

# ***HISTORY OF SOUTH ASIA***

# **Cultural Origins and Historical Background of South Asia**

The Pre-Aryan Period

The Hindu India

The Islamic India

The British India

Independence and Partition

## The Pre-Aryan period: Prior to 1500 B.C.

Evidence of ancient humans 2 to 1.8 million years ago

Arrival of modern humans from Africa 70,000 - 50,000 years ago

Agriculture occurred 7,000 years ago in the northwest



Rock paintings by hunters and gathers  
10,000 years ago, in present day  
central India

## Indus Valley Civilization: 3500 – 1500 B.C.

- Peaked around 1500 B.C.
- Largest centers Harappa (25,000) and Mohenjo-Daro (40,000) at peak



- City building culture



Arial view: grid-like streets



Residential area  
and neighborhood  
structures



- Diverse agriculture and importance of water management

Irrigation canals; water wells, drainage systems, granaries, wheat, cotton, sesame, dates, melons, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats



Drainage system



Granaries



Well



Great Bath



Bathroom



- Built by primarily dark-skinned people; but people of various racial origins also found



- Religion and arts: many elements adopted by later Hindu culture



A priestly residence?



Seals with animals



Priest king



A figurine of a dancing girl



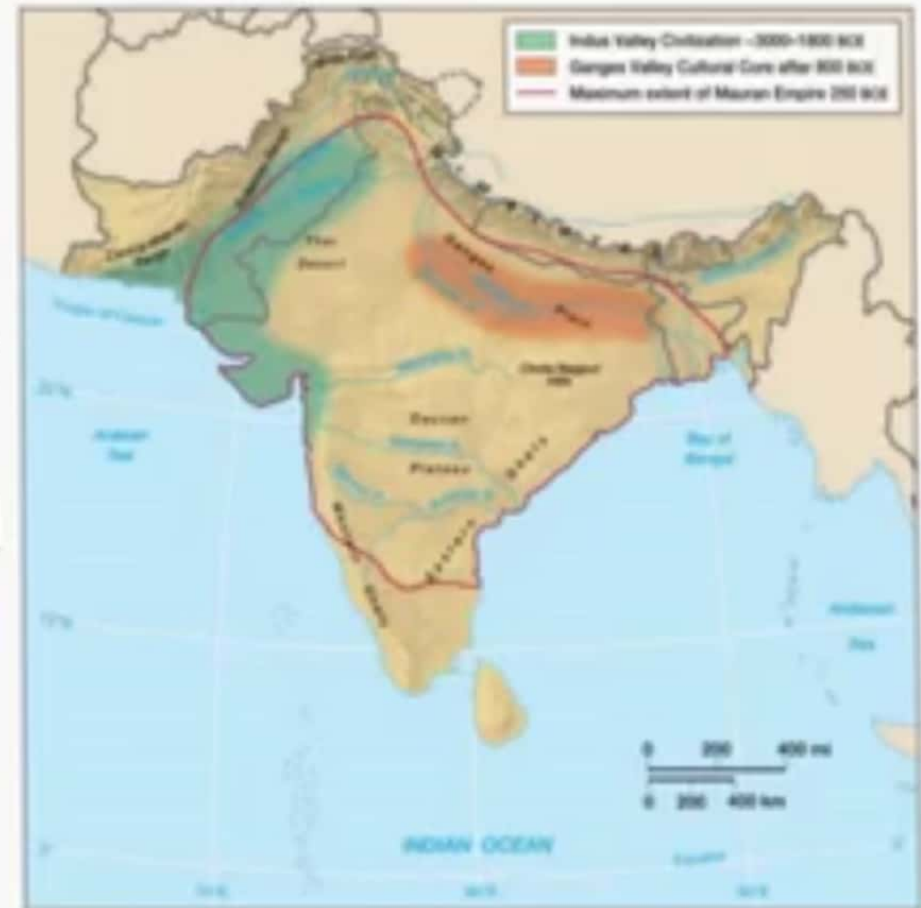


- Destroyed thousands years ago
- Unanswered questions
  - Who were these people?
  - What or who destroyed the civilization?



## The Hindu India: 1500 B.C. – 1206 A.D.

- Invasion of the Aryans (Indo-European speakers)
- War-like nomads turned into agriculturists
- Adoption of many cultural traits of the Indus Valley Civilization
- Pushed toward the Ganges lowland
- Development of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism
- Caste system: internal division of Hindu society



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The Indus and Ganges valleys

- Long periods of political fragmentation

Many kingdoms organized on expanded tribal connections

- Maha Janapada (Great Nation)
- Janapada (Nation)
- Jana (tribe)



Major nations (Kingdoms)

- Invasion of Alexander the Great, 326 B.C.
  - Conquered kingdoms in the Indus valley
  - Forged political alliances
  - Gave up the push to the Ganges due to troops revolt



Alexander's Empire

- The Mauryan Empire: 324 - 180 B.C.
  - Asoka 269 - 232 B.C.
  - Largely unified the Subcontinent
  - Converted to and spread Buddhism



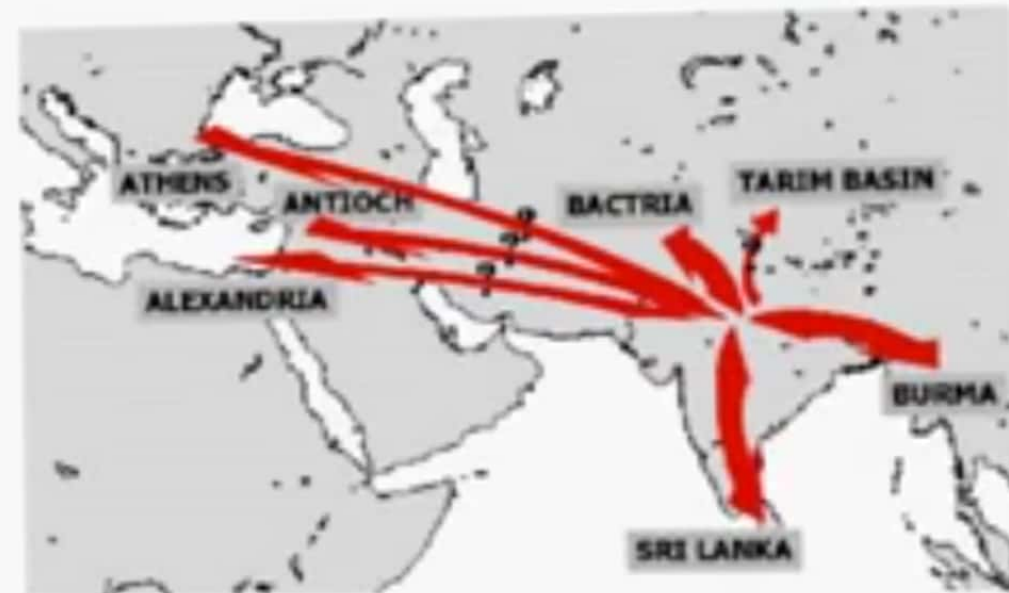
Asoka's empire



Lion Pillar of Asoka, adopted as the Indian national emblem



the Mahabodhi Buddhist Temple built by Asoka



Spread Buddhism by Asoka

- The Gupta Empire: A.D. 320 - 550
  - Classical age of Hindu revivalism
  - Golden age of culture and arts

### Examples of Achievements

- ✓ Medical instruments and operations
- ✓ Notion of zero
- ✓ Earth is not flat but round, rotates on its own axis
- ✓ Earth moves around the sun
- ✓ Eclipse
- ✓ Mild punishment by fine
- ✓ Free hospitals sponsored by the wealthy
- ✓ Kalidasa, great Indian poet and playwright



- Mughal Empire: 1526 - 1757
  - Turkish Muslim Babur conquered northern India
  - Akbar largely unified the Subcontinent
  - Prominence of the Persian culture
  - Shah Jahan built the Red Fort and Taj Mahal



AKBAR, EMPEROR OF INDIA.  
From *World's Great Men*, (London: 1911)

Emperor Akbar



Taj Mahal



## British India: 1757 - 1947

- Portuguese in Goa, and other Europeans
- British East India Company (1600)
  - Seized trade with Southwest Asia and Southeast Asia
  - Trading stations: Bombay, Calcutta, Madras



European trading stations

- Since the mid 18th century
  - Mughal Empire disintegrated
  - Other European powers defeated
  - the EIC established control of the colony



East India Company flag

- The Sepoy Mutiny in 1857
  - Sepoy: Indian soldiers hired by the British
  - First independence movement
  - Shift of control of the colony to the British government



The Sepoy Mutiny

- the Amritsar Massacre 1919
  - Martial Law imposed
  - People from outside town gathered for a festival
  - British soldiers fired at the crowds
  - Over 1,000 killed, 1,100 wounded



Site of the Amritsar Massacre

## Independence and Partition

- Indian National Congress, 1885: seek Indians' participation in socio-political life and freedom
- Mahatma Gandhi: transformed the National Congress into a mass movement; nonviolence and non-cooperation approach



Gandhi in the "Salt March" against the British taxes on salt making, 1930



Gandhi and Nehru who later became the first prime minister of independent India

- Muslim League, 1906, led by Jinnah in 1920s-1940s; accepted the idea of a Muslim nation in 1930s



Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League leader



Prevailing religions, 1909

- Partition
  - All efforts for a unified new India failed
  - Pakistan and India established in 1947
  - 8 million Muslims from India to Pakistan
  - 6 million Hindus from Pakistan to India
  - Half a million died in communal violence



Mass migrations during the partition

- The Kashmir problem
  - Hindu ruler and a Muslim majority of the population
  - Pakistani invasion led to the first war with India
  - the UN mediation established a divided control line
  - Two more wars fought and many more skirmishes since
  - A major sticking point in the India-Pakistan relations



Disputed territories in Kashmir

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## Summary

Various sources contributed to the culture of South Asia

These influences have given the region its identity in terms of religion, language, race, and ethnicity

Colonialism has had profound impacts on political development since the partition and independence

Knowing cultural origins and historical connections of the region helps us understand contemporary development paths the countries of South Asia have chosen

# MODERN SOUTH ASIA

# South Asia



# Partition: India and Pakistan 1947

- Independence from British rule and Partition of British India into modern countries of India and Pakistan (East and West)



# PAKISTAN

- 14 August 1947
- Muslim state
- Islamic Republic Of Pakistan
- Four provinces
- Also claimed the state of Kashmir in the northern areas



# BANGLADESH 1971

- War between East and West Pakistan results in separation of Pakistan into two states: Pakistan and Bangladesh
- 1500B.C. Aryans came and pushed Dravidians to this Eastern area
- 1757 under British rule and 190 years
- In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century came Arabians, Turks, Persians, Afghan, Mughals



# INDIA

- 15 August 1947
- Independent Democratic Republic in 1948
- 1956 rearranged the states
- India has 22 states in 1961
- 1962 war India with China
- 1965 Kashmir issue war with Pakistan
- 1971 war eastern and western Pakistan and India







# NEPAL

- Ashoka visited in 250 B.C
- 449 A.D. Changu Narayan Temple
- Thakuri ruled in 9<sup>th</sup> century
- Malla Dynasty divide region in three principalities
- King Prithvi Narayan in 1769
- Prime Minister ship in Rana's hands in 1951
- December 1906 King Mahendra Bir Bikram took over uptill now



# SRILANKA

- Originate from the mainland of India in 2500 B.C.
- 1505 Portuguese occupied
- 1796 British appointed governor
- February 1948 became independence
- 1956 member of Common Wealth
- Democratic Socialistic Republic Of Srilanka in 1978



# MALDIVES ISLAND

- Embraced Islam in 1153 A.D.
- Portuguese occupied from 1558-1573
- Borah (Ismaili) in 19<sup>th</sup> century
- British agreement 1956-57 at Addu Atoll time period and for 30 years
- November 1978 made many political, social, and economic reforms



- In 1948 Ceylon (Sri Lanka) independence
- In 1949 Bhutan: a protectorate of India
- In 1965 Maldives: independence
- 1971 Split of Pakistan and the establishment of Bangladesh

