CHAPTER XVII

THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Economically the Vedic society was an affluent but not a classless society. The different stratum of economic structure—the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' are clearly depicted. On the one hand there was Varu who invited people for charity to his house on the banks of Gomati and on the other was Kavaṣa who suffered from stark poverty. Many other examples of such contrasts can be quoted.

VEDIC SOCIETY NOT A CLASS-LESS ONE

Rich people enjoyed all amenities of life. They lived in big houses, as they are called—'ury kṣayāyah', 'dirghaprasadam' and 'bhantam kṣayam'. The houses were equipped with beds—'caturah padan', mattress—'talpa', bedding—'upastare', couches—'vahya', benches—'sayana', 'prostha' and 'āsandi', cushions and pillows—'upabarhanam' and chandeliers—'sikyānyā' bedhū ranyāyam'. They had paid domestic servants to help them.

On the other hand, poor people lived in huts made of thatch.

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1. Rg., VIII.24.30.
2. Rg., X.33.2-3.
3. Rg., VIII.68.12.
4. Rg., VIII.10.1.
5. Rg., X.47.8.
7. Rg., VII.55.8; Ath., XIV.2.31.
9. Rg., VII.55.8.
10. Ath., III.25.1; V.29.8.
11. Rg., VII.55.8.
13. Rg., X.85.7.
15. Rg., XIV.16.21; VIII.66.11; Ath., XII.3.13.
and grass. References to cave-dwellers are also there — 'ksaye guha'. There were poor people 'adhrāya', needy 'vakâmāhāya', substandard — 'rāphitāya', and beggars — 'upajagūma'19, 'arthina'20. In the opinion of authors of Vedic Index21 no reference to begging are found. However, there is a reference of Maruts who are said to be equals22 in all respects. We are not sure whether it meant economic equality as well.

**Agriculture**

People mostly lived in villages. Their main occupation was agriculture as evidenced by many words associated with agriculture as 'ṛṣṭi'23 (agriculture), 'ṛṣṭra'24 (field), 'kīnās'25 (farmer), 'laṅgala'26 (plough), 'śīra'27 and 'phāla'28 (the furrowing head of plough), 'ṭsārā'29 (handle of plough) and 'aṭrā' (plougher's goad)30. The authors of Vedic Index agree that Intensive cultivation by means of irrigation is clearly referred to both in the Rgveda31 and the Atharvaveda32. But they considered the expressions used for plough to belong to the later period33. But it makes no difference to our study as it covers the period extending upto Upaniṣads. Rapson34 also believed that agriculture was an important part of Vedic economy.

17 Ath.,IX.3.4, 17.
18 Rg.,X.22.1.
19 Rg.,X.117.2.
20 Rg.,X.26.8; X.127.5.
21 VINS.,2.104.
22 Rg.,V.60.5.
23 Rg.,I.23.15; 176.2.
24 Rg.,X.33.6.
26 Rg.,IV.57.4; Ath.,III.17.3.
27 Rg.,IV.57.8.
28 Ibid.
29 Rg.,VII.50.1.
30 Rg.,IV.57.4; VI.53.9.
31 Rg.,VII.49.2.
32 I.6.4; XIX.2.2.
33 VINS.,1.181.
34 CHOI.,P.89.
Other implements used for agriculture were ‘khanitra’— a spade, ‘kita’ and ‘pāvana’— a sieve, ‘ṣurpa’ or a winnowing fan and ‘dātra’ sickle etc.

Prthi Vainya is credited with the invention of cultivating grains in the fields i.e., agriculture—‘tām prthi vainyoadhok tām kṛṣim ca āyam cadhok.’ The Indus—Valley excavations bear testimony to the fact that agriculture existed in India much earlier.

The Vedic people mainly grew ‘yava’ (barley), ‘dhanā’ (paddy), ‘gṛḍhuma’ (wheat), ‘vṛīhi’ (wild-rice), ‘māca’ (urada), ‘mudga’ (mōnga), ‘māzura’ (a lentil) and ‘tila’ (sesamum). But again authors of Vedic Index raised doubts about the growing of wheat and rice as these are not mentioned in the Rgveda. In their opinion ‘Yava’ and ‘Dhanā’ were vague terms of doubtful signification. But we don’t agree with this view.

MEANS OF IRRIGATION

They mainly depended on rains for irrigation of the fields even though wells with pulley were also used ‘kūcakreṇa īva śīcate.’ Canals—‘kulyā’ were dug and the artificial channels—‘Khanitraṁ’ were also made for irrigation. Sometimes dams were

35 Rg.,I.179.6.
36 Rg.,X.71.2.
37 Ath.,IV.34.2; XVIII.3.11.
38 Rg.,VIII.78.10.
39 VINS.,1.181; 2.16.
40 Ath.,VIII.10(45).11.
41 Rg.,VIII.22.6; X.131.2.
42 Rg.,VI.29.4; X.28.1; Vaj.S.,IV.10.
43 Vaj.S.,XVIII; XIX.22.89.
44 Ath.,VIII.7.20.
45 Ath.,VI.140.2; XII.2.53.
46 Vaj.S.,XVIII.12.
47 Ibid.
48 Ath.,II.8.3.
49 VINS.,1.182.
50 Rg.,X.102.11 Sayana has interpreted the word ‘kucakra’ in a different way.
51 Rg.,III.45.3; Rg.,VII.49.2.
52 Rg.,VII.49.2; Ath.,I.6.4; XIX.2.2.
also built for this purpose - śindhava- yaṁtiṁ bardhat amucatāṁ. But all these means were not sufficient and droughts and famines occurred from time to time.

People owned definite Kṣetra of their own. Apālā refers to her father’s fields. The fields were carefully measured.

OTHER VOCATIONS

There were people practising other professions such as 'vāpa'—who sowed seeds, 'pañjāpa'—looked after the cattle, 'gopāla'—looked after the cows, 'avipāla'—looked after the sheep, 'ajapāla'—looked after the goats, 'śvanin'—reared the dogs 'Taksan'—carpenter, 'avastāp'—blacksmith, 'vāyitrī'—weaver, 'carmanta'—cobbler, 'godhāta'—slaughterer and 'raju sarja'—rope-maker. Villagers used to go to the forests to cut wood. In the evening they returned along with wood and cattle.

URBAN LIFE

There were people who led a settled life and lived in cities as is indicated by the words 'Pura'. In the opinion of the authors of Vedic Index, Rapson and P.L.Bhargava 'pura' denotes no more than an earthwork strengthened by a palisade or possibly occasionally by stone. But the Vedas give proofs of the urban life. Vasishtha talks of big forts 'with a hundred walls' 'śatabhujī' made of metal (See P.249 also). In the opinion of

53 Rg. X.43.7 Griffith has interpreted the word 'handhat' as restraint.
54 Rg.,VIII.91.5.
55 Rg.,I.110.5.
56 Vaj.S.,Ch.XX.
57 Also in Rg.,IX.112.1; Another word for carpenter is 'Taksar'—Rg.,I.61.4; 105.18; VII.32.20.
58 Rg.,X.71.9 gives 'ṣiri' for a female weaver.
59 Rg.,X.146.3-4.
60 VINS.,1.538-539.
61 CHOI.,P.88.
62 IIVA.,P.255.
63 Rg.,I.166.8.
64 Rg.,VII.15.14.
Pischel and Geldner there were towns with wooden walls and ditches like the Indian town of Pataliputra known to Magasthanese.

There were many - 'sahsaramahī pathibhih' wide roads-'urūm rathāya panthām' having mile stones on them 'pathām ankāsi'.

There were well equipped, big houses having many pillar - 'sahasra sṭhūpa' and many rooms. There were 2, 4, 6 or 8 rooms - 'vā dvipaṅkṣā catuspaksā satpaksā vā nimiṃyate/ aṣṭā paksām dasapakṣām śālāṃ mānasya patnīṃ agniḥ garbha irvāsaye'. Separate rooms were meant for different purposes like 'havirdhāna' āgni śala or where fire was burnt, 'patnīnaṃ sādanaṃ'- ladies room, 'sado' sitting room, 'sado devānam' a place of worship 'havirdhānaṃ āgniśālāṃ patnīnaṃ sādāh sado devānamasi devīśāle' and walls having grills- 'akṣum upasaṃ sahasrākṣa' and wells- 'krivi' in the houses. There were different types of beautiful doors which were high, having door posts and were easily accessible.

Bricks were used to construct buildings - 'istaka'. There is a description of construction of a building in the following mantra - 'upamītaṃ pratimītām atho parimitām uta śālaya viśvavārāya naddhāni vi cṛtāmasi'. The words 'upamita', 'pratimita' and 'parimit' appear to be technical. 'cṛtāmasi' means 'to fix' (cinana). In the following mantra there is a description of laying of foundation of a house - 'utte stābhanāmi prthivīṁ tvat

65 VINS., 1.229 cf., Vedische Studien, i, XXII, XXIII.
66 Rg., IX.106.6; Ath., XII.1.47.
67 Rg., VIII.68.13.
69 Rg., II.41.5.
70 Ath., IX.3.21.
71 Ath., IX.3.7-9.
72 Rg., VIII.43.7.
73 Rg., VIII.87.1.
74 Rg., I.91.19; X.40.12; Vaj.S., XXIX.3.
75 Vaj.S., XXV.8; SB., VII.4.2.16-22.
76 Ath., IX.3.1.
INHERITANCE

Another proof of their settled life was the inheritance of property. Rsi Somāhuti says, "We inherited the land from ancestors - 'imam pitaro lokam asmai'". When Nābhānediṣṭa was deprived of his share of his father's property, Manu, his father had to compensate him by giving him mantras of high value by which he was able to earn a lot of cattle from the Āṅgirasas (See Ch.VI P.96).

VOCATIONS

The mere mention of so many vocations related to city life points to the urbanization of the Vedic people. Yajurveda has enlisted a large number of such occupations for example- 'rathakāra' - the makers of chariots, 'िजुकारा' - made the arrows, 'ियाकारा' - made the thread of the bow, 'hiranyakāra' - the goldsmith, 'मापिकारा' - the people who carved and studded gems and stones, 'सुराकारा' and 'कालाला' - the dealers of wine, 'वाज paipuli' - dealers of scents and perfumes, 'राजयित्रि' - washerwoman, 'आजानिकारि' - lady barber, 'पारीवेष्टिता' - one who served food, the bearer, 'चारका' - wandering pupil, 'मागाधा', 'सुता' 'सालुगा' - the ballad singers and actors, 'कालाव' - musician, 'विनावादम' (who played on Vina), 'रेभा' - the poet, 'कारि' - the buffoon, 'अभिजेक्ता' - water sprinkler, 'उपामान्तिता' - churners, 'मानाक्ष्रता' - psychiatrist and so on.

METALLURGY

The reference to the science of metallurgy gives a picture of developed city life. They used the metals 'Hiranyā' (gold),

77 Ath.,XVIII.3.52.
78 Vaj.S.,XII.45.
79 Vaj.S.,Ch.XXX.
80 Rg.,I.167.3; Vaj.S.,XVII.13.
'candra'\textsuperscript{81} - (silver), 'avya'\textsuperscript{82} (iron or bronze), 'svama'\textsuperscript{83} (iron) 'Loha'\textsuperscript{84} (copper) and 'Lohita'\textsuperscript{85} (probably copper or bronze), 'Sisa'\textsuperscript{86} (lead) and ' Trapu'\textsuperscript{87} (Tin).

**BANKING**

The Panis were rich people\textsuperscript{88}. They were great bankers and fleeced people by charging high rates of interest. They were designated as 'pramaganda'\textsuperscript{89}, 'bekanatan'\textsuperscript{90} and 'kusidinah'\textsuperscript{91}. Generally the people used to hide their treasures and valuables underground\textsuperscript{92}.

**TRADE AND COMMERCE**

Trade and commerce existed. Rgveda\textsuperscript{93} mentioned sale, purchase, bid, haggling and bargaining in a legend that some one sold a valuable at a lesser price. But when he betrayed the contract, the buyer told that it a was rule to sell a thing at the price settled at the time of contract. Rsi Atharvan mentioned that the exchange of articles or selling or purchasing of articles through money might be profitable - 'sunam no astu prapano vikrayasca pratiganah'.

81 Rg.,VIII.65.11 Though Sayana interpreted 'candra' as 'Ahāvikam' but it may be interpreted as such in contrast with 'hiranya' present in the same mantra.
82 Rg.,I.57.3 Zimmer identifies it with bronze (VINS.,1.31 cf.,Altindisches leben,52). In the opinion of the authors of Vedic Index most of the times it conveys the sense of bronze but sometimes it may mean iron also.
83 Ath.,IX.5.4.
84 Vaj.S.,XVIII.13.
85 Ath.,XI.3.11.
86 Ath.,XII.2.1,19 et seq.
87 Ath.,XI.3.8.
88 Rg.,I.33.4.
89 Rg.,III.53.14 Sayana interprets the word as the son of a usurer - 'vārdhusikah'. According to Vedic Index (VINS., II.38) 'pramaganda' was the name of a prince in the Rgveda where he is mentioned as the king of the Kikatas and where he seems to be designated by the epithet 'naicaśākha', - 'belonging to a low branch or race'.
90 Rg.,VIII.66.10.
91 SB.,XIII.4.3.11.
92 Rg.,I.116.11.
93 Rg.,IV.24.9.
The very word 'pana' in 'Pañi' indicates the selling and purchasing through a coin. The word 'śapana' 'vipani' for markets in later Sanskrit are possibly derived from 'pana'. Mostly barter system prevailed but the reference of 'niska' 'rūkma' and 'haryya - pinda' 'mrda' something like a ball made of solid gold, 'candra' made of silver may mean that buying and selling was also done through their payment but there were no figure bearing well chiselled coins. Cows and horses were also used for exchange. In the opinion of Rapson, no coin seems to be known, though the origin of currency may be seen in the frequent references to niskas as gifts. The niska, most likely was an ornament in the shape of a necklace of gold or silver. At a later date the name was given to a gold coin.

Both type of trade, wholesale and retail, existed as suggested by the word 'prakarita' (retailer). They measured the things with weighing balance - 'budhga'. 'Māna' (probably mana) was the unit of weight with fractions as 'pāda' (one forth ), and 'Sapha' (one eighth). They measured length in 'Sāla' and 'Bāhu'. Distance was measured in 'Vojana'.

Pañis were especially known as Vaniks (See Ch.III App.II). They used to go to far off places for trade. Probably Panipratsha> Modern Pānipat and Sonapratsha> Modern Sonipat were great centres of
There are several references to sea trade. Maxmuller, Lassen, Zimmer and Vedic Index agreed that Vedic Indians went on sea voyages very frequently. But according to Rapson there is no clear sign that they had reached the ocean in the period of the Rgveda. No passage even renders it probable that sea navigation was known. But there are clear evidences of sea. They talked of four seas 'samudrānacaturā' and 'catuh samudram' and big boats having hundreds of oars 'nāram ... sataritram' in the Vedas. Asvins saved Bhujyu in sea by their boat (See Ch.VI P.91-92). Viśvarūpā, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, also had a fleet of boats. Indra was requested to lead the trade delegations across sea. In Pusalkar's opinion Rigvedic people not only knew sea, but were mariners and had trade relations with the outside world.

Other descriptions such as palaces with tanks and fountains (see P.249) point towards the fact that cities with fortifications were also there and devas, as well the Panis lived there.

**POLITICAL CONDITIONS**

The Vedic society had a well knit system of polity. The view that it was a society of nomads has already been refuted in the
previous chapters.

KINGSHIP

The political system started with the institution of kingship. There was a king, small or big. The words 'Rāja', 'Aikarata', 'Samrāta' connote a small ruler, a king, and an emperor respectively. The following 'mantra, of the Rgveda gives a hint of the political system of those days:

\[ \text{yāh prānato nīmisito mahītvai kaj id rāja jagato babhuva, ya iṣe aṣya dvipadaśacatuśpadah kasmī devāya hariṣā vidhem} \]

that who by his grandeur hath become the Sole Ruler of all the moving world that breathes and slumbers; who is the Lord of men, and Lord of Cattle, he alone deserves our obeisance. (What God shall we adore with our oblation or, for that 'Ka' we offer oblation). Thus king was the lord of all living beings. The water of sacred rivers was poured on the head of the king during his coronation ceremony.

He was called 'Bhūpati' or 'bhūpā' in classical Sanskrit as he was in a way a big land-lord. He was 'Ganapati' too i.e., the lord of 'Ganas'the groups of people. In the opinion of P.L.Bhargava, king was not regarded as the owner of the land because the Dānastutis never mentioned the gift of land.

It is said in the Gopatha Brahmana that the king who performed a 'Rājasūya Yajña', was a 'Rājā', one who performed a 'Vājapeya' was a 'Samrāt', one who performed an 'Asvamedha' was 'Svārāt', one who performed 'puruṣamedha' was 'Virāt' and one who performed 'Svāmedha' was 'Svārāt'. According to Nitaraya

120 Rg. IV.17.20.
121 Ath.,III.4.1.
122 Rg.,I.100.1.
123 Rg.,X.121.3; Ath.,IV.2.2; Vaj.S.XXIII.3; Taitt.S., IV.1.8.4; VII.5.16.1.
125 Rg.,II.23.1.
126 IIVA.,P.259.
127 Go.Br.,Purva V.,B.
Brāhmaṇa\textsuperscript{129} after the performance of Āsvamedha, the king went out to conquer other territories. Rgveda also mentions that the kings attacked other kingdoms to bring them under their rule — 'vad udvato
nivato vāsī bhasat prthagesi pragardhinīva senā'\textsuperscript{129}. The mention of 'Ṛśtra' and its 'adhipati'\textsuperscript{130} and 'Śamrāja'\textsuperscript{131} in Rgveda and 'Śamrāja' in Yajurveda\textsuperscript{132} point out that there were fairly big kingdoms ruled over by emperors.

The emperor had conquered many states and assumed their overlordship. But overlordship did not mean total subjugation of the states. It was rather a 'laissezfaire' system in which the conquered states paid only a tribute to the emperor, otherwise they were free in all respects. For Example, Indra an overlord fought many wars and subdued kings who in turn paid tributes to him.

**SABHĀ AND SAMITI**

The king was not a despot. He was guided in his day to day working by the \textit{Samiti}\textsuperscript{133}, an executive body of councillors, and \textit{sabha}\textsuperscript{134}, a bigger assembly. According to Ludwig\textsuperscript{135} 'sabha' was an assembly not of all the people but of the Brāhmaṇas and Maghavans. Zimmer\textsuperscript{136} thinks that Sabhā was the meeting place of village council presided over by the Grāmaṇi. This view looked improbable to the authors of Vedic Index\textsuperscript{137}. In their opinion Samiti and Sabha were much the same, the one being the assembly, the other primarily the place of assembly. The hall was used for dicign\textsuperscript{138}, as a meeting place for social intercourse and general conversation about

\begin{itemize}
\item 129 VIII.21,23.
\item 129 Rg.,X.142.4.
\item 130 X.124.5.
\item 131 Rg.,V.85.1.
\item 132 IV.24.
\item 133 Rg.,X.97.6; Ath.,VII.12.1.
\item 134 Rg.,VIII.4.9.
\item 135 VINS.,2.427 TR.,3,253-256.
\item 136 Ibid., cf.,op.cit.,174.
\item 137 VINS.,2.430.
\item 138 Rg.,X.34.6.
\end{itemize}
and so on forth.

There are mentions of ‘Samsada’\textsuperscript{139}, ‘Parisad’\textsuperscript{140}, and ‘Sabhācara’\textsuperscript{141}. The kings presence in the samiti is clearly referred to. Rapson\textsuperscript{142} believed that there seemed no reason to doubt that on great occasions, the whole of the men of the tribe gathered there to deliberate, or at least to decide on the course laid before them by the great men of the tribe. The king acted at the advice of the councillors\textsuperscript{143}. The assembly and the executive body did not always constitute the ‘yes - men’ of the king. The king wished that the members of the Sabhā may speak and walk in unison with him\textsuperscript{144}. According to the Atharvaveda\textsuperscript{145} the people with meritorious constitutions and refined tastes performed Yajñas. They constituted Indra’s ‘Gayya Parisad’ - a council of scholars. This leads us to believe that the best and the selected people constituted these bodies. Rgveda also points out that the king reported to these bodies. Trisoka, the son of Kanva says, ”O Indra, whatever heroic deeds you have done in the foreign lands or whatever are new and fresh, may kindly be reported to the assembly – ‘ya vrtrahā parāvati sañā navā ca cucyute tā samsatsu pravocata’\textsuperscript{146}. The king always wanted to be in the good books of their people\textsuperscript{147}. But the Sabhā could never override the decision of the king.

Thus except for the function of enacting laws, these bodies performed the same functions as the legislatures of today. We

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{139} Rg., VI.28.6.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Rg., VIII.43.25.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Ath., XVIII.3.22.
\item \textsuperscript{142} Vaj.S., XXX.6.
\item \textsuperscript{143} CHOI., P.86.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Ath., VII.12.3.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Rg., X.191.3; Ath., VI.64.1; VII.12.2; VII.94.1.
\item \textsuperscript{146} XVIII.3.22.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Rg., VIII.45.25.
\item \textsuperscript{148} Rg., X.173.1.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
believe that legislation in those days was the function of the
rsis.

SELECTION OF KING

Though the kingship was normally hereditary, sometimes the
people chose the kings - 'haviṣaḥ abhi somaṃ erwāmaśa'i 149 that they
thought of making Soma a king. 'Erwāmaśa' means they made king
after thinking over it. Ilā was made the ruler of the region of
Ilayaspada after dethroning Nahuṣa (See Ch. VII P.102). Zimmer150,
Bloomfield151 and P.L. Bhargava152 agreed that in some cases
election by the canton was possible.

KINGS PERSONALITY

The qualities of a king, as described in the Ṛgveda, were -
'A hero lord, king of mighty folk and good master' he was, who
offered free oblations and promoted the law, who with a bounteous
guerdon welcomed hymns of praise: for him flowed the abundant
stream below the sky - 'sa ghā raṇa satpatih śūṣvat iano rāthahavyah
prati yah āsas śāṃ invati/yuktha va yo abhignati rādhasa danyah asmā
upara pinvate divah'153. According to the Vajurveda154 a wise king
nourished his people and helped them in their development and
growth - 'paryāṭi vidvān praṇām puṣṭim vardhayamāno'. The king was
the protector of the people - 'gopā janāya'155. Mostly kṣatriyas
were the kings. It was thought that kṣatriyas could protect a
kingdom well - 'rāstram guṇitam kṣatriyasya'156. A queen was
supposed to belong to kṣatriyas - 'kṣatrayasya yonih asī'157 and
having qualities of giving happiness to people - 'yo na asī' and

149 Ṛg., X.173.6.
150 CHOI., P.84 cf., op.cit., 162 sq.
152 IIVA., P.257 Quoting Ṛg., X.124.8.
153 Ṛg., I.54.7.
155 Ṛg., III.43.5.
156 Ṛg., X.109.3.
'sugadā asī'. The kings dressed themselves in beautiful attire - 'rākṣaṇa na citraḥ susandrah kṣitīnām na māryā arepasah'. The kings used to hold weapons and ride beautiful chariots. In the morning they were awakened by the bards - 'prātaḥ jarethe jaraneva kāpaya'. Their horses were covered with golden upholstery. There were different persons as 'anukṣattā' the charioteer to drive the chariots, 'hastin' to look after the elephants and 'aśvak' to look after the horses.

Kings lived in big palatial buildings. Varuna had a palace with thousand doors and pillars enameled with gold (See Ch.IV P.50). Kavi, the son of Bṛghu has given the description of a palace in which king Soma was sitting surrounded by the apsaras where fountains were running - 'samudrvā apsarasaḥ manasīnam āśina antarbhī somamksaraṇ ta jīn hinvantī bāṃpyaṇa saṁvane yākante saṃnam pavaṇānam kṣitam'. There were tanks with lotuses.

They made forts 'dūga' of iron - 'āyasyanādhrito orpitaye pūrvabhavā jatabhujih' and 'purah kṛpudhvāmāyaśirdhṛtā ma vah susroccamaso dhṛhatā tam'.

**ADMINISTRATION**

There were officers like 'Senāṇi' - commander of the army, 'purohit' - the priest, 'upamantrināḥ' - secretaries,
The king had spies to get reports about his subjects. The spies had difficult tasks to perform. They did not even blink while doing their duties. The spy system of Varuna is an example. 'Vīśpati' and 'Vṛājapati' were the heads of clans and 'Gramani' was a village head but the expressions like 'vattagāmani' used for head of states in Ceylonese Chronicles suggest that 'Gramani' meant head of a state.

The people paid him taxes. Dhruva Āṅgirasa said that Indra made the people to pay taxes - 'atha tā Indrah kevalīrvīso balihrtaskarat'. The king probably took 1/16 part of income as tax 'yaḍ rājano vibhajanta īstapūrttasya sodasam yamasyāmi sabhasadah'.

**JUDICIAL SYSTEM**

The king was the supreme court of justice but he generally followed the code of scriptures. When Bṛhaspati deserted his wife Jūhū, the king did justice and got Jūhū returned to Bṛhaspati - 'rājānah satyam kṛvāṇa brahmājāyāṁ punar dādhuh'. When a boy was trampled under the hoofs of Triaṇu's chariot's horses whose reins were held by Vṛṣa, the son of Jana, the boys family approached king Trasadasya for justice (See Ch.XI P.150). Rapson

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172 Rg., IX.97.11.
173 VINS., I.280 cf., St. peter Dict.
174 Vaj.S., XXX.11.
176 Rg., III.3.2; VI.8.4; VII.3.3; X.14.12.
177 Vaj.S., XXX.12.
178 Rg., IX.73.4.
179 Rg., I.26.7; VII.7.5.
180 Rg., X.179.2; Ath., VII.72.2.
181 Rg., X.52.11; X.79.
182 Rg., X.173.6.
183 Ath., III.29.1.
184 Rg., X.109.6. See Ch.IV P.51 for the legend.
185 CHOI., P.86.
opines "In accordance with the apparently undeveloped condition of political organization, we learn little of the administration of justice. That the king exercised criminal and civil jurisdiction, assisted by assessors, is a conclusion which must rest for its plausibility on analogy and on the later practice in India". But this view is not corroborated by the texts.

The other terms, such as 'Prasānin' - the plaintiff, 'abhiprasānin' - the defendant, 'praśnavivāka' and 'Madhyāsūrī' - the arbitrator point out that there existed a complete legal and judicial system. 'Sabhāsadhī' and 'Sabhācarā' were the members of the Sabhā - which sat to decide cases. This Sabhā was like a court of law. The word 'Jnātr' is technical term meaning witness. 'Grāmya-Vādin' indicates that a separate judicial system of the villages, something like the 'Pañcāyata' of today, existed.

**CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS**

The crimes enumerated included the abortion of an embryo, slaying of a man in general, for example the legend of killing of a boy by Vṛṣaṇa (See Ch.XI P.150), and of a Brāhmaṇa in particular. The offenders of law were punished.

Punishments were hard for example the guilty was pricked with a lance to death; the eyes of the culprits were taken out from their sockets, they were burnt alive, trampled down under

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186 Vaj.S.,XXX.10.
187 Rg.,X.97.12.
188 Ath.,III.29.1.
190 Ath.,VI.32.3; VIII.8.21.
191 VINS.,1.290 cf.,Zimmer, op.cit,181.
193 Rg.,II.29.1; Taitt.S.,VI.5.10.2; Kath.S.,XXVII.9.
194 Ath.,V.18.
195 Ath.,XVIII.1.33.
196 Rg.,V.8.9; Ath.,VIII.6.16.
197 Ath.,V.29.4.
198 Vaj.S.,XI.77; Ath.,VIII.4.2.
feet\textsuperscript{199}, or the hands and feet were chopped off\textsuperscript{200}. Sometimes the criminals were rolled down from a higher place to meet their death\textsuperscript{201}. They were sometimes stoned to death\textsuperscript{202} or beheaded\textsuperscript{203}. To throw the guilty to snakes was also one of the punishments\textsuperscript{204}. The couples who performed sorcery were burnt to death\textsuperscript{205}.

**WAR TECHNIQUES**

The kings maintained a cavalry\textsuperscript{206} and used elephants in wars. Rapson opines\textsuperscript{207} that horse and elephant were not used in the wars. But the view is not correct. Indra rode a horse to kill Vṛtra -

\textit{"asvayo varo abhayas tad Indra srke yat tvā pratyahan deva

\textit{gkah"}\textsuperscript{208}. He is also is described to hold a goad \textit{\textquoteright\textquotesingle\	extit{aṅkuśā\textquoteright\textquotesingle} in his hand to control the elephants\textsuperscript{209}. Bhargava also opines that horse-riding was known and possibly the cavalry was also used. The weapons used in the wars were \textit{\textquoteright\textquotesingle\	extit{vajra\textquoteright\textquotesingle}\textsuperscript{210} \textit{\textquoteright\textquotesingle\	extit{garju\textquoteright\textquotesingle} (the battle axe), \textit{\textquoteright\textquotesingle\	extit{ṛṣṭi\textquoteright\textquotesingle} \textsuperscript{211} - (a javelin fixed with something like a burning hot iron), \textit{\textquoteright\textquotesingle\	extit{dhanuṣa\textquoteright\textquotesingle} \textsuperscript{212} (bow), \textit{\textquoteright\textquotesingle\	extit{bāṇa\textquoteright\textquotesingle} \textsuperscript{213} (arrow) \textit{\textquoteright\textquotesingle\	extit{Hisāṅga\textquoteright\textquotesingle} \textsuperscript{214}}
(Quiver), 'vasi'\(^{214}\) and 'asi'\(^{217}\) -(sword), 'pavi'\(^{218}\) -(wheel), 'ghana'\(^{219}\) (wedge) 'raud'\(^{220}\) (net) and 'sakti' a particular type of weapon. They also wore mails -'varman'\(^{221}\), helmets -'pipra'\(^{222}\) and handguard 'hastaghna'\(^{223}\).

Asuras created -'maya'\(^{224}\) a sort of smoke-screen as a war strategy. Atri dispelled the smoke-screen created by Svarbhānu\(^{225}\). Stones or such things were also rolled down from a higher place on the enemies at a lower level\(^{226}\). They used to wear 'manis' (stones and gems) while going to wars since they believed in their efficacy\(^{227}\). Kaśyapa chiselled a stone for Indra with the help of which he killed Vṛtra and conquered all the quarters\(^{228}\). A war-drum was beaten and 'dundhūbi' was played to indicate the beginning of the battle\(^{229}\). The fighters used abusive language in encounters to exhort and provoke each other\(^{230}\). The warriors had different types of flags inscribed with their insignia or symbols, fluttering on their chariots\(^{231}\). Great tumult was created with the driving of chariots and neighing of horses in the war\(^{232}\).

THE POLITICAL MAP OF THE TIMES

The political picture which emerges from the study of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item 216 Rg.,VIII.29.3.
  \item 217 Ath.,X.1.20; X.79.6.
  \item 218 Rg.,X.27.6.
  \item 219 Ath.,XX.70.17.
  \item 220 Ath.,VIII.8.7.
  \item 221 Rg.,VI.78.1.
  \item 222 Rg.,V.54.11 The helmet of Asvins was made of iron -'gah-

'sipra' - Rg.,IV.37.4, those of Maruts golden 'hiranya-

'sipra' - Rg.,II.34.3. and others of some yellow metal

'hari-sipra' - Rg.,X.98.4.
  \item 223 Rg.,VI.75.14.
  \item 224 Rg.,VI.18.9.
  \item 225 Rg.,V.40.5.
  \item 226 Ath.,VIII.4.4.
  \item 227 Ath.,VIII.2.2.
  \item 228 Ath.,VIII.5.14-15.
  \item 229 Rg.,VI.47.31.
  \item 230 Ath.,VIII.3.14.
  \item 231 Rg.,VI.47.31; Ath. XI.10,1-2
  \item 232 Rg.,VI.75.7; X.103.10; Vaj.S.,XXIX.44.
\end{itemize}
Vedas is that the Adityas were emerging as the dominant rulers. Indra was the overlord of whole of the northern region including 'Saptasindhu' - the land of seven rivers extending to the region of Gomati. His people were the Pūrus. Indraprastha was probably his capital (See Ch.III Pp.15-16). The region of the Gandhīra and Indus was dominated by Varuṇa, his brother and Soma was appointed a governor of the region by the devas (See Ch.IV P.50; Ch.V P.81).

Ikṣāvākus lived in the Himalayan region. They were the rulers of Bhajeratha, lying in between the area of origin of Satudru (modern Satlej) and Jahnāvi (the Ganges). Asamāti and his son Bhayada ruled over the area (See Ch.XI).

There were twenty one Janapadas at the banks of Paruṣṇi (modern Ravi). The residents included Puru, Anu, Yadu, Turvasa and Druhyu - the five kings. Abhyāvartin Cāyamān was at Hariyūpia. There were a large number of fortified cities on the bank of Indus built by Panis which were burnt by Indra. The tribes - the Sivas, the Bhalānasas, the Alinas, the Pakthas (modern Pathāns) and the Viśānins who were also the residents of the western region. They were followers of Indra (See Ch.VIII P.118-19). The Mujāvants also resided in the Himalayas. Balhikas lived in the territory between Beas and Satlej (See Ch.X P.130).

The Madra region was also inhabited. People from Madra were known for their discourses on philosophy.

Panis were rich people and lived in fortified dwellings. The Vṛtras dwelled in the Himalayas, Vṛcīvants in the area of Indus, Bheda at Yamunā and Sambhara at lake Sāmbhara in Rajasthan. Vala was a resident of Arbud mountain in Rajasthan. Virocana was king of Aṅga and Arṇā and Citraratha were on Sarayu. 'Paniprastha', modern Panipat and 'Sonaprastha', modern Sonipat appear to be their trade
centres. Indra was at constant war with the Panis, and defeated all those Pani-chiefs who did not submit. He killed thousands of their followers. Rakṣasas, who were most probably uncivilized black skinned tribals, were also slain by Indra (See Ch.III App.II).

When Indra became weak the region of Sarasvati came under the domain of Nahuṣa, a descendant of Viśvāmitra. Nahuṣa was deposed by the devas and Ilā was made the ruler after whom the region of Sarasvati came to be known as Ilāyāspada. Pururavas, her son, fell in love with Urvasī and followed her to settle in Gāndhāra (See Ch.VII Pp.104-105).

Bharata, his son, became the next ruler of the region. Bharata expanded his kingdom and brought a large number of territories under his rule. He posed a threat to Ikṣavākus in the north, defeated Puru, and the Sātvats (See Ch.VIII). Bharata's descendants were Sṛnjayas/Bharatas/Tṛtsus and Somaka/Paṇcālas. Sṛnjayas/Bharatas/Tṛtsus dominated the region of Ilāyāspada (See Ch.VIII) and Somaka/Paṇcālas migrated towards the east. Their capital was Paricakrā (Kāmpilya). Roughly speaking the territory of the Paṇcālas included the regions of northern and southern banks of Ganga near Barelli in Uttar Pradesh (See Ch.IX).

The Bharatas faced many revolts and had to fight many a battle. Bharata fought with Pūru. Sṛnjaya fought Vṛcīvants and Turvāsa, and Divodasa fought against Yadu and Turvāsa. He fought a war against Sambara which lasted for forty years. The Bharatas under Divodasa lost the kingdom. Sudāsa inhabited Uttar-Kissi. He also had fought many battles. In one of the battles at Paruṣṇi he fought against twenty one kings including those of the five tribes Anu, Druhyu, Turvāsa and Yadu and others. He fought a battle at Yamunā against ten kings whose leader was Bheda (See Ch.VIII).

Purukutsa son of Ikṣavāku became the king of Puru. He was
married to Narmada according to the Purānas. Probably, he got the area around Satpura range from his wife’s side. Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa, and his son Kurusrvana also became the kings of the Pūrus, the people of Sarasvati region. After Divodāsa it appears that Kurusrvana, the son of Trasadasyu, dominated the scene, and the territory was known as Kuruksetra and people as Kurus.

Mahāraṣas234, Vāsas, Usīnaras235, the Sarpas236 and the Matsyas237 were the tribes of the middle country near about modern Alwar. The country of the Vāsas, later came to be known as ‘Vatsas’, was situated around about Kausambi (modern Kosama near Allahabad in U.P.).

Kasu was the king of Cedi (Modern Bundelkhand) (See Ch. XIV). Videgha Māthava from the region of Sarasvati migrated towards east and established the kingdom of Mithila. Some of the Ikṣavākus established Kōsala and Kāśi. The kings Vibhīnu, Ajātaśatru and Bhadrasena belonged to the Kāśis. Vibhīnu established Vibhīnukas probably (modern Bhind). Hiranyaṇābha and Prasenjit were the kings of Kōsala (See Ch.XII).

Anāga was ruled over by Virocana, son of Prahlāda, whose grandson Anāga adopted Kakṣīvat Dīrghatamas’s son from a slave girl and this area also came under the rule of devas (See Ch.XIII P.47,168). Kīkata238 were considered out of bound of the Vedic people, as they were called Pramaganda and Naicaśākha (of low birth). Zimmer239 locates them in the country later known as Maγadha. Maγadha has found mention in the Atharvaveda240. The Andhras, Pūndras, Sabaras, Pulindas and Mutivēsas were the tribes.

234 See Ch.XIV P.185.
235 See P.158.
236 See Ch.X.P.135.
237 See Ch.VI.P.87.
238 Rg.,III.53.14.
239 VA,P.248.
240 V.22.14.
of the east (See Ch. XIV P. 190) which also were outside the fold of the Aryan society.