

South India and the Cholas

EXERCISES

Question 1.

Mention two ways in which Inscriptions may be used for reconstructing the history of the Imperial Cholas.

Answer:

The inscriptions provide the following information about the Cholas.

1. They tell us about the Chola administration.
2. They record gifts and endowments to temples and brahmanas.
3. They inform us about the construction of a temple or the setting up of a new image of the deity.
4. Inscriptions on temple walls served the purpose of a public registrations by conserving a record of sales, mortgagees and other forms of transfers of property rights in village lands.
5. Inscriptions have preserved the decisions and agreements on meters of public importance.

Question 2.

Name one of the masterpieces of the temples built, by the Chola king Rajaraja I.

Mention one architectural feature of the temple.

Answer:

He constructed the famous Brihadeswara Temple also known as Rajarajeshwar Temple at Thanjavur. The temple consists of the Nandi mandapa, a pillared portico and an assembly hall, all interconnected.

Question 3.

Under whose rule, the Cholas rose to imperial greatness towards the end of the 10th century AD?

Answer:

Under the ruler ship of Sundara Chola's son, Rajaraja I, the Cholas rose to Imperial greatness towards the end of the 10th century AD.

Question 4.

Mention any two victories won by Cholas under Rajaraja I.

Answer:

Annexation of Kalinga and Maldives.

Question 5.

Who among the Chola kings adopted the title of 'Gangaikonda'? Name the city commemorating the event.

Answer:

Rajendra I, adopted the title of 'Gangaikonda'. Gangakundrapuram or Gangaikonda-Cholapuram.

Question 6.

What names were given to the following territorial divisions of the Chola kingdom:

(a) Province, and (b) the District?

Answer:

Following names were given to the following territorial divisions of the Chola kingdom:

1. The Province was named as
2. The District was named as

Question 7.

What was the method of electing members of the village assembly under the Cholas?

Answer:

The method of electing members of the village assembly was as such-name-slips of the candidates were thrown and mixed up in a pot, from which they were drawn one by one a small boy. The results were announced by the village-priest.

Question 8.

Mention any two duties assigned to a village assembly under the Cholas.

Answer:

Following are the two duties assigned to a village assembly under the Cholas:

1. To regulate water supply,
2. To provide education to children.

Question 9.

Give one evidence to suggest that the Brihadeswara Temple is a repository of every branch of art.

Answer:

1. The temple consists of the Nandi mandapa, a pillared portico and an assembly hall, all interconnected.
2. The Maha-mandapa was originally three-storeyed. The top storey was an open terrace, with a row of Nandis placed on the top of its walls.
3. Like the outer doorway, other outer entrances are also flanked by dwarapalas.
4. The numerous Sanskrit and Tamil inscriptions on it are in fine calligraphy.

5. Another imposing structure in the Temple is the Amman Temple housing Brihannayaki, the consort of Brihadeshwara. In brief, the Brihadeswara Temple is a repository of every branch of art-architecture, sculpture, painting, jewelry, dance and music etc.

STRUCTURED QUESTIONS

Question 1.

With the accession of Rajaraja I (985-1014 AD) began the most glorious epoch of the Cholas. In this context, explain briefly:

- (a) His Conquests.
- (b) His activities as a Great Builder and a Ruler.

Answer:

With the accession of Rajaraja I (985-1014 AD) began the most glorious epoch of the Cholas. In this context, the given headlines are described as below:

(a)

Rajaraja defeated the Cheras and then he seized Madurai and captured the Pandya king Amarbhujanga. He also annexed Kalinga. He carried out powerful raids into the territory of Western Chalukyas also. He invaded the Island of Sri Lanka and annexed its northern parts. Towards the end of his reign he conquered Maldives. Thus, Rajaraja made himself the overlord of almost the whole of the present state of Tamil Nadu, parts of the State of Karnataka, its adjoining regions, Sri Lanka and other islands.

(b)

Rajaraja I was also a capable administrator, a great builder and a patron of arts and literature. A chief mark of his administrative system was an expansion of rural self-governing institutions. He constructed the famous Brihadeswara Temple (also known as "Rajarajeshwara Temple) at Thanjavur. He endowed and built some Vishnu temples also. He worshiped Shiva, but was tolerant of other sects and religions, as is evident from the fact that he granted to a village to the Buddhist Vihara at Nagapattam in the Malay peninsula.

Question 2.

King Rajendra I (1014-1044 AD) raised the Chola empire to the pinnacle of glory. In this context explain:

- (a) His main Conquests.
- (b) His attainments as a Great Builder.

Answer:

King Rajendra I (1014-1044 AD) raised the Chola empire to the pinnacle of glory'. In this context the given headlines are explained as under:

(a)

His main Conquests: About 1017 AD, he annexed the whole of Sri Lanka. He organised the Pandya and Kerala territories and the Island of Sri Lanka into regular provinces of his empire. His armies marched through the northern region as far as the Ganga Valley. He overpowered Orissa and a portion of Eastern Bengal. To commemorate this event, he adopted the title of Gangaikonda and built a new Capital called Gangaikonda-Cholapuram, identified with Gangakundapuram. In 1025 AD, he despatched a naval

expedition for the conquest of king Shailendra's territories of Java and Sumatra.

(b)

His attainments as a Great Builder: Rajendra I got constructed an artificial lake, near his new Capital. Its embankments were more than 25 kms. in length. It was filled with water from the Kolerun and Vellar rivers. He also constructed a splendid temple at Gangaikonda-Cholapuram. Its huge lingam (a symbol of generative power) of solid granite is very impressive.

Question 3.

Under Cholas, the ruler was the pivot on which turned the whole machinery of the state, but actual administration was not highly centralised. In this context, explain briefly.

(a) The position of the Chola Monarch.

(b) Functioning of the autonomous rural institutions (Gram Sabhas).

Answer:

Under Cholas the ruler was the pivot on which turned the whole machinery of the state, but actual administration was not highly centralised. In this context given headlines are explained as under:

(a)

The position of the Chola Monarch: The king was the pivot, around, which the whole system was based. The coronation Ceremony was marked by many festivities. The power and glory of the monarch was enhanced with the huge resources of the kingdom, vast palace establishment and splendour of the Court. The verbal orders of the King were reduced to writing, before they were communicated to the officials concerned.

(b)

The functioning of the autonomous rural institutions (Gram Sabha): Gram Sabha enjoyed full powers in the management of local affairs. The village assemblies administered justice within the village except the cases involving serious crimes. They regulated water supply, gathered such as temples, schools etc. They could sell or donate land for religious purposes. Accounts were maintained with meticulous care. In case a defaulter embezzled money, he was severely dealt with. The village assembly on its affairs with the help of smaller committees, each looking after specific matters such as the tanks, gardens, temples, justice and general management.

Question 4.

Study the picture of the Brihadeswara Temple and answer the following questions:

- (a) Name the place where the Temple is located.
- (b) When and by whom was the Temple built?
- (c) To which Deity was the temple dedicated?
- (d) Mention outstanding features of the Temple



Brihadeeswara Temple

Answer:

On the basis of the study of the picture of Brihadeeswara Temples, the given headlines are answered as follows:

- (a) The Brihadeeswara Temple is located at Thanjavur.
- (b) In 1000 AD, Rajaraja the Great, of the Chola dynasty built the Temple.
- (c) The Temple was dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- (d) The Temple consists of the Nandi mandapa, a pillared portico and an assembly hall, all interconnected and in the center of a spacious walled enclosure; Its massive tower rises to a height of 57 meters and is shaped like pyramid. It has thirteen successive story and its top is crowned by a single block stone, 8.6 meters high and it weighs about 80 tonnes. The interior walls of the temple are decorated with elaborate painting and magnificent sculptures.

Question 5.

Discuss people's social life under Imperial Cholas with reference to:

- (a) Caste System (b) Religion (c) Literature and Cultural Activities

Answer:

(a)

The caste system very much prevailed in Southern India. Besides the prosperous Brahmins, merchants had emerged as a powerful class by virtue of their wealth. The social status of the lower castes was pitiable. They could not draw water from the common wells, nor were they allowed to enter temples.

(b)

The Chola emperors were worshipers of Lord Shiva, but they were by no means intolerant of other sects and religions.

(c)

The Chola era, was the 'Golden Age' of Tamil literature. Kamban translated the Sanskrit

epic 'Ramayana' into Tamil in the ninth century AD, it came to be known as Kamban Ramayana. Kamban had translated its earliest Kandas (parts). The later parts (Uttarakhanda) were translated by Qttakuttan. Another renowned poet Pugalendi flourished in the 12th century. He wrote Nalavenda, which is based on the love story of Nala and Damayanti. The Buddhist and the Jain scholars also made a rich contribution to Tamil literature. The Jain Scholar Amrit Sagar wrote a book on poetics, the art of writing poetry. The Buddhist Scholar Buddhmitra wrote 'Rasolium', a grammar book.

Question 6.

Write a brief note on the development of Tamil Literature under the Cholas.

Answer:

The development of literature, art and architecture of the Chola period promoted the cultural value of the Chola rule. The Cholas made lot of improvements in these fields. The Chola rule marked a milestone in the history of Tamil literatures. The Chola kings gave many concessions and patronage to Tamil scholars and writers. Sangam literature deals with emotional and material topics such as love, war, governance and trade with the revival of Cholas power in the middle of the ninth century, the awareness for the literature and art broadened for the first time in history, an imperial state encompassed the entire South India bringing with it the safety and security to the people and provided the opportunity for the people to experience cultures beyond their own. Tamil became a language of the people. One of the best known Tamil work of this period is the Kamban Ramayana by Kamban who flourished during the reign of Kulottunga III. It is the greatest epic in Tamil Literature, and although the author states that he followed Valmiki, his work is not a mere translation or even an adaptation of Sanskrit epic.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Short Answer Questions:

Question 1.

Mention the significance of inscriptions for providing information about the Cholas.

Answer:

The inscriptions provide the following information about the Cholas.

1. They tell us about the Chola administration.
2. They record gifts and endowments to temples and brahmanas.
3. They inform us about the construction of a temple or the setting up of a new image of the deity.
4. Inscriptions on temple walls served the purpose of a public registrations by conserving a record of sales, mortgagees and other forms of transfers of property rights in village lands.
5. Inscriptions have preserved the decisions and agreements on metters of public importance.

Question 2.

Who established the rule of the Cholas ?

Answer:

Cholaruler Vijayalya(AD 846-871) established Chola rule in Tamil land with Tanjore as his capital during the middle of ninth century.

Question 3.

Why did Rajaraja undertake a naval expedition against Ceylon and Maldives ?

Answer:

Rajaraja (AD 985-1012) was a brilliant general and attacked the kingdoms of Pandyas and Cheras and parts of Mysore. This area was the main region of activities of Arabian traders. In order to strengthen his power along the coast of South India, he took out a naval expedition and attacked both Ceylon and Maldives islands.

Question 4.

Name any three great rulers of the Chola dynasty.

Answer:

1. Rajaraja I (AD 985-1012)
2. Rajendra Chola (AD 1012-1044)
3. Rajadhiraj Chola (AD 1044-1052)

Question 5.

Give any two achievements of Rajendra Chola.

Answer:

1. He defeated Mahipala, king of Bengal and adopted the title of Gangaikonda.
2. With a huge navy he defeated Shrivijaya king and solved the problem of Indian merchants who were in trouble by the merchants of Shrivijaya.

Question 6.

Name the new capital built by Rajendra Chola.

Answer:

The new capital was Gangaikonda-Cholapuram.

Question 7.

Why did the Cholas build a strong naval fleet ?

Answer:

The Cholas built a strong naval fleet, in order to keep a strong control over the trade activities of Arabian traders with the Indian merchants of the southern coastal region.

Question 8.

What made the Chola administration strong and effective?

Answer:

The Cholas system of administration was highly organised and efficient, the king as the pivot of all administration. There was central government, provincial government and local self-government including 'ur' – assembly of normal villages, ' Sabha' - assembly of Brahmins and 'nagaram' – the assembly of merchants. All this well distributed and managed system of administration became strong and effective.

Question 9.

Name the two languages promoted by the Cholas.

Answer:

The two languages promoted by the Cholas were Sanskrit and Tamil. Poems and plays were also written in Tamil by leading poets and dramatists. The works of Tamil writers were collected in eleven volumes which are known as 'Tirumurais'.

Question 10.

Name any two features of temple built by the Cholas.

Answer:

The chief features of Chola temples are their massive vimanas or towers and spacious courtyards. Most of the Chola temples were built in the Dravidian style.

Question 11.

Which is the best example of Chola temples ?

Answer:

The best example of Chola temple is the Brihadeshvara or Shiva temple at Tanjavur.

Question 12.

What is known as the 'gopuram' ?

Answer:

The 'gopuram' is the structure of entrance of the temple.

Question 13.

To what use was the temple put during the Chola period?

Answer:

The temple in the Chola kingdom was the center of social activity. The money donated by the people was used for decoration and maintenance of the temples. Some temples also participated in inland and overseas trade. The temples also provided employment to large number of people and also provided food, clothing and housing facilities and education. Medical aid and hospitals were also established by the temples.

Question 14.

Name one important literary source that gives information about the Cholas. Name the author of this text and the ruler, whose exploits its describes.

Answer:

Kalingattuparani is an important literary source about the Cholas. It was a war song by Jayankondar, the court poet of Kulottunga. It celebrates the victory of Kulottunga Chola I over the Kalinga King, Anantavarman Chodaganga in the Chola-Kalinga war. Kulottunga Chola I is the hero of this magnificent work.

Question 15.

Name the last ruler of the Cholas.

Answer:

Rajadhiraj Chola (AD 1044-1052) was the last great ruler of Chola dynasty.

Question 16.

Who finally defeated the Cholas ?

Answer:

Cholas were defeated by Chalukyas in AD 1052, in the famous battle of Koppam.

Question 17.

Give an example of sculpture during the Chola period.

Answer:

The Cholas excelled in making images of gods and goddesses made of stone and bronze; e.g., the bronze image of Lord Shiva as 'Nat4raja' – Lord of Dance, is an excellent work of art.

Question 18.

Who wrote the Tamil Ramayana ?

Answer:

Kamban wrote the Tamil Ramayana.

Question 1.

With reference to the sources of information about the Cholas, give the significance of the following:

- (a) Chola Inscriptions.
- (b) Brihadeshwara Temple.

Answer:

(a) Chola Inscriptions—The inscription provide the following information about the Cholas.

1. They give information about the Chola administration. For example, the Uttaramerur inscription gives information on the village administration, taxation and land revenue.

2. They record gifts and endowments to temples and brahmanas. Copper-plate inscriptions are the records of grants of villages, plots of land or other privileges to individuals or institutions by the Cholas. For example, the Leyden grant (so called as they are preserved in the Museum of Leyden in Holland) of Parantaka Chola and those of Parakesari Uttama Chola are among the most important.
3. They tell us about the construction of a temple or the setting up of a new image of the deity.
4. Some inscriptions have preserved the decisions and agreements on matters of public importance. These include royal orders on taxation and land revenue resolutions of village assemblies, judgement delivered against persons guilty of theft, murder and other crimes.
5. Inscriptions on temple walls served the purpose of a public registrations by conserving a record of sales, mortgages and other forms of transfers of property rights in village lands.

(b) Brihadeshwara Temple — The Brihadeshwara temple is the finest monument of a splendid period of South Indian history and the most beautiful specimen of Tamil architecture. The temple has been declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. It is one of the best specimens of Dravidian style of architecture. The main structure of the temple has a great building to temples. The taxes on land were collected by the officials from the village councils vimana (tower) and is crowned by a massive dome consisting of a single block of stone. The massive temple building is covered from the base to the top with sculptures and decorative mouldings. The shrine houses a gigantic ShivaLingam, cut in a monolithic rock.

Question 2.

With reference to the Chola period explain the following”

- (a) Taxes imposed by the Cholas.
- (b) Administration of the Kingdom,
- (c) The three types of village assemblies.

Answer:

(a)

The revenue of the Chola Kingdom came from taxes on land and produce of the land and tax on trade. Part of the revenue was kept for the king and the rest was used for public works.

(b)

The administration was highly organised and divided into central, provincial and local self governments in order to get better results.

(c)

The three types of village assemblies were as follows:

1. ‘ur’ — the assembly of common villages.
2. ‘Sabha’ — the assembly of Brahmins.
3. ‘nagaram’ — the assembly of merchants

Question 3.

With reference to the Chola Administration, write short notes on:

- (a) The King, the chief administrator
- (b) Local Self-Government

Answer:

(a)

The King was the pivot of administration with the help of the council of ministers. The King also went on tours to observe the public problems.

(b)

Cholas were good administrators. They believed in local self-government. In many of the villages the administration was carried out, not by the government officials but by the villagers themselves. These villages had three types of village assemblies, namely, the ur, the sabha and the nagaram. There are long inscriptions on the walls of some of the village temples giving details of how the ur and sabha were organised.

Question 4.

Study the picture of the Brihadeshwara Temple and answer the following questions:

- (a) Who built this temple ?
- (b) To which deity is the temple dedicated ?
- (c) Mention two special features of this temple.



Brihadeshwara Temple

Answer:

- (a) Brihadesvara temple at Tanjavur was built by the Chola King Rajaraja-1.
- (b) It is dedicated to Lord Shiv.
- (c) The main structure of the temple has a great vimana or tower consisting of 13 successive stores rising to a height of 190 feet.

Its top is crowned by a massive dome of a single block of stone about 25 feet high and weighing about 80 tons.

Question 5.

With reference to the South Indian temples answer the following questions:

- (a) The role of the temple as an employer.
- (b) The role of the temple as a landlord.
- (c) The role of the temple as centres of learning.

Answer:

(a)

The temple provided employment to large number of people in various types of works and means of livelihood to a large number of people. The temples used to take care of the welfare of its workers by providing food, clothing and housing facilities and by arranging proper education and establishing hospitals.

(b)

The temple owned large areas of land, so the temple authorities worked as big landlords.

(c)

Various types of people from different communities came together in the temple and discussed several matters of public problems and views. This resulted in the promotion of knowing and learning the various aspects of social structure and state of progress.

Question 6.

With reference to Chola literature, write on the following:

- (a) Kalingattuparani
- (b) Religious and secular literature.

Answer:

(a)

It is a 12th century poem and a war song by Jayankondar, the court poet of Kulottunga I. It is the most fascinating historical work in Tamil literature which celebrates the victory of Kulottunga Chola I over the Kalinga King, Anantavarman Chodaganga in the Chola-Kalinga war. It gives a vivid and a graphic description of battle scenes and also provides details about the route taken by Kulottunga's army. It is hailed as one of the masterpieces of Tamil literature with its majestic styles and diction.

(b)

Tamil Ramayan and stories from Ramayana and Mahabharat are the religious literature. The secular literature are treatises on grammar by Buddhamitra and Rawankashi