

Very Short Answer Questions

Q.1. What do Indian epics talk about?

Ans. The two Indian epics—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*—give account of the social, political and religious features of the people of the Epic Age. They mention not only the political affairs of the kings and give vivid descriptions of their empires, but also their relations with other neighbouring rulers and their mode of warfare.

Q.2. What does Mahabharata, the famous epic deal with?

Ans. The Mahabharata, written by sage Vyas, refers to a war fought between the Kauravas and Pandavas who were cousins. This was a war to gain control over the throne of the Kurus, and their capital, Hastinapur.

Q.3. What does the famous epic Ramayana deal with?

Ans. The Ramayana deals with Rama, the prince of Kosala, who went into exile. His wife Sita had been abducted by the king of Lanka named Ravana, and Rama had to fight a battle to get her back. He won and returned to Ayodhya, the capital of Kosala, after his victory.

Q.4. Write a note on Buddhist and Jain texts.

Ans. Tripitakas and Jatakas of Buddhism as well as Angas of Jainism give us vital information. It contains the names of numerous persons and places that help in the reconstruction and ascertaining the history of ancient India.

Q.5. In what field had ancient India achieved wonderful heights?

Ans. Ancient India achieved wonderful heights in the field of fine arts, viz., architecture, sculpture, painting, jewellery, metallurgy, stone and metal polishing, and engineering.

Short Answer Questions

Q.1. How is Indian literature unparalleled?

Ans. In the field of language and literature, Indian heritage is unparalleled. It is not easy to find such a literature in any other language as to match with the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Bhagavadgita and the Jatakas, the Tripitakas along with Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa of the Buddhists, Angam texts of the Jains and the Sangam literature of the Tamils.

Q.2. What does the Tamil epic Silappadhikaram deal with?

Ans. The famous Tamil epic, the Silappadhikaram, was composed by the poet named Ilango about 1,800 years ago. It tells about a merchant called Kovalan who lived in Puhar and fell in love with a courtesan named Madhavi. He neglected his wife Kannagi. Later, he and Kannagi left Puhar and went to Madurai where he was falsely accused of theft by the court jeweller of the Pandya king. The king sentenced Kovalan to death. Kannagi, who still loved him, was full of grief.

Q.3. What did Tamil epic Manimekalai depict?

Ans. Another Tamil epic, the *Manimekalai* was composed by Sattanar around 1,400 years ago. It describes the story of the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi. The manuscripts of these beautiful compositions were rediscovered about a hundred years ago.

Q.4. Give India's achievements in the field of architecture.

Ans. In the field of architecture, the Great Bath of Mohenjodaro, Buddhist temples at Gaya, the Stupas at Sanchi and Bharhut, the Gupta temples at Deogarh and Kanpur, the Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar, the Tejpal Temple at Mount Abu, the Mahadev Temple at Khajuraho, Vishnu Temple at Badami and the Shiva Temple at Thanjavur deserve special mention.

Q.5. Give India's achievements in the field of sculpture and stone carving.

Ans. In the field of sculpture and stone carving, the Indus seals and toys, the Ashokan pillars at Sanchi, Sarnath, Lauriya Nandangarh, Rampurva, etc., stone images made during the Gupta and the Rajput periods, several other pieces of sculpture made in the Gandhara style and the images carved in stone at the Ajanta and Ellora caves are worth mentioning.

Q.6. How were Hindu temples carved out?

Ans. Ancient Hindu temples of deities like Shiva, Vishnu and mother goddess were also decorated with sculpture and paints. The room where the chief deity was placed was called the garbhagriha. Priests and devotees performed rituals and devotion at this place. On the top of the garbhagriha was a *shikara* which was made as a mark of

respect to the deity. Building of shikaras required careful thinking. It even had a space or hall called *mandapa* where marriage or other important religious ceremonies were performed.

Q.7. Examine developments of science in ancient India.

Ans. It was the time when Aryabhata, a mathematician and an astronomer, wrote a book in Sanskrit known as the *Aryabhatiyam*. He stated that days and nights were caused by the rotation of the Earth on its axis, even though it seems as if the Sun is rising and setting every day.

Long Answer Questions

Q.1. How are Puranas an important cultural heritage?

Ans. The Puranas written as early as 1st century BC are the oldest records for the reconstruction of early Indian history. The Puranas are eighteen in number and have five divisions. Out of these, the fifth one is historically important as it contains the traditions about the dynasties of rulers of ancient India. However, all the Puranas, from the historical point of view are not so important as the Vayu, Vishnu and the Matsya Puranas. These Puranas are full of information concerning the Purus, the Nandas, the Mauryas, the Kushanas and the Guptas, etc.

Q.2. How did Sanskrit language enrich Indian literature?

Ans. Good quality of Sanskrit literature was produced in India from the second century AD to the fourth and fifth century AD. The Guptas made Sanskrit their court language. Kalidasa, the greatest poet-dramatist, enriched the Sanskrit language. His plays *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, *Vikramorvashi* and *Malavikagnimitra*, are gems of Sanskrit literature. Some other significant authors of this period were Vishkhadatta who wrote *Mudra Rakshasa* and *Shudraka* who wrote *Mrichhakatikam*. *Panchatantra*, a wonderful collection of animal fables, was also written during this period.

Q.3. How did Tamil language enrich South Indian literature?

Ans. The literature produced by the ancient Tamil poets, popularly called Sangam literature has also proved to be an important source of history especially for South India. It is believed that much of this literature was produced in three sangams or assemblies of the Tamil poets, which were held between the 1st century AD and 6th century AD. They give detailed account of some important rulers, their commercial activities, administrative set-up and social, economic and religious conditions of that period. Two famous epics, *Silappadikaram* by Illango Adikal and *Manimekalai* by Sattanar also enrich this vast literature.

Hots (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

Q.1. Give India's achievements in metallurgy.

Ans. In the field of metallurgy, ancient India had made much progress. The specimens in this field worth seeing are the copper and bronze images and the Iron Pillar at Mehrauli which keeps its original finish even today after bearing the stress of weather for thousands of years. It does not show any signs of rust despite rain and thunder.

Q.2. How were bricks and stone important in Buddhist buildings?

Ans. The buildings display the skill and craftsmanship of our people. One such building is that of the stupa. Stupa means a mound. In the centre of the stupa, there is a small box containing bodily remnants (like ashes, bones or teeth) of Buddha and his disciples or followers and their precious items of stone or gold. This small box called 'relic casket' is covered with earth. A layer of baked brick or mud is attached to it on the top. Around the stupa there is a Pradakshina Patha. It is surrounded with railings which is linked with gateways. Devotees go around the stupa in a clockwise direction as a mark of devotion.

Q.3. How were temples and stupas built?

Ans. Building temples and stupas were a costly affair. It was normally made by kings and queens. These were built in several stages such as:

- Good quality stone was traced, quarried and carried to the place where the temple was to be built.
- At the given place, shaping of stone, carving of pillars and panels for walls, floors and ceilings were done.
- Kings and queens spent money from their treasury to hire skilled craftsmen who could build wonderful structures.