

The Golden Age: Gupta Empire

Exercise

I. Fill in the blanks:

1. The Gupta Age is known as the **Golden Age** of Indian **History**.
2. Chandragupta II assumed the title of **Shakari**.
3. Samudragupta did not **conquer** the southern kingdoms; he took only **tribute** from them.
4. The two great **grammarians** of this period were Panini and **Patanjali**.
5. The greatest **poet** of Vikramaditya's court was Kalidasa.
6. The masterpiece of art during the Gupta period is the image of **seated Buddha** in a yogic pose.
7. The centres of high learning during the Gupta age were **Nalanda, Takshshila** and **Ujjain**.
8. Varahamihira wrote **Brihat Samhita**, an encyclopaedia on astronomy.
9. The finest example of metallurgy of this period is **Iron Pillar** at **Mehrauli** in Delhi.
10. **Samudragupta** was called the Indian Napoleon.

II. Match Column A with Column B:

Column A	Column B
1. Sakari	(a) Great astronomers
2. Tamralipti	(b) Wrote Panchtantra
3. <i>Abhijnana Shakuntalam</i>	(c) Were worshippers of Vishnu
4. Allahabad pillar inscription	(d) Harisena
5. Frescoes	(e) Written by Kalidasa
6. Vishnu Sharma	(f) Title given to Chandragupta II
7. Java, Sumatra, Cambodia	(g) Famous port during the Gupta period
8. Gupta rulers	(h) Ajanta Caves
9. Aryabhatta and Varahmihira	(i) Guptas had trade relations with these countries

Answer:

Column A	Column B
1. Sakari	(f) Title given to Chandragupta II
2. Tamralipti	(g) Famous port during the Gupta period
3. <i>Abhijnana Shakuntalam</i>	(c) Written by Kalidasa
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6. Vishnu Sharma	(b) Wrote Panchtantra
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8. Gupta rulers	(c) Were worshippers of Vishnu
9. Aryabhatta and Varahmihira	(a) Great astronomers

III. State whether the following statements are True or False:

1. Chandragupta Vikramaditya was the founder of the Gupta dynasty.
False
2. Chandragupta I ruled from AD 375 to AD 415.
False
3. Samudragupta is called the Indian Napoleon.
True
4. Fa-Hien, a Chinese traveller, visited India during Samudragupta's reign
False
5. Skandagupta was the last great Gupta ruler.
True

IV. Answer the following questions:

Question 1.

Why is Chandragupta I called the real founder of the Gupta Empire?

Answer:

Chandragupta I is called the real founder of the Gupta Empire because he was first independent and important ruler of this dynasty. He raised the power and prestige of his empire through conquests and marriages. He assumed the title Maharajadhiraja, ie, the king of kings'. He started the Gupta Era in 320 AD which marked the date of his accession.

Question 2.

Describe the military achievements of Samudra gupta. Which source tells us about him?

Answer:

The most important historical source of information about Samudra gupta is the Allahabad Pillar Inscription which was composed by Harisena. According to the inscription Samudra gupta was a great conqueror and he won a series of wars in north and south India. He defeated as many as 9 rulers in northern India and 12 rulers in eastern Deccan and southern India. But Samudra gupta did not want to gain permanent possession of his conquests in the south because he knew he could not control south India from his capital. He was happy with the tributes collected from the defeated princes of the south, bringing home large stores of treasure.

Question 3.

Why is Chandragupta II considered the greatest ruler of the Gupta dynasty?

Answer:

Fa-Hien's account forms the historical source of information about Chandragupta II. Chandragupta II was a great conqueror. His greatest achievement was to destroy the power of the Shaka from Malwa, Gujarat and Saurashtra permanently. He gained control over three important parts of Bharuch, Cambay and Sopara. He also assumed the title Shakari or the conqueror of the Shakas. He was a great patron of art and literature. He had at his court, the famous Navaratnas, the most learned men of his time. Poet Kalidasa was one of them.

Question 4.

What were the religious beliefs of the people during the Gupta period?

Answer:

The Gupta kings were Vaishnavas, but they were tolerant towards all religions. Brahmanism had come to the forefront. The two gods who commanded the worship of the majority were Vishnu and Shiva. Religious sacrifices were performed. Hinduism became the most powerful religion and the Gupta kings gave donations for building of temples. Buddhism no longer received the royal patronage, though it continued to be the second most important religion.

Question 5.

Describe the great progress made in art and architecture during the Gupta period.

Answer:

Art and architecture gained great heights during the Gupta Period. Many temples were built. The temples at Deogarh, Sanchi and Bhattargao are very famous. The 29 cave temples at Ajanta near Aurangabad in Maharashtra and Bagh in Madhya Pradesh were also built during this period. The walls of these caves were covered with paintings (called murals or frescoes). Two main centers of art were Mathura and Samath. The image of the seated Buddha in a yogic pose is one of the masterpieces of art of this period.

Question 6.

With examples prove that Sanskrit literature reached its peak during this period.

Answer:

The Gupta period is called the Golden Age of Sanskrit literature. Chandragupta II is credited with

maintaining Nav-Ratna (Nine luminaries) at his court. Kalidasa and Amarasimha adorned his court. Kalidasa was the greatest and most famous poet of this period. He wrote Abhijnana Shakuntalam, Raghuvansham, Meghaduta and Kumar Sambhava. Amarsimha wrote Amarakosa, a Sanskrit dictionary. Panini was a great grammarian. Ashtadhyayi, the greatest work on Sanskrit grammar was written by Panini during this period.

Question 7.

Describe the progress made in the field of science during the Gupta period.

Answer:

Scientists, mathematicians, astronomers and physicians flourished in the court of the Gupta rulers. Two well-known mathematicians and astronomers of this period were Aryabhatta and Varahmihira. Aryabhatta said that the earth moves round the sun and at the same time it moves on its axis. The books authored by Aryabhatta are Aryabhatiya and Suryasidhanta. Varahmihira wrote Brihat Samhita, an Encyclopedia on Astronomy. Indian mathematicians knew the use of zero. The Indians also used the decimal system.

Question 8.

Write a short note on Gupta administration.

Answer:

The Gupta empire was divided into provinces. These provinces were further divided into various districts. There were district councils which helped the provincial governors. The provinces were known as Bhuktis and the districts were known as Vishayas. Each district was divided into villages called gramas. Each Bhukti was placed under the charge of an Uparika and each Vishaya under a Vishayapati. There were many officers who assisted the king in his work. The provinces were under the charge of princes. They were assisted by officials called Kumarmatyas. The villages were looked after by Gramapati.

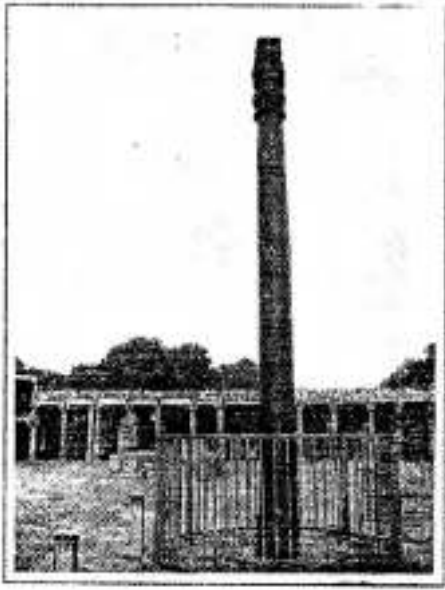
Question 9.

With appropriate examples prove that the Gupta period has been rightly called a 'Golden Age'.

Answer:

The Gupta period is known as "Golden Age of Indian History". The rule of the Gupta kings lasted for more than two hundred years. India made progress in almost every field under the Gupta kings. This period saw considerable achievements in the field of Indian culture especially in the areas of art, architecture and literature. Remarkable advancement also took place in the field of science, medicine and metallurgy. Peace and prosperity prevailed in the empire.

V. Picture study: This is a picture of Iron Pillar.



1. Who built it?

Ans. Chandragupta II

2. Where is it situated ?

Ans. Mehrauli, Delhi

3. Why is it called 'rustless wonder' ?

Ans. It is called rustless wonder because it has not rusted yet. rather still shines.

4. Its specially

Ans. It shows the progress of the Gupta ruler in the field of metallurgy.

5. Name of which ruler is inscribed on it ?

Ans. Chandra.

Textbook Keywords

1. **Navaratnas:** It means nine gems. This term was used to refer to talented writers, musicians, dramatist, etc. who were present in the king's court.
2. **Huns:** They were barbarians who invaded India. Kumar amatyas They were officials who assisted the princes in governing the provinces.
3. **Vishyapatis:** They were the officers who looked after the administration of the districts or vishyas.
4. **Vaishnavas:** They are the worshipers of Lord Vishnu. Bhakti cult It was a religious cult that believed that God could be reached through intense and true devotion and not through rituals.
5. **Aryabhatta:** He was a famous mathematician and astronomer who discovered that the earth moves around the sun, and the reasons for lunar and solar eclipses.
6. **Vagabhatta:** He wrote a book on ayurvedic medicine. Kalidas He was the most famous Sanskrit poet and dramatist of this period.

Additional Questions

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The foundation of the Gupta empire was laid by **Chandragupta I**.
2. The **Allahabad Pillar inscription** by the court poet Harisena is a valuable source of information for the Gupta period.
3. Samudragupta defeated **nine** king in northern India and **twelve** kings in southern India.
4. The Pallava ruler of Kanchi formed a **confederacy** of the rulers of southern India.
5. The rulers of southern India accepted Samudragupta as their **overlord** and paid **tribute** to him.
6. Samudragupta celebrated his conquests by performing the **Ashvamedha Yagna**.
7. Samudragupta was not only a military genius but a **talented musician** and **poet** as well.
8. Chandragupta Vikramaditya strengthened his position by **matrimonial** alliance
9. The great Sanskrit writer **Kalidas** was one of Vikramaditya's nine gems.
10. The account of the Chinese traveller **Fa Hien** is a valuable source of information for the Gupta period.
11. The last important ruler of the Gupta dynasty was **Skanda-gupta**.
12. The Gupta period is known as the **Golden Age** of ancient India history.

B. Match the following

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Kalidasa | physician |
| 2. Nalanda | Mehrauli |
| 3. Aryabhatta | Buddhist learning |
| 4. Vagabhatta | Sanskrit literature |
| 5. Iron Pillar | Ajanta caves |
| 6. Fresco Paintings | mathematician and astronomer |

Answer:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Kalidasa | Sanskrit literature |
| 2. Nalanda | Buddhist learning |
| 3. Aryabhatta | mathematician and astronomer |
| 4. Vagabhatta | physician |
| 5. Iron Pillar | Mehrauli |
| 6. Fresco Paintings | Ajanta caves |

C. Answer the following questions.

Question 1.

What was the political condition of India after the decline of the Kushanas and the Satavahans?

Answer:

After the decline of the Kushanas and Satvahanas. India was divided into a number of small

kingdoms and republics. The political condition was instable.

Question 2.

Why did the Pallava ruler of Kanchi form a confederacy against Samudragupta?

Answer:

The Pallava ruler of Kanchi form a confederacy because he realized that he could not face Samudragupta alone. So he formed a confederacy of the kings of South India under his leadership.

Question 3.

Why did Samudragupta not annex the South Indian kingdoms after defeating them?

Answer:

Samudragupta. did not annex the south Indian kingdoms because he realized it would not be easy to control such a vast empire without proper transport and communication facilities.

Question 4.

Why did the frontier states of the east and the west surrender to Samudragupta?

Answer:

The frontier states of east and the west surrender to Samundragupta because the ruler of these states accepted him as their overlord and paid large sum of money as a tribute.

Question 5.

What was the extent of Samudragupta's empire?

Answer:

Samudragupta's empire extended from Bengal in the east to Delhi in the west from the Himalayas in the north to Narmda in the south. His indirect control over the vassal states also.

Question 6.

How did Chandragupta Vikramaditya strengthen his position through matrimonial alliances?

Answer:

Chandragupta Vikramaditya strengthen his position by matrimonial alliance. He married the daughter of a powerful Naga ruler. He gave his daughter in marriage to the Vakataka ruler in the Deccan from whom he got valuable help during his campaigns against the Sakas.

Question 7.

Mention two important reasons for the downfall of the Gupta empire.

Answer:

The important reasons for the downfall of the Gupta empire are following.

1. Skandagupta successors were week.
2. They could not protect the empire from the repeated onslaughts of the Huns.

Question 8.

What according to Fa Hien, was the condition of the people during the Gupta period?

Answer.

According to Fa Hien's account the people were honest, secure, prosperous and happy during Gupta Period. There was no capital punishment, for very serious crimes like treason and rebellion the right hand was cut off. Criminals were usually fined. Taxes were light.

Question 9.

What did the Gupta rulers do to encourage education?

Answer:

Liberal grants were given to encourage education and Gupta established Nalanda University.

Question 10.

What progress did the Guptas make in the following fields:

1. Astronomy
2. Medicine
3. Mathematics
4. Metallurgy

Answer:

1. **Astronomy**— A tremendous progress was made in the field of astronomy. Aryabhatta who was a known astronomer discovered the movements of earth i.e. it moves around the sun on its axis. He also found out the causes of lunar and solar eclipses.
2. **Mathematics**— The discovery of the zero and decimal system was made in use during Gupta period.
3. **Medicine**— Vagabhatta and Dhanvantri were famous physicians and surgeons who served the people during this period.
4. **Metallurgy**— Mehrauli pillars throw light on the iron metallurgy of this period. The pillar was built in the 4th century CE has not rusted in the last few centuries. The 25 meter high copper statue of Buddha and the numerous gold coins testify the skill in metal casting.

D. State whether the following are true or false.

1. Criminals were punished severely during the reign of the Guptas.
False.
2. There was an elaborate spy system under the Guptas.
False.
3. Taxes were light during the Gupta period.
True.
4. The Gupta encouraged the revival of Hinduism.
True.
5. The Guptas followed a policy of religious tolerance
True.

E. Picture study.

This is a picture of the ruins of an ancient university.



1. Identify the name of the university.

Ans. This is a picture of Nalanda University.

2. Mention the subjects taught in this university.

Ans. Medicine, astronomy grammar philosophy, and vedic literature were taught in Nalanda University, Subjects.

3. Which dynasty established this university?

Ans. Gupta dynasty established this University.