

IMPORTANT QUESTION CLASS – 12 HISTORY CHAPTER- 7

AN IMPERIAL CAPITAL : VIJAYNAGARA

Question 1.

‘The rulers of Vijayanagara innovated and developed new traditions in the Virupaksha temple’. Elaborate.

Answer:

Virupaksha temple was built over centuries. Inscription suggested that the earliest shrine of the Virupaksha temple dated to the 9th-10th centuries.

Later, it was substantially enlarged with the establishment of the Vijayanagara empire. It was believed that the site of Vijayanagara was inspired by the existence of the shrines of Virupaksha and Pampadevi. Royal portrait sculpture was displayed in temple. The king’s visit to temples were treated as important state occasions on which he was accompanied by the important nayakas of the empire

The hall in front of the main shrine with delicately carved pillars was built by Krishnadeva Raya to mark his accession. Virupaksha, the guardian deity of the kingdom, was recognised as a form of Shiva and Vijayanagara kings claimed to rule on behalf of the God Virupaksha. Krishnadeva Raya constructed the Eastern gopuram.

The halls of the temple were used for a variety of purposes like programmes of music, dance, drama and marriages of deities. Special images of deities different from central shrines were used in these occasions. In this way, the rulers introduced new traditions in the Virupaksha temple.

Question 2.

Why were the water resources of the Vijayanagara empire developed? Give reasons.

Answer:

Vijayanagara empire was one of the most arid zones of the Peninsula, much importance was provided to water resources in the selection of capital.

People of Vijayanagara obtained water in the following ways:

1. The water requirements of Vijayanagara were met by the natural basin formed by the river Tungabhadra. This river flows in a North-Easterly direction. It is surrounded by the stunning granite hills. These hills seem to form a girdle around the city. It is from these rocky outcrops that many streams flow down to the river.

2. In order to meet the water requirements of the city, embankments were built along these streams to create reservoirs of different sizes. One most important of such tanks was built during the early years of the 15 th century. It is now known as the Kamalapuram tank. The nearby fields were irrigated from the water of this tank. In order to meet the water requirements of the 'Royal centre', its water was also conducted through a channel to that place.

3. Most of the water requirements of Vijayanagara were met with the water of Hiriya canal, one of the most prominent water works. It was perhaps built by kings of the Sangama dynasty. It drew water from a dam across the Tungabhadra. The cultivated valley separate the 'sacred centre' from the 'urban core'. This was irrigated by the water from this canal. Thus, the rulers of Vijayanagara displayed a special interest in the preservation of the water resources. They made a number of important efforts in order to meet the water requirements of common men.

Question 3.

Why was Vitthala temple of the Vijayanagara unique?

Answer:

The Vitthala temple is the another shrine located at Vijayanagara empire. The uniqueness of this temple can be understood through the following points:

- The Vitthala temple is well-known ' for its exceptional architecture and unmatched craftsmanship. The iconic temple has amazing stone structures such as musical pillars. It has 56 musical pillars. The cluster of musical pillars was carved out of huge single pieces of resonant stone.
- A characteristic feature of this temple complexes is the chariot streets that extended from the temple gopuram in a straight line. These streets were paved with stone slabs and lined with pillared pavilions in which merchants set up their shops.
- This temple has several halls and a unique shrine designed as a chariot.
- The principle deity of this temple was Vitthala, a form of Vishnu, which is generally worshipped in Maharashtra.

Question 4.

Why did the imperial power of Vijayanagara decline after the death of Krishnadeva Raya?

Answer:

There are various reasons for the decline of Vijayanagara empire e.g.

- Strain began to show within the imperial structure after the death of Krishnadeva Raya in 1529.

- His successors were not much capable to stand up against the rebellious nayakas or military chiefs which were posing threat to Vijayanagara.
- By 1542, control at the centre shifted to another ruling lineage, that of the Aravidu, which remained in power till the end of the 17th century.
- During this period, the military ambitions of the rulers of Vijayanagara as well as those of the Deccan sultanates resulted in shifting alignments.
- Eventually, this led to an alliance of the sultanates against Vijayanagara. Finally, in 1565, the combined armies of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Golconda defeated the army of the Chief Minister of Vijayanagara, Rama Raya at Rakshari-Rangadi (Talikota).
- Consequently, the city of Vijayanagara was sacked by the victorious armies and totally abandoned within a few years.

Question 5.

‘Vijayanagara was characterised by a distinct building style’. Support this statement with the sacred architectural examples of Vijayanagara.

Answer:

Vijayanagara empire was founded by two brothers, Harihara and Bukka in 1336. The Vijayanagara kings competed with contemporary Sultans of the Deccan and Gajapati rulers of Orissa. Interaction with these states led to the sharing of ideas, especially in the field of architecture.

The building style of Vijayanagara is discussed below:

- The great ruler of Vijayanagara, Krishnadeva Raya, developed the kingdom by establishing some fine temples and adding impressive gopurams to many important South Indian temples. He also founded a suburban township, Nagalapuram, named after his mother.
- Foreign travellers were greatly impressed by the fortification of the capital. The fort was entered through well-guarded gates, which linked the city to the major roads. The architecture of the gateways was influenced by the Turkish architecture. Some of the most important roads extended from temple gateways and were lined by bazaars.
- The style of Raya gopurams or royal gateways were the symbols of the power of kings. Royal palaces had two types of platforms, viz. the audience hall and the Mahanavami dibba. The ceremonies performed in Mahanavami dibba included worship of the image, worship of state horse, sacrifices of buffaloes and other animals, dances, wrestling match, royal procession, etc.
- Other distinctive features include mandapas or pavilions, long pillared corridors, etc. The Lotus Mahal and Hazara Rama temple had spectacular architecture. In this way, Vijayanagara developed a distinctive architectural style.

Question 6.

How and when were the ruins of Hampi brought to light? Explain briefly.

Answer:

It was Colin Mackenzie who brought to light the ruins at Hampi in around 1800.

He was an engineer, surveyor and cartographer who served in India (mostly Southern parts).

The following points discussed below tell us about the evidences of the ruins of Hampi:

- His chief source of reconstruction of local histories was information gathered from recollections of priests of Virupaksha temple and Pampadevi (mother Goddess) temple.
- In 1836, epigraphists began collecting several dozen inscriptions found in these temples and various other temples of Hampi. From 1856, photographers began to record the monuments for their research work in these fields.
- The various descriptions left by travellers allowed historians to reconstruct some aspects of vibrant life at Hampi in those years.
- Other literature in various vernacular languages like Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Sanskrit also proved to be the directions in assessing the remains of Hampi by various notable historians.
- The oral traditions combined with archaeological findings, monuments, inscriptions and other records helped scholars to rediscover Hampi, i.e. the Vijayanagara empire.

Question 7.

Explain briefly any five striking features about the location of Vijayanagara.

Answer:

The most striking feature about the location of Vijayanagara is the natural water resources which played an important role regarding the property of the empire. These features were as follows:

- Vijayanagara was located in the natural basin formed by the river Tungabhadra, which flows in the North-Easterly direction.
- The surrounding landscape was characterised by stunning granite hills that seem to form a girdle around the city.
- Many embankments were built along those streams to create reservoirs of different sizes. Since Vijayanagara was one of the most arid zones of the Peninsula, perfect arrangement were made to store rainwater to be used in the city.
- Kamalapuram tank was the best example of a tank built in early years of the 15th century. Water from this tank was used not only for irrigating fields but was also conducted through a channel to the 'royal centre'.
- According to the historians, the Hiriya canal was one of the most prominent waterworks. This canal drew water from a dam built across the river Tungabhadra and irrigated the cultivated fields that separated the 'sacred centre' from the 'urban core'.

Question 8.

Domingo Paes has called the Mahanavami dibba of Vijayanagara empire as ‘The House of Victory’. Justify.

Answer:

Domingo Paes called the Mahanavami dibba of the Vijayanagara empire as ‘The House of Victory’. These buildings had two platforms, one above the other. These were beautifully sculpted. On the upper platform, the king had a room made of cloth, where the idol had a shrine. It is the highest point in the city and is a massive platform. The other in the middle was placed a dais (a low platform for a throne) on which stood a throne of state.

He suggested that for the people the showed the victory of good over evil. Both these ‘audience hall’ and the ‘Mahanavami dibba’ comprised of the valour, justice and the suzerainty of the king over all other.

The calling of the house as the house of victory was due to the fact that it was situated at the site highest of all in the kingdoms. It was constructed so as to keep up the memory of the victory of the kingdom in war over other kingdoms and empires.

Question 9.

‘Krishnadeva Raya’s rule was characterised by expansion and consolidation’. Justify the statement on the basis of evidences.

Answer:

The most famous ruler of Vijayanagara, Krishnadeva Raya (1509-29) belonged to the Tuluva dynasty. His rule was characterised by expansion and consolidation in the following ways:

- The land between the Tungabhadra and Krishna rivers (the Raichur Doab) was acquired by Krishnadeva Raya in 1512.
- In 1514, rulers of Odisha were subdued and Sultan of Bijapur was defeated in 1520. He made his kingdom so extensive that many smaller kingdoms allied with it and showed their respect to Raja Krishnadeva Raya.
- His kingdom remained in a constant state of military preparedness. It flourished under the conditions of unparalleled peace and prosperity at the time of Krishnadeva Raya.