1. INTRODUCTION

- The whole sky is filled with tiny shining objects – some are bright, others dim. Some twinkling and some does not.
- Along with these bright objects, you may also see the moon on most of the days at different times, in different shapes and at different positions.
- You can see the full moon only once in about a month’s time and the day called Full moon night or Poornima.
- A fortnight later, you cannot see it at all. It is a New moon night or Amavasya.
- The very bright light of the sun does not allow us to see all these bright objects of the night sky.
- The sun, the moon and all those objects shining in the night sky are called celestial bodies.
• Some celestial bodies are
  • very big and hot.
  • are made up of gases.
  • have their own heat and light, which they emit in large amounts.
  • These celestial bodies are called **stars**.
  • The sun is a star.
• Stars in the night sky are similar to the sun. But we do not feel their heat or light, and they look so tiny because they are very very far from us.

*Figure 1.1 : Saptarishi and the North Star*
While watching the night sky, you may notice various patterns formed by different groups of stars. These are called **constellations**.

**Ursa Major or Big Bear** is one such constellation.

One of the most easily recognisable constellation is the **Saptarishi** (*Saptaseven, rishi*-sages). It is a group of seven stars (Figure 1.1) that forms a part of Ursa Major
**Constellation.**

- In ancient times, people used to determine directions during the night with the help of stars. The **North star** indicates the north direction, also called the **Pole Star**. It always remains in the same position in the sky. We can locate the position of the Pole Star with the help of the Saptarishi.
- Some celestial bodies do not have their own heat and light. They are lit by the light of the stars. Such bodies are called **planets**.

- The word ‘planet’ comes from the Greek word “Planetai” which means ‘wanderers’. The earth is a planet. It gets all its heat and light from the sun, which is our nearest star.
- The moon that we see in the sky is a **satellite**. It is a companion of our earth and moves around it.

**THE SOLAR SYSTEM**

- The sun, eight planets, satellites and some other celestial bodies known as asteroids and meteoroids form the solar system.
**The Sun**

- The sun is in the centre of the solar system.
- It is huge and made up of extremely hot gases.
- It provides the pulling force that binds the solar system.
- The sun is the ultimate source of heat and light for the solar system.
- But that tremendous heat is not felt so much by us because despite being our nearest star, it is far away from us.
- The sun is about 150 million km away from the earth.

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**Planets**

- There are eight planets in our solar system.
- In order of their distance from the sun, they are:
  - Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune.
All the eight planets of the solar system move around the sun in fixed paths.

- These paths are elongated. They are called *orbits*.
- *Mercury* is nearest to the sun. It takes only about 88 days to complete one round along its orbit.
- *Venus* is considered as ‘Earth’s-twin’ because its size and shape are very much similar to that of the earth.
- Till recently (August 2006), Pluto was also considered a planet. However, in a meeting of the International Astronomical Union, a decision was taken that Pluto like other celestial objects (Ceres, 2003 UB313) discovered in recent past may be called ‘dwarf planets.”

The Earth

The earth is the **third nearest** planet to the sun.

- In size, it is the **fifth largest**
  - It is slightly flattened at the poles. That is why, its shape is described as a *Geoid*. Geoid means an earth-like shape.
  - Conditions favourable to support life are probably found only on the earth
  - neither too hot nor too cold
  - has water and air, which are very essential for our survival.
  - The air has life-supporting gases like oxygen.

From the outer space, the earth appears blue because its **two-thirds** surface is covered by water. It is, therefore, called a *blue planet*.

The Moon

- Our earth has only one satellite, that is, the moon.
- Its diameter is only **one-quarter** that of the earth.
- It appears so big because it is nearer to our planet than other celestial bodies.
- It is about 3,84,400 km away from us.
The moon moves around the earth in about 27 days. It takes exactly the same time to complete one spin. As a result, only one side of the moon is visible to us on the earth.

- The moon does not have conditions favourable for life. It has neither water nor air. It has mountains, plains and depressions on its surface. These cast shadows on the moon's surface.

**Asteroids**

- Apart from the stars, planets and satellites, there are numerous tiny bodies which also move around the sun. These bodies are called *asteroids*.
- They are found between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter (Figure 1.2).
- It is viewed as parts of a planet which exploded many years back.

**Meteoroids**

- The small pieces of rocks which move around the sun are called *meteoroids*.
- Sometimes these meteoroids come near the earth and tend to drop upon it. During this process due to friction with the air they get heated up and burn. It causes a flash of light.
- Sometimes, a meteor without being completely burnt, falls on the earth and creates a hollow.
- Do you see a whitish broad band, like a white glowing path across the sky on a clear starry night? It is a cluster of millions of stars. This band is the *Milky Way galaxy* (Figure 1.6).
- Our solar system is a part of this galaxy. In ancient India, it was named *Akash Ganga*.
- A galaxy is a huge system of billions of stars, and clouds of dust and gases.
- There are millions of such galaxies that make the
INTRODUCTION
In this chapter you will learn that people are different from each other in many ways. Not only do they look different but they might also belong to different regional, cultural or religious backgrounds.

These differences enrich our lives in many ways and also make them more fun! All these different people, who come from all kinds of backgrounds, and belong to all kinds of religions and cultures help to make India so interesting and so diverse.

As per the story of Samir ek and Samir do, Although they both are more at home in different languages they still communicated with each other. They made the effort to do so because this was what was important to them.

Different religious and cultural backgrounds such as these are an aspect of diversity.

Diversity is also in languages of people.

Some people are some are rich.

This difference is not the same as the one we have seen earlier. Here, we’re talking not of difference but of inequality.

Inequality comes about when a person does not have the resources and opportunities that are available to other persons.

The caste system is another example of inequality. According to this, society was divided into different groups depending upon the work that people did and they were supposed to remain in those groups.

This system was considered irreversible. And because you were not supposed to change your profession, it was not considered necessary for you to know anything more than what you needed in your profession. This created a situation of inequality.
What does diversity add to our lives?

- By the example of the story tellers/writers, they give us point that due to people lived in different they observed different society and culture thus they were able to write different types of the stories.
- If we force them all to live in same environment and same society and gave them same type of upbringing then they couldn’t been so different at all and may have wrote similar stories.
- Thus due to this diversity we have so many options in our life.

DIVERSITY IN INDIA

- India is a country of many diversities.
- We speak different languages, have various types of food, celebrate different festivals, practice different religions.
- But actually, if you think about it, we do many things that are similar except that we do them in different ways.

How do we explain Diversity?

- A little more than two hundred years ago or long before the train, aeroplane, bus or car became a part of our lives, people travelled from one part of the world to another, in ships, on horses, on camels or on foot. Imagine
- Different ways in which people greet each other
- Different ways in which people dress
- Different ways in which people get married
- Different ways in which people pray
- List at least three different ways in which people in India do the following. One of the possible answers has been provided for you already.
• Different ways in which people cook rice By making Biriyani, pulav, plain etc.

1. Many others left their homes because there were famines and drought and they could not get enough to eat. Some went in search of work while others left because there was a war.
2. Sometimes, as they began to make their homes in new places, people began to change a little and at other times they managed to do things in the old ways.
3. So their languages, food, music, religions became a mix of the old and the new, and out of this intermixing of cultures, came something new and different.
4. The history of many places shows us how many different cultural influences have helped to shape life and culture there. Thus regions became very diverse because of their unique histories.
5. Similarly diversity also comes about when people adapt their lives to the geographical area in which they live. For example living near the sea is quite different from living in a mountainous area.

Consider two different states:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>Ladakh</th>
<th>Kerala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical Area</td>
<td>1. Ladakh is a desert in the mountains in the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>1. Kerala is a state in the southwest corner of India. It is surrounded by the sea on one side and hills on the other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2. Very little agriculture is possible here since this region does not receive any rain and is covered in snow for a large part of the year.</td>
<td>2. A number of spices like pepper, cloves and cardamoms are grown on the hills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Availability</td>
<td>3. For drinking water, people depend on the melting snow during the summer months.</td>
<td>3. This area has no shortage of drinking water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. The people in Ladakh carefully collect the pashima wool of the sheep and sell this to traders from Kashmir. Pashmina shawls are chiefly woven in Kashmir.

5. It was considered a good trade route as it had many passes through which caravans travelled to what is today called Tibet. These caravans carried textiles and spices, raw silk and carpets.

6. Buddhism reached Tibet via Ladakh. Islam was also introduced in this region more than four hundred years ago and there is a significant Muslim population here.

6. different religions such as Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism and their related culture.

7. meat and milk products like cheese and butter, they depend on the market to buy all the food and other goods that they need because it has little agriculture.

7. The agriculture here is very good people have so many options to grow vegetable and crops. Sea food is also available here.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

- India’s diversity has always been recognized as a source of its strength.
- When the British ruled India, women and men from different cultural, religious and regional backgrounds came together to oppose them.
- India’s freedom movement had thousands of people of different backgrounds in it. They worked together to decide joint actions, they went to jail together, and they found different ways to oppose the British.
- Interestingly the British thought they could divide Indians because they were so different, and then continue to rule them. But the people showed how they
could be different and yet be united in their battle against the British.

- Men and women, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, rich and poor had gathered to protest against the British.
- In his book *The Discovery of India* by Jawaharlal Nehru says that Indian unity is not something imposed from the outside but rather, “It was something deeper and within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practiced and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.” It was Nehru, who coined the phrase, “*unity in diversity*” to describe the country.
- India’s national anthem, composed by Rabindranath Tagore, is another expression of the unity of India.

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12. BUILDINGS, PAINTINGS AND BOOKS | HISTORY | CHAPTER 12 | CLASS 6 | NCERT NOTES | STUDY MATERIAL | PDF |

The iron pillar

- The iron pillar at Mehrauli, Delhi, is a remarkable
example of the skill of Indian crafts persons. It is made of iron, 7.2. m high, and weighs over 3 tonnes.

- It was made about 1500 years ago. We know the date because there is an inscription on the pillar mentioning a ruler named Chandra, who probably belonged to the Gupta dynasty.
- What is amazing is the fact that the pillar has not rusted in all these years.

Metallurgy

- Ancient Indian metallurgists made major contributions to the metallurgical history of the world.
- Archaeological excavations have shown that the Harappans were master craftsmen and had knowledge of copper metallurgy.
- They even manufactured bronze by mixing copper and tin.
- India produced highly advanced types of iron-forged iron, wrought iron and cast iron.

Buildings in brick and stone

- The skills of our crafts persons are also apparent in the buildings that have survived, such as stupas.
- The word *stupa* means a mound. While there are several kinds of *stupas*, round and tall, big and small, these have certain common features.
- Generally, there is a small box placed at the centre or heart of the *stupa*. This may contain bodily remains (such as teeth, bone or ashes) of the Buddha or his followers, or things they used, as well as precious stones, and coins.
- This box, known as a relic casket, was covered with earth. Later, a layer of mud brick or baked brick was added on top. And then, the dome like structure was
sometimes covered with carved stone slabs.
- Often, a path, known as the *pradakshina patha*, was laid around the *stupa*.
- Both railings and gateways were often decorated with sculpture.
- Many of the stone carvings for decorating the *stupa* were made about 2000 years ago. Other buildings were hollowed out of rock to make artificial caves.
- Some of these were very elaborately decorated with sculptures and painted walls.
- Some of the earliest Hindu temples were also built at this time. Deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and Durga were worshipped in these shrines.
- The most important part of the temple was the room known as the *garbhagriha*, where the image of the chief deity was placed. It was here that priests performed religious rituals, and devotees offered worship to the deity.
- Often, as at Bhitargaon, a tower, known as the *shikhara*, was built on top of the *garbhagriha*, to mark this out as a sacred place. Building *shikharas* required careful planning.
- Most temples also had a space known as the *mandapa*. It was a hall where people could assemble.
- Mahabalipuram and Aihole has some of the finest stone temples were built in these towns. Each of these was carved out of a huge, single piece of stone (that is why they are known as monoliths). While brick structures are built up by adding layers of bricks from the bottom upwards, in this case the stone cutters had to work from top downwards.

**How were stupas and temples built?**

- Several stages: Usually, kings or queens decided to build these as it was an expensive affair.
- First, good quality stone had to be found, quarried, and
transported to the place that was often carefully chosen for the new building.

- Here, these rough blocks of stone had to be shaped and carved into pillars, and panels for walls, floors and ceilings.
- And then these had to be placed in precisely the right position.
- Besides, when devotees came to visit the temple or the stupa, they often brought gifts, which were used to decorate the buildings. For example, an association of ivory workers paid for one of the beautiful gateways at Sanchi.
- Among the others who paid for decorations were merchants, farmers, garland makers, perfumers, smiths.

**Painting**

- Find Ajanta on Map 7 (page 113). This is a place where several caves were hollowed out of the hills over centuries. Most of these were monasteries for Buddhist monks, and some of them were decorated with paintings. Here are some examples. As the caves are dark inside, most of these paintings were done in the light of torches. The colours, which are vivid even after 1500 years, were made of plants and minerals. The artists who created these splendid works of art remain unknown. Paintings from Ajanta. Describe what you see in each of these paintings.

**The world of books**

- Some of the best-known epics were written during this period.
- Epics are grand, long compositions, about heroic men and women, and include stories about gods.
A famous Tamil epic, the **Silappadikaram**, was composed by a poet named Ilango, around 1800 years ago.

**A description from the Silappadikaram**

- the poet describes Kannagi’s grief in *silappadikaram*.
- Another Tamil epic, the **Manimekalai** was composed by **Sattanar** around 1400 years ago. This describes the story of the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi.
- These beautiful compositions were lost to scholars for many centuries, till their manuscripts were rediscovered, about a hundred years ago.
- Other writers, such as **Kalidasa**, wrote in Sanskrit.

**A verse from the Meghaduta**

- Here is a verse from Kalidasa’s best-known poem, the Meghaduta, in which a monsoon cloud is imagined to be a messenger between lovers who are separated from one another. See how the poet describes the breeze that will carry the cloud northwards: “A cool breeze, delightful as it is touched With the fragrance of the earth Swollen by your showers, Inhaled deeply by elephants, And causing the wild figs to ripen, Will blow gently as you go.”

**Recording and preserving old stories**

- A number of Hindu religious stories that were in circulation earlier were written down around the same time.
These include the Puranas. *Purana* literally mean old.
The Puranas contain stories about gods and goddesses, such as Vishnu, Shiva, Durga or Parvati.
They also contain details on how they were to be worshipped.
The Puranas were written in simple Sanskrit verse, and were meant to be heard by everybody, including women and *shudras*, who were not allowed to study the Vedas.
They were probably recited in temples by priests, and people came to listen to them.
Two Sanskrit epics, the *Mahabharata and Ramayana* had been popular for a very long time. Some of you may be familiar with these stories.
The Mahabharata is about a war fought between the Kauravas and Pandavas, who were cousins. This was a war to gain control of the throne of the Kurus, and their capital, Hastinapura. The story itself was an old one, but was written down in the form in which we know it today, about 1500 years ago.
Both the Puranas and the Mahabharata are supposed to have been compiled by Vyasa. The *Bhagavad Gita*, was also included in the *Mahabharata*.
The *Ramayana* is about Rama, a prince of Kosala, who was sent into exile. His wife Sita was abducted by the king of Lanka, named Ravana, and Rama had to fight a battle to get her back. He won and returned to Ayodhya, the capital of Kosala, after his victory.
Valmiki is recognised as the author of the Sanskrit *Ramayana*.

**Stories told by ordinary people**

Ordinary people also told stories, composed poems and songs, sang, danced, and performed plays.
Some of these are preserved in collections of stories such as the Jatakas and the Panchatantra, which were
written down around this time.
- Stories from the Jatakas were often shown on the railings of stupas and in paintings in places such as Ajanta.

Writing books on science
- This was also the time when Aryabhata, a mathematician and astronomer, wrote a book in Sanskrit known as the Aryabhatiyam. He stated that day and night were caused by the rotation of the earth on its axis, even though it seems as if the sun is rising and setting everyday. He developed a scientific explanation for eclipses as well.
- He also found a way of calculating the circumference of a circle, which is nearly as accurate as the formula we use today.
- Varahamihira, Brahmagupta and Bhaskaracharya were some other mathematicians and astronomers who made several discoveries.

Ayurveda
- Ayurveda is a well-known system of health science that was developed in ancient India. The two famous practitioners of Ayurveda in ancient India were Charaka (1st-2nd centuries C.E.) and Sushruta (c. 4th century C.E.) Charak Samhita, written by Charak is a remarkable book on medicine.
- In his treatise, Susruta Samhita, Sushruta speaks about elaborate surgical procedures.
Zero

- While numerals had been used earlier, mathematicians in India now invented a special symbol for zero.
- This system of counting was adapted by the Arabs and then spread to Europe. It continues to be in use throughout the world. The Romans used a system of counting without using zero.

Elsewhere

- Paper has become a part of our daily lives. The books we read are printed on paper, and we use paper for writing.
- Paper was invented in China about 1900 years ago, by a man named Cai Lun. He beat plant fibres, cloth, rope and the bark of trees, soaked these in water, and then pressed, drained and dried the pulp to create paper.
- Even today, hand made paper is made through a similar process.

Iron tools and agriculture

- Use of iron began in the subcontinent around 3000 years ago.
- Largest collections of iron tools and weapons were found
in the megalithic burials
- Around 2500 years ago, there is evidence for the growing use of iron tools.
- These included axes for clearing forests, and the iron ploughshare.

Other steps to increase production: irrigation
- While new tools and the system of transplantation increased production,
- irrigation was also used like canals, wells, tanks, and artificial lakes.

Who lived in the villages?
- 3 Kinds of people lived in most villages in the southern and northern parts of the subcontinent.
- In the Tamil region, :
  - large landowners were known as vellalar,
  - ordinary ploughmen were known as uzhavar,
  - and landless labourers, including slaves, were known as kadaisiyar and adimai.
- In the northern part of the country,
  - The village headman was known as the grama bhojaka, the post was hereditary. He was the largest landowner.
  - Generally, he had slaves and hired workers to cultivate the land. He used to collect taxes for the king.
  - He also functioned as a judge, and sometimes as a policeman.
  - Other independent farmers, known as grihapatris, most of whom were smaller landowners.
  - And then there were men and women such as the dasa karmakara, who did not own land.
In most villages there were also some crafts persons such as the blacksmith, potter, carpenter and weaver.

The earliest Tamil compositions

- The earliest works in Tamil, known as Sangam literature, were composed around 2300 years ago.
- These texts were called Sangam because they were supposed to have been composed and compiled in assemblies (known as sangams) of poets that were held in the city of Madurai
- The Tamil terms mentioned above are found in Sangam literature.

Finding out about cities: stories, travellers, sculpture and archaeology

- Jatakas: were stories that were probably composed by ordinary people, and then written down and preserved by Buddhist monks.
- Sculptors carved scenes depicting peoples’ lives in towns and villages, as well as in the forest.
- Many of these sculptures were used to decorate railings, pillars and gateways of buildings that were visited by people.
- Many of the cities that developed from about 2500 years ago were capitals of the mahajanapadas.
- Some of these cities were surrounded by massive fortification walls. In many cities, archaeologists have found rows of pots, or ceramic rings arranged one on top of the other.
- These are known as ring wells. These seem to have been used as toilets in some cases, and as drains and garbage dumps.
- Another way of finding out about early cities is from
the accounts of sailors and travellers who visited them.
- One of the most detailed accounts that has been found was by an unknown Greek sailor. He described all the ports he visited.

Find Below: A sculpture from Sanchi.

S9I1

This is a sculpture from Sanchi, a site with stupas, in Madhya Pradesh, showing the scene in a city.

Coins

- Archaeologists have found several thousands of coins belonging to this period.
- The earliest coins which were in use for about 500 years were punch marked coins.
- Punch-marked Coins Punch-marked coins were generally rectangular or sometimes square or round in shape, either cut out of metal sheets or made out of flattened metal globules (a small spherical body.
- Coins were not inscribed, but were stamped with symbols using dies or punches. Hence, they are called punch-marked coins.
- These coins are found over most parts of the subcontinent and remained in circulation till the early centuries CE.

Cities with many functions

- Mathura has been an important settlement for more than 2500 years.
- It was important because it was located at the cross
roads of two major routes of travel and trade – from the northwest to the east and from north to south. There were fortifications around the city, and several shrines.

- Farmers and herders from adjoining areas provided food for people in the city.
- Mathura was also a centre where some extremely fine sculpture was produced.
- Around 2000 years ago Mathura became the second capital of the Kushanas.
- Mathura was also a religious centre – there were Buddhist monasteries, Jaina shrines, and it was an important centre for the worship of Krishna.
- Several inscriptions on surfaces such as stone slabs and statues have been found in Mathura.
- These were made by kings and queens, officers, merchants, and crafts persons who lived in the city.
- For instance, inscriptions from Mathura mention goldsmiths, blacksmiths, weavers, basket makers, garland makers, perfumers.

Crafts and crafts persons

- Archaeological evidence for crafts.
- These include extremely fine pottery, known as the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW). It gets its name from the fact that it is generally found in the northern part of the subcontinent.
- There were famous centres such as Varanasi in the north, and Madurai in the south. Both men and women worked in these centres.
- Many crafts persons and merchants now formed associations known as shrenis.
- These shrenis of crafts persons provided training, procured raw material, and distributed the finished product. Then shrenis of merchants organised the trade.
- Shrenis also served as banks, where rich men and women deposited money. This was invested, and part of the interest was returned or used to support religious institutions such as monasteries.

- **Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW):** NBPW is a hard, wheel made, metallic looking ware with a shiny black surface. The potter used to expose the earthenware to very high temperature in his kiln which resulted in the blackening of its outer surface. A fine black slip was also applied on this, which gave the pottery a mirror-like shine.

**A closer look — Arikamedu**

- Arikamedu (in Puducherry) Between 2200 and 1900 years ago,
- Arikamedu was a coastal settlement where ships unloaded goods from distant lands. A massive brick structure, which may have been a warehouse, was found at the site.
- Other finds include pottery from the Mediterranean region, such as amphorae (tall double-handed jars that contained liquids such as wine or oil) and stamped red-glazed pottery, known as *Arretine Ware*, which was named after a city in Italy.
- Roman lamps, glassware and gems have also been found at the site. Small tanks have been found that were probably dyeing vats, used to dye cloth. There is plenty of evidence for the making of beads from semi-precious stones and glass.

**Elsewhere**

- This is one of the oldest cities in Europe, and developed around the same time as the cities in the Ganga valley.
Rome was the capital of one of the largest empires — one that spread across Europe, North Africa, and West Asia. Augustus, one of the most important emperors, who ruled about 2000 years ago, said that he found Rome a city of brick, and made it into a city of marble. He, and later rulers, built temples and palaces. They also built huge amphitheatres — open arenas surrounded by tiers of seats — where citizens could watch all kinds of shows, and public baths (with separate timings for men and women), where people met and relaxed. Huge aqueducts — channels to supply water — were built to bring water to the city — for the baths, fountains and toilets.

A very big kingdom = an empire

- The lions that we see on our notes and coin shave a long history. They were carved in stone, and placed on top of a massive stone pillar at Sarnath.
- Ashoka was one of the greatest rulers known to history and on his instructions inscriptions were inscribed on pillars, as well as on rock surfaces.
The empire that Ashoka ruled was founded by his grandfather, Chandragupta Maurya, more than 2300 years ago. Chandragupta was supported by a wise man named Chanakya or Kautilya. Many of Chanakya’s ideas were written down in a book called the Arthashastra.

**Dynasty:** When members of the same family become rulers one after another, the family is often called a dynasty.

The Mauryas were a dynasty with three important rulers –
- Chandragupta,
  - his son Bindusara,
  - and Bindusara’s son, Ashoka.

There were several cities in the empire (marked with black dots on the map). These included the capital Pataliputra, Taxila, and Ujjain.

- People indifferent parts of the empire spoke different. They probably ate different kinds of food, and wore different kinds of clothes as well.

**How are empires different from kingdoms?**
- Emperors need more resources than kings because empires are larger than kingdoms, and need to be protected by big armies.
- So also they need a larger number of officials who collect taxes.
Ruling the empire

- As the empire was so large, different parts were ruled differently.
- The area around Pataliputra was under the direct control of the emperor.
- This meant that officials were appointed to collect taxes from farmers, herders, craftsmen and traders, who lived in villages and towns in the area. Officials also punished those who disobeyed the ruler’s orders.
- Messengers went to and fro, and spies kept a watch on the officials. And of course the emperor supervised them all, with the help of members of the royal family, and senior ministers.
- There were other areas or provinces. Each of these was ruled from a provincial capital such as Taxila or Ujjain.
- Although there was some amount of control from Pataliputra, and royal princes were often sent as governors, local customs and rules were probably followed.
- Every part had its own importance, for example, the Arthashastra tells us that the north-west was important for blankets, and south India for its gold and precious stones. It is possible that these resources were collected as tribute.
- There were also the forested regions. People living in these areas were more or less in dependent, but may have been expected to provide elephants, timber, honey and wax to Mauryan officials.

Tribute: Unlike taxes, which were collected on a regular basis, tribute was collected as and when it was possible from people who gave a variety of things, more or less willingly.
The emperor and the capital city

- Megasthenes was an ambassador who was sent to the court of Chandragupta by the Greek ruler of West Asia named Seleucus Nicator.
- Megasthenes wrote an account about what he saw. Here is a part of his description:
  - “The occasions on which the emperor appears in public are celebrated with grand royal processions. He is carried in a golden palanquin.
  - His guards ride elephants decorated with gold and silver. Some of the guards carry trees on which live birds, including a flock of trained parrots, circle about the head of the emperor.
  - The king is normally surrounded by armed women. He is afraid that someone may try to kill him. He has special servants to taste the food before he eats. He never sleeps in the same bedroom for two nights.”
  - And about Pataliputra (modern Patna) he wrote: “This is a large and beautiful city. It is surrounded by a massive wall. It has 570 towers and 64 gates.
  - The houses, of two and three storeys, are built of wood and mud brick. The king’s palace is also of wood, and decorated with stone carvings. It is surrounded with gardens and enclosures for keeping birds.”

Ashoka, a unique ruler

The most famous Mauryan ruler was Ashoka. He was the first ruler who tried to take his message to the people through inscriptions. Most of Ashoka’s inscriptions were in Prakrit and were written in the Brahmi script.
Ashoka’s war in Kalinga

- Kalinga is the ancient name of coastal Orissa.
- Ashoka fought a war to conquer Kalinga. However, he was so horrified when he saw the violence and bloodshed that he decided not to fight any more wars.
- He is the only king in the history of the world who gave up conquest after winning a war.

Ashoka’s inscription describing the Kalinga war

- This is what Ashoka declared in one of his inscriptions: “Eight years after becoming king I conquered Kalinga. About a lakh and a half people were captured. And more than a lakh of people were killed. This filled me with sorrow. Why? Whenever an independent land is conquered, lakhs of people die, and many are taken prisoner. Brahmins and monks also die. People who are kind to their relatives and friends, to their slaves and servants die, or lose their loved ones. That is why I am sad, and have decided to observe dhamma, and to teach others about it as well. I believe that winning people over through dhamma is much better than conquering them through force. I am inscribing this message for the future, so that my son and grandson after me should not think about war. Instead, they should try to think about how to spread dhamma.”

What was Ashoka’s dhamma?

- Ashoka’s dhamma did not involve worship of a god, or performance of a sacrifice.
- He was also inspired by the teachings of the Buddha.
- People in the empire followed different religions, and this sometimes led to conflict.
  - Animals were sacrificed.
  - Slaves and servants were ill treated.
  - Besides, there were quarrels in families and amongst neighbours.
- Ashoka felt it was his duty to solve these problems. So, he appointed officials, known as the *dhamma mahamatta* who went from place to place teaching people about
- Besides, Ashoka go this messages inscribed on rocks and pillars, instructing his officials to read his message to those who could not read it themselves.
- Ashoka also sent messengers to spread ideas about *dhamma* to other lands, such as Syria, Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka.
- He built roads, dug wells, and built rest houses. Besides, he arranged for medical treatment for both human beings and animals.
- The Rampurwa bull-stone sculpture. This was part of a Mauryan pillar found in Rampurwa, Bihar, and has now been placed in Rashtrapati Bhavan. It is an example of the skill of the sculptors of the time.

**Ashoka’s messages to his subjects:**

- “People perform a variety of rituals when they fall ill, when their children get married, when children are born, or when they go on a journey. These rituals are not useful. If instead, people observe other practices, this would be more fruitful. What are these other practices? These are: being gentle with slaves and servants. Respecting one’s elders. Treating all creatures with compassion. Giving gifts to brahmins and monks.”
- “It is both wrong to praise one’s own religion or
criticise another’s. Each one should respect the other’s religion. If one praises one’s own religion while criticising another’s, one is actually doing greater harm to one’s own religion. Therefore, one should try to understand the main ideas of another’s religion and respect it.”

- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, wrote: “His edicts (instructions) still speak to us in a language we can understand and we can still learn much from them.” Identify the parts of Ashoka’s message that you think are relevant today.

Elsewhere

- About 2400 years ago, emperors in China began building the Great Wall.
- It was meant to protect the northern frontier of the empire from pastoral people. Additions to the wall were made over a period of 2000 years because the frontiers of the empire kept shifting.
- The wall is about 6400km long, and is made of stone and brick, with a road along the top. Several thousand people worked to build the wall. There are watch towers all along, at distances of about 100-200m.
The story of the Buddha

- Siddhartha, also known as Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was born about 2500 years ago.
- This was a time of rapid change in the lives of people.
- The Buddha belonged to a small gana known as the Sakya gana, and was a kshatriya. When he was a young man, he left the comforts of his home in search of knowledge.
- He finally decided to find his own path to realisation, and meditated for days on end under a peepal tree at Bodh Gaya in Bihar, where he attained enlightenment. After that, he was known as the Buddha or the Wise One.
- He then went to Sarnath, near Varanasi, where he taught for the first time.
- He spent the rest of his life travelling on foot, going from place to place, teaching people, till he passed away at Kusinara.
- The Buddha taught that life is full of suffering and unhappiness. This is caused because we have cravings and desires (which often cannot be fulfilled). The Buddha described this as thirst or tanha. He taught that this constant craving could be removed by following moderation in everything.
- He also taught people to be kind, and to respect the lives of others, including animals. He believed that the results of our actions (called karma), whether good or bad, affect us both in this life and the next.
- The Buddha taught in the language of the ordinary people, Prakrit, so that everybody could understand his message.

Upanishads
Thinkers felt that there was something permanent in the universe that would last even after death. They described this as the *atman* or the individual soul and the *brahman* or the universal soul.

They believed that ultimately, both the *atman* and the *brahman* were one. Many of their ideas were recorded in the *Upanishads*.

*Upanishad* literally means ‘approaching and sitting near’ and the texts contain conversations between teachers and students. Often, ideas were presented through simple dialogues.

Occasionally, there is mention of women thinkers, such as Gargi, who was famous for her learning, and participated in debates held in royal courts.

Poor people rarely took part in these discussions.

One famous exception was Satyakama Jabala, who was named after his mother, the slave woman Jabali.

Many of the ideas of the *Upanishads* were later developed by the famous thinker Shankaracharya.

**Six Schools of Indian Philosophy**

- These are known as *Vaishesika, Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimansa and Vedanta* or *Uttara Mimansa*.
- These are said to have been founded by sages Konada, Gotama, Kapila, Patanjali, Jaimini and Vyasa, respectively.
- German-born British indologist, Friedrich Max Muller, has observed that the six systems of philosophy were developed over many generations with contributions made by individual thinkers.

**Panini, the grammarian**

- *Panini*, who prepared a grammar for Sanskrit.
- He arranged the vowels and the consonants in a special order, then used these to create formulae like those found in Algebra.
He used these to write down the rules of the language in short formulae (around 3000 of them!).

**Jainism**

- The last and 24th *tirthankara* of the Jainas, Vardhamana Mahavira, also spread his message around this time, i.e. 2500 years ago.
- He was a *kshatriya* prince of the Lichchhavis, a group that was part of the *Vajji sangha*.
- At the age of thirty, he left home and went to live in a forest. For twelve years he led a hard and lonely life, at the end of which he attained *enlightenment*.
- He taught a simple *doctrine*: men and women who wished to know the truth must leave their homes. They must follow very strictly the rules of *ahimsa*, which means not hurting or killing living beings.

“All beings,” said Mahavira “long to live. To all things life is dear.” Ordinary people could understand the teachings of Mahavira and his followers, because they used *Prakrit*.

- There were several forms of Prakrit.
- Followers of Mahavira, who were known as *Jainas*, had to lead very simple lives, begging for food. They had to be absolutely honest, and were especially asked not to steal. Also, they had to observe celibacy.
- And men had to give up everything, including their clothes.
- Thousands left their homes to learn and teach this new way of life. Many more remained behind and supported those who became monks and nuns, providing them with food.
- Jainism was supported mainly by traders. Farmers, who had to kill insects to protect their crops, found it more difficult to follow the rules.
- Jainism spread to different parts of north India, and to Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
They were written down in the form in which they are presently available at a place called Valabhi, in Gujarat, about 1500 years ago.

The sangha

- Both the Mahavira and the Buddha felt that only those who left their homes could gain true knowledge.
- They arranged for them to stay together in the sangha, an association of those who left their homes.
- The rules made for the Buddhist sangha were written down in a book called the Vinaya Pitaka.
  - All men could join the sangha.
  - However, children had to take the permission of their parents and slaves that of their masters.
  - Those who worked for the king had to take his permission and debtors that of creditors.
  - Women had to take their husbands’ permission.
- They meditated for most of the time, and went to cities and villages to beg for food during fixed hours. That is why they were known as bhikkhus (the Prakrit word for renouncer – beggar) and bhikkhunis.

Jaina:
The word Jaina comes from the term Jina, meaning conqueror.

Monasteries

- To begin with, both Jaina and Buddhist monks went from place to place throughout the year.
- During rainy seasons their supporters built temporary shelters for them in gardens, or they lived in natural caves in hilly areas.
- As time went on, many supporters of the monks and nuns, and they themselves, felt the need for more permanent shelters and so monasteries were built. These were known as viharas.
A Buddhist text tells us:

- Just as the waters of rivers lose their names and separateness when they flow into the mighty ocean, so are varna and ranks and family forgotten when the followers of the Buddha join the order of monks.
- Very often, the land on which the vihara was built was donated by a rich merchant or a landowner, or the king.
- The local people came with gifts of food, clothing and medicines for the monks and nuns. In return, they taught the people. Over the centuries, Buddhism spread to many parts of the subcontinent and beyond. You will learn more about this in Chapter 10.

The system of ashramas

- Around the time when Jainism and Buddhism were becoming popular, brahmins developed the system of ashramas.
- It is used instead for a stage of life. Four ashramas were recognised: brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and samnyasa.
- Brahmin, kshatriya and vaishya men were expected to lead simple lives and study the Vedas during the early years of their life (brahmacharya).
- Then they had to marry and live as householders (grihastha).
- Then they had to live in the forest and meditate (vanaprastha).
- Finally, they had to give up everything and become samnyasins.
- Generally, women were not allowed to study the Vedas, and they had to follow the ashramas chosen by their husbands.

Elsewhere

- Find Iran in your atlas. Zoroaster was an Iranian
prophet.  
- His teachings are contained in a book called the **Avesta**.  
- The language of the Avesta, and the practices described in it are very similar to those of the Vedas.  
- For more than a thousand years, Zoroastrianism was a major religion in Iran.  
- Later, some Zoroastrians migrated from Iran and settled down in the coastal towns of Gujarat and Maharashtra. They were the ancestors of today’s