

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



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Subject : History

Chapter : 7

Chapter Name : An Imperial Capital Vijayanagara

Q1 What have been the methods used to study the ruins of Hampi over the last two centuries? In what way do you think they would have complemented the information provided by the Virupaksha temple?

Answer. An engineer and antiquarian named Colonel Colin Mackenzie brought the ruins of Hampi to light in the year 1800. He was an employee of the East India Company, he prepared the first survey map of the site. The information he received initially was based on the memories of priests of the Virupaksha temple and the shrine of Pampadevi. From the year 1836, photographers began to record the monuments which enabled scholars to study them. Epigraphists began collecting inscriptions from there and other temples at Hampi. Historians used to collect information from accounts of foreign travellers and other literature written in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Sanskrit.

All the functions performed and studies done complemented the information that was provided by the priests at Virupaksha temple.

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Q2 How were the water requirements of Vijayanagara met?

Answer. A natural basin formed by the river Tungabhadra fulfilled the water requirements of Vijayanagara. This flowed in the north-easterly direction. A number of streams flowed down to the river from the rocky outcrops.

Embankments were built along these streams to create reservoirs of varying sizes. As this is one of the most arid zones of the peninsula, elaborate arrangements had to be made to store rainwater and conduct it to the city. One of the most important tanks was built in the early years of the fifteenth century and it is now called kamalapuram tank. Water from this tank not only irrigated fields nearby but was also conducted through a channel to the 'royal centre'.

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Q3 What do you think were the advantages and disadvantages of enclosing agricultural land within the fortified area of the city?

Answer. The advantages of enclosing agricultural land within the fortified area of the city are :

- It enclosed agricultural tracts.
- In the medieval times, sieges were laid to starve the defenders into submission. These sieges could last for several months and sometimes years. So in order to cope up with the situation rulers built large granaries within the fortified areas.

The disadvantages are :

- It was very expensive method.
- The agricultural lands were far away from the places where the farmers lived.

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Q4 What do you think was the significance of the rituals associated with the mahanavami dibba?

Answer. The mahanavami dibba was a massive platform rising from a base of about 11,000 sq. ft to a height of 40 ft. The base of the platform was covered with relief carvings. Rituals associated with the structure probably coincided with Mahanavami (literally, the great ninth day) of the ten day hindu festival during the autumn months of September and October, known variously as Dushera (northern India), Durga Puja (in Bengal) and Navaratri or Mahanavami (in peninsular India). The Vijayanagara kings displayed their prestige, power and suzerainty.

The ceremonies performed on the occasion included :

- Worship of the image, worship of the state horse, and sacrifice of buffaloes and other animals.
- Dances, wrestling matches, and processions of caparisoned horses, elephants and chariots and chariots and soldiers, as well as ritual presentations before the king and his guests by the

chief nayakas and subordinate kings marked the occasion. These ceremonies were imbued with deep symbolic meanings.

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Q5 Fig. 7.33 is an illustration of another pillar from the Virupaksha temple. Do you notice any floral motifs? What are the animals shown? Why do you think they are depicted? Describe the human figures shown.

Answer. Yes, there are floral motifs on the pillar. The animals and birds shown are horse, duck and peacock. These are probably carved on the gateways of the Virupaksha temple to attract people. These sculptures represent the religiousness of people, and art and architecture during those times.

There is a sculpture of a dancing human. There is also a Linga with a creature performing something which is different. There is also a deity seen on the pillar. The deity seen is a male god and is wearing a crown and a male. There is a gadda in his hand which probably indicates that he is the destroyer of evil powers.

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Q6 Discuss whether the term "royal centre" is an appropriate description for the part of the city for which it is used.

Answer. The term "royal centre" is the most appropriate description used for that part of the city. It was located in the south-western part of the settlement. It included over 60 temples. About thirty building complexes have been identified as palaces.

One of the most beautiful buildings in the royal centre is the Lotus Mahal, so named by British travellers in the nineteenth century. While the name is certainly romantic, historians are not quite sure what the building was used for. One suggestion, found in a map drawn by Mackenzie, is that it may have been a council chamber, a place where the king met his advisers.

While most temples were located in the sacred centre, there were several in the royal centre as well. One of the most spectacular was Hazara Rama temple. This was probably meant to be used only by the king and his family. The images in the central shrine are missing; however,

sculpted panels on the walls survive. These include scenes from the Ramayana sculpted on the inner walls of the shrine.

Page : 194 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q7 What does the architecture of buildings like the Lotus Mahal and elephant stables tell us about the rulers who commissioned them?

Answer. The architecture of buildings like the Lotus Mahal and elephant stables tells us that the rulers had adopted traditional Indian symbols, but the style used to construct was Indo-Islamic as the rulers of the empire were very liberal and tolerant in nature.

Lotus Mahal : The Lotus Mahal was named by the British travellers in the nineteenth century. Though historians are not sure about the utility of the building, one suggestion found in a map drawn by Mackenzie is that it may have been a council chamber, a place where the king met his advisers.

The Lotus Mahal is two-storied and is well-structured symmetrically. It is surrounded by a rectangular wall and nine towers - a high central one, and eight along the sides. The walls and pillars are beautifully carved with patterns like sea creatures and birds.

Elephant Stables : A very large army was maintained by the rulers of Vijayanagara. Probably they would have maintained a huge number of elephants and the Elephant Stables was constructed near the Lotus Mahal in order to accommodate the elephants.

Page : 194 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q8 What are the architectural traditions that inspired the architects of Vijayanagara? How did they transform these traditions?

Answer. Many new features were evident in the temple architecture during this period. These included structures of immense scale that must have been a mark of imperial authority. The best example was Raya Gopuram. Royal gateways often dwarfed the towers on the central shrines, that signalled the presence of temple from a great distance. They were also meant as reminders of the powers of kings, able to command the resources, techniques and skills needed to construct these towering gateways. Other distinctive features include mandapas or

pavilions, and long pillared corridors that often ran around the shrines within the temple complex.

There were two main temples - the Virupaksha temple and the Vitthala temple.

The Virupaksha temple was built around the ninth and tenth centuries, it was substantially enlarged with the establishment of the Vijayanagara Empire. The hall in front of the main shrine was built by Krishnadeva Raya to mark his accession. This was decorated with delicately carved pillars.

The Vitthala temple was built and here the principal deity was Vitthala, a form of Vishnu. The temple has several halls and a unique shrine designed as a chariot.

Page : 194 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q9 What impression of the lives of the ordinary people of Vijayanagara can you call from the various descriptions in the chapter?

Answer. The Vijayanagara Empire was founded in 1336 by Bukka Raya and Harihara. The empire included people who spoke different languages and followed different religious traditions. We can say that if people followed different religions and spoke different languages then the rulers must be very tolerant towards all. Probably, the lives of the people would be easy going.

The warfare during these times depended on effective cavalry, the import of horses from Arabia and Central Asia was important. It was initially controlled by Arab traders. Later, the local communities of merchants known as kudirai chettis or horse merchants also participated in these exchanges.

There were peasants, craftsman, traders who sold spices, goldsmiths and ironsmiths. Sixteenth-century Portuguese traveller Barbosa described the houses of ordinary people, which have not survived : "The other houses of people are thatched, but nonetheless well built and arranged according to occupations, in long streets with many open places." The surveys also indicate that wells, rainwater tanks as well as temple tanks may have served as sources of water to the ordinary town dwellers.

Page : 194 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q10 On an outline map of the world, mark approximately Italy, Portugal, Iran and Russia. Trace the routes the travellers mentioned on p.176 would have taken to reach Vijayanagara.

Answer. The routes that the travellers would have taken are :

Nicolo de Conti from Italy and Duarte Barbosa, Domingo Para and Fernao Munoz from Portugal would have crossed the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean to reach Vijayanagara.

Afansaii Nikitin from Russia must have taken land route via Afghanistan to reach India and then to South India.



Page : 195 , Block Name : Map Work.