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### Who were Mahajanapadas special (Magadha) in India?

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#### ABSTRACT

In ancient India, a number of kingdoms emerged during the Vedic Age that were spread across the Indo-Gangetic plain. These kingdoms were also called as republics and 16 of them were regarded the greatest of all. These 16 kingdoms were known as the 16 Mahajanapadas (Anga, Assaka, Avanti, Chedi, Gandhara, Kamboja, Kasi, Kosala, Kuru, Machcha, Magadha, Malla, Panchala, Surasena, Vajji, Vatsa). These 16 Mahi Jana Padas are mentioned in the ancient literature and scriptures. The term Mahajanapada actually means "great country" and is derived from Sanskrit. The sixteen mahajanapadas rose before the start of Buddhism in India. Some were big and strong, some other were very small, some of them had monarchy, some of them had republican form of Sagas which are unique in nature. Unity was not there, they fought among themselves for the supremacy. Making use of this opportunity, Bimbisara strengthened Magadha Kingdom by waging war and with alliance, he incorporated all the Jana Padas into Magadha. His son and successor Ajatasatru further strengthened and extended Magadha territory by way of waging wars. But his successors were not powerful. Mahi Padmananda, hailed from Nanda dynasty occupied Magadha. At about 324 B.C. Chandragupta Maura defeated the last Nanda ruler Dhanananda and established the famous Maura empire, made Pataliputra as its capital

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#### INTRODUCTION

We have two terms one Jana Padas means non-monarchical government or autonomous clans and other Mahajanapadas. The sixteen mahajanapadas rose before the start of Buddhism in India. Though these places were tribal settlements initially, roughly by 600 B.C they grew into bigger political entities by grabbing land. This was also the time when the name Bharat-Maharash was coined for the whole Indian subcontinent. This vast land of roughly 3000 kms was split into 16 major mahajanapadas around the 6th century B.C.E to 4th C B.C. and, they were divided into two categories as follows: monarchy, 11 of these mahajanapadas were ruled by kings or monarchs. The kings in these states had the supreme authority. Anga, (Kolkata and Bangladesh), Kasha, (Varanasi/Banaras), Koala, (East Uttar Pradesh), Cedi, (Central Madhya Pradesh), Vats, (southern Uttar Pradesh), Mistaya, (Eastern Rajasthan and Western Madhya Pradesh), Shorten, (Indian Punjab), Ashman, (Central India-Eastern Maharashtra), Avanti, (Western and southern Madhya Pradesh), Gandhi, (Peshawar and northern Pakistan Punjab), Magadha, (Bihar and Bengal)

Republics, The remaining 5 were Republic countries. These republican states had a Gana-parishad or an Assembly of senior and responsible citizens. This, Gana-parishad had the supreme authority in the state. All the administrative decisions were taken by this Parishad. Vrijji (North Eastern Uttar Pradesh), Malala, (Northern West Bengal and Western Assam) Koru (Haryana and Delhi), Panchal (Uttara hand and Western Uttar Pradesh), Kamba (Northern Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province of Pakistan), Of all these, Avanti, Kosala, Gandhar, Vatsa and Magadha were the biggest and their role was very important all the forth comings. (1)

Organization of ancient India from 8<sup>th</sup> B.C to 4<sup>th</sup> B.C:

Clan states and kingdoms:

Around the eighth century B.C the janapadas, or the territories of the janas, the peoples, became more clearly marked. There must have been numerous janapadas, in a unique grammatical compendium, the Ashtadhyayi of

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Panini; sixty-nine polities of various sizes are named. There were many amalgamations that eventually created sixteen mahajanapadas, or the greater states. Their geographical spread provides us with a clearer understanding of how human settlement patterns in the northern part of South Asia evolved up to 600 B.C. The focus of settlement in the Harappan era was the Indus basin; in the early Vedic period it was Punjab; then it moved eastwards, and by the end of the Vedic age the entire Ganga etic basin consisted of eleven of the sixteen mahajanapadas and their capital cities. Central and peninsular India had only three between them, and there were two in the northwest.

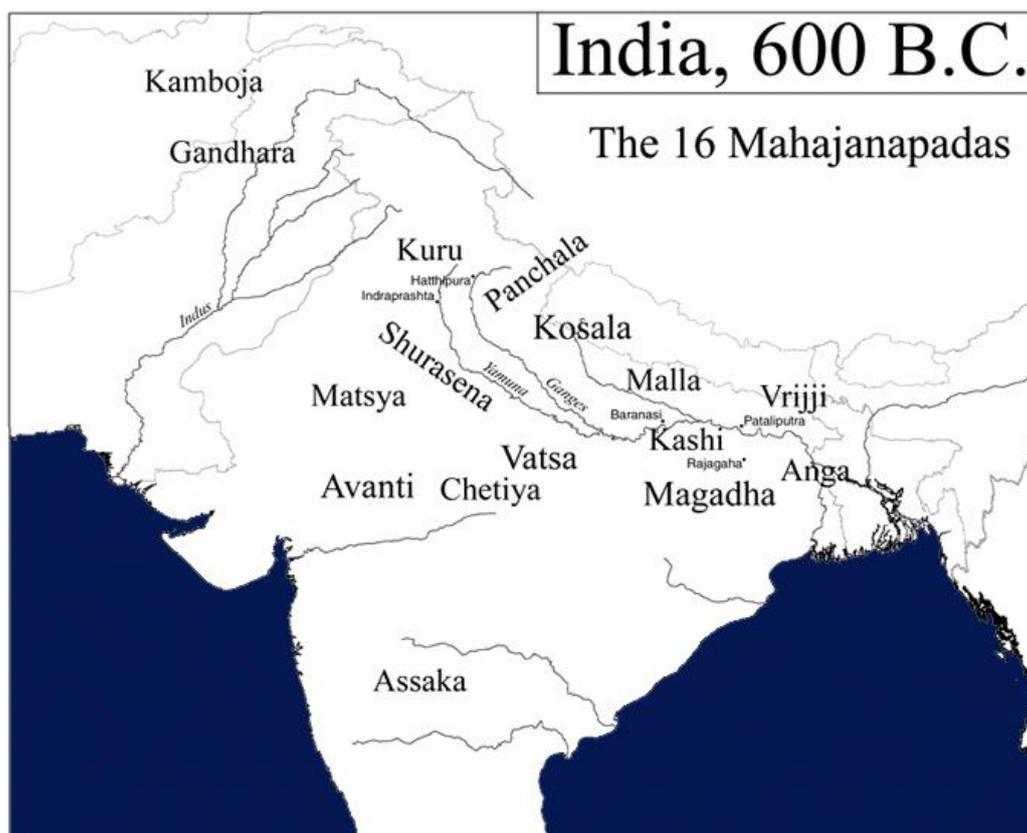
As for their political structures, both the janapadas and the mahajanapadas can be classified into two groups: a smaller one of clan states, and the greater one of numerous kingdoms. The clan states were situated mostly on the periphery of the heartland kingdoms, in the Himalayan foothills, northwest India, Punjab, Sind, and central and western India. The people of the clan states, hardy and independent-minded hill people, continued with the ancient clan traditions of working together with others whom they regarded of as part of a bigger family, which was the clan. Two mahajanapadas, Malls and Veii, became the most important clan states. Historians have variously described the clan states as democracies, republics or oligarchies, and each designation has a definable element of truth in title clan states practiced democracy to the extent that there were great assemblies in which people expressed heterodox ideas; but, since the lowest orders were excluded from the consultative process, it was an imperfect sort of democracy. The states were republican in the sense that they did not subscribe to the institution of monarchy, with the accompanying panoply of ritual ceremonial and sacrifices; but a number of clan states produced powerful personalities who called themselves rajas, or kings, and who came to dominate the discussions and assembly proceedings. Generally speaking, an oligarchy of a few strong men obtained a dominant voice in the governance of the clan states. Although kingship was dissolved and republics were set up, the class divided patriarchal society, bureaucracy, taxation system and an army for the coercion of people remained. In whichever way we understand the clan states, there were two aspects that were common to all of them. One was their corporate style of government. The heads of clan families met in an assembly, or sangha, which was ordinarily convened in the main town, and the proceedings were conducted by someone who was recognized as the most senior. The role of the leader was not hereditary but highly honored; the debates were rigorous, and a vote was taken in the absence of unanimity. The second aspect common to the clan states was a great degree of anti-Brahmana tendency among their citizenry. The Vedic orthodoxy of the caste system based on varna-ashrama was rejected, and the alliance of the Brahmans and the Kshatriya, which underpinned the structure of authority in the kingdoms, did not hold well in the clan states. The powerful Kshatriya families in these states accorded little awe or respect for their Brahman peers, and this was why the orthodox of the Vedic tradition called these Kshatriyas degenerate. Although it is perhaps coincidental, it is worth noting that most of the dissenting traditions arose within the clan states.

In contrast to the clan states there were the kingdoms, great and small, ruled by the monarchs? Two millennia and a half later, with the end of British rule in 1947, and the adoption of a republican constitution in 1950, the institution of monarchy in India was to become obsolete. The king of England then ceased to be the emperor of India, and nearly 600 Indian princes lost their authority. The fundamental principles and styles of government that had operated in Indian political life for at least 2,700 years were thus destroyed. The early history of the Jana kingship began around the eighth century is, during the later Vedic age, when the rajas belonging to elite lineages, called rajanyas, within the Kshatriya caste, came to dominate the military-nobility nexus within the Indian context. The word Khatri means power. The authority of the rajas derived partly from stories of righteous heroism in the great epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, which bestowed upon them the legitimacy of a sacred right to rule. As what unfolded in the epics has such great resonance within the Hindu psyche, it is to be expected that many Indians even now regard the divine origin of kingship very seriously. There was also a long tradition in India of people trusting their monarchs to do what was right and just. This sense of an unwritten code of conduct was derived from all the religious traditions to which the various monarchs subscribed. They enjoined a monarch to be strong, wise, decisive, kind and a concerned protector of his people; and the king's power was to be matched by his obligations to his subjects, as is made clear in relation to his right to levy taxes. The king who takes his sixth share as tribute and fails to protect his subjects commits a sin. But alas, with a few exceptions, the Indian monarchs turned out to be no less violent and cruel, or vain and stupid, than their many counterparts in various parts of the world in different epochs. Continuing with the late Vedic tradition, the post-Vedic kings used to hold major ceremonies of sacrifice in order to bolster their authority. Among the main ceremonies was the royal sacrifice, called the rajasuya. At this annual ceremony, the king honored his patrons and courtiers with the title of ranting, the jewels, and would make offerings to them, as a way of protecting his patrimony and winning the loyalty of the men closest to him. The king also gave Dana (gift) to the chief priest (the profit) There were many royal rituals in ancient India. They involved such activities as cattle raids, games of dice and chariot races, but perhaps the most crucial rite was that of the horse sacrifice, called the Ashvamedha. In a semi-settled society which was not yet fully agricultural and where the territorial boundaries were very fluid, the acquisition of land was a marker of status for any aspiring raja. Initially, ambitious rajas tested the limits of their rivals territories by allowing a white

stallion to wander at will for a year, monitored by soldiers who, when the horse was challenged, would either fight if they sensed a weaker enemy or prudently withdraw in the face of a stronger one. At the end of the year the raja would claim all the territory over which the horse had wandered freely. Then, at a huge sacrificial rite attended by vast crowds, the horse would be consecrated. There then followed a symbolic mating ceremony involving the raja's chief wife and the sacred horse. The horse was then sacrificed by the Brahman priests. Sex and magic, religion and superstition were combined in this ceremony, with the aim of symbolically demonstrating the mystical authority of royal power.

*In short about 16 Mahajanapadas:*

The sixteen mahajanapadas are given here in detail.



*Amga:*

The kingdom of Amga is mentioned in the Amhara Veda and was located roughly at the site of the present day Bihar and some parts of West Bengal. On the north was River Ganga and it was separated from the Magadha by River Champa. Anga was one of the most flourishing cities and was an important center of trade and commerce. It was regarded as one of the six principal cities of early India.

*Asoka / Ashcake:*

Asoka, also known as Ashcake was a kingdom that was located in the south of India. During the time of Buddha, this tribe was located on the banks of river Godavari. The capital city of Asoka was known as Potana. It was situated in central India and extended till southern India. It is estimated that Asoka was situated roughly at the place where modern day Maharashtra is located.

*Avanti:*

Avanti was a very important kingdom located in Western India and was considered to be one of the four important monarchies during the time Buddhism began in India. River Netravali used to flow right through Avanti thus dividing it into north and south provinces. Avanti was located roughly at the place where the state of Madhya Pradesh is located now. Avanti was an important center of Buddhism and later became a part of Magadha Empire.

*Cedi/Chet:*

There were two different settlements of the Chides, also known as Cheti. One was in the mountainous regions of Nepal while the other was located near River Yamuna. The southern boundaries of Cedi went till the banks of River Narmada. The Chides are mentioned in Rig Veda, which is regarded as the oldest scripture. This means that Chides were prevalent here since a long time.

*Gadara:*

the Gadara's established themselves since the Vedic Age on the banks of River Kuban till the River Indus. With time, they crossed Indus and expanded their territory into Punjab. The Gadara's were very aggressive in nature and were masters of the art of warfare. It is said that this kingdom was founded by the son of Arundhati known as Gadara.

*Cambodia:*

Cambodia was said to have been located on either sides of the Hindukush. In early scriptures and literature, Cambodia is mentioned along with Gadara, Dared and the Baglike quite a number of times. The Cambodia's were supposed to have both Indian and Iranian similarities.

*Kais /kasha:*

The Aryans who had settled around Varanasi were known as Kassite city was flanked by the rivers Varna and Asia from which the place derives its name. Kasi was the most powerful kingdom of the sixteen Jana Padas before the rise of Buddhism. During the rise of Buddha, it was converted into Kosala. This place is mentioned as Kaushik / Kuaka in the Mistaya Purina. [2]

Kasha was at first the most powerful of them and perhaps played an important part in the subversion of the Videhan monarchy; its capital Varanasi is described in various sources as an important city. According to the Dasaratha Janaki, one of the Buddhist birth stories, Rama, whom it describes both as the brother and husband of Site, was the king of Kasha and not Ajodhya where his modern devotees (Ramabhaktas) demolished a medieval mosque leading to a communal holocaust in the country. The economic importance of Kasha lay in the fact that it had emerged as a leading center of textile manufacture in the time of the Buddha; the Kashaya (orange brown) robes of the Buddhist monks are said to have been manufactured here. [3]

*Koala:*

Koala was located around 70 miles to the north west of present day Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. It was flanked in the south by River Gagarin the north by the Himalayas and in the east by the River Gandak. The ruler was called king Present who was succeeded by his son Vidudabha. During his son's reign, Koala was combined with Magadha. The three chief cities of Koala were Ajodhya, Skeat and Sarasvati.

*Koru:*

The origin of the Koru clan can be traced to the Puru-Bharata family. Some of them were settled in central India and some were living beyond the Himalayan ranges. It is said that the founder of Kururashtra in Kurukshetra was the son of Samvarsana called Kuru. The Korus were known for their profound wisdom and sound health. The Korus switched to republic form of government from monarchy during 5th Century B.C.

*Machala / Mistaya:*

The kingdom of Mistaya or Machala is said to have comprised the region of the present day Jaipur in Rajasthan along with Altar and Bharatpur. The founder of this kingdom was king Vibrate and the capital of this kingdom was named Viratanagara after him. The Mistaya once formed a part of the Cedi kingdom as there are evidences that show that this place was ruled by the king of Cedi.

*Magadha:*

The Magadha's are referred to in the Amhara Veda. According to the early scriptures, the Magadha's were not fully Brahmins. Thus; they were loathed at and were spoken of in contempt. Except for King Propaganda, no other ruler is mentioned in the Vedas. It is stated in the Mahabharata that Magadha came into the limelight under the king Bimbisara and later under his son Ajatasatru. It was one of the chief empires of India during those times. The kingdom of Magadha was situated roughly where the present day Bihar is located. (we will discuss after about Magadha dynasty in detail)

*Malala:*

Most of the scriptures of the Jains and Buddhists mention the Malls. Their tribe was supposed to be quite powerful and they lived somewhere towards the Eastern India. The Malls had a republic form of society and their dominant territory comprised of nine provinces. Two of these nine provinces (Pave and Kasandra) gained

much importance in due course of time when Buddha came over here and took his last meal before breathing his last at Kasandra.

*Panchal:*

the Panchal as were located in the north of India and had their province to the east of the Korus. They were located between the Himalayan ranges and river Ganga. One can say that it was located roughly at the place where the modern day Uttar Pradesh is located. The Panchal as were originally monarchial in nature and later transformed to the republican form of government during the 5th Century B.C. They are mentioned in Kausalya's Arthashastra as following the constitution of the king.

*Sarasin:*

The location of the Sarasin was around the west side of river Yamuna and had its capital city at Mathura. The king of Sarasin, Avantiputra played a vital role in promoting Buddhism in his kingdom. He was one of the chief disciples of Buddha and aimed at spreading his knowledge and wisdom all through his kingdom. The capital city of Mathura was an important center for the worship of Lord Krishna. With time, the kingdom of Sarasin was annexed by Magadha Empire.

*Hajji / Veii:*

the Hajji or Veii comprised of eight to nine allied races and this kingdom became an important center of cultural and political activities. It was essentially located in northern India. Out of the nine races, the Licchavis, the Verdeans, the Jnatikas and the Hajjis were the most important. The Licchavis were an independent clan and their capital was called Vaishali. It was an important center of Buddhism and the headquarters of the powerful republic of Vajjis. Buddha is supposed to have visited Licchavis on many occasions. As time passed, the kingdom of Licchavis was conquered by the king of Magadha, Ajatasatru.

*Vasa/Vats:*

Considered to be an offshoot of the Korus, the kingdom of Vats or Vasa was roughly situated at the location of modern day Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. The capital city was known as Kaushambi, which was a prosperous city. A number of rich merchant's dwelled heredity was an important gateway for goods and people coming from the North West and south. The ruler of Vats was known as Dyane and he was a very powerful ruler. He became a follower of Buddha and adopted Buddhism as the religion for his kingdom [4]

*The cause's supremacy of Magadha:*

The greatest of all the kingdoms was to be Magadha. Rise of Magadha and Nanas:

According to the Mahabharata and the Purina's, the earliest dynasty of Magadha was founded by Brihadradha, the father of Jarasandha and son of Vasu. Magadha came into prominence under the leadership of Bimbisara, who belonged to the Haryana dynasty.

*Haryana Dynasty:*

*Bimbisara (544-492 B.C.):*

The first important ruler of Magadha was Bimbisara who was a contemporary of Buddha. He started the policy of conquest and aggression.

1. Bimbisara annexed Amga and placed it under the viceroyalty of Ajatashatru at Champak.
2. He was the earliest of the Indian kings to stress the need for efficient administration.
3. Bimbisara consolidated his power and influence by matrimonial alliances. His principal queen was Kosaladevi, the sister of King Present of Kosala. He married Chelan, the daughter of the Lichchhavi chief Chetaka. Khema, another wife of the king, was a daughter of the king of Madras. His Koala wife brought Kais as a dowry-gift.
4. Magadha's most serious rival was Avanti, whose king Chandra Pradyota Macarena fought Bimbisara but ultimately the two became friends. Later when Pradyota was attacked by jaundice, at the Avanti king's request Bimbisara sent the royal physician Ivana to Ujjain.
5. Bimbisara is also said to have received an embassy and a letter from the ruler of Gadara, Pukkusati.
6. He is described as Saniya with an army being perhaps the first king to have a regular standing army.
7. Ajatashatru, the son of Bimbisara, impatient to rule Magadha, murdered his father in about 492 B.C. and became king.

*Ajatashatru (492-460 B.C.):*

The beginning of the conflict between Koala and Magadha took place in the time of Ajatashatru. Reacting to the murder of Bimbisara by Ajatashatru, Prasenjit revoked the gift of the Kasha village which had formed part of his sister's dowry. Therefore war took place between Ajatashatru and Parasenjiti. Several battles were fought

without any lasting success for either. Ultimately Present was betrayed by his own minister Dirghacharayana, who handed the royal insignia to Prasenjit's son and military command to Vidudabha.

Present died at Rajagriha and Vidudabha along with his army was drowned by an untimely flood in the river Rapt. Ajatashatru annexed the Koala kingdom without fighting.

1. Ajatashatru strengthened Rajagriha, the Magadha capital, and built a small fort, Pataligrama in the vicinity of the Ganges. This was later to become the famous Maryann metropolis of Pataliputra.

2. The Vajjian confederacy was suppressed by Ajatashatru by sowing internal dissension among the Lichchavis with the help of his Brahman minister Vassakara. It took sixteen years to suppress the Vajjians.

3. A description of the war between the Magadha's and the Vajjians mentions the use of two weapons, mahashilakantaka (a large-sized catapult used for hurling heavy pieces of stone) and the rathamushala (a chariot with knives and cutting edges fixed to it).

4. In religious tradition Ajatashatru is remembered as a patron of Deviate, the schismatic cousin of the Buddha, and also as a friend of both the Jains and the Buddhists.

5. After the death of Gautama Buddha, he constructed Dhatuschaityas round Rajagriha. He repaired 18 mahaviharas. He helped the Buddhist monks to hold their first Buddhist Council at Rajagriha under his patronage.

6. The story of Ajatashatru's interview with Buddha is also stated in the Bharuch sculptures of the second century B.C.

#### *Dayan (460-444 B.C.):*

1. According to Buddhist writers Ajatashatru was succeeded by his son Dayan.

2. Dayan had probably to fight with the king of Avanti, but the most notable event of his reign was the foundation of the capital city of Kusumpura or Pataliputra.

3. Dayan was succeeded by the dynasty of Sisunagas.

#### *Sisupala Dynasty (444 B.C. to 396 B.C.):*

The successors of Dayan were all parricides, of whom the last was banished by the indignant citizens, who met together and appointed as their king a worthy minister known by the name of Sisupala.

1. Sisupala carried on the forward policy of Magadha by the absorption of the powerful kingdom of Avanti and thus the 100 years old rivalry between Avanti and Magadha came to an end.

2. Sisupala temporarily shifted the Magadha capital to Vishal.

3. Sisupala's successor, Kalkaska or Kakavarnin, transferred his royal residence permanently from Girivraja to Pataliputra, though Vishal was occasionally graced by the presence of the sovereign.

3. At Vishal the second Buddhist council was held during Kalkaska's reign.

4. Kalkaska was murdered by Mahapadma Nanda, the founder of the Nanda dynasty.

#### *The Nanda Dynasty (345-322 B.C.):*

The Sisunagas were succeeded by the Nanas, who proved to be the most powerful rulers of Magadha. The founder of this dynasty was Mahapadma or Mahapadmapati, Sovereign of an infinite host, or of immense wealth, according to the Puranas. Regarding the parentage of the first Nanda there are two traditions. The Purina's represent him as son of Mahanadi, the last king of the Sisupala dynasty by a Sutra woman. Jaina writers on the other hand, represent him as the son of a courtesan by a barber which is strikingly supported by the testimony of Quintus Curtius. In any case it remains true that the Nanas were the first of a number of non-Kshatriya ruling dynasties. Alexander, who invaded Punjab at that time, did not dare to move towards the east.

#### *Mahapadma Nanda:*

1. He claimed to be karat, the sole sovereign who destroyed all the other ruling princes.

2. The Hathigumpha inscription of king Kharavela refers to the conquest of Kalanga by a ruler of the Nanda dynasty. This occurred in the reign of Mahapadma Nanda.

3. Mahapadma Nanda has been described in the Purina's as the destroyer of all the Kshatriyas (Sarvakshatrantaka), and as a second Parsurama or Bhargava.

4. According to Buddhist sources Mahapadma Nanda reigned for about ten years and was succeeded by his eight sons. The last Nanda ruler was Dana-Nanda, the Grammie or Mandrakes of classical writers.

He owned a vast treasure and commanded a huge army of 20,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots and no less than 3,000 elephants. To maintain the huge force and amass the treasure he had to resort to heavy taxation.

The Nanda rule in Magadha was supplanted by that of the Maryann dynasty under which the Magadha Empire reached the apex of glory.

Than Causes of Magadha Supremacy is this that the formation of the Magadha State during this period was the work of several enterprising and ambitious rulers such as Bimbisara, Ajatashatru and Mahapadma

Nanda.Magadha enjoyed an advantageous geographical position in the age of iron, because the richest iron deposits were not far from Rajagriha. The ready availability of the rich iron ores enabled the Magadha kings to equip themselves with effective weapons, which were not easily available to their rivals.

The two Magadha capitals, the first at Rajagriha and the second at Pataliputra were situated at very strategic points. Rajagriha was surrounded by a group of five hills and so it was rendered impregnable whereas Pataliputra were situated at the confluence of the Ganga, the Gandak and the Son, and a fourth river called the Hagar joined the Ganga not far from Pataliputra. It facilitated communication of army. Further, Pataliputra was a true water fort (Jaladurga) as it was surrounded by rivers on almost all sides.

1. The area of Magadha was far more productive as it lay at the center of the middle Gangetic plain. The fertile alluvial soil enabled the peasants to produce considerable surplus, which could be mopped up by the rulers in the form of taxes.

2. Magadha kings also benefitted from the rise of towns and the use of metal money on account of trade and commerce.

3. Magadha was the first kingdom to use elephants on a large scale in its wars against its neighbors.

4. Finally the Magadha society being recently aryanised showed more enthusiasm for expansion than the kingdoms which had been brought under the Vedic influence earlier.

*As a result, two foreign intrusions:*

The first important foreign intrusion to challenge the emerging state system of India was that of the Persians. They became a power to be reckoned with after the establishment in the sixth century by of the Achaemenes dynasty by Cyrus II (550–529 by). [5]

About the time when Timisoara ruled in Magadha, a powerful kingdom rose in Persia under Cyrus, the founder of Achaemenian dynasty in Persia. [6]

Although it is not clear how much of the northwest of India he actually controlled, a number of ancient Greek sources have confirmed that his empire included Gadara, western Punjab, one of the sixteen mahajanapadas. From the reign of Darius I (521–486 by), the third Achaemenes ruler, we have more substantial evidence, from his own inscriptions about the Persian stake in northwest India. The famous Behest Rock Inscription (520–518 by), engraved on a cliff 100 meters off the ground along the road between Hamadan in Iran and Baghdad in Iraq, contains Darius's political testament and autobiographical details; and among the twenty-three lands of the Persian Empire are mentioned Gandhara, Arachosia (southern Afghanistan) and Make (the Macron coast of Baluchistan). Two other inscriptions, one in Old Persian block tablets sunk in the wall of the platform at the royal palace of Persepolis (518–515 by) and another chiseled around the tomb entrance of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam (just after 515 by), expressly mention Hi(n)dush, the Indus basin as Persian controlled. [7]

He annexed Gadara, sent a naval expedition to explore a sea passage from the mouth of Indus to Persia and conquered the Indus Valley as far as the deserts of Rajputana. The Indo-Persian contact lasted for about 200 years. It gave an impetus to Indo-Persian trade and commerce. Through the Iranians, the Greeks came to know about the great wealth of India which eventually resulted in Alexander's invasion of India. The Persian scribes brought into India a form of writing which came to be known as Kharosthi script. Persian influence may also be traced in the preamble of Asoka's edicts and in the bell-shaped capital of Asoka's pillars. [8]

This could mean that Darius had not fully conquered the Indus area by the time the Behest rock inscription was carved. Darius's fame rests principally on the efficient ways he ruled the empire and the manner in which he added more territories. He divided it into twenty satrapies (or provincial governments) and judiciously balanced central authority with decentralization within each territory. His Indian possessions were well integrated into his empire by means of highways. The wealth of his empire was legendary, since resources and tributes flowed into Persia from all directions. The well-known Greek historian Herodotus stated that India (Hi (n) dish or the Indus basin) counted as the twentieth satrapy of the empire, and yet it contributed a third of all the revenues, mostly gold, that came from the Asiatic provinces (nearly 80 percent of the empire). Gadara, Sind, the Indus basin, Baluchistan and Afghanistan were the geographical limits of the Persian Empire in the east. The Persians did not enter the Gangetic basin or Rajasthan. By the middle of the fourth century a new force came to dominate all the Greek city-states: the kingdom of Macedon. Its ruler, Philip II, created a formidable military structure, which was based on phalanxes backed by armored cavalry and siege trains of catapults. He left this formidable inheritance to his son, Alexander, who became king in 336 bc. Alexander first destroyed the continuing Persian hold over the Greek cities of Asia Minor by his victory over them at the battle of Issus in 333 bc. Two years later, at Gaugamela, Persian power was decisively broken when the last Achaemenes, Darius III, fled to Bactria, where he was murdered. After burning Persepolis (330 BC), Alexander marched through the heart of Iran towards the eastern Persian satrapies of Drangiana, Arachosia, Bactria and Sogdiana. The news of his victories and cruelties preceded him, creating great panic and fear among those who awaited his arrival. In the spring of 327 by he had nearly reached the western banks of the River Indus. The first group of people that Alexander met on South Asian soil were those whom the Greeks called the Assakenois, who lived on the present borders of the

North West Frontier province and Kashmir in Pakistan. They resisted him, in the way the frontier people have done throughout history, but in vain. Alexander proved much too strong for them. Next was the turn of the Gadara satrapy, with its capital of Pushkalavati taken? In this case, overwhelming force was unnecessary because of Indian collaboration. The most significant collaboration was offered by the new king of Axilla, Ambit, whose forces dominated the lands between the rivers Indus and Jhelum. Taxila was an ancient city where Vedic culture had flourished for centuries, and to a certain extent Mahi's collaboration made sense. His reward came with the confirmation of his kingdom within the Alexandrine world empire. The next stage in Alexander's conquest was the encounter with Pours, the Parana king, who ruled the lands between the rivers Jhelum and Chenab. Porus, has been portrayed as a figure of heroic grandeur and a worthy opponent of Alexander. The Pours of history nowhere actually matched Alexander in might and power.

He did fight bravely, but his army was massacred and he was decisively beaten. Legend has it that he refused to cringe or be obsequious to Alexander, but the reality was that he had become a subaltern to Alexander. The latter awarded him with an extension of territories beyond the Chenab almost to the Ravi, but with the strategic aim of protecting his own larger stake in the Indus basin. Alexander moved yet further east to the River Beas, which joins up with the Sutlej to become a mighty tributary of the Indus basin. Reaching the Beas was the high point of Alexander's military adventure; but however further east he wished to go; both he and his men realized that it would be a journey without end in the vast Indian landscape that spread before them. Finally, in July 326 by, his pride and ambition gave way before the demands of his armies to turn back. Alexander may have intruded into India but, in a sense, India had conquered him. He turned back up to the Jhelum River and, with great forces and accoutrements, sailed south towards the open sea. On his way he met ferocious resistance from the Malaga's, a hardy and free-spirited people, and from the Brahman clans who considered it a part of their dharma or religious duty to fight him. With overwhelming force and some good fortune he saved himself and his crew. After sailing through the confluence of the Indus tributaries, he devised a three-pronged exit strategy. One army, under a general called Craters, was to return through Arachosia. Then, at the mouth of the Indus; Alexander ordered his navy, under Narcho's, to proceed through the Arabian Sea towards the Persian Gulf, while he himself proceeded to Iran through the scorching desert of Baluchistan. He never reached his Macedonian homeland, dying in Babylon in 323 by. Volumes have been written about the character and personality of Alexander; nevertheless he remains difficult to evaluate. For the Persian Zoroastrians he was the accursed for the Indians he was remembered only as a ruthless aggressor who came and went, allegedly leaving no lasting imprint on their imagination; while for most Europeans he still is the heroic ideal. All three assessments are seemingly correct and yet false. In the context of India, Alexander's intrusion was only a minuscule event, India was not Hellenized soon forgot the passing of the Macedonian storm. However, the settlement of many of his soldiers all along the northwest of India, within a number of succeeding Indo-Greek kingdoms, influenced the politics, art, religion and trade of India in later centuries. The intellectual worlds of both Greece and India also came to know each other better. Alexander himself became fond of a naked Indian ascetic, Kalakos (Kaylan, or lucky), whose wisdom and eccentricity were both instructive and amusing for him and his soldiers. [9]

The invasion of India by Alexander, the great king of Macedonia in 326 B.C. is an episode of early Indian history. About the time of Alexander's invasion, the Indus was the official boundary of the Persian Empire, but there was no trace of Persian rule anywhere in Punjab.

On the contrary, we learn from the account of Greek writers that north western India was split up into a number of small independent States like, Axilla, kingdom of Pours, kingdom of Gadara's, etc. Except king Pours, who fought the famous battle of Hydaspas (Jhelum) with Alexander, all other kings submitted meekly. Alexander commemorated his victory by the foundation of two towns: Nicaea and Boukephala. Alexander advanced as far as river Beas but his soldiers, war-weary and disease-stricken, refused to go farther. So he was forced to give orders of retreat. To mark the farthest point of his advance, he erected twelve huge stone altars on the northern bank of Beas. The direct results of Alexander's invasion were small. India was not Hellenized. The only direct effect of Alexander's raid was the establishment of a number of Greek settlements in north western India. But indirectly, Alexander's expedition had an appreciable influence on the history of the country. Firstly, it exposed India to the full gaze of Europe by opening up four distinct lines of communication, three by land and one by sea. Secondly, as a result of the cultural contact, there grew up in course of time, a cosmopolitan school of art in Gadara, which was largely inspired by the Hellenistic influence.

Thirdly, of Indian religions, Buddhism was possibly modified by the influence of Greek religious ideas. An immediate, though indirect, political result followed Alexander's invasion. It paved the way for the unification of northern India under Chandragupta by weakening the small States and the turbulent tribes of the Indus Valley. The date of Alexander's invasion (326 B.C.) has been well described as the sheet-anchor of Indian chronology. [10]

*Conclusion:*

Although the entire Gangetic basin is generally considered as the region where the north Indian civilization has grown and flourished since 600 scythe political heart of that civilization for the first thousand years, until about the sixth century b.c., was in an area southeast of that basin. This area is today covered by the Patna and Gaya districts of Bihar. This is the area where the mahajanapada of Magadha developed into a great state and then into an empire. Certain key advantages gave it an edge over all its rivals. Even today Bihar is rich in iron-ore deposits. Iron was the key resource that gave the Magadha's supremacy in both agricultural and military technology. [11]

Magadha also controlled the main trade route of the Gangetic basin leading to the Bay of Bengal, which brought in substantial revenues to the state. The two great cities of Magadha, first Rajagriha and later Pataliputra, were both massive fortress-cities, which were impervious to attacks from outside. Magadha's supremacy was, at first, challenged by such kingdoms as Koala and Kasha and the clan state of Veii, but her kings proved to be brilliant both at strategy and at tactics in warding off their threats. Three major dynasties guided Magadha between the middle of the sixth century by and 321 by, when the empire of the Maury's was proclaimed from Pataliputra, by then the capital of Magadha. The first two kings, Bimbisara (544–493 by) and Ajatsatru (492–462 by), belonged to the Haryana dynasty. Under them the mahajanapadas of Amga, Koala and Kasha were Formative centuries of the pre-Maryann era defeated, and the long war with the Veii Confederacy was begun. Both kings were men of immense energy and talent. Bimbisara, the first great Indian monarch about whom we have some considerable certainty of knowledge, streamlined his administration by instituting four grades of officer class, known as mahamatras. Through them it became easier to collect tax revenues. He allowed a degree of autonomy through a system of sub-kings, or mandala-rajahs, and yet was able to keep in check the centrifugal tendencies of the system. He was murdered by his own son, Ajatsatru, who proved to be an outstandingly energetic ruler. The latter greatly increased the military capabilities of Magadha, strengthened the fortifications at Rajagriha, the then capital, and started building a new stronghold at Pataligrama which, later, came to be known as Pataliputra. The victories over all his enemies were celebrated in great style with horse sacrifices. Just as he had done, the successors of Ajatsatru all killed their parents to gain the throne. The Haryana's were finally overthrown in 413 by by the founders of the dynasty of Shishunaga. The Shishunaga ruled for half a century, from 413 by to 364 and annexed the strategically important Mahajanapada of Avanti in central India, overwhelming its capital, Ujjain. The last of the three dynasties before the Maury's was that of the Nandas, who ruled between 364 by and 321 by. The dynasty started with a brilliant usurper, Mahapadma, whose mother was a shard and who disliked the Kshatriyas intensely. With his reign we see the beginnings of non-Kshatriya involvement in the control of power in different parts of north India. Mahapadma Nanda was succeeded one after the other by his eight sons, each ruling only very briefly. Although the nine Nandas ruled altogether for just forty-three years, they are still remembered as the most powerful pre-Maryann monarchs of India. [12]

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