

The Shakhas

And their impact on India.

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Where were the Shakhas?



Wars between Indians and Shakhas

The presence of the Scythians in north-western India during the 1st century BCE was contemporary with that of the Indo-Greek Kingdoms there, and it seems they initially recognized the power of the local Greek rulers.

Maues first conquered Gandhara and Taxila around 80 BCE, but his kingdom disintegrated after his death. In the east, the Indian king Vikrama retook Ujjain from the Indo-Scythians, celebrating his victory by the creation of the Vikrama era (starting 58 BCE). Indo-Greek kings again ruled after Maues, and prospered, as indicated by the profusion of coins from Kings Apollodotus II and Hippostratos. Not until Azes I, in 55 BC, did the Indo-Scythians take final control of northwestern India, with his victory over Hippostratos.

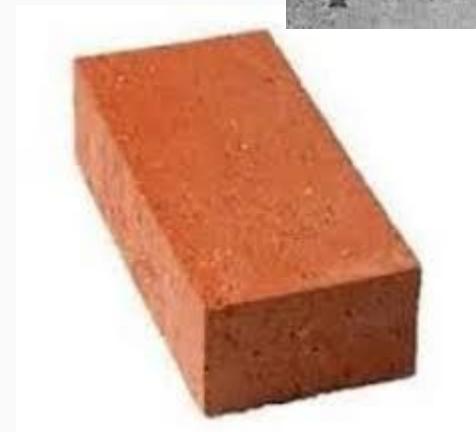


New inventions introduced to India

Shaka and Kushan period saw the use of better cavalry. The use of reins and saddles were introduced by Shaks and Kushans. Besides, Shaks and Kushans introduced tunic, turban and trousers and heavy long coat. Cap, helmet and boots were also introduced during this phase which facilitated the victories in war. Central area was opened to trade with routes through sea and valleys. One of these routes becomes famous as the old silk route.

The typical pottery of this age (Shaka-Kushan age) was red ware both in plain and polished form. It was similar to red pottery with thin fabric discovered in Kushan Empire in Central Asia. Red pottery techniques were quite common in Central Asia.

This age was marked by the construction of brick-walls. The use of burnt bricks for flooring and of tiles for both roofing and flooring was evident.



Agriculture & Art

The agriculture was promoted by the Kushans. The archaeological traces of irrigation facilities have been discovered in parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan and western Central Asia. The Shak and Kushan princes patronized Indian art to a great extent. This caused several schools of art which are Gandhara, Mathura and Central Asian. This happened because of Indian craftsmen coming into contact with Greeks, Romans and Central Asians craftsmen.

The influence of the Gandhara art reached to Mathura. The Mathura school of Art developed in the early centuries of Christian era and its products are made of red sandstone.



Literature and science

Literature

The Sanskrit literature was patronized by foreign princes. The great writers such as Ashvaghosha were patronized by Kushans. Ashvaghosha was the author of Buddha charita and Saundarananda.

The Indian theatre was also enriched with Greek influence since the use of curtains was introduced by the Greeks.

Science and Technology

Indian astrology was influenced by the Greek ideas which produced the term horashastra derived from the term horoscope. The Greek coins were better shaped and stamped as compared with punch-marked coins then common in India. The word drama was also derived from the Greek term drachma.

It is possible that, Indians learnt the art of leather shoes making during this time.

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Thankyou.