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Chapter 7 The First Empire book exercises.

III. Answer the following questions in brief.

1. How did the battle of Kalinga affect Ashoka?

Ans- Battle of Kalinga changed Ashoka's life. Though Kalinga was conquered, there was a huge loss of human lives. It impacted Ashoka so much that he decided not to fight wars anymore. He became a follower of the Buddha and devoted the rest of his life to his Dhamma.

2. Write a note on Ashoka's Edicts?

- Ashoka was the first ruler to communicate to his subjects through edicts. To spread his ideas, Ashoka inscribed his messages on stone pillars, caves, boulders and rocks so that people could read them.
- These edicts were widely spread throughout his empire and placed on important routes at strategic locations.
- They conveyed Ashoka's ideas on administration, religion and behaviour of people towards one another and their elders.
- Ashoka's edicts were usually written in Prakrit, i.e., the language of the common people. They were also written in Greek, Kharosthi, and Aramaic in north-west India.

3. What were the main principles of Ashoka's Dhamma?

- Though inspired by Buddhism, Ashoka's Dhamma was essentially his ideas on society and governance.
- He saw himself as a father to his subjects and felt that he had a moral duty to instill good values in his people.
- He spoke directly to his people through his edicts. Through Dhamma, Ashoka encouraged his subjects to be non-violent, truthful and tolerant and respectful towards others' religious beliefs, instructed that one should be respectful towards one's elders, and kind and charitable to all. The above are also the main principles of Ashoka's Dhamma.

4. Give an account of the Mauryan administration.

- The Mauryan administration was well-defined. The king held supreme power. He took important decisions only after consulting his ministers (mantri parishad) and other members of the royal family.
- The empire was divided into provinces, which were ruled by governors who were usually royal princes or Kumaras. Provinces were further divided into districts, which comprised several towns or villages.
- Each village had a headman called the gramika. Pataliputra, the capital city, and its surrounding territories were regarded as the core area and were directly administered by the emperor with the help of officials appointed by him, who were responsible to him.
- Taxes were levied on providing water for irrigation. The other sources of revenue were land revenue, taxes on trade and crafts, forest produce, output from mines as well as fines.

5. what were the reasons for the decline of the mauryan Empire?

Ans-The Mauryan Empire declined mainly because the successors of Ashoka were weak. They could not efficiently manage the huge expenditure on the army. What added to the disorder were invasions in the north-western border of India. Some historians also feel that Ashoka's pacifist policy was responsible for the decline of the Mauryan Empire.

IV. Answer the following questions in details.

1. what do you know about Alexander? How did his presence impact the Indian subcontinent?

- Alexander, the ruler of Macedonia who attacked north-western India and defeated several republican states.
- Though he wanted to cross the Indus, and continue eastwards into the north Indian heartland, his army was deterred by the powerful army of the Nanda dynasty. So, Alexander appointed governors in India to look after the territories he had conquered, and left for Greece.
- Alexander's invasions weakened the small tribes and states of north India. This enabled the Mauryas to establish control over these territories and build an empire.

2. Discuss the personality and deeds of Chanakya.

- Chanakya, also known as Kautilya or Vishnugupta, was the mastermind behind Chandragupta's rise to power.
- Chandragupta Maurya overthrew the Nandas and established the Mauryan Empire with Chanakya's help.
- Chanakya is regarded as a great political thinker and economist, and a kingmaker. Chanakya wrote Arthashastra that contain guidelines on how to run a government. It is one of the world's earliest treatises on political thought and social order.

3. Who was Chandragupta Maurya? Why is he an important character in the history of ancient Indian subcontinent?

- Chandragupta Maurya is the first king of the Mauryan Empire. He is an important character in the history of ancient Indian Subcontinent as he overthrew the Nandas and established the Mauryan Empire.
- After consolidating his position in Magadha, Chandragupta conquered the Punjab and other parts of north India. In the north-west, Chandragupta concluded a marriage alliance with the daughter of Seleucus Nicator, Alexander's general.
- Territories, covering modern Afghanistan, were given to Chandragupta through this marriage. His empire extended from the Hindu Kush in the northwest to Bengal in the east and Himalayas in the north to the Narmada in the south.
- Towards the end of his life, he became a follower of Mahavira. He abdicated his throne and joined a group of Jaina monks led by Bhadrabahu and travelled to Shravana Belagola in Karnataka. There, he fasted unto death, in keeping with the Jaina spiritual tradition.

4. Write a note on Bindusara's reign.

Bindusara, Chandragupta's son, succeeded him to the throne. During Bindusara's reign, the Mauryan Empire extended as far as Mysore in the south. Only the region of Kalinga (in present-day Odisha) and the kingdoms on the extreme south of India were not part of his empire. Bindusara maintained friendly relations with Greek governors in Asia and Africa. Bindusara was succeeded by his son Ashoka, who is considered as the greatest ruler of the dynasty.

5. What were the achievements in the field of art and architecture in the Maurya rule?

- Most of the information that we have about the Mauryan period comes from the art and architecture left behind such as the Ashokan edicts, viharas, pillars and stupas.
- The earliest viharas were rock-cut caves made during this period. These were carved out of granite hills.
- Ashoka built over 84,000 stupas throughout the kingdom, of which the Sanchi stupa is one of the most famous.
- The highly polished monolithic pillars are a cause of wonder even today. The Ashoka Chakra found on the Indian flag is taken from the Lion Capital of Ashoka.
- The Mauryan ruler also built many impressive palaces.

My History corner

Mapping Ashoka's Empire

On a political map of India, mark the extent of Ashoka's empire. Sarnath, Kalinga, Pataliputra, Ujjain, Allahabad, Rampurwa and Sanchi are also located on the map.

