



VALUE ADDED NOTES

ILP-2020



IASBABA

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INTRODUCTION

Hello Friends,

Continuing our Ancient Indian History modules, we are going to study about Post-Mauryan History covering important aspects for the examination. You have already gone through the kind of questions asked from Ancient History in the previous value add. Let us revise some of the concepts asked in previous year Prelims and other important concepts.

Banskhera Inscription

- Banskhera meaning the land bearing Bamboo, is an ancient village in in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. Banskhera is known in the Indian history for the discovery of Banskhera copper plate of Harshavardhana.
- The copper plate bears the signature the great king of kings, Harshavardhana.
- It was issued in 22nd year of Harsha's reign i.e. 628-629 AD. This copper plate gives the ancestry of Harsha. It is important that this plate bears signature of Harsha. This inscription was issued from place named Vardhamanakoti

Harshvardhana

- The decline of the Gupta Empire was followed by a period of political disorder and disunity in North India. It was only in the beginning of the seventh century A.D. that Harshvardhana succeeded in establishing a larger kingdom in north India.
- The chief sources for tracing the history of Harsha and his times are the Harshacharita written by Bana and the Travel accounts of Hiuen Tsang. Bana was the court poet of Harsha. Hiuen Tsang was the Chinese traveler who visited India in the seventh century A.D.
- Besides these two sources, the dramas written by Harsha, namely Ratnavali, Nagananda and Priyadarsika also provide useful information.
- The Madhuben plate inscription and the Sonpat inscription are also helpful to know the chronology of Harsha. The Banskhera inscription contains the signature of Harsha.
- King Harshavardhan was a Shaivite. However, he was tolerant towards all other religions and supported them fully.
- Sometime later in his life, he became a patron of Buddhism also. King Harshavardhana propagated the religion by constructing numerous stupas in the name of Buddha.

Pattini Cult

- The Cheras ruled over parts of modern Kerala. Their capital was Vanji and their important seaports were Tondi and Musiri. They had the palmyra flowers as their garland. The Pugalur inscription of the first century A.D refers to three generations of Chera rulers.
- Padirruppattu also provides information on Chera kings. Perum Sorru Udhiyan Cheralathan, Imayavaramban Nedum Cheralathan and Cheran Senguttuvan were the famous rulers of this dynasty.
- Cheran Senguttuvan belonged to 2nd century A.D. His younger brother was Elango Adigal, the author of Silappathigaram. Among his military achievements, his expedition to the Himalayas was remarkable. He defeated many north Indian monarchs. **Senguttuvan introduced the Pattini cult or the worship of Kannagi as the ideal wife in Tamil Nadu.** The stone for making the idol of Kannagi was brought by him after his Himalayan expedition. The consecration ceremony was attended by many princes including Gajabhagu II from Sri Lanka.

Tolkappiyam

- The Sangam Age constitutes an important chapter in the history of South India. According to Tamil legends, there existed three Sangams (Academy of Tamil poets) in ancient Tamil Nadu popularly called Muchchangam.
- These Sangams flourished under the royal patronage of the Pandyas. The first Sangam, held at Then Madurai, was attended by gods and legendary sages but no literary work of this Sangam was available.
- The second Sangam was held at Kapadapuram but the all the literary works had perished except Tolkappiyam.
- The third Sangam at Madurai was founded by Mudathirumaran. It was attended by a large number of poets who produced voluminous literature but only a few had survived. These Tamil literary works remain useful sources to reconstruct the history of the Sangam Age.
- Tolkappiyam is a work of Tamil Grammar, which is said to be the earliest extant work of Tamil Literature.

Maski

- Maski is a village and an archaeological site in the Lingasugur taluk of Raichur district of the state of Karnataka, India. It lies on the bank of the Maski river which is a tributary of the Tungabhadra.

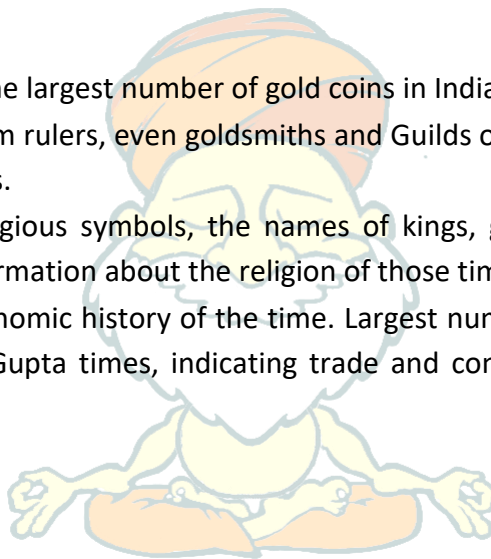
- Maski derives its name from Mahasangha or Masangi. The site came into prominence with the discovery of a minor rock edict of Emperor Ashoka by C. Beadon in 1915. It was the first edict of Emperor Ashoka that contained the name Ashoka in it instead of the earlier edicts that referred him as Devanampiyeti.
- This edict was important to conclude that many edicts found earlier in the Indian sub-continent in the name of Devanampiyeti, all belonged to Emperor Ashoka.

Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum

- Most of the inscriptions bearing history of Maurya, Post Mauryan and Gupta times have been published in series of collections called "Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum".
- First volume of Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum contained Asokan inscriptions and was brought out in the year 1877.

Gupta-Coin

- The Guptas issued the largest number of gold coins in India.
- With permission from rulers, even goldsmiths and Guilds of merchants were allowed to issue their own coins.
- Coins contained religious symbols, the names of kings, gods, dates etc. Coins are a major source of information about the religion of those times.
- Coins tell about economic history of the time. Largest number of coins are found from post-Mauryan and Gupta times, indicating trade and commerce flourished especially during these times.



Milinda Panho

- It deals with the conversation that took place between the monk Nagasena and King Milinda in the form of questions and answers.
- It has been written by Nagasena in Pali language.

Rudradaman I

- He is famous in history for undertaking repair works of Sudarshana lake which was used for irrigation in Kathiawar region but the lake was built during Mauryan era, under Chandragupta Maurya.

Samudragupta

- As per eulogistic inscriptions from Allahabad, it appears Samudragupta never faced any defeats and because of this sense he is called Napoleon of India.

- The Allahabad Pillar inscription calls him Kaviraja because of his ability in composing verses. He is also shown with Veena in the coins issued by him.

Harshavardhana authored three plays - Ratnavali, Priyadarsika and Nagananda. Banabhatta, his court poet, wrote Harshacharita (biography of Harsha) and Kadambari

Gupta Kings

- Gupta kings followed a policy of tolerance towards different religious sects. There is no example of persecution of followers of Buddhism or Jainism
- The Gupta period was poor in architecture. Only a few temples made of bricks were found in Uttar Pradesh.
- Abhijanasakuntalam of Kalidasa was written during this period. It is considered one among the 'hundred best books of the world'.
- Metallurgy made a wonderful progress during the Gupta period, for example, the gigantic copper statue of Buddha, and the Delhi Iron pillar, which is still rust free after so many centuries.

The Mudrarakshasa (The Signet of the Minister)

- It is a historical play in Sanskrit by **Vishakhadatta** that narrates the ascent of the king Chandragupta Maurya. (Chanakya and Chandragupta defeat the king Nanda, in an alliance with another king Parvateshvara (or Parvata).)
- Manimekalai written by Chithalai chattanar
- Daridra Charudatta written by Bhasa
- Mrichchakatika written by Shudrak

Trading Guilds

- Guilds continued to be the nodal points of commercial activity. They were almost autonomous in their internal organization. The government respected their laws. The laws governing the guilds were made by a corporation of guilds in which each guild had a member. The corporation elected a body of advisers who functioned as its functionaries. Some industrial guilds like that of the silk weavers had their own separate corporations. It is also interesting to observe that the Buddhist Sangha was rich enough to participate in commercial activities. At places the Sangha acted as the

banker and lent money on interest. This was in addition to their returns from land. They too took one sixth of the produce just as the State.

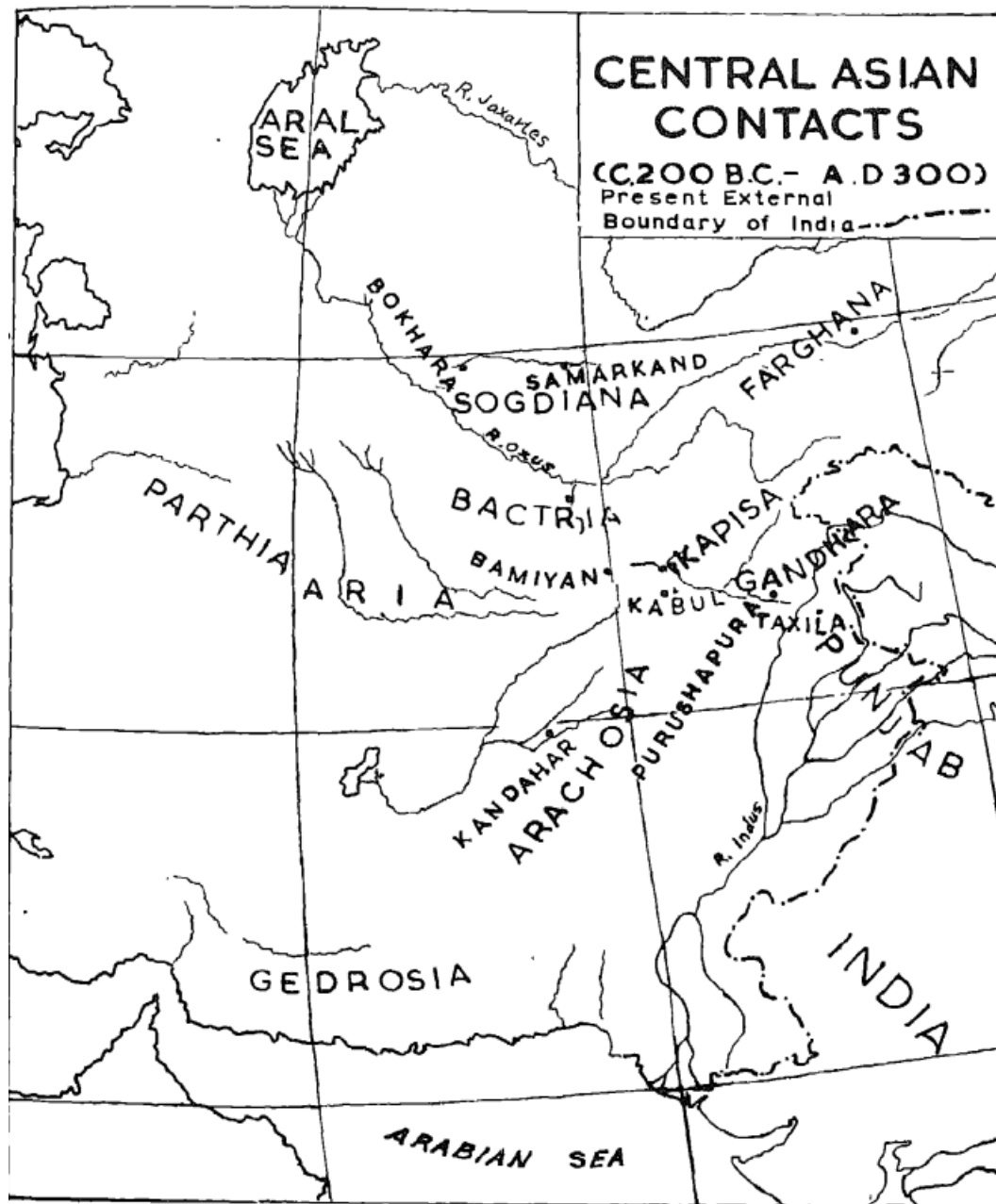
- The rate of interest varied. Very high rates of interest were no longer charged for overseas trade showing that there was increased confidence in that form of trade. Generally the rate was 20 per cent as against 240 of the earlier period. This lowering of the interest rate also reveals abundance of goods and conquest decrease in rate of profit.
- Besides serving the purpose of keeping the members of a trade together like a close community, the Guilds undertook many useful roles such as administrative, economic, charitable and banking functions.
- Besides these functions, the Guilds could try their members for offence in accordance with their own customs and usages, which came to acquire almost the status of law. A guild member had to abide by both guild and state laws.
- The Guilds enjoyed considerable autonomy, which came not as a favour from the state but by their inherent right. The guilds safeguarded the interests of traders and craftsmen against oppression by the king, as well as legal discrimination they were normally subjected to.

6 Philosophical Schools

Many Hindu intellectual traditions were classified during the medieval period of Brahmanic-Sanskritic scholasticism into a standard list of six orthodox (astika) schools (darshanas), the "Six Philosophies" (*ṣaḍ-darśana*), all of which accept the testimony of the Vedas.

- Samkhya, the enumeration school
- Yoga, the school of Patanjali (which provisionally asserts the metaphysics of Samkhya)
- Nyaya, the school of logic
- Vaisheshika, the atomist school
- Purva Mimamsa (or simply Mimamsa), the tradition of Vedic exegesis, with emphasis on Vedic ritual, and
- Vedanta (also called Uttara Mimamsa), the Upanishadic tradition, with emphasis on Vedic philosophy.

CENTRAL ASIAN CONTACTS AND THEIR RESULTS



After The decline of Mauryan Empire, many new foreign rulers arrived and had a deep impact on the Indian society and culture. Most important of them were –

- Indo – Greeks (Bactrian kings – Greeks – 2nd C BC)
- Shakas – Scythians – Central Asia – 1st C BC
- Parthians – Pahalvas – Persia – 1st C AD
- Kushans – Yutchi tribe – Central Asia – 1st C AD

INDO – GREEKS (BACTRIANS)

- They came 2nd C BC and got settled in Northwestern India (Afghanistan) and made Taxila their Capital.
- The first known king was Demetrius – 2nd C BC.
- Their greatest king was **Menander**, known as **Milind** in Indian literature.
- In his period, a great Buddhist scholar **Nagasena**, also called Nagarjuna, wrote a book '**Milindpanho**' in Pali.
- **Milindpanho** literally means **questions of Milind**. It is a book on **Buddhist philosophy**, where Milind is asking questions to a Buddhist monk about life.

Contribution of Bactrians:

Coins: They were the first to use gold coins in India. They were also the first to use date and images on coins.

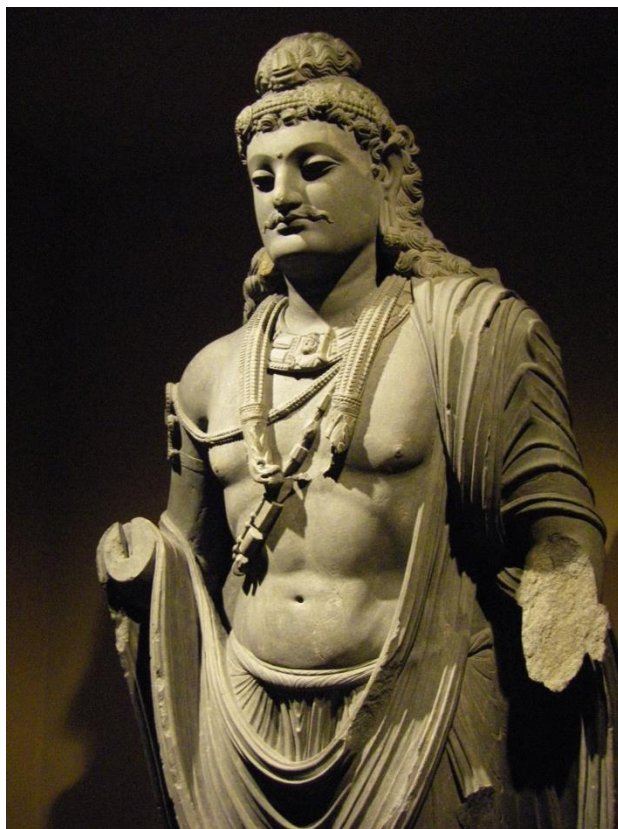


Astronomy: They helped in the development of astronomy and astrology. They made a week of 7 days (Greek influence).

Art: They developed Gandhara School of sculptural art also known as Hellenistic Art.

- Hellenistic = Greek + Persian + Indian
- Themes – Buddha and his life were themes of this art.

- These statues were found in Kabul – Banmiyan (this was destroyed by Taliban few years ago), Kandahar, Bagram, Heart and Taxila.
- They were mostly made of mud, schist, sandstone and plaster.
- The statues were mostly made in standing position.
- They depicted Buddha in Greco – Roman style. (In 2013, a question was asked in GS 1 that what were the Greco – Roman influences in the Gandhara School of Art?)



- Hairstyle – Curly (Greek)
- Ears – Long elongated (Roman)
- Eyes – Sharp (Greek)
- Faces – Flat and expressionless (Greek)
- Muscles – muscular (Roman and Greek Gods like apolo and Zeus)

This art was developed most during the Shakas and Kushans, during which the tallest Buddhist statue was built in Bamiyan. After it was destroyed, the tallest is at China.

SHAKAS (SCYTHIANS – CENTRAL ASIA)

- **Shakas** came to India from Central Asia in **1st C AD** and settled in **Punjab to Gujarat** region. The wall of China was built in the south to protect china from Shaka attack in 3rd C.
- There were many dynasties in Shakas which ruled. Shakas were a group of people and not a single dynasty like Mauryas and Mughals.
- They had two major headquarters in India – Ujjain and Mathura.
- They introduced the concept of 'Kshatrapa' system – military governorship appointed by the king.
- They had a system of two rulers at a time, Father – son, two brothers etc.
- **Rudhradaman** was the greatest king of Shakas in 2nd C AD.

Junagarh inscription gives information about him.



- The inscription is in Chaste Sanskrit.
- It informs about a dam repaired by Rudradaman on Sudarshan lake in Kathiawar Region.
- This dam was originally built under the rule of Chandragupta Maurya in 4th C BC.
- Rudradaman performed an Ashwamegha yajna.

PARTHIANS (PHALVAS) – PERSIA

- They came from Persia and settle in the western part of India.
- Takht – e – Bahi inscription tells about them.

- Most famous king is Gondopherous.
- It is believed that the first Christian missionary, Saint Thomas, came to his court around 52 AD. According to a Christian tradition, Saint Thomas was sent by the Christ himself.

KUSHANAS (YUTHI TRIBE) – CENTRAL ASIA

- They came from Central Asia and occupied area from Afghanistan, Kashmir to Prayag (Allahabad).
- Amongst the foreigners they had the largest empire.
- They had two headquarters – Peshawar and Mathura.
- Kanishka was the most powerful king of Kushans. And ruled in 1st – 2nd C.

Important events:

- During his period the 4th Buddhist council was held at Kashmir.
- The Buddhists were divided into Hinayana and Mahayana.
- He preserved some holy relics of Buddha including his tooth.
- He built several stupas.
- He was a follower of Mahayana.

Some great scholars of this period:

Charak: 'Charak Samhita'

- It is the first scientific book on medicine in India. It describes in detail the symptoms, causes, and cure of the diseases.
- Many surgical process and instruments are also mentioned in the book.
- The book is known as the encyclopedia of medicine in India.

Vasumitra and Ashvaghosha (Buddhist Scholars)

- Asvaghosa wrote Buddha Charita. The first biography of Buddha. It was written in Sanskrit.

Contribution of Kushans:

- They accepted Indian religion and language. As they themselves were tribesmen they did not have an organized religion before.
- They also followed Vaishnavism as it was more liberal than Shaivism. For the first time there is a mention of '**Vasudev Krishna**' in Mathura.
- Horse riding was introduced by them. Use of **stirrup, saddle and reins** was introduced. Chariots became outdated.
- A **new fashion** and costumes were introduced. **Hat, leather boots, pants and overcoat.**



Statue of Kanishka showing new attire

- They patronized **Mathura and Amravati** school of art.
- They introduced the **tradition of worshipping ancestors** called '**Dev Kul**' tradition.
- They issued numerous gold coins. Their metal was found to be the purest amongst all gold coins even that of Gupta period.



SATAVAHANAS/ANDHRAS

- They ruled in the modern day Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh from 1st C BC to 3rd C AD.
- They claimed that they were Brahmins.
- Gautamiputra Satkarni was their greatest ruler in 2nd C AD. This society was probably matriarchal as their names were prefixed by the names of their mother. Gautamiputra means son of Gautami.
- Capital – Pratisthan/ Paithan
- Official language was Prakrit and they followed Vedic Religion.
- They were the first in India who gave land grants to priest class – both Brahmins and Buddhist.
- They patronized Amravati school of Arts.
- Two seaports were developed during their reign – Sopara (Maharashtra) and Baruch (Gujarat).

IMPACT OF CENTRAL ASIAN CONTACTS**Structures**

- Advanced in building activities.
- Use of burnt bricks for flooring and of tiles for both flooring and roofing.
- Construction of brick—wells

Pottery

- Red ware is typical pottery with plain and polished.
- Know red pottery techniques
- The distinctive pots are sprinklers and spouted channels.

Better cavalry

- The Sakas and Kushans added new ingredients to Indian culture and enriched it immensely.
- They Settled in India and assimilated with its culture.
- Because they don't have their own script, language and religion they adopted these from India.
- Became integrated part of Indian society.
- Introduced cavalry and use of riding horse on large scale
- Use of reins and saddles in the Buddhist sculptures.
- Possible used stirrup
- Introduced turban, tunic, trousers, and heavy long coat (see the effect - the Afghans and Panjabis wear turbans, and the sherwani (successor of the long coat) even today)

Trade and agriculture

- Created trade contacts between Indian and Central Asia
- Result – India received gold from Altai mountains
- Profit in roman trade as received gold coins
- Income from silk route (controlled it)
- Promoted agriculture
- Large scale irrigation in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Western Asia.

Polity

- Development of a feudatory organization.
- Adopted the pompous title of king of kings to indicate their supremacy over numerous small princes.
- Strengthened the divine origin of kingship
- Called themselves as sons of gods. (while Asoka called dear to gods)
- Introduced satrap system of government (empire divided into satrapies under a satrp)
- Introduced hereditary dual rule (two kings ruling in the same kingdom at one and the same time) (like son and father jointly ruled)
- Introduced practice of Military governorship.

New elements in Indian society

- They become Indianized completely
- Absorbed in society as warrior class

Religious developments

- Most of the rulers were converted to some religions.
- Example – Indo – Greeks worshipped Vishnu
- Menander became a Buddhist
- Kushan ruler worshipped Shiva and Buddha and also Vishnu.
- Some rulers worshipped as incarnation of god

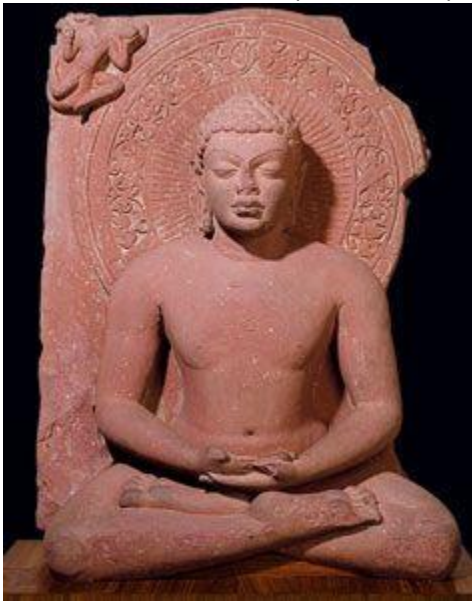
Origin of Mahayana Buddhism

- In post Mauryan times Indian religion underwent major change because of 2 things –
 - Due to a big leap in trade and artisan
 - Large influx of people from Central Asia.
- Buddhism affected greatly. Monks and nuns could not afford to lose the cash donations from growing traders.
- Buddhists welcomed non-vegetarians meaning laxity in the code of conduct of Buddhism.
- Slowly they moved towards money and then women and in this way degeneration started. This form was called as Mahayana Buddhism.

- Image worship of Buddha started.

MATHURA SCHOOL OF ART

- An indigenously developed sculptural art.
- Related to all the three contemporary religions – Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism.
- The evidences came from Mathura and Kankalitila.
- The sculptures were mostly made of mud and red sandstone (spotted red sandstone)
- Buddha is depicted with hair locks and better facial expressions.
- Jain tirthankars – 23rd (Parsavnath) and 24th (Mahavira) are found regularly.



- Vaishnavite deities were represented more than the Shaivite – Vishnu, surya and Kuber are found regularly.
- Mathura school includes Wema Kadphises and Kaniska, Parkham Yaksha, Maholi Bodhisattva and seated Kubera.
- The life of common people, costumes, flora and fauna have been depicted in a better way in Mathura school of Art.
- The Sarvatobhadrika image of 4 Jinas, The images of Vaishnava and Shaiva, The Standing Buddhas of the Sravasthi Sarnath and Kausambhi are some of the finest examples of Mathura School.

GANDHARA SCHOOL OF ART

- It was distinctive Gandhara style of Buddhist art, which developed from a merger of Greek, Syrian, Persian, and Indian artistic influences. (Greco-Roman influence)
- Grey sandstone (Blue-grey Mica schist) is used in Gandhara School of Art.

- The Gandharan style flourished and achieved its peak during the Kushana period, from the 1st to the 5th centuries.
- It declined and was destroyed after the invasion of the White Huns in the 5th century.



Figure Greco-Buddhist statue of standing Buddha, Gandhara (1st–2nd century),

AMRAVATI SCHOOL OF ART

- **Main centers:** Amravati, Goli, Ghantishila and Guntur are the important centers from which the remains have been found.
- Buddha and Bodhisatva were the most important themes.



Figure - The above sculptor depicts a heroic story in a narrative form. An elephant goes berserk and people are running for safety, then Buddha enters and elephant kneels before Buddha.

- Some of the statues were independently build but some as a part of the building like stupas, pillars, walls etc.
- The depiction of common life is much better than Gandhara and Mathura art.
- This was patronized by Satavahanas and Ishkavakus after them.
- They used sandstone and marble.

Features	Mathura	Gandhara	Amravati
Time period	2 nd C. BC	1 st C. BC	1 st C. BC
Flourished in	Mathura region	North western part of Indian subcontinent	Valley of Krishna and Godavari