

# Indian Empires

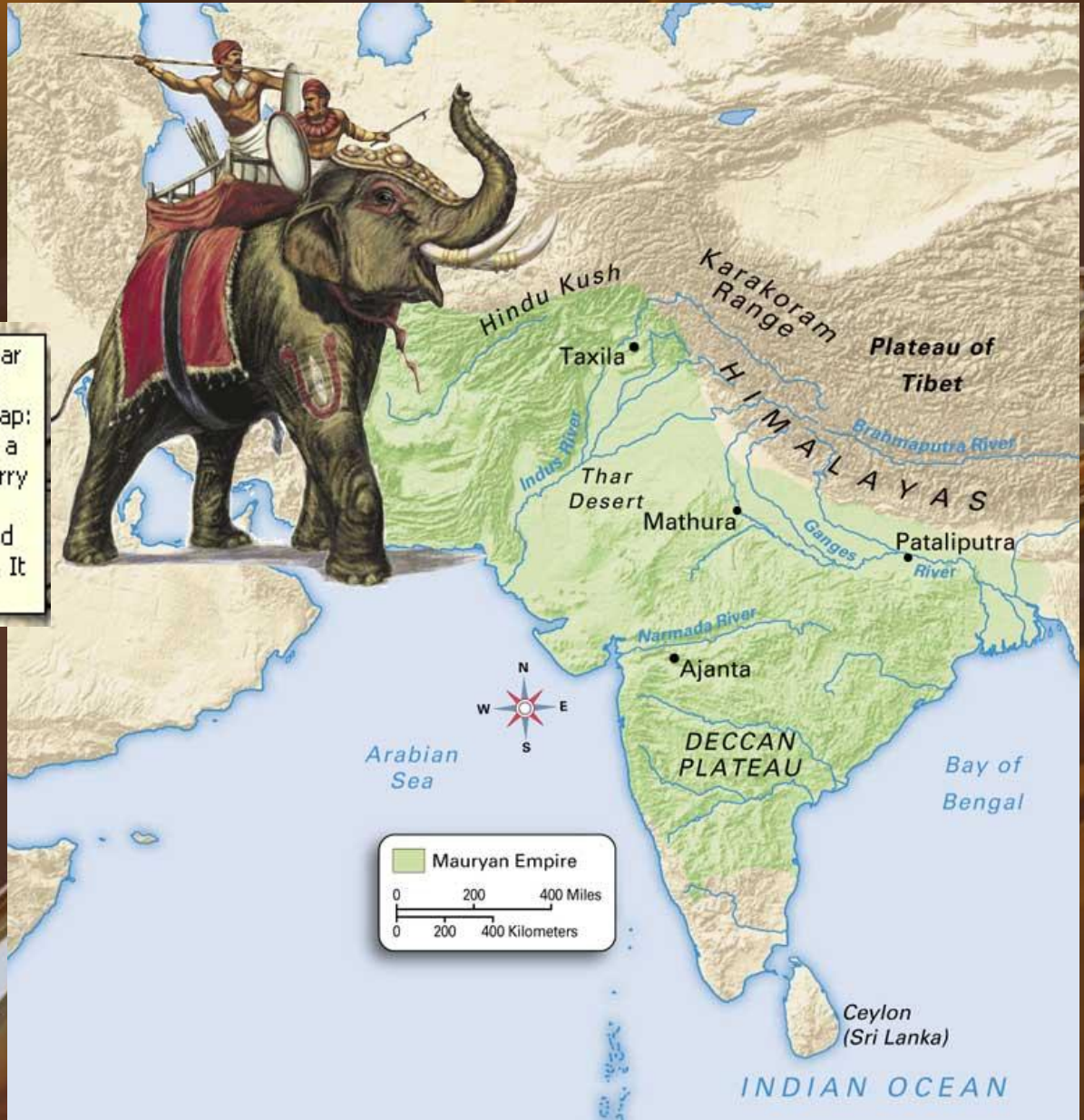
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# **Mauryan Empire Unifies India**

- **Under Aryan rule, India was divided into several states with no central leader.**
- **Then, during the 300s BC, the conquests of Alexander the Great brought much of India into his empire.**
- **An Indian military leader named Chandragupta Maurya followed Alexander's example and seized control of the entire northern part of India.**
  - **The Mauryan Empire lasted for 150 years.**

# MAURYAN EMPIRE

320 – 185 BC



Mauryan troops used war elephants in battle, striking fear in their enemies. As the elephants charged forward into battle, soldiers on top hurled spears at their enemies. Map: Mauryan Empire, c. 320-185 BC: This is an illustration of a pair of warriors riding atop an elephant. The warriors carry spears and shields. The elephant's trunk is raised and it wears armor covering its forehead. This map of India and south Asia has the Mauryan empire highlighted in green. It stretches from Hindu Kush in the west to

# Candragupta

- **Candragupta's complex government included a huge army and a network of spies.**
- **He taxed the population heavily for the protection he offered.**
- **Eventually, Candragupta became a Jainist monk and gave up his throne to his son.**
- **His family continued to expand the Indian empire.**

## **Asoka's Rule**

- **Candragupta's grandson, Asoka, was the strongest ruler of the Mauryan dynasty.**
- **The empire thrived under his rule. But at last, tired of killing and war, Asoka converted to Buddhism.**
- **He sent Buddhist missionaries to other countries and devoted the rest of his rule to improving the lives of his people.**
- **The rest of the family, however, did not follow Asoka's example.**

# Asoka



This Buddhist shrine, located in Sanchi, India, was built by Asoka.

## Key Events

c.270 BC Asoka becomes Mauryn emperor.

c. 261 BC Asoka's empire reaches its greatest size.

c. 261 BC Asoka becomes a Buddhist.

c. 251 BC Asoka begins to send Buddhist missionaries to other parts of Asia.

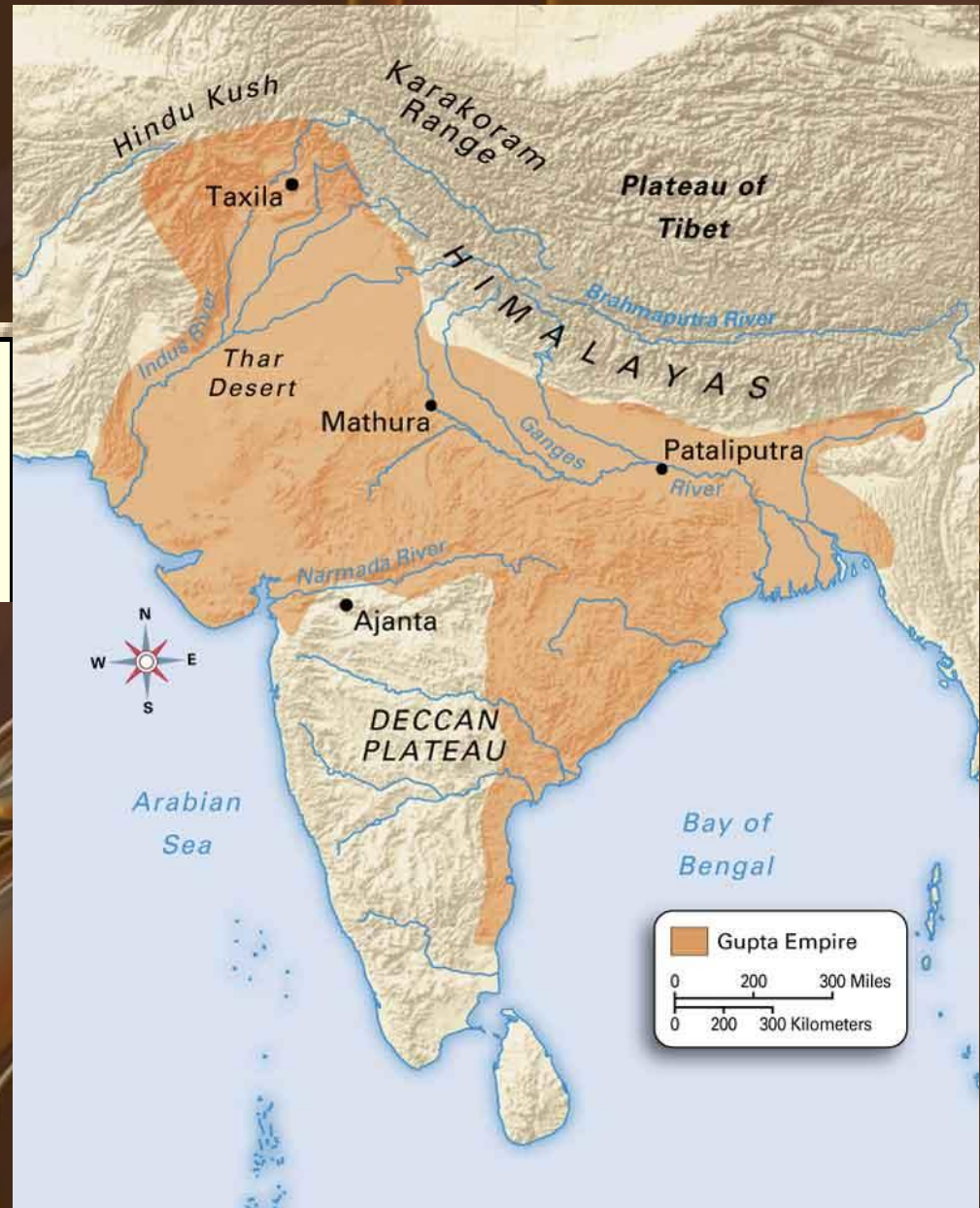
# Spread of Buddhism

- **When Asoka died, his sons struggled for power and foreign invaders threatened the country.**
- **The Mauryan Empire fell in 184 BC India remained divided for about 500 years.**
- **The spread of Buddhism steadily increased, while Hinduism declined.**

# Gupta Empire

400

Map: Gupta Empire, c. 400. This is a map of India. The Gupta Empire is shaded in pink and consists of most of the northern part of India. It extends around the Deccan Plateau, south almost to the tip of India.



## **Gupta Rulers Promote Hinduism**

- **A new dynasty was established in India. During the 300s AD, the Gupta Dynasty once again rose to unite and build the prosperity of India.**
- **Not only did the Guptas control India's military, they were devout Hindus and encouraged the revival of Hindu traditions and writings.**
- **The Guptas, however, also supported Jainism and Buddhism.**

# Candra Gupta II

- **Indian civilization reached a high point under Candra Gupta II (not related to Candragupta Maurya).**
- **He poured money and resources into strengthening the country's borders, as well as promoting the arts, literature, and religion.**



# Gupta Art



This Gupta painting of a palace scene shows some of India's different castes. Gupta rulers supported Hinduism and the caste system. This is a Gupta painting showing a palace scene with some of India's different castes. It shows men and women who are all sitting in a group. They are all doing different things. Some are holding tools. Some are holding umbrellas. Some are talking to each other. There are a lot of whites, browns and blacks used in this painting. Credit: © SEF/Art Resource, NY

# Caste System

- **The Guptas believed the caste system supported stability.**
- **This was not good for women, whose role under the empire was very restricted.**
- **Women were expected to marry, in weddings arranged by their parents, and raise children.**
- **A woman had to obey her husband and had few rights.**

# The Huns

- **The Gupta Dynasty lasted until fierce attacks by the Huns from Central Asia during the 400s drained the empire of its resources.**
- **India broke up once again into a patchwork of small states.**

