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Q.1. The Aranyakas texts are so-called because

- A** they cannot be read by those other than Siddhas
- B** they contain metaphysics
- C** they are works to be read in the forests
- D** they appear after Upanishads

SOLUTION

Aranyakas are generally the concluding portions of the several Brahmanas, but on account of their distinct character, contents and language deserve to be reckoned as a distinct category of literature.

They are partly included in the Brahmanas themselves, but partly they are recognized as independent works. Aranyakas literature is rather small as compared to the Brahmanas.

The term Aranyakas is derived from the word 'Aranya' meaning 'forest'. The Aranyaka texts are so-called because 'they were works to be read in the forest' in contradiction to the regular Brahmanas, which were to be read in the village.

Whereas the Brahmanas deal with the huge bulk of sacrificial paraphernalia which represents Kama-Kanda, the Aranyakas and Upanishads, on the other hand, chiefly deal with the philosophical and theosophical speculations which represent Jnana-Kanda.

Q.2.

Samaveda and Natya Shastra are both related to _____ .

A Music

B Painting

C Stone architecture

D Religious rituals

SOLUTION

The earliest tradition of Indian music may be traced to the Sama Veda, which contains the slokas. Chanting of Vedic hymns with prescribed pitch and accent still form a part of religious rituals.

The earliest text dealing exclusively with performing arts is Bharata's Natya Shastra (compiled between 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD), which has six chapters on music.

Q.3. Which of these is not an archaeological excavation site and example of Janapadas?

A Purana Qila in Delhi

B Hastinapur near Meerut

C Atranjikhhera near Etah

D Magadha in Bihar

SOLUTION

The word Janapada literally means the land. Archaeologists have excavated a number of settlements in these Janapadas, such as Purana Qila in Delhi, Hastinapur near Meerut, and Atranjikhhera, near Etah (the last two are in Uttar Pradesh).

Q.4.

The Vedic literature is broadly divided into two categories, viz., Shruti and Smriti. What is the difference between them?

1. Shruti is considered eternal, whereas Smriti is subject to change.
2. Smriti philosophy stands in direct opposition or contrast to Shruti philosophy.

Which of the above is/are correct?

A 1 only

B 2 only

C Both 1 and 2

D None

SOLUTION

Smriti literally means, 'which is remembered', and it is the entire body of the post-Vedic era.

Classical Sanskrit literature comprises Vedanga, Shad Darsana, Puranas, Itihasa, Upveda, Tatras, Agamas and Upangs. There is another post Vedic class of Sanskrit literature called Epics, which includes the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Shruti means, 'which has been heard' and is canonical, consisting of revelation and unquestionable truth, and is considered eternal. It refers mainly to the Vedas themselves.

Shruti describes the sacred texts comprising the central canon of Hinduism, viz., Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads.

Smriti means 'which has been remembered' supplementary and may change over time. It is authoritative only to the extent that it conforms to the bedrock of Shruti.

Q.5.

Consider the following statements about Aranyakas:

1. They are the concluding portions of the several Brahmanas.
2. They mainly deal with sacrificial techniques and Karma-Kandas.
3. These were works to be read in the villages, as opposed to 'Brahmanas' text which must be read in the forests.
4. There is no Aranyaka which belongs to Atharvaveda.

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

A 1 and 4 only

B 1 and 2 only

C 3 only

D 1,3 and 4 only

SOLUTION

Statement 1: Aranyakas are generally the concluding portions of the several Brahmanas, but on account of their distinct character, contents and language deserve to be reckoned as a distinct category of literature.

They are partly included in the Brahmanas themselves, but partly they are recognised as independent works.

Statement 2: Aranyakas literature is rather small as compared to the Brahmanas. Whereas the Brahmanas deal with the huge bulk of sacrificial paraphernalia which represents Karma-Kanda, the Aranyakas and Upanishads.

Statement 3: The term Aranyakas is derived from the word 'Aranya', meaning 'forest'. The Aranyakas texts are so-called because 'they were works to be read in the forest' in contradiction to the regular Brahmanas, which were to be read in the village.

This is because Yajna and other rituals are prescribed only for those who live in homes and lead the life of house-holders. But it has to be understood that Vedic rituals are intended to confer not only material benefits but also mental purity by constant discipline. Having obtained purity, one must seek the solitude of forests for further concentration and meditation.

Aranyakas containing explanations of the rituals and allegorical speculations meant for Vanprasthas, who renounce family life residing in the forests for tapas and other religious activities.

Statement 4: Aranyakas have been written for Rigveda, Samaveda, Shukla Yajurveda and Krishna Yajurveda only.

Q.6.

The Puranas laid down that

1. it was not possible for devotees to receive the grace of God unless they were born in certain castes.
2. one should not be devout of god idols and instead meditate on the formless reality

Which of the above is/are correct?

A 1 only

B 2 only

C Both 1 and 2

D None

SOLUTION

Statement 1: One should attain the grace of god irrespective of one's caste status.

Statement 2: Around the time when the Puranas first began to be composed, the belief in particular deities had become established as one of the principal marks of the Hindu faith, and to some degree, the Puranas can be described as a form of sectarian literature.

Some Puranas exhibit devotion to Shiva; in others, the devotion to Vishnu predominates.

Q.7.

The basic material or mantra text of each of the Vedas is called _____.

A Samhita

B Brahmanas

C Aranyakas

D Paujanas

SOLUTION

Samhita literally means 'put together, joined, union', 'collection' and 'a methodically, rule-based combination of text or verses'.

Samhita also refers to the most ancient layer of text in the Vedas, consisting of mantras, hymns, prayers, litanies and benedictions.

Parts of Vedic Samhitas constitute the oldest living part of Hindu tradition. Some post Vedic texts are also known as 'Samhitas' such as Ashtavakra Gita, Bhrigu Samhita, Brahma Samhita, Deva Samhita, Garga Samhita, Kashyap Samhita, Shiva Samhita and Yogayajnavalkya Samhita.

Q.8. Which of the following is NOT a Vedanga?

A Nirukta: Etymology

B Vyakarana: Grammar

C Kalpa: Ritual instruction

D Virakta: Philosophy

SOLUTION

Vedangas literally mean the limbs of the Vedas. They are six in number. Just like the limbs of the body, they perform various supportive and augmenting functions in the study, preservation and protection of the Vedas and the Vedic traditions.

The six Vedangas are Shiksha, Chanda, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Jyotisha and Kalpa.

These subjects were an integral and essential part of ancient Vedic education system, aimed to promote an all-round development of the students with a better understanding of the Vedas and Vedic practices.

Of these six subjects, Siksha deals with each syllable; Chhanda with the mastery of rhyme and meter; Vyakarna with the study of heavenly bodies to find an auspicious time for the performance of the rituals; and Kalpa with the ethical, moral and procedural percepts associated with the performance of rituals as a way of life.

Q.9.

Among the four Vedas, the first one was ____.

A Rig Veda

B Sama Veda

C Yajur Veda

D Atharva Veda

SOLUTION

The Rig Veda is the first Veda which is a collection of inspired songs or hymns and is the main source of information on the Rig Vedic civilization. It is the oldest book in any Indo-European language and contains the earliest form of all Sanskrit mantras, dating back to 1500 BCE- 1000 BCE.

Q.10. When was the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien visited to India?

A In 3rd century BC

B In 4th century BC

C In 5th century AD

D In 4th century AD

SOLUTION

Fa-Hien a Chinese Buddhist monk visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II and he was most known for his pilgrimage to Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautama Buddha in modern Nepal and later wrote a book on his travels, filled with accounts of early Buddhism, and the geography and history of numerous countries along the Silk Roads as they were, at the turn of the 5th century CE.

