



B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. How did the accused try to shift the blame on others?
How far did they succeed?

Answer: The chief of builders was the first one to be held guilty. He shifted the blame on the workmen. The workmen were surprised but did not lose their reasoning power. They told the king he had forgotten the fact that the bricks were made of the wrong size. Swayed by their rational argument, the masons were summoned. They trembled with fear, but shifted the blame on the architect who was responsible for planning and erecting the arch. The king ordered the architect to be hanged. The clever architect rehndded the king that he had forgotten one small thing. He had made certain amendments to plans when the former had shown them to the latter. This clearly meant that he held the king responsible for the mishap. The king became very angry and lost" his capacity of clear judgement. He called it a tricky thing and sought the advice of the wisest man in the country. Thus each accused succeeded in shifting the blame on others.

Question 2. What impression do you gather about the king from 'The Tale of Melon City'?

Answer: The just and placid king appears quite ruthless as he becomes 'placider' and decides to have all the workmen hanged instead of the chief of builders. His wobbling mind and capricious nature is indicated by the frequent changes in his decision. He is easily swayed by arguments and seems fickle-minded. He seems to be eager about public welfare and gets an arch constructed across the thoroughfare to edify them. The whimsical king is easily outwitted by the clever architect. The king loses his head in a fit of anger. In order to save his skin, he seeks the advice of the wisest man in the country. The king wants to keep the public in good humour. He is quite observant and judges the mood of the masses correctly. His lack of foresight proves to be his doom. The height of the noose fits only his neck. He foolishly becomes a victim of his own order. He wants to prevent a public revolt but pays for the public amusement with his blood. Thus he is a short-sighted crank with muddled reasoning power.

Question 3. What do you think makes 'The Tale of Melon City' interesting and edifying?

Answer: As the title indicates the poem tells a story about Melon City—a city named after its ruler. It is quite interesting and edifying to learn how the country got a melon as its ruler. In short, it was on account of customary choice. The people relate the story of a just and placid king who was hanged by his own Royal Decree. What the king did for the people and how he held the trails of the accused both are quite amusing. The clever arguments of the accused to save their lives are equally interesting. The king feels the pulse of the people who want to see a hanging. He knows how mischievous an angry mob can be and hence orders that someone must be hanged immediately. The irony of the situation is that only the king is tall enough to fit the noose. The practical-minded ministers resort to the age-old custom to choose the next ruler. The idiot's choice is approved of in the name of custom. The people are indifferent to the fact that their ruler is a

melon not a man. The behaviour of pragmatic ministers and equally selfish, foolish and mean people seems quite funny and interesting. It is instructive too. A wise man should avoid the company of fools.

Question 4. "The poem mocks the process of fair trial and proper judgement." How far do you agree with the statement?

Answer: The poem is a severe indictment of the age-old custom of delivering justice by word of mouth of the kings. There was a time when the King's word was considered divine and whatever he uttered was law. A just and placid king was expected to protect the innocent and punish the quality. However, the process of trial and the ever-changing judgement's make a fun of the whole process of fair trials and considered awards. This is evident from the statements of the accused who try to save their lives by holding others responsible for the guilt. The King's capriciousness and inability to see through the thin veil of their arguments make him an object of ridicule rather than a dispenser of divine justice. Hence, we agree hilly with the above statement.

Question 5. Comment on the ending of the poem 'The Tale of Melon City'. What bearing does the ending have on the title of the poem?
OR

Comment on the title of the poem 'The Tale of Melon City'.

Answer: The ending of 'The Tale of Melon City' is quite significant. It has a direct bearing on the title. The ending of the poem reveals that the incidents took place long ago. It throws light on the old custom of the state to choose their new ruler. Confronted with the dilemma, the ministers took the easy way out. The person who passed the City Gate next was to name the king. It happened to be an idiot who gave the standard answer "a melon" to every question. So the melon was crowned the king, carried to the throne and respectfully set down there. The people are not at all ashamed to have a melon as their king. They say that if the king rejoices in being a melon, that's all right with them. They find no fault with him as long as he leaves them to enjoy their peace, freedom and free trade. The capital city is called Melon City after the king. Thus the ending throws light on the selfish nature of the people and their belief in old customs. It also explains the title.

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