

CLASS VI

HANDOUT OF MODULE 1/2

Chapter - 8 History

Ashoka, the Emperor who gave up War

- By the end of the Vedic period, the Aryan tribal settlements spread across the Indo-Gangetic plains grew into territorial divisions like Janapadas.
- One of the most powerful Janapadas, was that of Magadha under the Mauryas.

• **Rise of Magadha:**

- (i) The rise of Magadha is attributed to the fertile plains along the river Ganga.
- (ii) The Haryanka, Shishunaga and Nanda dynasties helped in the development of Magadha as a powerful state.
- (iii) Around 326 BC, Greek ruler Alexander invaded India. At that time Magadha was ruled by Nandas.
- (iv) The Nanda rulers who had humiliated Chanakya were overthrown by Chandragupta who established the Mauryan empire in 321 BC with his capital at Patliputra.
- (v) Chandragupta captured Punjab, Gujarat, Afghanistan. He even defeated Greek ruler Seleucus in 305 BC.
- (vi) After ruling for 25 years, Chandragupta became a Jain ascetic and gave his kingdom to his son Bindusara who further expanded it southwards.

• **Ashoka: From a Warrior to Messenger of Peace:**

- (i) Bindusara was succeeded by his son Ashoka, the greatest Mauryan emperor.
- (ii) He undertook military campaign against Kalinga. After defeating it he saw a pool of blood.
- (iii) The sight of large scale killing moved Ashoka and he embraced Buddhism.
- (iv) He began to spread the teachings of Buddha not only in India but even abroad.
- (v) His philosophy called 'Dhamma' was propagated all over. He preached peace,

tolerance, shunning violence, stopping animal sacrifice and respect of slaves by their masters.

(vi) He sent missionaries called 'Dhamma Mahamattas' to Sri Lanka, Burma and South-east Asian countries to propagate Buddhism.

● **Mauryan Administration:**

(i) The Central administration was headed by the king who was the supreme judge and the law giver.

(ii) The king appointed several officials called mantris and amatyas to assist him.

(iii) The provincial administration was headed by a governor who was generally a Kumara or an Aryapura.

(iv) The provinces were divided into district or Janapada. It had three important officials called Pradeshika, Rajuka and Yukta.