

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



aglasem.com

Class : 12th

Subject : History

Chapter : 3

Chapter Name : Kinship, Caste and Class

Q1 Explain why Patriliney may have been particularly important among elite families?

Answer. Patriliney is a system of tracing descent from father to son, grandson and so on. Patriliney may have been particularly important among elite families for the following reasons :

- In order to inherit the resources (including the throne in case of kings) of their fathers.
- In order to continue the dynasty. In cases where no sons were there, brothers would succeed one another and sometimes other kinsmen claimed for the throne, sometimes even women would do so. One such example is Prabhavati Gupta.

Page : 80 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q2 Discuss whether kings in early stages were invariably Kshatriyas.

Answer. The Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras contained rules about the ideal "occupations" of the four categories or varnas. It was mentioned that Kshatriyas were to engage in warfare, protect people and administer justice, study the Vedas, etc. So only Kshatriyas were supposed to be the kings. But it is important to note that there were many non-kshatriya kings, several important ruling lineages probably had different origins. The social background of the Mauryas, has been debated. While later Buddhist texts suggested that they were Kshatriyas, Brahmanical texts described them as being of 'low' origin. The Sungas and Kanvas, the immediate successors of the Mauryas, were Brahmanas. In fact, the political power was effectively open to anyone who could gain the support and resources and hence it rarely depended on birth as a Kshatriya.

Page : 80 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q3 Compare and Contrast the dharma or norms mentioned in the stories of Drona, Hidimba and Matanga.

Answer. Drona : Drona was a Brahmana. According to Dharmashastras it was the duty of Brahmanas to impart knowledge and education. Drona used to teach the Kuru princes the art of archery, once he was approached by Ekalavya, a forest dwelling nishada (a hunting community). When Drona, who knew dharma refused to have him as his pupil, Ekalavya returned to the forest, prepared an image of Drona out of clay, and treating it as his teacher, began to practise on his own. In those days people of low caste were not allowed to acquire education, knowledge or skill which was supposed to be acquired by a person born in some high caste. In due course, he acquired great archery skills but Drona demanded Ekalavya his right thumb as his teaching fee. He did so just in order to make sure that there was no better archer than Arjuna.

Hidimba : Hidimba was a lady demon. She was sent by her brother, a man-eating demon to capture the Pandavas. Instead of doing so she fell in love with Bhima, the second Pandava. She declared her love for Bhima and told Kunti that she have forsaken her dharma and her kin and would like to marry him. After getting married Hidimba gave birth to a son named Ghatotkacha, who was also a demon. Soon both of them left the Pandavas and Ghatotkacha promised to return whenever the Pandavas needed him.

Matanga : Matanga the Bodhisatta was once born as a chandala, got married to Dittha Mangalika, the daughter of a merchant. Later a son was born to them, they named him Mandavya Kumara. He learnt the three Vedas as he grew up and began to provide food to 16,000 Brahmanas every day. One day he refused to give food to his father who was dressed in rags thinking him to be an outcast. He said his son that one should not be proud of one's birth and be ignorant. After saying this he rose and disappeared into the air. When Dhitta learned about the incidence she asked for the forgiveness of her husband and fulfilled the duty of being a wife.

Page : 80 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q4 In what ways was the Buddhist theory of a social contract different from the Brahmanical view of society derived from the Purusha sukta?

Answer. Purusha sukta was a hymn in the Rigveda, which describes the sacrifice of Purusha. According to Brahmanical view the society was divided into four categories or varnas : Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The Brahmanas were supposed to impart knowledge and education, the Kshatriyas were the people engaged in warfare, Vaishyas were engaged in trade and Shudras were assigned only one occupation i.e to serve the other three varnas.

Whereas, the Buddhist theory of a social contract was different. It did not support the idea of, birth being the criteria for determination of social status. Their ideology suggested that the institution of kinship was based on the choices of humans and that it could change as per the needs of the society in future.

Page : 80 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q5 The following is an excerpt from the Mahabharata, in which Yudhishthira, the eldest Pandava, speaks to Sanjay, a messenger :

Sanjaya convey my respectful greetings to all the Brahmanas and the chief priest of the house of Dhritarashtra. I bow respectfully to teacher Drona ... I hold the feet of our preceptor Kripa ... (and) the chief of Kurus, the great Bhishma. I bow respectfully to the old king (Dhritarashtra). I greet and ask after the health of his son Duryodhana and his younger brother ... Also greet all the young Kuru warriors who are our brothers, sons and grandsons ... Greet above all him, who is to us like father and mother, the wise Vidura (born of a slave woman) ... I bow to elderly ladies who are known as our mothers. To those who are our wives you say this, " I hope they are well-protected" ... Our daughters-in-law born of good families and mothers of children greet on my behalf. Embrace for me those who are our daughters ... The beautiful, fragrant, well-dressed courtesans of ours you should also greet. Greet the slave women and their children, greet the aged, the maimed (and) the helpless ...

Try and identify the criteria used to make this list - in terms of age, gender, kinship ties. Are there any other criteria? For each category, explain why they are placed in a particular position in the list.

Answer. The criteria used to make this list shows that there were other factors also that was used to make this list.

The Brahmanas, the priest, and the guru was bestowed the highest position.

Kins, people of the same age were bestowed the second position.

Warriors were placed next in the order.

Elderly ladies, wives, daughters and daughters-in-law were next in order.

Slave women, orphans and handicapped were also taken care of and were next in order.

Page : 80 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q6 This is what a famous historian of Indian literature, Maurice Winternitz, wrote about the Mahabharata : "just because the Mahabharata represents more of an entire literature ... and contains so much and so many kinds of things, ... (it) give(s) us an insight into the most profound depths of the soul of the Indian folk." Discuss.

Answer. There are an enormous number of texts that gives us deep insights into the Indian history. Mahabharata is one such source that is recognised not only by Indian historians but also by foreigners. This epic contains huge number of lessons for life and also carries the information about different aspects of Indian life. We get to know about the different perspectives and ideas of people that existed during those times.

The contents of the present text is classified by the Historians under two broad heads - narratives and didactic. The sections that contain stories are designated as the narratives and the sections that contain perceptions are designated as didactic. This division is neither rigid nor watertight - the didactic sections basically contains the stories, and the narrative often contains a social message or a moral lesson for its readers. However, in general it is agreed by the Historians that Mahabharata was meant to be a dramatic and moving story while the didactic portions were probably added later. This epic contains a great deal of discussion about the forests, battlefields, palaces, settlement, etc. It describes the political situation, different forms of marriages and rules related to marriage, the position of women in the society and inheritance.

Page : 81 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q7 Discuss whether the Mahabharata could have been a work of a single author.

Answer. There are several views :

→ The original story was probably composed by charioteer-bards who were known as sutas they generally accompanied Kshatriyas warriors in the battlefield and composed poems celebrating their victories and other achievements.

→ It was believed that these compositions circulated orally. Then, from the fifth century BCE the Brahmanas took over the story and committed themselves to writing. This was the time when Kuru and Panchala were gradually becoming Kingdom. The story of Mahabharata revolves around them.

→ In some parts of the story it also possibly reflected that the old social values were often replaced by the new norms.

→ During this time, worship of Vishnu was growing and gaining importance, and Krishna, one of the important figures of the epic was coming to be identified with Vishnu.

→ The text initially had less than 10,000 verses which gradually grew to about 1,00,000 verses. This enormous composition is traditionally attributed to a sage named Vyasa.

If this epic was the work of a single author, there was a possibility that we would not have seen such variations in the perceptions of the people and the idea would have possibly become monotonous. In that case we would have seen the epic from the viewpoint of the author and hence would have interpreted in the manner which would match with that of the author.

Page : 81 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q8 How important was gender differences in early societies? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer. During those times Patriliney was prevalent and patrilineal succession was proclaimed though there were a very rare few circumstances where women such as Prabhavati Gupta exercised power.

According to Manusmriti, the paternal estate was to be divided equally among the sons after the death of the parents and women could not claim a share of these resources. However, women were allowed to retain gifts they received on the occasion of their marriage. This could be inherited by their children, without having any claim on it. At the same time, the Manusmriti warned women against hoarding family property, or even their own valuables, without the husband's permission.

Rules of marriage was also different for both men and women. Sons were important for the continuity of the patrilineage, whereas daughters were viewed differently. They had no claims to the resources of the household. There was also a belief that kanyadana or the gift of a daughter in marriage was an important religious duty of the father, whereas there was no such belief in case of sons.

Cumulative evidence suggests that the upper-class women may have had access to resources, land, cattle and money were generally controlled by men. Social differences between men and women were sharpened because of the difference in access to resources. The above mentioned reasons clearly stated the gender differences in the society that was prevalent in early societies.

Page : 81 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q9 Discuss the evidence that suggests that Brhmanical prescriptions about kinship and marriage were not universally followed.

Answer. The evidence that suggests that Brhmanical prescriptions about kinship and marriage were not usually followed universally are :

→ Families are usually parts of larger networks of people defined as relatives or kinfolk. While familial ties are regarded as natural and based on blood. Some societies regard cousins as being blood relations, whereas others do not.

It was easy for the historians to retrieve information about elite families as compared to that of ordinary people. The system of Patriliney was prevalent in those days and had variations in practice : Sometimes there were no sons, in some situations brothers succeeded one another, sometimes other kinsmen claimed the throne and in very exceptional circumstances women exercised power.

→ Rules of marriage were also different for both men and women. While sons were important for the continuity of the patrilineage, daughters were looked upon differently, marrying them

outside the kin was considered desirable. This system, called exogamy meant that the lives of young girls and women belonging to families that claimed high status were often carefully regulated to ensure that they were married at the right time to the right person. This also gave rise to the belief of kanyadana or the gift of daughter in marriage where this was an important duty of the father.

Whereas, the case of Satavahana rulers were different. Some of the rulers were polygynous (they had more than one wife). An examination of the names of the women who married Satavahana rulers indicates that many of them maintained the gotras of their fathers. This idea ran contrary to that of the Brhmanical prescriptions.

Page : 81 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q10 Compare the maps in this chapter with Map 1 in chapter 2 . List the mahajanapadas and cities located near the Kuru-Panchala lands.

Answer. Vajji, Koshala, Kashi, Vatsa, Shurasena, Matsya, Malla, etc.

Map 1 in chapter 2 :



Map from this chapter :



Page : 81 , Block Name : Map Work

aglasem.com