

HISTORY

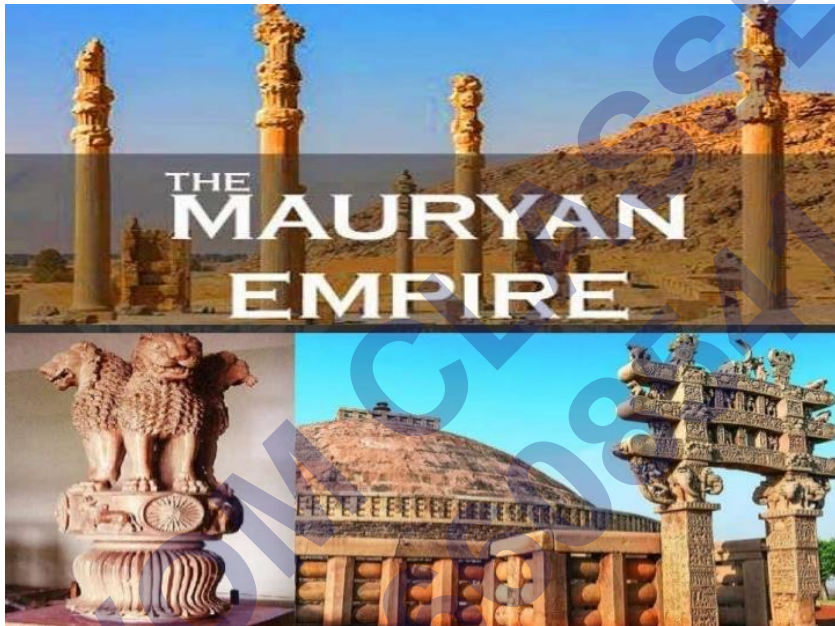
Chapter 7: Ashoka, the Emperor who Gave up War



Ashoka, the Emperor who Gave up War

The Mauryan Empire

The Mauryan dynasty was founded by Chandragupta Maurya about 2300 years ago. Chandragupta defeated the last ruler of the Nanda dynasty with the help of a wise man, **Chanakya**. Chanakya wrote the '**Arthashastra**' in which he put down his ideas about managing the administration and collection of taxes by the state.



King Ashoka was the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya. Under his rule, the Mauryan Empire expanded greatly. It was called an empire since it covered almost the entire Indian subcontinent. Empires differ from kingdoms in that they are larger and have a vast army. Since empires are large, they have several officials who collect taxes from the people.



King Ashoka finds mention in various inscriptions and Buddhist texts. He inscribed many of his teachings on rocks and pillars. The Lion Pillar of Sarnath is a famous piece of sculpture which belonged to the Mauryan dynasty under king Ashoka. The image of the Ashoka pillar at Sarnath is found on the Indian currency- on notes as well as on coins.



The ashoka pillar at sarnath

How are empires different from kingdoms?

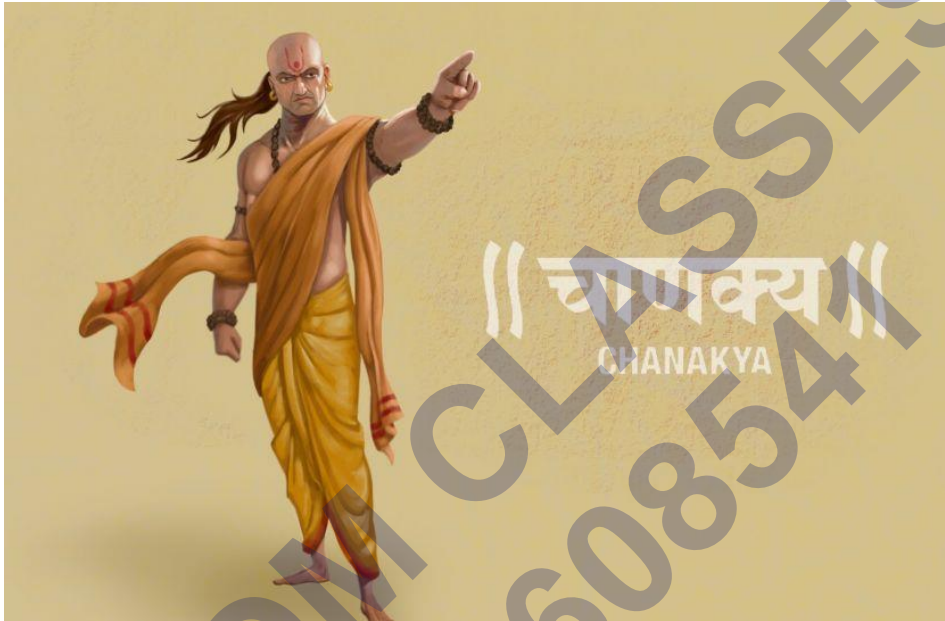
- Emperors need more resources than kings because empires are larger than kingdoms, and need to be protected by big armies.
- So also they need a larger number of officials who collect taxes.

The Empire under Ashoka

- The Mauryan Empire had several big cities like the capital city- Pataliputra, Taxila and Ujjain. These cities were mainly inhabited by the merchants, traders, officials and craftsmen.
- While Taxila was on the gateway to the north-west, Ujjain lay on a route from north to south.
- Patliputra was directly ruled by the king. Officials were appointed to collect taxes from the farmers, traders, herders and craftsmen.
- The officials were paid salaries in cash and their work was supervised by the king along with the royal members and senior ministers.
- The empire was divided into provinces and each province had a capital. Royal princes were sent as governors to manage the various provinces.
- Farmers and herders lived in the villages while hunters and gatherers lived in the forests. People living in the forests paid taxes to the government in the form of timber,

wax, honey and elephants.

- Since the Mauryan Empire encompassed vast lands, people living in different parts of the empire spoke different languages, followed different customs, ate different food and had different dressing styles.
- Various parts of the empire were famous for different things. According to the Arthashastra, while the north-west part of the country was famous for blankets, South India was famous for gold and precious stones. These resources were probably collected as a tribute from the people.



Ashoka, a unique ruler

The most famous Mauryan ruler was Ashoka. He was the first ruler who tried to take his message to the people through inscriptions. Most of Ashoka's inscriptions were in Prakrit and were written in the Brahmi script.

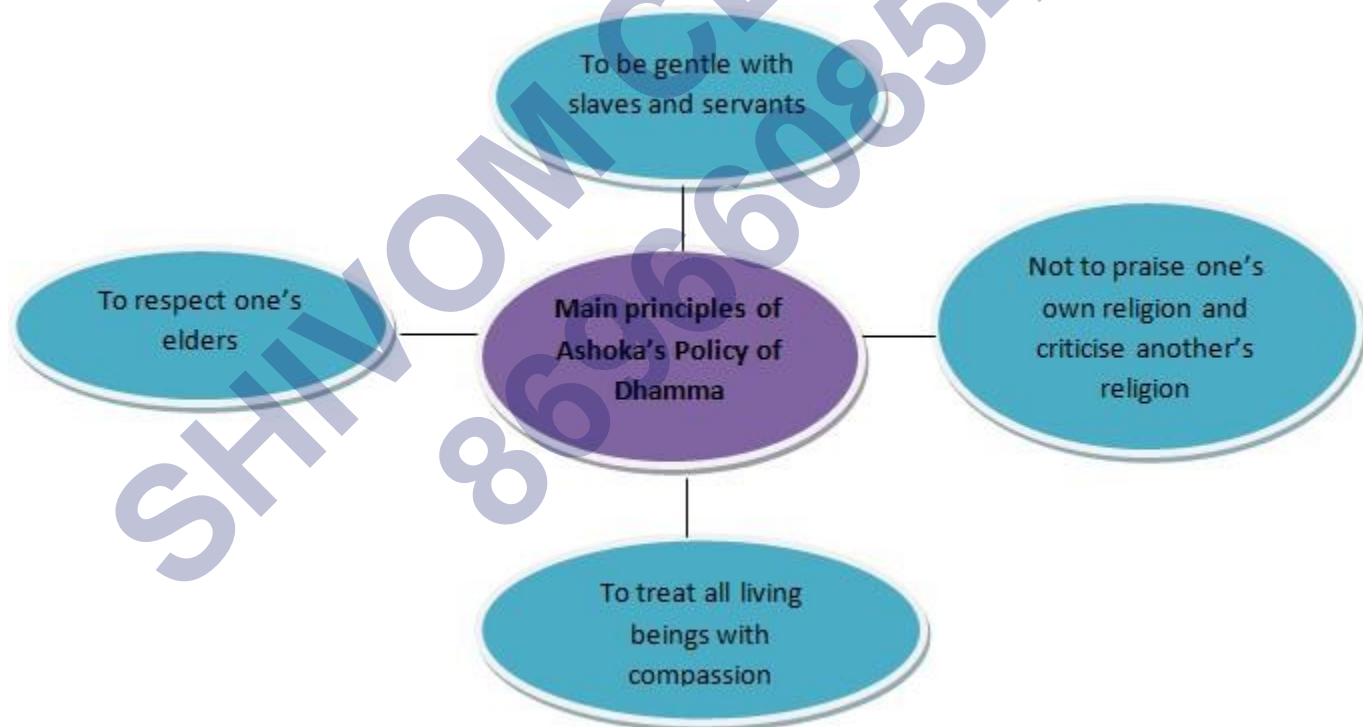
The Kalinga War

During the Mauryan dynasty, the current day coastal Orissa was known as Kalinga. It was not under the control of the Mauryan Empire. King Ashoka thus waged a war to conquer it. Many people were killed in the war and several others were injured. King Ashoka was filled with remorse and sadness when he saw the dead and the injured soldiers in the battlefield. He thereafter decided not to fight any more wars. He is the only king in the history of the world who gave up conquests after winning a war.



Ashoka's Policy of Dhamma

Inspired by the teachings of Buddhism, Ashoka followed the policy of Dhamma. He wanted his subjects to follow these principles of dhamma:

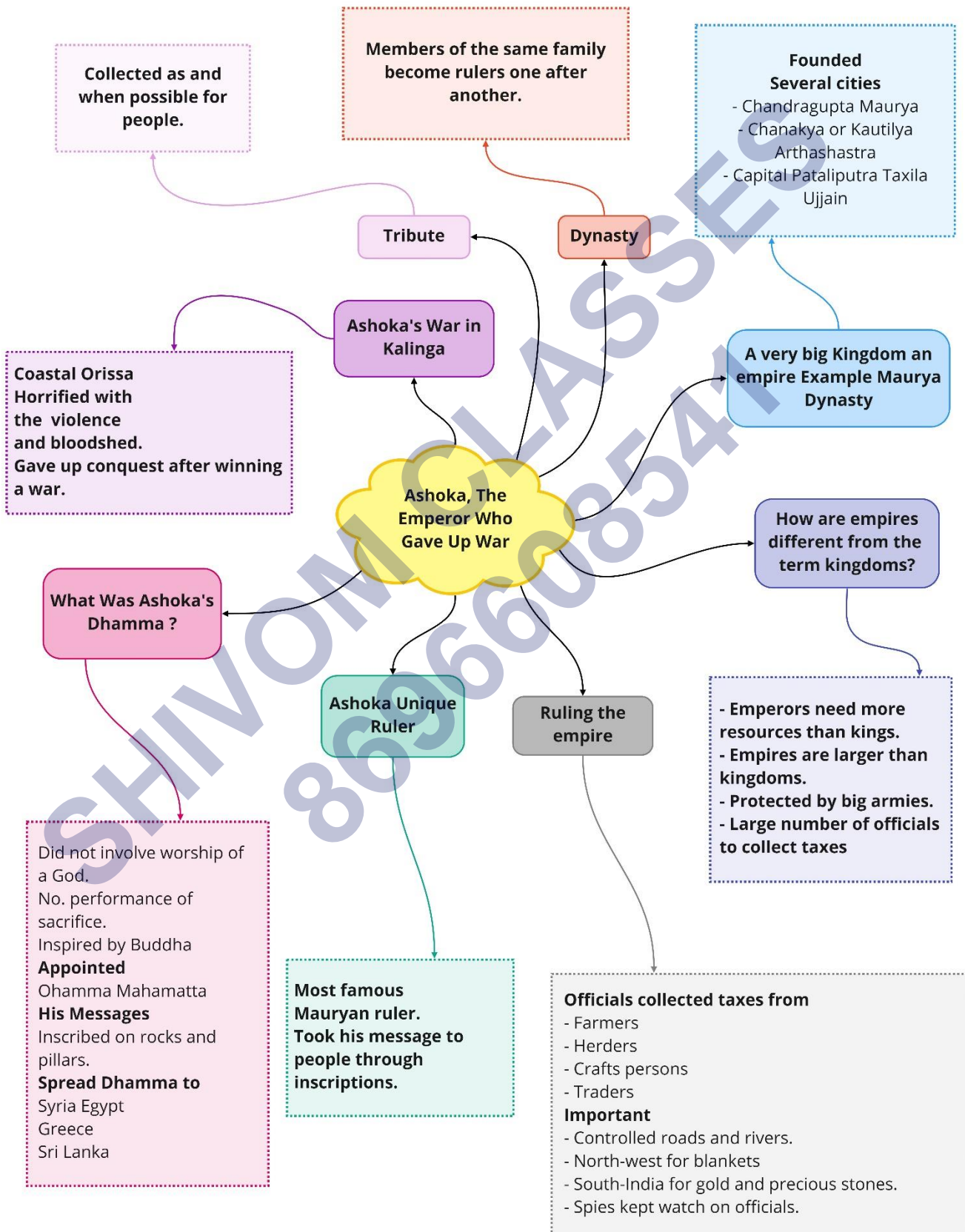


- Ashoka appointed several officials known as dhamma mahamatta who travelled to various places and taught the teachings of dhamma.
- Ashoka also inscribed his teachings on rocks and pillars. These messages were supposed to be read to those who could not read it themselves.
- Ashoka also sent his officials to Syria, Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka to spread the message of dhamma. He also spread Buddhism in various countries of South and South-East Asia.

- King Ashoka himself was involved in many welfare activities. He built roads and rest houses, dug wells and arranged for medical treatment of human beings and animals.

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Class : 6th Social Studies (History)
Chapter - 7 : Ashoka, The Emperor Who Gave Up War



Important Questions

➤ Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1. As per Megasthenes, how many gates were in the Pataliputra?

- (a) 20
- (b) 35
- (c) 55
- (d) 64

Question 2. Name of the bird which was included in the tree that was carried with emperor at the time of appearance in public:

- (a) Trained Crows
- (b) Trained sparrows
- (c) Trained parrots
- (d) Trained ducks

Question 3. The duty of Dhamma Mahamatta was:

- (a) Went place to place for teaching people about dhamma.
- (b) To collect the taxes.
- (c) To punish the people who violated rules.
- (d) To award the people who are gentle.

Question 4. A sculpture of polished stone bull which was found in Rampurwa (Bihar) is now placed:

- (a) In Parliament House
- (b) In front of the Share market office at Mumbai
- (c) In Rashtrapati Bhawan
- (d) In PMO office.

Question 5. Name of the Ashoka's grandfather:

- (a) Bindusara
- (b) Chandragupta
- (c) Chanakya
- (d) Upgupta

Question 6. Which city was the capital of the Mauryan Empire?

- (a) Taxila
- (b) Ujjain
- (c) Samath
- (d) Pataliputra

Question 7. In the Mauryan Empire, taxes were collected from:

- (a) Farmers, herders, crafts persons, traders
- (b) Slaves, herders, crafts persons, traders
- (c) Farmers, slaves, crafts persons, traders
- (d) Farmers, herders, women, traders

Question 8. Megasthenes was:

- (a) A trader
- (b) An ambassador
- (c) King
- (d) Chandragupta's son

Question 9. Place where Ashokan Pillar is located:

- (a) Lamhi
- (b) Sarnath
- (c) Sikral
- (d) Salarpur

Question 10. What is Arthashastra:

- (a) Place
- (b) Book
- (c) Palace
- (d) Officials

Question 11. Royal princes often went to the provinces as _____

- (a) Ministers
- (b) Governors
- (c) King
- (d) Administrators

Question 12. Adviser of Chandragupta Maurya:

- (a) Buddha
- (b) Tansen
- (c) Kautilya
- (d) Birbal

Question 13. The national emblem of India has been taken from the pillar at Sarnath which had:

- (a) Bear
- (b) Tiger
- (c) Lion
- (d) Snake

Question 14. A state of an vast empire is known as:

- (a) District
- (b) Capital
- (c) Provinces
- (d) Village

Question 15. From whom did they collected taxes:

- (a) Hunters
- (b) Farmers
- (c) Craftsman
- (d) All of these

➤ **Match The Following:**

	Column-I		Column-II
1.	Chanakya	A.	Seleucus Nicator
2.	Founder of Mauryan Empire	B.	Provincial capital
3.	Taxila or Ujjain	C.	Arthashastra
4.	Megasthenes	D.	Chandragupta

➤ **Fill in the blanks:**

1. Officials collected _____ from the area under the direct control of the ruler.
2. Royal princes often went to the provinces as _____.
3. The Mauryan rulers tried to control _____ and _____ which were important for transport.
4. People in forested regions provided the Mauryan officials with _____.
5. The Arthashastra tells us that the north-west was important for _____.
6. Ashoka was inspired by the teachings of _____.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F):**

1. Ujjain was the gateway to the north-west.
2. Chandragupta's ideas were written down in the Arthashastra.
3. Kalinga was the ancient name of Bengal.
4. Most Ashokan inscriptions are in the Brahmi script.
5. The Arthashastra tells us that south India for its gold and precious stones.
6. The empire that Ashoka ruled was founded by his father.

7. Ashoka appointed special officials who were known as the Dhamma Mahamatta.

➤ Very Short Questions:

1. How did Ashoka convey his message to the people?
2. Who built Great Wall of China?
3. Who wrote Arthashastra?
4. What is the ancient name of coastal Orissa?
5. Name some cities of Mauryan Empire.
6. Name the book in which the ideas of Kautilya were written down.
7. What is dhamma?
8. Name the provincial capital of Mauryan Empire.
9. Who was Seleucus Nicator?
10. Which the region that was popular for the production of blanket during Maurya period?
11. Who was Chanakya?
12. Why was the Great Wall of China made?
13. Which script was used in the Ashoka's inscriptions?
14. Who founded the Mauryan Empire?
15. Name the capital of Mauryan Empire. In which current state of India is it located?

➤ Short Questions:

1. Explain the term tribute.
2. Explain the term the Brahmi Script.
3. Why did Ashoka decided to give up wars?
4. What is Rampurwa bull and where it has been placed now?
5. What were the things given as tribute by the people living in the forested areas?
6. What was Ashoka's dhamma?

➤ Long Questions:

1. Describe the Mauryan people?
2. What were the effects of Kalinga war on Ashoka?
3. What were the means adopted by Ashoka to spread the message of dhamma?
4. What Megasthenes wrote about Mauryan Emperor?
5. Describe the governance in Mauryan Empire?
6. What Megasthenes wrote about Pataliputra (modern Patna)?

ANSWER KEY –

➤ Multiple Choice Answer:

1. (d) 64
2. (c) Trained parrots
3. (a) Went place to place for teaching people about dhamma.
4. (c) In Rashtrapati Bhawan
5. (b) Chandragupta
6. (d) Pataliputra
7. (a) Farmers, herders, crafts persons, traders
8. (b) An ambassador
9. (b) Sarnath
10. (b) Book
11. (b) Governors
12. (c) Kautilya
13. (c) Lion
14. (c) Provinces
15. (d) All of these

➤ **Match The Following:**

	Column-I		Column-II
1.	Chanakya	C.	Arthashastra
2.	Founder of Mauryan Empire	D.	Chandragupta
3.	Taxila or Ujjain	B.	Provincial capital
4.	Megasthenes	A.	Seleucus Nicator

➤ **Fill in the blanks:**

1. Taxes
2. Governors
3. Roads and rivers
4. Elephants, timber, honey and wax.
5. Blankets.
6. Buddha.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F):**

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. True

➤ **Very Short Answer:**

1. He conveyed his message to the people through inscriptions.
2. Emperors in China built the Great Wall.

3. Chanakya wrote Arthashashtra.
4. Kalinga is the ancient name of coastal Orissa.
5. Pataliputra, Taxila, and Ujjain.
6. Chanakya's ideas were written down in a book called the Arthashastra.
7. 'Dhamma' is the Prakrit word for the Sanskrit term 'Dharma'.
8. Taxila or Ujjain.
9. He was a Greek ruler of West Asia.
10. north-west
11. Chandragupta was supported by a wise man named Chanakya or Kautilya.
12. It was built to protect the northern frontier of the empire from pastoral people.
13. Most of Ashoka's inscriptions were in Prakrit and were written in the Brahmi script.
14. Mauryan Empire was founded by Chandragupta Maurya more than 2300 years ago.
15. Pataliputra (modern Patna) in Bihar.

➤ Short Answer:

1. Unlike taxes, which were collected on a regular basis, tribute was collected as and when it was possible from people who gave a variety of things, more or less willingly.
2. Brahmi is the modern name given to one of the oldest writing systems used in Ancient India. Most modern Indian scripts have developed from the Brahmi script over hundreds of years.
3. Ashoka fought a war to conquer Kalinga. However, he was so horrified when he saw the violence and bloodshed that he decided not to fight any more wars.
4. The Rampurwa bull is finely polished stone sculpture. This was part of a Mauryan pillar found in Rampurwa, Bihar, and has now been placed in Rashtrapati Bhavan. It is an example of the skill of the sculptors of the time.
5. People living in the forested areas were more or less independent, but may have been expected to provide elephants, timber, honey and wax to Mauryan officials.
6. Ashoka's dhamma did not involve worship of a god, or performance of a sacrifice. He felt that just as a father tries to teach his children, he had a duty to instruct his

subjects. He was also inspired by the teachings of the Buddha.

➤ Long Answer:

1. Merchants, officials and crafts persons probably lived in these cities.

In other areas there were villages of farmers and herders. In some areas such as central India, there were forests where people gathered forest produce and hunted animals for food. People in different parts of the empire spoke different languages. They probably ate different kinds of food, and wore different kinds of clothes as well.

2. **Effects of Kalinga war on Ashoka:**

- Ashoka fought a war to conquer Kalinga.
- However, he was so horrified when he saw the violence and bloodshed that he decided not to fight any more wars.
- He is the only king in the history of the world who gave up conquest after winning a war.
- He decided to observe dhamma and to teach others about it as well.

3. **Means adopted by Ashoka to spread the message of dhamma were:**

- He appointed officials, known as the dhamma mahamatta who went from place to place teaching people about dhamma.
- Besides, Ashoka got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars, instructing his officials to read his message to those who could not read it themselves.
- Ashoka also sent messengers to spread ideas about dhamma to other lands, such as Syria, Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka.

4. Megasthenes wrote an account about what he saw.

Mauryan Empire according to him was as follows:

- Emperor is carried in a golden palanquin.
- His guards ride elephants decorated with gold and silver.
- Some of the guards carry trees on which live birds, including a flock of trained parrots, circle about the head of the emperor.
- The king is normally surrounded by armed women.
- He has special servants to taste the food before he eats.
- He never sleeps in the same bedroom for two nights.

5. Governance in Mauryan Empire:

- The area around Pataliputra was under the direct control of the emperor.
- This meant that officials were appointed to collect taxes from farmers, herders, crafts persons and traders, who lived in villages and towns in the area.
- There were other areas or provinces. Each of these was ruled from a provincial capital such as Taxila or Ujjain.
- Mauryas tried to control roads and rivers, which were important for transport, and to collect whatever resources were available as tax and tribute.

6. Megasthenes wrote about Pataliputra (modern Patna):

- It is a large and beautiful city.
- It is surrounded by a massive wall.
- It has 570 towers and 64 gates.
- The houses, of two and three storeys, are built of wood and mud brick.
- The king's palace is also of wood, and decorated with stone carvings.
- It is surrounded with gardens and enclosures for keeping birds.