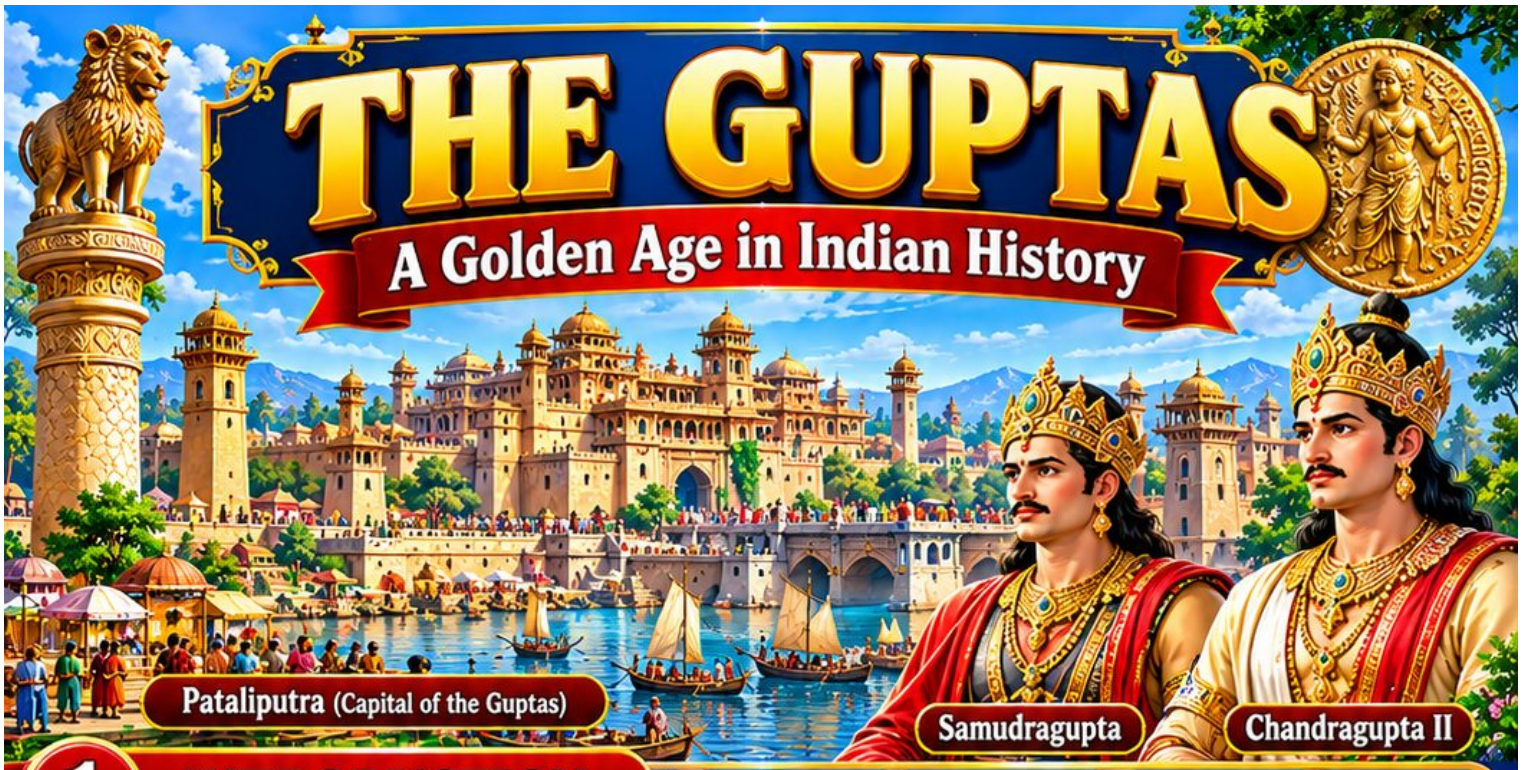
THE GUPTAS

A Golden Age in Indian History



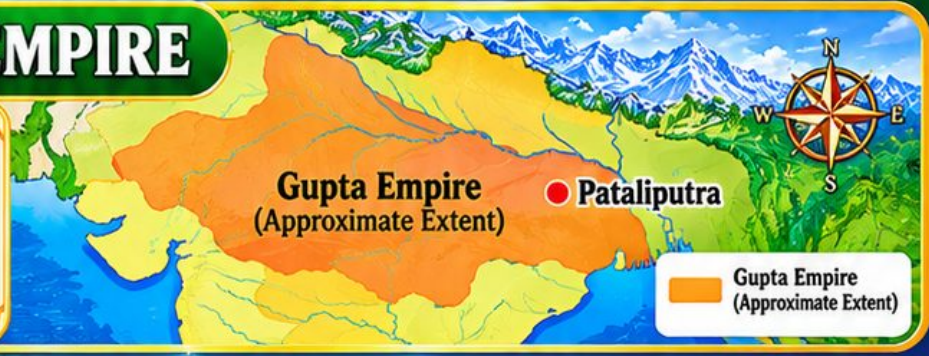
1 INTRODUCTION

After the **Mauryas**, the Guptas established a powerful empire. **Pataliputra** was the capital of the Guptas. **Samudragupta** and **Chandragupta II** were among its most famous rulers.



2 THE GUPTA EMPIRE

The **Gupta dynasty** was an important royal family in Indian history.



3 THE ROYAL COURT

The Gupta period witnessed achievements in **literature**, **art**, **architecture**, **science and mathematics**.





SAMUDRAGUPTA

The Great Warrior, Poet and Patron

1 MILITARY ACHIEVEMENTS

Samudragupta was a great warrior. According to the Allahabad pillar inscription written by his court poet Harisena, he defeated **nine kings of North India** and later defeated **twelve kings of South India.**



2 ALLAHABAD PILLAR INSCRIPTION

Harisena composed the inscription describing Samudragupta's victories and achievements.



3 ASHWAMEDHA

Samudragupta performed the **Ashwamedha Yaga** to commemorate his southern expedition.



4 KAVIRAJA

Samudragupta was a patron of education. He was a poet and musician and received the title **'Kaviraja'**, meaning **king of poets.** His coins depict him playing the veena.



5 HIS COURT

Vasubandhu, a senior Buddhist monk, was his minister.



CHANDRAGUPTA II

Vikramaditya — The Powerful Gupta Ruler

1 A POWERFUL EMPEROR

Chandragupta II was the son and successor of Samudragupta. He was an expert in warfare and defeated the **Shakas** who ruled **Gujarat**. He held the title **'Vikramaditya'**.



2 GOLD COINS

Chandragupta II issued new types of gold coins.



3 LITERATURE AND SCHOLARS

The great poet **Kalidasa** and many other famous scholars were present in his court.



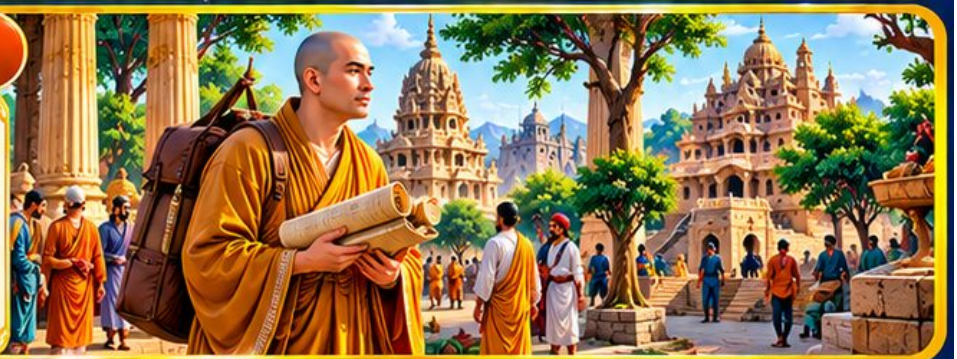
4 ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The Gupta Empire prospered in economy, literature, iconography, architecture, painting, science and mathematics.



5 FA-HEIN'S VISIT

Fa-Hein was a Buddhist pilgrim from China. He visited India during the period of Chandragupta II and recorded his experiences in a book called 'Fo-kwo-ki'. He later returned to China with Buddhist scriptures and translated them into Chinese.



CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE GUPTAS

Literature, Temples, Stupas and Paintings

1 SANSKRIT LITERATURE

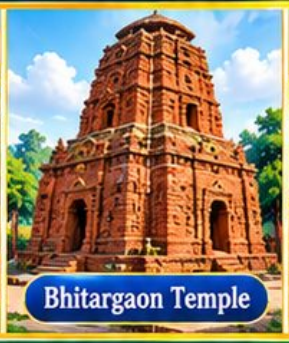
Sanskrit literature developed greatly during the Gupta period. **Kalidasa** was a famous poet and playwright. His works include **'Abhijnana Shakuntalam'**, **'Raghuvamsha'** and **'Meghaduta'**. Other writers included Shudraka and Vishakhadatta.

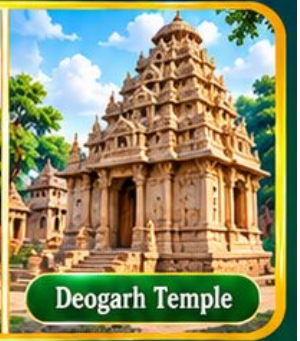


2 TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Gupta-period temple architecture developed significantly. Important examples mentioned in the textbook include the temples at **Sanchi**, **Bhitargaon** and **Deogarh**.

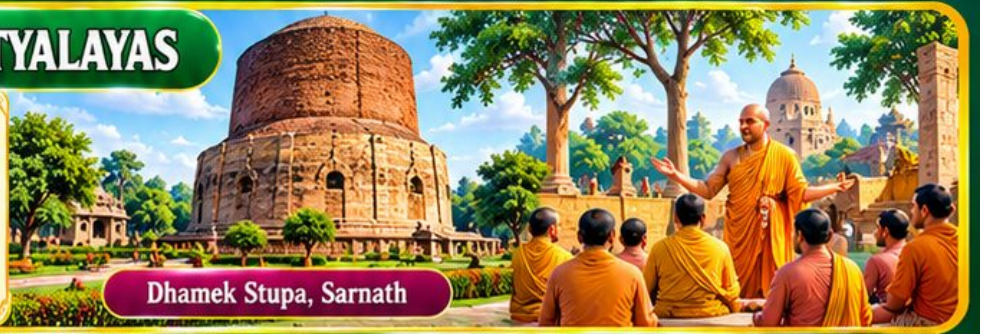

Sanchi Temple


Bhitargaon Temple


Deogarh Temple

3 STUPAS AND CHAITYALAYAS

The **Dhamek Stupa at Sarnath**, described in the textbook as **128 feet tall**, is a notable construction associated with the Gupta period.


Dhamek Stupa, Sarnath

4 PAINTINGS

The wall and ceiling paintings of the **Ajanta** caves are famous around the world. Buddhist viharas and cave temples are also found at Ajanta and **Ellora**.



5 SCULPTURE AND ART

The Gupta period saw remarkable development in sculpture and art. Beautiful stone sculptures, carved pillars and fine artistic works were created during this time.



SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE GUPTA AGE

Mathematics, Astronomy, Metallurgy and Ayurveda

1 ARYABHATA

Aryabhata of Pataliputra was a famous mathematician of the Gupta period. His work **'Arya Bhateeyam'** contributed to mathematics and the understanding of eclipses.



2 MATHEMATICS AND ASTRONOMY

Brahmagupta was another eminent mathematician. **Varahamihira** was a renowned astronomer associated with this period.



3 METALLURGY

The **Iron Pillar at Mehrauli** near the Qutub Minar in Delhi is an example of the advanced metallurgical knowledge of ancient India.



4 AYURVEDA

Vagbhata was associated with the Ayurvedic tradition. His work **'Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita'** is an important text on Ayurveda.



5 SURGERY AND MEDICINE

The textbook describes advanced surgical knowledge in ancient India, including the use of a variety of surgical instruments.



6 KNOWLEDGE AND DISCOVERY

The Gupta period made great contributions in mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medicine, literature, art and architecture.

