

U.G.C. Serial No. 01, Journal No. 42486

ISSN - 0974-1526

SAN̄SKRTI SANDHĀNA

VOLUME - XXXI

NO. 2

(July - December) 2018

AN INTERNATIONAL REFERRED JOURNAL



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ISSN-0974-1526

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53, महामनापुरी कालोनी, आई०टी०आई० रोड, करौंदी,
पोस्ट - बी०एच०यू०, वाराणसी-221005 (उ०प्र०)
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Editorial

Present publication is an International referred Journal Saṁskṛti Sandhāna Vol. XXXI, No. 2, (July-December) 2018 of Manav Sanskriti Shodh Sansthan, Varanasi. All the Research papers are on different aspects of Indian History, Culture, Art, Archaeology, Religion & Philosophy, Language & Literature etc. from ancient to modern times. Our Indian society and culture is claimed to be a progressive society from early Rigvedic era and onwards but due to the invent of Sanskaras in Dharmasutras, shudras were ignored by the privileged class especially by Brahmn priesthood which resulted the outcome of Shramanic culture (Buddhism and Jainism etc.) keeping in view of Social and religious harmony, Social and religious equality amongst all people of Indian sub-continent.

Due to this progressive religious movement, foreign elements could dare to emerge with Indian society and culture. With advent of foreigners, i.e., Yavanas, Śakas, Pahlavas and Kushanas in Indian society from 1st century A.D. and onwards, Indian society was classified in to two classes, i.e. Arya and Anarya (Mleksha, Dasyu or Dasas). These Anaryas (foreigners) were totally ignored and neglected by the Brahmanical social system. But as a ruler, they claimed a respectable position in the society and when their claim was not easily admitted, they dominated over them by force as indicated in Yugapurāṇa section of Gargi Samhitā. A large number of evidences also indicate that same policy was also followed by the later Kushanas. In this way, we find that the socio-political scene was changed during Kushana period. As quoted above, Pali text Angavijja (of 3rd century A.D.) clearly indicates that people of lower varṇas began to adopt the various occupations, earned money and claimed a respectable position in the society.

In ancient Indian society 'śilpa' as an occupation was regarded as means of livelihood which according to social norms, was exclusively reserved for Shudras. It seems to be a general notion that dynamics of social changes such as rise of trade, growth of industries, urbanisastion and related socio-economic mobilities of different class of artists and artisans, etc., have a little effect on devalued and degraded practical aspect of 'śilpa' because of the

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powerful orthodoxy in particular and various other external/internal complexities of socio-religious structure in general. With the exception of some early Vedic and Buddhist texts, almost all the variable literary sources place the artists and artisans within Shudra-varna who were no doubt exploited by the upper varṇas. Various literary, epigraphic and art evidences prove that inspite of Shudra varṇa artisans were considered as an important segment of society. The shilpins were consider in the category of artisan class or guild who were enjoying an honourale status in society during Kushana period. Their mastry in various skills and techniques made them an important and essential part of society. During Kushana period they enjoyed a very high position too. Heads of these guilds were very powerful during these days. With the emergence of different arts and artisan classes who were patronised by Kushana rulers, Mathura (centre of Kushanas) was developed as one of the richest centre of Indian economy. It is because of the close relations and helping attitude to Kushana rulers towards these weaker sections of our Indian society, who not only adopted differnt shilpas (means of economic productivities) but also earned a lot to enrich the individual as well as Indian economy as a whole by dint of sincere and hard labour. Due to their rich economy, they got a very respectable position in the society and made a large number of donations for religious purposes. In the list of religious doners, we find inscriptions of goldsmit, ironsmith, kashthakāra, and mrttikara. Mathura Jain inscription of Jamanabhaga gives us clear evidence of the donation of Ayala, the son of Indrasharmana for the Buddhist monks of Suvarnaka Vihar. An other Mathura Jain inscription records the names of Posthasaka Kalvalasa (modern Kalawar), who donated Ayagapatta to Jain munis. In the same way we find many other inscriptions of Gandhika (perfumers), Navakarmika (an overseer worker), Dasa (slave), Ganika (courtesan) and Nartaka (dacner), etc., who made different types of donations for religious purposes.

Above records of religious donations made by lower class people clearly indicate that a large number of weaker class people of our ancient Indian society adopted sramanic (Buddhist and Jain) religious cult inspite of Brahmanical religious cult in which they got no respectable position in previous centuries. Kushana rulers who accepted Buddhism, provided them (weakers) full freedom regarding their numerous facilities in socio-economic and religious activities. Kushana rulers politically patronised these weaker sections of our ancient Indian society for their betterment. It seems that majority of weaker sections of Kushana society who were previously ignored by our

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Brahamaical social order, got full freedom in all walks of their lives. Hence, they adopted different types of occupations, earned a lot by dint of their hard labour, donated for the cultural and religious enrichment and made a rich contribution in the development of Kushana economy, also. It is only due to the encouragement from rulers, they (weakers) developed their skills and new techniques in development of different Art, Crafts and Architecture, etc. These are the contributions of weaker sections of Kushana Era which proved them as worthy of the backbone of our Indian economy, art and culture.

Manav Sanskriti Shodh Sansthan, Varanasi is grateful to Dr. B.R. Mani, Vice Chancellor, National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation & Museology, Janpath, New Delhi and Padma Shri Prof. Ram Harsh Singh, Patron, Manav Sanskriti Shodh Sansthan, Varanasi and Founder Vice Chacellor of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurved University, Jodhpur and distinguished Professor, Department of Kayachikitsa, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU for his valuable suggestions from time to time. We are also thankful to Prof. Om Prakash, Former Vice Chancellor, M.J.P. University, Berelly, (U.P.) and Dr. Ghanshyam Singh, President, Manav Sanskriti Shodh Sansthan for their kind support. We are also grateful to the Associate Editors of the Journal namely Dr. Vinay Kumar, Assistant Professor, Dept. of AIHC and Archaeology, BHU and Dr. Baleshwar Prasad, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy and Religion, BHU, Varanasi for going through all the papers and doing the proof reading. We are also thankful to all the writers, members of editorial board, life members of Manav Sanskriti Shodh Sansthan and all the members of the Management Committee for their help and support.

**December 2018
Varanasi**

Dr. Jhinkoo Yadav