History

Lesson-8

The Mauryan Empire

1. What were the things given as tribute by the people living in the forested areas?

Ans. People living in the forested areas were more or less independent, but may have been expected to provide elephants, timber, honey and wax to Mauryan officials

2. What was Ashoka’s dhamma?

Ans. Ashoka’s dhamma did not involve worship of a god, or performance of a sacrifice. He felt that just as a father tries to teach his children, he had a duty to instruct his subjects. He was also inspired by the teachings of the Buddha.

3. How are empires different from kingdoms?

Ans. Empires are different from kingdoms in the following ways: i. Emperors need more resources than kings because empires are larger than kingdoms, and need to be protected by big armies. ii. So also they need a larger number of officials who collect taxes.

4. What does Dynasty mean?

Ans. When members of the same family become rulers one after another, the family is often called a dynasty. The Mauryas were a dynasty with three important rulers — Chandragupta, his son Bindusara, and Bindusara’s son, Ashoka

5. When did Ashoka's inclination towards Buddhism developed?

Ans. After the Battle of Kalinga, he was so horrified when he saw the violence and bloodshed that he decided not to fight any more wars. He slowly became the follower of the Buddhist religion and adopted the path of non-violence.

6. Why Ashoka known as a unique ruler?

Ans. Ashoka was known as a unique ruler because i. The most famous Mauryan ruler was Ashoka. ii. He was the first ruler who tried to take his message to the people through inscriptions. iii. Most of Ashoka’s inscriptions were in Prakrit and were written in the Brahmi script.

7. What were the problems that Ashoka wanted to solve by introducing dhamma?

Ans. There were many problems that Ashoka wanted to solve by introducing dhamma. i. People in the empire followed different religions, and this sometimes led to conflict. ii. Animals were sacrificed. iii. Slaves and servants were ill-treated. iv. Besides, there were quarrels in families and amongst neighbours.

8. Describe the Mauryan people?

Ans. Merchants, officials and crafts persons probably lived in these cities. In other areas there were villages of farmers and herders. In some areas such as central India, there were forests where people gathered forest produce and hunted animals for food. People in different parts of the empire spoke different languages. They probably ate different kinds of food, and wore different kinds of clothes as well

9.What were the effects of Kalinga war on Ashoka?

Ans. Effects of Kalinga war on Ashoka i. Ashoka fought a war to conquer Kalinga. ii. However, he was so horrified when he saw the violence and bloodshed that he decided not to fight any more wars. iii. He is the only king in the history of the world who gave up conquest after winning a war. iv. He decided to observe dhamma and to teach others about it as well

.

10. What were the means adopted by Ashoka to spread the message of dhamma?

Ans. Means adopted by Ashoka to spread the message of dhamma were: i. He appointed officials, known as the dhamma mahamatta who went from place to place teaching people about dhamma. ii. Besides, Ashoka got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars, instructing his officials to read his message to those who could not read it themselves. iii. Ashoka also sent messengers to spread ideas about dhamma to other lands, such as Syria, Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka.

11.What Megasthenes wrote about Mauryan Emperor?

Ans. Megasthenes wrote an account about what he saw. Mauryan Empire according to him was as follows:

i. Emperor is carried in a golden palanquin.

ii. His guards ride elephants decorated with gold and silver.

iii. Some of the guards carry trees on which live birds, including a flock of trained parrots, circle about the head of the emperor.

iv. The king is normally surrounded by armed women.

v. He has special servants to taste the food before he eats.

vi. He never sleeps in the same bedroom for two nights.

12. Describe the governance in Mauryan Empire?

Ans. Governance in Mauryan Empire

i. The area around Pataliputra was under the direct control of the emperor.

ii. This meant that officials were appointed to collect taxes from farmers, herders, crafts persons and traders, who lived in villages and towns in the area.

iii. There were other areas or provinces. Each of these was ruled from a provincial capital such as Taxila or Ujjain.

iv. Mauryas tried to control roads and rivers, which were important for transport, and to collect whatever resources were available as tax and tribute.

13. What Megasthenes wrote about Pataliputra (modern Patna)?

Ans. Megasthenes wrote about Pataliputra (modern Patna)

i. It is a large and beautiful city.

ii. It is surrounded by a massive wall.

iii. It has 570 towers and 64 gates.

iv. The houses, of two and three storeys, are built of wood and mud brick.

v. The king’s palace is also of wood, and decorated with stone carvings.

vi. It is surrounded with gardens and enclosures for keeping birds.