

## Territorial Monarchies and the Tribal Oligarchies in the Middle Gangetic Valley (The Sixth Century BCE to Third Century CE)

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### I. Introduction

The Mid-Ganga Plains cover an area of approximately 160,000sq. km, extending from the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna at Allahabad in the west to Rajmahal in the east, where the Ganga takes a turn to the south<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, eastern U.P. and north Bihar were the regions, which are part of the Mid-Gang Plain. During the fifth century BCE, this area called as the Majjhimdesa<sup>2</sup>.

Geographically, The Middle Gangetic Valley lies in the middle of 24 ° 30', 27 ° 50' northern latitude, 81 ° 27', and 87 ° 50' eastern longitude<sup>3</sup>. The maximum length of this area from east to west is 600 km and from north to south width is 330 km. It has no physical boundary as such<sup>4</sup>.

Though, not a clear-cut physical unit, the Mid Ganga Plain is a large physical area, and it is the immense human, cultural, and economic significance that gives it great importance. It covers the eastern U.P. and north Bihar plains in its entirety, lying on the either side of Ganga and the Saryu within the Himalayan and the peninsular ramparts on the north and south respectively<sup>5</sup>.

Spathe recognizes the Mid Ganga Plain the region as the En third of U.P and the Nn half of Bihar<sup>6</sup>. The region is very transitional between the relatively dry, mainly Bhanger Doab of Upper Ganga Plain and the largely humid Khader, Bihar<sup>7</sup>. The Middle Ganga Valley is a transitional region, and all its physical, human, cultural, social and economic fabrics seem to woven out of the various unique processes interplaying in transition.

### II. References to this Region in The *Jātākas*

The topographical maps of The Middle Gangetic Valley display the primary features of the states: the river's flows, natural vegetation and environmental setting of the region. These elements or features of regional configuration find repeated references in the Buddhist text *Jātākas*. This is because of the fact that they were easily distinguished during sixth century BCE to third century CE.

The *Jātākas* stories are an interesting source of information on the geographical settings in the Middle Gangetic Valley. The physical geography of The Middle Gangetic Valley including the ecological setting, physical division, rivers, natural vegetation and overall view with reference to this region in the *Jātākas*. The legendary stories contained in this relate the events of the previous lives of Gautam Buddha or Bodhisatta. The *Jātākas* stories were widely known in the Third century B.C<sup>8</sup>.

They give us graphic descriptions of the contemporary society. The text has the clear references to various regions and geographical divisions. In sixth century BCE, people were using iron tools on a large scale. Prosperous agricultural settlements and towns have also reported in the *Jātākas*. Thus, the *Jātākas* depicts the clear-cut picture of the Indian society in sixth century BCE to third century CE.

This chapter would try to explore the geographical data, which can glean from The *Jātākas*. This will include the geographical data embodied in them classified for the sake of clarity and well- arranged study for this research.

### III. Geographical Setting of The Middle Gangetic Valley in the *Jātāka*

The *Jatakas* cite the places where particular event of any stories took place. They also mention the settings of stories in the Middle Gangetic Valley region. Sinha, points out in this connection that many stories in

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1 Spate, O.H.K., and Learmonth A.T.A., *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography*, 1967, pp. 563-70.

2 Singh, R.L, *India: A Regional Geography*, , Ed.1987, pp.183.

3 Singh, R.L, *India: A Regional Geography*, Ed.1987, P.184.

4 Ibid., pp. 22.

5 Singh, R.L, *India: A Regional Geography*, Ed.1987, pp.184.

6 Spate, O.H.K., and Learmonth A.T.A., *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography*, 1957, pp. 515.

7 Ibid., p. 516

8 Cowell, E.B., *The Jatakas Stories, The Pali Text Society*, Ed. 1973, pp.7.

The *Jatakas* are set in the kingdom of *Rajgrah, Kasi, Kosala, Patliputra, Vaisali, Mithila, Vajji, Videah, Magadh, Anga and Champa* and so on.<sup>9</sup>

It would be important to point out some of the regions as mentioned in the *Jātākas* stories in the Middle Ganga valley during fifth century BCE, The kingdom of *Kasi* in *Katthahari, Titttha, Virocana, Telovada, Udapana Dusaka* and *Lola Jātākas*. *Videha* in *Makhadeva, Nacca Jātāka*. *Magadha* in *Duddada* and *Kakkata Jātāka* were bounded on the north and west by the Ganga and the Son rivers, on the south by the spurs of the Vindhya, by river Champa on the east which joins the Ganga<sup>10</sup> near the Anga capital and *Kosala* in *Munika, Losaka, Rohini, Kharassara, Kalakanni, Ekapanna Jātākas*.<sup>11</sup>

The climatic pattern with highly potent climate and other factor was an important subject of discussion in the daily life. As it deals with the economy, polity and social life as well as the changes it generates. Hence, the pattern of the climate easily brought forth with the help of daily life and seasonal variation of climate as mentioned in the *Jātākas*.

The Middle Ganga Plain gets far more rainfall and humidity than the Upper Ganga Plains. The average rainfall in this area varies from about 1600mm to 1000mm<sup>12</sup>. This naturally gives rise to thick vegetation and has dense forest. The general slope of the Ganga is from north-west to southeast, but from Allahabad, onwards the river enters flat plains, which contains several areas that often get flooded<sup>13</sup>. The slope of north is more fertile than South. Hence, the alluvial soil of The Middle Ganga Valley is more fertile than Upper Ganga Valley.

Flora of the region primarily depends upon its topography, climate and soil<sup>14</sup>. The land formed of river basin, soil and climate having arid or semi arid climate in some part, hot, and humid in the other part<sup>15</sup>.

Most part of the region covered with alluvial soil. Such a condition favors the growth of natural vegetation, which grew luxuriantly during fifth century BCE. Undoubtedly, the *Jātākas* serve as the literary source for a systematic exposition of geography of the Middle Ganga Valley during sixth century BCE.

#### **IV. Historical Setting of The Middle Ganga Valley In the *Jātākas***

Before involving into the question of the territorial monarchies and the tribal oligarchies of the Middle Gangetic Valley with special reference to the *Jātākas*, it is important to explore the historical setting of the region. In this transition what were social, political, economic and cultural factors, which interlinked to Social Stratification in sixth century BCE to third century CE. It is also important to discuss in the process of State Formation, how the simple society did turned in to complex society.

There is an appearance of state interlinked with the presence of complex society. Earliest societies were kin-based and egalitarian hence there were simple societies headed by bandleader or chiefs. In contrast, to the complex society which was a state based society, marked by stratification, and its member differentiated from one another on the bases of birth, status and above all resources. This kind of social stratification distinguishes the Varna-divide society found in the age of Buddha in The Mid-Ganga Plains.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the state originated due to the social differentiation, and once the differentiation appears state upholds. However, here the question, which arises, is how this social differentiation took place. What were the causes, which promoted such process of social change? Was there a single ideology and theory for all or it varies according to time and space.

The Mid-Ganga people were hunters, herdsmen and hoe agriculturalists. Men engaged in big game hunting and in fighting and women in agriculture. Probably the chiefs distinguished themselves from their ordinary relatives by the use of semi-precious stones and copper used in war and hunting to symbolize their higher status. Even then, the people seem to be more egalitarian than the Vedic People. Here I would like to describe the cultural fusion that led to the formation of state.

The Middle Ganga Valley lies at the lower elevation and was probably even more densely forested and certainly given to the large areas of the marshlands<sup>17</sup>. It comes into historical focus with the migration and settlements of the peoples along two routes. The northern route followed by the foothills of the Himalayas and appears to be the one taken by the Videgha Mathava; the second followed the south bank of the Yamuna and The Ganga at the base of Vindhyan outcrops<sup>18</sup>.

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9 Sinha, B.P. *Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol.1, 1974, pp. 100.

10 Raychaudhuri, H.C. *Political History of Ancient India*, 1953, pp. 120-122.

11 Ibid., pp. 125

12 Singh, R.L, *India: A Regional Geography*, Ed.1987, pp. 187

13 Ibid., pp. 189

14 Singh, R.L, *India: A Regional Geography*, Ed.1987, pp.191.

15 Ibid., pp. 192

16 Sharma, R.S., *The State and Varna Formation in Mid – Ganga Plain*, 2001, pp. 17

17 Thapar, Romila. *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 70-71

18 Ibid., pp. 73

According to Sharma, it is likely that the *Vratya* (kin-based group or Early Vedic group) use to speak an Indo Aryan language<sup>19</sup>. It is as such they neither study the Vedas nor they plough or trade. They were pastoral people) migrated eastward and in other direction, because of the hostility of the more Brahmanised section of the Vedic community.

Further, the *Vratyas* are divided into three higher social orders: Condemned (*nindita*), Eldest (*jyestha*) and Youngest (*kanistha*) including the Householders (*gahapati*)<sup>20</sup>. This division may belong to Post Vedic times. The earliest *Vratyas* correspond to Shudras, for they do not read the Vedas. The term *Arhat* used for Buddhist monk, which suggests that by the fourth century BCE the Buddhism influenced the *Vratyas* in Eastern India<sup>21</sup>.

The *Kosalas* and *Kasis* are called the offspring of the Sataptha hero Videgha Mathava who migrated to Videha along with his priest Gotama Rahugana and other Brahamana, all led by the fire god Agni Vaisvanara<sup>22</sup>. The *Vrataya* band and the *Vidheya* Madhava group may have merged with The Mid Ganga pastoralists, but the *Vidheya* Madhava group seems to have introduced the Brahma and Ksatriyas orders. The Sankhayana *Srautasutra* describes Jala Jatukarnaya as the purohita of the king of *Kosala*, *Kasi* and *Videha*, and the oldest Buddhist text *Suttanipata*, speaks of animal sacrifices in *Kosala* in Buddha time<sup>23</sup>.

The story of Videgha Mathava and Agni Vaisvanara suggests the pioneering role of the Ksatriya and the Brahamana settler in the East of the Gandak<sup>24</sup>. They did not have to pay taxes probably because of this role coupled with the military and religious services that they rendered to the community. Fick, "the non-payment of the taxes continued by their descendants"<sup>25</sup>. Hence, the institutional ideas and practices brought in by the people from the Kuru Pancala land probably changed the social set up or the cultural fusion in The Middle Gang Plains. These people were already familiar with the presence of the proto state and social differentiation. The emergent group may have formed the state and laid down rules for the regulation of Hierarchal society.

The interplay between the two ethnic and cultural groups may have given rise to the Middle Indo Aryan languages known as *Pali* and *Prakrit*<sup>26</sup>. The vocabulary for plants, animals, tools, crafts and so on, found in these languages suggests the supreme imposition of Indo Aryan subsistence terms over the existing ones from the Vedic people. Along with *Sanskrit*, these languages facilitated communication and created a favorable climate for the formation of State and Stratified Society.

Thus, as discussed above the social and cultural theory of change, now would like to elaborate on the economic and political process of change.

In the fifth century BCE, the tools and methods of agriculture underwent a radical change. It is important to stress upon the functional distinction between the two stages in the history of the use of iron. In the first stage iron tools were mainly used for war and hunting. However, in the second stage, from 600 BCE onwards though they continued to use by hunters and warriors they mainly used by farmers and artisans.<sup>27</sup>

Iron axes used in cutting trees; iron hoe and share used in breaking the hard clay soil of the plains of Magadha as well as of the plains lying on the north of the Ganga in eastern U.P and The western Bihar plains<sup>28</sup>.

Much of the evidence for events in this area comes from Buddhist literature. The Middle Ganga Valley was a comparatively new ecological situation for the settlers, whether those of painted grey ware or for the black and red ware culture, particularly with the rice cultivation becoming the major agricultural activity. The use of iron boosted production, which also helped by irrigation.

*Kosala* in northeastern U.P. was suitable for both barley and rice, but the wetness of adjoining north Bihar posed problem for the cultivation of barley<sup>29</sup>. Its high temperature and humidity made it ideal for rice cultivation. The wide flood plains of north Bihar, wider than those of the upper doab, provided good rice lands as also the banks of the *jhils* and *chaurs*<sup>30</sup>.

Wet rice cultivation revolutionalised agriculture by increasing paddy production nearly two and a half time<sup>31</sup>. Thus, in the terms of high productivity rice producing areas had a distinct edge over other areas. Buddhist text describes rice and its varieties with as much details as Rigvedic hymes describe cows<sup>32</sup>.

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19 Sharma, R.S. 2001. *The State and Varna Formation in Mid - Ganga Plain*, pp. 57. *Pancavimsa Brahmin xvii.1.9*.

20 Ibid., pp. 58

21 Thapar, Romila. *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 74

22 Ibid., pp. 76-78.

23 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 90.

24 Ibid., pp. 91-95.

25 Fick, R., *The Social Organisation In North East India in Buddha's Time*, trans. S.K. Mitra, 1920, pp. 180.

26 Sharma, R.S., *The State and Varna Formation in Mid - Ganga Plain*, 2001, pp. 65.

27 Sharma, R.S., *Origin of State in India*, 2001, pp. 38-40.

28 Sharma, R. S., *Perspective in Social and Economic History of Early India*, 1983 pp. 49.

29 Ibid., pp. 55-60.

30 Spate, O.H.K., and Learmonth A.T.A., *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography*, 1967, pp. 515.

31 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 72.

32 Ibid., pp. 73.

The discussion on rice in the Middle Ganga valley relates not to the type of rice cultivation but rather to the large scale and wide spread cultivation of rice as the single major crops and its impact on food production and land man ratios<sup>33</sup>.

Several important additions made to the list in the age of the Buddha. Mustard mentions in the early *Pali* text. Both mustard and sesame oil may have been used in cooking for a great variety of pulses began to be cultivated. Finally, sugarcane, which requires deep ploughing is mentioned in the *Pali* and *Sanskrit*<sup>34</sup>.

Coupled with the use of iron tools in agriculture, paddy transplantation made available considerable surplus with which the state apparatus and complex society comprising priest, rulers, soldiers, merchants, artisans, and professionals and so on can maintained<sup>35</sup>. Equally significant was the rise of cities around fifth century BCE and their growth in subsequent time.

Erdosy, recognizes the importance of iron in colonizing the Gangetic Plains and promoting agriculture, but he nevertheless questions its catalytic role in creating conditions for the rise of state and cities in that area.<sup>36</sup> The attributes the production of surplus to the intensive use of the existing tools, gradual reduction of the fallow period through double cropping and other methods and to the demand for surplus by stratified society.<sup>37</sup>

The Tribes who kept cattle and other animals for Non-vegetarian food cannot clearly identified though they lived in *Anga, Magadha, Videha, Vajji, Kasi, Kosala and Vatsa*<sup>38</sup>.

Many cattle killed in *Kasi* and *Kosala* where Vedic sacrifices performed. Early Buddhists texts including the *Suttanipata* speak of Gautama Buddha's strong reaction against Vedic sacrifices<sup>39</sup>, which suggests that important Tribal chief of The Mid Ganga Plains, had imbibed Vedic culture.

The Later Vedic phase shows the beginning of both social differentiation and State apparatuses. Knowledge of these institutions may have travelled to the east. The interaction of two cultural and ethnic traditions called as historical accident<sup>40</sup>. As Vedic people advanced further east, they encountered the Chalcolithic culture of The Mid Ganga Plains<sup>41</sup>. Both cultures were familiar with Iron and cereals. Their artifacts indicate that mere familiarity with Iron and cereals did not take them too far. Thus, the existing Tribal people of The Mid Ganga Plains did not have much of Social differentiation.

An attempt to present a geographical picture as well as the ecological change of The Middle Gangetic Valley, along with the merging of the two cultures from Upper Gangetic Valley to The Middle Gangetic Valley, which can drawn from The *Jātākas*. In The Middle Ganga Valley, rice cultivation and irrigation were initially important but probably were not sufficient causes. However, they sharpened stratification between those who owned the land and those who labored on it.<sup>42</sup>

The imminence of internal tension made the possibility of control through the state system feasible. The recognizable state emerges when the stratification is much more widespread both socially and geographically.

## **V. State Formation In The Middle Ganga Valley: References In the *Jātākas***

The sixth century BCE often regarded as a major turning point in the Middle Gangetic Valley region. The state formation in the Middle Gangetic Plain appeared from around Fifth Century BCE. It is an era associated with early states, cities, the growing use of Iron, the development and use of coinage, trade and commerce, administration and so on. The widespread use of Iron in Eastern U.P and Western Bihar, as evidence from excavation from *Rajghat* (Banaras) and *Chirand* (Chapra), led to the formation of large territorial states<sup>43</sup>.

New agricultural tools and implements enabled the peasants to produce a good amount of surplus, which not only met the needs of the ruling class but also supported numerous towns. Excavations show *Rajgir, Vaisali, Rajghat, Chirand and Kausambi* to be urban settlements of Sixth century BCE<sup>44</sup>. Thus around Fifth century BCE we notice a large scale beginning of towns life in North Eastern India, giving rise to new problems of Administration.

It said earlier that the iron weapons enhance the power of the chief but could not convert chieftdom in the state. The breakthrough came only with the use of iron in agriculture and crafts, which ensured taxes for maintaining the warriors and gifts for supporting the priests. Once the state firmly established it could compel

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33 Ibid., pp. 74-75.

34 Tamaskar, B.G., *Contribution to Historical Geography of India*, 1985, pp. 26.

35 Sharma, R.S., *The State and Varna Formation in Mid - Ganga Plain*, 2001, pp. 65-70.

36 Erdosy, George., *Urbanisation in Early Historic India, BAR International Series*, 430, 1988, pp. 130.

37 Ibid., pp. 127-9.

38 *Kunala Jataka; Ang. Nik*, I. 128, 206.

39 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 85-90.

40 Sharma, R.S., *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institution in Ancient India*, 1968, pp. 38

41 Sharma, R.S., *The State and Varna Formation in Mid - Ganga Plain*, 2001, pp. 55-58

42 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 93.

43 Sharma, R.S., *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institution in Ancient India*, 1968, pp. 277

44 Ibid., pp. 278-80

the peasants to produce surplus, went on unabated in sixth century BCE. The Buddhist school, which propounded the contract theory of the origin of state, considers taxes to be the only distinctive feature of state<sup>45</sup>.

Even so, it is difficult to visualize the rise of either the city or the state in the Mid Ganga Plains without high productivity made possible by the use of Iron tools. If it is to believe that, the State based on privileged interest groups living on gifts taxes and tributes, the substantial increase in production and settlement ruled out. These increases occur in the thickly forested and hard alluvium soil area without the use of iron tools. The view that the Chalcolithic tools could produce surplus in The Mid Ganga Basin is unrealistic<sup>46</sup>.

These changes were by no means universal but were large enough to affect the overall system. Settlements nucleated and became the foci of political power and exchange, some eventually developing into towns. Because of the greater concentration of the wealth and power in these settlements, they required to defend. External conflicts was no longer a cattle-raid but a calculated campaign for acquisition of territories and towns.

The concentration of wealth at the court and in the commercial towns is qualitatively different from the wealth obtained by chiefs and distributed as booty or as sacrificial offerings. Under the impact of trade, the item, which was a gift in the lineage system, became a commodity when exchanged<sup>47</sup>. In the Middle Gangetic Valley in sixth century, BCE the gift transmuted into the property and the concept of exchange went through a transformation.

These changes were more evident in urban society, which was in any case a small percentage of the whole. Land and produce changed from usage to property rights<sup>48</sup>.

The pattern of state formation and the particular factor, which went into its framing, influenced the specific form it was to take. The Republican experiment is a distinctive feature of the fifth century BCE. The Republics found in the foothills of Himalayas in U.P and Bihar<sup>49</sup>. The monarchies may have been the remnants of Vedic tribes, and second may have been breakaway states from parent monarchies in eastern U.P and north Bihar<sup>50</sup>.

Several differences marked out the republics from the monarchies. In *Magadha* and *Kosala* the king claim to be the sole recipient of revenue from peasants, but in the republics this claim was advanced by every tribal oligarch, by each one of the 7707 kings who maintained their stored houses<sup>51</sup>.

Finally, what evidently distinguished the republics was the functioning of assemblies, which disappeared in the new monarchies. Thus, the republican tradition became feeble from the sixth century BCE onwards. The significance of the period lay in evolving the military, fiscal and judicial organs to meet the new social, economic and political situation in the large territorial kingdoms in eastern U.P and north Bihar.

Hegemony extended over a range of differentiated system – Hunter-gatherers, Chief ships, a variety of peasant tenures and exchange relationship extending from barter to nascent market systems.<sup>52</sup>

Most of the kingdom of sixth century BCE of which *Kosala* and *Magadha* were the most powerful, were ruled by hereditary monarchs belonging to Ksatriya varna. The king enjoyed the highest social status in society. The term “kingmaker” used in some of the *Jātākas* story refers to the expulsion of the king and his chief priest by the people. However, it happened rarely.<sup>53</sup>

We thus come to know about the officials both high and low. High functionaries called as Mahamatras in the *Jātākas*<sup>54</sup>. They employed in different capacities as multipurpose officers, such as *mantrin*, *senanayak*, *judge*, *chief accountant* (ganaka), and head of royal harem, they formed a cadre of officers<sup>55</sup>. In the Later Vedic times a society, this is still to a considerable extent tribal in character ruled by king. Who though wealthy and powerful, has only rudimentary governmental machinery in the forms of *Ratnins*<sup>56</sup>.

The period introduced the earliest scale of punch-marked coins, made of copper or silver. Around 500 BCE, these were into the use, which naturally facilitated internal transaction and trade. On the one hand, trade and industry constituted profitable source of income to the state, and on the other hand, it gave rise to a class merchants, called *Setthis*, who cannot ignored in society<sup>57</sup>.

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45 Sharma, R.S., *Material progress, taxation and state formation in the age of Buddha*, in Sinha, B.P., *Felicitation Volume*, Ed. 1987, p. 249.  
46 Ibid., pp. 250-53

47 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 158-60

48 Ibid., pp. 170-173

49 Sharma, R.S., *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institution in Ancient India*, 1968, pp. 281

50 Ibid., pp. 283-283

51 *Jataka*, VI, 513-17; cf. Agrawala, V.S., ‘*The Janapada and the Greek city State*’, *IHQ*, xxx, 46.

52 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 162

53 Ibid., pp. 163

54 Fick, R., *The Social Organisation In North East India in Buddha's Time*, trans. S.K. Mitra. 1920, pp. 195

55 Ibid., pp. 198-200

56 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 172-75

57 Sharma, R.S., *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institution in Ancient India*, 1968, pp.277.

In both *Kosala* and *Magadha*, revenues of villages granted not only to influential Brahmanas but also to *Setthis*<sup>58</sup>. Since, warriors and peasants- Ksatriya and Brahmanas- exempted from payment of taxes, and the main brunt was born by the peasants, we find new classes of taxpayers such as artisans and traders in sixth century BCE. According to which the first made to work once in a month for the king, and the second had to pay taxes on the sale of their commodities. In northeastern India this payment made in paddy, as would appear from the *Jātākas*<sup>59</sup>. The presence of towns as commercial centre is evident from the Buddhist sources.

The village community believed to be a community of equals and of economically self-sufficient. However, as we have seen, for the earliest periods for which there is an evidence, stratification is noticeable in the village community. The tension between the Rajanya and the Vis from the Vedic period become more acute in the hierarchy of the Kshatriya, the Gahapati and the Shudras in the subsequent period<sup>60</sup>. Sharper stratification emerges with the breaking up of clan system and landownership taking the form of private holding with grants to religious beneficiaries and peasants tenure that included independent cultivators, tenants, and sharecropper.

Changes in the perception of society reflected in the post Vedic sources. The economic categories are however more easily distinguishable in the Buddhist texts since they reflect a wider social reality than the Brahminical literature of the time.

However, for us no single reason can assign for these changes, as these were the products of several composite factors. There is no denying the fact that important changes did take place in society in sixth century BCE during the age of Buddha and the centuries preceding and succeeding it.

According to Sharma, 'certain material conditions favored the rise of Mahājanapadas in the sixth century BCE. The use of iron for crafts and agriculture was an essential feature'<sup>61</sup>. Likewise, the beginning of large-scale settlements in the alluvial soil was also one of the characteristics of sixth century BCE.

In the Vedic texts, cities are hardly referred to but now, in the sixth century BCE popular towns and cities exist in all district of The Middle Ganga valley.<sup>62</sup> In sixth century BCE comprising ancient *Kashi*, *Kosala*, *Videha*, *Vaishali*, *Magadh* and *Anga*, *Rajgrah*, H.C Rai Chaudhary has reconstructed *Vajji*, *Vaisali* in details<sup>63</sup>.

A great and apparently very rapid change had taken place in the structure of life and society<sup>64</sup>. New groups of merchants and skilled artisans were gaining in wealth and influence.<sup>65</sup>

In Later Vedic texts, the Rajanya, a relative of relatives of raja, played the diminutive role of a chief but now he practically came to be replaced by the Kshatriya order in the *Jātākas*<sup>66</sup>. The Buddhist monks who had no place in the hierarchy of Brahmana lent greater support to the emergent ruling order; for they accorded the Kattiyas the first place in the social ranking.

The confederation of the *Vajjis*, the most important of these Republics, was still apparently a force to reckon with, but there is a good indication that its assembly, the governing body of the confederate tribes, was rapidly becoming inadequate to cope with new situations, and the tribal structure was undergoing greater strain<sup>67</sup>. Towards the end of Buddha's life, the rising kingdom of Magadha overwhelmed the *Vajjian* confederacy<sup>68</sup>.

A new economic change has characterized by the second urban revolution in sixth century BCE in The Middle Ganga Valley. It had led to the growth of towns and commerce; the development of trade had resulted in the emergence of traders and *Gahapati*, and organizations of crafts into guilds had made an effect on the caste system<sup>69</sup>. This takes the form of transformation of *Gahapati* from a household head within a clan system to a landowner, and subsequent to this, as a participant in trading activities and in its counter poise in the transformation of the Shudra into the peasant cultivators and the artisans.

All these changes have awakened the spirit of the enquiry among the people. They turned to finding freedom from the bonds of customs rather than to preserving the traditional way of life<sup>70</sup>

In the Middle Gangatic Valley, there were *Katuhala-salas* for relaxation and debate<sup>71</sup>. These were not only shelters for religious teachers during the rainy seasons but they attracted the audience also. Urban life

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58 Ibid., pp. 278-79

59 Fick, R., *The Social Organisation In North East India in Buddha's Time*, trans. S.K. Mitra. 1920, pp. 201

60 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 85.

61 Sharma, R.S., *The State and Varna Formation in Mid - Ganga Plain*, 2001, pp.70.

62 Ibid., pp. 72.

63 Raychaudhuri, H.C., *Political History of Ancient India*, 1953, pp. 125.

64 Basam, A.L., 'The background of rise of Buddhims in studies in history of Buddhism', ed. Narain, A.K., 1980, pp.249.

65 Ibid., p.16

66 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 87-89.

67 Sharma, R.S., *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institution in Ancient India*, 1968, pp. 278.

68 Ibid., pp. 279-80.

69 Wagle, N.K., *Society at the time of Buddha*, 1996, pp.153.

70 Sharma, R.S., 'Material progress, taxation and state formation in the age of Buddha', in Sinha, B.P., *Felicitation Volume*, Ed. 1987, p. 249.

released a degree of curiosity and freethinking, which employed by some of the contemporary teachers, as they were anxious to address large audiences<sup>72</sup>. The *Kutuhala-salas* maintained by wealthy citizens or through royal patronage and were clearly important locations for debating a variety of doctrines.

Buddha lent his clear cut support to new economic atmosphere promoted by agriculture (*kasi*), animal husbandary (*gorakkha*), and merchandise (*vanijjia*), referred to several times in the *Khandahāla Jātākas* and *Manicora Jātākas*. The text also underlines the significance of intensive agriculture, made possible with the use of Iron ploughshare and new farming techniques. It also found its strong supporters among the big property owners (*gahapatis*) and wealthy merchants (*sresthins*) who, unlike the Vedic period, offered an active participation in the religious life eventually<sup>73</sup>.

Thus, The Middle Gangetic Valley in sixth century BCE Buddhism promoted the new economic enterprise by assimilating the practices of new urban economy in its gospel.

The present study would show that polity and political ideas in The Middle Ganga Valley in the sixth century BCE not always molded by any single factor. The tribal set up seems to have been an important element before fifth century BCE, but social orders and territorial states emerged as decisive factors in sixth century BCE. Economic activities and the need of vast empire determined the Mauryan mechanisms of administration. The influence of religion is perceptible throughout, but even the ideas and institution known from Jatakas reflect the changing social and economic background.<sup>74</sup>

An analysis of state formation in The Middle Gangetic Valley in sixth century BCE can be seen as a process of change from social formation which may broadly be classified as lineage system to those dominated by the State system. The nature of the system does not fall easily into any of the existing models and its dynamics requires a fresh reworking. Nor is the change from one social formation to the other a clear-cut transformation for there is much that survives from the earlier to the later and many overlaps.

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71 Thapar, Romila., *From Lineage to State*, 1984, pp. 153.

72 Ibid., pp. 156.

73 Ibid., pp. 89-90.

74 Sharma, R.S., 'Material progress, taxation and state formation in the age of Buddha', in Sinha, B.P., *Felicitation Volume*, Ed. 1987, p. 250.