

Chapter 6. Kingdoms, Kings and an Early Republic

Very Short Q&A:

Q1: What do you mean by The word "Janapadas"?

Ans: land where the jana set its foot and settled down.

Q2: Janapada could be a republic or a _____.

Ans: Monarchy

Q3: What do you mean by mahajanapadas?

Ans: Some janapadas gained control over large areas and became mahajanapadas

Q4: List an important charactersistics of the Ganges civilisation of Northern India.

Ans: Painted grey ware frequently decorated with simple designs in black or red paint, These were used on special occasions to serve special food.

Q5: What was the use of the Painted grey ware?

Ans: These were used on special occasions to serve special food.

Q6: Who conquered the last of the ganas or sanghas?

Ans: Gupta rulers

Q7: What is the meaning of term Ashvamedha ?

Ans: horse sacrifice

Q8: Some kings were recognised as 'rajas' due to the big sacrifices they made. True/False

Ans: true

Q9: Name the most important centre for making objects out of stone, shell and metal.

Ans: Charioteer

Q10: Who composed later Vedic books?

Ans: Priests

Q11: later Vedic books are named so e because they were composed after the _____.

Ans: Rigveda

Q12: Write the name of a new tool which was used to dig earth for turning the soil and planting trees.

Ans: Shudra

Q13: The Shudras had to serve the other three groups from the caste hierarchy.
True/False

Ans: true

Q14: Who where Kammakaras?

Ans: Landless Agricultural labourers

Q15: List a work done by Kammakaras.

Ans: The work of transplantation of paddy was a back breaking work.

Q16: Amongst the others, the later vedic literature generally included the _____.

Ans: Sama Veda

Q17: Into how many groups, the Later vedic society was divided?

Ans: Four

Q18: Name the four groups into which Later vedic society was divided.

Ans: Brahmins, Kshaytriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.

Q19: The special type of pottery found at Janapadas was _____.

Ans: painted grey ware

Q20: Why did kings fortified their capital city?

Ans: For protection and showing off their wealth

Q21: Soldiers of ancient period were paid regular salaries. True/False

Ans: True

Q22: List one of the major changes that occurred in the field of agriculture.

Ans: growing use of iron plough shares.

Q23: What led to the increase in the production?

Ans: the introduction of iron plough shares

Q24: Name the group of people who were not allowed to participate in the assemblies of the ganas.

Ans: women, dasas and kammakaras

Q25: Alexander lived in _____.

Ans: Macedonia, in Europe

Q26: Buddha and Mahavira belonged to which group ?

Ans: Kshatriyas

Q27: What was the name of the minister of Ajatasatru?

Ans: Vassakara

Q28: Ajatasattu wanted to attack the _____.

Ans: Vajjis

Q29: Name a famous Buddhist book.

Ans: Digha Nikaya

Q30: What is the another name of famous Buddhist book 'Collection of Long Discourses'?

Ans: Digha Nikaya



Q31: Why did Alexander's soldiers refused to march further from the bank of river Beas?

Ans: they were afraid of the Indian armies.

Q32: What did the forests provided to the people of Magadha?

Ans: wood for building houses and chariots

Q33: Bimbisara and Ajatasatru were rulers of _____.

Ans: Magadha

Q34: In Magadha elephants were captured and used in army. True/False

Ans: True

Q35: Avanti had its capital at _____.

Ans: Ujjain

Q36: What was the most important source of revenue to the state?

Ans: Agriculture

Q37: What was bhaga or a share?

Ans: the tax was fixed at 1/6th of the crop produced. This was known as bhaga or a share.

Q38: Name the great religious leader who belonged to gana-sangha.

Ans: Lord Mahavira

Q39: Name the capital of the state of Vajji.

Ans: Vaishali

Q40: The capital of Magadha shifted from _____ to _____.

Ans: Ujjain to Vaishali

Q41: List some important mahajanapadas.

Ans: Among the important mahajanapadas were Kosala, Vatsa, Magadha, Vajji and Avanti

Q42: Name the capital of Magadha.

Ans: Rajagriha

Q43: A king of Macedonia who wanted to become the conqueror of the world.

Ans: Alexander

Q44: List the feature that contributed the most to the rise of mahajanapadas.

Ans: expansion of territories by the janapadas

Q45: How many mahajanapadas was there?

Ans: There were altogether 16 mahajanapadas.

Q46: The members of the Vajji gana enjoyed the title of _____.

Ans: Raja

Q47: Define bhaga.

Ans: The collection of taxes on crops during the time of Mahajanapadas.

Q48: Name two most important rivers of the Magadha, which contributed in its development.

Ans: Ganga and the Son.

Q49: Bimbisara and Ajatasattu were the kings of_____.

Ans: Magadh

Q50: Who provided the first evidence of democratic form of government?

Ans: Greece

Short Q&A:

Q1: What were the natural advantages that helped Magadha to become a powerful kingdom in North India?

Ans: The following natural features helped Magadha to become a powerful kingdom:



1. Many rivers such as the Ganga and Son flowed through Magadha. These rivers made the land fertile for agriculture. Moreover, these rivers were important for transport and water supplies.
2. Another natural feature was the forests. Some parts of Magadha had forests. Elephants, which lived in the forest, could be captured and trained for the army. Forests also provided wood for building houses, carts and chariots.
3. To become powerful, the rajas were fighting battles and required powerful weapons. Strong tools were required to clear forests. Magadha had iron ore mines, which could be used to make strong tools and weapons.

Q2: Write a short note on the important rulers of Magadha.

Ans: Bimbisara and Ajatasattu were two very powerful rulers of Magadha. They used all possible means to conquer other janapadas. Mahapadma Nanda was another important ruler. He extended his control upto the north-west part of the subcontinent. Rajagriha in Bihar was the capital of Magadha for several years. Later the capital was shifted to Pataliputra.

Q3: Why were taxes imposed by the rulers on the people of Mahajanapadas?

Ans: Huge resources were required by the rulers of Mahajanapadas for building forts and maintaining large armies. Rajas of the janapadas depended on the occasional gifts brought by the people. So, instead of depending on these occasional gifts, the raja of the mahajanapadas imposed regular taxes on the people. Special officers were appointed to collect these taxes.

Q4: Why did rajas build large and tall walls around the cities?

Ans: The Rajas built large and tall walls around the cities in order to show their wealth and power. Moreover, with these huge walls the Kings could easily control the land and the people living inside the fortified areas.

Q5: How were regular taxes imposed and collected in the mahajanapadas?

Ans: Taxes were imposed on crops. This was most important since most people were farmers.

1. The tax was fixed at 1/6th of the production. This was known as bhaga or a share.
2. There were taxes on crafts men who paid it by providing their labour. For example a weaver or a smith would work for a day in every month for the king.
3. Taxes on herders were met by them by providing animals and animal produce.
4. Taxes were imposed on goods that were brought and sold through trade.



5. Hunters and gatherers also paid their taxes by providing the forest produce to the raja.

Q6: What resources were necessary to build the huge walls around the cities?

Ans: Building such huge walls required a great deal of planning. A number of resources had to be found for the building of these walls. Firstly, thousands of bricks or stones had to be prepared. Secondly, labour of thousands of men, women and children were required in the construction of these walls.

Q7: Name the Later Vedic books.

Ans: The Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda are the Later Vedic books.

Q8: What was the content of Later Vedic books.

Ans: Later Vedic books contained rules about the society.

Q9: How did the use of iron ploughshare increase the production during the age of mahajanapadas?

Ans: The use of iron ploughshare helped to turn over the heavy ,clayey soil which was not possible with a wooden ploughshare. This increased the production.

Q10: Who provided the labour for the agricultural work done during the development of the mahajanapadas?

Ans: Slave men and women (dasas and dasis) and landless labourers (kammakaras) had to work on the agricultural land and therefore provide the labour.

Q11: What were the geographical features that made Magadha the most powerful Mahajanpada?

Ans: According to Historians, Magadha became the most powerful mahajanapadas due to the following geographical features:

1. Many rivers such as the Ganga and Son flowed through Magadha, which provided good transport, water supplies and made the land fertile.
2. Parts of Magadha had forests that provided elephants, which were captured and trained for the army needs. Forests provided wood for building houses and chariots.
3. There were iron ore mines in the region that was used to make strong tools and weapons.

Q12: What was the ashvamedha?

Ans: The ashvamedha or horse sacrifice was a ritual in which a horse is let loose to wander and it was guarded by the raja's men. If the horse wandered into the kingdoms of other rajas and they stopped it, they had to fight. If they allowed the horse to pass, it meant that they accepted that the raja who wanted to carry out the sacrifice was stronger than them. These rajas were then invited to the sacrifice, which was performed by especially skilled priests, who were rewarded with gifts. The raja who organized the sacrifice was recognized as being very powerful, and all those who came brought gifts for him.

Q13: Where did Alexander live and what was his aim?

Ans: Alexander lived in Macedonia in Europe and wanted to conquer the whole world. But he was able to conquer only the parts of Egypt, West Asia and some parts of the South Asia.

Q14: Name and explain different groups that existed during Vedic period.

Ans: There were several different groups in society at that time — priests and warriors, farmers, herders, traders, crafts persons, labourers, fishing folk, and forest people. Some priests and warriors were rich, as were some farmers and traders. Others, including many herders, craftsmen, labourers, fishermen and huntsmen and gatherers, were poor.

Q15: Who divided people into four groups and based on what?

Ans: The priests divided people into four groups, called varnas. According to them, each varna had a different set of functions.

1. The first varna was that of the brahmin. Brahmins were expected to study (and teach) the Vedas, perform sacrifices and receive gifts.
2. In the second place were the rulers, also known as kshatriyas. They were expected to fight battles and protect people.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Q16: Explain the term gana or Sangha and its functions.

Ans: In a gana or Sangha there were not one, but many rulers. Sometimes, even when thousands of men ruled together, each one was known as a raja, they together formed a republic. These rajas performed rituals together. They also met in assemblies and took



decisions through discussions and debate. When they were attacked by the enemy, they gathered together and decided what to do.

Q17: What archaeological excavations tell about the 'janapadas' settlements?

Ans: Archaeologists have excavated a number of settlements in these janapadas, such as Purana Qila in Delhi, Hastinapur near Meerut, and Atranjikhhera, near Etah (the last two are in Uttar Pradesh). 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.

Q18: What were the characteristics of the earthen pots used by the people in janapadas?

Ans: The people of janapadas made clay (earthen) pots. Some of these were grey in colour, others were red. One special type of pottery found at these sites is known as Painted Grey Ware. As is clear from the name, these were grey pots and had painted designs, usually simple lines and geometric patterns.

Q19: Why was the capital city of mahajanapadas fortified?

Ans: The capital city of mahajanapadas was fortified with huge walls of wood, bricks or stones around them because people were afraid of attacks from other kings and needed protection. Some rulers wanted to show how rich and powerful they were by building huge walls and forts.

Q20: How did the fortification of their land help the rulers in controlling their people living in the mahajanapadas?

Ans: The fortification helped the rajas in many ways; they were able to control the people and land inside the fortification.

Q21: Why were taxes collected by the rulers of the mahajanapadas?

Ans: For building huge forts and maintaining big armies, the rulers needed more resources. So the rulers collected regular levy instead of depending on occasional gifts from the people.

Q22: Describe the system of government in Vajji?

Ans: The system of government in Vajji was known as gana or sangha. Vajji was administered by not one but many rulers. Each ruler was known as a raja. These rajas performed all the rituals together. All these rajas met in assemblies. Through discussions and debates in these assemblies they decided what had to be done and how. Both Buddha and Mahavira belonged to ganas and sanghas.



Q23: What were the features of the taxation system in Mahajanapadas in the ancient India?

Ans: Taxes were collected in Mahajanapadas from the common people to build the infrastructure of the city and to maintain big armies for the protection of the city. Taxes from the crops were the most important source of revenue for the king's officials. The crops tax was fixed at 1/6th of the produce or bhaga (share). Crafts people were also made to pay taxes in the form of labour provided for a day to the king. Herders were made to pay taxes in kind and would have to give up animals or animal produce as tax. There were taxes on tradable goods and forest produce also. The king was the main beneficiary of these taxes.

Q24: What is the difference between the Republican and the Monarchical Mahajanapadas ?

Ans: A republican Mahajanapad was ruled by a group elected by the common people called the sangha. Monarchies were ruled by kings and his word was law.

Long Q&A:

Q1: Why did the agriculture flourish in the Mahajanapadas?

Ans: Around 600 B.C two major changes occurred in the agriculture. One was an increase in the use of iron ploughshare. By using iron ploughshare heavy, clayey soil could be turned over better than with a wooden ploughshare. This led to an increase in production of grains. Secondly, transplantation of paddy began during this time. In this process, instead of scattering seed on the ground, saplings were grown and then planted in the fields. This led to increased production, as many more plants survived. As a result of these two changes, the agriculture flourished in the Mahajanapadas.

Ans: The use of iron ploughshare helped to turn over the heavy ,clayey soil which was not possible with a wooden ploughshare.This increased the production. Second, people began transplanting paddy. This meant that instead of scattering seeds on the ground, from which plants would germinate, saplings were grown and then planted in the fields. This led to increased production, as more plants survived.This however was back breaking work.

