

Chapter: 1

Kingdoms to Empire

• Very Short answer questions:

Question: 1 Name two literary sources of the Mauryan period.

Answer: Arthashastra and Indika.

Question: 2 Who was Megasthenes? Which book reflects his travels around India?

Answer: Megasthenes was the ambassador of Seleucus Nicator in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. His book Indika reflects his travels around India.

Question: 3 What is the significance of the Lion Capital in India?

Answer: The most famous one is the pillar at Sarnath, our national Emblem is the replica of the capital of Sarnath. Its Lion Capital has now become the National Emblem of India.

Question: 4 List the countries where Ashoka propagated the principles of Dhamma.

Answer: Ashoka's son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra

Date ____ / ____ / ____

went to Sri-Lanka to spread Buddhism there. Buddhist missionaries also went to Burma and other south-east Asian countries to spread Buddhism.

Question: 5 Which war changed Ashoka's life and why?

Answer: Kalinga's war changed Ashoka's life because thousands on both sides were killed and wounded during the Kalinga war. The bloodshed and the wailing of widows and orphans completely changed Ashoka's attitude towards expansion through war. He gave up war and adopted the path of peaceful conquest.

Short answer questions:

Question: 1 Mention the most significant effect of Alexander's invasion.

Answer: Alexander's invasion opened new trade routes to Bharat and weakened the authority of north-western rulers.

Question: 2 Who was Bindusara?

Answer: Bindusara was the son of Chandragupta Mauryan. He was the second emperor to sit on the throne of the Mauryan dynasty.

Question: 3 Describe the effects of the Kalinga war on Ashoka.

Answer: In 261 BCE, Ashoka attacked and conquered Kalinga (Modern Odisha). Thousands of both sides were killed and wounded during the Kalinga war. The bloodshed and the wailing of widows and orphans completely changed Ashoka's attitude towards expansion through war. He gave up war and adopted the path of peaceful conquest.

Question: 4 Write two of Ashoka's welfare measures.

Answer: Ashoka did a number of welfare works like building of roads, planting of trees along the roads, building wells, rest houses for travellers, hospitals for the sick etc.

Long answer questions:

Question: 1 What did Ashoka do for the welfare for his people?

Answer: Ashoka believed that a king should treat his subject just as a father treat his children. He did a number of welfare works, like building of roads, planting of trees, building wells, rest houses for travellers, hospitals for sick etc. The Dhamma Mahamatras looked after these welfare activities across the empire.

Question: 2 What was Ashoka's 'dhamma'?

Answer: Since Ashoka became a devotee Buddhist, he began to spread the teachings of Buddha by issuing edicts. These edicts were engraved on rocks or pillars in Prakrit language and Brahmi so that even common people could read them.

The principal of Dhamma were:

- (i) People should live in peace and harmony.
- (ii) Shunning violence and war.
- (iii) Stopping animal sacrifice and non-vegetarianism.
- (iv) Respect of slaves by their masters.
- (v) Respect and tolerance to all irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

Question: 3 How did Chandragupta Maurya establish his empire?

Answer: With the help of Chanakya, Chandragupta overthrew the Nandas and set up Mauryan empire in 321 BCE with capital at Pataliputra. He brought together the small fragmented kingdoms of the country and combined them into a large empire. During his reign, the Mauryan Empire stretched from Bengal and Assam in the east, to Afghanistan and

Baluchistan in the west, to Kashmir and Nepal in the north and to the Deccan Plateau in the south.

Question: 7 Briefly describe the central administration of the Mauryas.

Answer: In the central administration of the Mauryas, the King was the head of the state. He had legislative, executive and judicial powers. He was the Supreme commander of the army and planned military operation with his Genapati. The King appointed ministers or Amtyas. He was advised by the mantri parishad. The Amtyas performed judicial and administrative functions and monitored the affairs of the state. The Adhyakshas were in charge of various department. They collected taxes and controlled the dealings connected to the land. The Samaharta was the officer-in-charge of the treasury. The Purochitas, Genapatis and Dandanika and Durgapala were other officials who helped in administration.

Question: 8 Why are Ashoka's edicts and inscriptions important?

Answer: Ashoka was the first king and perhaps the first king in the world to speak directly to his

Date ____ / ____ / ____

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subjects, through his inscriptions which carried his messages. These inscriptions engraved on rocks and pillars are found all over his vast empire. They were written in Brahmi script for a large part of India. These inscriptions seem to indicate that the Ashoka was genuinely interested in reaching out to his subjects. The inscriptions tell us about the policies of Ashoka.