

CHAPTER 5

KINGDOMS, KINGS AND AN EARLY REPUBLIC

NOTES:

HOW SOME MEN BECAME RULERS

Around 3000 years ago, we found some changes had taken place in the ways in which rajas were chosen. Some men were then recognised as rajas by performing very big sacrifices. **Ashvamedha or horse sacrifice** was one such ritual in which a horse was let loose to wander freely 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 perform the sacrifice was stronger than them. These rajas were then invited to the sacrifice. The raja who organised the sacrifice was recognised as being very powerful and all those who came brought gifts for him.



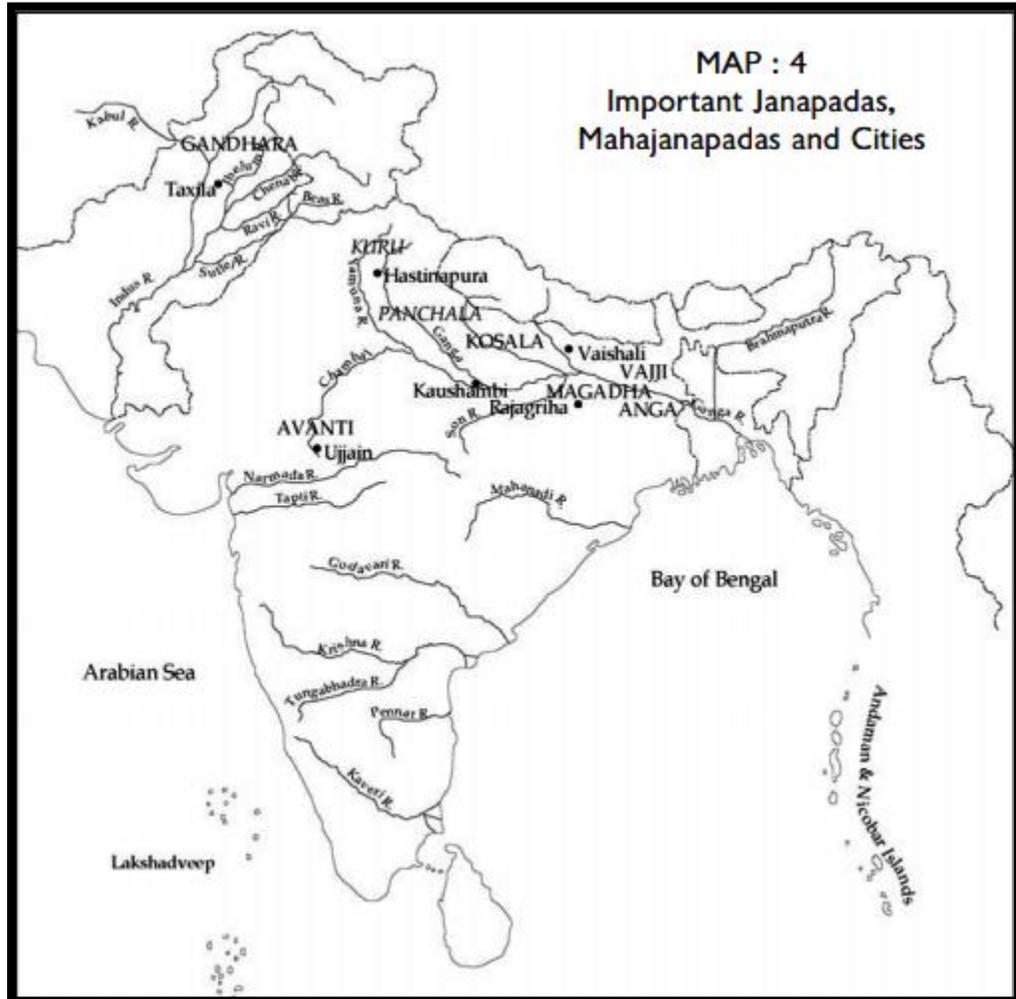
PAINTED GREY WARE

JANAPADAS

The rajas who performed big sacrifices were then recognised as being **rajas of janapadas** rather than janas. The word janapada means the land where the jana set its foot and settled down. Archaeologists have excavated a number of settlements in these janapadas such as Purana Qila in Delhi, Hastinapura near Meerut, and Atranjikhera near Etah.

1. They found that people lived in huts, and kept cattle as well as other animals.

2. They also grew a variety of crops such as rice, wheat, barley, pulses, sugarcane, sesame and mustard.
3. They made earthen pots. One special type of pottery found at these sites is known as Painted Grey Ware.



MAHAJANAPADAS

About 2500 years ago, some janapadas became more important than others, and were known as **mahajanapadas**. Most mahajanapadas had a capital city, many of these were fortified which means that huge walls of wood, brick or stone were built around them.

Forts were probably built because:

1. People were afraid of attacks from other kings and needed protection.
2. Some rulers wanted to show how rich and powerful they were by building large, tall and impressive walls around their cities.
3. The land and the people living inside the fortified area could be controlled more easily by the king.

4. Building such huge walls required a great deal of planning.

The new rajas began maintaining armies. Soldiers were paid regular salaries and maintained by the king throughout the year.

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