

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q2

Pala period is the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India. Enumerate.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · GS I · 10 marks · Indian Heritage and Culture

Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Core demand of the question

- Pala period is the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India. Enumerate
- Keep the enumeration within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Pala kings endowed **Nalanda** and raised **Vikramshila** and related mahaviharas.

The phase matured Mahayana and Vajrayana when much of India had other royal cults.

Pala bronze and manuscript painting set an eastern Buddhist style.

Atisha carried this learning into Tibet.

It is the last organised Indian Buddhist university age.

Introduction

Under the Palas of Bengal and Bihar, Buddhism received a last great Indian state. Monasteries, tantric learning, and a Tibetan connection made the phase more than a local revival. Enumeration must name institutions, doctrine, and the later export of the faith.

Body

Royal and monastic institutions

- Pala kings from **Gopala** and **Dharmapala** onward endowed **Nalanda** and founded or raised **Vikramshila**, **Odantapuri**, and **Somapura** (Paharpur).
- These were universities of vinaya, logic, and Vajrayana, not only shrines. Tibetan pilgrims treated them as the Indian curriculum.
- Bronze and stone Pala sculpture of the **Buddha** and Tara became the eastern Indian Buddhist look that Nepal and Tibet copied.

Doctrine and the last Indian flourishing

- Mahayana and Vajrayana matured in Pala Bihar-Bengal while much of the rest of India had already turned more Hindu in royal cult.
- **Atisha Dipankara** trained in this world and later reformed Tibetan Buddhism. The Pala phase is therefore also a Himalayan chapter.
- Manuscript painting and the cult of the goddess in Buddhist form show a living, not a fossil, religion.

Why 'most significant' as a late phase

- After the Palas, the great viharas declined under political shock and loss of patronage. Indian Buddhism's organised university phase effectively ends here.
- Significance is of a last high watermark and of transmission abroad, not of numerical majority in the subcontinent.
- Enumeration should not deny earlier Mauryan and Kushan peaks; it should say the Pala age is the most significant late Indian Buddhist state.

Flow diagram

Pala state -> Nalanda Vikramshila
Pala state -> Vajrayana art
Nalanda Vikramshila -> Atisha Tibet
Vajrayana art -> Last Indian Buddhist high point

Conclusion

Enumerate the Pala phase as **Nalanda**, **Vikramshila**, Vajrayana learning, **Pala bronze**, and **Atisha's** Tibet mission. It is the last great Indian Buddhist university age, and the bridge that carried that learning north.

Facts & figures

Nalanda

Older mahavihara that Pala patronage kept as a pan-Asian Buddhist school.

Vikramshila

Pala foundation associated with tantric scholarship and later Tibetan memory.

Atisha

Bengal-trained master who went to Tibet and shaped later Tibetan Buddhism.

Somapura

Paharpur monastic city, a UNESCO-scale Pala Buddhist plan in Bengal.

Pala bronze

Portable **Buddha** and Tara images that spread the eastern Indian icon across the Himalaya.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2020/pala-period-is-the-most-significant-phase-in-the-history-of-buddhism-in-india-enumerate/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com