

Chapter 8

The Tale of Melon City

READING WITH INSIGHT

Q. 1 Narrate 'The Tale of Melon City' in your own words.

Answer:

Once upon a time, there lived a king who was placid. He, once he desired to construct an arch, which would eddy the people. The kings desired was soon implemented and a beautiful arch was constructed.

When the king rode down the thoroughfare, his crown has fallen down from his head getting hit by the arch, which was constructed too low. The king considered it as a disgrace to him and wanted to hang the culprit.

He immediately ordered the soldiers to hang the chief of the builders. The chief then said that it was the mistake of the builders. Then the king shifted the punishment to the builders. The builders then cried that the size of the bricks was more hence the architect must be hanged. Thus the punishment was finally shifted to the architect. The architect reminded the king that, the king himself has made some amendments in the design that he had shown. Now it finally turned towards the king.

He thought for a while and ordered the soldiers to bring the wisest man in the country. As ordered by the king they brought an old man, who can barely see and hear. He suggested that the arch should be hanged since it was the reason for such disgrace, which was immediately put into practice. Then one of the ministers objected it saying that how can they hang an arch so shamefully. Then the king took back his decision and wanted to deal it his own way.

The said that the nation wants someone to be hanged immediately, so every man was measured by and by and only one man was tall enough to get struck in the arch and it was the king. So finally he was hanged.

The people of the country then wanted a new king. According to their tradition, they asked the first person pass the city gate. Unfortunately, the person was a mad man. When the soldiers asked him about, who the next king should be? He replied ‘melon’, as he liked them the most. So a melon was finally crowned and was put on the royal throne.

Q. 2 What impression would you form of a state where the King was ‘just and placid’?

Answer:

In a state where the king was just and placid will not be secured. In the state depicted in this poem, it is the same case. The king was so foolish that he sentenced himself to death without any fault of his own. He didn’t have any confidence in the decisions he made and kept altering them. In such a state surely a right decision cannot be made on anything and no situation will be acted properly.

Q. 3 How, according to you, can peace and liberty be maintained in a state?

Answer:

I think that in a state peace and liberty can be maintained

1) By implementing the rules and decisions that would favor the people. However, no law can be made which is in favor of everyone because one thing which seems to be correct to one person may not be the same to the other. Hence the laws should be made in such a way that it favors the lion’s share of people.

2) By spreading the feeling of unity among the people through all the possible mediums.

Q. 4 Suggest a few instances in the poem which highlight humor and irony.

Answer:

There are some instances in the poem which highlight humor and irony. They are:

- 1) The king, altering his decisions on hearing each person who he considered as a culprit.
- 2) The wise man's suggestion to hang the arch.
- 3) Finally, the mad man's advice to make a melon as their king.

Q. 5 'The Tale of Melon City' has been narrated in a verse form. This is a unique style which lends extra charm to an ancient tale. Find similar examples in your language. Share them with the class.

Answer:

Practical question. Should be done with your teacher's help.