

Lesson-6

Janapadas and New Kingdoms

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. Rajagriha was the earlier capital of Magadha.
2. Magadha was an important city for trade.
3. The Ashwamedha Yagna was performed by specially-trained priest in front of a large gathering.
4. The main tax was on agricultural produce.
5. Mahavira belonged to the Lichchavi clan.

B. Give one word answers:

1. I am a sacrifice done to show the king's power. Ashwamedha Yagna.
2. I am the ruler who conquered the kingdom of Anga. Bimbisara.
3. I was the founder of Jainism. Vardhaman Mahavira.
4. I paid my taxes in the form of animals and animal produce. Herders.

C. Fill in the blanks with the correct answers.

1. _____ was the term used for republic.
(a) Janapada (b) Mahajanapada (c) Sabha (d) Gana-sanghas
2. The _____ formed the lowest rung in society.
(a) Brahmins (b) Kshatriyas (c) Vaishyas (d) Shudras.
3. The port of Champa was associated with _____.
(a) Vaishali (b) Taxila (c) Anga (d) Bodhgaya.
4. _____ was not a mahajanapada.
(a) Avanti (b) Kosala (c) Vatsa (d) Gupta
5. _____ was well known for his important trade routes.
(a) Champa (b) Shravasti (c) Tamralipti (d) Sabha

D. Answer these questions in brief:

1. What is the difference between Janapada and mahajanapada?

Ans.1 A group of tribes formed a village called a grama. These gramas became large territories. These large territories came to be known as Janapadas.

Some kingdoms became bigger and more powerful. These evolved into mahajanapadas which were powerful kingdoms.

2. Name the book from which we learnt about the mahajanapadas?

Ans.2 we learnt about the mahajanapadas from the Vedas.

3. Why were people unhappy with the Varna system?

Ans.3 The people were very unhappy with the Varna system as the lower caste was not treated relevantly by the upper classes. They had no rights and were treated like slaves.

4. Who is a rajan?

Ans.4 A rajan is a ruler or a leader of a tribe.

5. Name two monarchies and two republics?

Ans.5 Two monarchies are Anga and Avanti and two republics are Lichchavi clan and Shakya clan.

E. Answer these questions in detail:

1. Explain the Varna system. Identify the upper classes and the lower classes in this social hierarchy?

Ans.1 Varna is a Sanskrit term used to describe the social class divisions made in the Vedic period. The first mention of the Varna system was found in Purusha Suktam verse of the ancient Sanskrit Rig Veda.

The two upper classes were the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, who enjoyed all the power and status. The two lower classes, the Vaishyas and the Shudras, were exploited by the upper classes. The Shudras formed the lowest rung in the social hierarchy and along with landless peasants, had no right and were treated as slaves.

2. Explain the developments that took place, leading to urbanization in the period.

Ans.2 This period was marked by major developments which included the use of iron, paddy transplantation, the imposition of taxes, the growth of trade and urban settlements, the growth of new skills and crafts and the emergence of new religions and ideas. The developments in agriculture and crafts led to the emergence of many trade towns which were mainly located near rivers. Several trade routes developed at this time and the cities became important market places.

3. Why were taxes introduced by the rulers?

Ans.3 The rulers introduced taxes to pay salaries to the soldiers and officials, as needed a large amount of money to pay them. They also needed money to build forts and carry out public welfare jobs. The money they collected was used for the development of a strong army. The main tax was on agriculture produce as agriculture was the main occupation. Taxes were also imposed on craftsmen in the form of labour and Herders in the form of animals and animal produce.

4. Explain the differences between monarchies and republics citing examples.

Ans.4 Most of the mahajanapas that existed during the Vedic period were mostly monarchies, that is they were ruled by kings or rajans and the throne was hereditary. The rajan was admired and respected by all, including the Brahmins. There were also republics along with monarchies. There term republic means Gana-sangha meaning equal governance. It was a political system in which the chief or rajan was elected and his position was not hereditary. The republics were spread out in the foot hills of the Himalayas. They consisted of a single clan such as shakyas and Koliyas. Most of these monarchies were located in the Gangetic plains.

END OF THE CHAPTER.