

## CBSE Notes Class 6 History Chapter 7

### Ashoka, the Emperor Who Gave Up War

Ashoka was one of the greatest rulers known to history and on his instructions, inscriptions were inscribed on pillars, as well as on rock surfaces. Before we find out what was written in these inscriptions, let us see why his kingdom was called an empire.

#### **A very big kingdom = an empire**

Ashoka, one of the greatest rulers of history ruled-empire founded by his grandfather, Chandragupta Maurya-over 2300 years ago-supported by a wise man named Chanakya or Kautilya-Chanakya's ideas written down in the Arthashastra-several cities in the empire (marked with black dots on the map)-included the capital Pataliputra, Taxila, and Ujjain-Taxila a gateway to the northwest, including Central Asia- Ujjain lay on the route from north to south India-Merchants, officials and craftspersons lived in these cities-In other areas there were villages of farmers and herders-In 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-ate different kinds of food-wore different kinds of clothes as well.

#### **How are empires different from kingdoms?**

Emperors need more resources than kings-are larger than kingdoms-need to be protected by big armies-they need a larger number of officials who collect taxes.

#### **Ruling the Empire**

Large empire-different parts ruled differently-area around Pataliputra under the direct control of the emperor-officials were appointed to collect taxes from farmers, herders, craftspersons and traders(lived in villages and towns in the area)-also punished those who disobeyed the ruler's orders-officials were given salaries-Messengers went to and fro-spies kept a watch on the officials- the emperor supervised them all, with the help of members of the royal family and senior ministers-other areas or provinces-ruled from a provincial capital such as Taxila or Ujjain-some amount of control from Pataliputra, and royal princes were often sent as governors, local customs and rules were probably followed-were vast areas between these centres-Mauryas tried to control roads and rivers important for transport-collect whatever resources were available as tax and tribute.

#### ***Tribute***

Unlike taxes, collected on a regular basis, tribute was collected as and when it was possible from people who gave a variety of things, more or less willingly.

#### **Ashoka, a unique ruler**

Famous Mauryan ruler-Ashoka-first ruler who tried to take his message to the people through inscriptions-inscriptions were in Prakrit- written in the Brahmi script.

## Ashoka's war in Kalinga

Kalinga-the ancient name of coastal Orissa-Ashoka fought a war to conquer Kalinga-he was horrified when he saw the violence and bloodshed-decided not to fight any more wars- is the only king in the history of the world who gave up conquest after winning a war.

## What was Ashoka's dhamma?

Did not involve worship of a god, or performance of a sacrifice. He had a duty to instruct his subjects- was also inspired by the teachings of the Buddha-a number of problems troubled him. People in the empire followed different religions- led to conflict- Animals were sacrificed-Slaves and servants were ill treated-quarrels in families and amongst neighbours-Ashoka's duty to solve these problems-appointed officials, known as the dhamma mahamatta-went from place to place teaching people about dhamma- got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars- instructed his officials to read his message to those who could not read it themselves- sent messengers to spread ideas about dhamma to other lands, such as Syria, Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka-built roads, dug wells, and built rest houses- arranged for medical treatment for both human beings and animals.