

Upapuranas

1. Central plot of the Ramayana

The epic centers on Prince Rama of Ayodhya, an incarnation of Vishnu, who is exiled to the forest for 14 years alongside his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana. When the demon king Ravana abducts Sita to Lanka, Rama builds an alliance with the Vanara army, defeats Ravana in battle, rescues Sita, and returns to Ayodhya to establish an era of righteous rule (Ramrajya).

2. Meaning of the word Ayurveda

Ayurveda is a Sanskrit compound formed from Ayur (meaning "life" or "longevity") and Veda (meaning "knowledge" or "science"). Taken together, it translates to the "Science of Life" or "Knowledge of Longevity," focusing on physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

3. Significance of Pāṇini in Sanskrit grammar

Pāṇini (c. 6th–4th century BCE) was an ancient Indian grammarian who authored the Aṣṭādhyāyī, a foundational text comprising roughly 4,000 algorithmic sutras. He is significant for standardizing Classical Sanskrit through an advanced, generative, and rule-based formal linguistic system comparable to modern computational theory.

4. Two important styles of Indian temple architecture

Nagara style: Predominant in Northern India, characterized by a beehive-shaped, curvilinear tower (shikhara) over the sanctum.

Dravida style: Originating in Southern India, recognized by pyramidal stepped towers (vimana) and massive monumental entrance gateways (gopurams).

5. Concept of Ritucharya

Ritucharya (Ritu = season, Charya = regimen) is the Ayurvedic practice of seasonal lifestyle and dietary management. It prescribes adjustments in diet, daily routines, and clothing across the six traditional Indian seasons (Shishira, Vasanta, Grishma, Varsha, Sharad, and Hemanta) to maintain balance among the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha).

6. Importance of the Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads in Vedic literature

These texts mark the pedagogical and philosophical evolution of the Vedas:

Brahmanas: Provide prose commentaries detailing ritual performance, symbolic meanings, and sacrificial duties (karma-kanda).

Aranyakas: Serve as transitional "forest texts" exploring meditation, mysticism, and internal interpretations of rituals.

Upanishads: Represent the culmination of Vedic thought (Vedanta / jnana-kanda), shifting focus from ritualism to philosophical inquiries into Brahman (ultimate reality) and Atman (the self).

7. Divine entity associated with Ayurveda

Lord Dhanvantari, regarded as an avatar of Vishnu and the celestial physician of the devas, who emerged during the churning of the cosmic ocean (Samudra Manthan) carrying the pot of Amrita (nectar of immortality).

8. Main purpose of taxation in the ancient Indian economy

Taxation (Bali, Bhaga, and Kara) was levied to fund the state machinery, defend the realm through a standing army, maintain law and order, and finance public works such as irrigation tanks, roads, grain reserves for famine relief, and civic welfare projects.

9. The four Vedas and the focus of the Rigveda

The four Vedas are the Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda.

Rigveda: The oldest text, composed of 1,028 hymns (suktas) organized across 10 books (mandalas). It primarily focuses on praising Vedic deities (such as Agni, Indra, and Soma), cosmogonic inquiries into creation, and natural order (Rta).

10. Two famous ancient Indian mathematicians and their contributions

Aryabhata: Introduced approximations of π (3.1416), rules for square/cube roots, trigonometric functions (such as *jya* for sine), and asserted that the Earth rotates on its axis.

Brahmagupta: Formalized arithmetic rules for operations involving zero and negative numbers, and derived Brahmagupta's formula for the area of a cyclic quadrilateral.

11. Danda Niti in ancient Indian administration

Danda Niti translates to the "Policy or Science of the Rod/Punishment." In ancient Indian statecraft (notably in the Arthashastra and Manusmriti), it refers to the legal, coercive, and administrative authority of the king to enforce the rule of law, maintain social order (Dharma), and prevent anarchy (Matsya Nyaya).

12. Two major foundational texts of Ayurveda

Charaka Samhita: Authored by Acharya Charaka, focusing primarily on internal medicine (Kaya Chikitsa), pathology, and diagnosis.

Sushruta Samhita: Authored by Acharya Sushruta, foundational to surgical techniques (Shalya Tantra), anatomical dissection, and surgical instrumentation.

13. Definition of 'Garbhagriha'

The Garbhagriha (literally "womb-chamber") is the innermost, unadorned sanctum sanctorum of a Hindu, Jain, or Buddhist temple where the primary presiding deity (murti) is consecrated. It represents the spiritual nucleus of the temple complex and the focal point of worship and circumambulation (pradakshina).

14. Central conflict of the Mahābhārata

The epic centers on a dynastic succession dispute and struggle for sovereignty over the Kuru kingdom (capital at Hastinapura) between two sets of cousins: the five righteous Pandavas and the hundred ambitious Kauravas, led by Duryodhana. The dispute escalates from political intrigue, dispossession, and exile to total warfare on the battlefield of Kurukshetra over righteousness (Dharma) versus moral failing (Adharma).

15. Two important Jain architectural sites in India

Dilwara Temples (Mount Abu, Rajasthan): Renowned for intricate white marble carvings and ceilings built between the 11th and 13th centuries.

Shravanabelagola (Karnataka): Home to the colossal 57-foot monolithic statue of Gommateshwara (Bahubali) carved from a single granite block