

The Making Of Regional Cultures

1. Match the following :

Anantavarnam	– Kerala
Jagannatha	– Bengal
Mahodayapurma	– Orissa
Lilatilakam	– Kangra
Mangalakavya	– Puri
Miniature	– Kerala

Answer:

Anantavarnam	– Orissa
Jagannatha	– Kangra
Mahodayapurma	– Kerala
Lilatilakam	– Kerala
Mangalakavya	– Bengal
Miniature	– Kangra

2. What is Manipravalam? Name a book written in that language.

Answer: Maftipravalam is a language. The name of a book written in this language is Lilatilakam.

3. Who were the major patrons of Kathak?

Answer: The Mughals were the major patrons of Kathak.

4. What are the important architectural features of the temples of Bengal?

Answer: Important architectural features of the temples of Bengal are:

- Temples began to copy the double-roofed or four-roofed structure of the thatched huts.
- In the comparatively more complex four-roofed structure, four triangular roofs placed on the four walls move up to converge on a curved line or a point.
 - Temples were usually built on a square platform.
 - The interior was relatively plain but the outer walls of many temples were decorated with paintings, ornamental tiles or terracotta tablets.

5. Why did minstrels proclaim the achievements of heroes?

Answer: Minstrels used to recite poems and songs which depicted the stories of the "Rajputs" heroic deeds. By reciting such poems and songs these minstrels inspired others to follow the examples of Rajputs. Ordinary people were also attracted by these stories.

6. Why do we know much more about the cultural practices of rulers than about those of ordinary people?

Answer: The cultural practices of rulers were carefully preserved in palaces for centuries. Hence we know much more about them. Ordinary men and women also painted on pots, walls, floors, cloth. But they did not survive for long.

7. Why did conquerors try to control the temple of Jagannatha at Puri?

Answer: The temple of Jagannatha at Puri gained importance as a centre of pilgrimage. Its authority in social and political matters also increased. Hence, conquerors tried to establish control over the temple. They felt that this would make their rule acceptable to the local people.

8. Why were temples built in Bengal?

Answer: Temple building in Bengal from the late 15th century gained momentum in the 19th century. Individuals or groups built temples to demonstrate their power and affluence. Some of the temples got constructed with the support of several low social groups. Some families belonging to these social groups availed of the new economic opportunities with the arrival of the European trading companies with the improvement in their social and economic position they also built temples to show their status. The local deities once worshipped in thatched huts in villages were now gained recognition of the Brahmanas. This recognition shifted them from the thatched huts to brick-built temples.

9. Describe the most important features of the culture of your region, focussing on buildings, performing arts and painting.

Answer: I live in Delhi. Right from the beginning it has been a land of mixed cultures. In old days, it was invaded by a number of foreign rulers. Some of them stayed here for sometime and some settled down permanently. They all affected its culture, language, religion, society, architecture, art and painting. Still we have buildings and monuments built by Mughal emperors, slave emperors, Rajput rulers and many more. We have temples, mosques and many other such places constructed by different rulers. Differences of cultures can still be seen in the areas of old Delhi and new Delhi.

10. Do you use different languages for (a) speaking, (b) reading, (c) writing? Find out about one major composition in language that you use and discuss why you find it interesting.

Answer: (a) For speaking I use Hindi and Punjabi.

(b) For reading I use Hindi and English.

(c) For writing I use Hindi and English.

Thus, I use different languages for speaking, reading and writing.

11. Choose one state each from north, west, south, east and central India. For each of these, prepare a list of foods that are commonly consumed, highlighting any differences and similarities that you notice.

Ans.

States	List of Foods
• Punjab (North)	Makke ki roti, Sarason ka saag, Rajma-chawal, Dal-chapatis
• Rajasthan (West)	Dalia, dal and Churma, Mama Kachori
• Kerala (South)	Rice and fish, Idli-Sambhar, Dosa, Dhokla
• West Bengal (East)	Rice and fish
• Madhya Pradesh (Central)	Dal-chapatis, chawal-dal

12. Choose another set of five states from each these regions and prepare a list of clothes that are generally worn by women and men in each. Discuss your findings.

Ans.

States	Clothes worn by men	Clothes worn by women
• Jammu & Kashmir (North)		
• Orissa (East)		
• Tamil Nadu (South)		
• Gujarat (West)		
• Chhattisgarh (Central)		

Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who was Anantavarman?

Answer: Anantavarman was one of the most important rulers of the Ganga dynasty in the 12th century.

2. Whom did King Anangabhima III dedicate his kingdom to? What did he proclaim himself?

Answer: King Anangabhima III dedicated his kingdom to Purushottama Jagannath and proclaimed himself as the deputy of the god.

3. What was called Rajputana by the British? [V. Imp.]

Answer: In the 19th century, the region that constitutes most of the present-day Rajasthan was called Rajputana by the British.

4. How were the Rajput rulers most distinctive?

Ans. The Rajput rulers were the apostles of bravery. They fought valiantly and often chose death on the battlefield rather than face defeat.

5. Define the term Kathak.

Answer: The term Kathaks is derived from katha, a word used in Sanskrit and other languages for the story.

6. Who were the Kathaks?

Answer: The kathaks were originally a caste of story-tellers in temples of north India who beautified their performances with gestures and songs.

7. Where did Kathak develop?

Answer: Kathak developed in the courts of Rajasthan (Jaipur) and Lucknow.

8. Under whose patronage did kathak grow into a major art form?

Answer: Kathak grew into a major art form under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh.

9. What are miniatures? [Imp.]

Answer: Miniatures are small-sized paintings, generally done in water colour on cloth or paper.

10. What distinguished Kangra painting from the paintings?

Answer: Soft colours including cool blues and greens, and a lyrical treatment of themes distinguished Kangra painting from other paintings.

11. On what objects do we find paintings of ordinary people?

Answer: We find paintings of ordinary people on pots, walls, floors and cloth.

12. Who were the Nathas? .

Answer: The Nathas were the ascetics who engaged in a variety of yogic practices.

13. Why was the second category of the early Bengali literature not written down?

Answer: The second category of the early Bengali literature was circulated orally and therefore it was not written down.

14. What are the chief food items of the Bengalis?

Answer: Rice and fish are the chief food items of the Bengalis.

15. What do terracotta plaques on the walls of temples and viharas depict?[V. Imp.]

Answer: They depict scenes of fish being dressed and taken to the market in baskets.

16. Why were the Bengal Brahmanas allowed to eat fish?

Answer: The Bengal Brahmanas were allowed to eat fish because fish was the main item in the local diet.

17. What is the Brihaddharma Parana?

Answer: It is a thirteenth-century Sanskrit text from Bengal.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Mention the role of the Chercis in the development of Malayalam. [V. Imp.]

Answer: The Chera kingdom of Mahodayapuram was established in the ninth century in the south-western part of the peninsula, part of present-day Kerala. It is likely that Malayalam was spoken in this area. The rulers introduced the Malayalam language and script in their inscriptions.

2. How did the Cheras draw upon Sanskritic traditions?

Answer: The temple theatre of Kerala borrowed stories from the Sanskrit epics. The first literary works in Malayalam, dated to about the 12th century, are directly indebted to Sanskrit. The Lilatilakam, a fourteenth century text, dealt with grammar and poetics and was composed in Manipravalam – literally, 'diamonds and corals' referring to the two languages namely Sanskrit and the regional language.

3. How did regional cultures evolve? [V. Imp.]

Answer: Regional cultures today are often the product of complex processes of intermixing of local traditions with ideas from other parts of the sub-continent. Some traditions appear specific to some regions, others seem to be similar across regions and yet others derive from older practices in a particular area, but take a new form in other regions.

4. How are women depicted in the stories about Rajput heroes?

Answer: Sometimes these stories depict women as the cause for conflict, as men fought with one another to either win or protect them (women). Women are also depicted as following their heroic husbands in both life and death. We are familiar with the stories about the practice of sati or the immolation of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands. So, those who followed the heroic ideal often had to pay for it with their lives.

5. Mention all the six dance forms that are recognised as classical.

Answer: Six classical dances are :

- Kathak (North India)
- Bharatnatyam (Tamil Nadu)
- Kathakali (Kerala)
- Odissi (Orissa)
- Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh)
- Manipuri (Manipur).

6. How did miniature painting develop under the Mughal patronage? [V. Imp.]

Answer: Miniatures are small-sized paintings, generally done in water colour on cloth or paper. The earliest miniatures were on palm leaves or wood. The Mughal emperors especially Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan patronised highly skilled painters. These painters primarily illustrated manuscripts containing historical accounts and poetry. These were generally painted in brilliant colours and portrayed court scenes, scenes of battle or hunting and other aspects of social life. They were often exchanged as gifts and were viewed only by the emperor and his close associates.

7. Write a brief note on early Bengali literature.

Answer: There are two categories of early Bengali literature:

- The first includes translations of the Sanskrit epics, the Mangalakavyas, auspicious poems, dealing with local deities, and Bhakti literature such as the biographies of Chaitanyadeva, the leader of the Vaishnava Bhakti movement.
- The second includes Nath literature such as the songs of Maynamati and Gopichandra, stories concerning the worship of Dharma Thakur, and fairy tales, Folk tales and ballads. The texts belonging to the first category are written while those belonging to the second category circulated orally.

8. Who were the pirs? What was their position in the society? [V. Imp.]

Answer: Pirs were spiritual leaders having supernatural powers. They also functioned as teachers and adjudicators. When early settlers in Bengal sought some order and assurance in the unstable conditions of the new settlements pirs favoured them and gave them full moral support. People viewed them as respectful figures. The cult of pirs became very popular and their shrines can be found everywhere in Bengal.

9. What is the significance of fish in Bengal? [Imp.]

Answer: Bengal is a riverine plain which produces abundant rice and fish. These two items are important foods of the Bengalis. Fishing has always been an important occupation and Bengali literature contains several references to fish. What is more, terracotta plaques on the walls of temples and viharas depict scenes of fish being dressed and taken to the market in baskets. Due to the popularity of fish in the local diet the Bengal Brahmanas also started eating fish. The Brihaddharma Purana, a thirteenth-century Sanskrit text from Bengal, permitted them to eat certain varieties of fish.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. What do you know about Rajput tradition of heroism? Write in brief [V. Imp.]

Answer: Rajputs are closely associated with the culture of Rajasthan. It is they who made this culture distinctive. The cultural traditions of Rajasthan were linked with the ideals and aspirations of rulers. From about the eighth century, most of the present-day Rajasthan was ruled by various Rajput families. The name of Prithviraj is worth-mentioning because he was one of the ablest Rajput rulers. These Rajput rulers are known for their bravery and sense of sacrifice. They cherished the ideal of the hero who fought valiantly, often choosing death on the battlefield rather than face defeat. Stories about Rajput heroes were recorded in poems and songs, which were recited by specially trained minstrels. These preserved the memories of heroes and were expected to inspire others to follow their examples. Ordinary people also liked these stories which often depicted dramatic situations and a range of strong emotions in the forms of loyalty, friendship, love, valour, anger etc.

2. Give a detailed description of Kathak, a popular classical dance form of north India. [V. Imp.]

Answer: The term Kathak is derived from Katha, a word used in Sanskrit and other languages for story. The Kathaks were originally a caste of story-tellers in temples of north India, who beautified their performances with gestures and songs. Kathak began evolving into a distinct mode of dance in the 15th and 16th centuries with the spread of the Bhakti movement. The legends of Radha-Krishna were enacted in folk plays known as rasa lila, which combined folk dance with the basic gestures of the Kathak story-tellers. Kathak was performed in the Mughal court. Here, it acquired its present features and developed into a form of dance with a distinctive style. Afterwards, it developed in two traditions known as gharanas—one in the courts of Rajasthan, Jaipur and the other in Lucknow. Kathak grew into a major art form only under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh. By the third quarter of the 19th century it was firmly established as a dance form not only in these two regions but also in the adjoining areas of present-day Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Emphasis was laid on intricate and rapid footwork, elaborate costumes as well as on the enactment of stories. Although most British administrators never favoured Kathak, it survived and continued to be performed by courtesans. It was recognised as a classical dance form after the country got independence.

Q.3 How did Bengali develop as a regional language?

[Imp.]

Ans: Bengali is said to have been derived from Sanskrit but early Sanskrit texts derived it. Now the question arises how did this language develop. From the fourth-third centuries BCE, commercial ties developed between Bengal and Magadha which may have led to the growing influence of Sanskrit. During the fourth century the Gupta rulers established political control over north Bengal and began to settle Brahmanas in this area. Thus, the linguistic and cultural influence from the mid-Ganga valley became stronger. In the seventh century the Chinese traveller Xuan Zang observed that languages related to Sanskrit were in use all over Bengal. From the eighth century, Bengal became the centre of a regional kingdom under the Palas. Between the 14th and 15th centuries Bengal was ruled by Sultans. In 1586, when Akbar conquered Bengal, it formed the nucleus of the Bengal Suba, while Persian was the language of administration, Bengali developed as a regional language.

By the 15th century the Bengali group of dialects came to be united by a common literary language based on the spoken language of the western part of the region, now known as West Bengal. Thus, although Bengali is derived from Sanskrit, it passed through several stages of evolution. A wide range of non-Sanskrit words, derived from tribal languages, Persian and European language, have become part of modern Bengali.