

RESOURCE NO 1- BOOK 1 CLASS 12

META DATA

Theme:

Subject- History

Linkage of Theme- Kinship , Caste and Class

Class- XII Part I

Objectives- Teachers

1 To use pictures as an aid to make children understand the causes for the growth of the Magadha Empire.

2 To appreciate the dynamism of the early Magadha rulers.

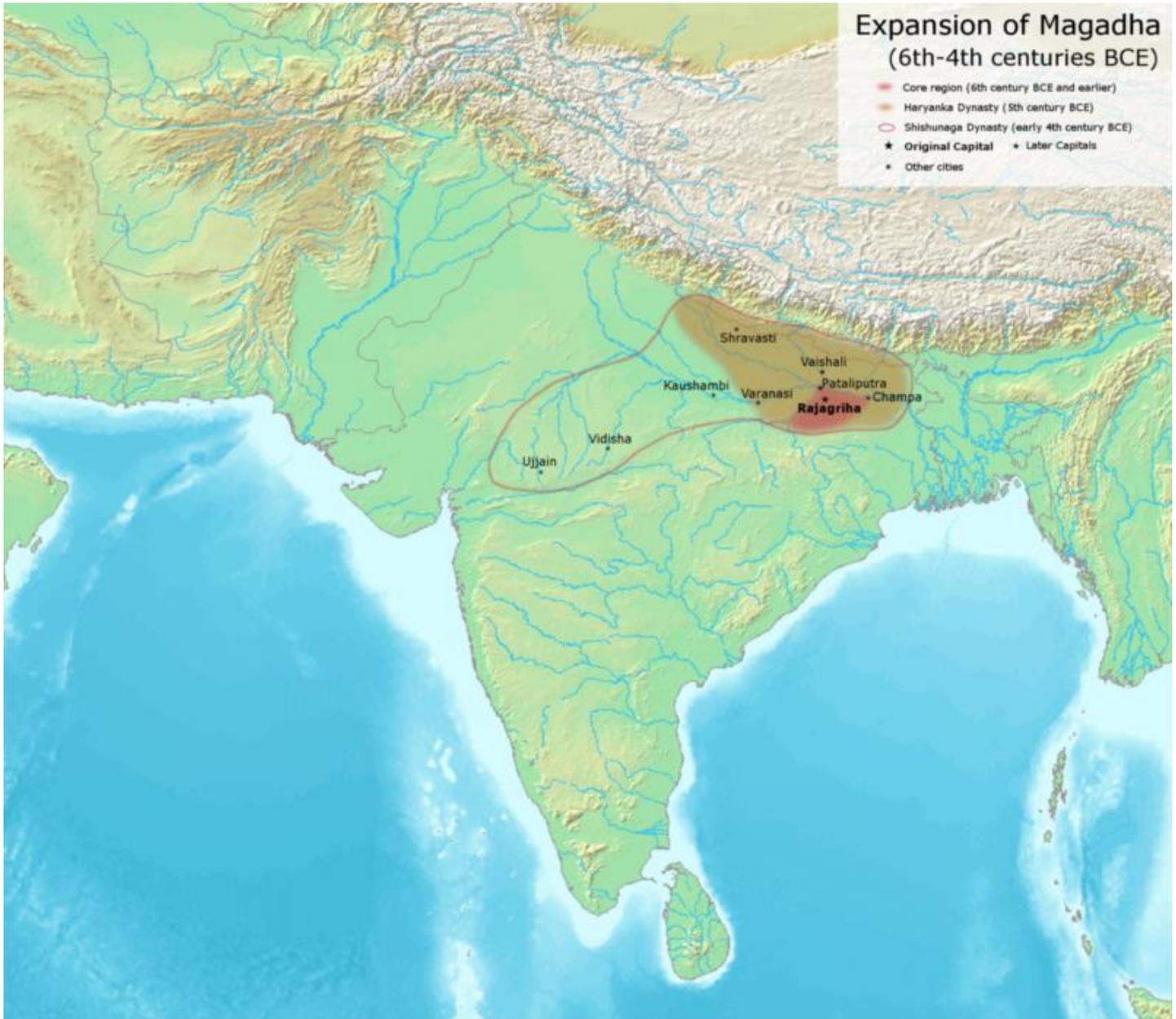
3 To initiate a discussion with children about the Magadha empire.

Key Words : Mahajanpadas, Magadha, communication, means of transportation, an expansionist policy, Srenika,

Description

Magadha was one of the 16 Mahajanpadas. It rose to prominence as the most powerful Mahajanpada of the contemporary period. It was situated in modern day central Bihar. It was the nucleus of several large kingdoms between the 6th century BCE and 8th century CE. Magadha became powerful due to its advantageous geographical factors. It was situated at the confluence of the River Ganga and Sone. This enabled rulers of Magadha to gain control of communication through river which also helped the trade. Communication through river was cheap and effective means of transportation. Magadha Rulers had large number of Elephants. They became integral part of the army and they were very effective for crossing jungles and were used against the enemy. In addition, access to iron deposits enabled them to make better tools and weapons which were useful for clearing forests and also used in battles. However, the most important factor was presence of strong and able kings who followed an expansionist policy and made Magadha powerful state. The strong foundation was laid by the rulers of Haryanka dynasty namely Bimbisara and his son Ajatshatru. The supremacy of Magadha kingdom continued under the Nandast Mauryas and later under the Guptas. After the rule of Ajatshatru, Patiliputra served as the capital city of the Magadha Empire.

Map showing expansion of Magadha



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/31/Magadha_Expansion_%286th-4th_centuries_BCE%29.png/800px-Magadha_Expansion_%286th-4th_centuries_BCE%29.png

BIMBISARA OR SRENIKA

King Bimbisara is also known as King Srenika, ruled Magadha from 543-491BC. He belonged to the Haryanka dynasty and was the most remarkable ruler. He was given the throne when he

was only 15 years old. The sources to study the rulers are limited and we come to know from the Buddhist Pali Canon, the Jain Agamas and the Hindu Puranas. Based on these sources, we come to know that the Haryanka dynasty ruled Magadha for 200 years.

Bimbisara could follow an expansionist policy due to the conditions prevalent at that time. His kingdom was protected by mountains and rivers. His capital, Girivraja was protected as it was surrounded by five hills. It was also protected by stone walls. Moreover, the soil was fertile which yielded good crops. The Sonariver which united with the Ganges, not only met the water requirements but also helped in trade and commerce. Elephants were an integral part of the army. They were useful not only to clear the forests but also in wars.

Bimbisara got his first military success when he conquered Anga (East Bihar) which had its capital at Champa near Bhagalpur. Prince Ajatashatru was sent as governor to Champa.

He also used marriage alliances to increase his power and extend his empire. He entered into marriage alliance to increase his power. He entered into marriage alliance with the rulers of Kosala and Vaishali. His wife from Kosala brought Kasi village as part of dowry. His marriage with ruling family of Vaishali enabled him to expand his empire northwards to the borders of Nepal.

Bimbisara was an able administrator and had an efficient system of administration. According to a Chinese pilgrim, he built a new city at the foot of the hills which he named Rajgriha (modern Rajgir in Patna district). This city was at the foot of the hills near Girivraja. Under his rule, Magadha flourished. Both Mahavira and Gautama Buddha, preached during the reign of Bimbisara. Gautama Buddha lived in his kingdom. He attained enlightenment in Bodh Gaya and gave the first sermon in Sarnath.

Bimbisara was imprisoned by his son Ajatsatru at Rajgriha and ascended the throne. According to traditions, he was murdered by Ajatsatru.

PAINTING OF KING BIMBISARA OFFERING HIS KINGDOM TO BUDDHA



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c8/King_Bimbisara_and_the_Buddha.jpg/640px-King_Bimbisara_and_the_Buddha.jpg

After the death of Buddha, Ajatsatru organized the First Buddhist Council in Rajgir. It was held at the Sattapani Caves in a conference hall built by him.

SATTAPANNI CAVE SON VAIBHARA HILLS NEAR RAJGIR-PLACE WHERE 1ST BUDDHIST COUNCIL WAS HELD



http://www.texte-zum-buddhismus.de/images/IMG_0836RajgirSattapanniCave.JPG

KING BIMBISARA WAS IMPRISONED BY HIS SON AJATASHATRU
BIMBISARA WAS IMPRISONED HERE IN RAJGIR



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7e/Bimbisarajail.jpg/220px-Bimbisarajail.jpg>

AJATASHATRU



<http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/images/ajatasatru-1.jpg>

Ajatasatru was also a powerful ruler. According to Buddhist texts, he imprisoned his father and ascended the throne of Magadha. According to traditions, he murdered his father Bimbisara. Since Prasenajit's sister was one of the queens of Bimbisara and had died of grief, he immediately organized alliance against Ajatasatru. The republican tribe on the northern and north western regions of Magadha entered into an alliance with Kasi-Kosala. Thus, the rulers Sravasti, Vrijis of Vaisali and the Mallas of Kusinagara joined hands against Ajatasatru.

To protect himself, Magadha fortified Pataligrama (Patliputra or modern day Patna) which was near the confluence of Ganga. Ajatasatru was successful in defeating all his enemies. Vriji was annexed to the kingdom of Magadha. He then tried to subdue Kosala but was not successful. The conflict ended when Ajatasatru married Prasenajit's daughter Vajjira and Kasi was again given back to Magadha. It is believed that he conquered 36 more kingdoms and smaller kingdoms around Magadha. Thus, Magadha empire extended from Haryana and Himachal Pradesh in the west to Bihar and West Bengal in the east. According to religious traditions, Ajatasatru was a patron of Devadutta, a separatist cousin of Buddha. At the same time he is also considered as a friend of Jainas and Buddhists.

He conquered 36 kingdoms and republican states to build a powerful Magadha Empire, which included present-day Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh.

After Buddha's death, Ajatsatru organized the First Buddhist Council in Rajgir which was held in a conference hall built by him outside the Sattapani caves, which evoked lot of praise among Buddhist writers.

SUCCESSORS OF AJATSATRU

The immediate successor of Ajatsatru according to the Puranas was Darsaka. After him, his son Uday . However, Buddhist and Jain writers believe that Udayi was the son of Ajatsatru. It was in his reign that the foundation of the city of Patliputra was laid near the fortress made by Ajatsatru.

ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS

Q1 Name the dynasty to which Bimbisara belonged?

Answer

(Answer to be hidden -Haryanka)

Q2 Who organized the First Buddhist Council at Rajgir?

Answer

(Ajatsatru)

Q3 Discuss the relationship of Bimbisara and Buddha .Do you think that Buddha's teachings were incorporated in his administration?

Q4 What were the sources for the history of Magadhan kings?

Answer,,

(Answer- Buddhist Pali Canon, the Jain Agamas and the Hindu Puranas)

Q5 Do you think Laws of succession were important among ruling families?

Answer

(Yes)

ACTIVITY FOR TEACHERS

Discussion in Class

- Ajatsatru was the cause of his father's death. In the light of this statement, discuss how much impact Buddha and Mahavira's teachings had considering they were contemporaries of both Bimbisara and Ajatsatru.
- Initiate a discussion in class. Discuss the supremacy of Magadha.