

MANIPUR HISTORY

CHAPTER – II

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Q1. What does Historical Archaeology deal with? (1/2018)

Ans: Historical Archaeology deals with the historical remains of human artefacts since man know how to write and record their history. It deals with the study of paleographical and epigraphical records, temple arts and architecture, sculptural remains and numismatics.

Q2. Mention the main sources of the art and architecture in Manipur.

Ans: The main sources of Art and Architecture of Manipur were the old Laiphams of Umanglais, old standing monuments and temples.

Q3. Explain the role of temples in the reconstruction of Manipur history.

Ans: In Manipur, temples played an important role as the keeper of historical records and the religious culture and beliefs of the people. While it reflected the religious aspirations of the people, temples had sculptures, images, designs and structures that portrayed the then prevailing architecture.

Some of the more important temples of Manipur are:

- 1) Vishnu temple at Bishnupur, constructed during King Kyamba;
- 2) Krishna temple at Brahmapur (Imphal), constructed during King Charairongba;
- 3) Govindaji temple at Kangla (Imphal), constructed during King Nara Singh.

These temples contained various architectural designs and structures specific to their own periods. They also highlighted the Meitei people's beliefs in Lais. These temples have a Hindu temple structures like figures, deities highlighting the Meitei belief in Hindu gods and goddesses. It also reflected the Meitei people conversion from Sanamahi religion to Vaishnavite Hinduism.

Q4. Under which Manipur King, the Meitei script was first introduced?

Ans: Under King Kyamba, the Meitei script was introduced.

Q5. Name two important stone inscriptions of Proto – Historical Manipur.

Ans: 1) Konthoujam Lairembi Stone Inscription;
2) Khoibu maring Stone Inscription.

Q6. Mention the role of Numismatics in the reconstruction of Manipur History.

Ans: Numismatics (the study of coins) is an essential component in the reconstruction of Manipur history. This is so because the study of coins reveals the then prevailing economic, political, social and cultural history of Manipur. For instance, the 'Sel' which is a small bell metal coin is said to have been minted in the 16th – 17th century A.D. during the reign of King Khagemba.

The coins of Manipur can be divided into three groups or categories according to the scripts embedded in the coins. They are:

- 1) Coins with archaic scripts of Manipur;
- 2) Coins with Devanagiri script;
- 3) Coins with Bengali script.

These coins were minted in gold, silver and bell metal respectively. These coins highlighted the level of literary activities, the people's taste in literature and the intellectual advancement of the people of the state. They also implied the existence of the old language of the Meiteis, the Meiteis' conversion to Vaishnava Hinduism from their ancestral religion (Sanamahi).

Q7. How did the Mesolithic culture provide new resources to humans? - (2/2020)

Ans: The Mesolithic culture belongs to the Holocene era. The climate became warmer and humid. Due to increased rainfall, there were expansions in the flora and fauna of the region. This led to the availability of new resources to humans during the Mesolithic period.

Q8. Show the division of the Palaeolithic age Or Show the transition of the various phases of the Palaeolithic age with the increased differences in the refineness of the stone tools.

Ans: The Palaeolithic age is the age in which men used coarsed (rough) stone tools. It can be subdivided into three phases with substantial subsequent refineness in the tools used:

1) Lower Palaeolithic: During this period, the popular tools used were mainly hand axes and cleavers. These tools were generally coarse and massive in size.

2) Middle Palaeolithic: During this period, the tools used were generally more refined and were made of flakes. For this reason, this period is at times known as Flake tool industry.

3) Upper Palaeolithic: During this period, the tools used were more refined, sharper on the edges, more pointed, smaller in size and lighter in weight. For instance, blades, bore tools, grinding stones and bone tools.