



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.A.LL.B. 1st Semester

SUBJECT: HISTORY - I

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NAME OF FACULTY: Dr. Sadhna Trivedi

Lecture-21



Age of Guptas

The Guptas ruled over India from 3rd century A.D. to 6th century A.D. with their capital at Pataliputra.

The Gupta Age ushered in a new era in Indian history. Its uniqueness lay in the fact that during this period some of the world's best specimens in art, literature, philosophy, astronomy and science were produced.

That is why the Age has been variously branded as the Golden Age, the Classical Age, the Age of Efflorescence, Age of Renaissance or the Age of Hindu Revivalism.

Therefore, historians have compared this age with the brilliant Periclean Age of Greece, Augustan Age of Rome and the Elizabethan Age of England. India witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of literary, artistic and scientific activities which gave a new impetus and drive for the shaping of Indian culture.

The background for the high standard of Gupta culture can be traced back to several factors. The outstanding military achievements of the Gupta rulers like Samudragupta and Chandragupta II Vikramaditya made India politically united and ushered in an era of good governance and progress. Both inland and foreign trade flourished under their rule. The country became wealthier. Peace, tranquility and prosperity prevailed everywhere.

Welfare administration and liberal patronage of the Gupta rulers also precipitated cultural attainments. Internal security and material prosperity found a conducive environment for its expression which culminated in the blossoming of a grand Indian cultural heritage.

In the annals of Indian history, Gupta Age is generally regarded as the Age of Maturity when the seeds of Indian culture blossomed in full bloom. This period of intellectual and cultural revival of Indian history is otherwise known as Gupta Renaissance for its tremendous contribution towards the promotion of religion, literature, art and science. India became a 'New India' with its high standard of cultural contribution for the enrichment of world civilization. It can be studied under the following heads.

Political Unification of the Country:

The nucleus of the Gupta kingdom was the Ganga heartland. But the Gupta rulers soon tried to give the country an imperial unity. After the downfall of the Mauryan dynasty India had been divided into several fragments remaining under the Sakas, the Kushanas and several petty local chiefs.

The campaign of Chandragupta II against the Sakas brought the annexation of western India under Gupta rule. Gupta control over the Deccan was further strengthened by marital alliances. The local chieftains, petty principalities and small rulers disappeared. A united and strong empire with efficient bureaucracy and a well-organised administrative machinery to carry out the royal decrees made India a healthy political unit.

The political unification of the country with internal peace and security and absence of foreign invasion inspired the people to concentrate on the finer aspects of Gupta civilization. Further, the benevolent despotism of the Gupta rulers with their liberal patronage of cultural growth gave the country an encouraging impetus. For example, Chandragupta II was a patron of poets, philosophers, scientists, musicians and sculptors like his predecessors. Consequently the cultural attainments of the age became wider with far-reaching influence.

MCQ

1. Who among the following was the ruler of Kanchi during the time of Samudragupta ?

- [A] Hastivarman
- [B] Mantaraja
- [C] Nilaraja
- [D] Vishnugopa

2. Who was the court poet of Samudragupta?

- [A] Harisena
- [B] Asanga
- [C] Veerasena Saba
- [D] Vasubandhu

3. Who assumed the title of 'Ksitipatasatpatih' (Lord of hundred Kings)?

- [A] Samudragupta
- [B] Skandgupta
- [C] Ashoka
- [D] Chandragupta I

4. Which among the following era is identical with Gupta era?

- [A] Vikram era
- [B] Vallabhi era
- [C] Saka era
- [D] Harsha era

5. Sudarshan lake repaired second time under the reign of _?

- [A] Skandgupta
- [B] Kumargupta
- [C] Rudradaman
- [D] Parnadatta