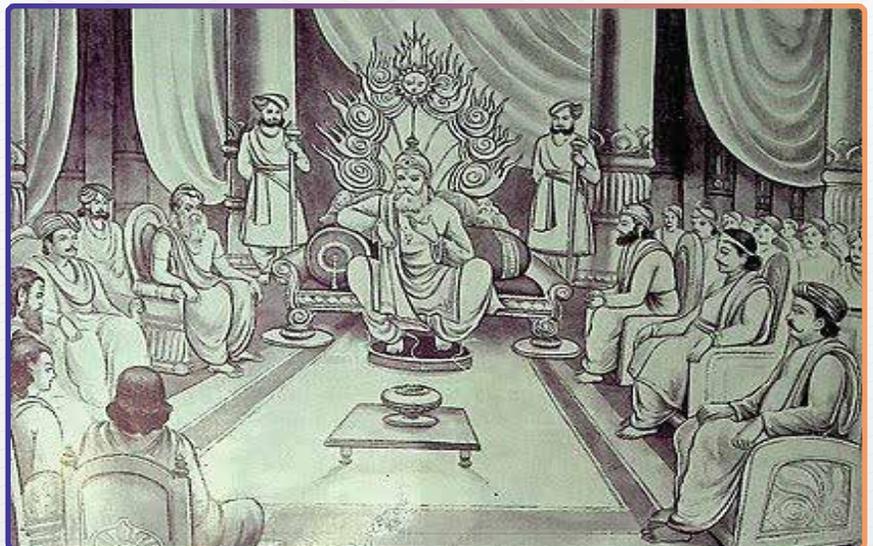


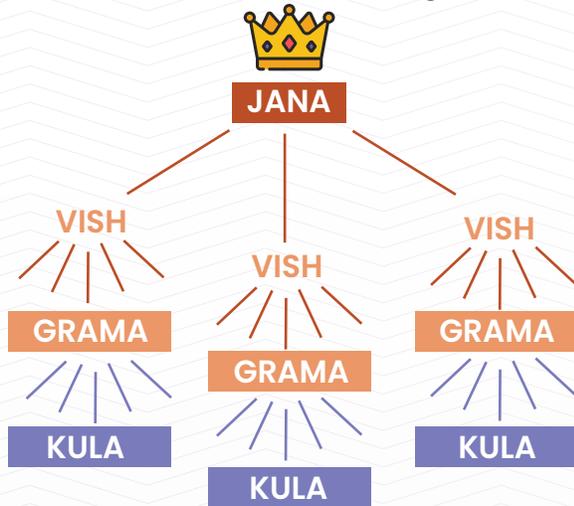


## Political Organization in the Rig Vedic Period

- ◆ The political structure during the Rig Vedic period was largely tribal, with the Rajan as the central figure of authority, supported by various tribal councils and functionaries.
- ◆ The largest social unit in Rig Vedic society was the **Jana** (tribe), and it was organized hierarchically within patriarchal families.
- ◆ The hierarchy began with the **Kula** (family), followed by the **Grama** (village), then the **Vish** (clan), and finally, the **Jana** (tribe), with each level having its respective leader.



### Rigvedic Political Organisation



- ◆ **Jana** (Tribes)- Head-Rajan or Janasya Gopa
- ◆ **Vish** ( Groups of Gram) (Head-Vishpati)
- ◆ **Gram** ( Village) ( Head- Gramini)
- ◆ **Kula** ( Family) ( Head-Kulapa)

### Rajan: The Tribal Chief

#### Role and Power of the Rajan:

- ◆ The **Rajan** or **Janasya Gopa** was the leader of the tribe, primarily responsible for military leadership, **protecting the tribe**, and ensuring the prosperity of cattle wealth.
- ◆ **The Rajan's primary role was not to rule over land or territory, as the concept of territorial rule did not exist at this time.** His leadership was based on his success in war and defense of the tribe.
- ◆ **Not an absolute monarch**, the Rajan's authority was constrained by tribal councils (Sabha, Samiti).
- ◆ The position was typically **hereditary**, but there were instances where the Rajan was **elected** by the tribal **assembly** (Samiti).
- ◆ There was no **regular revenue system**; the Rajan's income came from **voluntary tributes (Bali) and battle spoils**, but these were irregular and could not be considered taxes.
- ◆ The Rajan did not have a **judicial role**, though theft, particularly of cattle, was a concern. **Spies** were employed to monitor such issues.



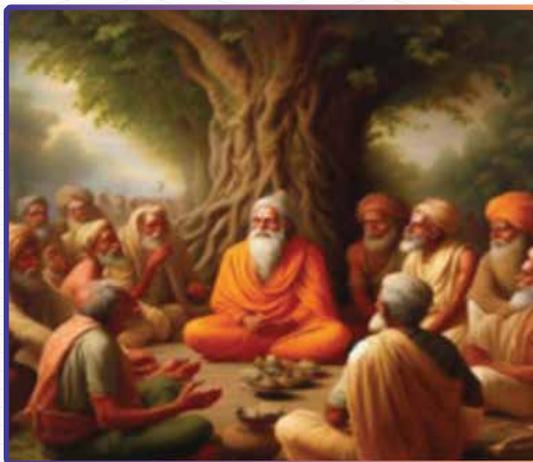
### Tribal Assemblies

The **tribal assemblies** were crucial in the decision-making processes related to military, religious, and social matters of the Rig Vedic society. These councils, including the **Sabha, Samiti, Gana, and Vidatha**.

The most important assemblies included the **Vidatha, Sabha, and Samiti.**

◆ **Sabha:**

- **Functions:** Judicial, administrative, and religious decisions.
- In the Rig Vedic period, the **Sabha** was an assembly where the elder members of the Jana (tribe) gathered.
- It was attended by both men and women, the latter being referred to as **Sabhavati**. However, women stopped participating in the Sabha during the later Vedic period.
- Over time, it became a place for gambling, music, and social activities.

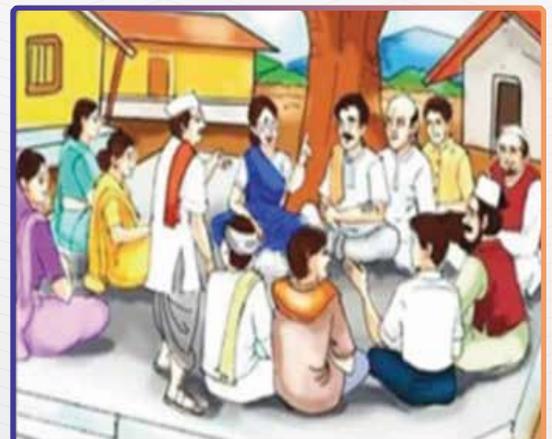


◆ **Samiti:**

- **Functions:** Primarily focused on folk assembly discussions, religious ceremonies, and philosophical debates.
- The **Rajan** could be elected or re-elected by the **Samiti**, which had a more democratic role.
- Over time, the Samiti became less influential, and its role diminished.
- **The Samiti gained prominence towards the end of the Early Vedic period, and unlike the Sabha, it did not engage in judicial functions.**

◆ **Vidatha:**

- **Functions:** An early assembly for **religious, economic, military, and social purposes**. It was more inclusive and provided a common ground for worship.
- The **Vidhata** was the **earliest tribal assembly** in the Rig Vedic period, mentioned **122 times** in the Rig Vedas, indicating its importance.
- **Women actively participated in the Vidhata, frequently** taking part in discussions, unlike in the Sabha where their participation was rare.
- The **Vidhata** served as a **common ground** for various clans and tribes, providing a platform for the **worship of their gods**.



## Functionaries Assisting the Rajan

1. **Purohita** - The **chief priest** who performed sacrifices for the tribe's prosperity and military success.
2. **Senani** - The **military general** responsible for leading campaigns and cattle raids.
3. **Vrajapati** - The **officer** in charge of the pasturelands, responsible for leading family heads (Kulapas) and militia during battle.
4. **Gramani** - The **head of the village**; Initially the leader of a tribal fighting unit, later becoming the head of a village.
5. **Madhyamasi** - The **mediator** in disputes.
6. **Bhagadugha** - The **tax collector** (although there was no formal taxation).
7. **Sangrahitria** - The **treasurer** of the tribe.
8. **Suta** - The **charioteer**.
9. **Palagala** - The **messenger**.
10. **Akshvapa** - The **accountant**.



## Tribal Conflicts

### Intra-Tribal Conflicts:

- ◆ Aryan tribes like the **Bharatas** and **Tristus** often engaged in conflicts among themselves.
- ◆ The **Battle of Ten Kings (Dasaraja)**: A significant battle fought on the Parushni (**Ravi**) river is a notable example, where the Bharatas, led by King **Sudas**, defeated a coalition of ten tribes (five Aryan and five non-Aryan). The **battle is first mentioned in the 7th Mandala of the Rigveda**.

### Inter-Tribal Conflicts:

- ◆ Conflicts with **Dasa** and **Dasyu** tribes, indigenous people often described as dark-skinned, non-Aryan, and living in fortified places called **Pur**.
- ◆ The **Panis**, wealthy non-Aryan traders, were also frequent adversaries of the Aryans, especially due to their refusal to support Vedic rituals.

## Military and Technology

◆ The Aryans succeeded in their battles, especially against the **Dasa and Dasyu** tribes, because of their superior **military technology** (Use of chariots and superior **weaponry** (coats of mail, arms)).

The **chariot**, driven by horses, was used for the first time in **West Asia and India** by the Aryans. This gave them a tactical advantage over their enemies.



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