

New Empires and Kingdoms

I. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Choose the correct option to complete the statements given below:

(i) The first ruler of the Gupta dynasty who adopted the grand title of maharaj- adhiraja was

- (a) Samudragupta (b) Chandragupta
(c) Skandhagupta (d) Both (a) and (c).

(ii) We learn about Gupta rulers from the

- (a) Inscriptions (b) Prashastis
(c) Coins (d) Both (a) and (c).

(iii) Harsha's brother-in-law was the ruler of

- (a) Kanauj (b) Patliputra
(c) Ujjain (d) Prayaga.

(iv) Pulakeshin II was a ruler of

- (a) Chalukya dynasty (b) Pallava dynasty
(c) Gupta dynasty (d) Chola dynasty,

(v) We come to know about Harshavardhana from

- (a) The biography written by
Banabhatta (b) The account of Xuan

Zang

- (c) Both (a) and (b)
(d) Neither (a) nor (d).

Ans. (i)–(b), (ii)–(d), (iii)–(a), (iv)–(a), (v)–(c).

II. FILL IN THE BLANKS

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete each sentence.

- (i) Kumara Devi, the mother of Samudragupta belonged to thegana.
- (ii), a Chinese pilgrim, spent a lot of time at Harsha's court and left a detailed account of what he saw.
- (iii) Harshavardhana's success was checked by, a Chalukya ruler.
- (iv) The two important ruling dynasties in south India during this period were the and the
- (v) The Raichur Doab was situated between the rivers and
- (vi) The andwere the new dynasties which took place of the Pallavas and the Chalukyas.
- (vii) Whenever the Samantas found the ruler weak and inefficient, they tried to become

(viii) The untouchables during this period were treated badly and were expected to live on the outskirts of the city.

Ans. (i) Lichchavi

(ii) Xuan Zang

(iii) Pulakeshin II

(iv) Pallavas, Chalukyas

(v) Krishna, Tungabhadra

(vi) Rashtrakuta, Chola

(vii) independent

(viii) outskirts

III. TRUE/FALSE

State whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F).

- (i) The military leaders collected revenue from the land granted to them and spent this on their families.

(ii) The rulers of dakshinapatha surrendered to Samudragupta after being defeated and were never allowed to rule again.

(iii) The descendants of the Kushanas and Shakas ruled the outlying areas during this period.

(iv) Harshavaradhana became the king of Thanesar after both his father and elder brother died.

(v) Harshavardhana never got success in the east.

(vi) Aihole was an important centre of trade.

(vii) The capital cities of the Pallavas and Chalukyas were not very prosperous. (viii) The prathama-kulika meant the chief craftsman.

Ans. (i) False, (ii) False, (iii) True, (v) True, (vi) False, (vii) True, (viii) False.

IV. MATCHING SKILL

Match the items in column A correctly with those given in column B.

Column A

Column B

(i) Kalidasa

(a) The court poet of Pulakeshin II

(ii) Aryabhatta

(b) The court poet of Samudragupta

(iii) Ravikirti

(c) A renowned poet during this period

(iv) Harishena

(d) The court poet of Harshavardhana

(v) Banabhatta

(e) An astronomer

Ans. (i)–(c), (ii)–(e), (iii)–(a), (iv)–(b), (v)–

(d). V. VERY SHORT ANSWER TYPE

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Samudragupta? [Imp.]

Ans: He was a famous ruler of the Gupta dynasty.

2. How do we know about him?

Ans: We know about him from a long inscription, which is a poem in Sanskrit composed by his court poet, Harishena.

3. Where is this poem inscribed?

Ans: This poem is inscribed on the Ashokan pillar at Allahabad.

4. What were prashastis?

[V. Imp.]

Ans: Prashastis were poems composed by the court poets in praise of their rulers.

5. During which dynasty did prashastis gain importance?

Ans: Prashastis gained importance during the Gupta dynasty.

6. What does Samudragupta's prashasti tell us?

Ans: Samudragupta's prashasti tells us that he was a great warrior who won several battles.

7. Name the four different kinds of rulers described by Samudragupta's court poet, Harishena. [V. Imp.]

Ans: • The rulers of Aryavarta

- The ruler of Dakshinapatha
- The inner circle of neighbouring states
- The rulers of the outlying areas.

8. Banabhatta wrote Harshavardhana's biography. What is the name of this book? [V. Imp.] Ans:

The biography written by Banabhatta is called the Harshacharita.

9. In which language is Harshacharita written?

Ans: Harshacharita is written in Sanskrit.

10. When did Harshavardhana become the ruler of Kanauj?

Ans: Harshavardhana became the ruler of Kanauj after his brother-in-law was killed by the ruler of Bengal.

11. What happened when Harshavardhana tried to cross the Narmada?

Ans: He was stopped by Pulakeshin II, the best known Chalukya ruler

12. Name the capital of the Pallavas.

Ans: Kanchipuram.

13. Name the capital of the Chalukyas.

Ans: Aihole.

14. From whom did Pulakeshin get the kingdom?

Ans: He got the kingdom from his uncle.

15. Harishena held more than one offices? Name them.

Ans: Harishena held more than one offices. Besides being a maha-danda-nayaka, he was a Kumar-amatya and a sandhi-vigrahika.

16. What was the nagaram?

Ans: It was an organisation of merchants.

17. Who controlled the local assemblies?

Ans: Wealthy and powerful landowners and merchants controlled the local assemblies

18. How do we know about the lives of ordinary people during this period?

Ans: We come to know about the lives of ordinary people from plays like Kalidasa's Abhijnana Shakuntalam and accounts left by Chinese pilgrims like Fa Xian.

VI. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. How does Samudragupta's prashasti describe him? [V. Imp.]

Ans: In Samudragupta's prashasti the poet-praised him in glowing terms. According to this prashasti, Samudragupta was a great warrior who won victories in battles. He was a learned king and the best of poets. He was equal to the gods. He was a brave ruler of the Gupta dynasty whose area of influence spread far and wide.

2. Describe Samudragupta as a warrior as mentioned in the prashasti?

Ans: Samudragupta was a great ruler of the Gupta dynasty. He was a brave warrior too who won victories in battles. His body was most charming and covered with the plenteous beauty of the marks of hundreds of scars caused by battle-axes, arrows, spikes, spears, barbed darts, swords, iron clubs, javelins, barbed arrows, long arrows and many other weapons.

3. What was the difference between the way in which Samudragupta treated the rulers of Aryavarta and Dakshinapatha?

Ans: Samudragupta's policies towards the rulers of Aryavarta were very strict. All the nine rulers were brutally defeated and their kingdoms were made a part of Samudragupta's empire. But so far the rulers of Dakshinapatha were concerned, Samudragupta maintained a submissive attitude towards them. There were twelve rulers who surrendered to Samudragupta after being defeated and he then allowed all of them to rule again.

4. What do you know about Harshavardhana? Describe the main events of his career. [V. Imp.]

Ans:

- Harshavardhana ruled nearly 1400 years ago.
- We come to know about him from his biography, written by his court poet Banabhatta. This biography is known as Harshacharita which is in Sanskrit.
- Another source to know about him is Xuan Zang's account which he left behind him.
- Harshavardhana became the ruler of Thanesar after both his father and elder brother died.
- He took over the kingdom of Kanauj after his brother-in-law was killed by the ruler of Bengal.
- Harsha led an army against the ruler of Bengal.

- He got success in the east and conquered both Magadha and Bengal. But he had to face defeat when he tried to cross the Narmada.

5. What do you know about the genealogies of the Guptas? Mention in brief.

Ans: We come to know about the genealogy of the Guptas from the prashastis, which mention Samudragupta's great grandfather, grandfather, father and mother. His mother, Kumara Devi belonged to the Lichchhavi gana, while his father, Chandragupta was the first Gupta ruler who adopted the grand title of maharaj- adhiraja. Samudragupta too used that title. His great grandfather and grandfather are mentioned simply as maharajas.

Samudragupta also added the name of his son Chandragupta II in the genealogy.

Chandragupta II led an expedition to western India where he defeated the last of the Shakas.

6. Pulakeshin II was the best-known Chalukya ruler. Explain in brief. [V. Imp.]

Ans: We come to know about Pulakeshin II from a prashasti, composed by his court poet Ravikirti. According to this prashasti Pulakeshin got the kingdom from his uncle. He led expeditions along both the west and the east coasts. Besides, he checked the advance of Harshvardhana when he tried to cross the Narmada to march into the Deccan. The prashasti also tells us that Pulakeshin also attacked the Pallava king, who took shelter behind the walls of Kanchipuram.

7. What was the condition of ordinary people in the kingdoms? Describe in brief.

Ans: The condition of ordinary people has been highlighted in the plays and accounts left by the foreign travellers especially the Chinese pilgrims such as Fa Xian.

- Kalidasa's plays throw light on life in the king's court. In his plays the king and most brahmins are shown speaking Sanskrit while women and men other, than the king and brahmins use Prakrit.
- The accounts of Fa Xian throw light on the plight of the untouchables. These untouchables were treated badly by the powerful and influential people of the kingdom. They were strictly instructed to live on the outskirts of the city.

8. The king's army on the move has been vividly described by Banabhatta. Write the whole description in your own words. [V. Imp.]

Ans: The king used to travel with a lot of things which included weapons and things of daily use such as pots, pans, furniture, golden footstools, food, etc.

- He was also accompanied by animals such as goat, deer, rabbits, etc. These were carts also carrying vegetables and spices.
- The king's huge army was accompanied by a band of musicians.
- Villagers brought gifts of curds, gur and flowers as for the king. They also provided fodder for the animals.
- After the army passed, the whole environment was seen filled with dust. Elephants often trampled down the huts of villagers.

VII. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Describe Samudragupta's policies towards the

- rulers of Aryavarta
- rulers of Dakshinapatha
- inner circle of neighbouring states, and
- rulers of the outlying areas. [V. Imp.]

Ans: Samudragupta was a great warrior of the Gupta dynasty. He won several battles.

In a prashasti Harishena describes four different kinds of rulers and tells us about Samudragupta's policies towards them.

- The rulers of Aryavarta. There were altogether nine rulers of Aryavarta. All of them were uprooted and their kingdoms were made a part of Samudragupta's empire.
- The ruler of Dakshinapatha. There were twelve rulers of Dakshinapatha. All of them were defeated by Samudragupta. These defeated rulers surrendered to Samudragupta. But Samudragupta showed leniency. He allowed them to rule again.
- The inner circle of neighbouring states. The rulers of these states including Assam, Coastal Bengal, Nepal and a number of gana Sanghain the northwest brought tribute to Samudragupta. They also followed his orders and attended his court.
- The rulers of outlying areas. They were perhaps the descendants of the Kushanas and Shakas and the ruler of Sri Lanka. They submitted to Samudragupta and offered daughters in marriage.

2. Who were the Pallavas and Chalukyas? Describe them in detail. [V. Imp.]

Ans: In South India during this period there were two famous ruling dynasties known as the Pallavas and Chalukyas.

- The Pallavas. The kingdom of the Pallavas spread from the region around their capital, Kanchipuram to the Kaveri delta.
- The Chalukyas. The kingdom of the Chalukyas was centred around the Raichur Doab, between the rivers, Krishna and Tungabhadra. Their capital was at Aihole. It was an important trading centre. Besides, it was a religious centre too. There were a number of temples there.

The Chalukyas and Pallavas were very much competitive. They were great rivals. They frequently seized one another's lands. Their main target were the capital cities because they were rich towns.

The name and fame of the Chalukyas and Pallavas did not last long. They lost their influence and finally they were replaced by the Rashtrakuta and Chola dynasties.