the older tradition described themselves as **theravadins**, that is, those who followed the path of old, respected teachers, the **theras**.

### The growth of Puranic Hinduism:

- ✓ The notion of a saviour was not unique to Buddhism.
- ✓ We find similar ideas being developed in different ways within traditions that we now consider part of Hinduism.
- ✓ These included Vaishnavism (a form of Hinduism within which Vishnu was worshipped as the principal deity) and Shaivism (a tradition within which Shiva was regarded as the chief god), in which there was growing emphasis on the worship of a chosen deity.
- ✓ In the case of Vaishnavism, cults developed around the various avatars or incarnations of the deity. Deity was believed to take avatars whenever there was disorder or destruction in the world by evil forces.
- ✓ It is likely that different avatars were popular in different parts of the country.
- ✓ Recognising each of these local deities as a form of Vishnu was one way of creating a more unified religious tradition.
- ✓ Shiva was represented through linga and sometimes through human form too.
- ✓ Such sculptures of deities represented complex set of ideas which could only be deciphered by historians by familiarising themselves with the stories behind them.

### Puranas:

- ✓ Such stories of gods and goddesses were contained in Puranas, which were composed by Brahmanas in the mid of 1<sup>st</sup> millennium CE.
- ✓ They were generally written in simple Sanskrit verse were meant to be read aloud to everybody, including women and Shudras, who did not have access to Vedic learning.
- ✓ Much of what is contained in the Puranas evolved through interaction amongst people – priests, merchants, and ordinary men and women who travelled from place to place sharing ideas and beliefs.

### Building temples:

- ✓ Around the time that the stupas at sites such as Sanchi were acquiring their present form, the first temples to house images of gods and goddesses were also being built.

### Features of Early temples:

- ✓ The early temple was a small square room, called the **garbhagriha**, with a single doorway for the worshipper to enter and offer worship to the image.
- ✓ One of the unique features of early temples was that some of these were hollowed out of huge rocks, as artificial caves.
- ✓ The tradition of building artificial caves was an old one.
- ✓ Some of the earliest of these were constructed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE (200-300 BCE) on the orders of Asoka for renunciators who belonged to the Ajivika sect.
- ✓ This tradition evolved through various stages and culminated much later – in the eighth century – in the carving out of an entire temple, that of **Kailashnatha** (a name of Shiva).
- ✓ A copperplate inscription records the amazement of the chief sculptor after he completed the temple at Ellora: “Oh how did I make it!!”
- ✓ Gradually, a tall structure, known as the **shikhara**, was built over the central shrine.
- ✓ Temple walls were often decorated with sculpture.
- ✓ Later temples became far more elaborate – with assembly halls, huge walls and gateways, and arrangements for supplying water

## TIMELINE 1 MAJOR RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS

c. 1500-1000 BCE	Early Vedic traditions
c. 1000-500 BCE	Later Vedic traditions
c. sixth century BCE	Early Upanishads; Jainism, Buddhism
c. third century BCE	First stupas
c. second century BCE onwards	Development of Mahayana Buddhism, Vaishnavism, Shaivism and goddess cults
c. third century CE	Earliest temples