

## Chapter – 7

### From a Kingdom to an Empire

#### **2marks:**

**1. Who founded the Mauryan Empire, and who supported him?**

**Answer:**

Chandragupta Maurya founded the Mauryan Empire, and he was supported by Chanakya (also known as Kautilya).

**2. What were the primary occupations of the people living within the Mauryan Empire?**

**Answer:**

The people within the Mauryan Empire were engaged in occupations such as farming, herding, crafting, and trading.

**3. What does Ashoka's dhamma emphasize, and how did he spread its message?**

**Answer:**

Ashoka's dhamma emphasized moral conduct, compassion, and non-violence. He spread the message through inscriptions on pillars and rocks, as well as through messengers and officials.

**4.Describe the impact of the Kalinga war on Ashoka's attitude towards warfare.**

**Answer:**

The Kalinga war deeply affected Ashoka, making him horrified by the violence and bloodshed. After winning the war, he decided to give up conquest and embrace a path of non-violence.

**5.How did Ashoka try to address the diverse religious practices within his empire?**

**Answer:**

Ashoka attempted to promote religious harmony by respecting all religions within his empire. His dhamma encouraged people to understand and respect each other's religious beliefs.

**6.Explain the concept of tribute in the Mauryan Empire.**

**Answer:**

Tribute in the Mauryan Empire was collected more or less willingly, as opposed to regular taxes. It involved people providing various things to Mauryan officials when possible.

**7.What were the main means adopted by Ashoka to spread the message of dhamma to his subjects?**

**Answer:**

Ashoka used inscriptions on pillars and rocks, sent messengers to various lands, and appointed officials known as dhamma maha matta to teach people about his dhamma.

**8.Describe the appearance of Pataliputra, the capital of the Mauryan Empire, as mentioned by Megasthenes.**

**Answer:**

Pataliputra was a large and beautiful city with a massive wall, 570 towers, and 64 gates. The houses were made of wood and mud brick, and the king's palace was adorned with stone carvings, surrounded by gardens and enclosures.

**4marks:**

**1.What was the significance of the lion capital on the currency notes during the Mauryan Empire?**

**Answer:**

The lion capital on currency notes symbolized the pillars erected by Ashoka at Sarnath. These pillars featured inscriptions promoting dhamma and were a way for Ashoka to communicate his messages to the people.

**2.Describe the administrative structure of the Mauryan Empire.**

**Answer:**

The Mauryan Empire had a centralized administration. The emperor, based in the capital Pataliputra, controlled the core regions directly. Provinces, ruled from provincial capitals like Taxila and Ujjain, had some autonomy in following local customs. Officials collected taxes, and messengers and spies facilitated communication and governance.

**3.What inspired Ashoka to embrace dhamma, and how did he propagate its principles?**

**Answer:**

Ashoka was inspired by the teachings of the Buddha and the desire to address societal issues. He propagated dhamma by appointing

officials (dhamma mahamatta), inscribing messages on rocks and pillars, sending messengers to neighboring lands, and building infrastructure like roads and rest houses.

**4.Explain the transformation in Ashoka's attitude towards war after the Kalinga war.**

**Answer:**

Witnessing the violence and suffering in the Kalinga war deeply affected Ashoka. He decided to renounce conquest and embrace dhamma, realizing the human cost of war. This transformation marked a unique historical event where a victorious king chose peace over further military expansion.

**5.What were the principal cities in the Mauryan Empire, and why were they strategically important?**

**Answer:**

Pataliputra, Taxila, and Ujjain were significant cities in the Mauryan Empire. Pataliputra, the capital, served as the administrative center. Taxila was a gateway to the northwest and Ujjain lay on the route from north to south India, facilitating trade and strategic control.

**6.How did Ashoka attempt to address religious diversity and societal issues within his empire?**

**Answer:**

Ashoka aimed to promote religious tolerance and address societal problems. He appointed officials to teach dhamma, spread his messages on inscriptions, and sent emissaries to neighboring lands. His emphasis on ethical conduct, respect for elders, and compassion aimed to create a harmonious society.

**7.Describe the features of Ashoka's dhamma and its relevance to modern times.**

**Answer:**

Ashoka's dhamma emphasized ethical principles, compassion, and respect for all religions. Its relevance today lies in promoting tolerance, non-violence, and understanding among diverse communities. Ashoka's messages on kindness, respecting others' beliefs, and gentle treatment of all creatures remain pertinent.

**7marks:****1. Discuss the key features of the Mauryan Empire's administrative structure under Ashoka's rule.****Answer:**

The Mauryan Empire, under Ashoka's rule, exhibited a well-organized administrative structure. Pataliputra served as the imperial capital, from which Ashoka exercised direct control over the core regions. Provinces, with Taxila and Ujjain as their capitals, retained some autonomy. Officials were responsible for tax collection, law enforcement, and maintaining order. The emperor's supervision, supported by the royal family and senior ministers, ensured effective governance.

**Imperial Capital and Core Regions:**

Pataliputra, strategically located along the Ganges River, served as the nerve center of the Mauryan Empire. It was the imperial capital from which Ashoka exercised direct control over the core regions.

Pataliputra's significance lay not only in its geographic centrality but also in its role as a political, economic, and cultural hub.

**2.Evaluate the impact of the Kalinga war on Ashoka's policies and governance.**

**Answer:**

The Kalinga war marked a turning point in Ashoka's reign, significantly influencing his policies and governance. Witnessing the widespread suffering and devastation compelled Ashoka to reevaluate the consequences of warfare. In a unique historical move, Ashoka decided to renounce further military conquests, embracing a philosophy of dhamma. This philosophy emphasized ethical conduct, compassion, and non-violence, shaping the emperor's approach to governance and societal harmony.

**Revaluation of Consequences:**

The aftermath of the Kalinga war exposed Ashoka to the widespread suffering and devastation caused by military conquest. Witnessing the human toll and the societal upheaval prompted a profound revaluation of the consequences of warfare. This introspection led Ashoka to question the ethical implications of his expansionist policies.



**3.Explore the significance of Ashoka's inscriptions and their role in disseminating his messages.**

**Answer:**

Ashoka's inscriptions played a pivotal role in communicating his messages and principles of dhamma to the diverse population of the Mauryan Empire. These inscriptions, crafted in Prakrit and the Brahmi script, adorned pillars and rocks across the empire. They served as a means of reaching a wide audience, including those who were illiterate. The inscriptions conveyed Ashoka's commitment to moral governance, tolerance of different religions, and the importance of ethical behaviour in daily life.

**Communicating Dhamma to the Population:**

Ashoka's inscriptions served as a powerful medium for disseminating his messages and principles of dhamma to the diverse and vast population of the Mauryan Empire. Recognizing the need for effective communication, Ashoka strategically utilized inscriptions to convey his vision for moral governance and societal well-being.

**4.Analyze the economic structure of the Mauryan Empire, highlighting the role of different occupations.**

**Answer:**

The Mauryan Empire boasted a multifaceted economic structure

characterized by diverse occupations. Farmers, herders, crafts persons, and traders were integral to urban centers, while villages, particularly in central India, were engaged in agriculture and herding. The strategic cities, including the capital Pataliputra, Taxila, and Ujjain, were hubs of economic activities. Various regions specialized in specific resources, such as the north-west for blankets and south India for gold and precious stones. The interconnectedness of these occupations contributed to the economic vitality of the empire.

**5. Investigate the role of Ashoka's dhamma in fostering societal harmony.**

**Answer:**

Ashoka's dhamma played a crucial role in promoting societal harmony within the Mauryan Empire. Unlike traditional religious doctrines, dhamma focused on ethical conduct, compassion, and respect for all religions. The emperor appointed officials, known as dhamma mahamatta, to propagate these principles. The emphasis on treating slaves, servants, and all creatures with kindness, and respecting elders, aimed at creating a more harmonious and just society. By addressing societal issues and encouraging virtuous behaviour, Ashoka's dhamma contributed to social cohesion.

**6.Evaluate the impact of Ashoka's efforts to spread dhamma beyond the borders of the Mauryan Empire.**

**Answer:**

Ashoka's initiatives to spread dhamma beyond the Mauryan Empire had significant consequences. He sent messengers to neighboring lands, including Syria, Egypt, and Greece, and dispatched his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghmitra to Sri Lanka. This dissemination of dhamma contributed to cross-cultural exchanges and enhanced diplomatic ties. By promoting ethical principles, respect for other religions, and compassionate governance, Ashoka aimed to create a broader influence that extended beyond the geographical boundaries of his empire.

**7.Examine the cultural and architectural legacy of the Mauryan Empire, focusing on symbols such as the lion capital and inscriptions.**

**Answer:**

The Mauryan Empire left a lasting cultural and architectural legacy, exemplified by symbols like the lion capital and inscriptions. The lion capital, prominently featured on currency notes, originated from pillars erected by Ashoka at Sarnath. It symbolizes the emperor's commitment to dhamma and ethical governance. The inscriptions, crafted in Prakrit and Brahmi script on rocks and pillars, not only

conveyed Ashoka's messages but also served as a unique form of public communication. These cultural artifacts reflect the empire's rich heritage, emphasizing moral values, tolerance, and the assimilation of diverse cultural elements.

**Fill in the blanks:**

**1.The Mauryan Empire's imperial capital was \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Answer:**

Pataliputra

**2.The Kalinga war, fought around \_\_\_\_\_ BCE, was a pivotal moment in Ashoka's reign.**

**Answer:**

261 BCE

**3.Ashoka's philosophy of \_\_\_\_\_ emphasized ethical conduct, compassion, and non-violence.**

**Answer:**

dhamma

**4.Ashoka's inscriptions were crafted in \_\_\_\_\_ and the Brahmi script.**

**Answer:**

Prakrit

**5.The inscriptions adorned \_\_\_\_\_ and rocks across the Mauryan Empire.**

**Answer:**

pillars

**6.The Arthashastra, a book attributed to \_\_\_\_\_, documented many ideas related to governance.**

**Answer:**

Chanakya

**7.The Mauryan Empire's principal cities included Pataliputra, Taxila, and \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Answer:**

Ujjain

**8.Officials appointed by Ashoka to propagate his messages were known as \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Answer:**

dhamma mahamatta

**9.Ashoka's inscriptions conveyed his commitment to moral governance, tolerance of different religions, and the importance of \_\_\_\_\_ in daily life.**

**Answer:**

ethical behavior

**10.The Mauryan Empire's collapse occurred about \_\_\_\_\_ years ago.**

**Answer:**

2200 years ago

**Multiple choice:**

**1. Who was the founder of the Mauryan Empire?**

- a) Ashoka**
- b) Chandragupta Maurya**
- c) Bindusara**
- d) Chanakya**

**Answer:**

- b) Chandragupta Maurya**

**2. What was the capital of the Mauryan Empire?**

- a) Ujjain**
- b) Taxila**
- c) Pataliputra**
- d) Varanasi**

**Answer:**

- c) Pataliputra**

**3. The Kalinga war had a profound impact on Ashoka, leading him to embrace:**

- a) Expansionist policies**
- b) Military conquests**
- c) Dhamma**

**d) Religious orthodoxy**

**Answer:**

c) Dhamma

**4.Ashoka's inscriptions were crafted in which language?**

**a) Sanskrit**

**b) Prakrit**

**c) Pali**

**d) Tamil**

**Answer:**

b) Prakrit

**5.Where were Ashoka's inscriptions commonly placed in the Mauryan Empire?**

**a) Temples**

**b) Caves**

**c) Pillars and rocks**

**d) Palaces**

**Answer:**

c) Pillars and rocks

**6.Who is credited with writing the book called the Arthashastra?**

**a) Ashoka**



- b) Chanakya**
- c) Bindusara**
- d) Chandragupta Maurya**

**Answer:**

- b) Chanakya**

**7.Which city was NOT one of the principal cities of the Mauryan Empire?**

- a) Ujjain**
- b) Pataliputra**
- c) Taxila**
- d) Varanasi**

**Answer:**

- d) Varanasi**

**8.What were officials appointed by Ashoka to propagate his messages called?**

- a) Ministers**
- b) Governors**
- c) Dhamma Mahamatta**

**d) Scribes**

**Answer:**

c) Dhamma Mahamatta

**9.Ashoka's dhamma emphasized:**

**a) Military prowess**

**b) Tolerance, compassion, and ethical conduct**

**c) Expansion of the empire**

**d) Religious orthodoxy**

**Answer:**

b) Tolerance, compassion, and ethical conduct

**10.Approximately when did the collapse of the Mauryan Empire occur?**

**a) 1500 years ago**

**b) 2000 years ago**

**c) 1700 years ago**

**d) 2200 years ago**

**Answer:**

d) 2200 years ago

## **Summary:**

The Mauryan Empire, initiated by Chandragupta Maurya, reached its zenith with Pataliputra as the imperial hub. Ashoka's transformative experience during the Kalinga war redirected the empire's trajectory. Opting for dhamma, he renounced militaristic pursuits, instilling a philosophy centered on ethics, compassion, and non-violence.

Ashoka's inscriptions, etched in Prakrit and Brahmi script, adorned pillars and rocks, making his principles accessible to a diverse populace. These inscriptions, strategically positioned across the empire, communicated his commitment to moral governance, tolerance, and the promotion of ethical behaviour in daily life.

The Arthashastra, a comprehensive treatise often attributed to Chanakya, documented governance strategies, providing insights into the administrative machinery of the Mauryan Empire. Principal cities like Pataliputra, Taxila, and Ujjain thrived as centers of political and cultural significance.