

Lesson at a Glance

- Chandragupta **Maurya** founded an empire more than 2300 years ago. His grandson Ashoka ruled the empire later. Chandragupta was supported by a wise man called **Chanakya** or Kautilya who wrote a book **Arthashastra**.
- The Mauryan empire had several important cities like the capital Pataliputra, Taxila, Ujjain, etc.
- The area adjacent to the capital was under the direct control of the emperor. Officials were used to collect taxes. There were other areas or provinces which had their own provincial capitals. According to *Arthashastra*, the northwest was important for blankets, and south India for gold and precious stones.
- The most famous of the Mauryan emperors was **Ashoka**. He sent his message to the general public through **inscriptions** written in **Prakrit** (in Brahmi script).
- Ashoka fought a war in the quest to conquer **Kalinga** (present-day Orissa). But the violence and bloodshed in the war touched him and he became the only king who gave up conquest forever after winning a war.
- Ashoka believed he had a responsibility to instruct his subjects, which he did through his '**DHAMMA**'. He was a Buddhist. He appointed officials called as '**DHAMMA MAHAMATTA**' who went to places teaching people about '**DHAMMA**'. He got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars as well.
- Ashoka built roads, dug wells, and built rest-houses. He arranged for the treatment of unwell humans and animals.



The Lion Capital



The Rampurwa Bull

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

Let's Recall

Q. 1. Make a list of the occupations of the people who lived within the Mauryan empire.

Ans. The Mauryan empire consisted of people who were merchants, officials, crafts persons, farmers and herders, etc.

Q. 2. Complete the following sentences:

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

(b) Royal princes 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

Ans. (a) taxes (b) governors

(c) roads, rivers

(d) elephants, timber, honey and wax.

Q. 3. State whether true or false:

(a) Ujjain was the gateway to the north-west.

(b) Chandragupta's ideas were written down in the Arthashastra.

(c) Kalinga was the ancient name of Bengal.

(d) Most Ashokan inscriptions are in the Brahmi script.

Ans. (a) False, (b) True, (c) False, (d) True.

Let's Discuss

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

Ans. There were a number of problems in the empire that led Ashoka to introduce his 'dhamma'. People in the empire followed different religions, usually causing conflicts. Animal sacrifice was common. Slaves and servants were ill-treated by their masters. There were quarrels among civilians. To solve these problems, Ashoka introduced his 'dhamma'.

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

Ans. Ashoka appointed officials (called 'dhamma mahamatta') to go from place to place and tell people about 'dhamma'. Ashoka got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars too, in a language called as Prakrit which was comprehensible to all. Messengers were also sent to other parts of the world.

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.

Ans. Slaves and servants were ill-treated because their masters felt superior to them. The masters treated them as animals. It was because of the old 'varna' system.

The emperor's orders might have helped to some extent. Ashoka was a king who was loved by his subjects. Moreover his 'dhamma' was a realistic innovation.

Let's Do

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.

Ans. The lions are part of the Lion Capital in Sarnath. These lions are shown on our currency notes in honour of one of the greatest kings of India, Ashoka, who built the Capital. Moreover, on independence, the lion was recognized as the national animal, so the notes also showed the Lion Capital.

Another object which has the lions are shown are the coins of our currency.

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

Ans. To answer this question, use your own imagination and help from friends and teacher.

Some sample points:

- Slavery be abolished.
- Animal sacrifice be stopped.
- People should not fight among themselves.
- No discrimination be practised based on gender, caste, creed, etc.