



KINGDOMS, KINGS AND AN EARLY REPUBLIC

Introduction: The Aryans cleared the thick forests of the Indo-Gangetic plains and brought more land under cultivation. As they started leading settled lives as cultivators, their settlements became permanent. Each of these settlements usually consisted of a single jana or tribe. These tribal settlements were the first states. They were called Janapadas. The powerful states that emerged after defeating the smaller states or janapadas came to be known as Mahajanapadas.

Meaning:

1. Kingdom: A territory having a king/queen
2. Rajan: a tribal chief
3. Janapada: a Tribal state ruled by a rajan.
4. Mahajanapada: a large state formed by the capture of many janapadas.
5. Ashvamedha: horse sacrifice performed by a king
6. Gana: a group that has many members.
7. Sangha: organisation or association.
8. Bhaga: tax on crops (1/6)

The Vedas:

1. The Rig veda
2. The Yajur Veda
3. The Sama Veda
4. The Atharva Veda.

The Varnas:

The later Vedic society came to be divided into four varnas. Each varna had a different set of functions. Initially, the Varna system was based on profession or occupation. In later, one's varna or caste was determined by birth. The four main Varna's or caste were Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras.

Mahajanapadas: About 2500 years ago, some big and powerful janapadas became more important than others were known as Mahajanapadas.

Ex. Gandhara, Magadha, Vajji.

Features:

1. Most Janapadas had a capital city.
2. Most of the capital cities were fortified.
3. The Rajas were begun to maintain armies.
4. Soldiers were paid regular salaries.
5. Used punch marked coins.
6. To build huge forts and maintain big armies, the Rajas started collecting taxes.
7. There were many changes in agriculture.
Ex. Increased use of Iron ploughshare, Transplantation of Paddy.
8. Due to increased use of iron and transplantation method, production of crops increased significantly.

Important Kings:

1. Bimbisara
2. Ajatasattu
3. Mahapadma Nanda

Other Important Characters:

1. Alexander
 2. Buddha
 3. Mahavira
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