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*History*  
UNFOLDING

# INDIA: THE MAURYAS TO THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

*THE WAY WE SAW IT*  
IN ILLUSTRATION AND ART

A Teacher's Resource Booklet

With Lesson Plans and Reproducible Student Activity Assignments



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The well-crafted lessons in MindSparks materials use editorial cartoons, photos, and other visuals to generate spirited yet carefully ordered classroom interactions. The materials are primarily booklets with the ImageXaminer included on CD-ROM. These curriculum supplements cover all major areas of the social studies, with some literature-based materials of interest to language arts teachers. MindSparks products are content-rich materials using visual primary source documents to promote classroom discussion, small-group interaction, and individual student research projects.

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# Introduction

## India's Classical Age

This MindSparks set is the second of two covering the story of India from ancient times through the Mughal Empire that lasted until just before the age of British imperial control. The first set is titled *Ancient India* (HS839).

More than 2000 years ago, Indian civilization already meant, above all else, Hinduism and the beliefs associated with it. For that reason, much of the material in this set focuses on Hinduism's role in Indian society, and on the other religions that in a sense were responses to it—Buddhism in particular. Political unity has been rare in India's history. Whereas, for example, China experienced long periods of unity under a single dynasty, punctuated by shorter periods of chaos and internal warfare, the reverse was the case for India. It is its religious traditions that have defined India's core cultural identity far more than any set of political institutions. That is why this set devotes so much space to those traditions, as well as to their interactions with Islam from the 11th century on.

This set uses 12 visual displays to focus on several of the key themes in India's story since the time of the Mauryan Empire. Each lesson uses three visual displays to explore one broad topic. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

### **Hindu India and the Buddha**

A brief summary of key aspects of Hindu belief, their relationship to the caste system, and to the origins of Buddhism, which was at least in part a reaction against some aspects of Hinduism.

### **Unity and Disunity in Early India**

The focus of these illustrations is on the rise and rapid fall of two northern empires in India, the Maurya and Gupta empires, with a focus also on Ashoka and his significance.

### **Buddhism and the Hindu Revival**

A closer look at the specifics of Buddhist beliefs and at the revival of new, more devotional forms of Hinduism in the first millennium CE.

### **Islam and the Mughals**

The arrival of Islam and various Muslim conquerors starting in the 11th century CE changed India in fundamental ways. The visual displays for this lesson focus on some of the issues this change raised for many of India's people.

## Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Most textbooks today are full of colorful visuals. But all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. But only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

## How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

**A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET** This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

**CD-ROM WITH IMAGES** The ImageXaminer allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions. The CD-ROM also includes a folder containing all of the discussion questions and follow-up questions in pdf format. All of the images are also in pdf format, should you wish to create overhead transparencies.

### **DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR EACH ILLUSTRATION**

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while viewing the images in the ImageXaminer. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments, while others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

---

**OBJECTIVES  
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better understand Hinduism and its role in Indian life.
  2. Students will better understand how dissatisfaction among some Hindus may have contributed to the rise of Buddhism.
- 

# Hindu India and the Buddha

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*Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.*

---

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

### Illustration 1

More than 2000 years ago, Indian civilization already meant, above all else, Hinduism and the beliefs associated with it. Hinduism was based on a powerful priesthood, the Brahmins. The photo here is of a modern-day Brahmin priest. Brahmins stood at the top of India's rigid caste system, in which people were limited by birth to a fixed social status. What made the caste system bearable to many was the Hindu concept of *samsara*, the idea that every person's undying soul passes from life to life. One's deeds, or *karma*, in this life directly affect one's future life. By this logic, one could enter a higher caste in the next life if one lived a virtuous life in the present.

### Illustration 2

The caste system divided India in one way. Another clear division was that between men and women. In this, India was not different from many other traditional societies, such as those in China, Christian Europe, or later the Islamic lands of the Middle East. In those societies, women were subordinate to men in many ways. But this 19th-century watercolor depicts one Indian practice unique to India. The practice is *suttee*, in which a widow throws herself on her deceased husband's funeral pyre. The practice horrifies many, but some Hindus see it as an act of sacred devotion to the husband, a devotion that would continue into the afterlife.

### Illustration 3

Dissatisfaction with the caste system and the Hindu priesthood may have aided the rise of Buddhism. The Buddha was Siddhartha Gautama, born a prince in the sixth century BCE. The gods supposedly came to him in a dream as he slept under a rose-apple tree. They showed him four sights his wealthy father had kept from him—a frail old man, a sick person, a dead person, and a monk seeking enlightenment. From this, Siddhartha concluded that only through spiritual enlightenment could humans escape suffering. Buddhism was to show the way to that enlightenment. Siddhartha accepted Hindu views about reincarnation, but he did not accept that caste limited one's ability to achieve that enlightenment. That is, one did not have to rise caste by caste through many lifetimes before attaining this spiritual release. This stone sculpture from the third century BCE shows Gautama Buddha with his devotees.

# Illustration 1

## Hindu principles:

### Dharma

The duty, code of conduct, or discipline guiding each individual's life

### Karma

The actions one takes in life to fulfill or thwart one's *dharmā*

### Samsara

The cycle of birth, death, and rebirth

## The caste system:

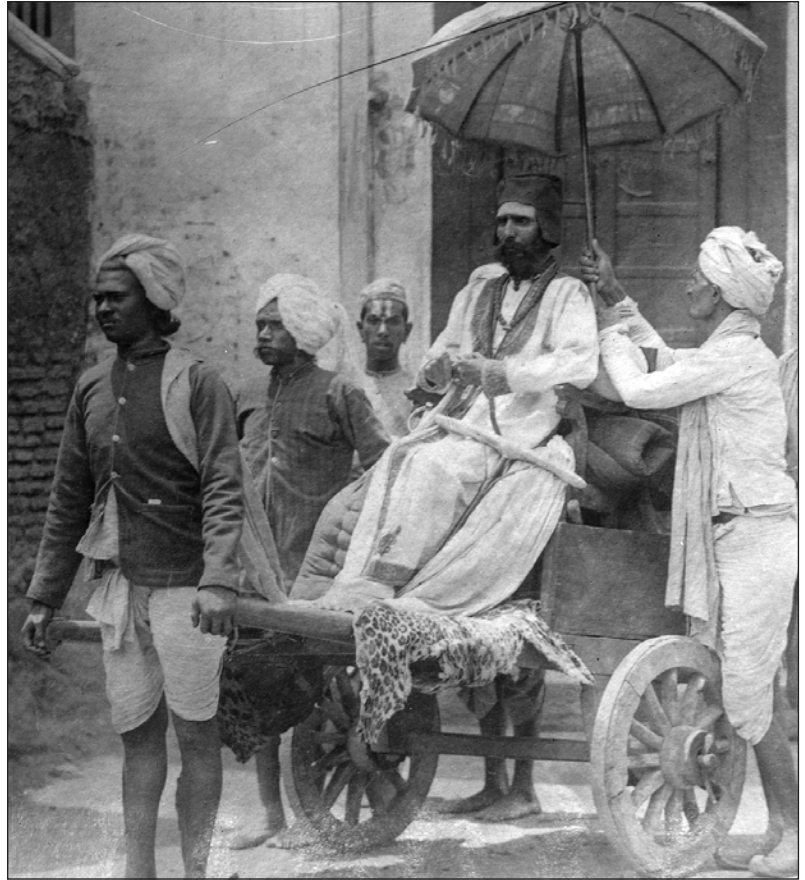
**Brahmin** (priests)

**Kshatriya** (warriors, kings, princes)

**Vaishya** (merchants, farmers, artisans)

**Shudra** (servants, laborers)

**Harijan** (outcasts, "untouchables")



Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

## Discussing the Illustration

1. Riding with his attendants in this illustration is a priest of India's main religion. From the picture and the words shown here, what religion is that? What does this photo from the early 1900s suggest to you about Hinduism and the role of its priests in that religion?
2. As these words show, Brahmins are at the top of India's caste system. From the words and your general knowledge of India, can you explain what is meant by the "caste" system? Do you think this illustration in any way helps to clarify what the caste system is actually like? Why or why not?
3. The caste system seems unfair to many because it has usually been very difficult for a person born into one caste to move upward into another. But the three key Hindu principles shown here, especially *karma* and *samsara*, did make it easier for those in the lower castes to accept this fact. From what you know of the Hindu principles listed on top here, can you explain how they might have made the caste system more bearable to those in the lower castes?

## Follow-up Activities

1. In the 1930s, Indian nationalist Mohandas Gandhi became a leader in the movement against the caste system. He fought hard to improve the status of those in the lower caste, the "untouchables." He actually began calling these people *Harijan*, or "children of God," the name commonly used today. How much did Gandhi succeed in reforming the caste system? Learn more about the caste system in India since Gandhi. To what extent does it survive? How has it been modified? Write a brief essay in which you present your findings.
2. The importance of the Brahmin priests grew out of the Vedic Age. As ritual sacrifice became more and more complex, the Brahmins became indispensable. Learn more about the role of the Brahmin priests in early Hinduism. Then learn more about the role of Roman Catholic priests in Europe's Middle Ages. Compare their role with that of the Brahmin priests. In what ways were they similar? In what ways were they different? Write a brief essay on what you find out.



## Illustration 2



The Granger Collection, New York

### Discussing the Illustration

1. The caste system divided India in fairly strict ways. This was also true of divisions between men and women in India. What do you know about these differences in the social position of men and women in India in its past?
2. Women were subordinate to men in many traditional societies. But this illustration calls attention to a unique aspect of their treatment in India, the practice of *suttee*. What is the practice of *suttee*?
3. *Suttee* was seen as a ritual in which the woman carries out a sacred task that supposedly honors herself as well as her husband. What attitude toward *suttee* does this illustration take. What details suggest a positive or a negative view of the practice?
4. Although *suttee* was accepted in many parts of India, the British who controlled India then abolished it in 1829. Do you think the British had a right to do this? Why or why not?

### Follow-up Activities

1. Small-group activity: Learn more about *suttee*. In theory, *suttee* was voluntary. How voluntary was it really? As a group, discuss this and other questions about *suttee*, such as: Did it happen all the time? What happened to those who chose not to “participate”? Were some groups more likely than others to practice it? Then, as a group, discuss whether *suttee* was a part of traditional Indian culture that no one ought to judge or an injustice that others outside that culture are entitled to judge. Use the ideas that come up in your group discussion to help you guide the entire class in a debate on the same question.
2. Find out more about the role of women in India’s lower castes and upper castes and the kind of life they had. Decide which group of women was better off, and which was worse off. Write your thoughts down in a brief essay. Be sure to back up your thoughts with solid evidence.



## Illustration 3



© Instructional Resources Corporation

### ***Discussing the Illustration***

1. In the sixth century BCE, a new religion arose in part because Hinduism seemed to be losing its appeal. As legend has it, this new religion's founder was led to his insight and inspiration while sitting under a Bodhi (or Bo) tree. Can you name that religion and its founder?
2. Sitting under this tree, Siddhartha Gautama—the Buddha—attained enlightenment. This third century BCE sculpture depicts Buddha with his devotees. How does the sculpture present Buddha, and how does this depiction of him help to suggest what Buddhists mean by “enlightenment”?
3. Buddhism accepted many aspects of Hinduism, but it did not accept others, including the authority of the Brahmin priesthood. It also seemed to go against the caste system in that it said spiritual enlightenment was open to all human beings at any time. In what ways did this go against Hindu beliefs, in particular beliefs about *samsara* and its relationship to the caste system?

### ***Follow-up Activities***

1. Buddhism is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha, or “Enlightened One.” Learn more about him. Specifically, find out what is actually known to be true about him, his family, where he was from, and the general story of his life as compared with what legend says about these things. Write a brief essay. Share your essay with the class.
2. Small-group activity: Buddha was the founding figure of a major world religion. Other founders of religions were Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and Confucius (Confucianism, while not technically a religion, has often been treated as one by some of its devotees). Have each member of your group learn more about Buddha and one of the other figures listed here. As a group, discuss what can be learned about each religion from the nature of its founder as compared with the others.

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**OBJECTIVES  
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better understand the Mauryan Empire and its most famous ruler, Ashoka.
  2. Students will better appreciate some factors that made it hard for India to attain political unity.
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# Unity and Disunity in Early India

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*Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.*

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

### Illustration 1

India's various regions have normally been difficult to unify under a single government. After the fall of the Indus civilization around 1500 BCE, the first state to come close to such unity was the Mauryan Empire in the fourth century BCE. The Mauryan Empire unified much of northern India. Perhaps its greatest conqueror was Ashoka, who extended the empire to include most of India. But Ashoka is remembered much more for turning away from conquest and accepting Buddhism and nonviolence. He sent missionaries to spread the Buddhist message. He also built *stupas* such as that shown here, and stone pillars inscribed with edicts to his subjects. Edict 12, also presented here, speaks of the importance of tolerating and even honoring all religious traditions.

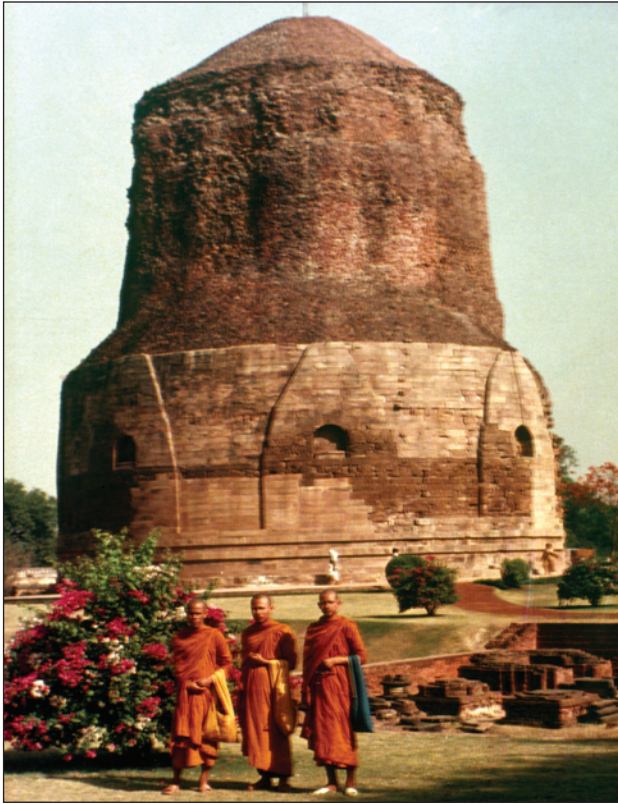
### Illustration 2

Together, the main map here and the inset illustrate again the fact that for much of its past, India achieved unity only for short periods before falling into discord again. The Mauryan Empire quickly declined after Ashoka's death in 232 BCE. The map inset shows the Gupta Empire that arose in 320 CE in the Ganges River valley. By 400 CE, as the inset map shows, a large part of northern India was once again under unified control. But the main map indicates that by the eighth century, the Gupta Empire was gone. It began to fall apart in the late fifth century. In the eighth century, India's chances of unity were threatened again when Islamic warriors began pressing in from the northwest.

### Illustration 3

Even when powerful empires did arise in the north, no Indian empire established complete control over southern India. The Dravidian people there differed in language and culture from the empires of northern India. This illustration shows part of a seventh-century rock-cut relief sculpture, one of several Pallava cave temples and sculpted reliefs in the southern seaport of Mahabalipuram. The Pallavas were powerful rulers in southern India at that time. The rock-cut temples and reliefs there contain many features associated with Buddhist cave shrines. The scene in this sculpture has been interpreted in two ways, as an episode from *The Mahabharata*, a key Hindu epic, or as a myth about the descent of the Ganges River from the heavens.

# Illustration 1



The Granger Collection, New York

*There should be a growth of the essence of all religions. This growth can take many forms, but the root of it is restrained speech. That is, one must not praise one's own religion or insult another's without reason. Attacking another religion should be for specific reasons only, because all religions deserve respect for one reason or another. Honoring other religions brings credit to one's own religion, and at the same time does service to the religions of other people. Acting otherwise harms one's own religion and other religions. For he who praises his religion excessively and condemns other religions in the hope of glorifying his own actually only harms it more. Contact between all religions is good since all people can benefit from hearing the beliefs professed by others.*

Partial translation of Edict 12 of Ashoka

## Discussing the Illustration

1. For much of its history, India was not united. At times, large empires would arise, but they mainly unified the northern part of India on the huge plain of the Ganges River. Why do you think that was so?
2. One early empire that united this northern region was the Mauryan Empire. When, approximately, did this empire exist? What do you know about it?
3. The most famous Mauryan ruler was Ashoka. He ruled from 269 to 232 BCE. Some call him the greatest ruler in the history of India. At first, Ashoka was a great conqueror. But then he became a Buddhist and built many *stupas*—large, dome-shaped monuments like the one shown here. What, if anything, do such monuments suggest about Ashoka's Buddhist ideas or his plans for his empire?
4. Ashoka also inscribed edicts on stone pillars all over India. How would you sum up the words of the edict here? In what ways, if any, do you think Buddhism influenced the ideas Ashoka expressed in this edict?

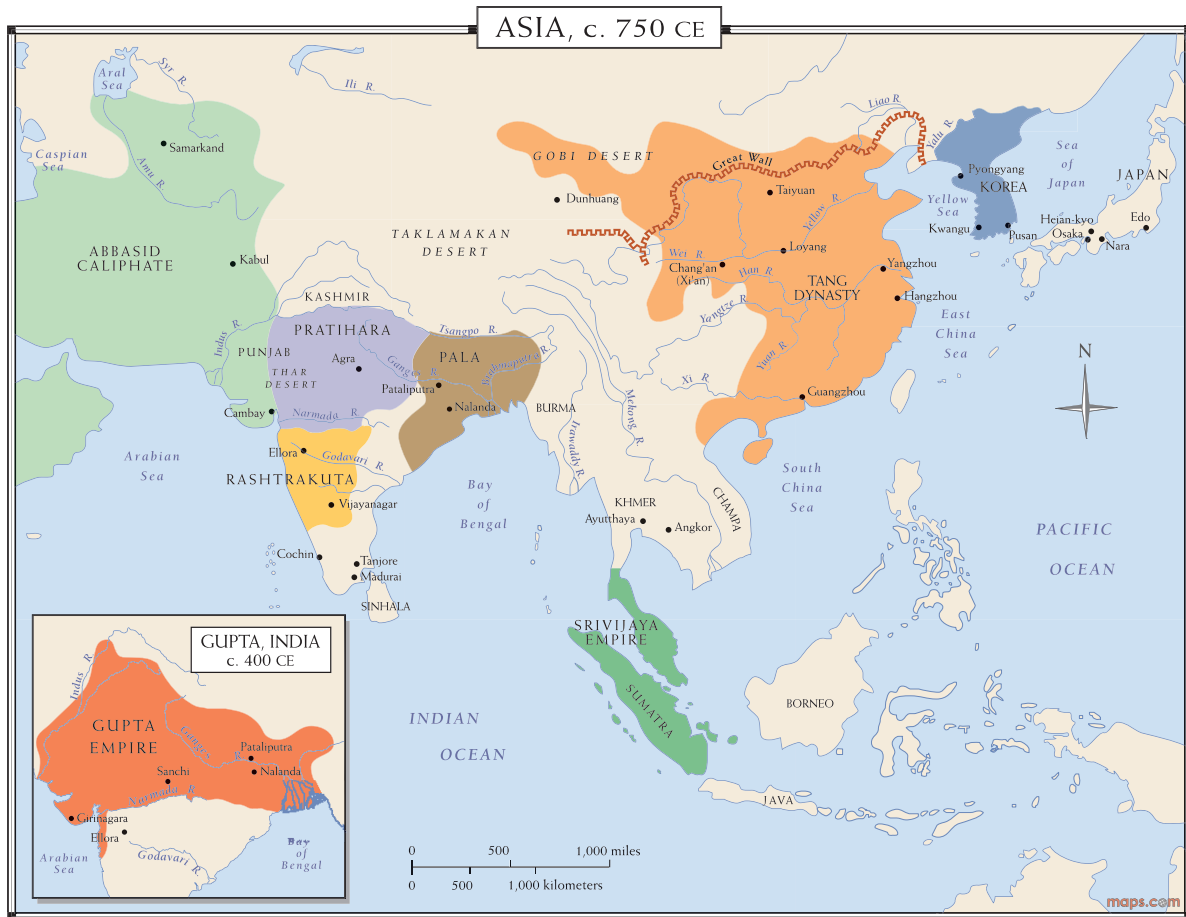
## Follow-up Activities

1. Ashoka's edicts were inscribed on rock surfaces and specially polished pillars. He issued his Pillar Edicts in the 27th and 28th year of his reign. Read more about Ashoka and collect as many interesting quotes as you can find from his Pillar Edicts. Use a few of these quotes in a brief talk to the class in which you explain how Ashoka's Buddhism is or is not expressed in these edicts.
2. A hilltop above the village of Sanchi, in Madhya Pradesh state in central India, contains a number of important Buddhist monuments, some of the oldest structures in India. The most elaborate and well known of the more than 50 monuments on the hill is the Great Stupa, begun by Ashoka. Find pictures of the Great Stupa at Sanchi. Also, find some pictures of other *stupas*. Learn what you can about the role and purpose of these *stupas*. Create a display that helps students better understand Buddhism by describing these various shrines and what they were for.



## Lesson 2—Unity and Disunity in Early India

### Illustration 2



© Maps.com

#### Discussing the Illustration

1. The Mauryan Empire fell apart shortly after Ashoka's death in 232 BCE. The inset of the map here shows the next big empire that arose in the north. What was the name of that empire and approximately when did it flourish?
2. The Gupta Empire was a time of prosperity. But as you can see, like the Mauryan Empire it did not last long. How does the main map here help to make that clear? What do you know about the Gupta Empire and the reasons for its fall?
3. It was in the eighth century CE that India first began to be threatened by new groups of outsiders from the northwest. Later, after the tenth century, these outsiders would begin to invade much of India. They were warriors inspired by a new religion. From the map, can you guess that religion?

#### Follow-up Activities

1. Small-group activity: Find several historical maps that show how the different parts of India were governed or ruled over the centuries. Begin in the 300s BCE with a map of the Mauryan Empire. Your final map should be a present-day political map. For each map, write a short paragraph describing what the map shows. Arrange the maps and descriptions in chronological order in a bulletin-board display titled "India: A History of Disunity." You may also want to include any images you find that relate to the periods in India's history each map covers. Include written descriptions of these images. Give a short class talk explaining your bulletin-board display.
2. Small-group activity: Have each member of the group learn about one key leader of the Mauryan or Gupta empires. Then, assuming the role of that ruler, each group member should give a brief speech to the class. In chronological order, have each "ruler" tell his story to the class so as to give a complete picture of these empires.

## Illustration 3



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### Discussing the Illustration

1. As with other Indian empires, the Gupta Empire never fully controlled all of southern India. In part that is because the people of southern India differed culturally in key ways, including the fact that they spoke a different family of languages. What name is used for this family of languages?
2. How might India's geography help explain the failure of the northern empires to control southern India?
3. This seventh-century rock-cut relief sculpture is one of several cave temples and reliefs in the southern seaport of Mahabalipuram. How does it seem like or unlike other Indian art and sculpture you have seen?
4. This sculpture, with its Buddhist designs, has been interpreted in two ways, as an episode from the *Mahabharata*, or as a myth about the descent of the Ganges River from the heavens. How does this show that cultural and religious influences spread to most of southern India even if the northern empires did not dominate there?

### Follow-up Activities

1. Small-group activity: Mahabalipuram was a port city of the southern Indian dynasty of the Pallavas in the seventh century. It may have been named after the Pallava king Mamalla. It has been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its many cave temples, sculpted reliefs, and other monuments. As a group, learn more about these monuments. Find illustrations of as many of them as you can. Arrange them, along with descriptions, into a bulletin-board tour guide of Mahabalipuram in which you explain as much as you can about these historic monuments.
2. The scene in this relief sculpture has been titled "Arjuna's Penance," which refers to an episode in the *Mahabharata*. Learn more about this Hindu epic and try to find out as much as you can about the episode this sculpture depicts. Give a brief talk in class to explain what you have learned about the sculpture.



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**OBJECTIVES  
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will understand a bit more in-depth the fundamental principles of Buddhism.
  2. Students will better understand the way Hinduism responded to the challenge Buddhism posed.
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# Buddhism and the Hindu Revival

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*Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.*

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

### Illustration 1

Buddhism is centered on what are called the Four Noble Truths: all life is suffering; the cause of suffering is desire, or attachment to what is not permanent; escape from this suffering is only achieved by ending desire; and the way to this release is to follow the eight steps of the “Middle Path” that Gautama preached. The goal was a somewhat mysterious state of ultimate peace called *nirvana*. Perhaps the serene, almost smiling face of this statue of Buddha offers some idea of what it means. Buddhism arose in part because many in India felt little spiritual link with the Brahmin priests of Hinduism, their complicated theology, or the limits of caste. From Ashoka’s time and for centuries after many schools of Buddhist thought flourished in India.

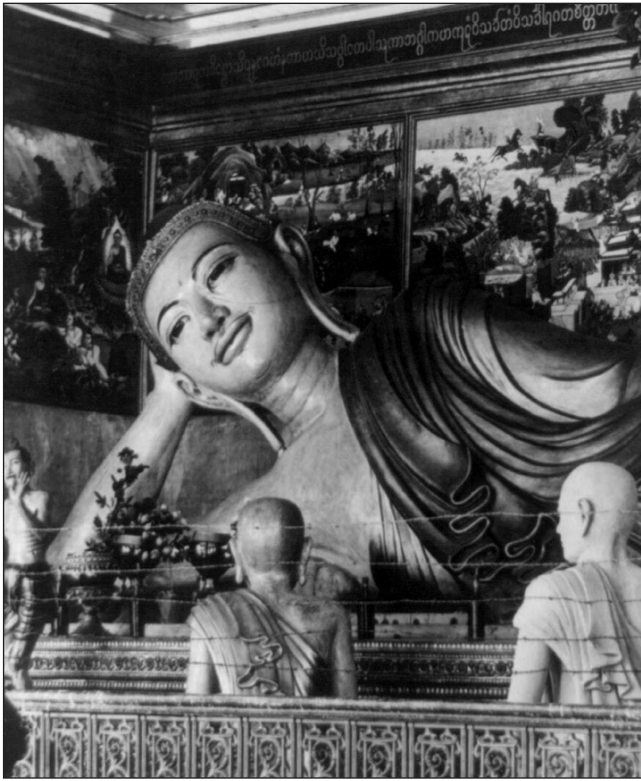
### Illustration 2

Buddhism satisfied a special spiritual longing that Hinduism seemed for a time unable to satisfy. Another religion, Jainism, did the same. But in time, Hinduism itself changed. It evolved away from a religion of sacrifices and other rituals presided over by an out-of-touch priesthood. Many sects arose in which believers worshiped more directly and passionately, serving one or more of the many Hindu deities. Some sense of this longing for direct spiritual experience is captured by this photo of a man practicing yoga. Yoga exercises are seen as ways to achieve union between the finite (or mortal) self and the eternal self, or *Brahman* (the Hindu term roughly comparable to what other religions mean by “God”).

### Illustration 3

Hinduism has always had an amazing ability to adapt and change and take in ideas from other faiths. Perhaps its ability to respond to Buddhism’s challenge helps explain the fact that in time Buddhism faded as a popular system of belief in India. Under Ashoka, Buddhism spread throughout the kingdom, but after Ashoka’s death, Hinduism revived. Buddhists were persecuted at times by Hindus and later by Muslims. In time, Buddhism nearly died out in Buddha’s homeland. But Buddhism and Hinduism both had a profound impact far beyond India’s shores. One form of Buddhism spread to Southeast Asia. And other forms of Buddhism were carried by merchants and missionaries along various Silk Road routes north of India to China, Korea, and Japan.

# Illustration 1



Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

## The Four Noble Truths

- All human life is suffering (*dhukka*)
- All suffering is due to human desire or attachment to the impermanent. Suffering is a product of what one has done—that is, a result of one's *karma*.
- Human suffering can end once desire and attachment end
- The way to end desire is to follow the eight steps of the Middle Path (right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration)

### Discussing the Illustration

1. Buddhism is centered on what Siddhartha Gautama called the “Four Noble Truths.” They are listed here. The problem of suffering is obviously at the heart of Buddhism. Why do you think that is so? What do you think of the solution to this problem offered by the Four Noble Truths?
2. The stupa shown in Lesson 2 is located at Sarnath. It was there that Siddhartha Gautama preached his famous “Deer Park Sermon” explaining his idea of the Middle Path. This was his path between a life of pleasure and an ascetic life in which all pleasure is given up. From what you see here, explain what you think following the Middle Path requires.
3. The goal of the Middle Path was enlightenment and *nirvana*. *Nirvana* is not an easy idea to explain. Some would say the serene expression on this statue of the Buddha suggests its meaning. From this illustration and what you know about Buddhism, explain what you think the concept of *nirvana* means.

### Follow-up Activities

1. The Four Noble Truths which make up the core of Buddhism are shown here. The fourth one sums up the eight steps of the Middle Path, also called the “Eightfold Noble Path.” Learn more about the Middle Path and these deceptively simple eight steps. In your own words, come up with a single sentence explaining each of the steps as well as an example of what you think each step means. Use these sentences and examples to create a chart on the Middle Path. Share your chart with the class.
2. Learn more about Buddhist monasteries. Find out what life in a Buddhist monastery was like. What was the daily routine of a Buddhist monk? How were the early Buddhist monks different from, and how were they similar to, the monks in Christian monasteries in Europe in Middle Ages? Write an essay explaining what you find.

## Illustration 2



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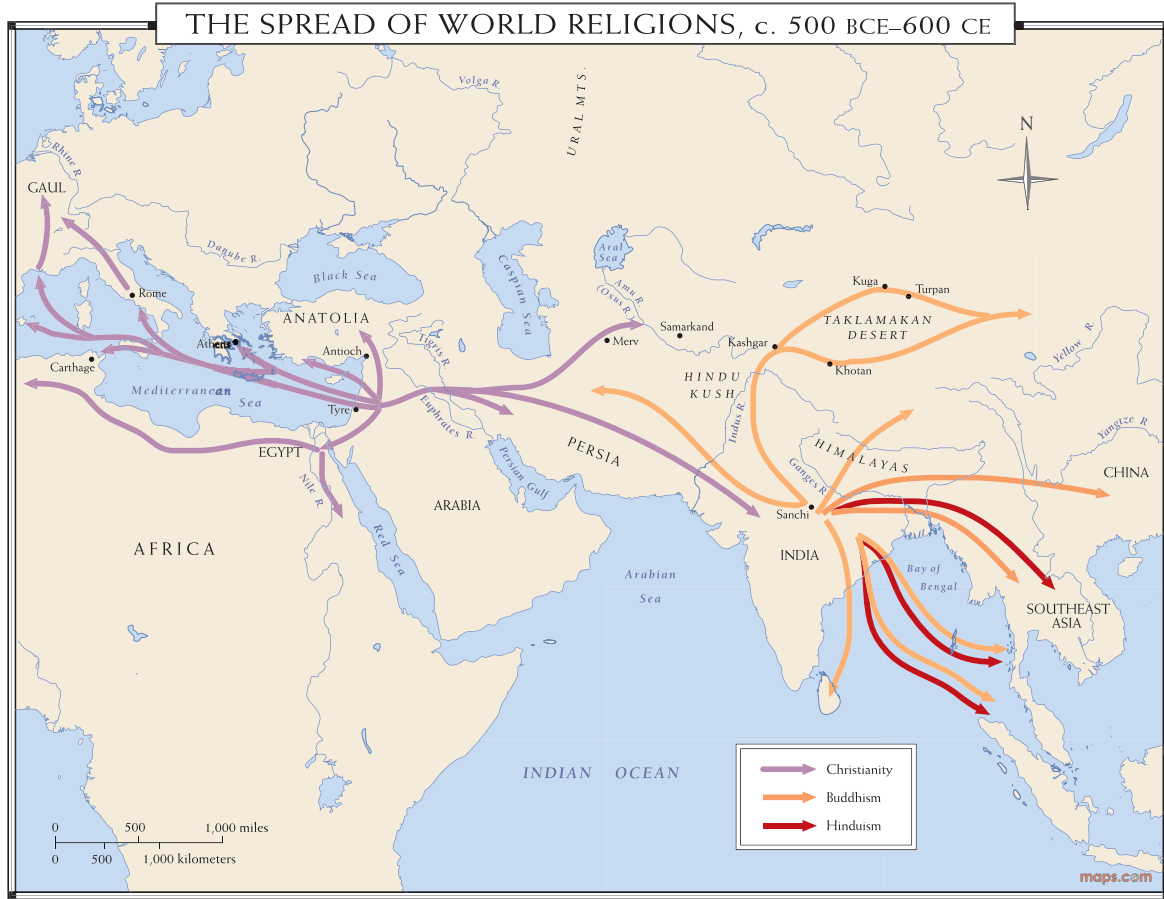
### Discussing the Illustration

1. Buddhism rejected some aspects of Hinduism and appealed to a spiritual longing that the Brahmin priesthood could not satisfy. Jainism was another religion that grew out of and away from Hinduism. What do you know about Jainism?
2. Perhaps in response, Hinduism changed as well. Historians say it became more “devotional.” And it put less of an emphasis on the Brahmin priests as necessary for worship. This man is engaging in one practice that arose within Hinduism. It clearly offered some a much more personal spiritual experience. What practice is this? What can you tell about the nature of this practice from this one photo of a man engaging in it?
3. One historian says that during the Gupta Empire in particular Hinduism “grew in complexity, acquiring more rituals, drawing more from astronomy, and absorbing aspects of both Buddhism and Jainism.” Does it surprise you that an ancient religion would grow and adapt in this way? Why or why not?

### Follow-up Activities

1. Small-group activity: Many Hindus worship the sun god during *Chhath*, also called *Dala Chhath*. This is a popular Hindu religious festival in northern India. During the festival, thousands of devotees engage in fasting and other acts of purification, and then take a holy dip in the Ganges River as they pray to the setting sun. Learn more about this Hindu religious festival and its history. Find pictures and descriptions of it. Create a bulletin-board display and explain the entire festival to the class.
2. Small-group activity: Learn more about Jainism and how it began. How has it survived to the present day? Why did it not spread beyond India? How is it similar to Buddhism and Hinduism? How is it different? Create a chart comparing the key aspects of Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Use the chart in a brief talk to the class.

# Illustration 3



## Discussing the Illustration

1. Buddhism's initial appeal in India was very strong, especially for the lower castes. However, between around 400 CE and 1000 CE, Hinduism revived and made gains at the expense of Buddhism. Why do you think that was so?
2. Yet even as Buddhism faded in popularity in India, it was becoming a world religion. How do the arrows on this map make that clear? Into what regions did Buddhism spread the most? Why did you think it won adherents in other parts of Asia while losing popularity in its homeland?
3. The map shows that both Buddhism and Christianity spread east and west along routes that ran north of the great mountain chains dividing India from Central and Inner Asia. These various routes are often called the "Silk Road." Why do the routes have that name? What do you know about the Silk Road, and why do you suppose it was so important to the movement of cultural and religious traditions?

## Follow-up Activities

1. The Silk Road played an important role in the spread of Buddhism and other many other ideas and cultural traditions. Learn more about the Silk Road. Find out about its cultural (as opposed to economic) impact. Write a brief essay on the importance of the Silk Road to the spread of Buddhism.
2. Small-group activity: Buddhism, which has many sects, is divided into two main branches: Theravada, which was the main form brought to Southeast Asia; and Mahayana, which was the main form taken along the Silk Road into China. One branch tended to appeal more to intellectuals and educated officials and rulers, while the other was more popular with "ordinary" people. Read more about these two branches of Buddhism in order to find out which was which. As a group, prepare a brief talk to the class in which you explain these two branches.



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**OBJECTIVES  
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will understand how Muslim invaders brought Islam to India and became dominant in many parts of India after the 11th century.
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# Islam and the Mughals

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*Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.*

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

### Illustration 1

Islam arose in the Middle East in the seventh century CE. It expanded rapidly to Spain in the west and to the edge of India in the east. In the 11th century, a long period of Muslim incursions into northern India began. The illustration here is of the Qutb Minar (or Tower of Victory), located outside of Old Delhi, completed in 1232 CE. Also displayed are the opening words of the Qur'an, Islam's holy book. The words suggest how different Islam was in spirit from Hinduism. Its message is of a single, all-powerful god who demands loyalty and rejects belief in any other god. This contrasts dramatically with Hinduism's many deities and its ability to incorporate new ones from other cultures. These differences probably helped to make conflict between Muslims and Hindus unavoidable.

### Illustration 2

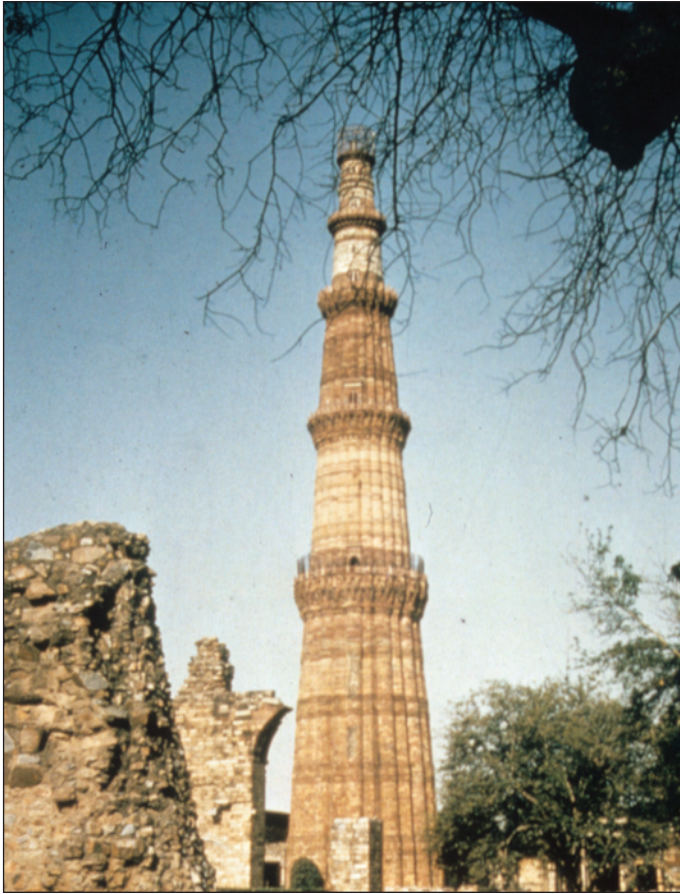
In the tenth century, Turkic Muslims began to invade northern India. The Delhi Sultanate, founded in 1206, was the main Muslim state in India before the Mughal Empire, which other Muslim conquerors founded in 1526. One of the most famous Mughal emperors, Akbar (1542–1605), is shown here in this Mughal illustration from around 1600. Akbar was similar to Ashoka in some ways. He was a Muslim. Yet, as the words here suggest, he tolerated and even admired other faiths. He brought Hindu and Christian advisers to his court. And he ended the poll tax that Muslim rulers elsewhere imposed on non-Muslims. But Akbar, like other Mughal rulers, was no man of peace. He continued efforts to conquer ever more territory for the Mughal Empire.

### Illustration 3

Akbar has generally been admired. One of the last powerful Mughals, Aurangzeb, is not nearly as well thought of. The Mughal Empire was at its peak by 1700. But several failed military campaigns by Aurangzeb, as well as his growing intolerance for other religions, led to troubles. Once again, India failed to remain united. The Mughal Empire began to fall apart after Aurangzeb's death in 1707. The next century saw the rise of British and French influence in India. While the Mughal Empire effectively ended with Aurangzeb's death, it did not officially cease to exist until the British government took over the administration of India from the British East India in 1858, opening a whole new chapter in India's history.



## Illustration 1



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### Discussing the Illustration

1. Islam arose in Arabia in the seventh century CE. In little over a century, Muslims conquered a huge empire. How far to the east, west, and north did this empire extend?
2. A few centuries later, Muslim armies began to conquer northern India. This photo shows the Qutb Minar (or Tower of Victory) built to mark the Muslim victories over the Hindus, that established the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526). How does this architectural style seem to differ from Hindu and Buddhist structures you are familiar with?
3. On the right are the opening words from Islam's holy book. What that book is called?
4. Islam's monotheism is expressed here in these words of the *Fatiha*. What is monotheism? How is Islam's monotheism expressed by the words of the *Fatiha*? Some historians say Islam's monotheism sets it apart in a major way from both Hinduism and Buddhism. Do you agree? Why or why not?

### Fatiha

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate, the Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succor. Guide us in the Straight Path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom Thou are wrathful, nor of those who are astray. (Q1:1–7)*

### Follow-up Activities

1. Small-group activity: The Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, and Hindu religions differ in many profound ways. But your group's task is to focus just on each religion's idea of a supreme god or ultimate ruling power in the universe. Learn more about this aspect of each of these five religions. Then create a chart showing their similarities and differences on this point. Using the chart and your general research on this topic, lead a class discussion on the similarities and differences you find, and their possible effects on India's history in particular.
2. Some of India's most beautiful architecture is Muslim, including the famous Taj Mahal. Find more examples of Muslim architecture in India. Using the images you find, create a bulletin-board display. Write brief, one-paragraph descriptions of your images to include on the bulletin board. Discuss your display with the class.

## Illustration 2



The Granger Collection, New York

### Akbar

(ruled 1556–1605)

- Abolished the Muslim *jizya* (poll tax) on Hindus
- Receptive to the ideas of all religions
- Expanded the Mughal Empire through conquest

#### Discussing the Illustration

1. The Delhi Sultanate was founded in 1206 by a lieutenant of Muhammad of Ghur, the Muslim conqueror of northern India. Approximately where in India is Delhi located?
2. The Delhi Sultanate was the main Muslim state in India before the beginning of the Mughal Empire, which was founded in 1526. One of the most famous of all Mughal emperors was Akbar (1542–1605). What do you know about him? What impression of Akbar and his empire can you get from this Mughal illustration of him from around 1600?
3. Akbar is famous in part because he eased some of the harsher rules Muslims often imposed on other religious groups in areas they conquered. From what you see here, can you explain?
4. Some see Akbar as similar to the great Buddhist monarch Ashoka. From what you know about both rulers, what similarities and differences between the two do you see?

#### Follow-up Activities

1. Small-group activity: The Delhi Sultanate was founded in 1206 by a lieutenant of Muhammad of Ghur, the Muslim conqueror of northern India. The Delhi Sultanate was the main Muslim state in India before the beginning of the Mughal Empire, which was founded in 1526. Learn more about the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. Create maps and a timeline to use in a talk to the class on the entire course of Islamic rule in India from 1206 through the rule of Aurangzeb.
2. One of the most famous of all Mughal emperors was Akbar. Learn more about him and write a brief biography based on your findings. In your biography, be sure to deal not only with the changes for which Akbar is famous but also with the attitudes toward him held by Muslims and non-Muslims in India.

## Illustration 3



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### Aurangzeb

(ruled 1658–1707)

- Continued Mughal wars of conquest
- Reimposed *jizya* (poll tax) on Hindus and other non-Muslims
- Destroyed Hindu temples and imposed stricter Islamic rule

#### Discussing the Illustration

1. One of the last truly powerful Mughals was Aurangzeb, shown here. He ruled the Mughal Empire from 1659 to 1707 during the peak of its power. Aurangzeb is not usually spoken highly of, as Akbar is. From what you know about Aurangzeb and the words here, can you explain why? Does this drawing offer any insight into his personality or ruling style? Why or why not?
2. In 1700, the Mughal Empire encompassed nearly the entire Indian subcontinent. But the empire began to fall apart in the early 1700s, partly due to unrest that Aurangzeb's rule had aroused in many Indians. Why might his rule have led to this unrest? What else do you know about the decline of the Mughal Empire?
3. During this time, two powerful European nations began to involve themselves in India's affairs. One of these would rule India as a colony into the 20th century. What were those two European nations? Which one ultimately came to control all of India as its colony?

#### Follow-up Activities

1. Aurangzeb, who ruled from 1659 to 1707, was the last of the great Mughal emperors. During his reign the empire reached its widest extent. Despite this, he is often blamed in part for the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Why? Learn more about him. Then write a brief essay focusing on the causes of the fall of the Mughal Empire and why Aurangzeb is often given part of the blame. Explain in your essay why you do or do not think he deserves any blame.
2. The West began to have a direct impact on India in the 1500s with the arrival of Portuguese traders. Later, the French and British made their presence felt in Indian affairs. Learn more about the early impact of Europe on India, before the British gained much greater control in the late 1700s. What factors helped Europeans win control over India? What sort of resistance, if any, did they encounter? How were Indians harmed by the contact and how did they benefit from it? Report your findings in a short essay.



# Answers to Factual Questions

(Answers provided only to questions  
requiring a single correct answer)

## Lesson 1

- Illustration 1** Question 1: Hinduism  
Question 2: A strict division of people into broad groups, with each person limited by birth to one caste for life  
Question 3: Good deeds in this life could win a soul a higher caste status in the next
- Illustration 2** Question 2: A ceremony in which a widow throws herself on her husband's funeral pyre to "accompany him to heaven"
- Illustration 3** Question 1: Buddhism; Siddhartha Gautama  
Question 3: In Buddhism, even lower-caste Hindus could attain enlightenment without passing through the cycle of samsara

## Lesson 2

- Illustration 1** Question 2: From late fourth to early second century BCE
- Illustration 2** Question 1: Gupta; fourth to seventh century CE  
Question 3: Islam
- Illustration 3** Question 1: Dravidian  
Question 2: The Deccan Plateau is a natural barrier between north and south  
Question 3: The *Mahabharata* is a part of Hindu mythology. The Ganges is in the north, where Buddhism originated.

## Lesson 3

- Illustration 1** (no questions of fact)
- Illustration 2** Question 2: Yoga
- Illustration 3** Question 2: The map shows it spreading to China, Japan, Southeast Asia, etc.  
Question 3: It was called the Silk Road because one of China's most valuable products, silk, was one of many carried by merchants along the routes

## Lesson 4

- Illustration 1** Question 1: West to Spain, north to present-day Russia and Afghanistan, east to India  
Question 3: Qur'an  
Question 4: Monotheism is the belief in only one god. The *Fatiha* says, "Thee only we serve."
- Illustration 2** Question 1: Delhi is in northern India near the Ganges  
Question 3: Akbar ended certain taxes that Muslim rulers usually forced non-Muslims to pay in order to be allowed to practice their religion; he was open to learning about other religions and accepting advice from those of other faiths; etc.
- Illustration 3** Question 3: Great Britain and France; Britain became sole ruler of India

# History

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## UNFOLDING



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