

# IRANIAN AND MACEDONIAN INVASIONS

## *Iranian Invasion*

- During the first half the sixth century B.C., there were several small principalities in the north-west India such as those of the Kambojas, Gandharas and Madras fought one another.
- The Iranian ruler Darius penetrated into north-west India in 516 B.C. and annexed Punjab, west of Indus and Sindh. This area constituted the twentieth province or satrapy of Iran.
- The Indian satrapy included Sindh, the north-west frontier and the part of Punjab that lay to the west of the Indus. It was most fertile and populous part of the empire.
- India continued to be a part of the Iranian empire till Alexander's invasion of India.

### **Result of the the Indo-Iranian contact** That lasted for about 200 years.

- The Iranian scribes brought into India a form of writing which came to be known as the Kharosthi script. It was written from right to left like the Arabic.
- Iranian influence on the Maurya sculpture is clearly perceptible. The monuments of Ashoka's time especially the bell shaped capital, owed something to the Iranian models.
- Iranian influence may also be traced in the preamble of Ashoka's edicts as well as in certain terms used in them. For instance, for the Iranian term *dipi*, the Ashokan scribe used the term *lipi*.
- It seems that through the Iranians the Greeks came to know about the great wealth of India, which whetted their greed and eventually led to Alexander's invasion.

## *Alexander's Invasion*

- Under the leadership of Alexander of Macedonia, the Greeks finally destroyed the Iranian empire.
- Alexander conquered not only Asia Minor and Iraq but also Iran.
- Herodotus, who is called father of history, and other Greek writers had painted India as, a fabulous land, which tempted Alexander to invade it.
- Alexander also possessed a strong passion for geographical inquiry and natural history.
- He had heard that the Caspian Sea continued on the eastern side of India.
- Alexander marched towards India through the Khyber pass in 326 B.C.
- Ambhi the prince of Taxila, readily submitted to the invader, augmented his army and replenished his treasure.
- Near Jhelum, Alexander met from Porus the first and the strongest resistance whose kingdom lay between the Jhelum and the Chenab. Alexander defeated Porus, he was impressed by his bravery and courage.
- Then he advanced as far as the Beas River. He wanted to move still farther eastward but his army refused to accompany him.
- The Greek soldiers had grown war-weary and diseased. The hot climate of India and ten years of continuous campaigning had made them terribly homesick.
- They had also experienced a taste of Indian fighting qualities on the bank of Indus
- As the Greek historian Arrian tells us; "In the art of war the Indians were far superior to the other nations inhabiting the area at that time."
- Especially the Greek soldiers were told of a formidable power on the Ganga.
- Obviously it was the kingdom of Magadha ruled by the Nandas who maintained an army far outnumbering that of Alexander.

