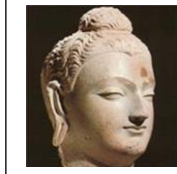


Aim #11: How did Maurya and Gupta rulers achieve peace & order in *Classical India*?

NYS SS Framework: 9.2b, 3a, 3b, 3c

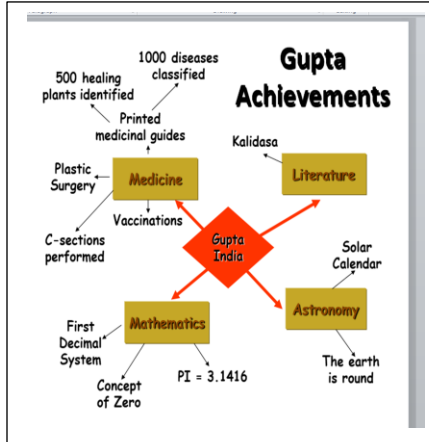
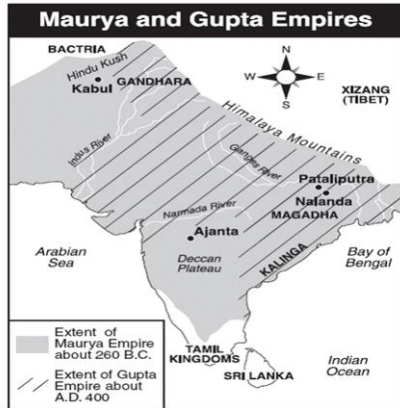
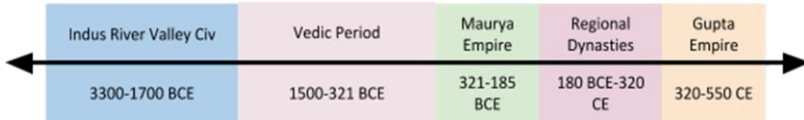
Powerful Empires of India



Extensive Trade 400



Timeline of Indian History through the Classical Age



Mini Lecture

- **Chandragupta Maurya** founded the first Indian empire in 321 B.C.E. The Maurya Empire's capital had schools, libraries, & palaces. The government built roads & harbors, collected taxes, & managed businesses. A secret police force reported on crime & dissent, or ideas opposed to those of the government.
- Chandragupta's grandson, **Asoka**, continued to expand the empire. Asoka began ruling in 268 B.C. He became a Buddhist & ruled by moral example. He sent missionaries to spread Buddhism throughout Asia. To help his people, Asoka built hospitals & roads.
- The empire declined after his death & ended around 185 B.C. Rival princes then held power for about 500 years. Each kingdom had its own government & capital.
- The **Gupta dynasty** united India from A.D. 320 to about 540. During this time, India enjoyed a period of great cultural achievement called a **golden age**.
- Prosperity contributed to a flowering of the arts & learning. Universities attracted students from many parts of Asia. Advances in mathematics included the system of numerals that we use today, the concept of zero, & the decimal system.
- For most Indians, everyday life revolved around the rules & duties associated with caste, family, & village.
- Villages produced most of the food & goods they needed. People regularly interacted with others from nearby villages while attending weddings, visiting relatives, or going to markets.
- Parents, children, & their offspring shared a common dwelling as a **joint family**. The father or oldest male served as head of the household. Children were trained to do the duties of their caste. Arranging good marriages was important & some families provided a **dowry**, or payment to the bridegroom.
- Women had had a higher status in early Aryan society than they did now. Over time, Hindu law placed greater restrictions on them.

Graphic Summary: Empires of Ancient India

*The diverse peoples of India rarely united. Yet the **Mauryas** and the **Guptas** were able to unite much of the subcontinent.

Empire	Maurya	Gupta
Dates	321 B.C. – 185 B.C.E.	C.E. 320-550
Government	- Harsh rule - Organized government - Officials collected taxes - Government owned factories	- Mild rule - Organized government - Villages and cities had power
Location	Northern and Southern India	Northern India
Learning	- Schools and libraries in capitals - Missionaries spread Buddhism	- Golden age of learning - Number system we use today; decimal system - Plastic surgery; vaccines for smallpox - Carvings of gods and animals

Review Questions:

1. How did Maurya rulers create a strong central government for their empire?
2. How did Buddhism influence Asoka's rule?
3. What were some of the advances of the Gupta dynasty?
4. What is a golden age?

Resources/Documents:

- Videos
- Maps
- Images
- Asokas's Edicts

Further Reading: Chapter 3, Section 3

How did Ashoka gain, consolidate, and maintain power during the the Maurya Empire?

Contextualize: Directions: Watch the video [“Ashoka the Great” from Mocomi Kids](#) and read the text below then answer the questions that follow.

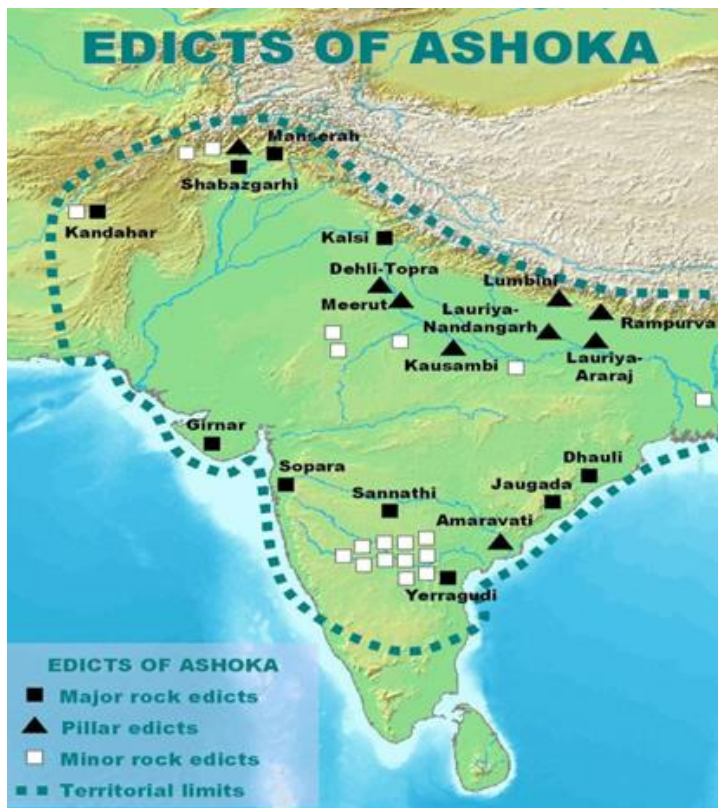
The **Mauryan Empire** ruled parts of India from 321 BCE until 185 BCE. In 269 B.C.E. **Ashoka Maurya** inherited the throne of the Mauryan Empire in India. His family created an empire by conquering other kingdoms in brutal wars. When Ashoka became the king he continued to fight wars and expand the empire. In his eighth year as the king, he went to war against the rulers of a section of India called Kalinga. Ashoka’s armies won the Kalinga War in which, according to historical sources, 100,000 people were killed and 150,000 people were forced to leave their homes. As he stated in one of his edicts, Ashoka “felt profound sorrow and regret” for the “slaughter, death, and deportation” his war caused. As a result, **Ashoka converted to the peaceful religion of Buddhism**. From that point onwards he based all of his government policies on Buddhist teachings. To inform the people he ruled, he had his new laws inscribed on rocks and stone pillars that were put up in public places throughout the empire. These policies are known as **Ashoka’s Rock and Pillar Edicts**. An edict is an official order.



The Maurya Empire ca. 250 BCE during Ashoka's Rule

1. How did Ashoka expand his empire before he converted to Buddhism?
2. Why was the Battle of Kalinga important to Ashoka’s story?
3. After his conversion to Buddhism, what actions did Ashoka take to improve the lives of the people in his empire? How might these actions have helped Ashoka gain, consolidate, and maintain his power?

Sourcing: Directions: Respond to the questions below using the text and images provided.



After the war of Kalinga, Ashoka controlled all the Indian subcontinent except for the extreme southern part and he could have easily controlled that remaining part as well, but he decided not to. Some versions say that Ashoka was sickened by the slaughter of the war and refused to keep on fighting. Whatever his reasons were, Ashoka stopped his expansion policy and India turned into a prosperous and peaceful place for the years to come.

Around 250 BCE, Ashoka began to issue one of the most famous edicts in the history of government and instructed his officials to carve them on rocks and pillars, in line with the local dialects and in a very simple fashion. In the rock edicts, Ashoka talks about religious freedom and religious tolerance, he instructs his officials to help the poor and the elderly, establishes medical facilities for humans and animals, commands obedience to parents, respect for elders, generosity for all priests and ascetic orders no matter their creed, orders fruit and shade trees to be planted and also wells to be dug along the roads so travellers can benefit from them. To this day, only nineteen of the pillars survive, six of them with Ashoka's lion symbol on the top. They average between 40 and 50 feet in height.

1. Who wrote Ashoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts?
2. When was *Ashoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts* written? Where was *Ashoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts* located?
3. What type of source is *Ashoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts*?
4. Why was *Ashoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts* written?
5. How might Ashoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts be useful evidence in determining what life was like under the Mauryan empire in Mesopotamia? How might it be not useful?
6. In what ways do you predict that Ashoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts are similar to *The Code of Hammurabi*?

Close Read: Directions: read the text below then answer the questions that follow.

How did the Mauryan Empire use their beliefs systems and philosophical ideas to gain, consolidate, and maintain power?

All men are my children. What I desire for my own children, and I desire their welfare and happiness both in this world and the next, that I desire for all men.

[Y]our aim should be to act with impartiality [fairness; evenhandedness]. It is because of these things -- envy, anger, cruelty, hate, indifference, laziness or tiredness -- that such a thing does not happen. Therefore your aim should be: "May these things not be in me." And the root of this is non-anger and patience...Failure in duty on your part will not please me. But done properly, it will win you heaven and you will be discharging your debts to me.

Happiness in this world and the next is difficult to obtain without much love for the Dharma, much self-examination, much respect, much fear (of evil), and much enthusiasm. But through my instruction this regard for Dharma and love of Dharma has grown day by day, and will continue to grow. And my officers of high, low and middle rank are practicing and conforming to Dharma, and are capable of inspiring others to do the same. Mahamatras [Ashoka's officials responsible for making sure Dharma was followed] in border areas are doing the same. And these are my instructions: to protect with Dharma, to make happiness through Dharma and to guard with Dharma. [King Ashoka] honors both ascetics [religious people] and the householders of all religions [...] By so doing, one's own religion benefits, and so do other religions, while doing otherwise harms one's own religion and the religions of others. Whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought "Let me glorify my own religion," only harms his own religion. Therefore contact (between religions) is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others.

Whatever good deeds have been done by me, those the people accept and those they follow. Therefore they have progressed and will continue to progress by being respectful to mother and father, respectful to elders, by courtesy to the aged and proper behavior towards Brahmins and ascetics, towards the poor and distressed, and even towards servants and employees.

There is no gift like the gift of the Dharma...One benefits in this world and gains great merit in the next by giving the gift of the Dharma. Therefore this Dharma edict has been written to last long and that my sons, grandsons and great-grandsons might act in conformity with it for the welfare of the world. However, this is difficult to do without great exertion.

1. What does "the Dharma" mean in this document?
2. how did Ashoka plan to spread "the Dharma?"
3. What is Ashoka's policy on religions other than Buddhism?
4. how does Ashoka want the people in his empire to act?
5. According to Ashoka, why should people act the way he suggests?

Corroborate

***Ashoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts* provide important context about life in the Mauryan Empire. However, like all primary sources, there are limitations and historians need to corroborate this piece of evidence with other pieces of evidence to have a clearer understanding of what life was like in the Mauryan Empire.**

What other sources might help us to better understand what life was like for people living in the Maurya Empire while Ashoka was the king?

What led to the Gupta Golden Age? How did the Gupta Golden Age impact India, other regions, and later periods in history?

Historians refer to certain time periods of some civilizations as **golden ages**.

Golden ages are periods of great **wealth, prosperity, stability, and cultural and scientific achievement**.

Why Golden Ages are Important to Historians

During Golden Ages, a lot of new ideas and **innovations** are produced in **visual arts, architecture, literature, philosophy, and science and technology** in a relatively short period of time in one geographic area, but these new ideas and ways of doing things do not stay in one place for long. They are carried to other civilizations through **cultural diffusion** and passed down to new generations through the process of **collective learning**.

Golden Ages move human intellectual and technological life ahead by leaps and bounds. These spurts of growth in our collective ability to understand the world around us, express it through art, and invent new ways of doing things have been important in getting the human race to where it is today.

The Gupta Golden Age Museum Walk

A lot of the artifacts that appear in museums come from the golden ages of civilizations. In this activity, you will visit exhibits on the Gupta Golden Age. **As you learn about the Gupta Empire, fill out the appropriate row in the [Golden Ages of Classical Civilizations Graphic Organizer](#).**

Golden Age	ACHIEVEMENTS and INNOVATIONS			
	Prosperity and Stability	Visual Arts and Architecture	Literature, Music, and Philosophy	Science, Mathematics, and Technology
Gupta Empire (320-550 CE)				
Han Dynasty				
Greece				
Rome "Pax Romana"				

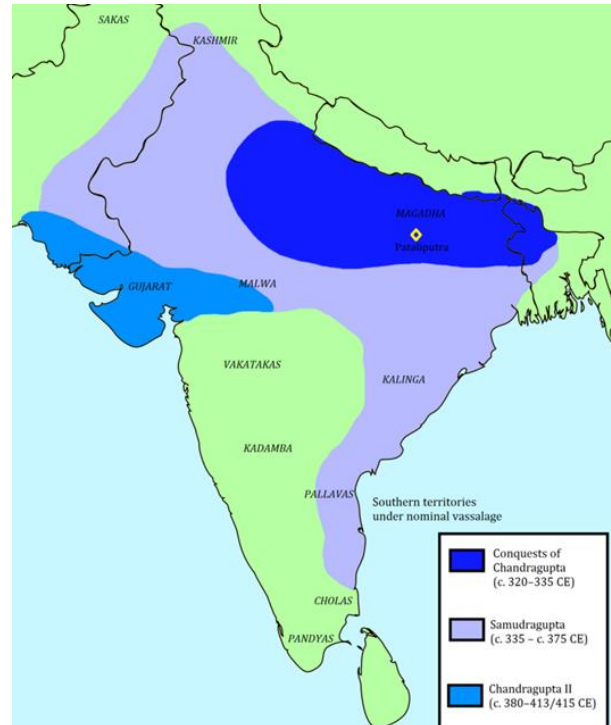
Exhibit A: The Gupta Empire (320-550 CE)

Timeline of Indian History through the Classical Age



The Gupta Empire ruled parts of India from 320-550 CE. **Chandragupta II** was one of the most powerful emperors of the Gupta empire. His rule spanned from 375 to 415 C.E. when the Gupta empire was at its height, often referred to as the *Golden Age* of India. He attained success by pursuing both favorable **military alliances and an aggressive expansionist policy** which made it possible for him to control a vast empire.

In addition to military prowess, Chandragupta II elevated culture, art, mathematics, philosophy, religion, and astronomy during his reign.



The Gupta Empire and conquests of its most powerful rulers.

Exhibit B: Trade, Prosperity, and Wealth

Standardized Money

Golden Ages require a lot of wealth. For artists and scientists to devote themselves to their work, they need someone to pay them for it so they can focus on their scholarly pursuits. Usually wealthy families or governments provide this support.

The government funded many of the innovations during the Gupta Dynasty. The government regulated and taxed trade



Golden coin from the Gupta Empire depicting an archer.



Silver coin from the reign of Chandragupta II

Exhibit C: Trade, Prosperity, and Wealth

Located On Trade Routes Between Rome and China

The Gupta ruled the largest and most **prosperous** empire in India, but in the first centuries CE it was not the most powerful in the world. To the west, **Rome** ruled the area around the Mediterranean Sea, and to the east, the **Han Dynasty** controlled China. The stability that the Roman, Han, and Gupta Empires brought spurred trade in Asia on the **Silk Roads**. This greatly benefited all three empires and the areas in between. Wealth and ideas passed along the trade network providing the money and ideas necessary for Golden Ages.

Classical Civilizations ca. 400 CE

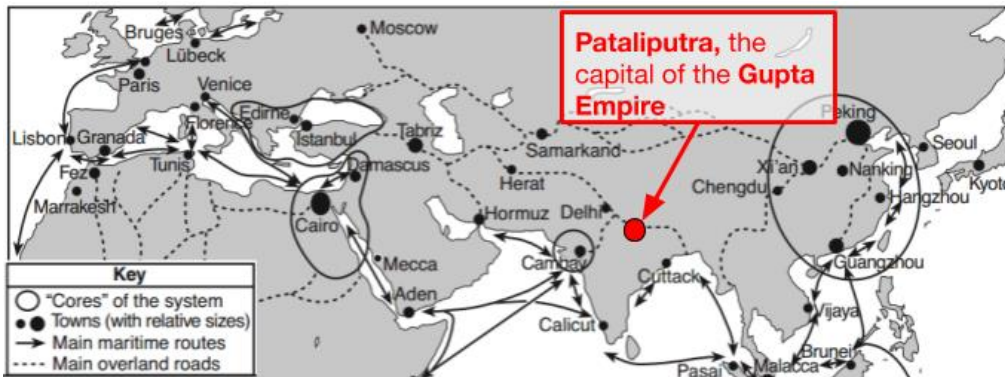
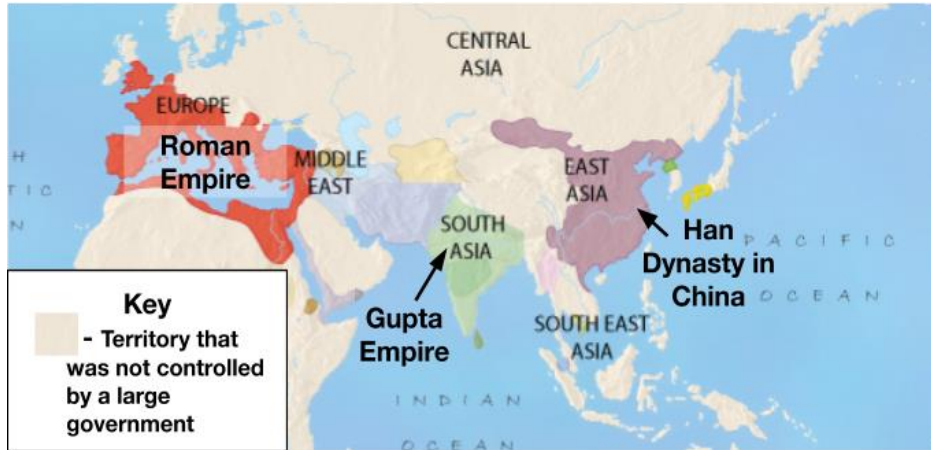


Exhibit D: Visual Arts and Architecture

Visual Arts and Architecture: Gupta Cave Shrines

Most of the examples we have of Gupta sculpture and architecture were inspired by Hinduism and Buddhism. The most well preserved and impressive of these examples are reliefs carved out of caves.



The image above is of a sculpture carved out of a cave wall of the Hindu god Vishnu in a boar-headed incarnation. It is roughly 23 feet tall and 13 feet wide.



The Ajanta Caves are covered in carvings and paintings that depict the lives of the Buddha.

Exhibit E: Literature

Some sources state that Chandragupta II supported literature and science in his empire directly by providing for a circle of scholars known as the **Nine Gems** in his court. A writer named **Kalidasa** stood as the greatest among them. He authored numerous pieces of literature, poems and plays, earning him the title of “the Shakespeare of India.”

Exhibit F: Mathematics

Watch an excerpt of “Ancient India’s Contributions to the World” (7:37- 10:33) and read the text below on other achievements in mathematics and made by Gupta scholars then answer the questions that follow.

Scholars during the Gupta period, made important **advances in mathematics** including:

- a close approximation of the value of **(pi)**
- advances in **trigonometry**
- the use of **negative numbers**

the use of **decimal points**

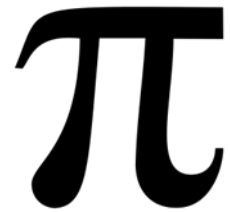


Exhibit G: Science and Technology

Stepwell Architecture



Watch an excerpt of “Ancient India’s Contributions to the World” (23:16- 26:38) about stepwells.

Metallurgy and the Iron Pillar of Delhi



Indian metal workers were known for their expertise in ancient times. The swords used by their soldiers were admired by other armies for their strength and the officers carried metal bows. In Delhi, there is an iron pillar from the Gupta era that stands 23 ft tall. It is over 1,500 years old but has very little rust or wear.

