

Improve your learning

- 1) Brief the importance of languages.
- 2) How can you say that Aryabhata was the father of astronomy?
- 3) Differentiate between Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita.
- 4) Mention a few inventions in Mathematics.
- 5) Look at a currency note and write down difference scripts on them. Identify the language in which they are written. Is the same script used for different languages? Which are they?
- 6) Refer to any general knowledge book and list out five great books in Telugu language and other languages.

Project :

Prepare a Flow Chart on the establishment of languages.

CHAPTER 20

Sculptures and Buildings

Archeologists digging very ancient cities of Indus Valley found some very nice stone and bronze sculptures besides seals carved on stones and baked clay figurines. These were made some 4000 years ago. You can see some of their pictures here. You can see that these depict everything in a natural manner. We don't know what they were used for.



Fig: 20.1. A small bust of a male person of importance – was he a priest or a king?



Fig: 20.3. A bronze statue of a girl standing – just as the way the sky looks when you look up.



Fig: 20.2. A beautiful Harappan Seal showing a bull



Fig: 20.4. A mother goddess figurine of terracotta.

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A little later the art of casting metal figures spread to Maharashtra. Some very exquisite bronze figures were found during digging. These were probably made some 3000 years ago. Do you think they could have been toys?



Fig: 20. 5. Daimabad Bronzes

These pillars and the Lion Capital represent the power and majesty of the Mauryan emperors. Compare this capital with the Bull capital in Rampurva. Here you can see that the bull looks more natural and quite similar to the Harappan seal's bull.



Fig: 20.6. Sarnath Lion Capital

Next important phase of sculpture belongs to the Mauryan period, that is around 2200 years ago. King Ashoka set up tall, smoothly polished pillars in many places. These were usually made of one piece of stone. Messages of Ashoka were carved on them. They also had at their top some figures of animals. These are called capitals. The most famous among these is the Lion Capital of Sarnath set up by Ashoka in the place where the Buddha first preached his teachings. These four majestic lions facing the four directions hold on their pedestal the Wheel of Dharma

- Do you feel that the lions look natural or do they look artificially posing for the sculpture?
- You must have seen these often. Where do you see pictures of these lions?



Fig: 20. 7 Rampurva Bull

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Portrait of Ashoka from Kanaganahalli



Fig: 20.8 Recent discoveries at Kanaganahalli in Karnataka brought out a stone portrait of king Ashoka, with an inscription in Brahmi letters read 'Ranya Asoka' (King Ashoka). You should remember that this was made some three hundred years after the death of Ashoka and as such may not have any resemblance with him.

Buddhist Stupas and Viharas

Given below is the picture of one of the most famous stupas in India – the Sanchi



Fig: 20. 9 Sanchi stupa in Madhya Pradesh. It is one of the most important stupas built by King Ashoka. Can you identify the hemisphere, the platform, the umbrella and the fence?

Stupa. Look at the photo. You can see that it is like a hemisphere (half ball) – just as the way the sky looks when you look up.

A stupa is built on a platform. In the centre of a stupa were buried relics of the Buddha or important monks (relics are remains of the body like teeth, bone, hair etc). The hemisphere is fully packed and you cannot enter it like a temple. Above it rises a pillar topped by umbrellas. The stupa is usually surrounded by a stone fence with decorated gateways. Initially in the time of Ashoka these were built of mud, brick and wood and later on made with stones.

The stupa has many meanings – it is supposed to represent the Buddha. At the same time it is believed that the dome of the stupa represents the universe with the central pillar being the axis around which everything revolves and which connects the world below, the earth and the heavens. Pilgrims worship the stupa by offering flowers etc, and going round it in *pradakshina* and meditating in front of it.

- Can you compare a stupa with a temple and tell what the similarities and the differences are between them and how people worship in them?

Archeologists have found remains of stupas from very early times in several places of Andhra Pradesh like Amaravati, Bhattiprolu, Ramathiraham, Salihundam etc. At Bhattiprolu stupa was found a crystal casket containing the relics of the Buddha.

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Fig: 20.10. Remains of Salihundam stupa. Can you see a spoke wheel kind of formation in the foundation of the stupa?



Fig: 20.11 Amaravathi stupa.

Amaravathi Stupa in Guntur district is the most famous one in Andhra Pradesh. This was built during the rule of Satavahanas about 1900 years ago.

Fig.20.11 shows a sculpture panel depicting the stupa. Can you see some flying figures on the top? These are supposed to be gods from heavens who came to worship the Buddha. At the bottom you can see some men and women also bowing down and worshipping. You can also see the four lions on the gateway. What do you think they signify?

Today the Amaravathi stupa is just a mound of rubble. All that we have to imagine is how this great stupa was with the help of the panels which show us how it must have looked 1900 years ago. As you can see from the picture the stupa was covered with panels of sculptures depicting the Buddha and his teachings. These panels were found by the British and were taken away by them to

London. Some of the panels that could not be transported were kept in Madras Museum. Based on these panels people have tried to imagine how the stupa would have looked like. See the picture of reconstruction and compare it with the panel.

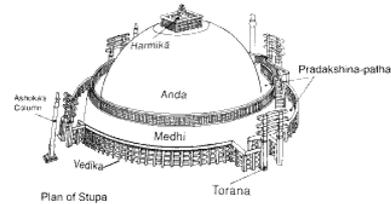


Fig: 20.12 Reconstruction of Amaravathi stupa

Another important stupa was the Nagarjunakonda stupa. It was part of Vijayapuri the capital city of Ikshvaku kings. It was on the banks of the Krishna River. Vijayapuri, had a large number of stupas, viharas and palaces. It also had a beautifully designed amphitheatre and ghats leading to the river. Unfortunately today the entire city lies under water – submerged in the Nagarjunasagar dam. A large number of sculptures and other remains have been removed and kept in a museum nearby.

Look at some of the sculpture panels from Nagarjunakonda and Amaravathi below. These sculpture panels represent the earliest sculptural activity in South India. You can get a glimpse of people of those times from them.



Fig: 20.14 A panel from Nagarjunakonda showing the admission of six princes and the barber Upali into the Sangha. In order to teach the princes humility, the Buddha admitted Upali first and the rest after him. You can see Upali seated on a low stool besides the Buddha.



Fig: 20.15 Panel from Sanchi shows the daily life of villagers. This is a beautiful panel which shows the visit of the Buddha to a village. Can you make a list of activities being done by the people in this panel? Do you get to see similar scenes in today's villages?

As time went on sculptors started making large and complete figures instead of just the reliefs shown above. Large statues of the Buddha tried to give people an idea of the peaceful, calm and serene personality of the Buddha. The most famous sculptures of the Buddha come from Gandhara in the Northwest, Mathura and Saranath in Uttar Pradesh (Fig: 17.11). We also can see some of these sculptures in Nagarjunakonda.



Fig: 20.13 A panel from Amaravathi showing calming of an elephant (Nalagiri) by the Buddha. The royal elephant went out of control and the people on the street were panic stricken. However on seeing the Buddha the elephant calmed down and bowed down to him. Can you see how they show a story in a panel? What could be the message of the story?

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Viharas were the monasteries or living places of Buddhist monks where religious education was imparted. A vihara usually had small rooms around an open courtyard and had a small shrine containing a stupa or an image of the Buddha at one end. This shrine was called a *chaitya* which was also a prayer hall for the monks.

There are cave viharas excavated on hill sides like in Nashik and Karle. These too have some beautiful sculptures carved on them. You will read about them below.

The other viharas were built with brick or stone blocks like in Takshashila, Nagarjunakonda and Nalanda which became great places of learning. In Viharas monks taught Buddhist scriptures to disciples. Apart from imparting education in Viharas, monks were also treating the physical ailments of people. We find many inscriptions from these viharas which tell us that ordinary men and women – farmers, traders, soldiers, and artisans – made liberal donations for building and expenses of these viharas.

Buddhist holy places of learning had attracted the pilgrims from other countries. Chinese pilgrims Fa-hi-an, Itsing and Hu-en-Tsang came to visit places associated with the life of the Buddha as well as famous monasteries.

Pilgrims were the people who took up journeys to holy places to offer worship.

Hu-en-Tsang, and others spent time studying in Nalanda (Bihar) the most famous Buddhist monastery of the period. This is how he describes it:

“The teachers are men of the highest ability and talent. They follow

the teachings of the Buddha in all sincerity. The rulers of the monastery are strict, and everyone has to follow them. Discussions are held throughout the day, and the old and the young mutually help one another. Learned men from different cities come here to settle their doubts. The gate keeper asks new entrants difficult questions. They are allowed to enter only after they have been able to answer these. Seven or eight out of every ten are not able to answer.”

Rock cut Chaityas and Early Temples

Traders, artisans and kings of the time of the Satavahanas donated generously to build a unique kind of chaityas and viharas in several places in Maharashtra like Karle, Bhaja, Kanheri and Nashik. These were built like caves on hill sides. Stone workers using chisel and hammer carved living rocks and reproduced structures which carpenters and wood workers had made. They made large prayer halls, stupas and small rooms for monks – all in the rock. They also carved beautiful images of people and animals and some times of the Buddha. Look at these pictures of the Karle chaitya which was built about 2100 years ago.

- Do you think the man and the woman shown in the sculpture had equal status? Give your reasons.
- Which part of the chaitya do you think was carved out first and which part was carved the last?



Fig: 20.16 Outside gate of Karle cave chaitya

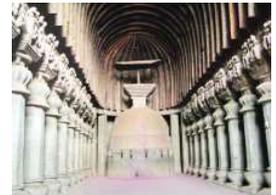


Fig: 20.17. Inside a Chaitya



Fig: 20.18 & 20.19 Sculptures from Karle

Even during these times, carpenters and masons are making temples and chaityas with mud, wood and stones. Some of these temples are for gods like Krishna while others are for the Buddha. But these have not survived. At Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh we get one of the earliest surviving stone temples. This is a very simple structure, with just a small room (called *garbhagriha*) in which the idol of the Buddha was kept, and a small open porch or *mandapa* with no walls but only pillars. The door and the pillars are beautifully carved. However, the temple has a flat roof without any tower or *shikhara* on it. This was built around 1600 years ago. See the pictures.



Fig: 20. 20. Early Buddhist temple from Sanchi

Key words

Chaitya	Monks
Vihara	Stupa
Relics	Monastery

Improve your learning

1. Why do you think Ashoka chose lions and bulls to put on his pillars rather than cows or parrots? What animal would you have chosen if you were in his place? Give reasons for your choice.
2. Look at the sculpture panel from Kanganahalli and identify the features that distinguish the king from other people.
3. Many stupas of Andhra Pradesh are on the banks of rivers (like Salihundam, Nagarjunakonda, Amaravati etc). Why do you think the monks selected these sites to build stupas?
4. Look at the sculpture showing the calming of the elephant. You can see some people watching the event from a height. Who do you think were these people?
5. Carefully look at the dresses of men and women in the sculptures. Can you try to draw them in a notebook? In what way are they different from the dresses we wear today?
6. Why do you think only the rock cut viharas and chaityas survived till today?
7. Compare the features of a Chaitya with that of a temple. Do you think the mode of worship in a Chaitya and a temple would be different?
8. Why the Buddhist Stupas, Chaityas are sacred?
9. How the Buddhist monks probably used the Viharas and Chaityas?
10. Locate Buddhist and Jain sites in Andhra Pradesh outline map?

Project

Visit a place of worship in your village or town and draw a sketch of the structure. Try to get the name of each part of the structure and its use and meaning. Prepare a report about this place of worship and conduct an exhibition in your class.

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