

# HISTORY

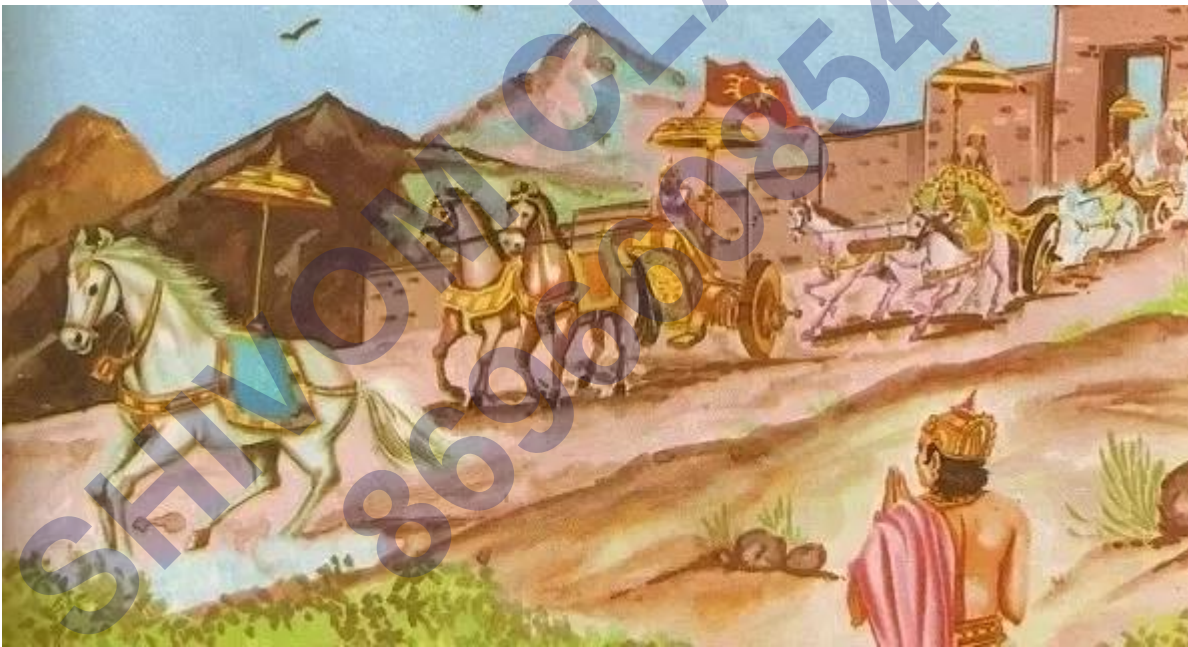
## Chapter 5: Kingdoms, Kings and an Early Republic



## Kingdoms, Kings and an Early Republic

### The Powerful Kings

The power of the kings increased during the late Vedic period. Though the 'raja' was chosen, his power increased and he came to be highly respected. Many kings who performed the ritual of *ashvamedha* or horse sacrifice became very powerful. In this ritual, a horse was let loose to pass through various kingdoms. Any king who stopped the horse in his territory had to wage a war with the raja performing the *ashvamedha*. If none of the kings stopped the horse, it meant that the king performing the ritual had supreme authority. He then organised a sacrifice which was performed by specially appointed priests. All the other rajas were invited to this sacrifice and brought gifts with them. Gifts were also brought by the ordinary people. 'Shudras', the people belonging to the lower castes could not participate in the sacrifices.



### The Caste System

In the late Vedic Period, the caste system became rigid. There were many social groups in society such as farmers, herders, traders, warriors, craftsmen etc. The priests divided society into four castes or the 'varnas'.

- The first class was occupied by the Brahmins. They performed the rituals and imparted education to the people.
- The second varna, the Kshatriyas, was that of the rulers who participated in the war and had the responsibility of protecting the people.

- The third place was occupied by the *Vish* or the *Vaishyas*. They were farmers, traders and herders.
- The last place was occupied by the Shudras. They did all the menial work and were treated as slaves.
- The Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas could perform rituals and sacrifices.
- Often women were grouped with the Shudras and were also not allowed to study the Vedas.
- The caste system was based on occupation and was hereditary in nature. A son of a Brahmin automatically became a Brahmin. Similarly a son of a Shudra was considered to be a Shudra.
- The caste differences were sharp and acute in the Northern Indian Plains while in the north eastern part of the country, the social and economic differences were very few.



## Janapads and Mahajanpads

### Janapads

**Janapads** were formed when many janas or tribes came together and settled in a land. The rajas that performed the horse sacrifices became the rajas of the janapads.

Many janpad settlements have been found in the excavations at Purana Qila in Delhi, Hastinapur near Meerut and Atranjikhera near Etah in Uttar Pradesh. People lived in huts and grew crops such as rice, wheat, barley and pulses.

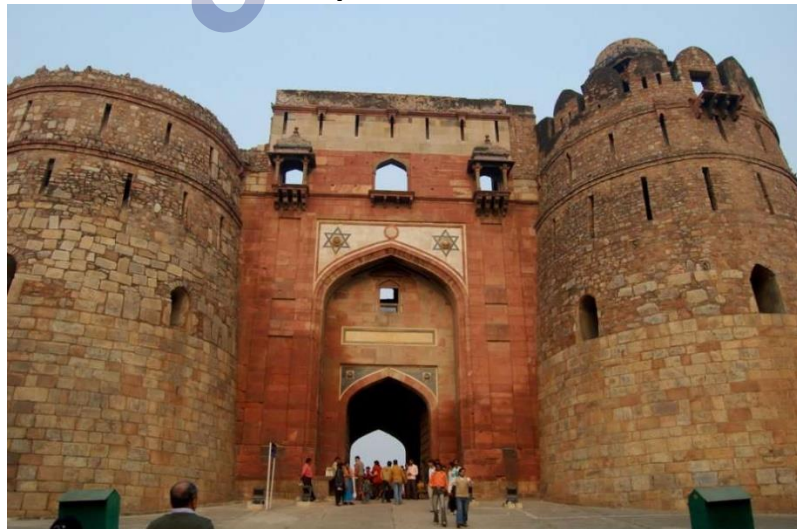




Atrajikhera near Etah in Uttar Pradesh



Hastinapur near Meerut

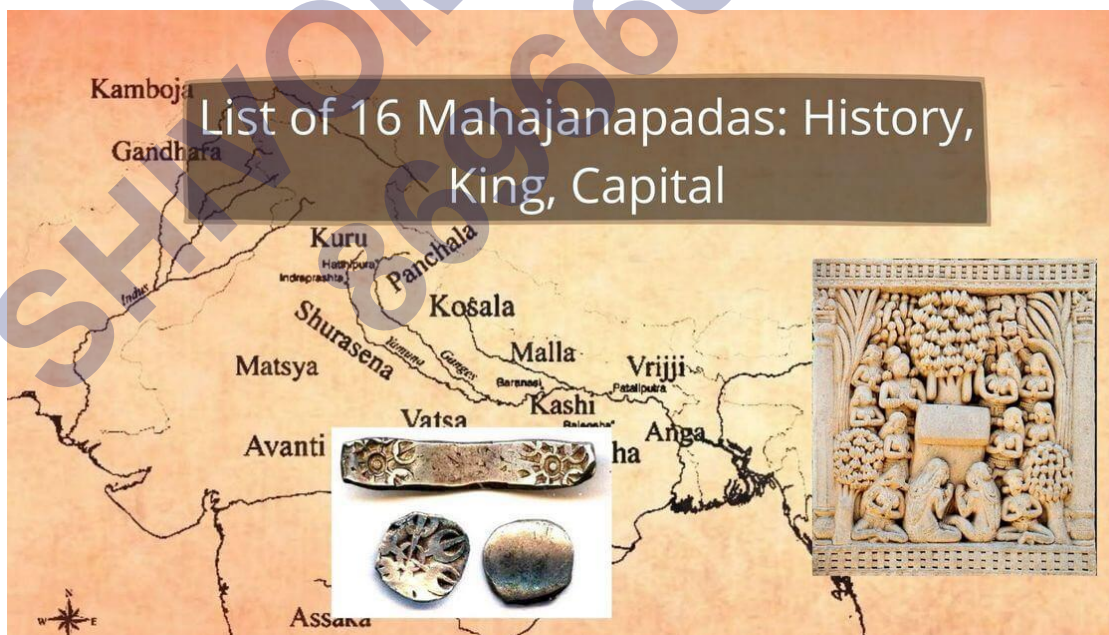


Purana Qila in Delhi

## Mahajanpads

During the latter years, some janapads became more powerful than the other janapads. These came to be known as **mahajanpad**. Some of the famous mahajanpad during this time were Avanti, Magadha, Kosala and Anga etc. Some important features of the mahajanpads were:

- Most of the mahajanpads had capital cities which were fortified, which meant that they came to be surrounded by walls made up of bricks, wood and stone.
- This was done to save the cities from foreign attacks. Kings who wanted to display their power and wealth also fortified their cities.
- The rajas of the mahajanpads were powerful and thus began to maintain a huge army for protecting the land from the attacks of the neighbouring kings.
- The growing use of iron added to the resources of the kings. With the use of iron, strong weapons and tools could be made.
- Iron also brought far reaching changes in agriculture. The ploughshares made up of iron proved to be more effective than the wooden ploughshares. This led to an increase in the production.
- Paddy began to be transplanted. Now instead of scattering seeds on the ground, saplings were planted in the fields. This also increased the production as now many plants were able to survive.



## Taxes

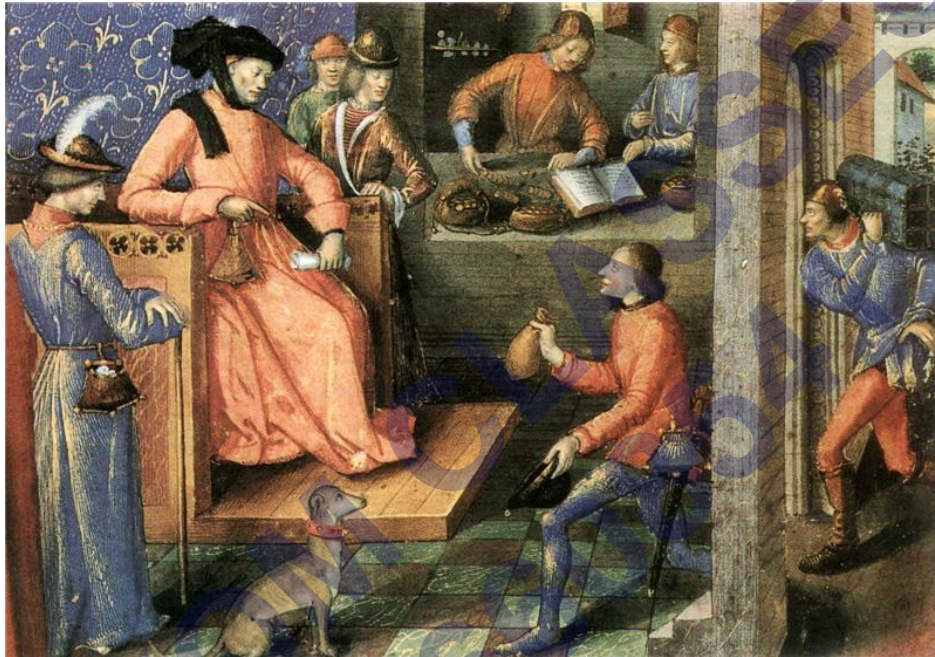
As the kings of the mahajanpads needed money to build forts and to pay regular salaries to the soldiers, they started collecting regular taxes from the people. Some of the features of the taxation system were:

- Taxes were collected on crops. This tax was known as bhaga or a share. It was fixed at



1/6th of the produce.

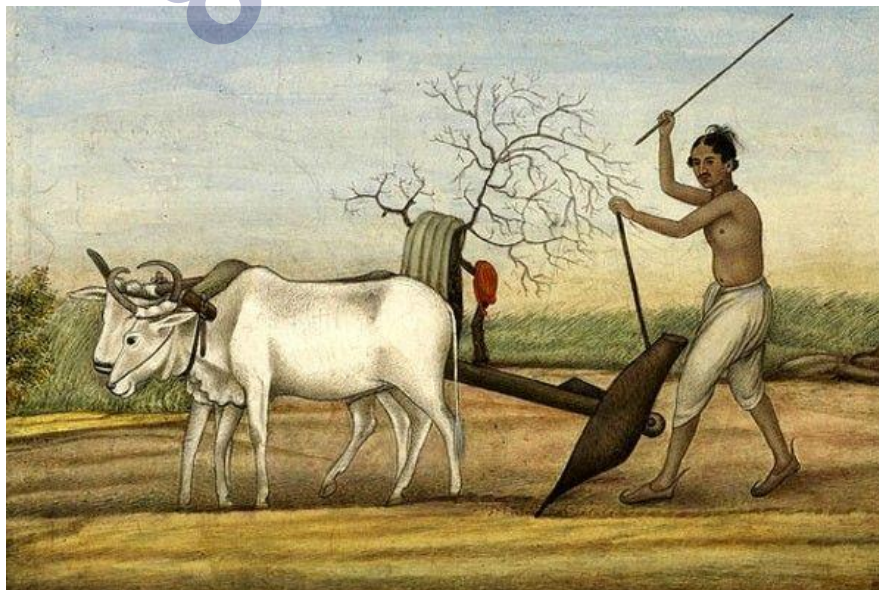
- Taxes were also levied on various craftsmen.
- Herders paid taxes to the kings in form of animals or animal produce.
- Taxes were imposed on goods which were brought and sold through trade.
- The hunters and gatherers had to provide forest produce such as honey, lac etc. to the kings.
- Paddy began to be transplanted. Now instead of scattering seeds on the ground, saplings were planted in the fields. This also increased the production as now many plants were able to survive.



### Changes in Agriculture

There were two significant changes in agriculture in ancient India.

- The first significant change included the usage of ploughshares. A wooden ploughshare was used to turn over heavy, clayey soil easily. More grains could be produced through this.



- The second major change was the transplantation of paddy. Saplings were grown and planted in fields through this method. Paddy transplantation led to increased production. The slave men and women (dasas and dasis) used to do these works.



### Magadha

Magadha emerged as a powerful mahajanpad during this time. It had a monarchical form of government where the king was powerful and his position was hereditary. Some of the reasons which led to the growing power of Magadha were:

- The rivers Ganga and Son flowed through Magadha. This not only made the land fertile but also helped in transportation of goods from one place to the other.
- Magadha was heavily forested. Elephants found in the forests were trained to be used by the army. Wood was used for the building of chariots which helped strengthen the army.
- Wood obtained from forests was used for making houses and carts.
- Iron mines further helped the state in making strong tools and weapons.

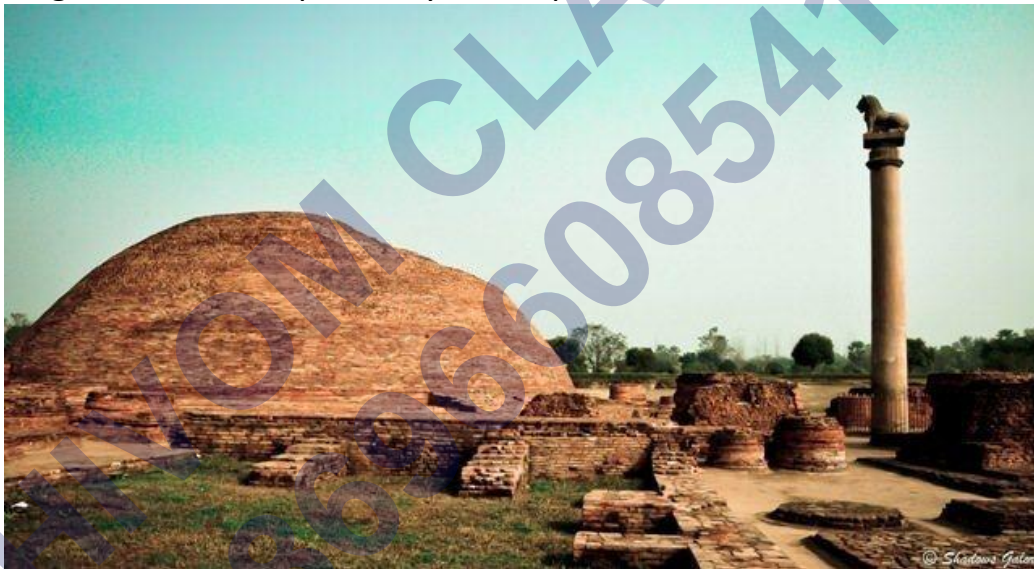
Magadha was ruled by powerful rulers like Bimbisara and Ajatasattu who expanded the kingdom by conquering other janapads. Mahapadma Nanda later further extended the kingdom. Rajagriha remained as the capital of Magadha for many years. Later, Patliputra (modern Patna) became its new capital.





## Vajji

- Although Magadha became a powerful kingdom in ancient India, Vajji was a different kingdom of importance in the subcontinent.
- Vajji's capital was Vaishali (Bihar) and was ruled by the Gana or Sangha.
- In a Gana or a Sangha, there wasn't anyone ruler. Instead, there were many rulers.
- Even when thousands of men ruled a territory together, each was called a Raja
- They performed rituals together, met in assemblies, and discussed and debated what had to be done.
- However, women, dasas, or kammakaras were not allowed in the assemblies.
- Both Gautama Buddha and Mahavira belonged to these ganas or sanghas.
- Buddhist books contain the most vivid descriptions of life in the sanghas.
- The sanghas were tried to be conquered by the rajas of powerful kingdoms in the Indian subcontinent.
- Despite that, the sanghas lasted for a long time till about 1500 years ago.
- The last of the ganas were conquered by the Guptas.



## King Alexander

King Alexander was a Macedonian ruler who came to India in about 326 B.C. He had the dream of conquering the world. When he reached the bank of the River Beas, his army refused to march further as they did not want to fight with the powerful Indian army. Finally, Alexander was forced to retreat.





### Some Other Areas

Find Greece and Athens in your atlas.

Around 2500 years ago, the people of Athens set up a form of government, which was called a democracy, which lasted for about 200 years.

All free men over the age of 30 were recognised as full citizens.

There was an assembly that met at least 40 times a year to decide on important matters.

All citizens could attend these meetings.

Appointments for many positions were made through lottery. All those who wanted to be chosen gave in their names, and then some were selected through lottery.

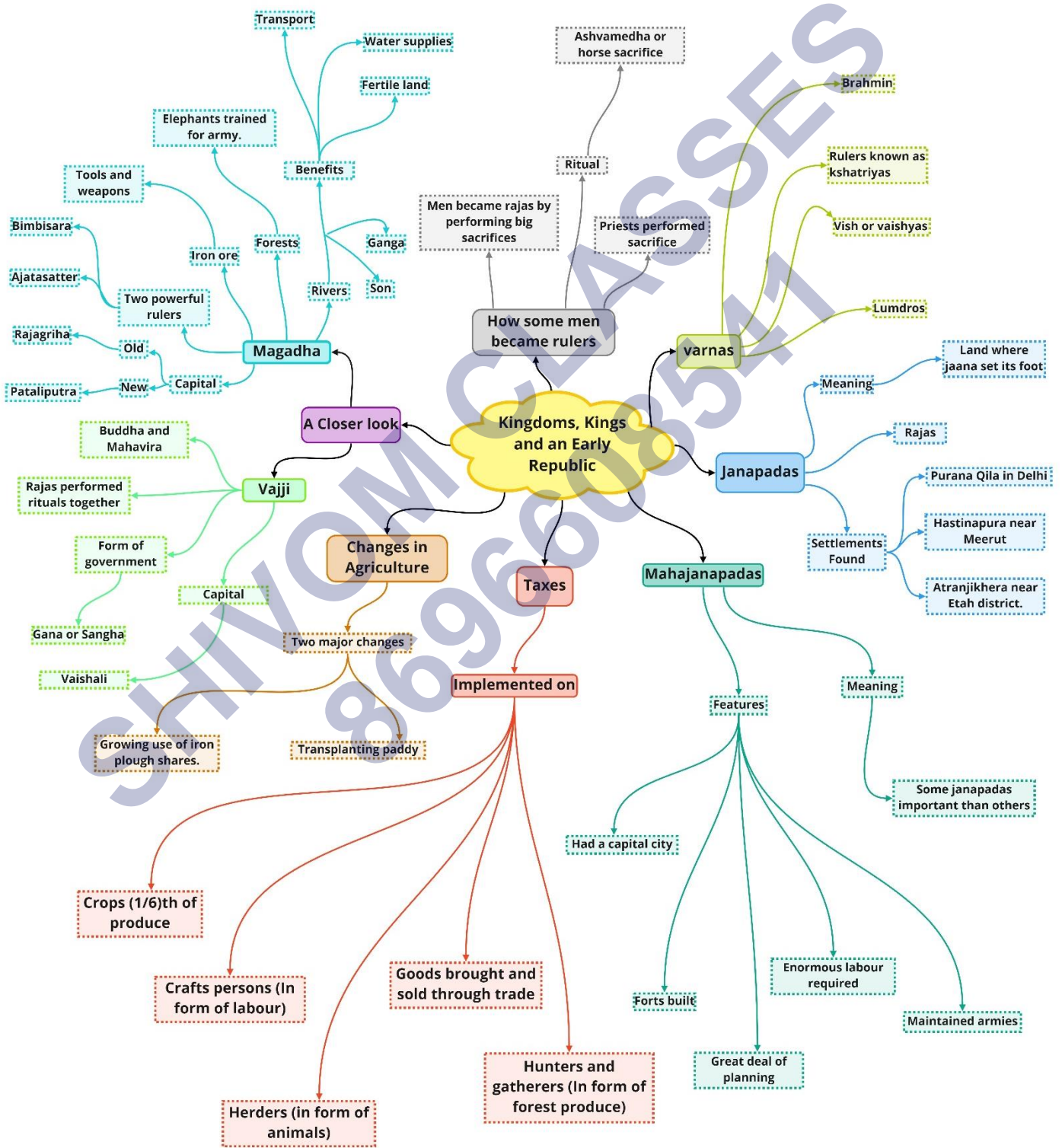
Citizens were expected to serve in the army and the navy.

However, women were not considered citizens.

Also, many foreigners, who lived and worked in Athens as merchants and crafts persons did not have rights as citizens.

Besides, there were several thousand slaves in Athens, who worked in mines, fields, households and workshops. They too were not treated as citizens.

Class : 6th Social Studies  
Chapter- 5: Kingdoms, Kings and an Early Republic



## Important Questions

### ➤ Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1. Which animal was let loose in Ashvamedha?

- (a) Cow
- (b) Horse
- (c) Elephant
- (d) Buffalo

Question 2. Who was a central figure in the rituals?

- (a) Brahmins
- (b) Women
- (c) Janas
- (d) King

Question 3. Who were poor?

- (a) Brahmins
- (b) King
- (c) Farmers
- (d) Traders

Question 4. Who were considered as untouchable in Varna system'?

- (a) Brahmins
- (b) King
- (c) Shudras
- (d) Women

Question 5. Who were the people who studies the Vedas, performed sacrifices and received gifts?

- (a) Brahmins
- (b) King
- (c) Janas
- (d) Merchant

Question 6. Which sentence is not true in respect of forts?

- (a) Forts were built because people were afraid of attacks from other kings
- (b) People were also controlled easily by kings by fortification.



(c) Some kings also wanted to show how rich and powerful they were by building really large, tall and impressive walls around their cities?

(d) All are true.

Question 7. Which sentence is not true in respect of the later Vedic books?

(a) In north India, many books were composed in the area drained by the Ganga and the Yamuna.

(b) These were composed before the Rigveda.

(c) These books described how rituals were to be performed and rules about society.

(d) These books were composed by priests.

Question 8. Which sentence is not true in respect of Pottery found in Mahajanapadas?

(a) These made earthen pots.

(b) Some of them were grey in colour, other were red.

(c) One special type of pottery found at these sites is known a Painted Grey Ware.

(d) These grey pots had painted designs, usually simple lines in geometric patterns.

(e) All are true.

Question 9. According to the Veda, which statement is false?

(a) Brahmins were expected to study the Vedas, perform sacrifices and receive gifts.

(b) Kshatriyas were the rulers. They were expected to fight battles and protect people.

(c) Both Shudras and women were allowed to study the Vedas.

(d) Shudras were last who had to serve the other three groups and could not perform any sacrifice. Later, they were classified as untouchables. The priest said that contact with these was polluting.

Question 10. What is true in respect of Athens?

(a) Women of Athens were not considered citizens.

(b) Foreigners, who lived and worked in Athens, did not have rights as citizens.

(c) There were several thousand slaves in Athens who were not treated as citizens.

(d) All above.

Question 11. How much of the produce was collected as tax

(a) one-third part

(b) one-fifth part

(c) one-sixth part

(d) half part

Question 12. Classification of society into four groups on the basis of their occupation is called

- (a) Vajja
- (b) Vista
- (c) Varna
- (d) Vedas

Question 13. \_\_\_\_\_ means unquestioned control over an area in which the royal horse move uninterrupted

- (a) Shermedha
- (b) Ashvamedha
- (c) Singhmedha
- (d) Shatriyas

Question 14. Magadha and \_\_\_\_\_ are examples of monarchical mahajanapadas

- (a) Shakyas
- (b) Lichchhavis
- (c) Vajji
- (d) Vatsa

Question 15. \_\_\_\_\_ had a large deposits of iron-ore

- (a) Malla
- (b) Vajji
- (c) Magadha
- (d) Ujjayini

➤ **Match The Following:**

	Column-A (Janapads)		Column-B (Place)
1.	Pur ana Qila	A.	Pakistan
2.	Hastinapur	B.	Bihar
3.	Atranjikhhera	C.	Delhi
4.	Magadha	D.	Meerut
5.	Gandhar	E.	Near Etah (UP)

➤ **Fill in the blanks:**

1. 'Rajas' who let the \_\_\_\_\_ horse pass through their lands were invited to the sacrifice.

2. Archaeologists have found huts in the settlements of the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Pots to store grain were made out of Painted \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ were paid regular salaries and maintained by the king throughout the year.
5. Both the Buddha and Mahavira belonged to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Ajatasattu wanted to attack the \_\_\_\_\_.

### ➤ Write true (T) or false (F):

1. Priests performed the rituals including the sprinkling of sacred water.
2. Usually, the tax was fixed at 1/6th of what was produced. This was known as bhaga or a share.
3. The word kammakaras used for slave men and women.
4. Raja composed later Vedic books.
5. Shudras had to serve the other three groups and could not perform any rituals.
6. In Magadha elephants were captured and used in army.

### ➤ Very Short Questions:

1. What is 'Sangha'?
2. What was the source of income of Raja of Mahajanapadas?
3. Name the four groups into which later vedic society was divided.
4. Name some rivers that flowed through Magadha.
5. Who conquered the last of the ganas or sanghas?
6. What was the most important source of revenue to the state?
7. What was the capital of Vajji?
8. What does ashvamedha means?
9. Name the animal that played a pivotal role during Ashvamedha.
10. What is the modern name of Rajagriha?
11. Name the Later Vedic books.
12. Who was the minister of Ajatasattu?
13. What does the word 'Janapada' mean?
14. What is Digha Nikaya?
15. Why the rivers that flowed through Magadha were considered important.

### ➤ Short Questions:

1. Why books such as Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda, as well as other books



are often called later Vedic?

2. In what ways are present-day elections different from the ways in which rulers were chosen in janapadas?
3. What led to the increase in the production?
4. Why were taxes collected by the rulers of the mahajanapadas?
5. Who was Alexander? Name some places that were conquered by him.
6. What archaeologists have found about the 'janapadas' and their people?

### ➤ Long Questions:

1. Write a short note on the governance system in 'Ganas' and 'Sanghas'.
2. What are the different roles of different people during Ashvamedha Yagya?
3. How were taxes collected by the rulers of Mahajanapadas?
4. Why did people oppose the system of varnas?
5. Explain the four Varnas of the Later Vedic Period.
6. What helped Magadha to become a powerful kingdom in North India?

### ANSWER KEY –

### ➤ Multiple Choice Answer:

1. (b) Horse
2. (d) King
3. (c) Farmers
4. (c) Shudras
5. (a) Brahmins
6. (d) All are true.
7. (b) These were composed before the Rigveda.
8. (e) All are true.
9. (c) Both Shudras and women were allowed to study the Vedas.
10. (d) All above.
11. (c) one-sixth part
12. (c) Varna
13. (b) Ashvamedha
14. (d) Vatsa
15. (c) Magadha

➤ **Match The Following:**

	Column-A (Janapads)		Column-B (Place)
1.	Pur ana Qila	C.	Delhi
2.	Hastinapur	D.	Meerut
3.	Atranjikhera	E.	Near Etah (UP)
4.	Magadha	B.	Bihar
5.	Gandhar	A.	Pakistan

➤ **Fill in the blanks:**

1. ashvamedha
2. janapadas
3. Grey Ware
4. Soldiers
5. ganas or sanghas
6. Vajjis

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F):**

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. True

➤ **Very Short Answer:**

1. Sangha means organisation or association.
2. Taxes was the source of income of Raja of Mahajanapadas..
3. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.
4. Many rivers such as the Ganga and Son flowed through Magadha.
5. Gupta rulers conquered the last of the ganas or sanghas.
6. Agriculture.
7. Vaishali (Bihar).
8. Ashvamedha means horse sacrifice.

9. Horse.
10. Rajagriha (present-day Rajgir) is in Bihar.
11. The Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda are the Later Vedic books.
12. Vassakara was the minister of Ajatasattu.
13. The word janapada literally means the land where the jana set its foot, and settled down.
14. Digha Nikaya is a famous Buddhist book, which contains some of the speeches of the Buddha. These were written down about 2300 years ago.
15. This was important for (a) transport, (b) water supplies (c) making the land fertile..

### ➤ Short Answer:

1. These books are often called later Vedic, because they were composed after the Rigveda. These were composed by priests, and described how rituals were to be performed. They also contained rules about society.
2. Some men became recognized as rajas by performing very big sacrifices. The ashvamedha or horse sacrifice was one such ritual. In present day elections leaders or rulers are chosen by voting.
3. People began transplanting paddy. This meant that instead of scattering seed on the ground, from which plants would sprout, saplings were grown and then planted in the fields. This led to increased production, as many more plants survived.
4. As the rulers of the mahajanapadas were building huge forts and maintaining big armies, they needed more resources. So, instead of depending on occasional gifts brought by people, as in the case of the raja of the janapadas, they started collecting regular taxes.
5. More than 2300 years ago, a ruler named Alexander, who lived in Macedonia in Europe, wanted to become a world conqueror. He conquered parts of Egypt and West Asia, and came to the Indian subcontinent, reaching up to the banks of the Beas.
6. Archaeologists have excavated a number of settlements in these janapadas. They found that people lived in huts, and kept cattle as well as other animals. They also grew a variety of crops – rice, wheat, barley, pulses, sugarcane, sesame and mustard.

### ➤ Long Answer:

1. **Note on the governance system in 'Ganas' and 'Sanghas':**
  - In a gana or a sangha there were not one, but many rulers. Sometimes, even when thousands of men ruled together, each one was known as a raja.



- These rajas performed rituals together. They also met in assemblies, and decided what had to be done and how, through discussion and debate.
  - For example, if they were attacked by an enemy, they met to discuss what should be done to meet the threat.
  - However, women, dasas and kammakaras could not participate in these assemblies.
2. The raja was a central figure in these rituals. He often had a special seat, a throne or a tiger skin. His charioteer, who was his companion in the battle field and witnessed his exploits, chanted tales of his glory. His relatives, especially his wives and sons, had to perform a variety of minor rituals. The other rajas were simply spectators who had to sit and watch the performance of the sacrifice. Priests performed the rituals including the sprinkling of sacred water on the king. The ordinary people, the vish or vaishya, also brought gifts. However, some people, such as those who were regarded as shudras by the priests, were excluded from many rituals..
3. **Taxes were collected in the following ways:**
- Taxes on crops were the most important. This was because most people were farmers. Usually, the tax was fixed at 1/6th of what was produced. This was known as bhaga or a share.
  - There were taxes on crafts persons as well. These could have been in the form of labour.
  - Herders were also expected to pay taxes in the form of animals and animal produce.
  - There were also taxes on goods that were bought and sold, through trade.
  - And hunters and gatherers also had to provide forest produce to the raja.
4. **Many people did not accept the system of varna laid down by the Brahmins:**
- Some kings thought they were superior to the priests.
  - Others felt that birth could not be a basis for deciding which varna people belonged to.
  - Besides, some people felt that there should be no differences amongst people based on occupation.
  - Others felt that everybody should be able to perform rituals.
  - And others condemned the practice of untouchability.
5. **The priests divided people into four groups, called varnas. According to them, each varna had a different set of functions.**
- The first varna was that of the brahmin. Brahmins were expected to study (and teach) the Vedas, perform sacrifices and receive gifts.
  - In the second place were the rulers, also known as kshatriyas. They were expected to fight battles and protect people.

- Third were the vish or the vaishyas. They were expected to be farmers, herders, and traders. Both the kshatriyas and the vaishyas could perform sacrifices.
- Last were the shudras, who had to serve the other three groups and could not perform any rituals. Often, women were also grouped with the shudras. Both women and shudras were not allowed to study the Vedas.

**6. Magadha became a powerful kingdom in North India because:**

- Many rivers such as the Ganga and Son flowed through Magadha. This was important for (a) transport, (b) water supplies (c) making the land fertile.
- Parts of Magadha were forested. Elephants, which lived in the forest, could be captured and trained for the army. Forests also provided wood for building houses, carts and chariots.
- Besides, there were iron ore mines in the region that could be tapped to make strong tools and weapons.
- Magadha had two very powerful rulers, Bimbisara and Ajatasattu, who used all possible means to conquer other janapadas. Mahapadma Nanda was another important ruler. He extended his control up to the north-west part of the subcontinent.

SHIVOM CLASSES  
8696608541