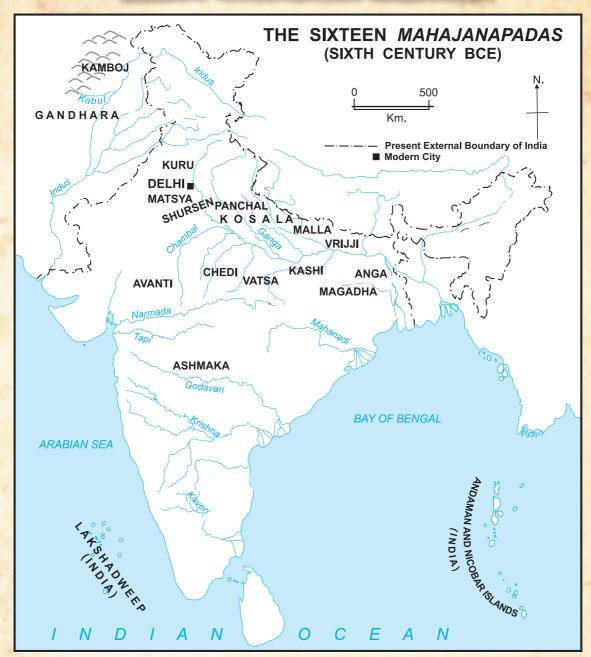
## 6. Janapadas and Mahajanapadas



- 6.1 Janapadas
- 6.2 Mahajanapadas
- 6.3 Rise of the Magadha Empire



### Try this.

Write the names of the sixteen *mahajanapada*s 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 ganaparishad 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 Shakva from the Republic. Every janapada had its own coinage.

### 6.2 Mahajanapadas

#### Mahajanapadas Magadha Kosala Vatsa **Avanti** The mahajanapada • • The Kosala The ancient • The ancient Vatsa was located mahajanapada kingdom of mahajanapada in the region around was located in the of Magadha was Avanti was Prayag, that is foothills of the located in the spread through Allahabad, in Uttar Himalayas in the Malwa region of the regions of Pradesh. Gaya, Patna in region of Uttar Madhya Pradesh. Bihar and some Pradesh and • Kosam, the capital • Ujjayani (Ujjain) Nepal. of Vatsa, was the regions in was its capital. ancient city of Bengal. • The famous • The city was an Kaushambi. cities of Kosala The capital of important trade were Shravasti, • It was an important Magadha was centre. Kushavati and Rajgriha centre for trade. The king of Saket. (Rajgir). • Three extremely Avanti, Pradyot, Shravasti was rich merchants of King was a the capital of Kaushambi had Bimbisara's contemporary of Kosala. built three *viharas* palace was built Gautama Buddha • Gautama Buddha by the architect for Gautama and Vardhaman had lived in the Mahagovind. Buddha and his Mahavir. famous vihara followers. • Jeevaka, the During the reign Jetvan at King Udayana was famous of King Shravasti for a physician, was a contemporary of Nandivardhan, long time. Gautama Buddha. at the court of the State of • The Kosala Bimbisara. Avanti was After king king Prasenjit Udayana, the State merged into • Bimbisara had was a the Magadha of Vatsa could not become a contemporary of maintain its Empire. follower of the Buddha and independent Gautama Vardhaman existence for long. Buddha. Mahavir. The king of Avanti • Later, the State mahajanapada of Kosala merged conquered the State. with Magadha.

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) Vrijji (North Bihar), (15) Gandhara (Peshawar),
- (16) Kamboj (Near Gandhara)



### 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	Group B	
(1) Sangiti	(a) Ajatshatru	
(2) Dhananand	(b) Parishad	
(3) Pataligram	(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 mahajanapada	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.		



