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HISTORY OF INDIA-II

B.H.I.C.- 103

B.A. History (Hons.) - 2nd Semester

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By: Taruna Jain



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**Sample Preview
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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

HISTORY OF INDIA-II

B.H.I.C.-103

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Attempt any five questions. Attempt at least two questions from each section. All questions carry equal marks.

SECTION-I

Q. 1. What does the term 'Tamilakam' mean? Discuss the emergence of chiefdoms in Tamilakam in the early historical period.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 18, 'South India (Tamilaham) : The Region' and Page No. 19, 'Evolution of Political Society'.

Q. 2. Discuss the different dimensions of the expansion of trade and urban centers in India from 200 BCE to 300 CE.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 33, 'Urbanization in 200 BCE-300 CE'.

Q. 3. Describe the emergence of regional powers in the post-Gupta period in North India.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 51, 'The Regional Power'.

Q. 4. Discuss the following:

(i) Kushanas

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 3, 'The Kushanas'.

(ii) Tinai System

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 24, 'The Tinai Concept'.

(iii) Satavahana society

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 18, 'Society'.

(iv) Gupta administration

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 43, 'Administration'.

SECTION-II

Q. 5. Describe the nature of craft production in early medieval South India.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 95, 'Crafts Production in South India'.

Q. 6. Write an essay on Epics and the Puranas.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 111, 'The Epics and the Puranas', 'Puranas', 'Mahabhartar' and Page No. 112, 'Ramayana'.

Q. 7. Discuss the perspectives on environment, forests and water resources in early India.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-18, Page No. 144, 'Environment', Page No. 146, 'Forests' and Page No. 147, 'Water Resources'.

Q. 8. Discuss the following:

(i) Bhakti cult

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 102, 'The Bhakti Movement'.

(ii) Aryabhata-I

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 129, 'Aryabhata-I' (C. 476-550 CE).

(iii) Rock-cut architecture

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 118, 'Rock-Cut-Architecture' and Page No. 123, 'Rock Cut Temples (Q. No. 4).

(iv) Position of women in Gupta and post-Gupta periods

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 90, Q. No. 4.



QUESTION PAPER

December – 2022

(Solved)

HISTORY OF INDIA-II

B.H.I.C.-103

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Attempt any five questions. Attempt at least two questions from each section. All questions carry equal marks.

SECTION – I

Q. 1. Who were the Kushanas? Describe the expansion of Kushana Empire.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 3, 'The Kushanas'.

Q. 2. Discuss the economic and social organisation in Tamilakam in the early historical period.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 26, 'Economic, Political and Social Organisation in Tamilakam'.

Q. 3. Discuss the nature of the Gupta Administration.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 43, 'Administration'.

Q. 4. Discuss the following:

(a) Indo-Greeks

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 9, 'Indo-Greeks'.

(b) Satavahana Administration

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 18, 'Administration'.

(c) Harshavardhana

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 61, 'Political Activities of Harsha: An Overview', 'Early Career', 'The Extent of Harsha's Kingdom' and 'The Harsha Era'.

(d) Decline of the Guptas

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 45, 'Decline of the Guptas'.

SECTION – II

Q. 5. Discuss the economic changes that occurred in the post-Gupta period with special reference to the decline in trade and urbanization.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 76, 'The Economic Changes: Decline in Trade and Urbanization'.

Q. 6. Discuss the chief features of the Bhakti Movement.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 102, 'The Bhakti Movement' and Page No. 106, Q. No. 3.

Q. 7. Discuss the achievements of scientists in India with reference to Aryabhata-I and Bhaskaracharya.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 129, 'Aryabhata-I (C. 476-550 CE)' and 'Bhaskaracharya'.

Q. 8. Discuss the following:

(a) Puranic Hinduism

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 101, 'Puranic Hinduism'.

(b) Prakrit and Pali

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 110, 'Prakrit' and 'Pali'.

(c) Ganika

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 86, 'Ganika (Elite Courtesan)'.

(d) Tantra Literature

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 106, Q. No. 4.

■ ■

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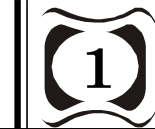


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HISTORY OF INDIA-II

BLOCK-I : INDIA : 200 BCE TO 300 CE



The Sungas and Kushanas

INTRODUCTION

The downfall of the Mauryan rule in 187 BCE paved the way for the emergence of several powers in the Indian subcontinent. This period from the decline of the Mauryas to the rise of the Guptas is known as the post-Mauryan period. There were many changes that were introduced by the Mauryan Empire during the period and the processes of change reached a level of maturity in the post-Mauryan period. After that the monarchical state system became more prevalent. This period was not as large as that of the Mauryas but is historically significant. There were many regional powers that emerged in north and north-western India during the period.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

THE EMERGING SIGNIFICANCE OF NORTH-WEST INDIA

The post-Mauryan period witnessed the movement of the population across Central Asia and in north and north-western India, particularly to the west of upper Ganga and Yamuna. The regions of Central Asia and the area between the Caspian Sea and China were embroiled in conflict among various nomadic tribes who were known as the Scythians, Sakas, Huns, Turks, etc. had started migrating from the Steppes in search of new pasture lands once China was closed to them. The Achaemenid invasion of India and Alexander's campaigns had opened the north-western parts of India to successive campaigns. Also, the Greeks or the *Yavanas* were followed by the Scythians (Sakas) and the Parthians (Pahlavas). The Kushanas, a branch of the Yueh-chi tribe soon followed. The movements did not stop here and continued.

The period also witnessed the formation of easy linkages with the West and Central Asia on the one hand and regions to the south of the Hindu Kush on the other. The kings of India had established close contacts with the north-west. The Ashoka's bilingual inscription has

been discovered which tells us about the interaction between the centers of Greek world and the outlying settlements during the Mauryan period. The widespread and intimate contacts with the regions in the west became more definite in the post-Mauryan period.

SOURCES

Mahabhasya of Patanjali, *Divyavadana*, *Puranas*, *Malavikagnimitra* of Kalidasa, *Harshacharita* of Banabhatta, a few inscriptions and art historical materials are some of the sources for studying this period. The information is present in *Gargi Samhita* and there are inscriptions from Ayodhya, Vidisa and Bharhut. The emergence of minor ruling families in north India is an important development during the period. We get the information from the coins minted by them and the inscriptions that are written in Kharosthi script have been found in large numbers in Gandhara and many Kharosthi documents have been recovered from Central Asia. Another important source is the Pali work *Milinda-Panha* (The Questions of Milinda) gives information about the *Yavana* king Menander and on Buddhism of this period. The Chinese historical chronicles also give us many details about the events in Central Asia, Bactria and north-west India.

THE SUNGAS

Brihadratha, was assassinated by Pushyamitra Sunga in 180 BCE. This is supported by Bana, the court poet of Harshavardhana of Kannauj. The Sungas were brahmanas and there are several references to Sunga teachers in Vedic texts. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* mentions a teacher named Sungiputra. *Malavikagnimitra* by Kalidasa also describes Agnimitra, son of Pushyamitra, as belonging to the Baimbika *kula* and the *Baudhayana Srauta Sutra* represents the Baimbikayah as Kashyapas. From all these sources, we come to know that the Sungas were brahmanas. A later text like *Harshacharita* also refers to Pushyamitra as a brahmana who was an ignoble person.

According to the *Puranas*, the Sunga rule in India lasted for 112 years. Magadha was the nucleus of the kingdom.

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Pushyamitra Sunga is famous for his encounter with the *Yavanas* (Bactrian Greeks.) The Patanjali's *Mahabhasya* (III.2.111) tells us that there were Greek incursions during the rule of the Sungas. This information is also confirmed by *Yugapurana*. According to Patanjali, the *yavanas* lived outside Madhyadesha which was situated to the east of Adarsa. A play by Kalidasa named *Malavikagnimitram* preserves the memory of the defeat of the *yavanas* at the hands of Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra Sunga. The play tells us that Pushyamitra (Pushyamitra) sent his grandson Vasumitra (Agnimitra's son) who accompanied the sacrificial horse during its travels through different areas prior to the performance of the *Asvamedha yajya*. The *Yavanas* were defeated by the Vasumitra on the banks of the Sindhu river. The sacrifice was performed after Vasumitra returned victorious along with the horse.

When Ashoka got inclined towards *Dhamma* and Buddhism, the Sungas are known for having reverted to Brahmanical orthodoxy. The Ayodhya inscription of Dhanadeva, Pushyamitra Sunga tell us that about the performance of two *Asvamedha* sacrifices and the Buddhist sources claim that he persecuted the Buddhists. *Divyavadana* depicts Pushyamitra as a destroyer of Buddhist monasteries and places of worship, particularly those constructed by Ashoka.

The kings during the period assumed grandiose titles which are opposite to that of the Mauryan period when Ashoka called himself only *Raja*. The titles like *Maharaja*, *Rajaraja*, *Rajati raja*, *Shaonanosha*, etc. were used during the period and the vedic sacrifices like *Asvamedha*, *Rajasuya*, etc. were performed with a view to augment royal power. The *Manusmriti* tell us about the *Prajapati* (the Creator) created the king by combining the essence of divinities like: Indra Varuna, Vayu, Yama, Agni, etc. The last Sunga king was Devabhuti who was killed by his brahmana minister Vasudeva. This ended the Sunga line by 75 BCE and was followed by Kanvas whose founding member was Vasudeva.

Territorial Control of the Sungas

The rule of the Sangas included centre at Pataliputra which seems to have embraced territories in the middle Ganga plain, the upper Ganga valley and eastern Malwa. The *Divyavadana* and Taranatha's account reveals that it also included Jalandhara and Sakala in the Punjab.

Administrative Structure

There were many variations in the administrative structure of the Sunga kingdom over a period of years. It is believed that Pushyamitra had a central administration at Pataliputra and was assisted by a council of ministers and bureaucrats, and his empire was divided into provinces. There were many tribal regions that had autonomous power and were also

integrated. The *sabha* which was convened under Pushyamitra probably functioned as a council of ministers or an Assembly and is stated in the *Malavikagnimitram* that Agnimitra, the Viceroy at Vidisa was assisted by a Council of ministers. The inscription of Dhanadeva from Ayodhya tells us that one of his forefathers had been the governor of Kosala and he was related by blood to Pushyamitra. The grandson of Pushyamitra, named Vasumitra was the Commander-in-Chief of the Sunga army. *Mantri-parishad* was an important element in the governmental machinery. Even princes were assisted by *parishads*. It is believed that after Pushyamitra's demise, the Sunga kingdom weakened and his successors may have ruled in the Vidisha area for some time. It is also believed that some of the Pushyamitra's family members may have ruled in the Kosala area (in Uttar Pradesh) too. The inscriptions in Ayodhya describe him as the lord of Kosala and the sixth in descent from Senapati Pushyamitra. The Sunga kingdom ended with the Kanvas. In all, about ten Sunga kings ruled for a period of 112 years from c.187 to 75 BCE.

Sunga Art

The Sunga empire played a vital role in patronizing art. Many evidences are found from Bharhut, Bodhgaya and Sanchi. The period also witnessed the flowering of visual arts including small terracotta images, larger stone sculptures and architectural monuments like the *caitya* hall at Bhaja, the stupa at Bharhut and the Great Stupa at Sanchi. The most prominent characteristic of the art during the period is its flowing linear rhythm that binds all isolated objects in one continuous stream of life. The stones of the period also have huge lotus stalks flowing in rhythmical waves from form to form. The reliefs illustrate episodes from the life of the Buddha and incidents that give us an idea of contemporary life. The sculptures of Bharhut, Bodhgaya and Sanchi also depict the first organized art activity which was opposite to the court art of the Mauryas and also tell us about the results of the ethnic, social and religious fusion and integration. Important religious developments also took place during this period.

THE INDO-GREEKS

Greeks settled in Bactria, a region which can be identified with the present-day northern Afghanistan, southern Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan at the time of rule of Alexander. When Alexander died, his generals came to rule the kingdoms. One such example was the Seleucid kingdom which was coterminous with the Mauryas. After that Bactria broke away from the Seleucid Empire in about 250 BCE and the Bactrian Greeks formed their own empire as the eastern most post of Hellenism. The Greeks were displaced between 145 and 130 BCE and the Bactrian Greeks moved southwards and came to control southern Afghanistan

(Arachosia), covering the area from the Hidukush to Gandhara. The Indo Greeks period began from here.

INDO-SCYTHIANS AND INDO-PARTHIANS

The Indo-Scythians are also known as Sakas and were the first large nomadic community to reach South Asia through Bactria. The term Scythian refers to a group of people, originating in Central Asia and then migrating to south and west. In the middle of the first century BCE, it was Azes, once a co-ruler of the Vonones group who assumed sole power and extended the rule of the Scythians in India. The Era was introduced in his name in 58/57BCE is evident from inscriptions which are dated in the Era of 'The Great King Azes'. The era was known earlier as Vikrama Era but now we know that it owed its origin to the first Indo-Scythian king, Azes I. After that Azilises succeeded him as the supreme ruler. The associate Azes II succeeded him in about the first quarter of 1st century CE. The Indo-Scythians ruled in the north-west India giving space to local dynasties till they were supplanted by Gondophares, the founder of the Indo-Parthian kingdom.

Indo-Scythians were succeeded by the Indo-Parthians or the Pahlavas in the Indo-Iranian borderlands. Gondophares was the first ruler whose kingdom extended from Seistan through Arachosia, to the Kabul valley and over Gandhara to the Jammu-Pathankot area. The reign of Gondophares could be fixed approximately between c.20 and 45 CE. Gondophares expanded his influence from Seistan to the river Sutej. The policy followed by him was conquest by a system of absorption, allowing local rulers to keep their independence. The reason for the collapse of the kingdom was the major invasion by the Kushanas under Kujula Kadphises. The overstrikes of Kujula Kadphises over the coins of Gondophares tells us that Kujula brought to an end Parthian rule in Paropamisadae (Kabul-Begram region) and Gandhara.

THE KUSHANAS

Kushanas were the major ruling group of the post-Mauryan period and were a branch of the Yueh-chi, a nomadic group of people who inhabited territories near Dunhuang until conflicts with the Xiongnu led to their migration across the Tarim Basin to Bactria between c. 165-128 BCE. The rule of the Kushanas was significant in the political history of the subcontinent and its north-western borderlands is enormous. The rule of the Kushanas transformed the Kushana principality in Bactria into a massive empire which included portions of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, parts of Chinese Central Asia, north-west borderlands of the subcontinent, Mathura and at times beyond Mathura through the Ganga plains till Bhagalpur in Bihar. The Kushana Empire is sometimes called the Central Asian Empire.

The Kushana period from the first to third centuries CE witnessed the increase in the political, economic,

religious, and cultural contacts between South Asia and Central Asia. There are various sources like archaeological excavations, art historical evidence, coins, and inscriptions directly which reflect these connections. At the time of the rule of Kanishka over Transoxiana and Bactria, the empire came to play an important role in the Silk route. The Silk route connected China across Bactria with West Asia and the Mediterranean.

Early Days

Kujula Kadphises was the first ruler who adopted the title 'Great King, King of Kings' on coins patterned on Saka and Parthian issues. He had united the five tribes of the Yueh-chi and made successful inroads into India and established himself at Kabul and Kashmir. The third ruler of the Kushana dynasty was Vima Kadphises. The nimbate figure of the ruler depicted him as a supramundane being, often showing him as emerging from the clouds, an obvious indicator of his divine status. The Dasht-i-Nawur inscription of Vima depicts the Kushana ruler was described as the 'Law of the Living World'. The king was shown as a law giver or upholder of the cosmic order. In the Rabatak inscription of Kanishka I he is given the attribute 'Bago' i.e. God himself. Thus, Kanishka was elevated from 'son of a God' to God itself.

Territorial Expansion

During Kanishka I's reign, the maximum territorial expansion of the Kushana empire took place. The accession of Kanishka is dated between 78 and 144 CE. The Rabatak Bactrian inscription reveals about the Kushana realm at the time of Kanishka which extended to the cities of Saketa, Kausambi, Pataliputra, and Sri-Campa in the Ganges-Yamuna valley. The north-western frontier areas of the subcontinent ruled over Kanishka. The casket inscription tells us about the city of Purushapura (Peshawar in Pakistan) figures as Kanishkapura named after the Kushana monarch. The renaming of the city after the reigning Kushana emperor tells us that this was the premier political centre of Kanishka within his South Asian territories.

Successors of Kanishka

The most powerful and prominent successors of Kanishka I was Huvishka who ruled for more than three decades. The coinage and many inscriptions tell us about the control over the areas to the west of Kabul is evident from his inscription at Wardak (year 51). The coins of Huvishka show an impressive number of images of divinities from the Indic, Iranian, Central Asian and Hellenistic pantheons.

After Kanishka II, the next ruler was Vasudeva who also enjoyed a long reign of more than three decades (yrs. 64/67 to 98). The coins of the period also tell us about the two more successors of Vasudeva I, namely Kanishka III and Vasudeva II. The last possible ruler of the dynasty was Vasudeva II. By the time of Vasudeva

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II's rule the Kushana realm had shrunk in size. The end of the empire was brought in by the Sassanid ruler Shapur I of Iran. During the rule of the Kushana, we come to know about the simultaneous rule of two rulers—one senior and a junior ruler. This form of hereditary dual rule was one such curious practice under the Kushanas. This means that there was less of centralization under these rulers.

Religious Policy of the Kushanas

There were many local divinities into the Kushana pantheon which were depicted on coins. Rosenfield tells us about the selection of reverse types indicated the nomination of individual deities as associates of the king, 'divine companions and supporters of the monarchy' so that the coinage types were propagandist in nature. The status and importance of Kanishka's is visible from the multiplicity of Gods. The majority of Kanishka's coinage shows Gods of the Iranian sphere on its reverse, indicating their names in Graeco-Bactrian. The Rabatak inscription tell us that the Gods worshipped by the Kushanas were seen as the source of their power were of Iranian origin and Nana was the presiding deity.

The coins of the Buddha period depicts about the Gods such as Shiva, Mithra, Ahuramazda, etc. The Buddha on a coin tells us that Kanishka has equated his position with that of deities, and thereby implied for himself a divine role. On the other hand, Huvishka followed more innovative religious strategies and admitted a wide range of Greek, Brahmanical, Buddhist and Zoroastrian gods for his numismatic pantheon. The Alexandrian and Roman deities tell us about the part of Huvishka to appease the Roman traders involved with Indian trade network.

The sources also tell us about the cosmopolitan attitude of these Kushana rulers which facilitated the trade that passed through their territory. The four different Gods to Huvishka were: Skanda, Kumara, Vishakha and Mahasena which later on merged into one deity that became known under the name Kartikeya in Brahmanical religion.

Dynastic Sanctuaries of the Kushanas

The Kushana rulers also constructed dynastic sanctuaries *Bagolango* or *Bogopouro* (in Bactrian) or *Devakula* (in Sanskrit/Prakrit inscriptions) and they also became objects of divine worship. Vima Kadphises began the construction of two such centres of royal cult, one at Mat, near Mathura, the other in Surkh Kotal. At Surkh Kotal, Kanishka I finished building the dynastic sanctuary which bore the name 'Kanishka Oanindo-sanctuary'. Kushana dynastic sanctuaries have been discovered from Khalchayan and Airtam (Uzbekistan) which corresponds with their image of 'God like King'. The inscriptions suggest that Kanishka is called a *bago* i.e. God himself. The scholars also reveal about the deification of kings, the practice of installing and

worshipping their images in shrines and people's veneration for them led to the foundation and growth of the Cult of the emperor.

NEW ELEMENTS IN INDIAN SOCIETY

The post-Mauryan period witnessed the large scale movement of peoples across the northwest frontier. The distinction between foreign and Indian was not clear in this period and the Yavanas, Sakas, etc. in any case became part of the population of the Indian subcontinent. The Greeks, Sakas, Parthians, Kushanas were gradually Indianized. The law-maker Manu stated that the Sakas and the Parthians were *kshatriyas* who had deviated from their duties and therefore came to be regarded as second class *kshatriyas*.

The rulers became an integral part of Indian society to which they contributed considerably and introduced better cavalry and the use of the horse on a large scale. The equestrian figures of the Kushana have been discovered from Begram in Afghanistan. The Sakas and Kushanas introduced the turban, tunic, trousers and heavy long coats.

NON-MONARCHICAL POWERS

Some of the areas in the Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh were being ruled either by minor royal families or by members of dominant clans like the Audumbaras, Yaudheyas, Malavas, Sibi, Vrishni and Kunindas. The land between the upper courses of the Ravi and Beas was occupied by the Audumbaras and Kunindas ruled the territory between the upper courses of the Beas and the Yamuna along the foothills of the Siwalik ranges. The Trigartas ruled the plain country between the rivers Ravi and Sutlej and the Yaudheyas ruled the territory between the Sutlej and Yamuna and parts of eastern Rajasthan. The decline of the Mauryan empire led to the groups being asserting their autonomy and they began to control different pockets between the Indus, the Beas and the Sutlej. This was soon disturbed with the inroads made by the Indo-Greeks and the Kushanas. Menander I conquered both east and west Punjab in and around the middle or the third quarter of the 2nd century BCE and the Malavas were forced to move towards the Haryana region and then further to eastern Rajasthan. Also the Sibis were contemporary of the Malavas and were neighbours. They also migrated to eastern Rajasthan following the occupation of their territory by Menander. The Yaudheyas migrated in phases being pushed first by the Indo-Greeks to the region around Rohtak in Haryana, then by the Saka-Pahlavas to Rajasthan and later on they moved back to their original habitat after perhaps dislodging the Later Kushanas. The Kunindas had to succumb to the Kushanas. The Vrishnis offered a different scenario and bore the brunt of the Kushana rule, they recovered in the post-Kushana phase but were subsequently overthrown by the fellow Yaudheyas.