



1. Explain why patriliney may have been particularly important among elite families.

Ans: Patriliney is the system through which descent from father to son and grandson is traced. The principle of patriliney would have been essential for the elite families for the following reasons:
Continuity of Dynasty: As per the Dharmashastras, it was an established belief that the son carried forward the dynasty. That was the main reason that the families wished for sons not for daughters. A couplet of Rigveda also substantiates this view. In this couplet, a father at the time of the marriage of his daughter wishes that she should have best sons with the grace of Lord Shiva.
Inheritance: In royal families, the acquisition of throne was included in the inheritance. After the death of a king, his eldest son was supposed to inherit the throne. After the death of the parents, the property was to be equally divided among all the sons. In fact, parents avoided disputes in the family after their death. Most of the royal families followed the patriliney since 600 B.C. But sometimes this system had exceptions also.

- The brother of the king ascended the throne in case the former had no son.
- Relatives also claimed inheritance of the throne.
- In some special cases, women also ascended the throne like Prabhavati Gupta.

2. Discuss whether kings in early states invariably were Kshatriyas.

Ans: As per the Dharmashastra, only Kshatriyas were supposed to be the kings. But it was also to be noted that many important ruling lineages perhaps had different origins. Mauryas were considered Kshatriyas by many people. Some Brahmanical texts described Mauryas as of low origin. The Shungas and Kanvas who were immediate successors of the Mauryas were Brahmanas. In fact those sections of the society controlled the political power which enjoyed support and resources. It did not depend on the question of being born as Kshatriya.

There were other rulers like Shakas who came from Central Asia. But the Brahmanas considered them as mlechchhas, barbarians and outsiders. Similarly, Gotami-putra Satkarni, the best known ruler of the Satavahana dynasty, became a destroyer of the pride of Kshatriyas. This we see that the Satavahanas claimed to be Brahmanas whereas the Brahmanas were of the opinion that the king should be Kshatriyas.

3. Compare and contrast the dharma or norms mentioned in the stories of Drona, Hidimba and Matanga.

Ans:

Drona: Drona was a Brahmana. As per the Dharmashastras, it was the duty of the Brahmana to impart education. It was considered a pious deed of the Brahmanas. Drona was also following that system. He was imparting education. He taught archery to the princes of the Kuru Dynasty. In those days, people of low caste were not entitled to get education. Keeping this view in mind, Drona refused imparting education to Ekalavya. But in the course of time, Ekalavya learnt archery and acquired great skill. But Drona demanded right thumb of Ekalavya as his teaching fee. This was against religious norms. In fact, Drona did this just to ensure that no

one could be better archer than Aijuna in the field of archery.
Hidimba: Hidimba was a lady demon, that is rakshasini. In fact, all the rakshasas were man-eaters. One day her brother asked her to catch Pandavas so that he may eat them. But Hidimba did not follow this. She fell in love with Bhima and married him. A rakshasa boy was born to him, named Ghatotkacha. In this way, Hidimba did not keep the norms of rakshasas.

Matanga: Matanga was Boddhisatta who was born in the family of a chandala. But he married Dittha Mangalika who was the daughter of a merchant. A son was born to him named Mandavya Kumara. In the course of time he learnt three Vedas. He used to offer food to sixteen hundred Brahmanas every day. But when his father appeared before him dressed in rags with a clay alms bowl in his hand, he refused to offer food to him. The reason was that, he considered his father as outcaste and his food was meant for Brahmanas only. Matanga advised his son not to be proud of his birth. After saying this, he disappeared into the air. When Dittha Mahgalika knew this incident, she went after Matanga and begged his forgiveness. This way acted like a true wife. She performed her duty religiously. A donor is considered generous. But Mandavya failed to follow the norms of religion and generosity.

4. In what ways was the Buddhist theory of a social contract different from the Brahmanical view of a society derived from the Purusha Sukta?(VBQ)

Ans: The Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda says that the four Varnas emerged because of the sacrifice of Purusha, the primeval man. The four varnas were Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. These Varnas had different jobs. The Brahmanas had supreme position in the society. They were also considered as teachers. Kshatriyas were considered warriors. They also ran the administration. The Vaishyas were the masters of trade. The Shudras were at the lowest strata. Their duty was to serve the above three varnas. Under this Brahmanical system, birth was the only criteria to judge the status and prestige in the society. But the Buddhist theory of a social contract was different. As per the Buddhist concept, there was inequality in society. But they also opined that this inequality was neither natural nor permanent. They did not favour the idea of birth being the criteria of social status.

5. The following is an excerpt from the Mahabharata in which Yudhishthira, the eldest Jandava, speaks to Sanjaya, a messenger: Try and identify the criteria used to make this list - in terms of age, gender, kinship ties. Are there any other criteria? For each category, explain why they are placed in a particular position in the list.

Ans: Not only age, gender and kinship ties but there were other factors too which were considered to prepare the list. The Brahmana, the Purohitas and the Gurus were bestowed the highest honours. They all were widely respected. Fraternal kins were also given respects who were considered like parents. People who were of equal age or younger were placed at the third rank. In the next order, the young Kuru warriors were respected. Women also received due place. Wives, mothers, daughters-in-law and daughters came in this order. Orphans and handicapped had also been taken care of. Yudhishthira also greets them.

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