

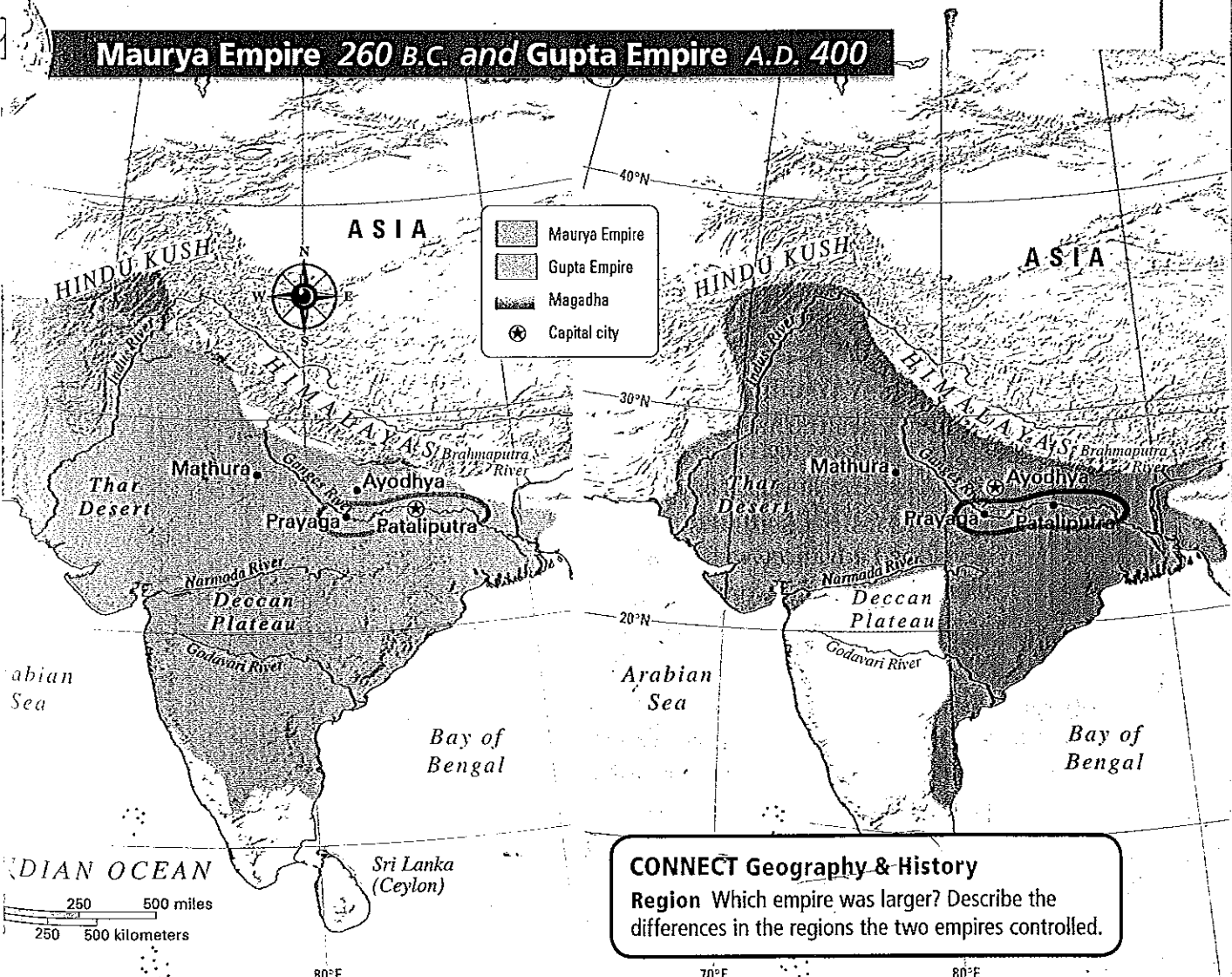
The Golden Age of the Guptas

KEY QUESTION Why was the period of Gupta rule a golden age for India?

Shortly after Asoka died, the Maurya Empire collapsed because of poor rulers and enemy invasions. Five centuries of conflict followed until the Gupta (GUP•tuh) family took control.

The Gupta Empire Like the Mauryas, the Guptas began as leaders in Magadha. Chandra Gupta I became king in A.D. 320. (He was not related to Chandragupta Maurya.) He immediately married a king's daughter and gained new lands. Later, his son enlarged the empire by fighting wars. But Chandra Gupta's grandson, Chandra Gupta II, was the greatest ruler of the family. During his reign (A.D. 375 to 415), India experienced a golden age—a time of great accomplishment.

Maurya Empire 260 B.C. and Gupta Empire A.D. 400



CONNECT Geography & History
Region Which empire was larger? Describe the differences in the regions the two empires controlled.

Art and Literature Under Chandra Gupta II, Indian arts flourished. Architects erected gracefully designed temples. Artists painted murals and sculpted statues. Many of these murals and statues had religious subjects.

The ancient Sanskrit epic the *Mahabharata* became the basis of many plays written in the Gupta period. Poetry also flourished under the Guptas.

Mathematics and Science Indian mathematics was among the most advanced in the world. Indian scholars invented the numeral system we use today. They also developed the decimal system and the symbol for zero. (The Maya of Central America also came up with the idea of zero independently.)

One mathematician figured out the length of a year. He also estimated the value of pi, which you will study when you take geometry. Pi is the number that is used to calculate the length of a circle's boundary, called the circumference.

During the Gupta Empire, knowledge of astronomy increased. Almost 1,000 years before Columbus, Indian astronomers proved that the earth was round by observing a lunar eclipse. During the eclipse, the earth's shadow fell across the face of the moon. The astronomers noted that the earth's shadow was curved, indicating that the earth itself was round.

Doctors added new techniques to the ancient practice of Ayurvedic (EYE•yuh•VAY•dihk) medicine. It promotes health through diet and exercise.

Metal Working Indian artisans developed advanced methods of metallurgy (metal working). Outside of Delhi, an iron pillar erected about A.D. 400 stands over 20 feet high. No other people were able to manufacture such a large piece of iron until at least 1,000 years later. Unlike most iron, the pillar has resisted rust for 16 centuries. One explanation is that the iron pillar contains more phosphorous than most iron does. As a result, a protective coating formed on the surface.

Qutab Minar, Delhi The iron pillar from the Gupta period weighs about 1,300 pounds and stands among the ruins of Qutab Minar near Delhi, India. ▼



Trade Spreads Indian Culture The royal court of the Gupta kings was a place of excitement and growth. Indians revered the kings for their heroic qualities. The kings displayed these qualities by adding territory to their empire, which allowed Gupta India to expand and profit from foreign trade. Traders sold Indian goods such as cotton and ivory to foreign merchants. Indian merchants bought Chinese goods such as silk. They resold these goods to traders who were traveling west.

Both traders and missionaries spread Indian culture and beliefs. Hinduism spread to parts of Southeast Asia. Buddhism gradually spread to Central Asia, Sri Lanka (formerly called Ceylon), China, and Southeast Asia. Eventually, the influence of Hinduism declined in Southeast Asia, but it remained the dominant religion in India. Buddhism was the opposite. It became the dominant religion in the regions to which it had spread. At the same time, it declined as an influence in its place of origin. In the next section on the legacy of India, you will see how Indian achievements have influenced the world in many areas. Among these are religion, literature, drama, art, sculpture, and architecture.

FIND MAIN IDEAS Discuss why the period of Gupta rule was a golden age for India.

3

Section Assessment



ONLINE QUIZ

For test practice, go to
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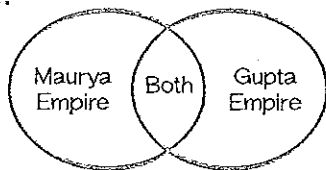
Terms & Names

1. Explain the importance of

<i>ahimsa</i>	Siddhartha Gautama	dharma
Buddhism	nirvana	Asoka

Use Your Reading Notes

2. Compare and Contrast Use your completed Venn diagram to answer the following question:
How were the Maurya and Gupta empires of India alike?



Key Ideas

- The Buddha's Eightfold Path stressed right behavior in eight areas. What were they?
- How did Buddhism influence Asoka as a ruler?
- What were the important achievements in Indian literature?

Critical Thinking

- Compare** Was Hinduism or Buddhism more similar to ancient Egyptian religion? Why?
- CONNECT to Today** If historians today found an engraved rock pillar from Asoka's time, would that be a primary source or a secondary source? Explain.

Activity

Write Rules With a group of your friends, agree on three or four basic rules for social conduct. Print your rules on a poster and display it in the classroom.

Section
4

Reading for Understanding

▶ Key Ideas

BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

The teachings of the Buddha and the growth of the Maurya and Gupta empires influenced Indian history and culture.

NOW YOU WILL LEARN

The influence of India can be seen around the world today in religion, art, and mathematics.

▶ Vocabulary

TERMS & NAMES

Mohandas Gandhi (MOH•huhn•DAHS GAHN•dee) 20th-century Indian who helped lead his country to independence by using nonviolent resistance to colonial rule

Kalidasa (KAH•lee•DAH•suh) one of India's greatest writers

Hindu-Arabic numerals numerals we use today that originated in India and were brought to the West by Arab trade

BACKGROUND VOCABULARY

practice to follow the teachings of a religion
translated expressed in a different language
place position of a numeral

REVIEW

religion worship of God, gods, or spirits



Visual Vocabulary Kalidasa

▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the chart shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the chart to help you categorize information about the legacy of India.



See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R6.

CATEGORIZE

Legacy of India		
Religion	Arts	Mathematics



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The Legacy of India



Connect to What You Know In ancient times, trade spread Indian religion and art to other parts of Asia. Indian culture continues to influence our modern world today.

India's Religious Legacy

▼ **KEY QUESTION** How did the religions of India affect other cultures?

Yoga is as old as the *Bhagavad Gita* and as new as the yoga classes taught in health clubs today. Its popularity shows that the ancient religious traditions of India are still very much alive.

Hinduism and Buddhism Today Four out of five people living in India today are Hindus. Hindus also live in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and many other countries. About one million people in the United States practice Hinduism.

Buddhism did not remain strong in India. Not even one percent of Indians today are Buddhists. But the religion is popular in Asia, Western Europe, and the United States.

▲ **Mohandas Gandhi**
In the early 20th century, Britain ruled India as a colony. Gandhi practiced *ahimsa* as he helped lead the fight against foreign rule. He took part only in nonviolent protests.

Spring Festival Indians dance and throw colors as they celebrate the spring festival known as Holi. ▼

