

TRADE AND CONTACT WITH DISTANT LANDS

About 50 years after the death of Ashoka, the Greek kings established their rule in the north-west of the Indian sub-continent. These were the people who had come with Alexander and Seleucus and settled in various places such as Egypt, Iran and Afghanistan.

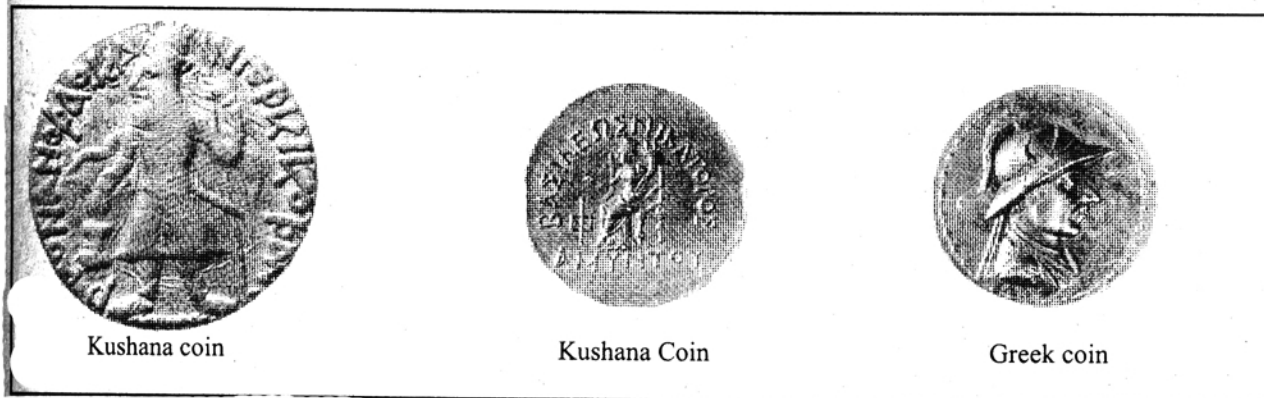
During this period, the Satvahana dynasty had established its rule in southern India. A little later, the Saka dynasty came to rule in western India and the Kushana dynasty in north-western India. The Kushanas and Sakas had connections with Central Asia and China.

With the establishment of these kingdoms, considerable traffic and trade developed between India and Greece, Rome, Egypt, Iran, Central Asia and China. Traders carried Indian goods to sell in those countries and brought back products of those countries.

Identify these countries and regions on the map of the world. Remember, Rome is today the capital of the country called Italy.

Coins

As a result of such trade, several foreign influences penetrated into India. For example, new techniques of making coins were introduced. Look at these coins of the Greek and Kushana kings. Some carry the faces of their kings while others have shown the entire figure. They also have something written on them. These coins were made by melting gold and silver and casting the molten metal in moulds. Other kings too began adopting this technique of casting coins in moulds. Prior to this, they had used other techniques. You would have seen pictures of such coins in the chapter on the *mahanagaras*.



Do those coins look different from the coins shown here? Describe the main differences.

The coins of the *mahajanapadas* were made of silver. Sheets of silver were first cut into smaller pieces and the king then had his seal stamped on these pieces of silver.

Sculpture

Techniques of sculpting too were influenced by sculptors from foreign countries. Look at this picture of a statue of the Buddha from the Mathura region. Now look at the picture of the Buddha statue made by sculptors from the Gandhara region.



Buddha image in the Mathura style



Buddha image in the Gandhara style

Do you notice any difference between the two statues?

Which sculptor has shown the folds of clothing in greater detail?

Which sculptor has highlighted the curls and strands of hair more?

Can you identify any other differences?

How did such differences creep in? Many artists from Greece, Rome and Egypt had settled around Gandhara in north-western India. These sculptors taught their skills to Indian artists, and in turn, learnt from their Indian counterparts. In this manner, the sculptors of Gandhara adopted many of the stylistic features of the sculpture of Greece and Rome.

The Week Days

Nowadays, we divide each month into weeks, and each week into seven days. Each day has been given a name. In Hindi, for example, each day is named after celestial bodies such as the sun, moon and planets. But this was not always so. This practice of naming the days came with the Greeks. Prior to this, other methods were used to count days and months. Do you know which these methods were? Can you find out about them?

Different Religious Influences

This was the time when brahmins and Buddhist monks travelled to Central Asia and China. They spread their teachings among the people of these regions. At about the same time, a disciple of Jesus Christ travelled to southern India with traders from Rome. His name was Saint Thomas.

On the whole, this was a time when people from distant countries came in contact and traded with each other. As a result, there was an exchange of goods, customs, ideas and rituals.

Ayurveda

It was during this period that the study of diseases and their treatment was taken up in a systematic manner in India. Diseases, their symptoms and their treatment were studied and analysed in detail. This information was collected into texts, one of which is the Charaka Samhita, written by Charaka, a well known physician of the time. From these early beginnings developed the school of medicine known as Ayurveda. This is one of the major systems of medicine practised in the world today.

Grammar

Among the major thinker-philosophers of India at that time was Panini. He made a detailed study of language and wrote an important text on Sanskrit grammar called Ashtadhyayi. Among other things, this text traces the origin and development of various words, sentences and phrases.

EXERCISES

1. List the dynasties which followed the Mauryan dynasty.
2. In which direction would you have to go from India to reach Greece and Rome?
3. As a result of foreign influences on India,
 - a. What changes occurred in the manufacture of coins?
 - b. What changes occurred in the techniques of sculpture?
 - c. What changes occurred in the counting of days?
4. Who were the people who went from India to other countries and why did they go?
5. The coins of every period have their specific characteristics. In the picture given below, can you sort out the coin of the *mahajanapadas* from that of the Kushana dynasty?



6. Identify the statue made by sculptors of Mathura and the one made by sculptors of Gandhara.