

Section 3

Reading for Understanding

▶ Key Ideas

BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

A group of nomadic people migrated into India, interacted with the people already there, and produced a distinctive culture and religion.

NOW YOU WILL LEARN

Many major religions developed in India, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.

▶ Vocabulary

TERMS & NAMES

ahimsa (uh•HIHM•SAH) nonviolence

Buddhism religion that began in India and is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama

Siddhartha Gautama (sihd•DAHR•tuh GAW•tuh•muh) founder of Buddhism also known as the Buddha, or "enlightened one"

nirvana (neer•VAH•nuh) in Buddhism, a state of wisdom that breaks the cycle of reincarnation

dharma (DAHR•muh) collective teachings of the Buddha, often represented by a wheel

Asoka (uh•SOH•kuh) greatest Maurya king who began to rule in 272 B.C.

BACKGROUND VOCABULARY

enlightened having spiritual knowledge or understanding

spies secret agents who obtain information about an enemy

flourished to have done well; prospered

estimated guessed; calculated roughly

REVIEW

empire group of territories and peoples brought together under one supreme ruler

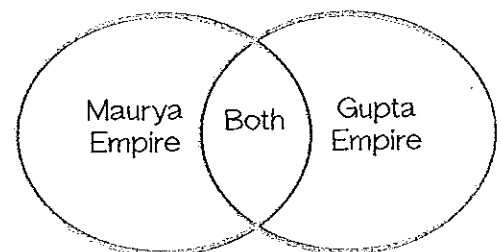
▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the Venn diagram shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the diagram to compare and contrast the Maurya and Gupta empires.



See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R8.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST



GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Go to Interactive Review @ ClassZone.com

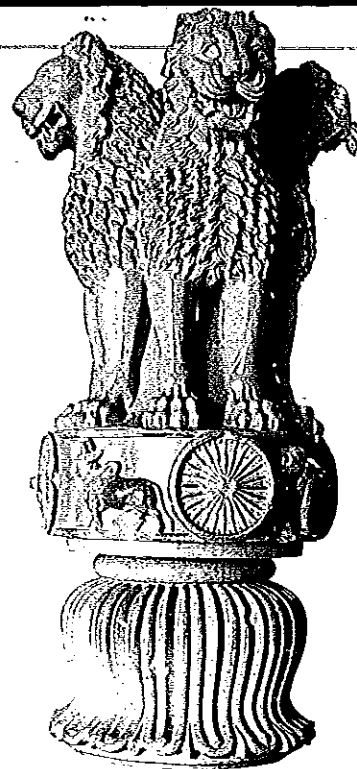
Buddhism and India's Golden Age

Connect to What You Know As you know, Hinduism is the modern name for the major religion that is practiced in India. Other religions also had their beginnings in India. One of these is the religion of Jainism. Jains teach *ahimsa* (uh•HIHM•SAH), which means “nonviolence.” Jains practice *ahimsa* very strictly. They believe that every living thing has a soul and should not be hurt. Some Jains even wear masks to avoid breathing in insects.

The Rise of Buddhism

▼ **KEY QUESTION** What are the main teachings of the religion of Buddhism?

Another major world religion, called Buddhism, also began in India. Buddhism is based on the teachings of **Siddhartha Gautama** (sihd•DAHR•tuh GAW•tuh•muh). He was a prince who gave up his wealth and position to try to understand the meaning of life. Later, when he began to teach what he had learned, he was called the Buddha, or “enlightened one.”



▲ **Lion** Asoka had his laws carved on pillars such as the one above. What might have been the reason for carving laws on pillars?

Resting Buddha
This carving of a sleeping Buddha is in the Ajanta Caves in India. ▼

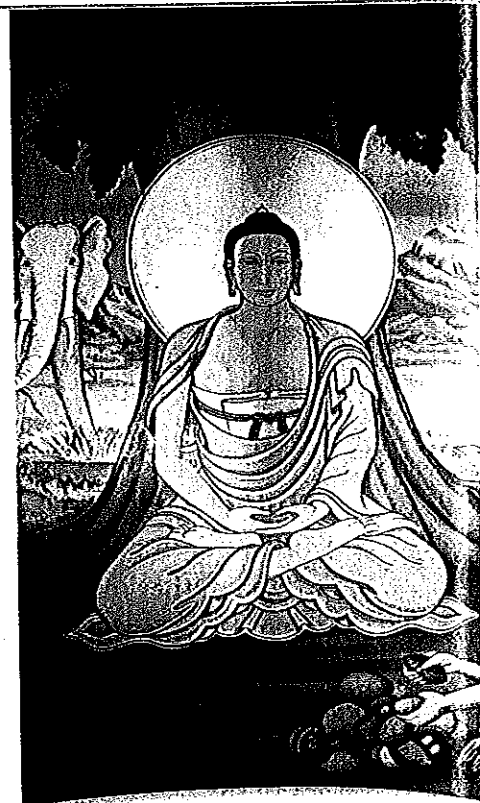


Siddhartha Gautama (c. 563 to 483 B.C.)

According to Buddhist teaching, as Siddhartha Gautama sat meditating, an evil spirit tempted him to stop seeking truth. First the spirit sent beautiful women, but Siddhartha ignored them. Then flaming rocks began to rain down on him. But as they drew close to Siddhartha, they became flower petals. Finally, the evil spirit asked what right Siddhartha had to look for truth. Siddhartha touched the ground, and a voice thundered, "I bear you witness"—which means to testify in one's favor.

That night Siddhartha's meditation grew even deeper, and he received his great insights. He had become the Buddha. The evil spirit decided to tempt him one last time. "No one will understand your deep truths," the spirit taunted.

The Buddha simply answered, "Some will understand."



CRITICAL THINKING

Make Inferences Why do you think the Buddha searched for truth?

The Buddha's Life and Teachings Siddhartha was born a Hindu prince. A priest had predicted that he would become a wandering holy man. To prevent this, Siddhartha's father sheltered him. Siddhartha did not see old age, illness, death, or poverty until he was 29. When he finally did see such troubles, they upset him. He fled his home to search for peace in a world of suffering.

For six years, Siddhartha starved himself, but this sacrifice did not help him find the answers he sought. Then he sat under a fig tree and meditated until he found understanding. This gave him insights into reality, which he called the Four Noble Truths. First, existence is suffering. Second, that condition comes from wanting what one doesn't have or from wanting life to be different. Third, people can stop suffering by not wanting. Fourth, people can stop wanting by following the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path involved right opinions, desires, speech, actions, job, effort, concentration, and meditation. This path could lead to nirvana (neer•VAH•nuh), the end of suffering. Reaching nirvana broke the cycle of reincarnation. The Buddha believed in the practice of *ahimsa*, but he didn't worship Hindu deities. After the Buddha died, his followers gathered his teachings to pass on to others. These collected teachings are called the *dharma* (DAHR•muh), which means the true nature of things. Dharma is often shown as a wheel.

▲ **SUMMARIZE** Describe the main teachings of Buddhism.

The Maurya Empire

KEY QUESTION What were some of the major achievements of Asoka in his rule of the Maurya empire?

One reason Buddhism became so influential is that a famous Indian king ruled by its teachings. As you will read, he was the third king of the Maurya dynasty, which united India.

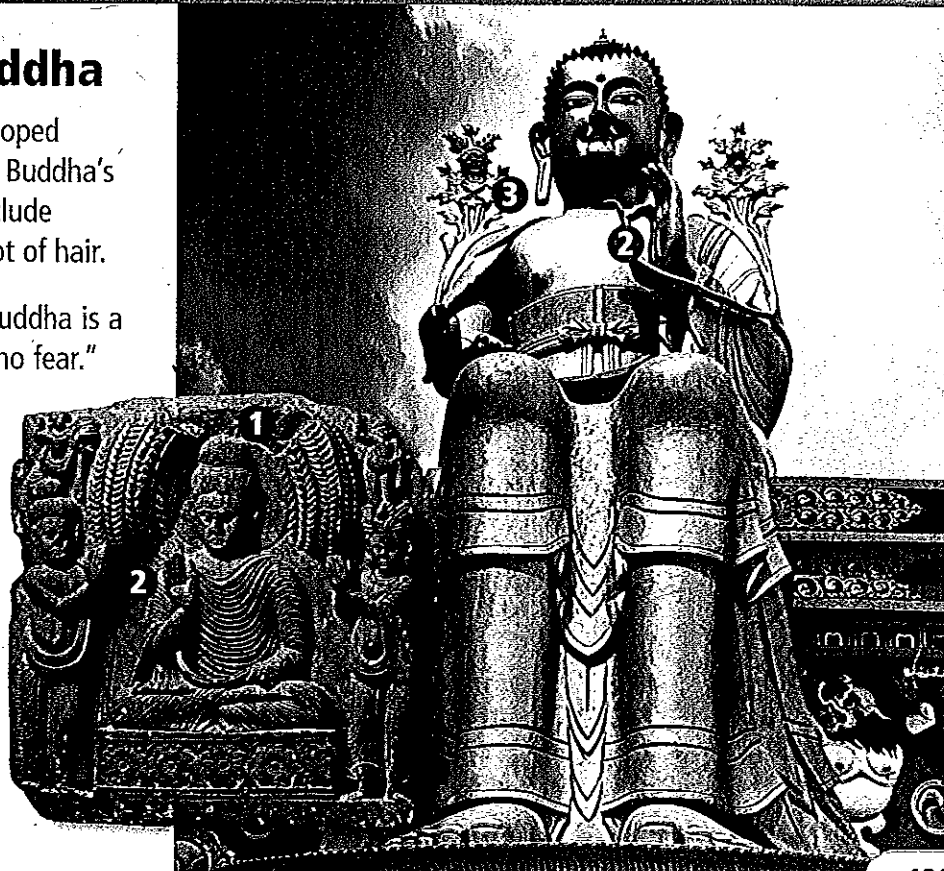
A United India For centuries, separate Aryan kingdoms battled each other. Around 550 B.C., Magadha (MAH•guh•duh), a northeastern kingdom, began to gain strength. About 321 B.C., Chandragupta Maurya (CHUHN•druh•GUP•tuh MOWR•yuh) became king of Magadha. He conquered much territory. Chandragupta moved northwest, seizing all the land from Magadha to the Indus. His Maurya empire soon covered much of the subcontinent.

Chandragupta controlled his empire by using spies to learn what people did and an army of soldiers to keep order. His vast army included 600,000 foot soldiers, 30,000 cavalry, and 9,000 elephants. Many officials ran the government. To pay these people, Chandragupta taxed land and crops heavily. Legend says that he became a nonviolent Jainist monk at the end of his life.

CONNECT Art & History

Images of the Buddha

- 1 Ancient Indian artists developed visual symbols to show the Buddha's holiness. These symbols include features such as the topknot of hair.
- 2 The upraised hand of the Buddha is a gesture that means "Have no fear."
- 3 The long earlobes, like the topknot, are lakshana—that is, traditional bodily signs of the Buddha.



CRITICAL THINKING

Compare and Contrast

When you compare these two images, what do they suggest about the Buddha?

Asoka, the Buddhist King The greatest Maurya king was Chandragupta's grandson **Asoka** (uh•SOH•kuh), who began to rule in 272 B.C. Early in Asoka's reign, he fought a bloody war and conquered a neighboring kingdom. Afterwards, Asoka decided to rule by Buddhist teachings. He gave up constant warfare. He tried to rule peacefully by law instead.

Asoka had his policies carved on rocks and pillars. Rocks that survive from his reign advise people to be truthful and kind. Others urge people not to kill living things.

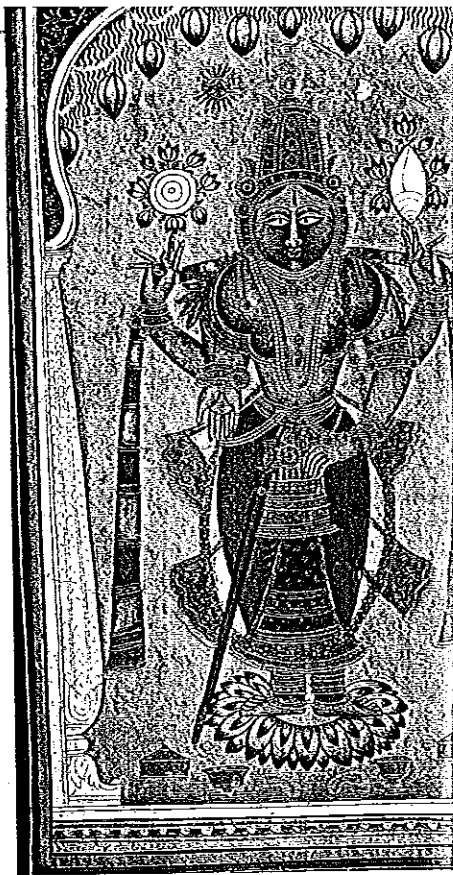
As a result of Asoka's patronage, Buddhism attracted people to join its order of monks. Asoka and the Buddhist rulers that followed him sent missionaries to bring new converts to Buddhism. At the same time, he let people of other religions worship freely. Asoka's officials planted trees, dug wells, set up hospitals, and built rest houses along main roads. These improvements allowed people to travel in more comfort than before. Better travel conditions helped traders and officials. Such actions demonstrated Asoka's concern for his subjects' well-being. Noble as his policies were, they failed to hold the empire together after Asoka died about 230 B.C.

Changes to Hinduism The popularity of Buddhism meant that fewer people were worshiping Hindu deities. Early Hinduism had a set of complex sacrifices that only priests could perform. They conducted the rites in Sanskrit, which few people spoke anymore. This caused people to feel distant from the deities. Many people turned to Buddhism instead. Rulers who had come under the influence of Buddhism encouraged this shift.

Then Hindu thought began to change. Poets began to write hymns of praise to the deities Vishnu and Shiva. These poems were written in languages that common people spoke, instead of in Sanskrit.

The poems became popular across India. As a result, many Indians felt a renewed love for their Hindu deities. This renewal of interest in Hinduism occurred at the same time as a decline in Buddhism. Eventually, Buddhism lost most of its followers in India. By that time, however, it had spread to many other countries in Asia.

FIND MAIN IDEAS Identify several of Asoka's major accomplishments.



▲ Vishnu The deity Vishnu remains one of the most popular deities in India. This Indian miniature dates from the 1700s.