2. A Brief Political History of the Republics in Ancient India

2.1 The Vedic Gana

There are two terms used by the ancient Indian thinkers for the non-monarchical systems of government, Sangha and Gana. According to Dr. B.K. Sarkar the term implies the regnum of the whole people. Buhler translated it as an autonomous corporation of tradesmen and Jolly understands it to mean an assembly. Dr. Fleet and other scholars interpreted it as an autonomous tribe or a self-governing community. The Smritis understand Gana as assemblage of families. Literally the term gana does not mean a tribe but an artificial collection of people not necessarily belonging to the same tribe, it appears that in most cases in the Vedic literature this term is used in the sense of a tribal or clan solidarity. Dr. Jayaswal understands Gana as ‘numbers’: Gananarajya will therefore mean ‘rule of numbers’, ‘the rule of many’. Gana thus was an assembly or parliament, so called because of the ‘number’ or the ‘numbering’ of the members present. Gananarajya was consequently denoted, government by assembly. The secondary meaning of gana came to be ‘parliament’ or ‘senate’ and as republics were governed by them, gana came to mean republic itself.  

Although monarchy was the dominant system of government, rudiments of non-monarchical type of government can definitely be traced to the earliest literary sources of the Aryans. The starting point of the ancient Indian political ideas is to be discovered in the collection of hymns and prayers forming the earliest history of the Indo-Aryans, the Rigveda Samhita.

It would thus appear that the early history of the Hindu political thought was held in the oldest literature of the sacred canon and intertwined with its concepts. The Rigveda shows the Indo-Aryans to be passing through a stage of transition, the tribal society is being transformed into the aggregate of tribes or the folk. The word Gana has been used forty six times in the Rigveda, nine times in the Atharvaveda and in

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18 K.P. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, p 23
several places in the Brahmans. In most cases it has been translated as ‘assembly’ or ‘troops’. Maruts have been called Ganas, they are divided into groups of nine. The Ganas of Devas are also referred to. The Rigveda and the Atharvaveda frequently mention the strong and vigorous Ganas of Maruts in the sense of army and troops under the command of Surya or Indra. Heroes are described as marching in ganas or companies. The troops of Marut are called to the rescue of Manu. The Ganas are equipped with fast steeds and weapons such as bows, arrows and quivers. Pushan is invoked to lead the Gana of men that long for kine to win the spoil. The leader of the Gana, at one place is known as ‘ganasyaraja’, is generally called ganpati. Indra, Marut, Brihaspati, and Brahmanaspati particularly the last three are repeatedly called ganapati. In Aitareya Brahman the king is invoked as gananampati. Brahmanaspati who at several places is called ganpati is also called the supreme king of prayers. The Vedic Gana was a self acting armed organisation, every member of which bore arms and were the forerunners of Ayudhajivi Sanghas of Panini and Vartasastropajivi Sanghas of Kautilya. Hence it would appear that the Vedic Ganas was an armed organisation of the whole clan or tribe. The most important function of the ganapati was to lead his band for the capture of cattle, which formed the chief spoils of war. It is stated that the Ganas were always anxious to win wealth for themselves.

Dr Jayaswal refer to a passage in Aitareya Brahman which mentions that among the Uttar Kurus and the Uttar Madras the whole community was consecrated to rulership and their constitutions were called Vairajya or kingless state. Dr. R .C.Majumdar supports his views. Dr A.S.Altekar argues that since the passage mentions the people and not their king, the same passage refers to the king of eastern and southern quarters, it becomes evident that the reference is to a non monarchical or republican form of government.

The Vedic literature sometimes refers to kings meeting together in an assembly.

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19 R.S.Sharma, Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India, p 122
20 Ibid, p 123
We are told that a person alone can become a king who is permitted to become one by other kings. The passage probably refers to the existence of an oligarchy, where power was vested in a council of nobles, each member of which was entitled to call himself a kin and had a right to elect the chief of the state, who was also called a king.\textsuperscript{21} It can also be interpreted that some tribes had no hereditary chief but were governed directly by the tribal council. As in some oligarchic clans the title of the raja was taken by all the great men of the tribes who governed it through folk moot.\textsuperscript{22}

As Montesquieu puts it, “the republican system is that in which sovereign power is possessed by either the whole people or some part of it.” The people may delegate power to a single man or a group of selected men. In either case, they should be the men of the choice of the people, exercising authority in moderation. Similar checks and balances are referred to in the Vedic texts. Two assemblies Sabha and Samiti formed essential feature of the government. Although the functions and powers of Sabha and Samiti cannot be exactly defined, numerous passages referring to them clearly indicate that both these assemblies exercised considerable authority and must have acted as healthy checks on the powers of the king.\textsuperscript{23} The Vedic Aryans might have been familiar with the organised body of people, Gana, living under several leaders or kings –Rajanah of whom was the jyeshtha raja that is the king supreme. Gana as a corporate body might have originated at this time. It is not hard to imagine this especially in a situation where villages enjoyed a corporate life with all the functions of an autonomous body. There were two popular bodies called the Samiti or tribal assembly and the Sabha, the council of elders and powerful men who perhaps chose the king and helped him in times of need.\textsuperscript{24} When Aryans invaded India, they were divided into a number of Ganas corresponding to the Roman Gens and Gentes and the Greek Genos, each Gens being a republic or democracy with no king, and that

\textsuperscript{21} A.S.Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p 39
\textsuperscript{22} A.L.Basham, The Wonder that was India, p 33
\textsuperscript{23} R.C.Majumdar, The Vedic Age, p 357
\textsuperscript{24} H.N.Sinha, Sovereignty in Ancient Indian Polity, p 14
during the Vedic and the Brahmanic periods a number of the Ganas passed into elective monarchies, while a few retained their republican form even to as late as the Buddhist period.

Thus as pointed out in the previous chapter on the Types of States, monarchy was not the only form of government prevalent in the Vedic period. Monarchy too had its variations in terms of their structures and processes and were not uniform, some exhibiting republican trends. The inductive inference can be taken to mean that since they were flourishing during the times of Buddha and Mahavir, they must have originated centuries earlier so as to attain that much maturity in statecraft and dexterity in constitutional ways. It is also interesting to note that those terms used in the republican constitution today occur frequently in Vedic hymns and Brahmanic texts of our rich and glorious past.
2.2 Panini’s Ashtadhyayi

Panini, the great grammarian’s birth place, Shalaturi lay a few miles to the north of the confluence of Kabul and the Indus river. The Daksha gotra, in which this celebrated grammarian was born, is referred to as a clan organized into a Sangha. Panini therefore was rightly placed in a situation from where he could get the first hand information about self governing people. He has analysed the methods of naming places, during his time. While showing various ways of naming, he mentions that, places were also named after the nature of their polity.

Panini makes a clear reference to two types of states, the first is to the

monarchical state as ‘Rajya’ derived from the word ‘Rajan’ or king as distinguished from Sangha or Gana or Republic. The grammarian points out that that the word Sangha does not signify, a mere collection, as the word Samghat does, but a Gana i.e a special kind of collection or a ‘corporate collection’. When Panini has the occasion to mention individual Sanghas, he names communities which are known from monumental and other evidences, to have been republican. In his time Sanghas denoted Gana ad the religious Sangha did not appear to have come into prominence. In fact we shall see, the latter republican bodies are called by Kautilya as Sanghas. There is thus not much room to doubt that Sangha originally meant a republic. Panini gives a generic sense in which the term Sangha was used during his days. Firstly he says that Sangha meant ‘a multitude’ , ‘a herd of cattle’. In the same sense it could also be applied to a multitude of human beings. Secondly a Sangha was a term for ‘Nikaya’ which is defined by him as a corporate body where the distinction of the upper and the lower does not exist.

Ayudhajivi Sanghas

Panini mentions a number of Sanghas as ayudhajivi meaning those who lived by the profession of arms. He refers to four of them. They were in

- **Vahikas** which comprised of the region from the Indus to the Beas and Sutlej.

He names them as Yaudheyas, Kshudrakas, Malavas. They were the most advanced among the ayudhajivis.

- **Parvat** or mountainous country formed an important group of martial Sanghas occupying Parvat or mountainous region of the north west. According to the true

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26 R.C.Majumdar, Corporate Life in Ancient India, p 221
27 K.P.Jayaswal, Hindu Polity A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, p 23
28 Shobha Mukerji, The Republican Trends in Ancient India, p 32
import of Panini’s rule, those whose ancestors once lived in the Parvat region
continued to retain their original appellation of the ancestral homeland, although
for the time being they might have migrated elsewhere. Most probably the
Parvat region must have been outside the plains of the Vahika country, which
brings us to the highlands of the regions of Hindukush or both sides of it.

- **Pugas** who were organised under their gramani under some form of Sangha
government. Pugas derived their names in two ways. Some were named after
their leader or gramani and some from other circumstances. It is interesting to
know that an organisation in its corporate capacity under one leader is still a
prevalent custom in the north west now Pakistan. Many of the Pathan tribes are
named after their ancestral leaders corresponding to the ancient gramanis. Isazai
and Usufzaïs both living on the banks of the Indus are names of this type. The
name of the Puga as derived from the original gramani founder continued later
through generations.

- **Vrata** were those who lived by depradation and violence and having only a
semblance of Sangha. They were bands of war like roving aboriginal tribes, with
whom the Aryans came into conflict. Panini refers to Vrata in twofold sense.
Firstly they appear to have lived in an elementary stage of Sangha government,
the other being depredation or physical violence by which those people made a
living, from which they were called ‘Vratinas’.  

**Republics named by Panini**

The following Ayudhajivi Sanghas are mentioned in the Sutras.

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29 V.S. Agarwala, India as known to Panini, p 434
30 Ibid, p 439
**The Vrikas:** An individual member of this Sangha was called Varkena and the whole Sangha, Vrika. This name standing alone in the Sutra with a suffix peculiar from the rest is hitherto untraced. Dr V.S. Agarwala is of the opinion that they need not be associated with the Vahikas but may be identified with Varkara, the old Persian form in the Behistun inscription of Darius, mentioned along with Parthan or Parthians. Their country seem to be identical with Hyrcania lying to the north of Parthia and on the eastern corner of the Caspian.

**Damani:** There is a strong resemblance between the name of this Sangha and a powerful war like tribe still known as Damani and settled in the north western portion of Baluchistan known as Chagai, lying to the south of the Chagai Hills.\

There is a mention of the names of six ganas which federated together to be called ‘Trigarta Shashtha’ or the league of six trigartas. Trigarta stands for three valleys viz. those of the Ravi, Beas and the Sutlej. They are named as

- Kaundoparatha
- Dandaki
- Kraushtaki
- Jalamani
- Brahmagupta
- Janaki or Jalaki

**The Yaudheyas:** the name itself is derived from ‘Yodha’ and signifies ‘warrior’. Panini’s reference to Yaudheyas is the earliest known. The Yaudheyas have a long history as shown by their inscriptions and coins of different ages, and were existing upto the time of Samudragupta. They survived the onslaught of the Mauryan

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31 Ibid, p 444
imperialism and closed their ranks in face of the Machiavillian Magadhan statecraft. They disillusioned the Sunga ambitions and subsequently defied the alien Sakas and Kushans, resisted their advance and were instrumental in bringing about their downfall. Their country is called Bahudhanyaka and their capital is Rohitaka in Mahabharata. According to Dr Altekar, we find from the spots where its coins have been discovered, that it extended from Saharanpur in the east to Bahavalpur in the west, from Ludhiana in the north west to Delhi in the south east. It was a confederation of three republics. Rohtak in Punjab was the capital of one of them, the northern Panchala known as Bahudhanyaka country was the centre of power for the second. Northern Rajputana seems to have been the jurisdiction of the third. The powerful trans Beas state, mentioned by Alexander’s historians, which possessed fertile territory and virile inhabitants, and which was governed by an aristocracy exercising its powers with justice and moderation was the Yaudheya republic.32

Parsu: the whole tribe was called Parsavah and single member Parsava. The Parsus may be identified with the Persians. The Parsus also find mention in the Rigveda.

Gandhara, Panini’s homeland and Parsa, both occur as names of two provinces in the Behistun inscription, brought under the common sovereignty of Darius (521 – 486 BC) which promoted their mutual intercourse. It seems that soon after the death of Darius, Gandhara became independent as would appear from the manner of its mention by Panini as an independent Janpada.33

Ayudhajivi Sanghas in the Gana Paath

More names are given in three groups of Damanyadi, Parsvadi and Yaudheyadi.

Damanyadi group includes

- Aulapi

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32 A.S.Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p 119
33 V.S.Agarwala, India as known to Panini, p 446
- Audaki
- Achyutanti
- Bindu
- Kakadanti
- Maunjayana
- Sarvaseni
- Savitriputra
- Tulabha

**Parsvadi** group includes twelve states

- Asura
- Asani
- Bahlika
- Dasarha
- Karshapana
- Marut
- Pisacha
- Rakshasa
- Satvatas
- Vasu
- Vishala
- Vyās

**Yaudheyas** group includes nine states

- Bharat
- Dharterya
- Jyabaneya
- Saubhreya
- Saukreya
- Trigarta
- Usinara
- Varteya
- Yaudheyas

Besides the above mentioned Ayudhjivi Sanghas stated as such in Ashtadhyayi,

Panini mentioned a few more communities whom we know from other sources to be republican in character. These include

**Vriji:** Buddhist literature mentions them as Vajjis which includes a confederation of eight states of which Lichchavis and Videhas are prominent, both being described as
republics during Buddha’s time.

**Rajanya:** The country occupied by them is known as Rajanyaka. Numismatic evidences in Hoshiarpur district points to it as their region. They also find mention in the writings of Katyayana and Patanjali and also in the Mahabharata. Not just the Hoshiarpur district, even in the Mathura region, their coins have been found leading us to conclude that there must be some tribal movements in those times where a branch of the Rajanyas had moved to the region of Mathura.

**Maharaja:** The existence of Maharaja janpada is proved by their coins found in Punjab. Four large villages in Moga tehsil of Ferozpur district which is the headquarter of a paragana is called Maharaja, held by the Maharajki clan of Jats. The Maharajkians who own the surrounding country or Jagirdars form a distinct community.

**Andhak Vrishni:** References to the Andhak Vrishni League is also made in the Puranas, Mahabharata and by Kautilya. Puranas make them identical with Satvat mentioned by Panini in the Gana Paath. All references are made in the context of their being a Sangha. The Andhak Vrishnis, the Yadavas, the Kukkurases and the Bhojas are described in the Mahabharata as having their full confidence in the leadership of Krishna. Probably they formed a federal republic at least for sometime.34

**Bharga** is referred to as a kshatriya tribe by Panini. They were called ‘Easterners’. The Mahabharat, the Buddhist records, have mentioned their locations differently. However, Panini finds them a political community like the Yaudheyas, with whom he groups them.

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34 A.S.Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p 121
**Kshudrakas** were another republic. Curtius expressly describes their form of government as democratic.

**Malava:** Panini refers to the Malavas as living by the profession of arms in Punjab. They may be identical with the Malloi tribe conquered by Alexander. About six hundred Malava coins have been discovered at an ancient site near the modern town of Nagar and its neighbourhood. At Rairh in the Jaipur State, some Malava coins have been found together with a lead stamp seal with the legend ‘malava-janpadasa’.\(^{35}\) According to the Greek writers this community was settled in the region where the river Ravi joins Chenab. They are said to have offered the toughest resistance to the Greek invaders. The coins have the legend of ‘Malvahana Jaya’, ‘Malvanam Jaya’ and ‘Malva Ganasya Jaya’.\(^{36}\)

**Vasati** is identified as somewhere in the region of confluence of the Chenab and Sutlej with the Indus.

**Aprita.** This tribe is identified with the Aparyatai of Herodotus. They are also identified with the modern Afridis whose ancestors pronounced their name as Apridi. Their country is called Apridi Tirah.

**Madhumant:** Panini mentions this republic as lying in the Gandhara region. Mahabharata too mentions it as people of north west.

**Asvayana** in Alishang or Kunar valley, **Asvakayana** in the Swat valley and highlands with capital at Maskavati and **Hastinayana** near the confluence of the Swat and Kabul, with capital at Pushkalavati are three more republics mentioned by Panini.

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\(^{35}\) D.C.Sircar, Northern India after the Kushans, The Age of Imperial Unity, p 165

\(^{36}\) R.C.Majumdar, Corporate Life in Ancient India, p 272
In the end we can say that Panini, being a resident of the region himself concentrated mostly on the north western part of India while describing and observing the republican or non-monarchical states. He also describes their political organisation and the impact of their non-monarchical spirit on the society. Even today we find that the constitutional governance in these regions as extremely weak as these areas are mostly autonomous. People here, belong mostly, to different tribal groups having their own customs, language, ways of functioning and lifestyle. People here are virile, militant like and have an impulsive love for freedom.
2.3 Buddhist and Jain Texts

The Aryan settlers lived in clans and their form of government was more or less republican. Generally a single chief was elected as the chief executive officer with the title of Raja, and whenever the supreme power became hereditary the result was the establishment of a monarch with unlimited authority. The reverse process of a monarch being converted into a republic scarcely found. Videha is the only one instance in the Buddhist records of a tribe, once under a monarchy, going back to the

37 http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=053
republican form. At the time of Gautam Buddha we find powerful monarchies existing side by side with republics with absolute or modified freedom. There were four kingdoms of great importance, viz., Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa and Avanti. The small kingdoms were about a dozen in number but they had very little political importance, and they were gradually absorbed in the powerful neighbouring states. The number of aristocratic republics existing at the time is not easy to ascertain. The most important republics were those of the Sakyas and the Vajjians. The Koliyans were a sub-clan of the Sakya race. The Vajjis consisted of eight confederate clans of whom the Lichchavis and the Videhas were most important. The other independent clans were the Mallas of Kusinara and Pava. The Pali Pitakas mention sixteen great countries (Maha-janapadah). In the sixth century B.C. they were:

(1) Anga, near modern Bhagalpur, with capital Champa.

(2) Magadha, or South Bihar, with capital at Rajagriha and afterwards at Pataliputra.

(3) Kasi, with capital at Kasi, modern Benares.

(4) Kosala, with capital at Sravasti on the borders of Nepal.

(5) Vrijji, the country of the Vajjians, who were composed of eight confederate clans, of whom the Lichchavis and the Videhas were the most powerful. The capital of the Videhas was Mithila, and that of the Lichchavis, Vaisali.

(6) The country of the Mallas, who were divided into two independent clans, and whose territory was on the mountain slopes to the east of the Sakya land.

(7) Cheti, the country of the Chedis, who perhaps had two distinct settlements, one in Nepal and the other to the east or south-east of Kosambi.

(8) Vatsa or Vamsa, of which Kosambi was the capital. It lay north of Avanti and along the banks of the Jamuna.

(9) The country of the Kurus, with its capital at Indraprastha, near modern Delhi.

(10) The country of the two Panchalas, to the east of the land of the Kurus, with capitals at Kampilya and Kanauj.

(11) The Matsya country, to the south of the Kurus and west of the Jamuna.

(12) The country of the Surasenas, with its capital at Mathura, to the south-west of the Matsya country and west of the Jamuna.
(13) The country of the Arsakas, on the banks of the Godavari, with its capital at Potana or Potali.

(14) Avanti, afterwards called Malava, with its capital, Ujjayini.

(15) Gandhara (modern Kandahar), including Eastern Afghanistan and North-western Punjab, with its capital, Taksha-sila.

(16) Kamboja, the country near modern Sindh.

The list does not include the names of some important states such as Sivi, Maddha, Sovira, Udyana and Virata. Vaisali, Anga and Kasi lost their independence but they are described here as independent states.

Numerous Republics have been recorded in the Buddhist literature. They covered land to the east of the kingdoms of Kosala and Kaushambi and to the west of Anga, from the districts of Gorakhpur and Ballia to the districts of Bhagalpur, to the north of Magadh and south of the Himalayas.

Prof. Rhys Davids has drawn up a list of ten clans which are referred to in the Buddhist Canons as existing during the time of Buddha. They were the

- Sakyas of Kapilvastu
- Bhaggas of Sumsumara Hills
- Bulis of Alakappa
- Kalamas of Kesaputta
- Koliyas of Ramagama
- Mallas of Kusinara
- Mallas of Pava
- Moriyas of Pipphalivana
- Videhas of Mithila
- Lichchavis of Vesali

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38 K.P. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, p 42
The last two were collectively called the Vajjians.

**Sakyas of Kapilvastu**

History remembers Sakyas not because of the might of their power, but because they gave to the humanity one of its greatest teachers, Gautama Buddha. Sakyas belonged to the solar dynasty. The Mahavastu refers to them as ‘Adityavandhus’ or people kin to the sun. They claimed that they were the descendants of the Ikshvakus.39

This state was bound on the north by the Himalayas, on the south and the west by river Rapti and on the east by river Rohini. Their capital was Kapilvastu. The Sakyas were the vassals of King Pasenadi (Pasenjit) of Kosala though the Kosala kingdom included the Sakya state within its boundaries, yet the Sakyas maintained their independent status. They were politically independent and formed a separate entity from the social standpoint with customs and practices peculiar to themselves. The Sakyas possessed a number of cities besides their capital, nine of which are mentioned in the Buddhist texts. They include Chatuma, Samagama, Ulumpa, Devdaha, Medalumpa, Nagarka, Sakkara, Silavati and Khomadussa.40

Before the birth of the founder of Buddhism, they were comparatively little known, yet in the rugged fastness of the lower Himalayas, the Sakyas had built up a remarkable though not a very powerful principality at the time the great teacher was born.

**Koliyas of Ramagama**

The Koliyas were divided into two chief settlements, one at Ramagama and the

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39 B.C.Law, Some Kshariya Tribes of Ancient India, p 174
40 Cambridge History of India, Volume 1, p 177
other at Devdaha. Several scholars are of the opinion that the Koliyas of Ramagama came originally from the same group as the Koliyas of Devdaha. Ramagama is also associated with Deokali. Alexander Cunningham says that Koliya country was located between the Kohana river and the Aumi river which formed the boundary between Koliyas on the one hand and the Mallas and the Moriyas on the other. From the Kunala Jataka it is known that the Koliyas came to be known by this name because they used to dwell in the Kola tree (Kolarukkhe). Hence they came to be called ‘Koliyas’ or dwellers in ‘jujube’ (Koli) trees. From Theragatha we learn that the river Rohini formed the boundary between the territories of the Sakyas and the Koliyas which were located on either sides. DighNikaya refers to the inhabitants of the Ramagama of the serpent race. A body of peons or police was mentioned as the central authorities of Koliyas. They, by their special head dress, became very famous in ancient India.

The Bhaggas of Sumsumara Hills

Reference of the Bhaggas have been made in the Mahabharat, they were known to Panini and Pali Canon also mentions them frequently. Bhargayana princes are mentioned in the Aitareya Brahmana too. The Bhaggas were next door neighbours of the Vatsas to the east, both according to the Mahabharata and the Pali records. Their seat was evidently a hill fortress(Sumsumara hills) somewhere in or about the district of Mirzapur. Panini found them an independent janapada or a political nation important enough to be placed at the head of the eastern communities. The Bhagga

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41 B.C.Law, Some Kshariya Tribes of Ancient India, p 211
42 Ibid, p 208
43 Cambridge History of India, Volume 1, p 178

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territory was situated between Vaishali and Sravasti, its capital being Sumsumaragiri. It has been inferred by many writers that Sumsumara hill was located in a deer park at Bhesakalavana and was used as a fort. Prince Bodhi, the son of Vatsa king Udayana ruled over the Bhaggas as his father’s viceroy. He used to live in Sumsumaragiri and a new place called Kokanada was constructed by him.  

**Kalamas of Kesaputta**

We do not know much about the origin of Kalamas of Kesaputta. “There is but a bare mention of them in the Nikayas. No doubt they existed at the time of Buddha as a distinct tribe or people. Probably their home or seat of government was in the mountain fastness, not far from the upper gangetic valley” the Kalamas were the people to whom belonged the far famed Alara, the first teacher of Buddha, before his attainment to Buddhahood. The word Kesaputta should be taken in the plural form, denoting the land of Kesaputtas. The etymology of the name indicates that the tribe traced its decent from the Kesins, a tribe connected with the Panchals. Panini has also mentioned Kesins.

**Bulis of Allakappa**

The Dhammapada commentary records the Buli state as the kingdom of Allakappa. It states further that it was only ten leagues in extent. Its relation with a state named Vathadipa were not good. Thus it may be inferred that Allakappa lay not from Vathadip. Vathadip housed a famous Brahmin in the early days of Buddhism who made a cairn over the remains of Buddha in his native land. Their territory is placed

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44 K.P.Jayaswal, Hindu Polity A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, p 43
45 B.C.Law, Some Kshariya Tribes of Ancient India, p 192-3
46 Ibid, p 203
somewhere in north Bihar. The city of Allakappa has not yet been identified.

**Moriyas of Pipphalivana**

Although inconspicuous at the time of Buddha, the Moriyas had a great destiny in the centuries that followed. The imperial Mauryas hailed from this clan. Some scholars derive its name from ‘modiya’ meaning pleasing or delightful. The Moriyas used to live in a delightful land. Some scholars say that the name had close connection with peacock. The people became known as Moriyas, because the place where they founded their city always resounded with the cries of peacocks.

The Moriyas of Pipphalivana were probably the close neighbours of the Koliyas beyond the Anoma river and the Mallas of Anupiya on the banks of that river. The river Anoma separated the Koliyas on the one hand and the Mallas and the Moriyas on the other. The Moriya state had its capital at Pipphalivana which has been identified by scholars with Hiuen Tsang’s Nyaygrodhvana or Banyan grove. It was located about fifty miles to the west of Kushinagar. It has been identified with the modern Sahelkot in Gorakhpur district.

**Mallas of Pava**

The Mallas who covered a large area to the south of the Sakyas and east of the Vrijis, from the district of Gorakhpur to that of Champaran, were divided into two units, with their capitals at Kushinagar and Pava. The reference to the Mallas of Pava have not been very frequent. The river Kakutta divided the two territories of the Mallas. It has been identified with the river Kuker. Alexander Cunningham identifies

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47 H Raychaudhary, Political History of Ancient India, p 192
Pava with the modern Padrauna, twelve miles to the north of Kasia. Carlyle identifies Pava with Faslipur, ten miles south east of Kasia, separated from it by the Kuker river. The importance of this state increases as the great Jain Tirthankar Mahavir left his mortal remains at Pava. It was at Pava where Buddha ate his last meal and fell ill. Their territory bordered that of Vajjians.

**Mallas of Kusinara**

Several references to this state have been made in the Buddhist and the Jain texts too. In one of the narratives Buddha says, “Come Ananda, let us go on to the Sala Grove of The Mallas, the Upavattana of Kusinara, on the farther side of the river Hiranyavati.”

He says, “Go now, Ananda and enter into Kusinara, and inform the Mallas of Kusinara, saying, this day,. O Vasetthas, in the last watch of night, the final passing away of Tathagata will take place. Be favourable herein O Vasetthas, be favourable. Give no occasion to reproach yourself saying, in our own village did the death of our Tathagata take place and we took not the opportunity of visiting Tathagata in his last hours.”

We can here see Mallas being addressed as Vasetthas i.e. belonging to the Vashistha gotra. The Mallas were a Sangha every member of which was entitled to call himself a raja. They were a martial race devoted mainly to the sports like wrestling. The great Buddha abandoned his mortal frame at Sal grove of Kusinara on the banks of the river Hiranyavati. The spot can be identified with Kasia as a colossal icon of Buddha has been found there in a lying posture.

According to Kautilya, the Mallas were a Sangha or corporation of which the

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49 Ibid, p 120-21
members called themselves rajas, just as the Lichchavis did. Buddhagosa also calls
them rajas. A passage in the Majjhim Nikaya mentions the Lichchavis and Mallas as
examples of Sanghas and Ganas.\(^{50}\)

Jainism and Buddhism found many followers among the Mallas. The
Kalpasutras of Janis refer to the participation of nine Mallakis (Malla Chiefs) among
those who arranged illuminations on the new moon day of the demise of Mahavir.
Both sections of the Mallas participated in the funeral of Buddha and claimed a share
of his relics. Hence until the time of Buddha’s Parinirvana they retained their
independence.

**Videhas of Mithila**

They were ancient people known to the Vedas, Brahmans and the epics. Prof. Rhys
Davids mentions Mithila as the capital of Videha. It was in the district now called
Tirhut. Its size is frequently given as seven leagues, about fifty miles in circumference.
It was bounded by Kausiki in the east, Gaya in the south, Sadanira in the west and the
Himalayas in the north.

**Lichchavis of Vaisali**

The Lichchavis had a republican form of government. Raja was the highest court of
appeal who alone could inflict punishment. He was elected by the people or rather by
the ruling clans of the Lichchavis. The administration of the country was in the hands
of the Lichchavigana who elected their members. In the Lichchavisanthagara,
discussions were held on the Tiratanas. It is not mentioned in the Samantapasadika
that the Lichchavi assembly was like the assembly of gods (Tavatimsadeva). In the
assembly of the Tavatimsa gods, four kings were the receivers of spoken words with

\(^{50}\) B.C.Law, Tribes in Ancient India, p 258
regard to the matter for which the 33 gods met in the assembly and four great kings were the receivers of the admonition given. From this Dr. Rhys Davids infers that the four great kings were regarded as Recorders (in their memory) of what had been said. The minutes of the meetings were kept by them. If so, there must have been such Recorders in the Mote halls of the clans. Their relations with some ancient chiefs and tribes may be briefly noted: They were on friendly terms with King Pasenadi (Prasenjit) of Kosala as is evident from the account given in the Angulimala Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya. Pasenadi (Prasenjit) went to the Buddha and confessed that Bimbisara of Magadha and the Lichchavis were his friends.

The Mallas and the Lichchavis were not on friendly terms. This is corroborated by the account of the fight between Bandhula, a Mallian general and the Lichchavis. It is stated in title Cullavagga of the Vinaya Pitaka that Vaddha, a Licchavi was instigated to bring a false charge against Dabba, a Mallian, of breach of morality, but he confessed his guilt and was punished.51

Lichchavis were regarded as the most well known people in the political and religious history of ancient India. They occur roughly around 6th Century BC. Their peculiar form of government, their free institutions, their manners and customs, their religious views and practices, afford us glimpses of India of the transition period, when the ancient Vedic culture was making a fresh development and undergoing a normal transformation under the influence of speculative activity out of which emerged two great religions of Jainism and Buddhism.52

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51 B.C.Law, Historical Gleanings, p 74
52 B.C.Law, Some Kshariya Tribes of Ancient India, p 162
The name of Mahavir’s mother was Trisala, but she was also called Priyekarini and Videhadutta, and described as belonging to the Videha clan. But from the Jain text it is known that she was the sister of the Lichchavi king Chetaka and thus she has been described as both Videhan and Lichchavi. Here both terms Lichchavi and Videhan have been used interchangeably and synonymously.

A few features of the Lichchavi society can be discussed. If a Lichchavi fell ill, the other Lichchavis came to see him. The whole clan would join any auspicious ceremony performed in the house of a Lichchavi. When a foreign king paid a visit to the Lichchavi country, the Lichchavis went out in a body to receive him and do him honour. They did not impose new taxes. Old taxes were abolished. The young Vajjians used to learn rajaniti from the old experienced Vajjians. Chastity was not to be violated by force. The old religious rites were observed. They used to hold frequent meetings. Matters relating to various parts of the country were heard and discussed. They sent out armies at the approach of foreign invaders. By beat of drum the meeting was announced and everyone tried to attend and having done their work they dispersed at the same time.

A Lichchavi gana could select a suitable wife for a Lichchavi when asked for. It was for the Lichchavigana to decide cases of adultery. Among the Lichchavis of Vaisali, there was a law to the effect that a woman born in the first district could marry only in the first district and not in the second or the third. One born in the middle district could marry only in the first and the second. One born in the third district could marry in any one of the three. Marriage outside Vaisali was not
allowed.  

**Brahmins of Vetthadipa**

A mention of this state is made along with the Bulis of Allakappa where it describes friendly relations between the two. Not much details have been found regarding this state but it seems that they were one of the few Brahmin republics.

**Dasarnas**

This state finds mention in the Jatakas and primarily in the list of the sixteen mahajanapadas. Dasarnas find mention in the Ramayana, Mahabharat and the Puranas.

**Kosiyas**

Except for their name and casual reference in the Buddhist text not much information has survived about them. Their name makes it resemble with the Koliyas, or a branch of them or entirely different from them.

**Assakas of Potana**

The Assaka had, during the time of Buddha, a settlement on the banks of the river Godavari. Their capital was Potana. Their country is mentioned with Avanti in the same way as Anga with Magadh. Its position on the list between Surasena and Avanti, makes it probable that, when the list was drawn up, the position was immediately north west of Avanti.

All these republics existed in the country to the north of the Ganges. Some people therefore doubt whether the tribes enjoying such autonomy were purely Aryan. These settlements were established later than those in the Punjab and in the Gangetic Valley, and they therefore maintained their independence down to a very late age. Moreover it

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53 B.C.Law, Historical Gleanings, p 72-73
is probable that a wave of immigrations of the Aryans followed the foot of the mountains. They might have come from Kashmir to Kosala and then to the Sakya country, and through Tirhoot to Magadha and Anga. This later immigration might account for the difference in manners and customs of the Prachyas from those of the people of the Kuru-Panchala and the Punjab. It has been pointed out that the resemblance in the dialects of Rajasthan, Nepal and Chamba, in fact may be taken as a proof of the common starting places of these peoples.

The regional character of these states as it is mostly confined to the eastern part of India should be taken as evidence of the Jain and Buddhist literature. Unlike the monarchical states these republics were very small territorial units. The Bhaggas, the Bulis, the Koliyas and the Moriyas were very small states, hardly more extensive than a tehsil or two of the modern times. The Sakyas, Mallas, Lichchavis and the Videhas were relatively larger, but the total extent of the territories of all these four states did not cover an area of more than two hundred miles in length and hundred miles in breadth between Gorakhpur in the west and Darbhanga in the east, between the Ganga in the south and Himalayas in the north.54

It can be inferred that Buddha’s age was the age of glory for the Indian republics. We often find some of these republics forming confederations among themselves to ward off the imperial neighbourhood of Magadha and Kosala, who were always anxious to annex them.

54 A.S.Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p 121-22
Map 3 The Sixteen Mahajanapadas and other Regional Powers

55 http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=052
2.4 The Epics

The great epic the Mahabharata is quite explicit in describing the characteristics of the republics which distinguished them from monarchies. In the discussion between Bhishma and Yudhishtir, there are definite traces that indicate that the characteristics go back to early times. The disquisition in the Mahabharata makes it clear that the ‘Gana’ refers to the whole body politic, the entire political community, and in the alternative, the Parliament and not the governing body alone.

In Sabha Parva, while describing the adventures of Arjuna it is said, “Thence, surrounded by kings and the peoples he subjugated, the hero marched against king Viswagaswa – that bull of Puru’s race. And having vanquished the brave mountaineers, who were all great warriors, the son of Pandu, o king, then reduced by means of his troops, the town protected by the Puru king. And having vanquished in battle the Puru king as also the robber tribes of the mountains, the son of Pandu brought under his sway the seven tribes called Utsava-Sauketa” 56

Mention of robber tribes and naming of confederation of seven tribes brings out the presence of republican trends in the polity of those times. It then says, “and that bull of Kshatriya race then defeated the brave Kshatriyas of Kashmir, and then king Lohita along with ten minor chiefs.” 57 Lohita has not been given any title of royalty. He could have been the chief of the confederacy of ten kings. Kashmir is not named by its ruler instead the term Kshatriyas (plural) has been used. It can be clearly deduced here that there existed some form of republican setup in Kashmir during those times.

56 Mahabharata, Sabha Parv, Section XXVII, p 81
57 Ibid.
Nakul, the son of Madri during his adventure, proceeded to the west and subjugated a number of republics, “Dasharnas, the Shivis, the Trigartas, the Amvashtas, the Malavas, the five tribes of Karnatas, and those twice born classes that were called Madhyamakeyas and Vatadhanas.”

“And the illustrious hero soon brought under subjugation the mighty Graminiyas that dwelt on the banks of the sea, and the Sudras and the Abhiras that dwelt on the banks of Saraswati, and all those tribes that lived upon their fisheries, and those also that dwelt on the mountains, and the whole country called after the five rivers, and the mountains called Amara, and the country called Utar-Yotisha and the city of Divyakuta and the tribe called Dwarapala.”

It is noteworthy that while describing the conquests of Arjuna and Nakula, various names of kings and their kingdoms have been mentioned. However in the passage quoted above, names of tribes, people, countries have been given. In fact occupational references have also been made. This further strengthens our belief of the existence of republican tribes during those times. In Jambukhandanirmana of Bhishma Parv there is a long list of names of countries. Neither their form of government is mentioned nor their details. However there is likelihood that a few of them must be republics. Frequent mention of a few of them as tribes and peoples further strengthen our observation.

The Andhak Vrishni Sangha was formed of five republican tribes, Yadavas, Kukuras, Bhojas, Andhaka and Vrishnis. Krishna Vasudev was their leader. They ruled in the region of Mathura. He also freed them from the cruel rule of Kansa. This

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58 Ibid, Section XXXII, p 93
59 Ibid, p 94
finds mention in the Mahabharata, Ghata Jataka and Patanjali’s Mahabhashaya. We also come to know that under the pressure of attacks from Magadh king Jarasand, they migrated to the western coast of Saurashtra and established Dwarika. The Mahabharata also confirms that the Andhak Vrishni Sangha was cursed by the sages because of their indecent behaviour towards the Rishis. Several numismatic evidences also point to their republican character.
Map 4  India as revealed in the Ramayana\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{60} http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=050
2.5 Greek Accounts

The Greek and Macedonian writers who accompanied Alexander distinguish between monarchical and republican states, the latter are either aristocratic or democratic, being described by them as ‘free’, ‘autonomous’ and independent. While describing the duties of the officials called superintendents, Megasthenes says that, “They report everything to the king where people have a king and to the magistrate where people have a king.”

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61 http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=051
where people are self governed.” The tradition as put by Megasthenes is that Dionysos came to India, conquered it, established an empire and civilised it and after reigning over the whole of India for two hundred and fifty years, he died of old age, while his sons succeeding to the government, transmitted the sceptic in unbroken succession to posterity. At last after many generations had come and gone, the sovereignty, it is said was dissolved and democratic governments were setup in cities.

Megasthenes records Indian tradition regarding Herakles, “ They further assert that Herakles was born among them…. His descendents having reigned for many generations and signalised themselves by great achievements. At last however after many years had gone, most of the cities adopted a democratic form of government”

In his campaign against India, Alexander came across the following republics and his writers have furnished detailed descriptions of them.

**The Kathians**

The Greek writers describe the Kathians as one of the most powerful nations of India. They were to the east of Hydraotes or Ravi, in the area now covered by the districts of Lahore and Amritsar. Their capital was Sangala (Sakala). The Kathians themselves enjoyed the highest reputation for courage and skill in the art of war. They along with the other republican Indians had shortly before their battle with Alexander defeated both king Porus and the king of Abhisars. The Kathians had fortified their capital city of Sangala and were there awaiting both the onslaught of

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62 J.W.McCrindle, Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, p 43
63 Ibid, p 39-40
64 J.W.McCrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, p 115
invaders and the reinforcements of their allies. The Kathians are described to have formed what in Hindu tactics is called ‘wagon formation’ against Alexander which presented great difficulty to his soldiers. Here it is learnt that Kathians, Oxydrakai and the Mallians, independent tribes had formed a confederation and were preparing to bond together to preserve their ancient freedom. The unjustified invasion had so angered the tribesmen that their ferocious resistance had compelled the invaders to retreat without having accomplished anything commensurate with their vast preparations and intentions.\textsuperscript{65}

**The Adraistai or Adrestai or Adrestae**

They dwelt on the eastern side of Hydraotes (Ravi) and their capital seems to be Pimprama as Greeks called it. Their communities were spelt as Adraistai or Adrestai or Adrestae. Dr. Jayaswal identifies them with the Arishthas of Panini and the Gana Path. Arrian mentions two more republics without giving their names. One of the republics that he describes is “it was reported that the country beyond the river Hyphases was fertile and that the men were good agriculturists, gallant in war and they conducted their own political affairs in a regular and constitutional manner. For the multitude was ruled by aristocracy, who exercised their authority with justice and moderation.”\textsuperscript{66} We come to know from the account of the various Greek writers that all states Alexander met on his way back, down the Indus and upto the Indian frontier in Baluchistan, were republican.

**The Sibis**

\textsuperscript{65} A.V.Cummings, Alexander the Great, p 354
\textsuperscript{66} J.W.McCrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, p 121
They were friendly neighbours of another famous republic, the Malloi. The Sibis inhabited the district between the Hydaspes and the Indus, and their capital stood at a distance of about thirty miles from the confluence with the Akesnes.\(^67\) This in modern times corresponds to the lower part of Rechna Doab in the Shorkot region of the present district of Jhanga between the junction of Jhelum and Chenab. Sibis represent one of the chief aboriginal tribes of the regions of the Indus as they dressed themselves in the skins of wild beast and had club for their weapons. The nation had forty thousand foot soldiers at the time of Alexander. In his Indika, Arrian refers to them, “so also when the Greeks came among the Sibai, an Indian tribe, and observed that they wore skins, they declared that the Sibai were descended from those who belonged to the expedition of Herakles, and had been left behind.” They are probably the same Siva people who find mention in the Rigveda where they share the honour of being defeated by Sudas with Alinas, Pakhtas, Bhalanese and Visanis.

The Jatakas too mention Sivi country and its cities of Aritthapura and Jetuttara. Thus we can imply that Sibi, Siva, Siboi were one and the same people. The Shorkot inscription also mentions Sibipura.\(^68\) The Sibis had a monarchy in the earlier days but became a republic later. By 100 BC, they migrated to Madhyamika, near Chittor in Rajputana, where a large number of their coins, issued in the name of their republic and not that of any king have been found.\(^69\)

**The Agalassoi**

They were neighbours of the Siboi people and mustered an army of forty thousand

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\(^{67}\) Ibid, p 366  
\(^{68}\) H Raychaudhary, Political History of Ancient India, p 130  
\(^{69}\) A.S.Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p 121
foot soldiers and three thousand horsemen to challenge the Macedonian conquerer.

**The Sudraeae or Oxydrakai**

They occupied a part of their territory below the confluence of Jhelum and Chenab. They are associated with the Shudrakas of Vedic times. They had formed a confederation to meet the invasion of Alexander and it seems to have lasted for about a century. The alliance had been cemented by ten thousand inter marriages. However there are contradictory statements of Greek writers regarding the pact between Malloi and Oxydrakai while Curtius tells us that their combined army was led by a Ksudraka hero, Diodorus says that Syrakusoi (Ksudrakas) and Malloi could not agree as to the choice of the leader and consequently did not take the field together. According to Arrian as well, the Malloi had agreed to combine with the Oxydrakai against Alexander, but the conquerer advanced so rapidly that their design was thwarted and the two tribes hardly had the opportunity to unite against the common enemy.70

**The Malloi**

The Mallois have been unanimously identified with the Malavas. Although it is certain that the Malavas were occupying a territory in Punjab at the time of Alexander’s invasion, but there is some difference of opinion about their exact location. Smith thinks they occupied a country below the confluence of Hydaspes and Akesnes i.e. a country comprising of the Jhang and Montgomery districts. According to McCrindle they occupied a greater extent of territory, comprising the modern Doab of Akesnes and Hydraotes (Chenab and Ravi) and extending to the confluence of the Indus and Akesnes identical with modern day Multan district and portions of

70 B.C.Law, Tribes in Ancient India, p 61
Montgomery. Raychaudhary locates them in the valley of lower Hydraotes on both banks of the river.

When Alexander reached Malloi, there were these republican friends called Siboi (Curtius says there was no king amongst them, only citizens filled highest offices.) The Mallois are called the race of independent Indians; their cities were along the Chenab and their capital was near the Ravi. In order to meet Alexander’s invasion, they formed an alliance, but before their armies could affect a junction, Alexander struck against the Malavas. The Malavas could muster an army of about one lakh strong, offered a stiff resistance and Alexander almost lost his life while trying to capture one of their forts. Eventually both the Malavas and Kshudrakas were compelled to sue for peace. The two states however, became wiser by this defeat and formed a confederation which lasted for a few decades.

The Agesinae (Acensoni or Agalassi or Argesinae)

Alexander met in the neighbourhood of the last two republics, the Agesinae who had mustered an army if we believe Diodorus of forty thousand foot and three thousand horsemen. The Indians, however having barricaded the narrow streets, fought with great vigour from the houses, so that Alexander in suppressing the attack lost not a few Macedonians. This enraged him and he set fire to the city burning with it most of its defenders.

The Ambasthas

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72 A.S.Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p 120
73 J.W.McCrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, p 285
The Ambasthas are the same as Abastanoi (Arrian), Sambastanoi (Diodorus), Sabarcae (Curitus) or Sabagrae (Orosius) of Alexander’s historians. They were a people inferior to none in India either in numbers or for bravery. They dwelt in cities in which democratic form of government prevailed. On hearing that Macedonians were coming to attack them, they collected sixty thousand foot soldiers, six thousand horsemen and five hundred chariots. But when the fleet bore in sight they were thrown into great alarm by the novelty of the appearance it presented and the unexpectedness of its presence. They elected three generals to oppose Alexander. Eventually however they decided to submit to him following the advise of the elders. This tribe finds mention in the Mahabharata and the Jatakas.

**The Xathroi and Ossadioi**

The Xathroi are the Kshatriya of Sanskrit mentioned in the Laws of Manu as an impure tribe being of mixed origin. After having subjugated Abastanoi, there arrived at the camp of Alexander “thirty oared galleys and transport vessels which had been built for him among the Xathroi, another independent tribe of Indians whose submission he had received. From the Ossadioi also, another independent tribe came envoys offering the submission of their nation.” The name of this city is not given by any of the historians, but in all probability it bore the name of its founder.

**The Mousikanos / Musicani**

It included a large part of modern Sindh. Its capital has been identified with Alor in the Sukkur district. They have their meals in common. Their food consists of

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74 Ibid. p 292
75 Ibid. p 156
what is taken in chase. They made no use of gold and silver, although they had mines of these metals. Instead of slaves they employed youths in the flower of their age. They study no science with attention but that of medicine, for they consider the excessive pursuit of some arts, as that of war, and the like to be committing evil.

Alexander’s companions admired their constitutions and laws. There is no process at law but against murder and outrage for it is not in person’s own power of each individual, he must endure the wrong, if good faith is violated by another; for a man should be cautious of whom he trusts, and not disturb the city with constant disputes in courts of justice.76

The Brachmanoi

Diodorus and Arrian mention “the country of the Brachmans.” It also finds mention in Panini’s Ashtadhyayi as the “Brahmanaka Janpada”. “Their military traditions continued up to the time of Alexander whose invasions they resisted with patriotic heroism”.77 Their territorial state comprised both middle and lower valley of the Indus. They were a republican community without any chief or king. The political sovereignty seems to have been vested in the whole of community. Diodorus refers to the “city of Brahmanas” which was probably the capital of their state. The city itself called Brahmana at the time of Alexander’s invasion is identical with Brahmanavaha of Rajshekhara (9th century AD.) Cunningham has identified it with the ruins situated near an old bed of the Indus at the distance of about forty seven miles to the north east of Hyderabad. It corresponds both in name and position with the great city of Brahmanabad.78 This little republic showed great spirit and patriotism and was

76 H.Raychaudhary, Political History of Ancient India, p 133
77 V.S.Agarwala, India as known to Panini, p 50
specially marked down for revenge by Alexander because, “the philosophers gave him no less trouble than the mercenaries because they reviled the princes who declared for him and encouraged free states to revolt from his authority. On this account he hanged many of them.”

The Patala

To the south of the Brachmanoi lay the state of Patala in the delta of the Indus. We also come to know that the political constitution was drawn on the same lines as Spartan. The location has been identified with Haiderabad (Sindh), whose ancient name is still remembered as Potalapuri. “the command in war was handed over to two hereditary kings belonging to two families while the council was in the hands of the Council of Elders. Evidently it seemed to be a dvairajya constitution and government was really oligarchical.”

Patala Constitution is a unique example of aristocratic oligarchy or democracy. The ultimate political authority in all cases rested with the Gana or the Sangha. The states wherein the Greeks found executive power held by a few families on hereditary principles, although the rulers were subject to a Gana, they have been described as aristocratic.

The Glaukanikoi or Glausai

The free clan called the Glaukanikoi by the historians of Alexander or Glausai by Ptolemy are identical with the Glauchukayanakas of the Kasika on Panini. Arrian

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78 Ibid.
79 J.W.McCrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, p 306
80 R.Dasgupta, A Study in Hindu and European Political Systems, p 223
states that they occupied a tract to the west of the Chenab which was coterminous with
the dominion of Porus. It is said that their “country lay in the fertile and populous
regions lying in the south of Kashmir (the Bhimber and Rajouri districts) between the
upper courses of the Jhelum, the Chenab and the Ravi”. The prevailing form of
government in their state was by and large republican. They were independent of
Porus. According to Arrian, they had thirty seven large cities, the smallest of which
had no fewer than five thousand inhabitants while many contained upwards of ten
thousand.\textsuperscript{81} There were also a great many villages which were not less populous than
the towns. Alexander took them and placed them under Porus, thereby adding much
‘country’ to what he had possessed before. They eventually became one of the
dependencies of Porus. All other independent tribes bordering on the banks of the Ravi
were reduced by Alexander’s troops and placed under the rule of other Porus, nephew
of the great Porus.

\textbf{The Kunindas or Kulindas}

They were known to Panini as Kuluna.\textsuperscript{82} They were originally settled in the
districts of Kulu on the Vyasa and Kunawar on the Sutlej. They were neighbours of
the Kulutas. Their name is still preserved in the Kunets of Kullu and Kunawar and the
hill districts of Shimla. Their coins affirm their republican status and a fact that they
were a widely diffused tribe. The legends on some of their coins afford very valuable
and concrete evidence of the political system that prevailed in their republican state.
They also find mention in the Mahabharata along with some republican tribes of the

\textsuperscript{81} J.W.McCrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, p 112
\textsuperscript{82} V.S.Agawala, India as known to Panini, p 54
Punjab. They lost their independence to the Kushans in the first century AD. In the third century, a confederacy of the Yaudheyas, the Kunindas and the Arjunayanas were formed against the Kushans. This led to the ouster of the Kushans from eastern Punjab. The Kuninda republic continued to flourish till about the end of the third century AD.  

**Sogdai or Sogdi**

They were one of the republican tribes of Upper Sindh. At the time of Alexander’s invasion they were settled on the banks of the Indus to the northward of Alor, the capital city of upper Sindh. They held an extensive territory extending to the Punjab. They along with other republican tribes are believed to have occupied northern Sindh with contiguous portions of the Punjab and Bahawalpur state below the confluence of the Punjab rivers. According to Arrian, on leaving the confluence of the Punjab rivers Alexander sailing down the Indus came to the capital of Sogdi, who offered him no opposition. One fact preserved in the account of Arrian is strongly in favour of the identification of the old site near Fazlipur with the town of the Sogdi. They have been identified with the town of Soda or Soda Rajput’s, who now occupy the south eastern district of Sindh around Umarkot.

A few names include Phegelas which is generally identified with Sanskrit ‘Bhagala’. Megasthenes gives a few names of mountain republics and says, “they are free and have no kings and occupy mountain regions, where they have built many cities.” He names them as Matte Corai, Snghai, Marshai, Rasungai, Morsurai.

Thus Greek accounts can be looked upon as important source of information.

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83 G.P.Singh, Republics, Kingdoms, Towns and Cities in Ancient India, p 79  
84 Ibid, p 68
regarding the republican and oligarchical states in ancient India. They clearly
demonstrate the existence of non-monarchical forms of government both aristocratic
and oligarchic. It appears that in some city states and in the tribal republics of the west,
democracy in the Greek sense made its appearance. Political power passed on into the
hands of free peoples who took part in the government of the state. Megasthenes in his
writings makes a statement, “at last, after many generations had come and gone, the
sovereignty, it is said was dissolved and democratic governments were setup in cities.”
While we see the Macedonian invader brought laurels to his state after inflicting defeat
after defeat over the Indian states that came in his way, the Indian side gave tough
resistance to the invader. Their form of government did not come in the way of
providing a wise, brave, energetic and steady opposition to the misadventures of the
foreign invader.
Map 6 South Asia in the Age of Magadhan and Achaemenid Hegemony
C 560 to C 325 B.C.

85 http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=052
Map 7 Campaigns and Empire of Alexander the Great 336 – 323 B.C. 86
Map 8 Eastern Campaigns and Conquests of Alexander the Great

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87 http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=054
2.6 Kautilya’s Arthashastra

Kautilya’s Arthashastra is a valuable source of information of the period 350 to 300 BC. It is a monumental work in the field of Political Science. He gives due credit to and appreciates the value of Republican states during and after foreign invasions.

Kautilya divides political sanghas into two groups, *Vartasastropajivin* and *Rajasabdopajivin*. In *Vartasastropajivin*, the government was carried on by those who lived by agriculture, trade, cattle breeding and fighting or in other words by all free men. So it can be implied that these countries were ‘democracies’. *Rajasabdopajivin* were states in which the government was carried on by men who lived by the title of king i.e. aristocratic rulers. So these states were oligarchies.

**Vartasastropajivin:** In this segment Kautilya mentions the following states.

- Kamboj
- Surashtras
- Kshatriyas
- Srenis and others

**The Kambojas**

This state finds mention in early Vedic text of Vamsa Brahman of Samveda. The next mention is in Yaksa’s Nirukta which shows that they spoke a dialect of the Vedic tongue differing in some respects from the standard language. Next in line is the Mahabharata which mentions it an important country known for manufacturing blankets made of fur of animals living in burrows in the earth. Panini’s sutra mentions Kamboja not only as a country or tribe but also as a Kamboja king. Kautilya mentions
them as one of the Vartasastropajivin Sangha of his times.

During the time of Asoka missionaries were sent to the borders of his empire viz the Kamboja and the Yavanas etc, with the object of converting them. Rock Edict V tells us that Censors were created by Asoka for the establishment of the law of piety, for the increase of the law, and for the welfare and happiness of the Kambojas, Gandharas and others living on the western frontier of his dominions.88 In Rock Edict XIII the Kambojas are placed between Yonas and Nabhas, and Asoka records his success in diverting their minds towards the true Dharma. In this edict they are included in one king’s domain (sphere of influence) probably as autonomous people.

The martial republics named in the Arthshastra are headed by the Kambhojas. They were in eastern Afghanistan.89

The Surashtras

It literally means good realm. This state is placed in Kathiawar. Their name still lives in modern Soratha. They seemed to have survived the Mauryan imperialism as they occur in the inscriptions of Bala-Sri and in the Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman.90 The Surashtra was also autonomous in the time of Asoka seems probable from Rudradaman’s inscription at Junagadh which refers to its Raja, the Yavana Tushaspha, the contemporory and vassal of Asoka. The Yavanraja was probably a Greek chief of the north west who was appointed supervisor of the Surashtra Sangha by Asoka.91 Republican institutions of Surashtra were allowed to

88 B.C.Law, Tribes in Ancient India, p 7
89 K.P.Jayaswal, Hindu Polity A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, p 52
90 Ibid.
91 H.Raychaudhary, Political History of Ancient India, p 152
continue to function, even under the supervision of the imperial monarchs. Kautilya in
his treatise also mentions this state when he says, “the corporation of warriors
(Kshatriyasreni) of Kambhoja and Surashtra and other countries live by agriculture,
trade and wielding weapons.”

The other two republics that he mentions are the Kshatriya and the Srenis. The
Kshatriyas are called by Greek writers as Xathroi. While usually taken to mean as
caste denomination mention of it in the Arthshastra sanctions it as the name of a
proper political body. The Srenis are identified with what Greeks called Agrasrenis,
Agalassi, or Acesnoi.

Rajsabdopajivin: In this segment he mentions the following republics

- Lichchavikas
- Vrijikas
- Mallas
- Madrakas
- Kukaras
- Kuru
- Panchalas

Lichchavikas, Vrijikas and Mallas have already been dealt with under the Buddhist
and Jain literature.

The Madrakas

References to Madrakas or the Madras have been made in the Vedic literature. The
Uttar Madras are referred to along with the Uttar Kurus in Aitareya Brahman. They

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92 R.Shamshastry, Kautilya’s Arthashastra (translation) Book XI, Ch.1, p 541
find mention in the Ramayana. They are in the Mahabharata where we meet Madri, the second wife of Pandu, a Madra princess. The Madras held central portions of Punjab. They appear to be between rivers Chenab and Ravi or according to some between Jhelum and Ravi. Their capital was Sangala or Sakala. This corresponds to the modern day Sialkot. They continued to exist as they find mention in Samudragupta’s Allahabad Pillar Inscription. The Uttar Madras or northern Madras originally had a constitution where the whole country, as opposed to a king was solemnised as the sovereign.\footnote{K.P.Jayaswal, Hindu Polity A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, p 50}

**The Kukuras**

Their territory may be sought in central and western India. They find mention in the Mahabharata as a branch of the Yadu race or a member of the Andhak Vrishni League.

**The Kurus and The Panchalas**

Kuru and Panchal have been known to be contiguous countries since the Vedic period. The capital of the Kuru country was Indraprastha near Delhi and that of Panchala, Kampilya which has been identified with Kampil on the old Ganges between Badaun and Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh.\footnote{D.R.Bhandarkar, Lectures on the Ancient History of India, p 52} They find place in the Vedic literature, the Epics, and the Jatakas. Sometime before the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC, the monarchical constitutions of the Kurus gave way to a republican one, for we are told by Kautilya that the Kurus were raja-sabda-upajivinah or enjoying the status of Rajas, i.e. all citizens have equal rank and rights.\footnote{B.C.Law, Tribes in Ancient India, p 29
In the 6th and the 5th centuries BC, the Panchalas were a monarchical clan, but became a Sangha in the 4th century when Kautilya lived. In Kautilya’s Arthashastra we read that the corporation of Panchala “lived by the title of Rajas.” The change was probably brought about in the following way. Members of the royal family were often given a share in the administration of a country, and in proportion as this share became less and less formal, the state organisation would lose the form of absolute monarchy and approach that of oligarchy.

Asokan Inscriptions too provide us with names of political communities which appear to be non monarchical. In Rock Edict V following names appear,

- The Yonas
- The Kamboj
- The Gandharas
- The Rashtrrikas
- The Pitinikas
- The Aparantas

Rock Edict XIII gives the following names

- The Yonas
- The Kamojas
- The Nabhaka and the Nabha panktis
- The Bhojas
- The Andhras
- The Paradas
They are referred to as ‘araja vishaya’. This is interpreted to mean non monarchical or without a king.

The communitites enumerated, all the same, were important enough to be noted by name, though they were within the empire. They were, further, in the Province or administrative unit - vishaya – designated as araja or non-monarchical, i.e. republican. In other words, they were important self governing communities under the Mauryan Emperor.96

The Yonas

They are evidently of Greek origin as the name suggests. There is a unanimity in placing them in the north west frontier of India. They have been identified with the Greek colony of Nysa. In the fifth book of Arrian’s work we find two relevant passages in this connection. The Nysaians are not an Indian race but decended from the men who came to India with Dionysos. The deputies of Nysa who waited upon Alexander themselves told the Macedonian monarch that their city was founded by Dionysos.97

The Gandharas

Having a monarchical form of government earlier, it became a seat of Kumara viceroyalty during the Mauryan period. It also finds mention as one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas of the Anguttar Nikaya. It was a republic during the Buddhist times and situated in the north west. The Yonas, the Kambojas and the Gandharas were neighbours and are mentioned in the geographical order.

96 K.P.Jayaswal, Hindu Polity A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, p 117
97 J.W.McCrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, p 79-80
The Aparantas

They were people belonging to Aparanta, a term used by Hindu geographers for western India. According to Dr Jayaswal, they were not the western neighbours of Asoka, but were within his empire. They find mention in the Mahabharata and the Puranas.

The Nabhakas and the Nabhapanktis

They occur in place of Gandharas of Rock Edict V. They could be either neighbours of Gandhara or some subdivision thereof.

The Paradas

They find mention in the Puranas and the Mahabharata. They are considered as a vassal tribe. Scholars identify them with Paratae of Ptolmy and places them in Afghanistan.

The Andhras

There is a contradiction between scholars and historians as to whether the Andhras were that of the north or the south. The Andhras of Asoka could not be southern Andhras. Two generations before, in the time of Chandragupta, the Andhras were a great kingdom, second in power only to Magadh. It seems that the power of the Andhras was broken under the reign of Bindusara. The Kambojas, the Rashtrikas, the Bhojas, the Pitinikas have been dealt with in the previous chapters.

Asoka in his inscriptions refers to people or tribe or community while mentioning these names, indicating a non-monarchical or republican form of government. However, out of all these tribes Kambojas have been exclusively described by
Kautilya as a republic.

Map 9 India as revealed by the Kautilya’s Arthshastra.  

98 http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/pager.html?object=053
2.7 Other Republics

Patanjali and Katyayana mention republics of Salankayanas and Vamarathas respectively.

The Salankayanas

The Ganapatha of Panini places them along with the Rajanyas and Audumbaras. They have Vastropajivin Constitution and were composed of three sections. The three members of the Salankayana Sangha represented an amalgamation of three small state units.

The Vamarathas

According to Patanjali, they were a republic noted for the scholarship of their learned men. Their seat is not known. To this class of new growth and early death must be referred the unnamed states of the Rajanya constitution whose coins are struck only in the name of Rajanyas (Presidents).  

The Audumbaras

The Audumbaras are not known to the earlier Paninian literature, but they are mentioned in Ganpath in the Rajanya group of republics. They are placed at the end of the Punjab republics in the earlier list of the Sabha Parva of the Mahabharata. Their name is derived from ‘Udumbara’ or the fig tree which occurs on their coins.

The Arjunayanas

The Arjunayanas flourished in the Agra Jaipur tract from c. 200 BC to 400 AD. Their coins have been found, which do not bear the name of any king or general, the legend is simply ‘Arjunayanam Jayah’, victory to the Arjunayanas. The coins belong to C 100 BC, but the Arjunayana state must have been much more ancient, for the ruling class believed that it decended from Arjuna, the epic hero. They worked in close cooperation with the Yaudheyas, their northern neighbours, who believed themselves

99 K.P. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times, p 153
100 Ibid. p 153
to be the descendants of Dharma, the eldest brother of Arjuna.101

The Agratyas or Agrodakas

They have been identified with the Agrohas in Hissar district of Hayana.

The Uddehikas

They were located in Madhyadesa. The Mahabharata and Puranas mention them as Kulinda. We have numismatic evidences of their form of government.

The Abhiras

According to the Mahabharata, the Abhiras were located in the western division of the country. This view is supported by the author of The Periplus of Erythrean Sea and Ptolmy, the Greek geographer. “The Abhiras are mentioned in the celebrated Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupt (second quarter of the 4th century AD) as one of the tribal states of the west and south west India. They paid homage to the great Gupta emperor and who were thus semi-independent people living outside the borders of his empire.”102

The Prarjunas

They voluntarily submitted to Samudragupta. Scholars almost unanimously identify them with Prajjunakas mentioned in the Arthashastra of Kautilya.

The Sanakanikas and Kakas

The Sanakanika chief was a feudatory of Chandragupt II. The Kakas find mention in the Mahabharata. They seem to be the neighbours of Sanakanikas. They too submitted to Samudragupta voluntarily.

The Kharparikas

They are placed in the same group as Abhiras and Madrakasi.e. the group of non-monarchical communities. Probably these Kharparikas or Kharparas are identical with the five Karpatas of the Mahabharata.

The Pulindas

101 A.S.Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p 119
102 B.C.Law, Tribes in Ancient India, p 81
They find mention in the Ramayana, the Mahabharatas, Puranas and also Buddhist texts. Ptolmy too mentions them along the banks of Narmada.

Thus we see that the origin of the concept of a republic took place in the Sabhas and Samitis of the Vedic age. During the ritualistic days of the Brahmanas they took a shape different to monarchy. They were slowly growing in power, prestige and in their assertion of importance during the Mahabharata times. They actually started functioning effectively during the time of Buddha i.e. 600 BC. Indian republics had a capacity to develop a firm organisation and settled constitutional order. They fought the onslaught of Greek invasion and even the mighty Mauryan kings and continued to exist till the early times of the Christian era. The definition of an ancient Indian republic has been aptly described in the words of Sri Aurobindo, “A sound political, economic and social life, a power and efficiency enabling a people to survive, to grow more securely towards a collective perfection and a vital elasticity and responsiveness that will give room for a constant advance in the outward expression of mind and the spirit.”

103 Sri Aurobindo, Spirit and Form of Indian Polity, p 2