

# The Age of the Guptas

## Exercises

### Question 1.

Name one literary and another archaeological source to reconstruct the Age of the Gupta's.

#### Answer:

1. **Literary Source:** Fa-hein visit to India.
2. **Archaeological Source:** Allahabad Pillar Inscriptions.

### Question 2.

Name the famous Inscription that tells us about the character and military achievements of Samudragupta.

#### Answer:

Allahabad Pillar Inscription

### Question 3.

Which great conquest enabled Chandragupta II to carry the title of Sakari ?

#### Answer:

The Conquest of Gujarat and Kathiawar peninsula dominated by the Saka power, enabled Chandragupta II to carry the title of Sakari.

### Question 4.

Who was Fa-hien ? What is the title of the book that he wrote about India ?

#### Answer:

Fa-hien was a Chinese pilgrim, who traveled all over India for more than 13 years. The title of the book that he wrote about India was, Fo-Kwo-Ki (The Travels of Fa-hien).

### Question 5.

What did Fa-hien write about the City of Pataliputra ?

#### Answer:

Fa-hien wrote about the City of Pataliputra that the City had two grand monasteries-one of the Hinayana and other of the Mahayana. He noticed the usual grandeur of Ashoka's Palace as such. People living there, were quite prosper by all means. There was an excellent hospital run by the wealthy citizens of the town. Rest-houses existed in large towns and on highways for the comforts of the travelers. The relations between the followers of various sects were cordial. The people were honest and law-abiding. No uneven restrictions were imposed on them to move about anywhere in the City. The criminal law was mild. Capital punishment was out of practice.

**PQ.** Which Gupta ruler defeated the Hunas ?

**Answer:** Skandagupta defeated the Hunas.

**Question 6.**

What does Fa-hien write about the life of the people during the Gupta age?

**Answer:**

Fa-hien writes that the bulk of the population during the Gupta age was vegetarian and usually followed the principle of Ahimsa (non-violence)

The caste-system prevailed and untouch ability had become an established institution in this age. The Chandalas occupied the lowest rank in society. They were outcasts and lived away from the people. They did menial jobs. When they approached a city or a market, they had to strike a piece of wood, so that others might avoid coming in contact with them.

Slavery also existed, although the Brahmins could not be owned as slaves. Women were educated in fine arts and domestic virtues. Widow-remarriage was viewed with disfavor. The practice of Devadasi was prevalent. In other words, some girls were being maintained to many temples for the service of Gods.

**Question 7.**

Who was the greatest literary genius of the Gupta period?

**Answer:**

Kalidasa was the greatest literary genius of the Gupta period.

**Question 8.**

Name two dramas and two epics written by Kalidasa.

**Answer:**

Malavikagnimitra and Vikramorvasiya are the two dramas written by Kalidasa. The two epics are—Raghuvamsa and Kumarasambhava.

**Question 9.**

Mention the contributions of Aryabhatta in the field of astronomy.

**Answer:**

Aryabhatta was the first Indian astronomer to declare that the earth is spherical in shape and he proved that the earth revolves around the sun on its own axis.

**Question 10.**

Name the famous astronomer of the Gupta period after whom an Indian Satellite was named.

**Answer:**

Aryabhatta.

**Question 11.**

Mention the important contributions of Varahamihira.

**Answer:**

Varahamihira was a great scientist of the Gupta age, he wrote Brihat Samhita which deals with Astronomy, Mathematics, Botany and Physical Geography. He also wrote a famous book on different branches of Jyotishastra and another work Pancha Siddhantika, giving an account of the five systems of Astronomy.

**Question 12.**

Mention two famous temples of the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

The Dasavatara Temple, also known as Vishnu Temple, at Deogarh near Jhansi, and Bhitargaon Temple near Kanpur.

**Question 13.**

Mention two important architectural features of the Dasavatara (Vishnu) Temple at Deogarh.

**Answer:**

The Temple stands on a wide basement with a flight of steps in the middle of each side. It had a spire and its roof was supported by pillars.

**Question 14.**

The Provincial Governors during the reign of the Gupta were called by which names ?

**Answer:**

The provincial governors were usually the princes of royal blood. As governors, they were called Uparika Maharaja or Pradeshikas.

**Question 15.**

The Districts (Vishyas) were placed under whose charge during the rule of Guptas ?

**Answer:**

A Bhukti was divided into districts called Vishyas, which were ruled by Vishayapatis or Ayuktas. They were usually appointed by the Provincial Governor. Many other persons had position of authority in the district administration. They were Prathamkayasthis who wrote letters and documents, Pushtapal, the keeper of records and Nagarshresthi, that is, the Chief Banker.

**Question 16.**

Mention an important cause for the revival of Brahmanical religion in the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

The Gupta monarchs were staunch supporters of Brahmanism, they gave a strong impetus to the restoration and enhancement of their religion.

**Question 17.**

What is the importance of Panchatantra?

**Answer:**

It is a collection of stories which intended to teach moral lessons to children.

**Question 18.**

Name three important sciences which made great progress during the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

Astronomy, mathematics and medicine.

**Question 19.**

Mention the famous work on medicine written by Vriddha-Vagabhatta.

**Answer:**

Ashtang Sangrah.

**Question 20.**

Which Gupta ruler defeated the Hunas?

**Answer:**

Skandagupta defeated the Hunas.

**Question 21.**

Mention two pieces of evidence to show that the art of Sculpture excelled during the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

The statue of the Standing Buddha discovered at Mathura and the figure of the Great Boar done in relief at the entrance of the Cave at Udayagiri are the two pieces of evidence that show that the art of Sculpture excelled during the Gupta period.

**Question 22.**

What is known as Frescoes ?

Ans.

The paintings done on the walls are called Frescoes.

**Question 23.**

Mention two places famous for the art of painting during the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

The Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra State and the Bagh Caves near Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh.

**Question 24.**

Mention two important features of the paintings at Ajanta.

**Answer:**

**Two important features of the paintings at Ajanta are as follows:**

1. The rock walls were first plastered with a thick coating of clay, mixed with straw, gypsum and other materials. Then a thin layer of lime-plaster was applied to produce a glazed surface for making the painting more effective.
2. On the glazed surface of the wall the outlines of the figures were drawn first. The artists used water colours.

**Question 25.**

Name the Chinese pilgrim who studied at the Nalanda University.

**Answer:**

Hiuen-Tsang was the Chinese pilgrim who studied at the Nalanda University.

**Question 26.**

Mention the extent of King Harsha's empire.

**Answer:**

The extent of King Harsha's empire included

1. Eastern Punjab
2. Kanauj (Uttar Pradesh)
3. Magadha (Bihar)
4. Bengal
5. Orissa.

**Question 27.**

How can we say that Harshavardhana was a patron of learning ?

**Answer:**

Matang Diwakar was the court-poet to Harshavardhana. His patronage to authors like—Banabhatta, who wrote Harshcharita, and Mayur, who wrote Suryashataka, shows his interest in literature. Harsha himself was a scholar and an author of three plays—Ratnavali, Nagananda and Priyadarshika. Nalanda University was patronised by Harshavardhana.

**Question 28.**

Who wrote Harshcharita ?

**Answer:**

Banabhatta wrote Harshcharita.

**Question 29.**

Where was the Fifth Buddhist Assembly held ? Who presided over the Assembly's deliberations ?

**Answer:**

The Fifth Buddhist Assembly was held at Kanauj, Hiuen-Tsang presided over the Assembly's deliberations.

**Question 30.**

Mention the main conquests of Pulakesin II.

**Answer:**

Pulakesin II, ruled, from 608 AD to 642 AD. He conquered northern Konkan and the Gujarat and Malwa regions.

**Question 31.**

Whose reign marks the climax of the Pallava power ?

**Answer:**

The reign of Narasimhavarman marks the climax of the Pallava power.

**Question 32.**

Mention the main conquests of the Pallava ruler Narasimhavarman.

**Answer:**

Narasimhavarman conquered the Chalukya's Capital Badami and occupied it. He defeated Cholas, the Cheras and the

**Question 33.**

Name the Inscription that refers to the achievements of King Kharvela of Kalinga.

**Answer:**

The Hathigumpha Inscription on the Udayagiri hills, near Bhubaneswar in Orissa.

**Question 34.**

Who converted Kanishka to Buddhism ?

**Answer:**

A Buddhist monk Asvaghosa converted Kanishka to Buddhism.

**Question 35.**

Name the two sects into which Buddhism got split during Kanishka's reign.

**Answer:**

During Kanishka's reign, Buddhism got split into Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) and the Mahayana (Great Vehicle).

**Question 36.**

Give one evidence to suggest that the sculptural art flourished during the reign of Satvahanas of Deccan.

**Answer:**

The sculptures of Amaravati and Nagarjuna konda Stupas.

**Question 37.**

Name a fine specimen of rock-cut architecture during the reign of the Satvahanas.

**Answer:**

The Chaitya at Karle.

**Question 38.**

Name the two main crafts that flourished during the Gupta age.

**Answer:**

Jewellery-making and sculpture flourished during the Gupta age.

**Question 39.**

Mention an important cause for the revival of Brahmanical religion in the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

The Gupta monarchs were staunch supporters of Brahmanism, they gave a strong impetus to the restoration and enhancement of their religion.

**Question 40.**

Mention-any one cause that led to the decline of the mighty Gupta empire.

**Answer:**

The repeated invasions of the Hunas led to the decline of the mighty Gupta empire. Pandyas. He also sent two naval expeditions to Sri Lanka to help Sri Lankan prince, Manavarman to gain the throne of that island.

**Question 41.**

Mention the literary works of Dandin.

**Answer:**

Dandin wrote Daskumarcharita and Kavyadarsha.

**Question 42.**

Name the literary work of Perundevanar.

**Answer:**

Perundevanar wrote Bharatam.

**Question 43.**

How many Rathas are found at Mahabalipuram?

**Answer:**

Eight Rathas are found at Mahabalipuram.

**Question 44.**

Name the 'Pancha Pandava' Rathas.

**Answer:**

Draupadi Ratha, Dharamaraja Ratha, Arjuna Ratha, Bhima Ratha and Sahadeva Ratha.

**Question 45.**

Name the largest and the smallest of the

**Answer:**

The largest Ratha is the Dharamaraja Ratha. The smallest Ratha is the Draupadi Ratha.

**STRUCTURED QUESTIONS****Question 1.**

There are many literary sources to reconstruct the Age of the Guptas. In this context explain the literary accounts of Fa-hien.

**Answer:**

Accounts of Fa-hien — Fa-hien, in his book Fo-Kwo-Ki (The Travels of Fa-hien) mentioned about life of the people and religious conditions that prevailed in the early years. According to Fa-hien, Magadha was a prosperous country with large towns, teeming with wealthy population. Pataliputra was a flourishing city with numerous charitable institutions, including a hospital endowed by benevolent citizens. According to Fa-hien, although the people were wealthy, they led simple lives, generally observing the Buddhist rules of conduct. Fa-hien has mentioned that Vaishnavism, Shaivism and even Buddhism and Jainism existed in the society. People, however, had no ill-will towards other sects. Fa-hien said that Hindu gods and goddesses were depicted on coins and also in sculptures and paintings. Fa-hien was pleased with the mildness of the administration. According to him, the penal code was mild and the offences were ordinarily punished by fines only. From his accounts, it can be inferred that the Gupta Empire was prosperous and governed on enlightened principles.

**Question 2.**

Regarding archaeological sources to reconstruct the Age of the Gupta, explain what significance do the following have:

(a) Allahabad Pillar Inscription (b) Nalanda University

**Answer:****(a) The Allahabad Pillar Inscription:**

Allahabad Pillar Inscription is one of the most epigraphic evidence of the Imperial Gupta. Achievements of different rulers of the Gupta empire are mentioned in Allahabad Pillar Inscription. It gives a vivid description of the reign and conquest of Samudragupta. Historians, both ancient and modern, have considered the historical value of Allahabad Pillar. It provides a pretty impressive list of Kings and tribal republics that were conquered by Samudragupta.

**(b) Nalanda University:**

It was the most renowned educational institution of ancient India. Located at Nalanda in Rajagriha in Bihar, it was originally set up by Sakraditya in the 5th century AD during the



reign of Kumaragupta-I. The University of Nalanda had imposing buildings. There were at least 8 colleges built by different patrons including one by Balaputradeva, King of Sumatra. According to Hiuen Tsang the whole university area was enclosed by a brick wall. The Nalanda University provided various facilities to the students for their studies. There were three great libraries called Ratnasagar, Ratnodadhi and Ratnaranjak. There were more than 10,000 students including teachers of all kinds. They came from Korea, Mongolia, Japan, China, Tibet, Ceylon and various parts of India. The subjects of study at Nalanda University were all the four Vedas, logic, grammar, medicine, samkya, yoga, nyaya and the Buddhist works of the different schools. It was not an ordinary university. It was a post-graduate institution to which admission was very difficult. Before admission, an examination was held in which hardly 20% students passed and the rest of 80% were rejected. Only the most brilliant were admitted to the University. Nalanda continued to be a beacon of light up to 12th century AD when it was destroyed by Mohammad-bin- Bakhtiyar Khilji, a general of Mohammad Ghori. Today only the remains of its magnificence and glory can be seen.

### Question 3.

Samudragupta earned a reputation as one of the greatest kings and conquerors. In this context, explain:(a) His Conquests, (b) His Personal Attainments.

#### Answer:

**Samudragupta earned a reputation as one of the greatest kings and conquerors.**

**In this context, the given heads are explained below:**

**(a) His Conquests:** Samudra gupta first defeated the rulers of northern India and annexed their dominions. They included the Nagas of Mathura, Padmavati (near Gwalior) and Ahicchetra (the region in the neighborhood of Bareilly) and the ruling chiefs of western Uttar Pradesh and eastern India. He won victories over twelve rulers including those of Orissa, Andhra and Tamil Nadu. He defeated these rulers, but did not annex their kingdoms. He allowed them to rule as tributaries of the Gupta empire. The rulers of Bengal, Assam, Nepal, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh got impressed by his victories and submitted of their own free-will and agreed to pay tributes to him.

**(b) His Personal Attainments:** Besides a great conqueror, Samudragupta was also a scholar, a poet and a lover of music. He was called He worshiped Lord Vishnu, but he showed respect for all religions. He was also a patron of learning.

### Question 4

The reign of Chandragupta n marks the zenith of the Gupta glory. In this context briefly describe his conquests and the extent of his Empire.

#### Answer:

**In context of the reign of Chandragupta II the given headlines are described below:**

Chandragupta II was determined to overthrow the Saka power in Gujarat and Kathiawar peninsula. With a view to pursuing his plan against the Sakas. He married Kubemaga, a Naga princess. He gave the hand of his daughter to Rudrasena II, the Vakataka prince. Thus, he secured the friendship of those rulers who could be of much service to him in his campaign against the Saka satraps. He attacked the Saka satraps. He conquered the Saka rulers and obtained the title of Sakari. He put an end to the domination of

foreigners in India, but added rich areas and prosperous parts to the empire. He defeated a united front of his enemies in Vanga (Bengal) and his victorious arms reached the northern Afghanistan (Vahilkas).

### Question 5.

The Gupta era witnessed an unprecedented intellectual progress. In this context explain:

(a) Enrichment of Sanskrit literature with reference to the works of Kalidasa and Visakhadutta.

(b) Technical and Scientific works of Aryabhatta

### Answer:

**In context of the unprecedented intellectual progress that the Gupta era witnessed, the given headlines are explained as under:**

(a)

The Gupta age had been aptly called the “Golden Age of Sanskrit Literature”. In this period, the great poet and dramatist, Kalidasa made a significant contribution in the field of Sanskrit literature. Abhi janash akuntalam popularly known as Shakuntala, is the well-known masterpiece of him, it is regarded as one of the best literary productions of the world. Malavikagnimitra and Vikramorvasiya are two other excellent dramas written by him. His literary skill is also displayed in his two epics—Raghuvamsa and Kumarasambhava and in the lyric poetry of Ritu Samhara and Visakhadutta was the another literary genius, he wrote the well known political drama Mudrarakshasa, in which he described the political revolution that led to the fall of the Nanda Dynasty and the establishment of the Mauryan empire. Devichandraguptam was another play of him, dealing with the early life of Chandragupta II.

(b)

Aryabhatta was a great astronomer and mathematician. He wrote two famous works, the Aryabhatiya and Surya Siddhanta. The former deals with Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra and Trigonometry. He worked out the exact value of  $7i$  ( $\pi$ ) viz, 3.1416 and discovered a formula to find the area of a triangle. In this famous work Surya Siddhanta, he explained scientifically the causes of the solar and lunar eclipses. He was the first Indian astronomer to declare that the earth revolves around the sun and rotates on its own axis. India's first satellite sent into space was named 'Aryabhatta' after this great astronomer.

### Question 6.

With reference to Nalanda University answer the following questions:

(a) Under whose patronage did the University develop into a famous Center of Learning ?

(b) Give three of its special features ?

(c) Who destroyed this University ?

### Answer:

(a)

**Nalanda University** — It was the most renowned educational institution of ancient India. Located at Nalanda in Rajagriha in Bihar, it was originally set up by Sakraditya in the 5th century AD during the reign of Kumaragupta-I. The University of Nalanda had

imposing buildings. There were at least 8 colleges built by different patrons including one by Balaputradeva, King of Sumatra. According to Hiuen Tsang the whole university area was enclosed by a brick wall.

**(b)**

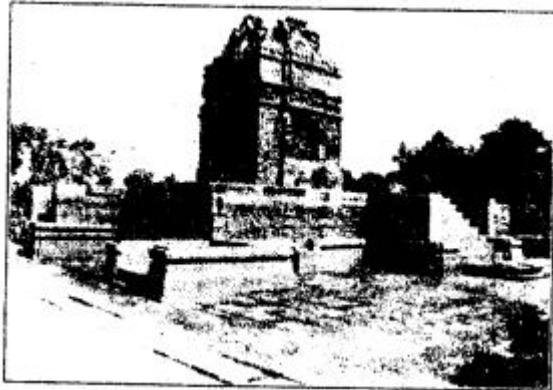
The Nalanda University provided various facilities to the students for their studies. There were three great libraries called Ratnasagar, Ratnodadhi and Ratnaranjak. There were more than 10,000 students including teachers of all kinds. They came from Korea, Mongolia, Japan, China, Tibet, Ceylon and various parts of India. The subjects of study at Nalanda University were all the four Vedas, logic, grammar, medicine, samkya, yoga, nyaya and the Buddhist works of the different schools. It was not an ordinary university. It was a post-graduate institution to which admission was very difficult. Before admission, an examination was held in which hardly 20% students passed and the rest of 80% were rejected. Only the most brilliant were admitted to the University.

**(c)**

Nalanda continued to be a beacon of light up to 12th century AD when it was destroyed by Mohammad-bin-Bakhtiyar Khilji, a general of Mohammad Ghori. Today only the remains of its magnificence and glory can be seen.

### Question 7.

Study the picture given here and answer the following questions:



(a) Where is this Vishnu Temple located ?

(b) Which period does it belong to ?

(c) What are the three main structural features of the temple?

**Answer:**

**(a)** This is the Vishnu temple located at Deogarh. It is also known as the Dashavatara Temple.

**(b)** Gupta Period.

**(c)** The Sanchi temple, another temple in the Gupta period has a flat roof. The columns of the portico are surmounted by a bell capital. A large number of Stupas, Viharas and Chaityas were cut out of solid rocks.

### Question 8.

The Pallava period recorded brilliant achievements in the fields of literature, art and architecture. In this context explain: Architectural features of the Dharmaraja Rath.

#### Answer:

**The main features of Dharmaraja Rath are as fellows:**

1. Dharmaraja Ratha is a monolithic structure, carved out of a single boulder on the seashore.
2. It resembles a Buddhist Vihara and Chaitya. Its base is square but the tower is pyramidal.
3. The tower has three tiers and a small stupa on top of the spire.
4. The Ratha is adorned with magnificent sculptures.

### Question 9.

Harshavardhana not only brought the greater part of northern India under his direct rule, he also consolidated his dominions by efficient administrative machinery. In this context explain:

- (a) His Conquests and Extent of his Empire
- (b) His Administration.

#### Answer:

**Harshavardhana consolidated his dominions by efficient administrative machinery in this context the given headlines are explained below:**

#### (a)

**His Conquests and Extent of his Empire:** Harshavardhana became the ruler of Thanesar after he succeeded his elder brother Rajyavardhana. After becoming the king, he immediately decided to rescue his sister and punish Sasanka. He advanced with a huge army and inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy. Harsha administered the government of Kanauj in the name of his sister. Later, the kingdom of Kanauj was combined with that of Thanesar and the union, thus formed, was developed into an empire by Harsha. Hiuen-Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, said Harsha brought the Five Indies under his control.

These regions included

1. Eastern Punjab,
2. Kanauj (Uttar Pradesh),
3. Magadha (Bihar),
4. Bengal and
5. Orissa

He tried to expand his empire beyond the river Narmada, but he suffered a defeat at the hands of Pulakesin II, the Chalukya king. He died in 648 AD. He had no heir.

**(b) His Administration:** Harsha raised the small state into the most powerful kingdom in northern India. Hiuen-Tsang remarks, “the king personally supervised the affairs of his vast kingdom. The day was too short for him.” His officials and state-functionaries, both civil and military, worked very efficiently. The outlying provinces were put in charge of Governors and the provinces were further subdivided into districts, called Visayas. The penal law was exceptionally severe. Imprisonment for life was a common penalty for breach of laws and conspiracy against the king. For offences against social morality, the punishment was to cut off nose or an ear or a hand or foot. Minor offences were punished by ordering offenders to pay a fine.

#### Question 10.

The Pallava period recorded brilliant achievements in the fields of literature, art and architecture. In this context explain:

- (a) Their patronage to literature.
- (b) Contributions in the field of architecture.

#### Answer:

**In context of the brilliant achievements in the fields of literature during the Pallava period, the given headlines are explained as under:**

**(a) Their patronage to literature:** The Pallava rulers patronised Sanskrit scholars. Mahendravarman himself was a scholar and a musician. He wrote Prahāsans (farces) – Mattavilāsa and Dandin, who wrote Daskumaracharita and Kavyadarśha, lived in the court of Narasimhavarman II. Dinnaga Vatsayana the author of Nyayabhasya, was also associated with Kanchipuram, Sanskrit was the language of courts and men of literature, but Tamil became the vehicle for popular composition of devotional poetry. It received encouragement from the rulers. Perundevanar wrote Bharatam and a court-poet of King ; Nandivarman III composed Nandikalambakam.

**(b) Contributions in the field of architecture:** Many magnificent temples were built by the Pallava kings. Under the Pallava rulers; of Kanchipuram, two forms of temple-architecture were evolved in the South—the rock-cut and the structural shrines. The rock-cut architecture includes two types of shrines—the Mandapas and the Rathas. Mandapas are open pavilions with one or more cells in the back-wall. This type of architecture is found in places like—Pallavaram, Trichinopoly and Dalavanur. Rathas are monolithic shrines. The best examples of monolithic shrines or Rathas are found at Mahabalipuram in Tamilnadu.

#### Question 11.

Study the picture of Dharmaraja Ratha and answer the following questions:

- (a) Name the place and the State where the Ratha is located ?
- (b) Under which Dynasty and in whose reign was the Ratha built ?
- (c) When was it built ?
- (d) Mention three architectural features of the

#### Answer:

**On the basis of study of the picture of Dharmaraja Ratha, the given questions are answered as under:**

- (a) Mahabalipuram in Tamilnadu.
- (b) Under the Pallava dynasty, King Narasimhavarman built the Rathas.
- (c) It was built in the 7th century AD
- (d) The temple is monolithic;

1. Carved from a single massive granite stone, it resembles a Buddhist Vihara and its base is square, but the tower is pyramidal;
2. The tower has three tiers and a small stupa on top of the spire.

### Question 12.

With reference to the Gupta administration, mention briefly: The position of the King and his Ministers.

#### Answer:

With reference to the Gupta administration, the given headlines are explained ahead

**The position of the King and his Ministers:** The Guptas discarded the modest title of Rajan and assumed titles like—Maharajadhiraja, Parambhattaraka and Paramadivata. An important feature of the period was the emphasis on divine character of kingship. Titles such as 'Paramadivata' raised rulers to the level of Gods. Several ministers assisted the king in the task of administration. The Mantri stood at the head of civil administration. Other important officials included the Senapati (General of the Army), the Chief of the Palace Guards and Sandhivigraha that is, the Minister for foreign affairs.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions:

#### Question 1.

When did Fa-hien visit India? Who was the ruler at that time ?

#### Answer:

Fa-hien started his journey from China in AD 399 and reached India in AD 405 and stayed in India up to 411. Chandragupta II was the ruler at that time.

#### Question 2.

During whose reign Hiuen Tasang visited India ?

#### Answer:

Hiuen Tasang visited India during the reign of Harsha.

#### Question 3.

Name the three dramas written by Kalidasa.

#### Answer:

The three dramas written by Kalidasa were Malavikagnimitram, Abhijnanashakuntalam and Vikramorvashiyam.

#### Question 4.

Why is the Gupta Period known as the Golden Age of Indian culture ?

##### Answer:

The Gupta Period is remarkable for all-around development in ideal administration, art, culture, economy, medicines, literature, education, astronomy etc. The famous universities of Taxila and Nalanda near Rawalpindi and in Bihar respectively. The temple of Bhitrigaon in Kanpur, Bhitari temple in Gazipur, Deogarh temple in Jhansi are examples of fine architecture. Aryabhata, a famous astronomer and mathematician, Varahmihira, Brahmagupta were eminent astronomers. Charaka and Sushruta were excellent scholars of Ayurveda. The 'Iron Pillar' in New Delhi is the proof of high level metallurgy due to its high quality iron. Highly talented poets were Kalidasa, Sudraka, Bhasa, Harishena, Dandin, Subandhu, Bharavi, Banabhatta, Vishnusharma (writer of Panchatantra). Besides this, Puranas and Bhagvata Gita were written in this period. So it was the golden period of Indian culture, undoubtedly.

#### Question 5.

How was Samudragupta a bold and great conqueror ?

##### Answer:

Samudragupta was a brave conqueror. He defeated many rulers. His empire extended from Yamuna and Chambal in the west to Brahmaputra in the east. He was known as the 'Napoleon of India'.

#### Question 6.

Who was Fa-hien ? What did he say about India ?

##### Answer:

The Chinese traveller Fa-hien, visited India at the time of Chandragupta-II (Vikramaditya). He was deeply impressed by the ideal and mild administration affected by Buddhism, economic prosperity of Pataliputra and Magadha, simplicity of the people. He had also mentioned about the versatile religions including Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, Buddhism and Jainism etc.

#### Question 7.

Name two renowned Sanskrit authors and their important works during the Gupta period.

##### Answer:

**Kalidasa:** The famous poet of Vikramaditya's court, wrote famous poetic works, e.g. Ritusamhara, Raghuvamsha. **Sudraka:** He wrote dramatic work 'Mrichchhakatika' or the 'Little Clay Cart', throwing light on socio-economic life of the people with a sense of humor.

#### Question 8.

Name two famous universities that existed during the Gupta period ?

##### Answer:

Two famous universities were Taxila near Rawalpindi and Nalanda university in Bihar.



**Question 9.**

Name any two titles adopted by the Gupta rulers ?

**Answer:**

'Maharajadhiraja' and 'Napoleon of India' were the two titles adopted by Gupta rulers.

**Question 10.**

Name the officer who collected the toll tax during the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

The officer who collected the toll tax during the Gupta period was known as 'Shaulkika'

**Question 11.**

Name the officer who was in charge of a province or bhukti during the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

The officer who was incharge of a province or bhukti during the Gupta period was called Vishayapati.

**Question 12.**

What contribution did Aryabhatta and Varahamihira make in the field of science, astronomy and mathematics ?

**Answer:**

Aryabhatta discovered zero decimal system and calculated the value of pi (3.1416) and area of triangle in mathematics; movement of earth and sun in the astronomy. Varahamihira invented that the moon moves around the earth and studied the movement of planets.

**Question 13.**

What was the chief architectural feature of the brick temple at Bhitrigaon ?

**Answer:**

This temple dates back to 5th century AD. The temple has a pyramidal roof and its outer walls are decorated with statues and figures. There is a Shivalinga placed in the Garbagriha. The chief architectural feature is the arch, the curved structure supporting the weight of the roof.

**Question 14.**

Give two distinguishing features of Ajanta and Bagh paintings.

**Answer:**

Ajanta and Bagh paintings are very impressive and lively with human faces, limbs drawn with grace and action along with flowers and birds depicting living action views.



## II. Structured Questions.

### Question 1.

With reference to the sources of information about the Gupta Age, write short notes on the following:

- (a) Accounts of Fa-hien
- (b) The Allahabad Pillar Inscription
- (c) Nalanda University

### Answer:

(a)

**Accounts of Fa-hien** — Fa-hien, in his book Fo-Kwo- Ki (The Travels of Fa-hien) mentioned about life of the people and religious conditions that prevailed in the early years. According to Fa-hien, Magadha was a prosperous country with large towns, teeming with wealthy population. Pataliputra was a flourishing city with numerous charitable institutions, including a hospital endowed by benevolent citizens. According to Fa-hien, although the people were wealthy, they led simple lives, generally observing the Buddhist rules of conduct. Fa-hien has mentioned that Vaishnavism, Shaivism and even Buddhism and Jainism existed in the society. People, however, had no ill-will towards other sects. Fa-hien said that Hindu gods and goddesses were depicted on coins and also in sculptures and paintings. Fa-hien was pleased with the mildness of the administration. According to him, the penal code was mild and the offences were ordinarily punished by fines only. From his accounts, it can be inferred that the Gupta Empire was prosperous and governed on enlightened principles.

(b)

**The Allahabad Pillar Inscription** — Allahabad Pillar Inscription is one of the most epigraphic evidences of the Imperial Gupta. Achievements of different rulers of the Gupta image are mentioned in Allahabad Pillar Inscription. It gives a vivid description of the reign and conquest of Samudra-gupta. Historians, both ancient and modern, have considered the historical value of Allahabad pillar. It provides a pretty impressive list of Kings and tribal republic that were conquered by Samudragupta.

(c)

**Nalanda University** — It was the most renowned educational institution of ancient India. Located at Nalanda in Rajagriha in Bihar, it was originally set up by Sakraditya in the 5th century AD during the reign of Kumaragupta-I. The University of Nalanda had imposing buildings. There were at least 8 colleges built by different patrons including one by Balaputradeva, King of Sumatra. According to Hiuen Tsang the whole university area was enclosed by a brick wall. The Nalanda University provided various facilities to the students for their studies. There were three great libraries called Ratnasagar, Ratnodadhi and Ratnaranjak. There were more than 10,000 students including teachers of all kinds. They came from Korea, Mongolia, Japan, China, Tibet, Ceylon and various parts of India. The subjects of study at Nalanda University were all the four Vedas, logic, grammar, medicine, samkya, yoga, nyaya and the Buddhist works of the different schools. It was not an ordinary university. It was a post-graduate institution to which admission was very difficult. Before admission, an examination was held in which hardly 20% students passed and the rest of 80% were rejected. Only the most brilliant were admitted to the University. Nalanda continued to be a beacon of light upto 12th century

AD when it was destroyed by Mohammad-bin-Bakhtiyar Khilji, a general of Mohammad Ghori. Today only the remains of its magnificence and glory can be seen.

## **2. With reference to the Age of the Guptas, answer the following questions.**

### **Question 2(a).**

Explain the extent of Samudragupta's Empire based on the information given in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription.

#### **Answer:**

The Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta describes four different kinds of rulers and tells us about Samudragupta's policies towards them:

1. The nine rulers of Aryavarta were uprooted and their kingdoms were made a part of Samudragupta's empire.
2. The twelve rulers of Dakshinapatha (South India), who surrendered to Samudragupta after being defeated, were liberated and allowed to rule again over their kingdoms.
3. The inner circle of neighboring states, including Assam, Coastal Bengal, Nepal and a number of gana sanghas (organisation of many kings) in the north-west. They brought tribute, followed his orders and attended his court.
4. The rulers of the outlying areas, who submitted to him and offered their daughters in marriage

### **Question 2(b).**

Explain how Chandragupta II expanded his empire.

#### **Answer:**

Chandragupta II inherited the military genius of his father and extended the Gupta empire by conquest of his own. He annexed the territories of Sakas of Malwa, Gujarat and Saurashtra. For this he was given the title 'Sakari' or conqueror of Sakas. According to noted historian, Dr. Vincent Smith, "the annexation of Saurashtra and Malwa not only added to the empire, provinces of exceptional wealth and fertility, but opened up access to the ports of the western coast; and thus placed Chandragupta II in direct touch with the seaborne commerce with Europe through Egypt." Chandragupta-II entered into matrimonial alliances as a part of his foreign policy. He married Kuberanaga of the Naga family. The Nagas were a powerful ruling clan and this matrimonial alliance helped the Gupta ruler in expanding his empire. The marriage of Chandragupta's daughter, Prabhavati with the Vakataka ruler, Rudrasena II helped him to establish his political influence in the Deccan.

## **3. With reference to the administrative system of the Guptas, answer the following questions:**

### **Question 3(a).**

Explain the position and powers of the king during the Gupta Age.

#### **Answer:**

The Gupta kings enjoyed a large number of powers which covered the political, administrative, military and judicial fields. They were the commanders-in-chief of the

army. Samundragupta, Chandragupta II and Skandagupta personally led their armies. The kings appointed all the governors and important military and civil officers. The governors and their officers had to work under the control and guidance of the king. The central secretariat also worked under the supervision of the king. The king was the source of all honors and titles. All land in the country was the property of the king. He could construct dams, give shelter to foreigners, impose, recover and remit taxes and give justice. If any property was unclaimed, that went into the coffers of the king.

**Question 3(b).**

Describe briefly the administration of villages during the Gupta period.

**Answer:**

The village administration was managed by the village headman. The Gupta inscriptions refer to the participation of leading local elements in the administration of the village or small towns called *vithis*. No land transactions could be effected without their consent and this may have been also true of other important affairs.

**4. With reference to Golden Age of Indian Culture answer the following questions.**

**Question 4(a) .**

Briefly describe growth of Sanskrit literature.

**Answer:**

Sanskrit became the language of the learned and retained its supreme position for a thousand years. Guptas made Sanskrit official language for administrative purposes. They used Sanskrit instead of Prakrit in their inscriptions. Sanskrit was used in official documents as well as in inscriptions. The classical Sanskrit literature that flowered during the Gupta period consisted of epics, poetry, drama, lyrics and prose.

**Question 4(b).**

Give an account of the contribution of Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta.

**Answer:**

Aryabhatta (AD 471-500) — He wrote two famous books *Aryabhattiyam* and *Surya Siddhanta*. He told that the earth moves round the sun. He also discovered the rule for finding the area of a triangle. He calculated the exact value of pi which was equal to 3.1416. The credit for development of trigonometry should actually go to him. Aryabhatta was acquainted with the decimal system and use of 'zero'. The decimal system has numbers from 1 to 9 and zero. Varahamihira — He composed two famous books *Panch Siddhantika* and *Brihat Samhita*. He proved that moon rotates round the earth and earth rotates round the sun. He also studied movements of planets. Brahmagupta — He wrote *Brahma Sphutic Siddhanta* and described law of gravitation, several centuries before Newton. This system is now in use throughout the world.

**Question 4(c).**

Describe the progress in medicine during this period.

**Answer:**

Ayurvedic medicines were created by Charak and Sushruta in the 2nd century A.D., which are still today the basic promoter of herbal medicines e.g. 'Chyavanprash' and various digestive medicines.