

NCERT Solutions Class 7 Social Science

(Exploring Society India and Beyond)

Chapter 6 The Age of Reorganisation

The Big Questions? (page 117)

Question 1. Why is the period that followed the Maurya Empire sometimes called the 'Age of Reorganisation'?

Answer: The period after the fall of the Maurya Empire is often called the 'Age of Reorganisation' because several new kingdoms and dynasties emerged across different parts of India. These included the Shungas in the north, Satavahanas in the Deccan, and Kharaveia's Chedi dynasty in Kalinga. These rulers revived local traditions, reorganized administrative systems, and promoted regional cultures, marking a shift from a centralized empire to regional powers that laid the foundation for future developments in Indian history.

Question 2. What were the values or principles that guided emperors of that period?

Answer: The emperors of this period were guided by a range of values, including:

1. Religious Tolerance: Rulers like Kharavela supported Jainism, Buddhism, and Vedic traditions equally.
2. Cultural Revival: Dynasties like the Shungas promoted Vedic rituals, Sanskrit learning, and traditional art.
3. Public Welfare: Kings issued inscriptions showing donations to temples, stupas, and public infrastructure.
4. Spirituality and Morality: Emperors like Ashoka emphasized Dhamma (righteousness) and moral conduct.

These values show a balance of political power and spiritual ethics in governance.

Question 3. How did foreign invaders assimilate into Indian society and contribute to cultural confluence?

Answer: Foreign groups such as the Indo-Greeks, Shakas, and Kushanas gradually assimilated into Indian society by:

1. Adopting Indian religions like Buddhism and Hinduism.
2. Marrying into Indian families and supporting local traditions.
3. Patronizing Indian art and architecture, contributing to a blending of Greek and Indian styles.
4. Issuing coins and inscriptions in Indian languages like Brahmi, which helped in the spread of Indian scripts and culture.



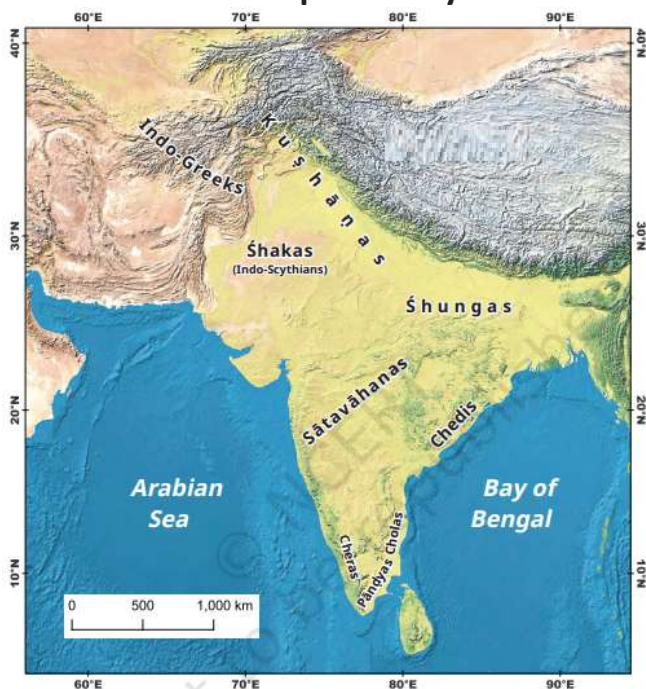
Their assimilation led to a rich cultural confluence, where ideas, languages, art, and religious practices from different parts of the world merged with Indian traditions.

Let's Explore (Page 118)

Question 1. Create a timeline on a sheet of paper marking the period from the first year of the 2nd century BCE and ending in the last year of the 3rd century CE. How many years does this period cover? As we progress through the chapter, mark the key individuals, kingdoms and events on the timeline.

Answer: Do it yourself.

Question 2. In the previous chapter, you studied the map of the Maurya empire (see page 100). Below is a map of the post-Maurya period. How many kingdoms can you count in the area that were previously under the control of the Maurya empire? (page 120)



Answer: After the decline of the Maurya Empire, the vast territory it once controlled broke into several independent kingdoms and regional powers. Based on the information provided in the text and map we can count at least 7 major kingdoms or regions that emerged from the former Mauryan Empire's territory:

1. Shunga Dynasty: in parts of northern India
2. Satavahana Dynasty: in the Deccan region
3. Indo-Greek Kingdoms: in the northwest
4. Shaka Kingdoms: western and northwestern India
5. Kushana Empire: large parts of north and northwest India
6. Pandya Kingdom: southern Tamil region
7. Chola and Chera Kingdoms: also in the far south (Tamilakam).



Question 3. Below is a panel from the Bharhut Stupa. Look at the two figures on the right. What are they doing? Can you guess their profession? Notice their attire. What does this tell us about them? List other details that you notice in the panel and discuss your findings in class. (page 124)



Answer: The two figures on the right appear to be carving or sculpting something. One may be holding a tool or chisel, indicating manual work or craftsmanship. Based on their posture and tools, it is likely that they are artisans or sculptors, possibly those who worked on building or decorating the stupa. Their attire is simple, with minimal ornamentation. This suggests they are working-class individuals. The practical clothing implies physical labor and a focus on function rather than luxury.

Question 4. Look closely at the pictures in the collage (given below). In a note, write down your observations on the clothes, the jewellery, and other objects of daily use. (page 125)



Answer: Clothes:

1. The people in the images are wearing draped garments, such as tunics, dhotis, or shawl-like wraps.
2. The clothing appears to be made from cotton or fine fabric, indicating skill in textile production.
3. Some figures wear headgear or turbans, suggesting status or regional customs.

Jewellery:

1. Both men and women are shown wearing necklaces, bangles, earrings, and armlets.
2. The jewellery is quite elaborate, indicating a rich tradition of ornamentation and possibly a flourishing trade in precious metals and stones.

Other objects of daily use:

1. There are depictions of mirrors, pots, combs, and musical instruments.
2. Items like storage jars and cooking vessels show everyday domestic life.
3. Some figures carry scrolls or tools, hinting at scholarly or artisanal professions.

The images suggest a vibrant urban society with a variety of occupations and lifestyles. There is a clear sense of cultural richness, aesthetic sensibility, and a developed economy with access to luxury and utility items.

Question 5. What do you think might have been the meaning of having deities like Vasudeva-Krishna or Lakshmi on some Indo-Greek coins? (page 135)

Answer: The presence of Indian deities like Vasudeva-Krishna or Lakshmi on Indo-Greek coins shows how foreign rulers adapted to Indian culture after settling in the region. These deities were highly revered by the local population, so placing them on coins helped the rulers to win the support of Indian subjects and show respect for local beliefs and traditions. They also blended their own Greek identity with Indian culture. This also reflects the cultural confluence of the time — a mix of Hellenistic (Greek) and Indian artistic and religious traditions. Such coins were likely meant to communicate legitimacy, acceptance, and unity, making the foreign rulers appear as rightful and respectful kings of the Indian land.

Question 6. Carefully observe this massive statue (1.85 m high) and notice the clothing, weapon, and footwear. What does it tell us about this figure? (page 136)



Answer:

1. The massive height (1.85 m) of the statue indicates that the figure is likely of great importance or heroic stature possibly a warrior, king, or divine figure.
2. The clothing may reflect the royal or elite status possibly detailed with folds or ornamentation, typical of the period's sculptural style.
3. The presence of a weapon shows that the figure was associated with strength, protection, or authority, a military or divine protector.
4. The footwear, suggests high status, and possibly that the figure used to travel for warfare.
5. The statue reflects a person of power, prestige, and importance, possibly someone admired or worshipped by the people of that time.

Question 7.

Observe the coins carefully. Who, besides the emperor, appears on the coin? (page 136)



Answer: On the first coin, Kanishka is shown holding a spear, titled 'King of Kings', while the other side features Buddha with the inscription in Greek script. On the second coin, an emperor appears on one side, and Shiva with the bull Nandi on the other.

Question 8. Now that you are familiar with the basic characteristics of the Mathura and Gandhara styles of art, study the pictures of artefacts given in Fig. 6.27 and try to identify which school of art each artefact belongs to. Write your observations with justifications. (page 140)



Answer:

1. Artefacts 1, 2 and 6 belong to Gandhara School of Art. The sculpture has a strong Greco-Roman influence, seen in the wavy hair, realistic drapery, and naturalistic features. These are typical of Gandhara art, which flourished in the northwestern regions.
2. Artefacts 3,4,5 belong to Mathura School of Art. The figures have simple carving and is less focused on realism and more on conveying divinity, which is characteristic of Mathura art.

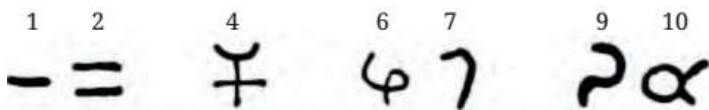
Think About It

Question 1. What, according to you, could the tradition of using the mother's name at the beginning of a king's name signify? (page 126)

Answer: The tradition of using the mother's name at the beginning of a king's name could signify several important cultural and social ideas:

1. Recognition of maternal lineage: It shows that mothers held an important place in society and that their identity was valued in royal succession and recognition.
2. Social status of women: This practice might reflect that women, especially royal mothers, had significant influence in political and dynastic matters.
3. Legitimacy of rule: Associating a king with his mother might have been a way to assert the legitimacy of his claim to the throne, especially if the mother came from a powerful or respected family.
4. Cultural respect: It may indicate a tradition of honouring the role of the mother in shaping the ruler's character and authority.
5. Religious or symbolic value: In some cultures, divine or semi-divine status was attributed to royal women, and naming a king after his mother may have carried spiritual or symbolic importance.

Question 2. In the series of numerals given below, which ones look somewhat like our modern numerals? Which ones don't? (page 126)



Answer: From the numeral series shown in the text (most likely ancient Indian numerals), the following can be observed:

Numerals that look somewhat like modern numerals:

- The symbol for 1 often looks quite similar to the modern numeral '1'.
- In some scripts, the symbol for 2 resembles a curled or bent version of our current '2'.

Numerals that do not look like modern numerals:

- 4 to 9: These generally appear quite different from today's numerals and are more stylized or symbolic in appearance.

Question 3. This sculpture of a yaksha from Pitalkhora carries an inscription on its hand, “kanhadasena hiramakarena kata,” meaning ‘made by Kanahadasa, a goldsmith’. Is it not interesting to see that a goldsmith could also craft a sculpture made of stone? What do you think this tells us about people’s professions at the time? (page 127)



Answer: The fact that a goldsmith like Kanahadasa could craft a stone sculpture is indeed interesting. This tells us that during this period, people often had multiple skills and professions. Unlike today, when specific trades are highly specialized, people in ancient times might have had a more versatile approach to their work. A goldsmith, skilled in working with metal, also had the ability to carve stone. This reflects a blending of different techniques and knowledge areas. The boundaries between art forms and craftsmanship were likely not as rigid as they are today, and people could engage in different types of creative and practical work.

Question 4. Notice the regularity of the rock-cut chambers sculpted nearly two millennia ago. How did artisans achieve such precision with just a chisel and a hammer? Picture yourself as a sculptor in that era, shaping stone into art with your own hands. What tools would you use? (page 129)

Answer: The remarkable precision of rock-cut chambers carved almost two thousand years ago shows the exceptional skill, patience, and experience of the artisans of that time. Despite having simple tools like chisels and hammers, they created symmetrical and well-proportioned structures entirely by hand.

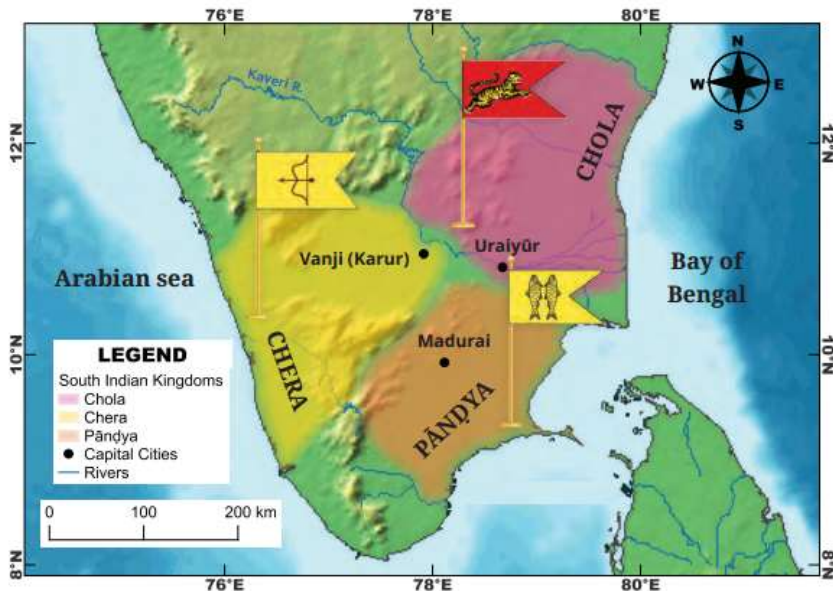
Artisans had deep knowledge of how to use basic tools like chisels, hammers, and picks effectively. Skills were passed down through generations, and artisans likely trained for years to develop expertise. With constant practice, they could estimate measurements with accuracy by eye. Large structures would be carved by teams of skilled workers, guided by experienced supervisors or master sculptors.

If I were a sculptor in that era, I would use:

1. A chisel of varying sizes to carve out finer and broader parts.
2. A hammer made of stone or iron to strike the chisel.
3. A pickaxe for breaking off large sections of rock.

4. A measuring cord or stick to maintain symmetry.
5. Possibly abrasives for polishing the surface.
6. Oil lamps or torches to light up cave interiors while working.

Question 5. In the map given below, you may notice different symbols alongside the names of the kingdoms. What do these symbols represent? Think about how they highlight the unique identities of the kingdoms. (page 129)



Answer: The symbols alongside the names of the kingdoms on the map represent distinctive emblems or icons associated with each southern kingdom.

These may include:

1. Animals, such as the tiger, elephant, or fish, which were royal symbols or dynastic emblems.
2. Objects, like bows, drums, or scepters, signifying power, warfare, or cultural traditions.
3. Natural elements, like mountains or trees, sometimes used to indicate sacred places or heritage.

These symbols highlight unique identities in the following ways:

1. They reflect the political or military strength of a kingdom (e.g., tiger for Cholas may symbolize courage and authority).
2. Some symbols are tied to religious beliefs, myths, or origin stories of the ruling dynasties.
3. They help us understand the cultural identity and pride of each kingdom.
4. These symbols acted like early flags or logos, allowing easy recognition of a kingdom's territory or influence on maps and inscriptions.

Question 6. Observe the statue of the king. How is he depicted? What do his posture, clothing, and expression say about his power and status? (page 132)



Answer: King Karikala is depicted in the statue with a commanding and upright posture, which reflects strength, authority, and leadership. His broad chest and firm stance symbolize courage and physical power, traits highly valued in a ruler. The upright and confident pose suggests that he was a powerful and respected king. He is shown wearing traditional royal attire, including ornaments and possibly a crown or headgear, symbolizing his regal status and rich cultural heritage. His facial expression is calm yet determined, conveying wisdom, control, and dignity. The detailing in the sculpture highlights heroism and grandeur, often associated with rulers who achieved great feats.

Question 7. Have you ever wondered how historians uncover the trade relations between two distant kingdoms many centuries ago? Let's take a moment to brainstorm and discuss how this information comes to light. (page 133)

Answer: Yes, historians use several fascinating methods to uncover trade relations between distant kingdoms from centuries ago. These include:

Archaeological Evidence: Excavations at ancient ports, warehouses, and marketplaces reveal coins, seals, pottery, and foreign goods (like Roman amphorae in India), suggesting long-distance trade. Storage jars, beads, spices, or imported goods found at inland or coastal sites also point to trading activity.

Inscriptions and Writings: Inscriptions on stone, copper plates, and temple walls sometimes mention gifts, merchants, and trade routes. Foreign travelers' accounts, like those of Greek, Roman, Chinese, or Arab visitors, describe Indian goods, ports, and trading customs.

Coins and Currency: The discovery of foreign coins in India (e.g., Roman coins in Tamil Nadu) suggests active trade links with Rome and other regions. The type of metal and inscriptions on coins provide clues about the origin and value of traded goods.

Literary Sources: Ancient texts like the Sangam literature, Jataka tales, or foreign books like the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mention ports, traders, and exported/imported items.

Art and Sculptures: Murals and carvings (like those in Amaravati or Bharhut) depict ships, merchants, markets, and exotic animals, hinting at vibrant trade connections.



Question 8. The Pandyas were known for their pearls. Why do you think pearls were an important article of trade during these times?

The Pandyas left many inscriptions in which their kings asserted their great concern for their subjects' welfare and their encouragements to all schools of thought and belief. (page 134)

Answer: Importance of Pearls in Trade: Pearls were considered rare, luxurious, and beautiful, making them highly sought after by foreign traders, especially from Rome, West Asia, and Southeast Asia. The Gulf of Mannar, near the Pandya kingdom, was rich in pearl-producing oysters, making the region a natural centre for the pearl trade. Pearls symbolized wealth, royalty, and spirituality, making them desirable for gifts, rituals, and ornamentation across cultures. Pearls were lightweight but high in value, making them ideal for long-distance trade.

Pandyas' Concern for Welfare and Beliefs: Inscriptions show that the Pandya kings were not only traders and warriors but also compassionate rulers who cared for their people. They promoted religious tolerance, encouraging various schools of thought and belief, showing that their society was diverse and open-minded. Their emphasis on public welfare and cultural support helped create a stable and prosperous society, boosting economic and cultural exchanges.

Question 9. Do you know where Gandhara is? Does it remind you of a character from the epic Mahabharata? (page 137)

Answer: Gandhara was an ancient region located in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent, what is now northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan, especially around the modern-day cities of Peshawar and Taxila.

Gandhara does remind us of a key character from the Mahabharata Gandhari, the queen of Hastinapur and mother of the Kauravas. She was the princess of Gandhara, and her name reflects her origin. This historical connection between a region and an epic character shows how ancient kingdoms influenced not only politics but also literature and cultural memory.

