

ForumIAS

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Prelims Marathon

1st Week June, 2024

HISTORY
ECONOMICS
POLITY
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

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Buddhism (Origin, Doctrine, Schools) Jainism and Ajivika sect

Q.1) Which of the following is/are correctly matched?

1. Confucius – Japan
2. Zoroaster – Greece
3. Parmenides – Iran

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: D

Explanation: Sixth century BCE was a period of great religious upheaval. Great teachers like Confucius in China, Zoroaster in Iran, and Parmenides in Greece questioned the established socio-religious norms and focused more on ethical and moral values.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.2) The “Buddhism and Jainism” religions was/were emphasized on which of the following?

1. Violence
2. Charity
3. Frugality

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: B

Explanation: India witnessed the growth of two great alternative religions: Buddhism and Jainism. These religions emphasized that true happiness does not lie in material prosperity or performance of rituals, but in nonviolence, charity, frugality, and good social conduct.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.3) Which of the following was/were the reason/s for Intellectual Awakening in sixth century B.C?

1. State formation
2. Rigidity of Vedic religion
3. Organized Vedic religion

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: B

Explanation: Sixth century BCE was a period of intense intellectual ferment. There are several reasons for the emergence of this ferment.

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- State formation and the rigidity of the Vedic religion constrained the liberty of thought and action. A revolt against religious practice of following dogmas found its articulation in heterodox sects.
- The emergence of territorial identities accelerated the process of sociopolitical and economic changes. The elite class, disillusioned with the system in place, began to move in protest towards the heterodox religions blossoming in Magadha or middle Ganges plains.
- As the Vedic religion was not fully organized, its reach did not permeate into the society and hence people did not find it difficult to follow the newly emerging religious sects.

Source: NCERT

Q.4) With reference to ancient India, the term “Samannaphala Sutta” was related to?

- a) Buddhism
- b) Jainism
- c) Ajivika
- d) Hinduism

ANS: A

Explanation: A Buddhist text, Samannaphala Sutta, while making a reference to Ajatashatru of Magadha meeting Gautama Buddha, mentions that before his meeting, the former had a philosophical discourse with the leaders of the various sects such as Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambalin, Pakudha Kachchayana, Sanjaya Belatthiputta and Nigantha Nataputta (Mahavira).

Source: NCERT

Q.5) Who among the following was the founder of the Ajivika sect?

- a) Nanda Vaccha
- b) Kisa Samkicca
- c) Makkhali Gosala
- d) Nilakesi

ANS: A

Explanation: The Ajivikas are believed to have evolved from one of the many ascetic groups of the times. According to Buddhist records, Nanda Vaccha was considered the founder of the Ajivika sect.

Source: NCERT

Q.6) Consider the following statements regarding “Ajivikas”:

1. They were naked ascetics.
2. Sravasti was the headquarters of the Ajivika sect.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: Gosala met Mahavira for the first time in Nalanda and their friendship lasted for six years. They separated due to doctrinal differences.

- Gosala then went to Sravasti, where he was patronised by a rich potter woman called Halahala.

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- He believed in the doctrine of reanimation, and criticised and ridiculed the severe austerities of the Vedic ascetics.
- Being rival sects, both the Buddhist and Jaina accounts portray Gosala as a person of vicious character.
- Sravasti was the headquarters of the Ajivika sect. The Ajivikas were naked ascetics.

Source: NCERT

Q.7) “Humans cannot change anything by action as everything is predetermined” – view held by?

- a) Purana Kassapa
- b) Ajita Kesakambalin
- c) Makkhali Gosala
- d) Mahavira

ANS: A

Explanation: Purana Kassapa held the view that actions did not have any merit or demerit. No evil is caused by torture, hurting and killing others.

- Similarly, no merit is acquired by generosity, self-control and truthful speech.
- Humans cannot change anything by action as everything is predetermined. According to him, non action is the way out of life.

Source: NCERT

Q.8) The “Bhagavatisutra” text was related to which of the following?

- a) Buddhism
- b) Jainism
- c) Ajivika
- d) Hinduism

ANS: B

Explanation: There was intense rivalry among the various heterodox sects.

- This is evident from the various religious accounts of the period.
- Buddhist and Jaina texts not only mention other heterodox sects but also belittle them.
- For example, Bhagavatisutra, a Jaina text, provides a poor account of Makkhali Gosala.

Source: NCERT

Q.9) Which of the following was also called as “Nirgranthas”?

- a) Buddhism
- b) Jainism
- c) Ajivika
- d) Hinduism

ANS: B

Explanation: Among the various sects, the sect led by Vardhamana Mahavira (referred to as Nigantha Nataputta by Buddhist texts) bloomed into a religion called Jainism. It was earlier known as Nirgranthas (free from bonds).

Source: NCERT

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Q.10) The “Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary” is recently seen in news related to?

- a) Maharashtra
- b) Madhya Pradesh
- c) Karnataka
- d) Tamil Nadu

ANS: B

Explanation: Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary is the largest wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh. The sanctuary covers nearly 1197 km² area across three districts i.e. Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur, of Madhya Pradesh.

The entire Sanctuary is situated on a plateau, forming part of upper Vindhyan range and has a connecting forest patch with Veerangana Durgawati Sanctuary in Damoh district towards east which extends up to Bandhavgarh National Park.

Source: FORUMIAS

Revision

Q.1) With reference to ancient India, who among the following was known “maker of fords”?

- a) Buddha
- b) Mahavira
- c) Makkali Gosala
- d) Nagarjuna

ANS: B

Explanation: According to Jain tradition, Mahavira was not the founder of Jainism, but the last of the 24 Tirthankaras or ‘maker of fords’ (ford means a shallow place in river or stream to allow one to walk across).

Source: NCERT

Q.2) Who among the following tirthankaras were mentioned in the “Yajur Veda”?

- 1. Risabha
- 2. Ajitanatha
- 3. Mahavira

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: B

Explanation: According to Jaina tradition, Risabha was the founder of the sect.

- He is considered the first Tirthankara.
- Yajur Veda mentions three of the Tirthankaras, viz., Risabha, Ajitanatha and Aristanemi.

Source: NCERT

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Q.3) The famous “Digambaras and Svetambaras” were belongs to which of the following?

- a) Buddhism
- b) Jainism
- c) Ajivika
- d) Hinduism

ANS: B

Explanation: About 500 years after Mahavira’s death, in about 79 or 82 CE, a schism occurred in Jainism.

- Magadha was affected by severe famine and some of the Jaina monks under Bhadrabahu went south to maintain their strict discipline.
- They remained without garments and were known as Digambaras (space-clad or naked).
- Others stayed back under the leadership of Sthulabhadra and adopted a white garment and were known as Svetambaras (white-clad).

Source: NCERT

Q.4) The ancient text “Kalpasutra” related to which of the following?

- a) Buddhism
- b) Jainism
- c) Ajivika
- d) Hinduism

ANS: B

Explanation: The Jaina monks not only wrote religious treatises but also promoted secular literature. Acharrangasutra, Sutrakritanga, and Kalpasutra are the earliest Jaina texts.

Source: NCERT

Q.5) Who among the following was the follower of Buddhism?

- a) M K Gandhi
- b) B R Ambedkar
- c) Jawaharlal Nehru
- d) Sardar Vallabhai Patel

ANS: B

Explanation: Among the heterodox sects, Buddhism was the most popular. It went on to emerge as a powerful religion patronised by various rulers.

- It was so influential that its ideas were adopted by Asoka as a state policy.
- Though it virtually disappeared from India for nearly a millennium, it spread far and wide and is widely followed even today in the South-east and East Asian countries.
- In the mid-twentieth century it was revived in India by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Source: NCERT

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Q.6) Which of the following events were related to Buddhism?

1. Mahabhiraskramana
2. Dharmachakra-parivartana
3. Parinirvana

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: C

Explanation: Buddha cut his hair and sent it along with his discarded garments and jewellery to his father. This is known as Mahabhiraskramana or the Great Going Forth.

- After 49 days of meditation, he attained enlightenment, at the age of 35. Thereafter, he came to be called Buddha or the Enlightened. He then delivered his first sermon in a deer park in Sarnath near Varanasi. This event is described as Dharmachakra-parivartana or 'wheel of the great law'.
- At the age of 80, he passed away in Kusinagara. This is known as Parinirvana.

Source: NCERT

Q.7) Consider the following statements:

1. First Buddhist council was headed by Buddha himself.
2. In second council, Buddhism was divided into two sects.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: B

Explanation: After the death of Buddha, the tenets and other aspects of Buddhism were decided upon in the councils of Buddhist monks.

- Over a period of time, four Buddhist councils were held. The First Buddhist Council was held at Rajgriha after Buddha's death. It was headed by Upali.
- In this council, Upali recited the Vinaya Pitaka. Ananda recited Sutta Pitaka.
- The Second Buddhist Council met at Vaishali a century after Buddha's death. The Buddhist Order split into two later.

Source: NCERT

Q.8) With reference to ancient India, the term "Kathavatthu" was associated with which of the following?

- a) Buddhism
- b) Jainism
- c) Ajivika
- d) Hinduism

ANS: A

Explanation: The Second Buddhist Council met at Vaishali a century after Buddha's death. The Buddhist Order split into two later.

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- One was called the Sthaviravadins or 'Believers in the Teachings of the Elders' and the other known as Mahasanghikas or 'Members of the Great Community'.
- The Third Buddhist Council was held at Pataliputra. It was convened by Asoka.
- The Sthaviravadins established themselves strongly and expelled the heretics.
- The last section called "Kathavatthu" was added to Abhidhamma Pitaka.

Source: NCERT

Q.9) The famous "The Starving Tigress - tale" related to which of the following?

- a) Buddhism
- b) Jainism
- c) Ajivika
- d) Hinduism

ANS: A

Explanation: Born in a family renowned for purity of conduct and great spiritual devotion, the Bodhisattva became a great scholar and teacher.

- With no desire for wealth, he went to a forest and led a life of an ascetic.
- It was in this forest he encountered a starving tigress, which after giving birth to cubs was about to eat her own new born cubs for survival.
- With no food in sight, the Bodhisattva offered his body as food to the tigress out of compassion.

Source: NCERT

Q.10) The famous Mesolithic site "Langhnaj" located in which of the following state?

- a) Madhya Pradesh
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Karnataka
- d) Gujarat

ANS: D

Explanation: Mesolithic sites in India are found in Paisra (Bihar), Langhnaj (Gujarat), Baghor II, Chopani Mando, Sarai Nahar Rai, Mahadaha and Damdama (all in Uttar Pradesh), Sankanakallu and Kibbanahalli (Karnataka).

Source: NCERT

The Mauryan Empire

Q.1) Who among the following was not related to "Mauryan Empire"?

- a) Chandragupta
- b) Bimbisara
- c) Bindusara
- d) Ashoka

ANS: B

Explanation: The first three Mauryan emperors, Chandragupta, Bindusara and Ashoka, were the best known.

Source: NCERT

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Q.2) The Mahavamsa, the comprehensive historical chronicle was written in?

- a) Pali
- b) Prakrit
- c) Sanskrit
- d) Magadhi

ANS: A

Explanation: There are hardly any comprehensive contemporary accounts or literary works which refer to the Mauryan emperors though they are mentioned in various Buddhist and Jain texts as well as in some Hindu works like the brahmanas.

The Mahavamsa, the comprehensive historical chronicle in Pali from Sri Lanka, is an important additional source.

Source: NCERT

Q.3) Who among the following was deciphered the inscriptions of Brahmi script at Sanchi?

- a) James Prinsep
- b) Mortimer wheeler
- c) Alexander Cunningham
- d) Bruce Foote

ANS: A

Explanation: The reconstruction of the Mauryan period to a great extent became possible only after the Brahmi script of the inscriptions at Sanchi was deciphered by James Prinsep in 1837.

Source: NCERT

Q.4) The play “mudrarakshasa by visakhadatta” was written during the period of?

- a) Gupta period
- b) Mauryan period
- c) Shungas period
- d) Satavahana Period

ANS: A

Explanation: The play Mudrarakshasa by Visakhadatta was written during the Gupta period, sometime after the 4th century CE.

It narrates Chandragupta's accession to the throne of the Magadha Empire and the exploits of his chief advisor Chanakya or Kautilya by listing the strategies he used to counter an invasion against Chandragupta.

Source: NCERT

Q.5) The Taxila city was brought to light by the excavation carried out by?

- a) Sir John Marshall
- b) Mortimer Wheeler
- c) Alexander Cunningham
- d) Friedrich Oscar Oertel

ANS: A

Explanation: Takshashila or Taxila is situated in presentday Pakistan. Between the fifth century and fourth century BCE, it was part of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia.

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- Because of its strategic location on the trade route between the East and the West, it emerged as an important centre of learning and culture.
- Students came from far and wide to Taxila in search of knowledge. The city was brought to light by the excavation carried out in the 1940s by Sir John Marshall.

Source: NCERT

Q.6) With reference to mahajanapadas period, the term “karsa” was associated with which of the following?

- a) Coins
- b) War materials
- c) Spies
- d) Traders

ANS: A

Explanation: The earliest coins in India are traced to the period of the mahajanapadas. The Indian word for coin karsa is of Persian origin.

The coins might have been inspired by the Persian coins. The existence of coins in that period suggests trade links between India and Persia.

Source: NCERT

Q.7) With reference to mauryan period, the term “satrap” was associated with?

- a) Emperor
- b) King
- c) Governor
- d) Village head

ANS: C

Explanation: A governor of an ancient Persian province was called a satrap. These areas ruled by satraps were called "satrapies".

- The Persian emperor Cyrus the Great first chose satraps to rule individual provinces, around 530 BCE.
- Each satrap controlled a specific amount of land, collecting taxes and maintaining law and order.

Source: NCERT

Q.8) Who among the following king of mauryan kingdom defeated the Alexander’s general Seleucus?

- a) Chandragupta
- b) Bindusara
- c) Ashoka
- d) Kala asoka

ANS: A

Explanation: After the death of Alexander, Seleucus had established his kingdom extending up to Punjab.

- Chandragupta defeated him in a battle some time before 301 BCE and drove him out of the Punjab region.
- The final agreement between the two was probably not too acrimonious, since Chandragupta gave Seleucus 500 war elephants.

Source: NCERT

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Q.9) The “Ashokan edicts and inscriptions” were written in which of the following scripts?

1. Brahmi script
2. Kharosthi script
3. Devnagri script

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: B

Explanation: The edicts of Ashoka thus constitute the most concrete source of information about the Mauryan Empire.

- There are 33 edicts comprising 14 Major Rock Edicts, 2 known as Kalinga edicts, 7 Pillar Edicts, some Minor Rock Edicts and a few Minor Pillar Inscriptions.
- The edicts were written mostly in the Brahmi script and in Magadhi and Prakrit.
- The Kandahar inscriptions are in Greek and Aramaic, while the two inscriptions in north-west Pakistan are in Kharosthi script.

Source: NCERT

Q.10) Consider the following statements:

1. The second Buddhist council held during the period of Ashoka.
2. An important outcome of third Buddhist council was the decision to expand the reach of Buddhism to other parts of the region and to send missions to convert people to the religion.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: B

Explanation: One of the major events of Ashoka’s reign was the convening of the Third Buddhist sangha (council) in 250 BCE in the capital Pataliputra.

- Ashoka’s deepening commitment to Buddhism meant that royal patronage was extended to the Buddhist establishment.
- An important outcome of this sangha was the decision to expand the reach of Buddhism to other parts of the region and to send missions to convert people to the religion.

Source: NCERT

Political & Cultural Developments in 200BCE to 300 BCE

Q.1) How many of the following given statements was/were associated with king “Kanishka”?

1. His kingdom has two capitals.
2. He started the Shaka era.
3. He held the third Buddhist Council.

Choose the correct answer from below given codes:

- a) Only one statement
- b) Only two statements
- c) All three statements
- d) None of the above given statements

ANS: B

Explanation: Kanishka had two capitals: Purushapura (present day Peshawar) and Mathura: He built a giant stupa to house the Buddha’s relics in the city of Purushapura.

- The building was still intact with all its magnificence when the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien visited the area later in the early fifth century CE.
- Started the Shaka era (78 CE), which is accepted as the beginning of his reign, and which is now used by the Government of India for its calendar.
- Held the fourth Buddhist council at Kundalavana (near Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir) under the presidency of Vasumitra.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.2) How many of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?

Author : Work

1. Ashvagoshā : Buddhacharita
2. Charaka : Sasruta
3. Vasumitra : Mahavibhasa

Choose the correct answer from below given codes:

- a) Only one pair
- b) Only two pairs
- c) All three pairs
- d) None of the above given pairs

ANS: D

Explanation: The Kanishka patronised great scholars and eminent personalities of that era such as:

- Ashvagoshā: A Buddhist scholar who wrote the hagiographic Buddhacharita (the sacred biography of the Buddha) and composed the Saundarananda (a Sanskrit kavya).
- Charaka: He is known as the father of Ayurveda who wrote a book on medicine called Charaksamhita and also wrote the Sasruta.
- Vasumitra: An eminent philosopher who authored the encyclopaedia of Buddhist philosophy called Mahavibhasa.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

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Q.3) Who among the following propounded the philosophy of “Madhyamaka”?

- a) Nagarjuna
- b) Vasumitra
- c) Charaka
- d) Ashvagosha

ANS: A

Explanation: Nagarjuna is often termed an Indian Einstein who proposed the Theory of Relativity in his time in the form of a Sutra, the Prajna Parimata Sutra. He was also a great exponent of the Mahayana doctrine and propounded the Madhyamaka (also known as Sunyavada School) which focuses on sunyata or emptiness.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.4) Sudarshan Lake from Chandragupta Maurya’s reign was located at?

- a) Rajasthan
- b) Gujarat
- c) Maharashtra
- d) Punjab

ANS: B

Explanation: Rudradaman I is famous in history because of the repairs he undertook to improve the Sudarshan Lake from Chandragupta Maurya’s reign, located in the semi-arid zone of Kathiawar, and this task is described in the famous Junagarh or Girnar Inscription (dated in the Shaka year 72, i.e., 150– 151 CE).

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.5) Zoroastrianism was developed in which of the following Ancient Areas?

- a) Nile Civilization Area
- b) Indus Valley Civilization Area
- c) Mayan Civilization Area
- d) Persian Civilization Area

ANS: D

Explanation: Zoroastrianism refers to the religion developed from the teachings of the Persian prophet Zoroaster or Zarathushtra. Zoroastrianism was influential on the history, culture, and art of Persia, as well as on the development of other religions. According to scholars, Zoroastrianism was the first religion to believe in angels, a day of judgment, a Demonic figure, and a battle between forces of good and evil.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.6) Who among the following is known as “Father of cosmetic Surgery”?

- a) Maharishi Sushruta
- b) Kapil Mani
- c) Charak Rishi
- d) Acharya Kanad

ANS: A

Explanation: During the 6th century BCE, an Indian physician named Sushruta - widely regarded as the 'Father of Indian Medicine' and 'Father of Plastic Surgery' - wrote one of the world's earliest works on medicine and surgery. Sushruta lived in the ancient city of Kashi, now known as Varanasi or Banaras in the northern part of India.

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Sushruta Samhita:

Sushruta is known for his pioneering operations and techniques and for his influential treatise 'Sushruta Samhita' or Compendium of Sushruta, the main source of knowledge about surgery in ancient India. Written in Sanskrit, the Sushruta Samhita dates back to the times before Christ and is one of the earliest works in the field of medicine. It forms the foundations of the ancient Hindu form of medicine known as Ayurveda and is highly regarded as one of the 'Great Trilogy of Ayurvedic Medicine.'

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.7) Consider the given below pairs:

| Author | Book |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Kautilya | Arthashastra |
| 2. Kalidasa | Mudrarakshasa |
| 3. Vishakhadatta | Malvikagnimitram |

Which of the above given pairs is/are correctly matched?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

ANS: A

Explanation: The Dharmasutras and the Smritis, are rules and regulations for the general public and the rulers. It can be termed in the modern concept as the constitution and the law books for the ancient Indian polity and society. These are also called Dharmashastras. These were compiled between 600 and 200 B.C. Manusmriti is prominent among the Kautilya's Arthashastra, a book on statecraft was written in the Maurya period. The text is divided into 15 chapters known as books. Different books deal with different subject matter concerning polity, economy and society. It appears that even before the final version of Arthashastra was written in the fourth century B.C. by Kautilya, there appeared a tradition of writing on and teaching of statecrafts because Kautilya acknowledges his debt to his predecessors in the field. Mudrarakshasa, a play written by Vishakhadatta, also gives a glimpse of society and culture. Kalidasa's Malvikagnimitram is based on some events of the reign of Pusyamitra Sunga, a dynasty which followed the Mauryas.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.8) Stories of Pushyamitra's brutality and hostility against Buddhism are described in which of the following text?

- a) Divyavadana
- b) Manusmriti
- c) Jataka stories
- d) Mahabhasya

ANS: A

Explanation: Religion and society during the post-Mauryan period witnessed the following changes.

- Rise of Brahmanism: People in the post-Mauryan period practised Vedic religion, Buddhism, and Jainism. However, Brahmanism experienced a resurgence under Shunga's rule. There was an increase in rituals such as Ashwamedha and Rajasuya.

Stories of Pushyamitra's brutality and hostility against Buddhism are described in the Divyavadana.

- Varna system: During the post-Mauryan period, the four-fold varna system was also revived. Thus, the social structure became rigid as the fourfold varna system was strengthened. The

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dominance of priests and the ruling class was strengthened, while the conditions of Shudras remained unchanged.

- Position of women: Women's position in society was generally limited to domestic roles, and they were expected to follow strict codes of conduct as mentioned in the Manusmriti.
- Cultural expanse: It was the period of the emergence of various mixed castes and the integration of foreigners into Indian society.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Q.9) Which one of the following books of Ancient India has the love story of the son of the founder of the Sunga Dynasty?

- Swapnavasavadatta
- Malvikagnimitra
- Meghadoota
- Ratnavali

ANS: B

Explanation: "Malvikagnimitra", a Sanskrit drama written by Kalidasa, is related to him and is based on the love between Vidharbha princess Malvika and Sunga king Agnimitra.

Source: UPSC PYQ

Q.10) Which of the following dynasty was called "moon tribe"?

- Shakas
- Indo Greeks
- Kushans
- Satavahanas

ANS: C

Explanation: The Kushanas were also referred to as Yueh-Chis (Moon tribe) or Tocharians, who were one of the five clans (Kuei-shang) into which the Yue-chi tribe was divided.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

Early Historical Period of South India

Q.1) With reference to ancient India, the term "Cheras" is associated with which of the following?

- Kerala
- Andhra Pradesh
- West Bengal
- Assam

ANS: A

Explanation: The Chera dynasty was an ancient Sangam age dynasty. It played a significant role in forming the land of Kerala by unifying diverse regions along the western coast and Western Ghats.

- The Cheras, specifically from the Kongu region, controlled eastern Kerala and a small portion of present-day western Tamil Nadu during the early medieval period.
- During the early medieval period, the Chera dynasty, one of the ancient Dravidian dynasties, governed the regions of present-day Kerala and parts of Tamil Nadu.

Source: NCERT

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Q.2) In which of the following place/s stupas and chaityas located?

1. Amaravati
2. Nagarjunakonda
3. Tirupati

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: B

Explanation: Buddhist sites with stupas and chaityas located in Andhra and Karnataka regions (Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, etc.).

Source: NCERT

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

1. Buddhist stupas evolved out of the burial of the ashes of the mortal remains of the Buddha.
2. Buddhist sacred architecture originated with the eight stupas where the ashes were divided.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: The stupa is a heap of clay that evolved out of earthen funerary mounds, in which the ashes of the dead were buried.

- Buddhist stupas evolved out of the burial of the ashes of the mortal remains of the Buddha.
- Buddhist sacred architecture originated with the eight stupas where the ashes were divided.
- Hemispherical shape, the stupa symbolizes the universe; and the Buddha represents the emperor of the spiritual universe.
- The stupa has a path around it for devotional circumambulation.

Source: NCERT

Q.4) Which of the following is/are part of Sangam Literature?

1. Tholkappiyam
2. Ettuththokai
3. Paththuppattu

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: C

Explanation: The Classical Sangam corpus consists of Tholkappiyam, the eight anthologies (Ettuththokai), Paththuppattu.

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Tholkappiyam, attributed to Tholkappiyar, is the earliest extant Tamil grammatical text dealing not only with poetry but also the society and culture of the times.

Source: NCERT

Q.5) Which of the following is/are correctly matched?

1. Periplus of Erythrean Sea - Herodotus
2. Natural History - Pliny the Elder's
3. Geography - Ptolemy

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: B

Explanation: The following Greek and Latin sources inform us about the long distance cultural and commercial connections.

- The Periplus of Erythrean Sea, an ancient Greek text of the first century CE.
- Pliny the Elder's Natural History, first century CE
- Ptolemy's Geography, second century CE

Source: NCERT

Q.6) Which of the following was/were associated with "Satavahana Kingdom"?

1. Gautamiputra Satakarni
2. Vasishthiputra Pulumavi
3. Hala

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: C

Explanation: Gautamiputra Satakarni was the greatest of the Satavahana kings. He defeated the Shaka ruler Nahapana and reissued the coins of Nahapana with his own royal insignia.

- Vasishthiputra Pulumavi, the successor of Gautamiputra Satakarni, expanded the frontiers of the Satavahana Empire.
- King Hala is credited with the writing of Gatha Sattasai, a collection of 700 love poems.

Source: NCERT

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Q.7) Consider the following statements Satavahanas:

1. The Satavahana Empire declined around the 3rd century CE and was replaced by the Rashtrakutas.
2. The Naneghat inscription refers to tax exemptions given to the lands granted to Buddhist monks.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: B

Explanation: The Satavahana Empire declined around the 3rd century CE and was replaced by the Ikshvakus, followed by the Pallavas, in Andhra and the Kadambas in northern Karnataka.

The Naneghat inscription refers to tax exemptions given to the lands granted to Buddhist monks. Thus we notice the beginning of priestly groups attaining higher status.

Source: NCERT

Q.8) Which of the following is not part of “muvendar”?

- a) Cheras
- b) Cholas
- c) Satiyaputra
- d) Pandyan

ANS: C

Explanation: Though the three Tamil ruling families were known to Asoka in the third century BCE itself, some individual names are known only from the Sangam poems of the first century and later.

Known as muvendar, ‘the three crowned kings’, the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyan controlled major agrarian territories, trade routes and towns.

Source: NCERT

Q.9) Consider the following statements regarding cholas:

1. Tiger was their emblem.
2. Pattinappalai offers elaborate descriptions of the bustling trading activity here during the rule of Karikalan.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: The Cholas controlled the central and northern parts of Tamil Nadu. Their core area of rule was the Kaveri delta, later known as Cholamandalam.

- Their capital was Uraiyur (near Thiruchirapalli town) and Puhar or Kaviripattinam was an alternative royal residence and chief port town.
- Tiger was their emblem. Kaviripattinam attracted merchants from various regions of the Indian Ocean.
- Pattinappalai, composed by the poet Kattiyalur Uruttirankannanar, offers elaborate descriptions of the bustling trading activity here during the rule of Karikalan.

Source: NCERT

Q.10) Vanji was the capital of which of the following kingdom?

- a) Satavahana
- b) Cholas
- c) Cheras
- d) Pandyans

ANS: C

Explanation: The Cheras controlled the central and northern parts of Kerala and the Kongu region of Tamil Nadu.

- Vanji was their capital and the ports of the west coast, Musiri and Tondi, were under their control.
- Vanji is identified with Karur, while some scholars identify it with Tiruvanchaikalam in Kerala.

Source: NCERT

The Guptas and the Vakatakas

Q.1) Consider the following statements:

1. Feudalism as an institution began to take root during the Gupta period.
2. Due to effective guild system and overseas trade, the Gupta economy boomed.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: After the Mauryan Empire, many small kingdoms rose and fell. In the period from c. 300 to 700 CE, a classical pattern of an imperial rule evolved, paving the way for state formation in many regions.

- During this period, the Gupta kingdom emerged as a great power and achieved the political unification of a large part of the Indian subcontinent.
- It featured a strong central government, bringing many kingdoms under its hegemony.
- Feudalism as an institution began to take root during this period.
- With an effective guild system and overseas trade, the Gupta economy boomed.

Source: NCERT

Q.2) With reference to the Gupta period, arrange the following rulers chronologically:

1. Sri Gupta
2. Ghatotkacha
3. Chandragupta I

Which of the following code is correct?

- a) 1 - 2 - 3
- b) 2 - 1 - 3
- c) 3 - 2 - 1
- d) 1 - 3 - 2

ANS: A

Explanation: The first ruler of the Gupta Empire was Sri Gupta (240–280 CE) who was succeeded by his son Ghatotkacha (280–319 CE).

- Both Sri Gupta and Ghatotkacha are mentioned as Maharajas in inscriptions.

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- Chandragupta I, the son of Ghatotkacha, ruled from 319 to 335 CE and is considered to be the first great king of the Gupta Empire.
- Chandragupta held the title of maharaja-adhiraja (great king over other kings).

Source: NCERT

Q.3) Who among the following was called “Kaviraja”?

- a) Sri Gupta
- b) Ghatotkacha
- c) Samudragupta
- d) Chandragupta I

ANS: C

Explanation: Samudragupta patronised scholars and poets like Harisena and thus promoted Sanskrit literature.

- Though an ardent follower of Vaishnavism, he also patronised the great Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu.
- As a lover of poetry and music, he was given the title “Kaviraja”.

Source: NCERT

Q.4) Who among the following was called “Vikramaditya”?

- a) Sri Gupta
- b) Ghatotkacha
- c) Chandragupta I
- d) Chandragupta II

ANS: D

Explanation: Named after his grandfather, Chandragupta II was a capable ruler, who ruled for 40 years from c. 375 to 415 CE.

He came to power after a succession struggle with his brother Rama Gupta. He is also known as Vikramaditya.

Source: NCERT

Q.5) Who among the following is not part of navaratnas of Chandragupta II?

- a) Kalidasa
- b) Harisena
- c) Amarasimha
- d) Shukra

ANS: D

Explanation: Chandra Gupta II court had nine jewels or navaratnas, that is, nine eminent people in various fields of art, literature and science.

This included the great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa, the Sanskrit scholar Harisena, the lexicographer Amarasimha, and the physician Dhanvantari.

Source: NCERT

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Q.6) Consider the following statements regarding “Chandragupta II”:

1. Fahien, the Buddhist scholar from China, visited India during his reign.
2. He was the first Gupta ruler to issue silver coins.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: Fahien, the Buddhist scholar from China, visited India during Chandragupta II reign. He records the prosperity of the Gupta Empire.

Chandragupta II was the first Gupta ruler to issue silver coins. His rule thus formed the peak period of Gupta’s territorial expansion.

Source: NCERT

Q.7) Which of the following role/s was/were played by “Harisena” of Chandragupta II?

1. Sanskrit scholar
2. Kumaramatya
3. Mahadandanayaka

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: C

Explanation: Individuals holding the ranks of kumaramatya sometimes had additional designations as well, and such ranks were hereditary.

For example, Harisena, composer of the Allahabad prashasti (inscriptions of praise), was a kumaramatya, sandhivigrahika and mahadandanayaka, and was the son of Dhruvabhuti, a mahadandanayaka.

Source: NCERT

Q.8) With reference to the administration of Guptas, the term “uparikas” was associated with which of the following?

- a) Emperor
- b) Council of Minister
- c) Governor
- d) Noble Priests

ANS: C

Explanation: The Gupta Empire was divided into provinces known as deshas or bhuktis. They were administered by governors who were usually designated as uparikas.

- The uparika was directly appointed by the king and he, in turn, frequently appointed the head of the district administration and the district board.
- Uparika carried on the administration “with the enjoyment of the rule consisting of elephants, horses and soldiers”, indicating his control over the military machinery as well.

Source: NCERT

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Q.9) With reference to the administration of Guptas, the term “visayas” was associated with which of the following?

- a) Kingdom
- b) Province
- c) District
- d) Village

ANS: C

Explanation: The provinces of the Gupta Empire were divided into districts known as visayas, which were controlled by officers known as vishyapatis.

- The vishyapatis seems to have been generally appointed by the provincial governor.
- Sometimes, even the kings directly appointed the vishyapatis.
- Prominent members of the town assisted the vishyapati in administrative duties.

Source: NCERT

Q.10) The famous “Betla National Park” is often seen in news related to?

- a) Jharkhand
- b) Chhattisgarh
- c) Tamil Nadu
- d) Andhra Pradesh

ANS: A

Explanation: Betla National Park is a national park located on the Chota Nagpur Plateau in the Latehar and Palamu district of Jharkhand, India. The park hosts a wide variety of wildlife.

Source:FORUMIAS

Buddhism and Jainism and their contributions to Indian culture

Q.1) Who among the following was patronized by a rich potter woman called Halahala?

- a) Mahavira
- b) Buddha
- c) Makkhali Gosala
- d) Nanda Vaccha

ANS: C

Explanation: Gosala, who was the third and the greatest of the Ajivikas.

- Gosala met Mahavira for the first time in Nalanda and their friendship lasted for six years. They separated due to doctrinal differences.
- Gosala then went to Sravasti, where he was patronised by a rich potter woman called Halahala.

Source: NCERT

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Q.2) Consider the following statements:

1. Mahavira was known as Jina of the soul and hence his sect came to be known as Jainism.
2. According to Jaina tradition, Risabha was the founder of the Jaina sect.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: Mahavira was known as Jina (conqueror) of the soul and hence his sect came to be known as Jainism.

- According to Jain tradition, Mahavira was not the founder of Jainism, but the last of the 24 Tirthankaras or 'maker of fords' (ford means a shallow place in river or stream to allow one to walk across).
- According to Jaina tradition, Risabha was the founder of the sect. He is considered the first Tirthankara.

Source: NCERT

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

1. Vardhamana was born in Kundagrama.
2. He belongs to Jnatrika clan.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: Vardhamana was born around 540 BCE in Kundagrama, a suburb of Vaishali.

- He was a member of the ruling family of a gana-sangha and his father Siddhartha was the chief of the Jnatrika clan.
- His mother Trishala was a Lichchavi princess and sister of its chief Chetaka.

Source: NCERT

Q.4) In which of the following place/s Jainism followers found?

1. Karnataka
2. Gujarat
3. Rajasthan

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: C

Explanation: Magadha was affected by severe famine and some of the Jaina monks under Bhadrabahu went south to maintain their strict discipline.

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- They remained without garments and were known as Digambaras (space-clad or naked).
- Others stayed back under the leadership of Sthulabhadra and adopted a white garment and were known as Svetambaras (white-clad).
- The schism weakened Jainism in Magadha, but it found ardent followers in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Karnataka.

Source: NCERT

Q.5) Consider the following statements:

1. Valabhi council added 12 upangas to Jaina texts.
2. Most of the early Jaina texts were written in Ardha-Magadhi.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: On the death of Bhadrabahu, Shulabhadra held a Great Council at Pataliputra, which compiled the Jaina canon.

- It consisted of 12 angas (limbs). Another council was held in Valabhi, Gujarat, in the 5th century CE.
- It added 12 upangas (minor sections). The Jaina monks not only wrote religious treatises but also promoted secular literature.
- Acharrangasutra, Sutrakritanga, and Kalpasutra are the earliest Jaina texts.
- Most of the early Jaina texts were written in Ardha-Magadhi, the language of the common people.

Source: NCERT

Q.6) Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding Jainism?

1. It criticizes human emotions.
2. It denies the existence of God.
3. It emphasizes that salvation cannot be attained by worshipping god or by sacrifices.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: C

Explanation: The central tenet of Jainism is non-violence. No other religion lays as much emphasis on non-violence as does Jainism.

- It also criticizes human emotions. Jainism denies the existence of God.
- In its early stages, deity was not worshipped in Jainism.
- It emphasizes that salvation cannot be attained by worshipping god or by sacrifices.
- It stipulates that one can escape misery only by performing austerities.

Source: NCERT

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Q.7) Which of the following is/are great vows of Jainism?

1. Not to kill or injure
2. Not to steal
3. Not to lie

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) None

ANS: C

Explanation: The Jain monks have to undertake the five great vows (pancha-mahavrata): (1) Not to kill or injure (ahimsa); (2) Not to steal (asteya); (3) Not to lie (satya); (4) Celibacy (brahmacharya); (5) Not to possess property (aparigraha).

Q.8) Consider the following statements:

1. Buddhism ideas were adopted by Asoka as a state policy.
2. Gautama Buddha was born as Siddhartha in the Sakya clan.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: C

Explanation: Among the heterodox sects, Buddhism was the most popular. It went on to emerge as a powerful religion patronised by various rulers.

- It was so influential that its ideas were adopted by Asoka as a state policy.
- Gautama Buddha was born as Siddhartha in the Sakya clan to its king Sudhodhana and his chief queen Mahamaya.

Source: NCERT

Q.9) The "Alara Kalama" was associated with which of the following?

- a) Mahavira
- b) Buddha
- c) Gosala
- d) Ajita Kesakambalin

ANS: B

Explanation: Siddhartha (Gautama Buddha) wandered about and joined Alara Kalama as a disciple for a brief period. He also sought guidance from a hermit Uddaka Ramaputta.

Source: NCERT

Q.10) The Fourth Buddhist Council was held at Kashmir during the reign of?

- a) Chandragupta I
- b) Kanishka
- c) Gautamiputra Satakarni
- d) Ashoka

ANS: B

Explanation: The Fourth Buddhist Council was held at Kashmir during the reign of Kanishka.

Source: NCERT