

Chapter 7 Ashoka The Emperor Who Gave Up War

Q.1 Make a list of occupation of people who lived within the Mauryan Empire.

The followings were the occupations of those people who lived within the Mauryan Empire:

1. Farming
2. Handicrafts
3. Trading
4. Herding
5. Hunting and gathering

Q.2 Complete the following sentences:

- a. Officials collected _____ from the area under the direct control of the ruler.
- b. Royal princess often went to the provinces as _____
- c. The Mauryan rulers tried to control _____ and _____ which were important for transport.
- d. People in forested regions provided the Mauryan officials with _____

Solution:(a) Officials collected Taxes from the area under the direct control of the ruler.

(b) Royal princess often went to provinces as governor.

(c) The Mauryan rulers tried to control roads and rivers which were important for transport.

(d) People in forested regions provided the Mauryan officials with elephants, timber and honey.

Q.3 State whether true or false:

- a. Ujjain was the gateway to the north-west
- b. Chandragupta's idea was written down in the Arthashastra
- c. Kalinga was the ancient name of Bengal
- d. Most Ashokan inscriptions are in the Brahmi script

Solution:

(a) False

The Mauryan province of Taxila was the gateway to the north-west.

(b) False

Arthshashtra is Sanskrit which means economic sciences. The Ideas of Kautilya otherwise known as Chanakya were written down in Arthshashtra.

(c) False

Kalinga refers to the coastal region between the Godavari and Mahanadi rivers in what is modern-day Orissa, not Bengal.

(d) True

Brahmi Script is the parent language of Hindi and many other north Indian languages. Ashokan inscriptions were written in Brahmi script.

Q.4 What were the problems that Ashoka wanted to solve by introducing *dhamma*?

Solution: Emperor Ashoka wanted to solve the following problems by introducing dhamma:

1. Inter-religious conflicts between his subjects.
2. Animal sacrifice during religious rituals.
3. Ill-treatment of servants and slaves.
4. Constant disputes between neighbours over petty issues.

NOTE: Dhamma is a Prakrit word which means dharma.

Q.5 What were the means adopted by Ashoka to spread the message of dhamma?

Solution: Ashoka adopted the following means to spread his message of dhamma:

1. He appointed officials called Dhamma Mahamatta who went to different places to spread the message of dhamma.
2. He had his messages inscribed on pillars so that common folk could read them.
4. Officials were directed to read out the messages inscribed on pillars to those who could not read.

Q.6 Why do you think slaves and servants were ill-treated? Do you think the orders of the emperor would have improved their condition? Give reasons for your answer.

Solution: Slaves and servants were ill-treated owing to the following reasons:

1. Most of them were prisoners of war.
2. Some belonged to the lowest social order, specifically Shudras.
3. The concept of human rights was virtually non-existent during that period.

Their condition would have improved after the order of Emperor because:

1. No one would dare defy the supreme order of the emperor himself.
2. Those who would disobey the emperor would be severely punished by his officials.
4. The Emperor was the supreme commander of the Mauryan Empire. Thus his word was law and had to be obeyed to the fullest extent.

Q.7 Write a short paragraph explaining to Roshan why the lions are shown on our currency notes. List at least one other object on which you see them.

Solution: The Ashoka pillar in Sarnath has 4 lions on top. Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment in Sarnath. The four lions are related to Buddhism and signify peace and friendship. During our independence struggles, the Buddhist ideals of non-violence inspired freedom movement. These lions on our symbol signify truth, peace, friendliness.

The lion symbol is an emblem of the Supreme Court of India, CBI, Police and almost all government departments. It is also seen on our passports as well.

Q.8 Suppose you had the power to inscribe your orders, what four commands would like to issue?

Solution: Students should do this project on their own