

HISTORY

Chapter 11: Buildings, paintings and Books



Buildings, paintings and Books

Monuments of Ancient India

India in the ancient times was not only a great empire but also had great craftsmen and architects who built several prominent buildings. Some of the important architectural structures built were stupas, hollowed caves and beautifully carved temples.

The iron pillar

The iron pillar at Mehrauli, Delhi, is a remarkable example of the skill of Indian crafts persons. It is made of iron, 7.2. m high, and weighs over 3 tonnes. It was made about 1500 years ago. We know the date because there is an inscription on the pillar mentioning a ruler named Chandra, who probably belonged to the Gupta dynasty (Chapter 11). What is amazing is the fact that the pillar has not rusted in all these years.

Stupas

The word stupa means a mound. It is generally a mound like structure which contains the relics of Buddhist monks. Some of its features are:

- Stupas have a small box placed at their centre. This box contains the relics (teeth, hair, bones or ashes) or the things used by Lord Buddha or his followers.
- This box, known as the relic casket, was covered in earth. Later, it was covered by a dome like structure with a carved stone.
- A *pradakshina patha* was laid around the stupa which was surrounded with railings. Devotees walked in a clockwise direction around the stupa.
- Amravati and Sanchi are the two places where these magnificent stupas were built. Some of the stupas were built as earlier as 2000 years ago.



Remains of the Sanchi Stupa in Madhya Pradesh

Hollowed caves

- Buildings were hollowed out of rocks to build artificial caves.
- Their walls were painted with human and animal figures.
- Many walls of the hollowed caves were carved and various scenes from the life of the Buddha were depicted on them.

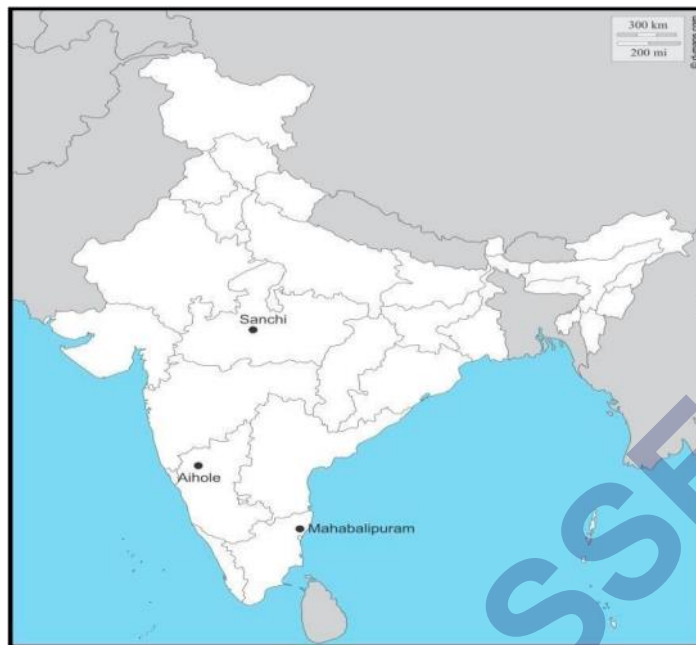


Various sculptures made on the walls of the Ajanta caves

Temples

- In this period, many Hindu temples, with deities such as Vishnu, Shiva and Durga in them, were built.
- The garbhagriha was the most important part of the temple where the chief deity was kept. All the religious rituals took place here.
- Often, a shikhara or a tower was built on the top of the garbhagriha to mark the sacredness of the place.
- Many temples had a mandapa, a hall where people could assemble.
- Some of the remarkable stone temples were built at Mahabalipuram and Aihole.





Map of India showing Sanchi, Aihole and Mahabalipuram.

The Construction of the Temples and Stupas Many stages were involved in the construction of a temple and a stupa such as:

- The temples and the stupas were mostly built by the kings and the queens as their construction was very expensive.
- First, the quality of the stone to be used was identified and then it was transported to the place where the temple was to be built.
- The stones were then shaped and carved into pillars and panels for walls, floors and ceilings and placed in the right positions.
- The money of the treasury was used for constructing the temples.
- Many a times, the gifts brought by the devotees were used for the decoration of the temples.
- Merchants, traders, farmers and other common people also paid for the buildings in their own capacity.



The Bhitargaon temple in Kanpur is the oldest remaining terracotta made Hindu shrine with a *shikhara* at the top.

Paintings

The finest examples of paintings are the cave paintings of Ajanta and Ellora. Here many caves were hollowed out of the hills. Most of these caves were used as monasteries for Buddhist monks. The walls of many of the caves were decorated with paintings. The colours were made up of plants and minerals. As the caves are dark inside, most of the paintings were made in the light of torches. The paintings of this period are one of the greatest legacies of the ancient period.



A painting depicted on the wall of a cave at Ajanta

Contributions in the Field of Writing

Many epics, great books on grammar and dramas were written during this period. Following are the most notable of them all:

- The Puranas, the religious stories of the Hindus were written during this period. These contain stories about Hindu gods and goddess. They were written in plain

Sanskrita and could be read out to everyone including women and shudras.

- Two great epics written in Sanskrit- the Ramayana and the Mahabharata became very popular. While the Ramayana was written by Valmiki, the Mahabharata and the Puranas were written by Ved Vyas.
- Silappadikaram, was a famous Tamil epic which was written about 1800 years ago. It was composed by a Tamil poet named Ilango.
- Another Tamil epic, the Manimekalai was composed by Sattanar around 1400 years ago.
- Kalidasa, a famous court poet of the Guptas, wrote plays in Sanskrita. Meghdootam and Abhijyanam Shakuntalam are some of his best known plays.
- Panchtantra and Jataka tales contain various stories written during this period. Various Jataka stories were carved on the railings of the stupas and paintings in Ajanta.



Contributions in the Field of Science

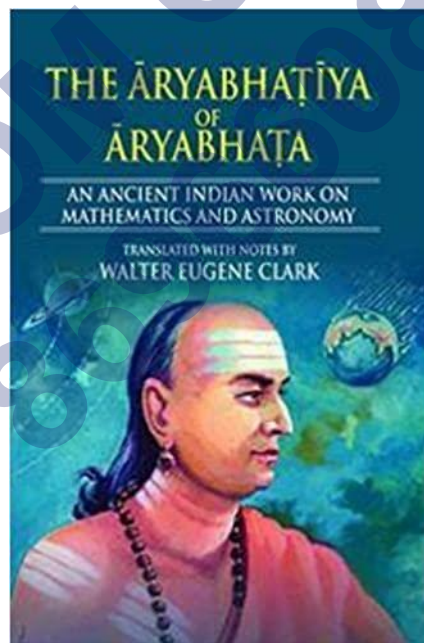
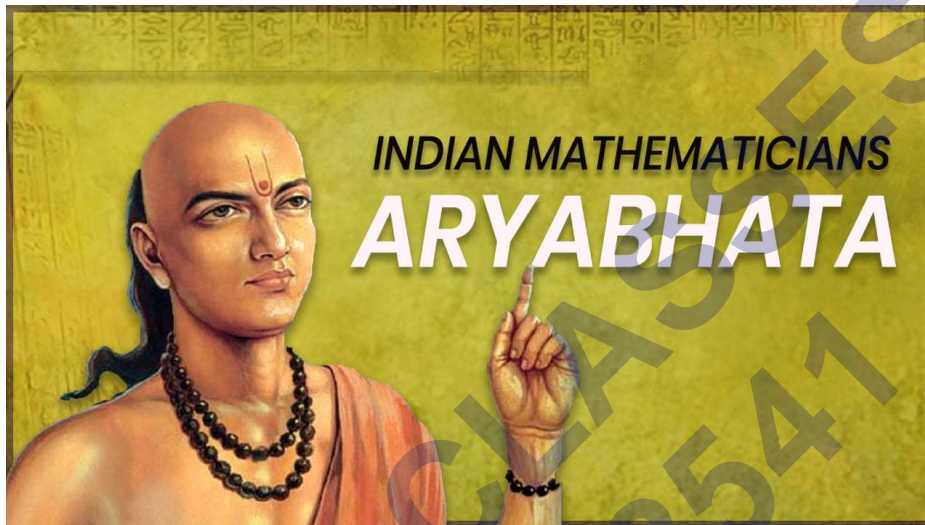
Following were the contributions of Indians in the field of science, technology and mathematics:

- Aryabhata was a mathematician and an astronomer. He wrote the book

'Aryabhatiyam', in which he explained the causes of the rotation and revolution of the Earth on its axis and calculated the circumference of a circle.

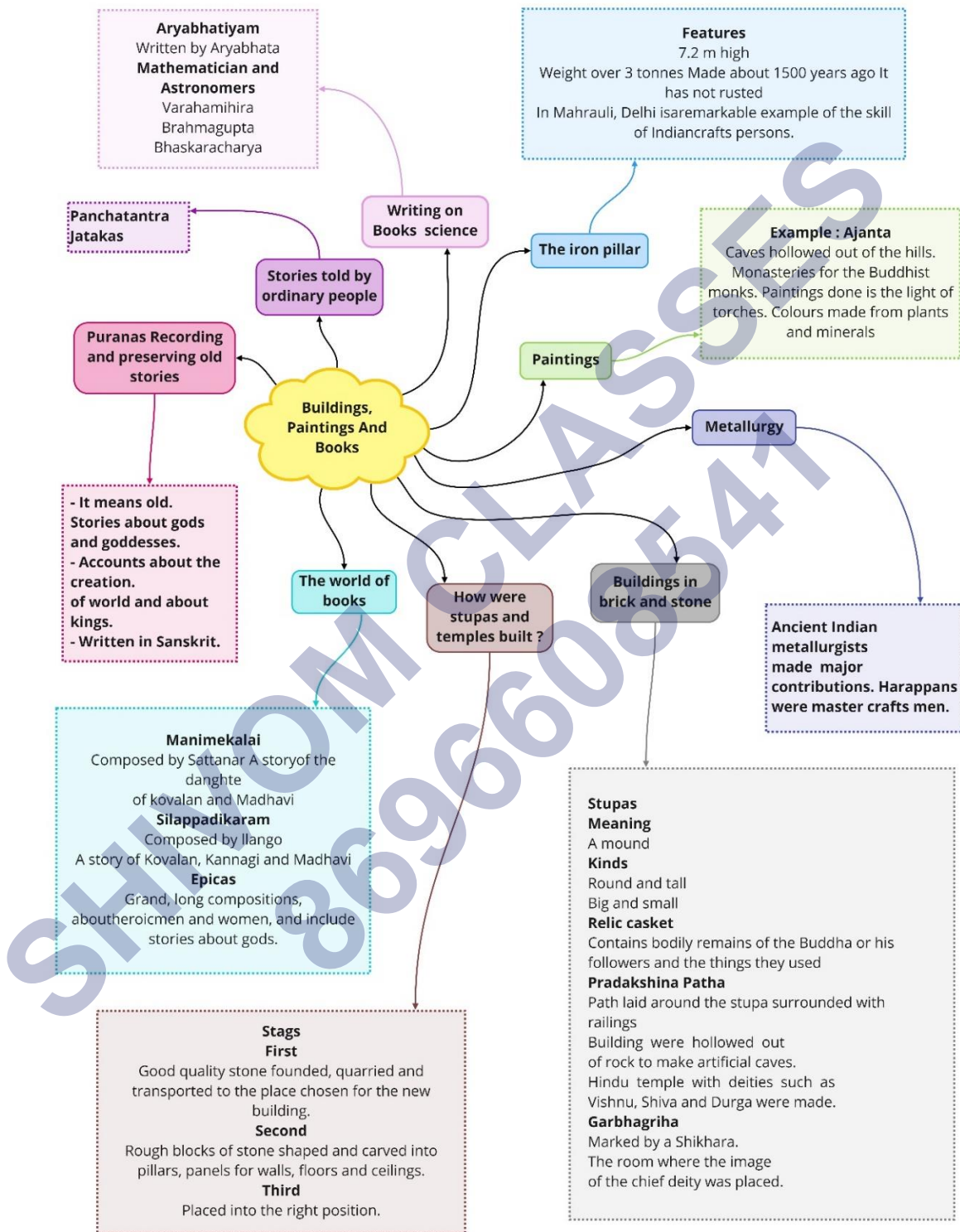
- The Indian numerals were spread into Europe by the Arabs. The symbol for 'zero' was also invented in India, which was in due time spread into Europe by the Arabs.

India, in the ancient times was thus famous for its art, architecture, literature, math and sciences.



The book 'Aryabhatiyam'

Class : 6th Social Studies (History)
Chapter - 11 : Buildings, Paintings And Books



Important Questions

➤ Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1. Subject of Meghaduta is related to:

- (a) A story of a king and its wars
- (b) A story of an Indian warrior
- (c) A story of lovers who are separated
- (d) A story of worship

Question 2. Subject of an epic the Silappadikaram is:

- (a) A story of a Kovalan and Madhavi
- (b) A story of Ram and Sita
- (c) A story of Pandavas
- (d) A story of Krishna

Question 3. Monolithic temples are found at:

- (a) Sarnath
- (b) Mathura
- (c) Mahabalipuram
- (d) Aihole

Question 4. Durga temple around 1400 years ago found in:

- (a) Sarnath
- (b) Mathura
- (c) Mahabalipuram
- (d) Aihole

Question 5. Bhitargaon, where an early temple is found is situated in the state of:

- (a) Madhya Pradesh
- (b) Uttar Pradesh
- (c) Andhra Pradesh
- (d) Bihar

Question 6. 'Puranas' were written in the language:

- (a) Hindi
- (b) Tamil
- (c) Sanskrit
- (d) Pali

Question 7. The pillar situated at Mehrauli is called:

- (a) Iron pillar
- (b) Bronze pillar
- (c) Gulden pillar
- (d) Pale pillar

Question 8. Garbhagriha is a part of:

- (a) Stupas
- (b) Church
- (c) Mosque
- (d) Temple

Question 9. An epic Bhagwad Geeta is related to:

- (a) Chandragupta
- (b) Ashoka
- (c) Sri Krishna
- (d) Ram

Question 10. Paper was invented by:

- (a) Cai Lun
- (b) Aryabhata
- (c) FaXhan
- (d) None

Question 11. The Puranas contain stories about gods and goddesses, such as

- (a) Vishnu, Shiva, Durga or Parvati
- (b) Ganesh, Shiva, Gurunanak dev or Parvati
- (c) Ganesh, Shiva, Durga or Gurunanak dev
- (d) Vishnu, Shiva, Durga or Ganesh

Question 12. Ram wife Sita was abducted by the king of Lanka, named

- (a) Laxman
- (b) Bharat
- (c) Kans
- (d) Ravan

Question 13. Silappadikaram is the story of a merchant named Kovalan, who lived in

- (a) Pukar
- (b) Puhar
- (c) Pohar
- (d) Pihar

Question 14. Who composed Manimekalai

- (a) Sangam
- (b) Sattanar
- (c) Sarthalai
- (d) Satna

Question 15. _____ are grand, long compositions, about heroic men and women, and include stories about gods.

- (a) Vedas
- (b) Books
- (c) Inscriptions
- (d) Epics

Match The Following:

	Column-I		Column-II
1.	Iron Pillar	A.	Maharashtra
2.	Amravati	B.	New Delhi
3.	Bhitargaon	C.	Mahabalipuram
4.	Monolithic temples	D.	Uttar Pradesh
5.	Monolithic temples	E.	Madhya Pradesh
6.	National Museum	F.	Mehrauli, Delhi

➤ Fill in the blanks:

1. _____ was a great astronomer.
2. Stories about gods and goddesses are found in the _____.
3. _____ is recognised as the author of the Sanskrit Ramayana.
4. _____ and _____ are two Tamil epics.
5. Both the Puranas and the Mahabharata are supposed to have been compiled by _____.
6. Stories from the _____ were often shown on the railings of stupas and in paintings in places such as Ajanta.

➤ Write true (T) or false (F):

1. The Mahabharata is about a war fought between the Kauravas and Pandavas, who were cousins.
2. Bhagavad Gita was included in the Ramayana.
3. Kannagi, the wife of Kovalan, mentioned in the Silappadikaram, destroyed the city of Madurai.
4. Devotees walked around the stupa, in an anticlockwise direction, as a mark of devotion.

➤ Very Short Questions:

1. What does the word stupa mean?
2. Who wrote Ramayana?
3. Who composed Silappadikaram?
4. What was the capital of Kosala?
5. What are the two great Sanskrit epics of India?
6. Name two Tamil epics.
7. What do you understand by Mandapa?
8. Who used to decide to build the stupas and temples?
9. What do you understand by the term Garbhagriha?
10. What is Pradakshina patha?
11. In which language were Puranas written?
12. Who wrote Meghaduta?

➤ Short Questions:

1. What is the historical importance of Amaravati?
2. What is Manimekalai?
3. Describe the poem Meghaduta written by Kalidasa?
4. What is stated in Aryabhatiyam?
5. Write about Monolithic temples.

➤ Long Questions:

1. Who was Aryabhata? What was he known for?
2. Highlight the chief features of stupa architecture.
3. What are main features of the Hindu temples built around 1800 years ago?
4. What do you know about iron pillar at Mehrauli?
5. What is the Mahabharata all about?
6. Discuss several stages in building a stupa or a temple.

ANSWER KEY –

➤ Multiple Choice Answer:

1. (c) A story of lovers who are separated
2. (a) A story of a Kovalan and Madhavi
3. (c) Mahabalipuram
4. (d) Aihole
5. (b) Uttar Pradesh
6. (c) Sanskrit
7. (a) Iron pillar
8. (d) Temple
9. (c) Sri Krishna
10. (a) Cai Lun
11. (a) Vishnu, Shiva, Durga or Parvati
12. (d) Ravana
13. (b) Puhar
14. (b) Sattanar
15. (d) Epics

➤ **Match The Following:**

	Column-I		Column-II
1.	Iron Pillar	F.	Mehrauli, Delhi
2.	Amravati	A.	Maharashtra
3.	Bhitargaon	D.	Uttar Pradesh
4.	Monolithic temples	C.	Mahabalipuram
5.	Monolithic temples	E.	Madhya Pradesh
6.	National Museum	B.	New Delhi

➤ **Fill in the blanks:**

1. Aryabhata
2. Puranas
3. Valmiki
4. Silappadikaram and Manimekalai
5. Vyasa
6. Jatakas

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F):**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False

➤ **Very Short Answer:**

1. The word stupa means a mound.
2. Valmiki wrote Ramayana.
3. It was composed by a poet named Ilango.
4. Ayodhya was the capital of Kosala.
5. The two Sanskrit epics are Mahabharata and Ramayana.
6. The two Tamil epics are Silappadikaram and Manimekalai.
7. Mandapa is place in temples where people could assemble.

8. Kings or queens decided to build these as it was an expensive affair.
9. Garbhagriha is a place where the image of the deity is installed.
10. Pradakshina patha is a circular path around the stupa.
11. The Puranas were written in simple Sanskrit verse.
12. Kalidasa wrote Meghaduta.

➤ Short Answer:

13. This was a place where a magnificent stupa once existed. Many of the stone carvings for decorating the stupa were made about 2000 years ago.
14. Manimekalai is a Tamil epic which was composed by Sattanar around 1400 years ago. This describes the story of the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi.
15. Meghaduta is a poem written by Kalidasa, in which a monsoon cloud is imagined to be a messenger between lovers who are separated from one another.
16. In Aryabhatiyam, Aryabhata stated that day and night were caused by the rotation of the earth on its axis, even though it seems as if the sun is rising and setting every day.
17. There are Monolithic temples at Mahabalipuram. Each of these was carved out of a huge, single piece of stone. While brick structures are built up by adding layers of bricks from the bottom upwards.

➤ Long Answer:

1. Aryabhata was a mathematician and astronomer, wrote a book in Sanskrit known as the Aryabhatiyam.

His contribution are:

- He stated that day and night were caused by the rotation of the earth on its axis, even though it seems as if the sun is rising and setting every day.
- He developed a scientific explanation for eclipses as well.
- He also found a way of calculating the circumference of a circle, which is nearly as accurate as the formula we use today

2. **Features of stupa architecture:**

- Generally, there is a small box placed at the centre or heart of the stupa. This may contain bodily remains of the Buddha or his followers, or things they used, as well as precious stones, and coins.
- Often, a path, known as the pradakshina patha, was laid around the stupa. This was surrounded with railings.

- Entrance to the path was through gateways.
- Both railings and gateways were often decorated with sculpture.

3. Main features of the Hindu temples:

- Deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and Durga were worshipped in these shrines. The most important part of the temple was the room known as the garbhagriha, where the image of the chief deity was placed.
 - It was here that priests performed religious rituals, and devotees offered worship to the deity.
 - Often, as at Bhitargaon, a tower, known as the shikhara, was built on top of the garbhagriha, to mark this out as a sacred place.
 - Most temples also had a space known as the mandapa. It was a hall where people could assemble.
4. The Mahabharata is about a war fought between the Kauravas and Pandavas, who were cousins. This was a war to gain control of the throne of the Kurus, and their capital, Hastinapur. The story itself was an old one, but was written down in the form in which we know it today, about 1500 years ago. The Mahabharata are supposed to have been compiled by Vyasa. The Bhagavad Gita was also included in the Mahabharata.
- 5.
- The iron pillar at Mehrauli, Delhi, is a remarkable example of the skill of Indian crafts persons.
 - It is made of iron, 7.2. m high, and weighs over 3 tonnes.
 - It was made about 1500 years ago. We know the date because there is an inscription on the pillar mentioning a ruler named Chandra, who probably belonged to the Gupta dynasty.
6. First, good quality stone had to be found, quarried, and transported to the place that was often carefully chosen for the new building. Here, these rough blocks of stone had to be shaped and carved into pillars, and panels for walls, floors and ceilings. And then these had to be placed in precisely the right position.