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Tender Heart High School,
Sector 33B, Chandigarh
Class VI

Subject:- History and Civics

Teacher:- Mili Bhatnagar

Chapter 9 The Mauryan Empire

Good Morning Students,

In this chapter we will study about the Mauryas who established the first ever 'empire' in India. It was called empire as it was much larger than a kingdom. The main sources of information about the Mauryas are the Indika by Megasthenes and Arthashastra by Kautilya. The rock and pillar edicts of Emperor Ashoka are equally valuable source.

The first ruler of the dynasty was Chandragupta Maurya who overthrew the Nanda ruler Dhana Nanda. He first conquered Magadha and then ended the Greek rule in Punjab. He also successfully defeated the Greek general Seleucus Nicator. According to the peace treaty signed Seleucus had to give Chandragupta eastern Afghanistan, Baluchistan and areas beyond the Indus river. An ambassador of Seleucus, Megasthenes stayed in the Mauryan court for many years.

Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusara. He extended the boundaries and ruled it well. His son Ashoka is considered as one of the greatest Indian rulers. During his reign Kalinga War was fought in 261 B.C.E. which proved a turning point in the life of Ashoka. Though

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Ashoka won the war, the death and destruction he saw touched him deeply. He vowed not to fight more wars. He embraced Buddhism and devoted his life to the well-being of others.

Dhamma of Ashoka is contained in the edicts. It was a code of conduct inspired by the teachings of Buddha. Spreading dhamma became Ashoka's goal in life. Through his dhamma, Ashoka wanted to instill a spirit of tolerance, co-existence, non violence and respect for elders in people. He took many steps to spread dhamma like:-

- i) Ashoka led by example. He followed the principles of dhamma in his daily life.
- ii) He appointed special officials called dharma mahamatras to spread dhamma.
- iii) Ashoka issued many edicts which contained the principles of dhamma. The edicts describe the reforms carried out by Ashoka. These edicts were put in public places so that common people could read and follow it.

Students give a reading to the chapter. Next week we will study about Mauryan administration.