



## QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

### A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. Narrate 'The Tale of Melon City' in your own words.

Answer: 'The Tale of Melon City' runs like folk tale. The city is called Melon City because its ruler is a melon. There is a curious tale around it. Once a fair and gentle king ruled over a state. He got an arch built across the thoroughfare. As he passed under the low arch it struck his head and he lost his crown. He thought it a disgrace and ordered the chief of builders to be hanged. The chief lay the blame on the workmen. The workmen were surprised. They said that the bricks were made of wrong size. So the masons were thought guilty. The masons shifted the blame on the architect. The architect put the blame at the king's door as he had amended his original plan. The king sought a wise man's counsel. He held the arch guilty and ordered it to be hanged. A councillor objected to it as it had touched the king's head. The people became restless. They wanted to see someone hanging. Only the king's head could fit the noose. So he was hanged. It was now announced that the next man who passed the City Gate would choose the king. An idiot came. He suggested 'A melon'. So melon was crowned the king. He was taken to the throne. He was called melon king.

Question 2. What impression would you form of a state where the king was just and placid\*?

Answer: The State where the king was just and placid' seems to be a backward region full of ignorant fools and ruled by a whimsical king. The king considers himself to be the custodian of people and gets an arch erected for their spiritual upliftment. The king's word is a command and unwritten law. The whole process of changing judgement on the appeals of the victims appears as a mock-trial. The Ministers and Councillors seems to be selfish. They advise the king to serve their own ends, though they appear to flatter the king and seem dedicated to the state. The common people are uneducated and ignorant fools. They need mental as well as spiritual upliftment. They are fun loving. In their quest for fun, they can cross all limits. If deprived of fun, the unruly mob can rebel against the crown. They do not bother whether the king is a man or a melon. They want there personal freedom, free business and peaceful lives.

Question 3. How according to you, can peace and liberty be maintained in a state?

Answer: Various people advocate various means of maintaining peace and liberty in a state. Some are in favour of dictatorship while others favour democracy. I think the best course lies in good governance. Whatever is well-administered is most fruitful for the citizens as well as the rulers. It ensures peace and liberty to the common man. A strong state, in itself, is safe against any external threat. Dedicated rulers, enlightened citizens and proper law enforcing agencies can establish peace and harmony in the state. Narrow considerations based on region, religion, caste etc. should be discouraged because these are potent threat to internal security as they fuel dissensions among the people. Free expression of opinions must be allowed but respect for law and order be

observed. People should be conscious of their privileges and rights as well as duties and responsibilities. This is the only way to maintain peace and liberty.

Question 4. Suggest a few instances in the poem which highlight humour and irony?

Answer: 'The Tale of Melon City' is full of instances of humour and irony. The just and placid king got an arch built to 'edify' spectators. The king's riding under low arch and losing his crown also creates humour. The way the accused appeal to the king and shift the blame on others is quite funny. The unstable behaviour of the king also creates humour. The self-defence of the architect is a masterpiece. He holds the king himself responsible for the disgrace as he had 'made certain amendments' to his original plan. The king's anger and inability to act calmly create humour.

The criteria for selection of the wisest man is quite ironic. It is assumed that wisdom comes with age. Being blind he does not know that an arch cannot be hanged. Others have eyes, yet they follow his advice and take the arch to the gallows. How ironic it is! The king wants to keep the crowd in good humour and orders that someone be hanged. Only the king is tall enough to fit the noose. What an irony! The king is hanged by his own order. The custom of naming the next king seems equally ridiculous. The idiot who passes by the City Gate suggests "melon" to be the next king. People who think only of their own interests do not bother whether the king is a man or a melon.

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