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Cultural Contributions of Kushanas-Religion (ಕುಶಾನರ ಧಾರ್ಮಿಕ ಕೊಡುಗೆಗಳು)



Recap of the Previous Class

ಹಿಂದಿನ ತರಗತಿಯ ಪುನರ್ಮನನ

- In the last session we discussed about the arrival of Kushanas to India and how they settled and established their Empire in India.
- And also studied their contributions to the Indian Culture.



Learning Objectives & Outcomes

ಕಲಿಕೆಯ ಉದ್ದೇಶಗಳು & ಫಲಗಳು

- To Enable the students to understand the religious contributions of Kushanas.
- And to identify their efforts in spreading the Mahayana cult of Buddhism.
- **Learning outcomes:**
- Students will be able to know, how the Kushanas patronized Buddhism and how did they propagate it outside India.



Introduction(ಪೀಠಿಕೆ)

- The Kushana's religious belief was extremely varied, as revealed by their gold, silver and copper coins.
- These coins contained more than 30 different Gods, belonging to Iranian, Greek (with Greek names) and Indian as well.
- Their coins had the images of Kushana Kings, Buddha, and figures from the Indo-Aryan and Iranian pantheons.



Kushanas and Buddhism

(ಕುಶಾನರು & ಬೌದ್ಧಧರ್ಮ)

- “Raja Tharangini” of Kalhana mentioned about Kushanas benevolence towards Buddhism. The Kushanas inherited the Greco-Buddhist traditions of the Indo-Greek kingdom they replaced.
- And their patronage of Buddhist institutions allowed them to grow as a commercial power.
- Buddhism was patronized by the Kushanas, extended to China and other Asian countries through the Silk road.



Kanishka and Buddhism

(ಕಾನಿಷ್ಕ & ಬೌದ್ಧಧರ್ಮ)

- Kanishka was the greatest(ಶ್ರೇಷ್ಠ) Emperor of (78-120 AD) Kushanas.
- The fame of Kanishka rests not on the military conquests but on the fact that he was a liberal (ಉದಾರ) patron of Buddhism.
- He adopted the following measures to spread Buddhism.....



- 1) He repaired old monasteries such as Stupas, Pillars, he built a huge tower of 400 ft. height and a Vihara at his capital Purushpura, and built a new city Kanishkapura and the statues of Lord Buddha in Gandhara Art.
- 2) He gave liberal grants and endowments to Buddhist monks and helped them in such a way as to encourage them to preach Buddhism with great zeal and devotion (ಭಕ್ತಿ).



- 3) He sent missionaries to different parts of India, Central Asia, China, Japan and Tibet to spread of Buddhism. The famous Buddhist monk Kashyap Matanga was sent to China.
- 4) He made use of art and painting and the statues of Buddha in various stages(ಘಟ್ಟ) of his life, to attract people towards Buddhism. This task was accomplished largely through the Gandhara Art.



- 5) Like Ashoka, Kanishka organized a great Buddhist council in Kashmir. This was the 4th Buddhist Council held in 102 AD at Kundalivana near Srinagar of Kashmir. Vasumitra was presided the council and Ashwaghosha was as Vice-President.
- In this council the disputed (ವಿವಾದಿತ) questions of Buddhist faith and practices were discussed, the council settled the dispute between 18 schools of Buddhism in which the 500 monks attended.



- In this council, the whole Buddhist literature was thoroughly examined. The commentaries on “Tripitakas” were collected in a book called “Maha Vibhasha” written by Vasumitra.
- This book was regarded as an Encyclopedia (ವಿಶ್ವಕೋಶ) of Buddhism.
- The important discussions were engraved on a copper plate and placed it in Stupa built near Srinagar.



Mahayana Sect (ಮಹಾಯಾನ ಪಂಥ)

- There was a transformation(ಬದಲಾವಣೆ) of Buddhism during the reign of Kanishka.
- There had been many difficulties among followers of Buddhism which ultimately divided into two sects known as Hinayana and Mahayana.
- The original form of Buddhism was called as Hinayana.
- Where as in Mahayana form of Buddhism, Buddha was regarded as 'Devine being' (ದೈವಿಕ) and all tantric practices of Hinduism were adopted to worship Buddha.



- Kanishka patronized 'Mahayana Buddhism, because of his efforts, Mahayana Buddhism again spread outside India after Ashoka.
- Thus Kanishka was highly venerated by the Buddhists to whom he became a 'Second Asoka'. But some scholars did not accepted it.
- Mahayana Buddhists believed in a multitude of Heaven, Hell and descriptions of Nirvana.
- And have great reverence for "**Bodhisattvas**", the Buddhist saints on the verge of nirvana who stopped short of attaining it.



- Kanishka encouraged both Gandhara school of Art and the Mathura school of Hindu art.
- His greatest contribution to Buddhist architecture was the Kanishka stupa at Peshawar, Pakistan.
- This stupa had a diameter of 286 feet (87 mts)
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- Kanishka is said to have been particularly close to the Buddhist scholar Ashwagosha who became his religious advisor in his later years.



- Monasteries (ವಿಹಾರಗಳು) were being established along the land routes that went from China and other parts of Asia.
- With the development of Buddhist books, it caused a new written language called Gandhara.
- Gandhara consists of eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan.
- Scholars are said to have found many Buddhist scrolls that contained the Gandhari language.



- Huska, Juska, Kanishka and Hivishka --
These kings albeit belonging to the Turkish race found refuge in acts of piety.
- They constructed monasteries in Suskaletra and other places.
- The kingdom of Kashmir was a important place of Buddhism.
- And a Bodhisattva was in this country the sole supreme ruler of the land.



Multiple choice questions (ಬಹು ಆಯ್ಕೆಯ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳು)

1. Buddhism was patronized by the _____.
- a) Guptas
 - b) Kushanas
 - c) Shungas
 - d) Shatavahanas

Answer: b) Kushanas



2. Kanishka was a follower of---

- a) Mahayana Sect
- b) Hinayana Sect
- c) Digambara
- d) Shwetambara

Sect

Answer: a) Mahayana



3. The 4th Buddhist Council in Kashmir was organized by_____.

- a) Harshavardhana
- b) Kanishka
- c) Ashoka
- d) Chandragupta Mourya

Answer: b) Kanishka



4 . The 4th Buddhist council in Kashmir was presided by---

- a) Vasumitra
- b) Ashwaghosha
- c) Ashoka
- d) Kaniska

Answer: a) Vasumitra



5. The Mathura school of art was patronized by--

- a) Mouryas
- b) Kushanas
- c) Guptas
- d) Shungas

Answer: b) Kushanas



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