

Unit 125 – upsc - Indian History - Reign of Kumaragupta

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Reign of Kumaragupta

[AD 415-455]

Chandragupta II (Vikramaditya) was succeeded by his son Kumaragupta. Like his father, Kumaragupta was also a very great and able ruler. He was able to keep the vast empire, which extended from North Bengal to Kathiawar and from the Himalayas to the Nerbudda, intact. He ruled efficiently for nearly forty years. However, the last days of his reign were not good. The Gupta empire was threatened by the invasions of Pushyamitras. The Pushyamitras were a tribe of foreigners who were settled in Central India. However, Kumaragupta was successful in defeating the invaders and performed *Ashvamedha Yajna* (horse sacrifice) to celebrate his victory. He issued new coins with images of Lord Kartikeya.

Skandagupta becomes the King

Kumaragupta died in AD 455 and was succeeded by his son Skandagupta. During his reign, the invasions of the Huns became more frequent. Skandagupta repelled their early invasions and recovered most of the imperial provinces.

Extract from *An Advanced History of India*

In one of the inscriptions the goddess of royal fortune is said to have chosen him as her lord, having discarded the other princes. The full import of this passage is obscure. It is, however, certain that the superior ability and prowess of Skandagupta in a time of crisis led to his choice as ruler in preference to other possible claimants. Proud of his success against the barbarians, Skandagupta assumed the title of Vikramaditya.

But the continuous attack of the Huns weakened the Gupta empire. Skandagupta died in AD 467. After his death, the Gupta empire began to decline.

Decline of the Gupta Empire

Inscriptions prove that the Gupta sovereignty was acknowledged in the Jabbalpur region in the Nerbudda valley as late as AD 528, and in North Bengal till AD 543-544.

Kumaragupta is known to have been ruling in AD 473-474, Buddhagupta from AD 476-495, Vainyagupta in AD 508 and Bhanugupta in AD 510-511. The Gupta empire became disintegrated and till the middle of the sixth century AD, they had merely become petty chiefs.