

**India and China Establish Empires****Lesson 1**

# India's First Empires

## Key Terms and People

**Mauryan Empire** first empire in India, founded by Chandragupta Maurya

**Asoka** grandson of Chandragupta; leader who brought the Mauryan Empire to its greatest height

**religious toleration** acceptance of the right of people to have differing religious beliefs

**Tamil** language of southern India; also the people who speak that language

**Gupta Empire** second empire in India, founded by Chandra Gupta

**patriarchal** relating to a social system in which the father is the head of the family

**matriarchal** relating to a social system in which the mother is the head of the family

## Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about the influence of ancient Rome.

In this lesson, you will read about the Mauryan and Gupta Empires in India.

## As You Read

Use a timeline to record key information about the Mauryan and Gupta Empires.

### THE MAURYAN EMPIRE IS ESTABLISHED

#### How did the Mauryan Empire begin?

In 321 BC, Chandragupta Maurya used his army to defeat a powerful king in eastern India. He became king, and this started the **Mauryan Empire**.

Chandragupta then moved northwest. In 305 BC, he began to challenge Seleucus, one of Alexander the Great's generals. The two armies fought for several years. Eventually Chandragupta won. For the first time, northeastern and northwestern India were joined under the rule of one person.

Chandragupta was a harsh ruler. He charged a heavy tax on farmers—one-

half of the crop they grew each year. He used this wealth to build a huge army. He controlled his government by choosing officials and watching them closely. He split his empire into four provinces, each ruled by a prince. These areas, in turn, were divided into smaller pieces that were run by members of the government. Life in the court was rich. The palace and capital were beautiful.

Chandragupta's grandson, **Asoka**, took the throne in 269 BC. He brought the Mauryan Empire to its greatest height. At first he was a warlike king and fought many fierce battles with an enemy to the south. Then he decided to accept the teachings of the Buddha.

Lesson 1, *continued*

Asoka promised to rule in a fair way. He issued laws that urged his subjects to avoid violence. He urged **religious toleration**. This is acceptance of people's rights to differing religious beliefs. He made great roads so that people could travel easily. Soon after Asoka died, however, his empire collapsed.

1. What changes did Asoka make in the Mauryan Empire?

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**A PERIOD OF TURMOIL****What troubles did India face?**

For 500 years after Asoka, India was a land of troubles. In the center of India, a new dynasty—the Andhra Dynasty—dominated the region. In the northwest, many Greeks, Persians, and Central Asians entered the land. They were fleeing the invasions of others. These invaders disrupted Indian society, but they also added new ideas and languages to India's rich mix of culture. In the south, three different kingdoms fought each other off and on. The people who lived in this region spoke the **Tamil** language. They are called the Tamil people.

2. Who are the Tamils?

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**THE GUPTA EMPIRE IS ESTABLISHED****What was life like in the Gupta Empire?**

Around AD 320, Chandra Gupta I came to power in the north. He was not related to the first emperor. He took the

title of king and began to conquer other areas.

His son, Samudra Gupta, followed the same policy. For 40 years, he fought to win new lands for the **Gupta Empire**. Samudra's son, Chandra Gupta II, brought the empire to its largest size. He added parts of western India, including some important ports on the Indian Ocean, to his empire. With these, the Guptas were able to take part in the rich trade that connected India, Southwest Asia, and the world of the Mediterranean Sea. The Gupta Empire stretched all across northern India.

Most Indians lived in villages and were farmers. Part of each crop that they grew had to be paid to the king each year. Farmers also had to set aside part of each month to work on community resources, such as wells or dams. Craftworkers and those who worked in trade lived in special sections of each village, town, or city.

Most families in northern India were **patriarchal**. They were headed by the oldest male. But in southern India, some Tamil families were **matriarchal**. This meant the mother was head of the family. Property, and sometimes the throne, were passed through the female side of the family.

The Gupta kings were patrons of the arts. Artists flourished during the Gupta rule. However, after the death of Chandra Gupta II, another wave of invaders moved into India. Over the next hundred years, the great Gupta Empire broke up into several smaller kingdoms. The empire ended about 535.

3. How did the Gupta Empire end?

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# Lesson 1, continued

As you read about the Mauryan and Gupta Empires in India, take notes to answer the questions about the timeline. (Some dates on the timeline are approximate.)

321 BC	Chandragupta Maurya claims the throne and the Mauryan dynasty begins.	1. How did Chandragupta support his successful war efforts?
301 BC	Chandragupta's son assumes the throne.	2. How did Chandragupta hold his vast empire together?
269 BC	Asoka, Chandragupta's grandson, becomes king of the Mauryan Empire.	3. Why did Asoka wage war early in his reign?
232 BC	Asoka dies and the empire begins to break up.	4. How did Asoka show concern for his subjects' well-being?
		5. What did Chandra Gupta I accomplish during his reign?
AD 320	Chandra Gupta I becomes first Gupta emperor.	6. What did Samudra accomplish during his reign?
AD 335	Chandra Gupta's son, Samudra, becomes ruler.	7. What was the significance of Chandra Gupta II's military victories?
AD 375	Chandra Gupta II becomes king.	8. What peaceful means did he use to strengthen his empire?

**India and China Establish Empires****Lesson 2**

# Trade Spreads Indian Religions and Culture

**Key Terms and People**

**Mahayana** sect of Buddhism that offers salvation to all and allows popular worship

**Theravada** sect of Buddhism focusing on strict spiritual discipline

**stupa** mounded stone structures built over Buddhist holy relics

**Brahma** creator of the world, in Hinduism

**Vishnu** preserver of the world, in Hinduism

**Shiva** destroyer of the world, in Hinduism

**Kalidasa** one of India's greatest poets and playwrights

**Silk Roads** caravan routes that crisscrossed Central Asia

**Before You Read**

In the last lesson, you read about the Mauryan and Gupta Empires of India.

In this lesson, you will learn how trade caused changes in Indian religions and culture.

**As You Read**

Use a chart to describe ways in which Indian culture changed and grew between the Mauryan and Gupta Empires.

**BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM CHANGE**

**What were the changes in religious thought?**

Over time, the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism became more and more distant from the common people. Priests dominated Hinduism. Followers of the Buddha found it difficult to find the promised goal of release from this world. As new peoples moved into India, they brought new ideas. These ideas had an impact on these religions.

The Buddha had taught that a strict spiritual life was the way to escape from the suffering of the world. But self-denial was difficult for most people. Many people came to worship the Buddha himself as a god, even though he had forbidden it. Some came to believe that other people could become Buddhas themselves. They could do this through good works and sacrifice.

These ideas created a new kind of Buddhism, the **Mahayana** sect. Those who held on to the stricter beliefs

**Lesson 2, continued**

belonged to the **Theravada** sect. The new Mahayana approach focused less on individual discipline. It helped Buddhism become a popular religion. This change created new art. Buddhists with money built cave temples and then paid artists to decorate them with sculptures and paintings. **Stupas** were also built. These buildings contain holy Buddhist relics, and are used as places for meditation.

Hinduism changed, too. By the time of the Mauryan Empire, only priests were involved in many rituals of the faith. For centuries, Hinduism had been a religion of many gods. Now other religions based on only one god were becoming more important. Many Hindus began to emphasize only three gods. One was **Brahma**, creator of the world. Another was **Vishnu**, preserver of the world. The third was **Shiva**, destroyer of the world. By devoting themselves to these gods, people began to feel the religion more directly in their lives.

1. What changes did the split in Buddhism bring?

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**ACHIEVEMENTS OF INDIAN CULTURE**

**What advances occurred in the arts and sciences?**

The amount and quality of Indian art increased. Poets and playwrights, such as **Kalidasa**, wrote beautiful works of literature. Other artists laid the foundations for the classical form of dance in India.

The scientists of India proved that Earth was indeed round 1,000 years before Columbus. They made great

advances in mathematics, too. They invented the idea of **zero** and of decimal numbers. The doctors of India became highly skilled. They knew more than 1,000 diseases and used hundreds of medicines from plants to help their patients.

2. What advances did scientists and mathematicians make?

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**THE SPREAD OF INDIAN TRADE**

**How did India's trade increase?**

Soon Indians learned about the **Silk Roads**. These were caravan routes that crisscrossed Central Asia. Indian traders joined in the trade along these routes. Indians traded cotton cloth and animals to China for silk. Traders brought spices from Southeast Asia to India and then sold them to Romans and other western peoples.

This trade was so busy that large numbers of Roman coins have been found in India. The Indians also traded their own cotton cloth in Africa for ivory and gold. They sent rice and wheat to Arabia for dates and horses. They carried out this trade by land and sea.

India's culture spread beyond India. The art and architecture of many lands in Southeast Asia show the influence of Indian art. Some people adopted Hinduism, and many began to follow Buddhism.

3. In addition to goods, what did India send to different parts of the world?

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**Lesson 2, continued**

As you read about the ways that Indian religions and culture changed and expanded between about 200 BC and AD 300, fill out the chart by writing notes in the appropriate spaces.

<b>Changes in Religious Thought</b>	
1. Note how Buddhism changed and identify two effects of this change.	
2. Note how Hinduism changed and identify two effects of this change.	

<b>Expansion of Culture</b>	
3. Note at least two examples of the flowering of literature and performing arts.	
4. Note at least two examples of the flowering of science and mathematics.	

<b>Expansion of Trade and Commerce</b>	
5. Note how development of the Silk Roads and increased sea trade contributed to the expansion of Indian commerce.	
6. Note two effects of the expansion of Indian trade.	

**India and China Establish Empires****Lesson 3**

# Han Emperors in China

**Key Terms and People**

**Han Dynasty** Chinese dynasty that ruled for most of the period from 202 BC to AD 220

**centralized government** government that concentrates power in a central authority

**civil service** administrative departments of a government; also, word describing government jobs and employees

**monopoly** one group's complete control over the production and distribution of certain goods

**assimilation** policy of encouraging conquered peoples to adopt the institutions and customs of the conquering nation

**Before You Read**

In the last lesson, you read about the spread of Indian religions and culture.

In this lesson, you will read about the Han Dynasty in China.

**As You Read**

Use a chart to record information about important rulers of the Han Dynasty.

**THE HAN RESTORE UNITY TO CHINA****What changes did Han leaders make?**

The Chinese had been united briefly under the Qin empire. But the empire fell apart during a period of civil war. In 202 BC, Liu Bang named himself the first emperor of the **Han Dynasty**. The Han would rule parts of China for the next 400 years. They set many patterns for Chinese culture for centuries to come.

Liu Bang created a **centralized government**. Local officials reported to the emperor. The rule of the previous emperor had been very harsh. Liu Bang took a different approach. He lowered

taxes. He gave lighter penalties for crimes. Life became easier for the Chinese people.

From 141 to 87 BC, Emperor Wudi ruled Han China. He made his empire almost the size of modern China. He defeated nomads in the north. He moved troops and settlers to the west. He sent soldiers to the north into modern Korea and to the south to modern Vietnam.

1. What changes did Liu Bang make?

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Lesson 3, *continued***A HIGHLY STRUCTURED SOCIETY;  
HAN TECHNOLOGY, COMMERCE,  
AND CULTURE****What advances took place?**

Chinese society under the Han Dynasty was very structured. The emperor was at the top. He had a large number of officials. These officials reached down to the smallest village. They filled civil service jobs. Those who wanted these jobs had to pass an exam. The exam tested them on their knowledge of the writings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius.

To support a large government, the emperor collected taxes. Farmers paid part of the crops they gathered. Merchants paid taxes on the goods they traded. Peasants also had to work one month a year on government projects, such as dams and roads.

Under Han rule, the Chinese created many new inventions. One was paper. Paper made books more available and increased learning.

The Chinese also improved farming by inventing a new two-bladed plow. This change was important because the number of Chinese people had grown greatly. As Han emperors told their people, farming was the most important work. At the same time, several industries became important. The government had a **monopoly** on, or took complete control of, the mining of salt and making of iron, coins, and alcohol. It also made silk, which was in great demand in other lands.

2. Why were changes in farming so important?

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**THE HAN UNIFIES CHINESE  
CULTURE; THE FALL OF THE HAN  
AND THEIR RETURN****Why did problems develop?**

China now included many different peoples. The Han rulers encouraged **assimilation**—making sure that these people learned Chinese ways. They urged the Chinese to marry them.

One group that did not do well in Han China was women. According to Confucius, women were limited to meeting the needs of their husband and children. Some upper-class women, however, were able to become involved in other areas of life.

The Han empire began to have problems. Rich people got richer, while the poor were forced to pay heavy taxes. Members of the court were caught up in plots to gain power. Eventually, the peasants rebelled against their high taxes and poor lives.

A government official named Wang Mang took the throne. He tried to help the poor by taking land from the large landholders. But a terrible flood struck China and the peasants rebelled again. The Han Dynasty was restored when a member of the Han family was put on the throne. This was called the Later Han Dynasty.

For the next few decades, China enjoyed peace and wealth. But the same problems arose. The gap between rich and poor was too great. By AD 220, the Han Dynasty had fallen for good.

3. What caused the fall of the first Han Dynasty?

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**Lesson 3, continued**

As you read about the Han Dynasty, take notes to fill in the charts.

<b>Ruler</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How objectives were accomplished</b>
1. Liu Bang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destroy rivals' power</li> <li>• Win popular support</li> </ul>	
2. Empress Lü	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep control of throne</li> </ul>	
3. Wudi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand Chinese empire</li> <li>• Appoint qualified people to government jobs</li> </ul>	
4. Wang Mang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restore order and bring the country under control</li> </ul>	

Use information from Lesson 3 to identify results of each situation or event.

<b>Situation or Event</b>	<b>Result(s)</b>
5. Paper is invented.	
6. Government makes techniques of silk production a closely guarded secret.	
7. Territorial expansion brings people of many cultures under Chinese rule.	
8. Gap between rich and poor increases.	