

A person in winter gear is jumping off a snowy cliff edge. The background features jagged, snow-capped mountains under a clear sky. A red ribbon graphic curves across the top of the image. The text is overlaid on a blue gradient background.

M.A DEGREE PROGRAMME IN HISTORY SEMESTER- 1

Indian History (Up to 600 A.D)



Module -3

Vedic Period

SOURCES ON THE VEDIC PERIOD

- The Vedic literature and archaeological evidences were the major sources for the history of the Aryans.
- Vedas are a mass of literature. The word Veda is derived from the root 'vid' meaning knowledge. The vast literature of the Aryans were divided into two groups namely Sruti and Smriti.
- The Vedic literature consisted of the Rig Veda Samhita, Samaveda Samhita, Yajurveda Samhita, Athrva Veda Samhita, massive prose texts called Brahmanas and philosophical works like Upanishads, Aranyakas, Upavedas, Vedangas and Dharmasastras.



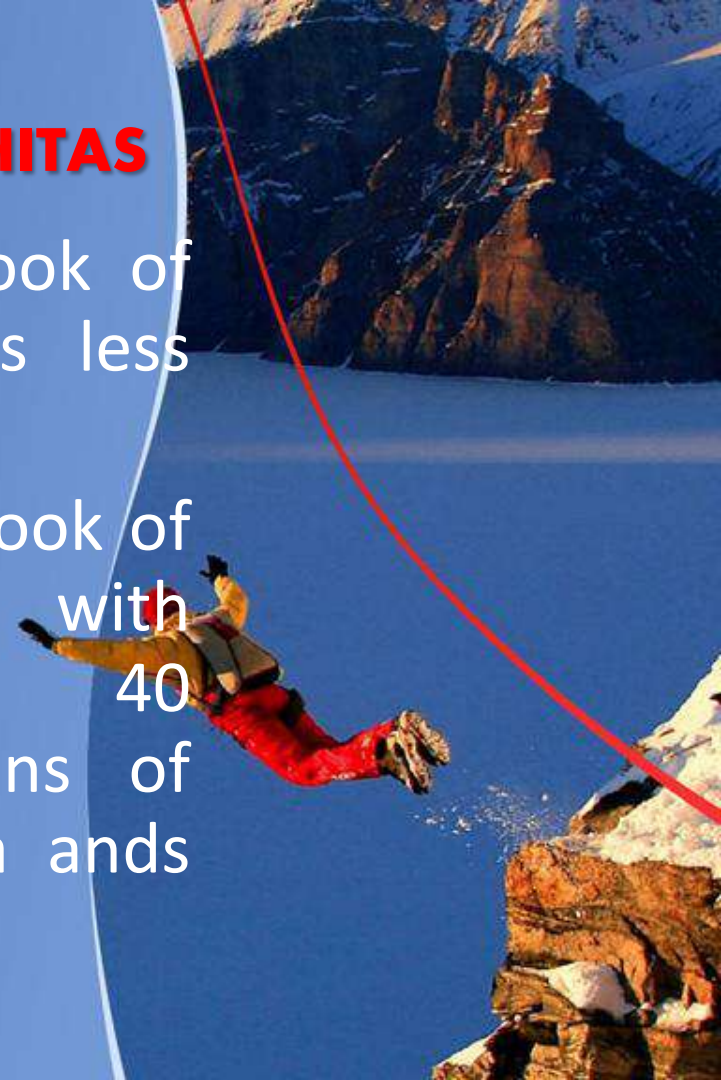
RIG VEDA SAMHITA

- It is the oldest and most important Vedic Samhita.
- It consisted of 1017 hymns arranged into ten mandalas or chapters.
- It contained the famous Gayatrimantra.
- Rig Vedic samhitas are very important in the historical point of view because it throws much light on the political, social, economic and religious life of the people of the Vedic period



SAMAVEDA AND YAJURVEDA SAMHITAS

- Samaveda was also called the Book of Chants. It deals with music. It has less historical value.
- Yajurveda is generally called "the Book of Sacrificial Prayers". It deals with rituals. This work contained 40 chapters. There were two divisions of Yajurveda namely Black Yajurveda and White Yajurveda.



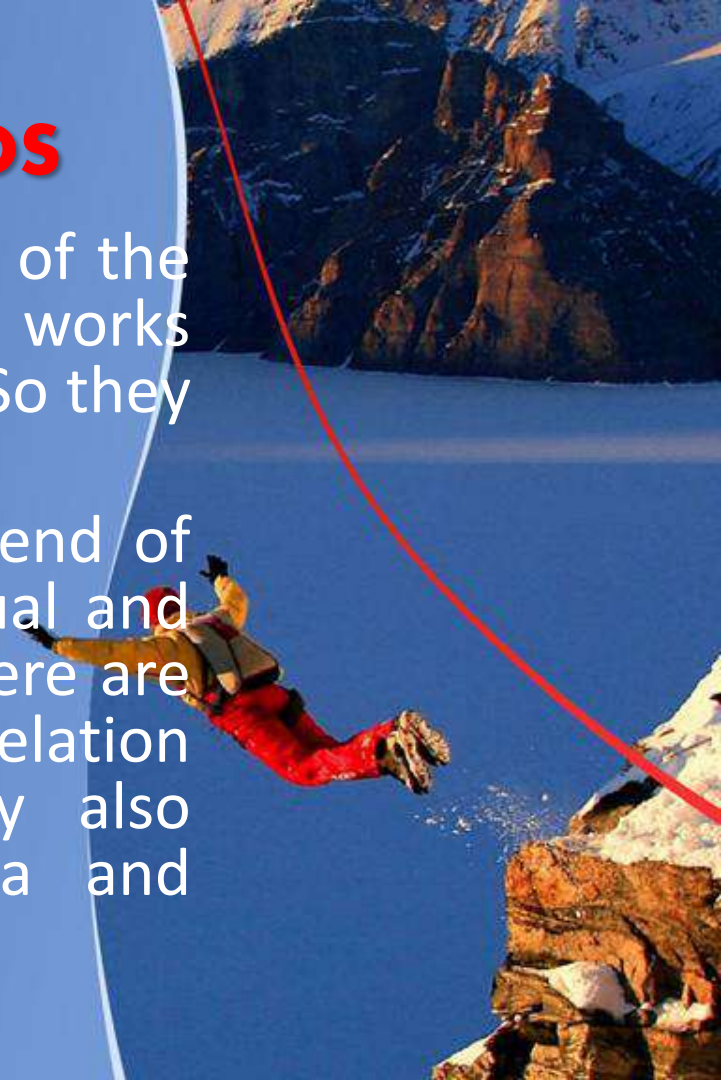
ATHARVAVEDA AND BRAHMANAS

- Atharvavedas are the books of magical formulas. Its mantras deal with charms to control demons and spirits. It is divided into 20 books. It contained description about the diseases and the kind of treatments.
- Brahmanas are prose texts explaining the meaning of mantras and also the method of performing them. It contained the legends of great personalities mentioned in the Vedic Samhitas.



ARANYAKAS AND UPANISHADS

- Aranyakas are the concluding parts of the Brahmanas. They are philosophical works meant for the Sages of the forests. So they are called Forest Books.
- The Upanishads are found at the end of the Brahmanas. They are the spiritual and religious thoughts of the Aryans. There are 108 Upanishads. They explain the relation between the soul and God. They also explained the doctrine of karma and salvation.



VEDANGAS AND UPAVEDAS

- Vedangas are also called the limbs of vedas. There are six vedangas. Among them Kalpa Vedanga is the most important which deals with the domestic life of the Aryans.
- Upavedas are supplementary Vedas which deals with secular subjects. There were four Upavedas. They are Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharvaveda and Shilpaveda.



THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

- The archaeological sources throw much light on the history of the Aryans.
- Among the archaeological sources the potteries deserve special mention. There were evidences of the potteries used by the Aryans like Ochre Coloured Pottery and Painted Gray Ware.
- Another notable source is the Bogazkoi inscription found in Asia Minor.





SOCIAL CONDITION OF EARLY VEDIC PERIOD

- The early vedic Aryans were pastoral people and the cattle rearing was their major occupation. Prayers were made for cattle. Cow was the chief medium of exchange.
- Cattle lifting was the main reason for the tribal wars. Several words found in Rig Veda like Gavishti (Search for cow), Aghanya (Not to kill cow) shows the importance given to cattle.
- The Aryans also domesticated horse, buffalo, sheep, goat, elephant, dog, donkey, deer, pig and camel.



SOCIAL CONDITION OF EARLY VEDIC PERIOD

- The Rig Vedic Aryans had a joint family system. The head of the joint family was known as Dampathy or Grihapati. He was respectable like God. Mother enjoyed respectable position in the family
- Even though people preferred sons than daughters, once born they were respected. Women could inherit property. They participated in the sacrifices and attended the meetings of Samiti. No child marriage .Monogamy practiced. Women participated in war and engaged in agriculture. There were women scholars like Viswawara, Apala, Lopamudra and Sikata.



SOCIAL CONDITION OF EARLY VEDIC PERIOD

- The people cultivated various food grains. The most important was barley. Soma and Sura were two intoxicant drinks.
- The dress of the people consisted of Nivi, Vasa and Adhivasa. Ornaments were used by both the sexes. The people engaged in indoor as well as outdoor hobbies.
- Chaturvarnya system began to appear during this period. But it was not rigid.

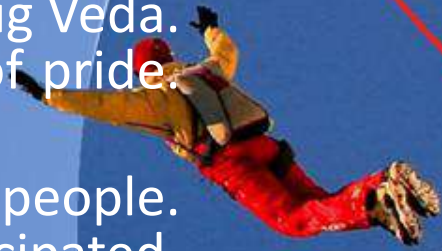
THE EARLY VEDIC POLITY

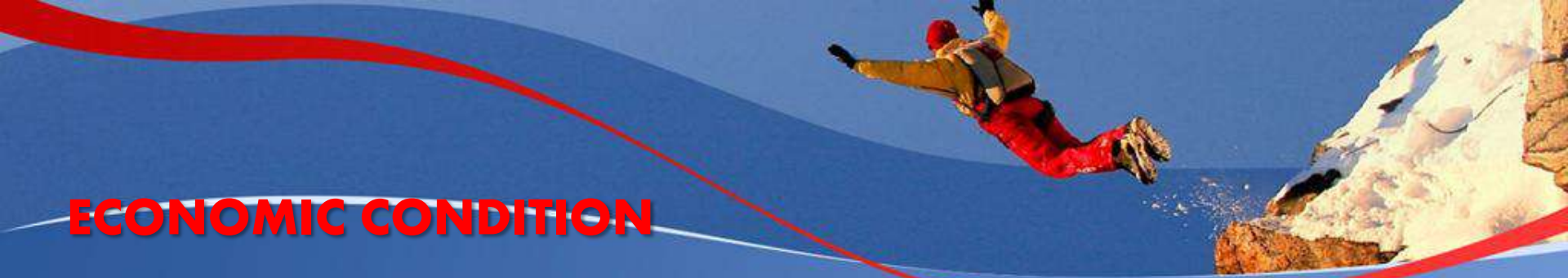
- Family was the basic unit of the society. Several families constituted a Grama under a Gramika. A number of gramas form Visya under Visyapati. A number of Visyas constituted Jana or Kingdom. King was called Rajan
- Kingship was hereditary. But there were cases of election also.



THE EARLY VEDIC POLITY

- Sabha, Samiti and Vidata were the three major popular assemblies.
- Vidata was the earliest. It is mentioned in 122 times in Rig Veda. Vidata performed political, social, military and festive functions.
- The term Sabha is mentioned in 8 times in Rig Veda. Its membership was regarded as a matter of pride. It had only limited membership
- Samiti was the national assembly of the people. King attended its meetings. Women participated. Some times King was elected by Samiti.





ECONOMIC CONDITION

- Agriculture and cattle rearing were the principal occupation of the people. Rice, wheat and barley were produced.
- Textile manufacturing developed. Arts and crafts also developed.
- Trade both internal and external developed. In the early stages barter system of exchange existed. But later coins began to be used.



RELIGIOUS CONDITION

- It was a kind of nature worship
- The most important Gods were Indra, Agni, Varuna, Soma etc. There was a predominance of male divinity over female divinity.
- Indra was called Purandara or breaker of forts. Indra was the rain God where as Varuna was the God of water. Other divinities include Savitri, Vayu, Pritvi, Ratri, Aranyani, Ushes etc. People offered sacrifices and recited mantras for appeasing their Gods and Goddesses.

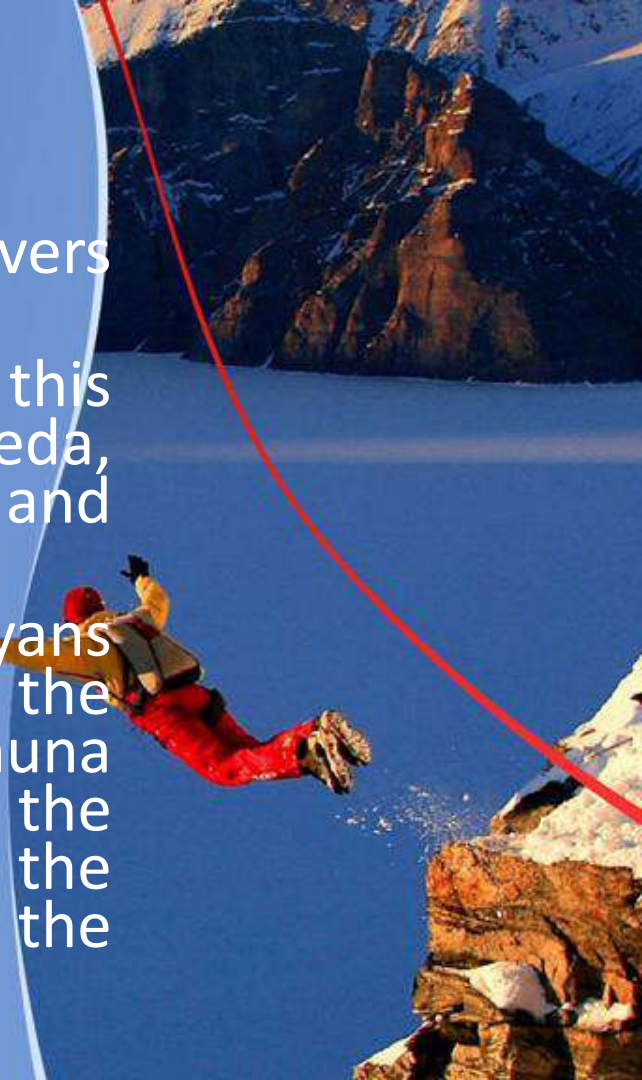


LATER VEDIC PERIOD

CHANGES OCCURRED DURING THE PERIOD

INTRODUCTION

- The later Vedic civilization roughly covers the period from 1000 B.C to 600 B.C
- The major sources of information for this period comes from SamaVeda, Yajurveda, Athrvaveda, Brahmanas,Upanishads and archaeological sources like P.G.W
- In the later Vedic period the Aryans expanded their culture from the saptasindhu areas to the Ganga-Yamuna Doab.The amalgamation of tribes, the possession of iron and horse and the growth of agriculture contributed to the Aryan expansion.



POLITICAL LIFE

- The political life was marked by many changes. The emergence of the idea of state, the growth of royal power and the elaboration of administrative machinery are some of these changes
- The popular Assemblies lost their importance.
- The Kings assumed several titles. Many royal sacrifices emerged. They include Aswamedha, Vajpeya and Rajasuya sacrifices.
- The Kings were helped by many new officials called Ratnis. Regular taxation started. The states with definite boundary began to appear.



SOCIAL LIFE

- The fourfold division of society based on system developed. The monopoly of Brahmins started.
- The Ashrama system started. The life of the people of higher varnas were divided into four ashrams each having 25 years of duration.
- The position of women deteriorated. They could not participate in public life. Child marriage, polygamy, sati and parda systems began. Although there were women scholars like Gargi and Maitreyi, educational rights of women were not entertained.



ECONOMIC LIFE

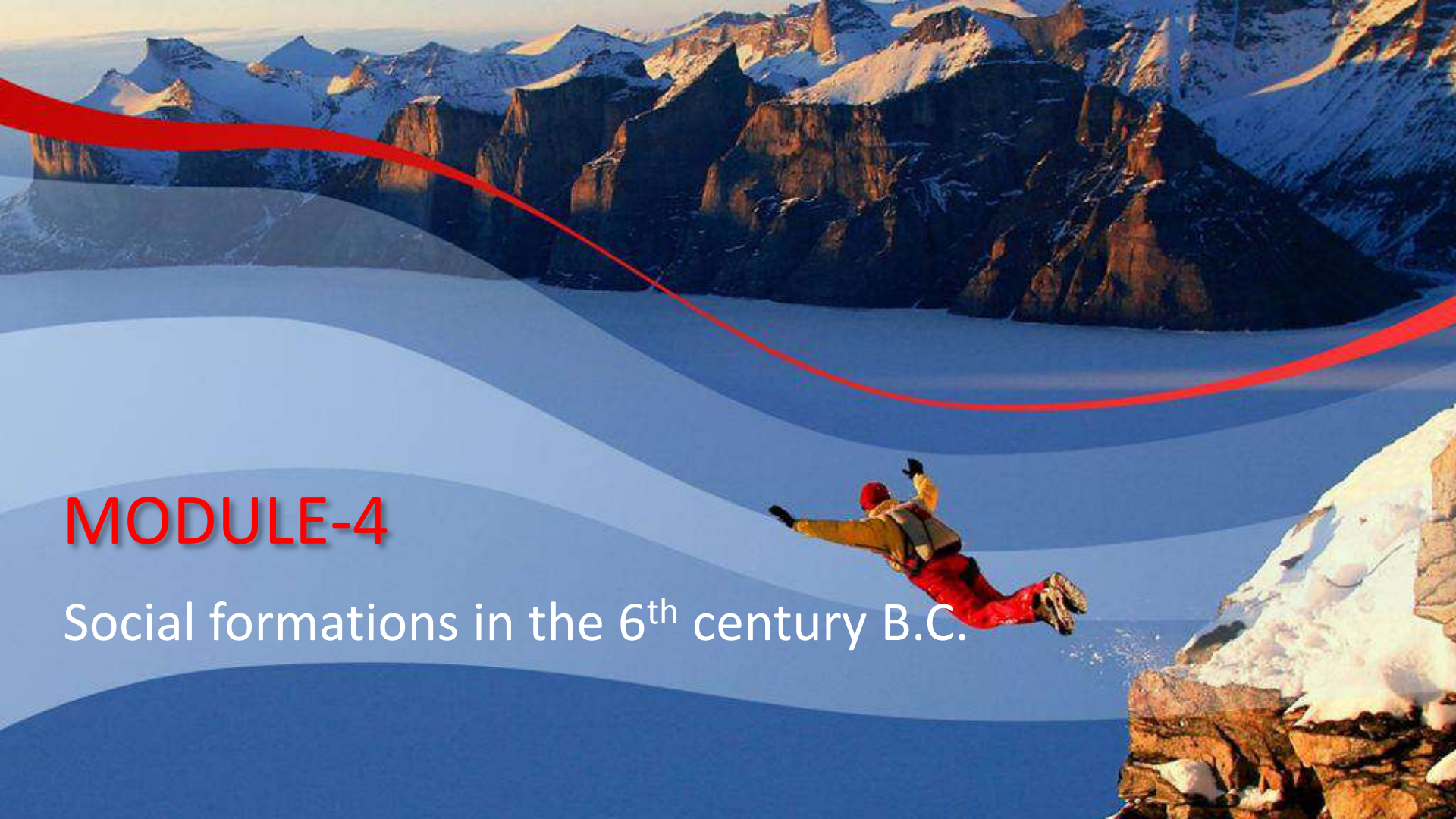
- Instead of pastoral profession the people gave importance to agriculture. Although barley was produced wheat became the staple food of the people. Arts and crafts developed. Cloth making was practiced especially by women.
- Trade relations with foreign lands developed which was dominated by traders known as Vanis. Coins began to emerge and the most important being Nishka, Krishnala, Satamana and Pana. Some changes occurred in religion also. The earlier Gods lost importance. Rudra became popular. More importance was given to sacrifices.



ECONOMIC LIFE

- Instead of pastoral profession the people gave importance to agriculture. Although barley was produced wheat became the staple food of the people. Arts and crafts developed. Cloth making was practiced especially by women.
- Trade relations with foreign lands developed which was dominated by traders known as Vanis. Coins began to emerge and the most important being Nishka, Krishnala, Satamana and Pana. Some changes occurred in religion also. The earlier Gods lost importance. Rudra became popular. More importance was given to sacrifices.



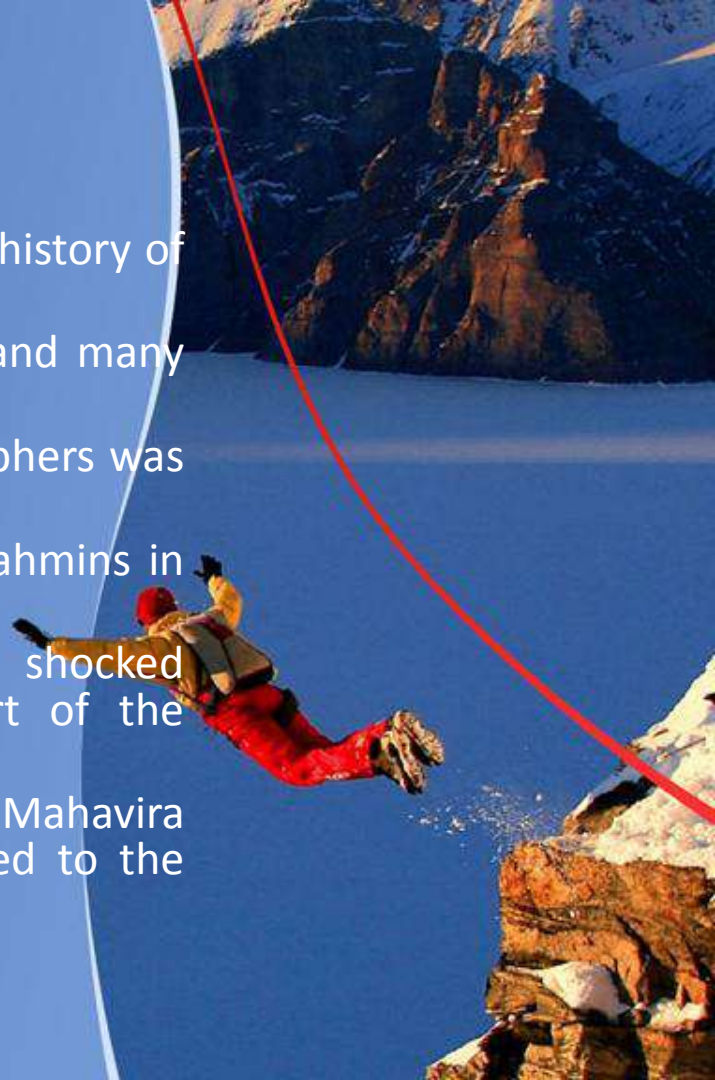


MODULE-4

Social formations in the 6th century B.C.

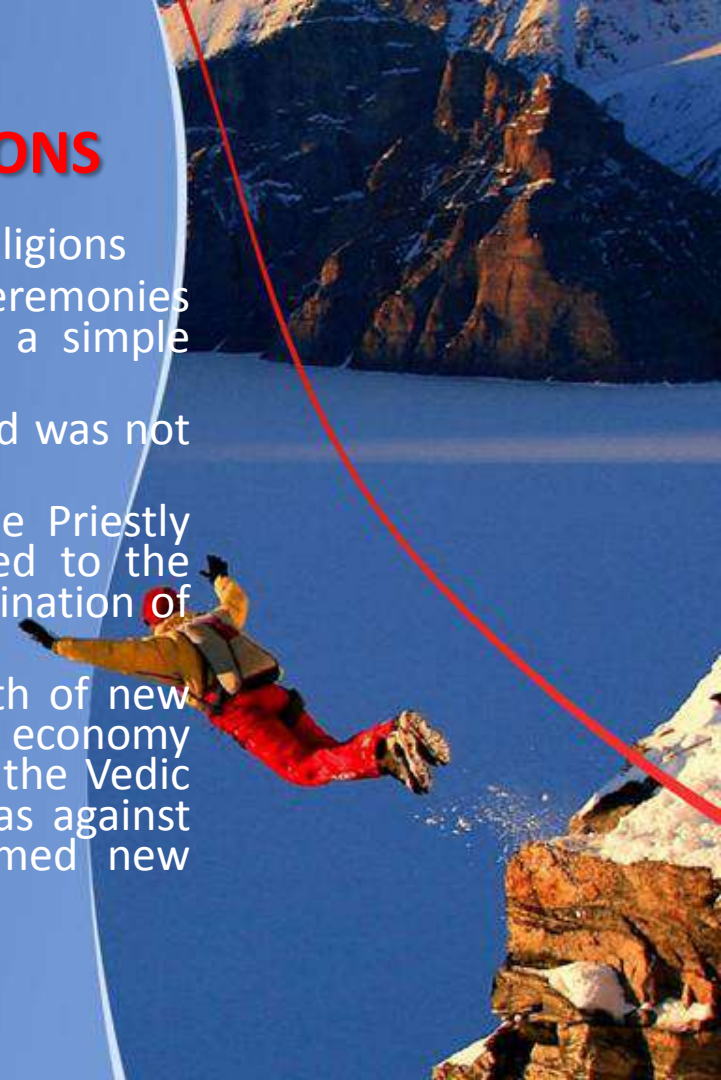
INTRODUCTION

- The sixth century B.C was a formative epoch in the history of the world as well as India.
- In India this age gave birth to Jainism, Buddhism and many other systems of Indian Philosophy.
- The most significant feature common to all philosophers was the renunciation of tradition.
- They opposed the predominant position of the Brahmins in the society.
- Indiscriminate slaughter of animals for sacrifices shocked their feelings. They got a wholehearted support of the people.
- The most well known of these Philosophers was Mahavira and Gauthama Buddha. Interestingly they belonged to the Kshatriya community.



CAUSES FOR THE ORIGIN OF NEW RELIGIONS

- Many causes were responsible for the rise of new religions
- The people hesitated the unnecessary rituals and ceremonies of the Vedic religion and the people longed for a simple religion.
- The growth of caste system in the post Vedic period was not liked by many people especially the last varnas.
- It was the reaction against the domination of the Priestly class. The founders of the new religions belonged to the Kshatriya clan and all of them questioned the domination of the Brahmins.
- There were some economic reasons for the growth of new religions. The introduction of the new agricultural economy in the north eastern India necessitated cattle, but the Vedic practice of slaughtering cattle for the sacrifices was against this new development. Thus the people welcomed new religions which propagated the ahimsa principle.



CAUSES FOR THE ORIGIN OF NEW RELIGIONS

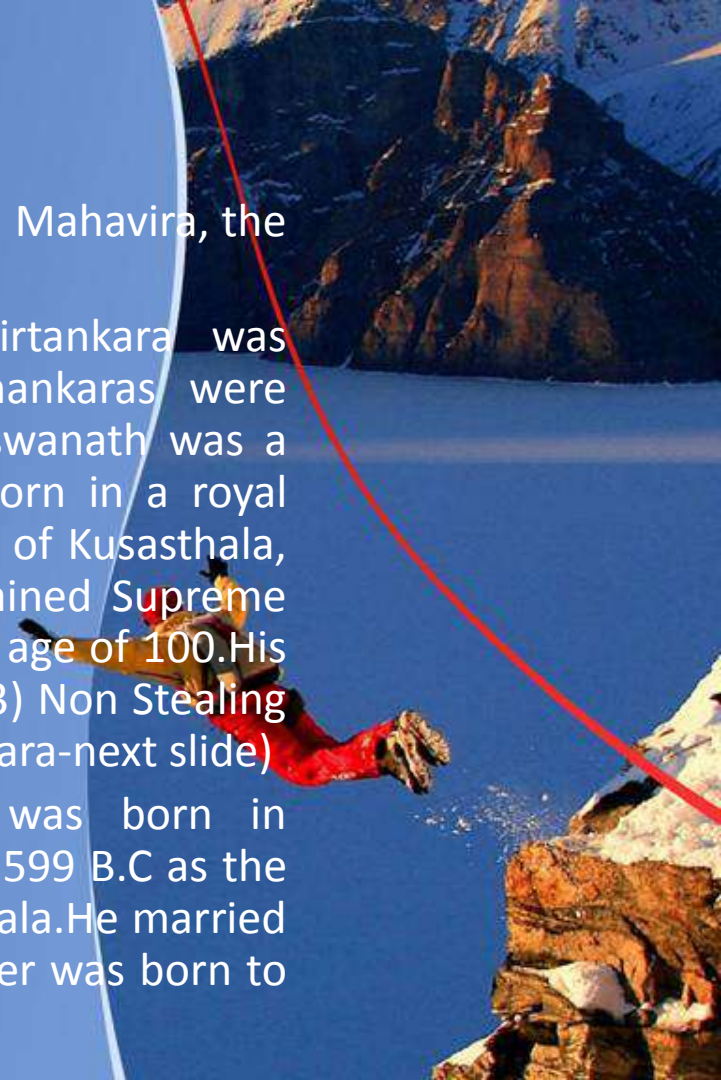
- The growth of trade was another reason for the origin of new religion. The rise of several cities in north western India, the use of coins by the artisans, traders and businessmen and the growth of agriculture promoted trade and exchange. These developments increased the position and power of the Vaisya Community.
- The Vaisya community patronized the new religion because of its positive attitude towards trade and commerce. On the other hand the Vedic religion was against the progressive trade and commerce.
- The monopolization of the language by the Brahmins was questioned by the other caste people. Not only the entire vedic literature were written in the Sanskrit language but it was not accessible to the lower castes. On the other hand the new religions used the local language of the people.



JAININISM

- There were 24 thirthankaras of Jain order. Vardhamana Mahavira, the real founder of Jainism was the last one.
- The first one was Rishabha. Twenty second thirtankara was Arishtanemi or Neminatha. All the first 22 thirthankaras were supposed to be legendary figures. The 23rd one Parswanath was a historical figure. He belonged to Benaras. He was born in a royal family as the son of Aswasena. He married Prabhavati of Kusasthala, but left the household life at the age of 30 and attained Supreme Knowledge after 84 days of meditation. He died at the age of 100. His teachings are the following-(i) Non Violence (2) Truth(3) Non Stealing and (4) Non Possession (The birth place of 3rd thirthankara-next slide)

Mahavira was the real founder of Jainism. He was born in Kundalagrama in Vaisali in North Bihar. He was born in 599 B.C as the son of Siddhartha, the Chief of Kundalagrama and Trishala. He married Yasoda, the daughter of Jithasatru of Kalinga. A daughter was born to him named Priyadarsana.



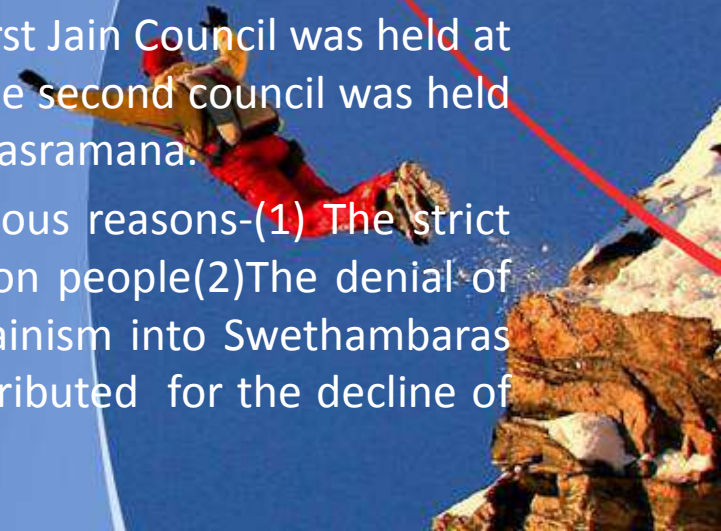
JAININISM

- At the age of 30 he left home and did penance for 12 years. In the 13th year he attained Kaivalya at Jrimbika grama. He traveled widely and spread his doctrines. He died at the age of 72 at Pava near Rajagriha.
- His major teachings are the following-(1)The world is full of misery and the desire is the cause of misery. According to him Karma and not the Gods is the architect of destiny.
- (2) All mobile and immobile objects in the universe have separate and independent Jivas or souls.
- (3) Thirratnas or three jewels. They are Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct.
- (4) Pancha Vratas-Ahimsa, Satya, Asatheya, Aparigriha and Brahmacharya.
- Other principles are-No faith in the Vedic Sacrifice, No faith in the existence of God, Pure Ahimsa and No faith in the caste system.



JAININISM

- Spread and growth of Jainism- In course of time Jainism spread to various places of India .It became very popular in Kosala, Magadha and Mithila. The following are major reasons for the spread of Jainism-(1) Royal patronage-Chandagupta maurya, Karavela of Kalinga, Chalukya ruler Kumara Pala, Asoka's grandson Samprati, the Rashtrkuta ruler Amoghvarsha and the ruler of Magadha Udayan patronized this religion.
- (2) Jain councils were responsible for the spread-The first Jain Council was held at Pataliputra under the president ship of Stulabhadra. The second council was held at Vallabhi under the president ship of Devardhi Kshamasramana.
- Decline of Jainism-It began to decline because of various reasons-(1) The strict principle of Ahimsa was not acceptable to the common people(2)The denial of the existence of God by Mahavira(3)The division of Jainism into Swethambaras and Digambaras (4) The spread of Buddhism also contributed for the decline of jainism



JAININISM

- Jainism made a lot of contribution to Indian culture.
- (1) Philosophy-Syadvatha Philosophy was a real contribution of Jainism.
- (2) Literature-12 Angas,12 Upangas,4 Mulasutras,10 Prakirnas,6 Chetasutras,Charitas and Prabandas.
- Art-Gomateswara statue at sravanabalgola-It was built by Chamundaraya, the minister of Ganga ruler Rajamalla-Bahubali statue at Karakkal in Karnataka-Tiger cave at Udayagiri-Indrasabha at Ellora-Sittannavasal cave at Pudukkottai.



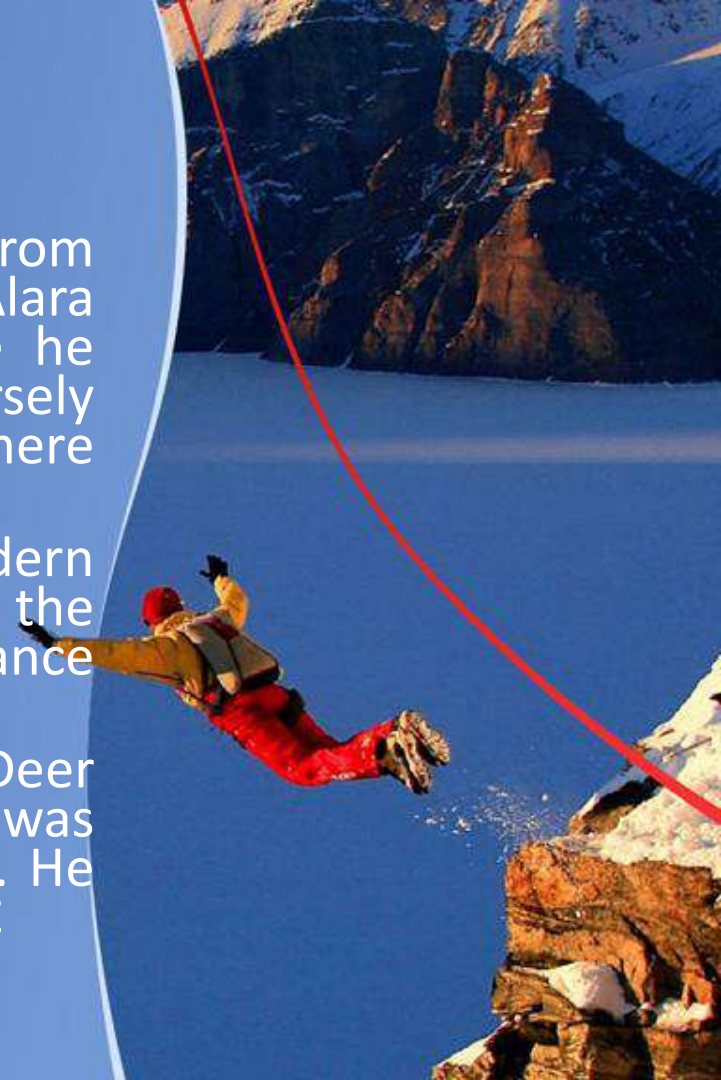
Buddhism

- Gauthama Buddha was the founder of Buddhism. He was also known as Siddhartha, Sakyamuni and Thathagatha.
- Buddha was born at Lumbini near Kapilavastu in 563 B.C as the son of Suddhodana, the Head of the Sakya clan and Mayadevi, the Princess of Koliya Republic. His mother died just a few days after his birth and he was brought up by his aunt Mahagajapati Gautami.
- Buddha married Yasodhara at the age of 16 and a son was born to him by name Rahul. But he was not interested in married life. The vision of old age, disease and death made him realise the hollowness of worldly pleasures. So he left his home at the age of 29. This is known as the Great Renunciation



Life of Buddha

- For about seven years he wandered from place to place. He became the disciple of Alara Kalama and others. As per their advice he observed strict penance. But it adversely affected his health and he became a mere Skelton.
- Later he went to Uruvela near modern Buddha Gaya. He sat under a pipal tree on the banks of Niranjana river. He observed penance for 49 days and got enlightened.
- Buddha made his first sermon in the Deer park at Saranath near Benaras. This was known as Dharmachakrapravarthanasutra. He died at Kusinara at the age of 80 in 486 B.C



Doctrines of Buddhism

- Gauthama Buddha proposed the following doctrines
- All Worldly life is misery. Desire is the cause of misery. One should make oneself free from desire. The path to the elimination of sorrow are the noble Eight fold path. They are –Right Views, Right mindedness, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Endeavor, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.
- Buddha proposed the following code of conduct:
- Do not convert the property of others, Do not commit violence, Do not use intoxicants, Do not speak lie and Do not indulge in corrupt practices.
- Doctrine of Karma and Rebirth. Attainment of Moksha. No belief in caste system-Middle path.Ahimsa-Neither accepted nor rejected God.



Spread of Buddhism

- Buddhism had a rapid spread not only in India but also abroad. Within a short span of time it spread to Kosala, magadha and Mithila.
- The Buddhist followers were divided into four categories-Bhikshus (monks), Bhikshunis (Nuns), Sravakas (Male householders) and Sravikas (Female Householders).
- Buddhism developed due to the work of the Buddhist councils- Sl.No. Venue President
 1. Rajagriha Upali(483 BC)
 2. Vaishali Sabakami(387 BC)
 3. Pataliputra Mogaliputatisa(350 BC)
 4. Kundalavana Vasumitra



Spread of Buddhism

- The personality of Buddha was an important factor for the rapid spread of Buddhism.
- Royal patronage was another major reason for its spread- Rulers like Bimbisara, Prasenjith, Pradyota, Udayan, Asoka, Harsha, Kanishka and Menandor patronized Buddhism.
- The use of the local language was another reason for its rapid growth. Buddhists used Pali which was the language of the common people.
- The help and assistance of the last three varnas contributed for its growth.



Contribution of Buddhism

- Buddhism made rapid contribution to Indian philosophy, Art and Architecture and Literature.
- There were great monastic establishments of world repute like that of Nalanda, Vikramsila, Somapuri and Odantapuri. Buddhist Chaityas and Viharas were great religious centers.
- Notable Buddhist art and architecture were found at Saranath, Sanchi, Bharhut, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Junair and Bhattiprolu. Gandhara and Mathura schools of art were the greatest contribution of Buddhism to Indian art and architecture.





Thank You (Dr. Shaji A.)