

Chapter 9: Traders Kings and Pilgrims

Intext Questions:

Question 1. Can you think of how and why these reached India?

Answer: India had a brisk trade with the Roman Empire. The traders took spices, precious stones and carried them in ships across the sea and but by land, in caravans.

Question 2. Make a list of all the things that are mentioned in the poem. What would they be used for?

Answer: Black pepper, gems and gold, sandalwood, pearls and corals, crops, food stuffs. Since they were brought to Puhar, an important port on the east coast, they were meant to be exported.

Question 3. Why do you think he wanted to control the coasts?

Answer: Gautamiputra Satakarni wanted to control the coasts because India has a brisk trade with foreign countries. Chiefs & kings who controlled the river valleys and the coasts became rich and powerful. He sent his army to the eastern, Western and southern coasts.

Question 4. Why do you think it would have been difficult to use carts along the silk route?

Answer: It would have been difficult to use carts along the silk route it, very long dangerous route, through roads, mountains and deserts. People living along the route often demanded payments for allowing traders to pass through. The traders could be attacked robbers.

Question 5. What do you think would have been the advantages and problems in transporting silk by sea?

Answer: The silk route extended from Central Asia down to the seaports at the mouth of the river Indus, from where silk was shipped westwards to the Roman empire. This route was a shorter route and the rulers could not demand taxes. It was the only advantage. The disadvantages were the ships could be attacked by pirates and the rough weather at sea.

Question 6. Can you think of how Buddhism spread to these lands in South-East Asia?

Answer: Buddhism spread south-eastwards to Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand other parts of South-East Asia including Indonesia because Buddhist monks travelled to these parts, with traders and merchants.

Question 7. Trace the route Fa Xian took.

Answer: On the basis of Map 6 (PAGE 77) of the textbook, the route, that Fa Xian took to his homeland is as under:

Bengal → Masulipatarn → Poduca → Takkola → Oc eo

Question 8. Why do you think Fa Xian did not want to throw away his books and statues.

Answer: Fa-Xian did not want to throw his books and statues of Buddha because he wanted to take them to China. He wanted to translate the books so that others could also read them. Statues would let the people imagine how Buddha looked and they were very valuable for him.

Question 9. List the reasons why Xuan Zang wanted to study in Nalanda.

Answer: Xuan Zang had studied at Nalanda. This is how he describes it:

1. The teachers were highly talented,
2. Rules of the monastery were strict and everyone had to follow them.

3. Discussions were held throughout the day and doubts were settled,
4. The gatekeeper asked difficult questions from the new entrants. They were allowed to enter only after they have been able to answer them. Seven or eight out of every ten were not able to answer. Xuan Zang wanted to study at Nalanda because of its high standards.

Question 10. In the poem 'A poem by a Bhakta' What does the poet regard as more valuable, social status or devotion?

Answer: This is a poem composed by Appar in Tamil, who was a devotee of Shiva. He was a Vellalar (a large landowner). He considers devotion to god more important than social status.

Question 11. Look at Map 6 (pages 76-77) and trace out the route that they may have used.

Answer: The Christian preachers came to West Asia to the west coast of the Sub-continent, partly travelling through land and partly by sea. They landed near Kerala because Syrian Christians are amongst the oldest Christians communities in the world.

Imagine

Question: You have a manuscript which a Chinese pilgrim would like to carry back with him. Describe your conversation.

Answer:

Pilgrim: Sir, I would like to take the manuscript with me, which is in your possession.

I: It is a rare manuscript and I cannot give it.

Pilgrim: The manuscript contains the life history of Buddha and his teachings. Since I am a follower of Buddha, it will be more useful for me.

I: I can understand your logic I will not send you back as a disappointed man. If you give me a month's time, I will hire scribes who will make one more copy of the manuscript and I will give it to you.

Let's recall

Question 1. Match the following:

1) Muvendar	a) Mahayana Buddhism
2) Lords of the dakshinapatha	b) Buddhacharita
3) Ashvaghosha	c) Satavahana rulers
4) Bodhisattvas	d) Chinese pilgrim
5) Xuan Zang	e) Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas

Answer: 1-e, 2- c, 3- b, 4-a, 5-d

Question 2. Why did the kings want to control the silk route?

Answer: Kings wanted to control the Silk Route because they could benefit from taxes, tributes, and gifts that were brought by traders and the people along the route.

Question 3. What kind of evidence do historians use to find out about trade and trade routes?

Answer: The remains of the merchandise like pottery, especially bowls and plates have been found at various places. They were taken by the traders. South India was famous for gold, spices and precious stones. Traders carried these goods to Rome in ships across the sea and by land in caravans. Gold coins have been

found at the trading posts.

Question 4. What are the main features of Bhakti?

Answer:

1. Bhakti is generally understood as a person's devotion to his or her chosen deity.
2. The idea of Bhakti is present in the Bhagavad Gita, a sacred book of the Hindus.
3. In the Bhagavad Gita (which is included in the Mahabharata), Krishna the God, asks Arjuna, his devotee, and friend, to abandon all dharmas and take refuge in him, as only he can set Arjuna free from every evil.
4. Those who followed the system of Bhakti emphasized devotion and individual worship of a single god or goddess, rather than the performance of elaborate sacrifices.
5. Deities who were worshipped through Bhakti included Shiva, Vishnu, and goddesses such as Durga. This form of worship became an important feature of Hinduism.

Let's discuss

Question 5. Discuss the reasons why the Chinese pilgrims came to India.

Answer: Pilgrims are men and women who undertake journeys to holy places in order to offer worship. The Chinese pilgrims like Xuan-Zang came to visit places associated with the life of Buddha as well as the famous monasteries. They also spent time studying in the monasteries. Xuan-Zang and other pilgrims spent time studying in Nalanda (Bihar).

Question 6. Why do you think ordinary people were attracted to Bhakti?

Answer:

1. I think that ordinary people were attracted to Bhakti because Bhakt-saint used the language of people, which they could understand easily.
2. The saints emphasized the worship of certain deities, which became a central feature of later Hinduism, gained in importance.
3. These deities included Shiva, Vishnu, and goddesses such as Durga. Bhakti is generally understood as a person's devotion to his or her chosen deity.
4. Anybody, whether rich or poor, belonging to the so-called 'high' or 'low' castes, man or woman, could follow the path of Bhakti.
5. They stressed simple ways for Moksha or salvation, the last aim of life.

Let's do

Question 7. List five things that you buy from the market. Which of these are made in the city/village in which you live, and which are brought by traders from other areas?

Answer: I buy the following things from the market.

- Foodgrains – grown in the villages
- Vegetable – in the nearby areas and also from villages
- Readymade garments – made in the cities
- Exercise notebooks and stationery goods – made in the cities
- Electronic toys and mobile phones – made in the city

Question 8. There are several major pilgrimages performed by people in India today. Find out about any one of them, and write a short description. (Hint: who can go on the pilgrimage – men, women or children? How long does it take? How do people travel? What do they take with them? What do they do when they reach the holy place? Do they bring anything back with them?)

Answer: India is a secular country. We find here the followers of almost all major religions of the world including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Parsi etc.

Major Pilgrims performed by the people in India are:

1. Visit shrine or Temple or Dargah on foot or by bus, or by train or by aeroplane and even using ponies or horses or walking on foot, for example, visit to Kailash Mansarover, to Shiv Ling ahead from Pahalgaon

- (J.K.), to Vaishnodevi shrine, to Ajmer-Pushkar or Dargah of Chisti, etc.
2. To participate in Rathayatra (Puri in Orissa).
 3. Visit Tirupati or Meenakshi temple or Char Dham.
 4. Hajj (performed by Muslims only).
 5. Visit Golden Temple, Hazur Sahib, or other historical Gurudawara Sahibs by Sikhs, Hindus and others.

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