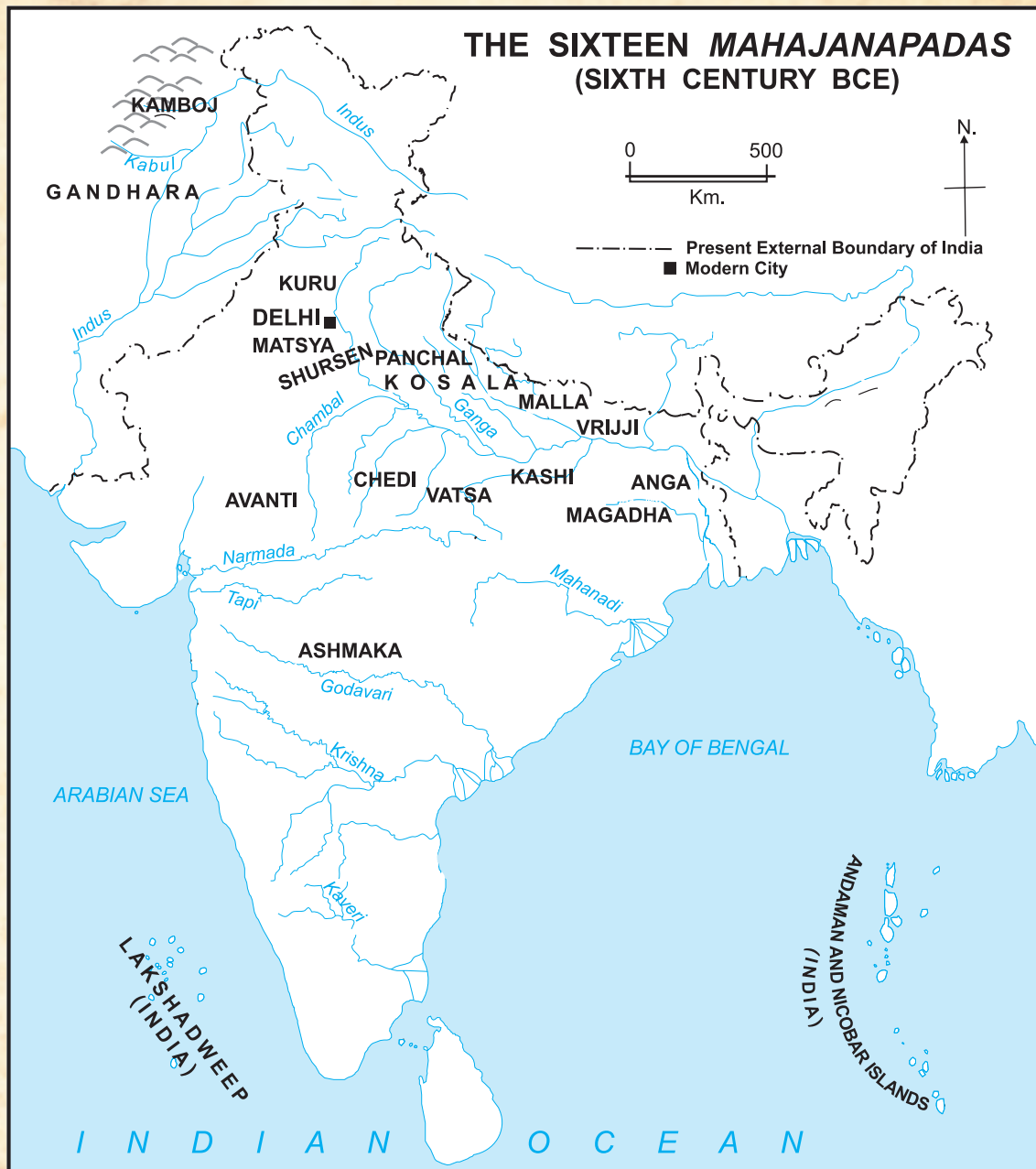


6. Janapadas and Mahajanapadas



6.1 Janapadas

6.2 Mahajanapadas

6.3 Rise of the Magadha Empire



Try this.

Write the names of the sixteen mahajanapadas in the proper places on an outline map of India.

6.1 Janapadas

The period from about 1000 BC to 600 BC is considered to be the post-Vedic period. It is in this period that the *janapadas* came into existence. *Janapadas* were the many small States that spread from today's Afghanistan which is to the northwest of the Indian subcontinent to Bengal and Odisha in the east and to Maharashtra in the south.

The *janapada* called ‘Ashmak’ occupied a part of today’s Maharashtra. The names of these *janapadas* can be found in Sanskrit, Pali and Ardhamagadhi literature. One can also find information about them in the writings of Greek historians. Some of the *janapadas* were monarchies, while others were republics.

Some *janapadas* had a *gana-parishad* of senior citizens. Members of the *gana-parishad* came together for discussions and made decisions regarding administrative issues. The place where these discussions took place was known as the *santhagar*. Gautam Buddha hailed from the Shakyas Republic. Every *janapada* had its own coinage.

6.2 Mahajanapadas

Mahajanapadas			
Kosala	Vatsa	Avanti	Magadha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Kosala <i>mahajanapada</i> was located in the foothills of the Himalayas in the region of Uttar Pradesh and Nepal. ● The famous cities of Kosala were Shravasti, Kushavati and Saket. ● Shravasti was the capital of Kosala. ● Gautama Buddha had lived in the famous <i>vihara</i> Jetvan at Shravasti for a long time. ● The Kosala king Prasenjit was a contemporary of the Buddha and Vardhaman Mahavir. ● Later, the State of Kosala merged with Magadha. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The <i>mahajanapada</i> Vatsa was located in the region around Prayag, that is Allahabad, in Uttar Pradesh. ● Kosam, the capital of Vatsa, was the ancient city of Kaushambi. ● It was an important centre for trade. ● Three extremely rich merchants of Kaushambi had built three <i>viharas</i> for Gautama Buddha and his followers. ● King Udayana was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. ● After king Udayana, the State of Vatsa could not maintain its independent existence for long. The king of Avanti <i>mahajanapada</i> conquered the State. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ancient kingdom of Avanti was located in the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. ● Ujjayani (Ujjain) was its capital. ● The city was an important trade centre. ● The king of Avanti, Pradyot, was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha and Vardhaman Mahavir. ● During the reign of King Nandivardhan, the State of Avanti was merged into the Magadha Empire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ancient <i>mahajanapada</i> of Magadha was spread through the regions of Gaya, Patna in Bihar and some regions in Bengal. ● The capital of Magadha was Rajgriha (Rajgir). ● King Bimbisara’s palace was built by the architect Mahagovind. ● Jeevaka, the famous physician, was at the court of Bimbisara. ● Bimbisara had become a follower of Gautama Buddha.

Some *janapadas* gradually became stronger and expanded their geographical boundaries. Such *janapadas* came to be known as *mahajanapadas*. From the literature of that period, it is clear that up to the sixth century BCE, sixteen *mahajanapadas* had acquired special importance. Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti and Magadha among them became more powerful.

6.3 Rise of the Magadha Empire

Ajat shatru, the son of Bimbisara, continued with the policy of expansion of the Magadha Empire. He successfully conquered many republics of the east. The kingdom of Magadha prospered during the reign of Ajatshatru. He had become a follower of Gautama Buddha. After the Mahaparinirvana of Gautama Buddha, it was during his reign that the first Buddhist Council or *Sangiti* was held at Rajgriha.



Ajatshatru Sculpture

The foundation for the new capital Pataligram of Magadha was laid during Ajatshatru's period. Later, it became famous as 'Pataliputra'. Pataliputra was probably in the vicinity of today's Patna city.

A noteworthy successor of Ajatshatru was the Magadha king Shishunag. He annexed the kingdoms of Avanti, Kosala

and Vatsa to Magadha. Nearly the entire region of northern India came under the control of Magadha. That was how the Magadha Empire took shape.

The Nanda Kings of Magadha : The Nandas ruled the Magadha Empire between 364 BCE and 324 BCE. They had set up a good administrative system necessary to run the huge empire. They had a huge four-column army of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. The Nandas also introduced the system of standard weights and measures.

King Dhananand was the last king of the Nanda dynasty. By this time, the Magadha Empire had extended up to the Punjab in the west. However, during Dhananand's reign, the ambitious youth Chandragupta Maurya won Pataliputra, ended the Nanda regime and laid the foundation of the Maurya Empire.

In the next chapter, we will read about the foreign invasions on the western and northwestern frontiers of India during the rise of the Maurya Empire. Also, we will read about the Maurya Empire in greater detail.



Do you know ?

The ancient and modern names of the 16 *mahajanapadas* :

- (1) Kashi (Benaras), (2) Kosal (Lucknow), (3) Malla (Gorakhpur), (4) Vatsa (Allahabad), (5) Chedi (Kanpur), (6) Kuru (Delhi), (7) Panchal (Rohilkhand), (8) Matsya (Jaipur), (9) Shurasen (Mathura), (10) Ashmak (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), (11) Avanti (Ujjain), (12) Ang (Champa East Bihar), (13) Magadha (South Bihar), (14) Vriji (North Bihar), (15) Gandhara (Peshawar), (16) Kamboj (Near Gandhara)



Exercise

1. Answer in one sentence.

- (1) What is meant by *janapada*?
- (2) What is meant by *mahajanapada*?
- (3) Where was the first Buddhist Council held?
- (4) Who introduced the system of standard weights and measures?

2. Can you name the following?

- (1) Some part of today's Maharashtra was occupied by this *janapada* –
- (2) This was an assembly of the senior citizens of a *janapada* –
- (3) This was the venue of discussions –

(4) Gautama Buddha belonged to this *janapada* –

(5) They had a four-column army –

3. Match the following.

Group A

- (1) *Sangiti*
- (2) Dhananand
- (3) Pataligrama

Group B

- (a) Ajatshatru
- (b) *Parishad*
- (c) Mahagovind
- (d) Nanda King

4. Make a table showing the various kingdoms in the Indian sub-continent and their capitals.

Activity :

- (1) Visit a nearby fort and find out the following :
 - (1) Type of the fort
 - (2) In whose reign it was built
 - (3) The *Killedar*.....
 - (4) The main feature.
- (2) Find out the different arms and services of the Indian Army.
- (3) Complete the following table :

S.No.	Name of the <i>mahajanapada</i>	Location	Capital	Name of the most important king
1.	-----	At the foot of the Himalayas	-----	-----
2.	Vatsa	-----	-----	-----
3.	-----	-----	-----	Pradyot
4.	-----	Region around the cities of Patna, Gaya.	-----	-----

