

Chapter – 9

New Empires and Kingdom

2marks:

1.Mention 3 authors who wrote about Harshavardhana.

Answer:

The 3 authors were.

1.Banabhatta

2.Xuan Zang

3.Ravikirti

2. What changes do you find in the army of this time?

Answer:

Like earlier rulers, some of these kings maintained a well-organised army, with elephants, chariots, cavalry and foot soldiers. Besides, there were military leaders who provided the king with troops whenever they needed them. They were not paid regular salaries. Instead, some of them received grants of land. They collected revenue from the land and used this to maintain soldiers and horses, and provide equipment for warfare.

3. What were the new administrative arrangements in this period?

Answer:

1. Administrative posts turned out to be hereditary

2. On some occasions, one man had multiple posts.

4. What do you think Arvind would have to do if he was acting as Samudragupta?

Answer:

Give importance to science, astronomy, music and art.

5. Do you think ordinary people would have read and understood the prashastis? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

Ordinary people would not have read and understood the prashastis, since Sanskrit is not the language of ordinary people.

6. If you had to make a genealogy for yourself, who are the people you would include in it? How many generations would you like to show? Make a chart and fill it.

Answer:

It is a class activity for the students.

7.How do you think wars affect the lives of ordinary people today?

Answer:

- 1.It affects the livelihood of people
- 2.It affects the trade and business
- 3.People may incur a personal loss due to the loss of lives of near and dear ones and the loss of property.

4marks:

1. Who composed Samudragupta's prashasti, and what is the significance of a prashasti in historical records?

Answer:

Samudragupta's prashasti was composed by the poet and minister Harishena. A prashasti is a Sanskrit inscription "in praise of" a ruler and serves as an important historical record, providing insights into the ruler's achievements, character, and policies.

2. Describe the different regions mentioned in Samudragupta's prashasti and explain the varying policies he adopted towards them.

Answer:

Samudragupta's prashasti mentions four kinds of rulers: those in Aryavarta, Dakshinapatha, inner circle states, and outlying areas. He uprooted some in Aryavarta, allowed defeated rulers in Dakshinapatha to continue ruling, received tribute from the inner circle, and accepted the submission of rulers in the outlying areas.

3. Explain the hereditary nature of administrative posts during the Gupta period. Provide an example from the text.

Answer: In the Gupta period, some administrative posts became

hereditary, passing from fathers to sons. An example is Harishena, who held the position of maha-danda-nayaka (chief judicial officer), inheriting it from his father. One illustrative example of this hereditary nature is evident in the case of Harishena, a prominent figure during the Gupta era. Harishena assumed the crucial role of maha-danda-nayaka, signifying the chief judicial officer in the king's court. What makes his case significant is that he inherited this esteemed position from his father, thereby highlighting the hereditary nature of administrative offices within the Gupta dynasty.

4. Briefly narrate the genealogy of Samudragupta as mentioned in the prashasti.

Answer:

Samudragupta's genealogy includes his great grandfather and grandfather referred to as maha-rajas, his father Chandragupta, and his mother Kumara devi from the Lichchhavi gana. The family gradually rose to importance, culminating in Samudragupta's rule.

5. What challenges did Harshavardhana face in his attempts to expand his kingdom, and who thwarted his ambitions?

Answer:

Harshavardhana faced resistance in the Deccan when attempting to

cross the Narmada. His ambitions were thwarted by Pulakeshin II, a ruler of the Chalukya dynasty.

6. Discuss the role of samantas in the Gupta period and their impact on the stability of rulers.

Answer:

Samantas were military leaders who provided troops to kings in exchange for grants of land. Their influence often led to challenges for rulers, as some samantas sought independence when rulers were weak.

7. How did the Pallavas and Chalukyas engage with each other, and who was Pulakeshin II?

Answer:

The Pallavas and Chalukyas frequently raided each other's territories. Pulakeshin II, a Chalukya ruler, is known for his prashasti composed by Ravikirti, which mentions his victories over Harsha and the Pallava king.

8. Describe the impact of the king's army on ordinary people, as depicted in Banabhatta's account.

Answer:

Banabhatta's account illustrates the massive size of the king's army, its equipment, and the challenges faced by ordinary people, such as destruction of villages and the need to provide hospitality and resources along the way.

7marks:

1.Discuss the role of prashastis in shaping the historical narrative of Gupta rulers. How did Harishena, through Samudragupta's prashasti, contribute to the glorification of the Gupta dynasty?

Answer:

Prashastis, being Sanskrit inscriptions that eulogize rulers, are invaluable sources for constructing historical narratives. Harishena's prashasti dedicated to Samudragupta provides a multifaceted portrayal of the Gupta ruler. Through vivid descriptions, Harishena not only glorifies Samudragupta's military prowess but also extols his scholarly achievements and cultural contributions. The prashasti acts as a propaganda tool, shaping a positive historical image of the Gupta dynasty, emphasizing its strength, intellect, and cultural patronage.

2.Explore the geopolitical strategies employed by Samudragupta in his interactions with rulers in Aryavarta, Dakshinapatha, the inner circle, and outlying areas, as outlined in Harishena's prashasti.

Answer:

Samudragupta's geopolitical strategies, as outlined in Harishena's prashasti, exhibit diplomatic finesse and military acumen. In

Aryavarta, he employed a policy of assimilation, uprooting rulers and integrating their kingdoms into his empire. In Dakshinapatha, defeated rulers were allowed to continue ruling, showcasing a blend of military strength and diplomatic leniency. The inner circle states brought tribute, indicating a balance of power and authority. The rulers of outlying areas, including descendants of the Kushanas, submitted, showcasing the extension of Gupta influence. This strategic approach demonstrates Samudragupta's ability to adapt to diverse geopolitical scenarios.

3. Provide an in-depth analysis of Samudragupta's genealogy as mentioned in the prashasti. How did familial connections contribute to the consolidation of Gupta power?

Answer:

Samudragupta's genealogy, detailed in the prashasti, serves as a crucial lens into the consolidation of Gupta power. Starting with his great grandfather and grandfather mentioned as maha-rajas, the lineage gradually rose to prominence. Chandragupta's adoption of the title maharajadhiraja marked a significant shift, indicating the increasing consolidation of power within the Gupta family. The familial connections, including his mother Kumara devi, belonging to the Lichchhavi gana, showcase strategic alliances that strengthened the Gupta dynasty's political and social standing.

4.Evaluate the reasons behind the challenges faced by Harshavardhana in expanding his kingdom, emphasizing the role of Pulakeshin II. How did this interaction shape regional politics during that period?

Answer:

Harshavardhana's challenges in the Deccan, particularly in facing Pulakeshin II, highlight the complex regional dynamics of the time. Pulakeshin II, a Chalukya ruler, successfully impeded Harshavardhana's attempts to expand southward. This interaction reveals regional rivalries, differing political ambitions, and the contest for territorial control. The clash between Harshavardhana and Pulakeshin II significantly shaped regional politics, influencing subsequent power shifts and contributing to the intricate tapestry of medieval Indian history.

5.Examine the significance of samantas in Gupta governance, elucidating their role in military support and the potential challenges they posed to rulers. Provide historical examples to support your analysis.

Answer:

Samantas played a pivotal role in Gupta governance by providing military support to rulers in exchange for land grants. This system aimed to ensure a standing army without a regular salary burden.

However, the influence of samantas posed challenges, as their power and autonomy could lead to attempts at independence during periods of ruler weakness. A historical example is the potential for samantas to assert independence when rulers were less powerful, showcasing the delicate balance of power and potential conflicts within the ruling structure. The samanta system reflected both the strength and vulnerability of Gupta rulership.

6.Evaluate the economic and social impacts of the king's army movements, as described by Banabhatta. How did the army's large-scale presence affect the livelihoods of ordinary people and the overall socio-economic fabric of the regions visited?

Answer:

Banabhatta's vivid account of the king's army movements provides insights into their significant economic and social repercussions. The army's large-scale presence resulted in a trail of destruction, with elephants trampling down villages and the commotion scaring animals. This led to economic hardships for ordinary people, as their huts were destroyed, and the disruption affected daily life.

Additionally, the army's need for hospitality placed a burden on villagers, who had to provide essentials such as curds, gur, and flowers. This dynamic illustrates the intricate relationship between military activities, economic stability, and social well-being.

7. Discuss the role of local assemblies, such as sabha, ur, and nagaram, in southern kingdoms during the Gupta period. How did these assemblies contribute to local governance, and what was their impact on societal structures?

Answer:

Local assemblies, including sabha, ur, and nagaram, played pivotal roles in southern kingdoms during the Gupta period. Sabhas, consisting of Brahmin landowners, were responsible for overseeing various aspects like irrigation and agricultural operations through sub-committees. Urs, village assemblies in non-Brahmin areas, and nagaram, organizations of merchants, contributed to local governance. These assemblies were often controlled by influential individuals, impacting societal structures by consolidating power in the hands of the rich and powerful. Their continuity for centuries reflects their enduring influence on local administration.

8. Explore the dual linguistic representation in Kalidasa's plays, where the king and most Brahmins speak Sanskrit, while women and others use Prakrit. What cultural and social implications can be drawn from this linguistic distinction, and how does it reflect the social hierarchy of the time?

Answer:

Kalidasa's linguistic representation, where Sanskrit is reserved for

kings and Brahmins while others speak Prakrit, holds cultural and social significance. This linguistic divide reflects the societal hierarchy of the time, emphasizing the elite status of the king and Brahmins who were associated with Sanskrit, a language often considered sacred. The use of Prakrit by women and non-elites underscores a social and cultural distinction, showcasing a linguistic hierarchy that mirrored broader societal divisions. This linguistic representation in Kalidasa's plays thus serves as a cultural mirror reflecting social stratification and linguistic norms prevalent during the Gupta period.

1. State whether true or false:

(a) Harishena composed a prashasti in praise of Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni.

(b) The rulers of Aryavarta brought tribute for Samudragupta.

(c) There were twelve rulers in Dakshinapatha

(d) Taxila and Madurai were important centres under the control of the Gupta rulers.

(e) Aihole was the capital of the Pallavas.

(f) Local assemblies functioned for several centuries in south India.

Answer:

(a) Harishena composed a prashasti in praise of Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni. – False

(b) The rulers of Aryavarta brought tribute for Samudragupta.- False

(c) There were twelve rulers in Dakshinapatha – True

(d) Taxila and Madurai were important centres under the control of the Gupta rulers.- False

(e) Aihole was the capital of the Pallavas.- False

(f) Local assemblies functioned for several centuries in south India. – True

Fill in the blanks:

1. Samudragupta's prashasti was composed by the poet and minister _____.

Answer:

Harishena

2. The term "prashasti" is a Sanskrit word meaning 'in praise _____.'

Answer:

of

3. Samudragupta's prashasti provides insights into his policies towards rulers in Aryavarta, Dakshinapatha, inner circle states, and _____ areas.

Answer:

outlying

4. Harshavardhana's court poet, _____, wrote the Harshacharita in Sanskrit.

Answer:

Banabhatta

5. Harsha's brother-in-law was the ruler of _____, and he was killed by the ruler of Bengal.

Answer:

Kanauj

6. Pulakeshin II, a Chalukya ruler, played a significant role in thwarting Harshavardhana's attempt to cross the _____.

Answer:

Narmada

7. In the Gupta period, some administrative posts became _____, passing from fathers to sons.

Answer:

hereditary

8. _____ were military leaders in the Gupta period who provided troops in exchange for land grants.

Answer:

Samantas

9. Local assemblies in southern kingdoms, such as sabha, ur, and _____, played pivotal roles in governance.

Answer:

nagaram

10. In Kalidasa's plays, Sanskrit is spoken by the king and most Brahmins, while women and others use _____.

Answer:

Prakrit

Multiple choice:

1. Who composed Samudragupta's prashasti, a special kind of inscription 'in praise of' the king?

A) Chandragupta

B) Harishena

C) Pulakeshin II

D) Banabhatta

Answer:

B) Harishena

2. What does the term "prashasti" mean in Sanskrit?

A) Victory

B) Conquest

C) In praise of

D) Royal decree

Answer:

C) In praise of

3. Harshavardhana's court poet, Banabhatta, wrote which Sanskrit biography?

A) Ramayana

B) Mahabharata

C) Harshacharita

D) Arthashastra

Answer:

C) Harshacharita

4. Who successfully stopped Harshavardhana from crossing the Narmada during his attempt to march into the Deccan?

A) Pulakeshin II

B) Samudragupta

C) Chandragupta II

D) Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni

Answer:

A) Pulakeshin II

5. In the Gupta period, what term is used for military leaders who provided troops in exchange for land grants?

- A) Rajputs**
- B) Samantas**
- C) Maharajas**
- D) Kayasthas**

Answer:

- B) Samantas**

6. What was the primary role of local assemblies like sabha, ur, and nagaram in southern kingdoms during the Gupta period?

- A) Military command**
- B) Trade regulation**
- C) Governance**
- D) Religious ceremonies**

Answer:

- C) Governance**

7. Kalidasa's plays depict linguistic distinctions, where Sanskrit is spoken by kings and Brahmins, and others speak:

- A) Pali**
- B) Prakrit**

C) Tamil

D) Kannada

Answer:

B) Prakrit

8. What term refers to the hereditary administrative posts during the Gupta period?

A) Samantas

B) Maharajas

C) Heredity officials

D) Kayasthas

Answer:

C) Heredity officials

9. The Pallavas and Chalukyas were prominent ruling dynasties in which part of India during this period?

A) Northern India

B) Western India

C) Eastern India

D) Southern India

Answer:

D) Southern India

10. What term is associated with the era beginning in 58 BCE and is traditionally linked to Gupta king Chandragupta II?

A) Vikram Samvat

B) Gupta Samrajya

C) Maurya Era

D) Harsha Era

Answer:

A) Vikram Samvat

Summary:

In Chapter 9 of the history book, "New Empires and Kingdoms," the focus is on the Gupta period and the expansion of empires in ancient India. The chapter explores the significance of prashastis, Sanskrit inscriptions praising rulers, using the example of Samudragupta's prashasti composed by the poet and minister Harishena. The text sheds light on Samudragupta's policies toward various regions, including Aryavarta, Dakshinapatha, the inner circle, and outlying areas.

The narrative unfolds through discussions on genealogies, emphasizing the hereditary nature of administrative posts during the Gupta period. The chapter delves into the complexities faced by rulers like Harshavardhana and the role of Chalukya ruler Pulakeshin II in resisting expansion attempts.

Harishavardhana's rule is examined through the lens of Banabhatta's biography, the Harshacharita, offering insights into the challenges and successes of this historical figure. The text also explores the power dynamics between the Pallavas and Chalukyas in southern India during this era.