

# **BANABHATTA: A HISTORIAN OF ANCIENT INDIA(PART-1)**

**M.A HISTORY , SEM-3, PAPER CC:10**

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# INTRODUCTION

**Baṇabhaṭṭa** was a 7th-century Sanskrit prose writer and poet of India. He was the *Asthana Kavi* in the court of King *Harshavardhana*, who reigned from 606 to 647 A.D in north India first from *Thaneswar*, and later from *Kannauj*. Bana's principal works include a biography of Harsha, the *Harshacharita* (Deeds of Harsha),<sup>[1]</sup> and one of the world's earliest novels, *Kadambari*. Bana died before finishing the novel and it was completed by his son Bhuṣaṇabhaṭṭa. Both these works are noted texts of Sanskrit literature. The other works attributed to him are the *Caṇḍikāśataka* and a drama, the *Pārvatīpariṇaya*.

# INTRODUCTION

*Harshacharita* provides valuable information about the period, though with some obvious exaggeration in the emperor's favour. Written in the ornate *kavya style*, involving extremely lengthy constructions, elaborate descriptions, and poetic devices, the work has great vitality and a wealth of keenly observed detail. His second great work, the prose romance *Kadambari*, is named for the heroine of the novel. The book describes the affairs of two sets of lovers through a series of incarnations.

# LIFE OF BANABHATTA

The personal history of Banabhatta is not very much known. Unlike the majority of Sanskrit poets, he has revealed a part of his life in his work. In the introductory verses to the *Kadambari*, he has given a short account of his family; but in the first three ucchvasas of the *Harshacharita* he has given an autobiographic account of his life.

He was a native of village *Pritikuta*, situated on the western bank of river sona in the Kanyakubja region. This village was a resort of learned Brahmanas, as if it is called *brahmanadhivasa* by the poet. He was born in an illustrious family of Brahmanas, highly esteemed for their learning.

# LIFE OF BANABHATTA

His father was Chitrabhanu and mother was Rajadevi. As his mother died in his tender age, he was brought up by his father. But his father also died when he was only fourteen years old.

He was *taught by Bharvu* whom he has saluted in an introductory verse of *Kadambari* where it is stated that his teacher was also adored by the king of Maukharin family.

Though he owned sufficient ancestral wealth and was in constant attachment to learning, yet he set out from home to see the lands with his friends (retinue of 44 members each one with a special attainment in the arts and crafts of his time).

# LIFE OF BANABHATTA

With them he visited many royal courts , attended several educational institutions and the meeting of the meritorious that was full of valuable discussion. He gained much experience and acquired a rich fund of knowledge during his tour and he has displayed first hand knowledge in his works, later on. At long last, he returned to his native village, Pritikuta.

(To be continued)

