# Ancient India
# Prehistoric Period

## Stone Age

Isolated remains of Homo erectus in Hathnora in the Narmada Valley in central India indicate that India might have been inhabited since at least the Middle Pleistocene era, somewhere between 500,000 and 200,000 years ago. Tools crafted by proto-humans that have been dated back two million years have been discovered in the northwestern part of the subcontinent. The ancient history of the region includes some of South Asia's oldest settlements and some of its major civilisations. The earliest archaeological site in the subcontinent is the palaeolithic hominid site in the Soan River valley. Soanian sites are found in the Sivalik region across what are now India, Pakistan, and Nepal.

The Mesolithic period in the Indian subcontinent was followed by the Neolithic period, when more extensive settlement of the subcontinent occurred after the end of the last Ice Age approximately 12,000 years ago. The first confirmed semipermanent settlements appeared 9,000 years ago in the Bhimbetka rock shelters in modern Madhya Pradesh, India. Early Neolithic culture in South Asia is represented by the Bhirrana findings (7500 BCE) in Haryana, India & Mehrgarh findings (7000–9000 BCE) in Balochistan, Pakistan.

Traces of a Neolithic culture have been alleged to be submerged in the Gulf of Khambat in India, radiocarbon dated to 7500 BCE. Neolithic agricultural cultures sprang up in the Indus Valley region around 5000 BCE, in the lower Gangetic valley around 3000 BCE, and in later South India, spreading southwards and also northwards into Malwa around 1800 BCE. The first urban civilisation of the region began with the Indus Valley Civilisation.

## Indus Valley Civilisation

The Bronze Age in the Indian subcontinent began around 3300 BCE with the early Indus Valley Civilisation. It was centred on the Indus River and its tributaries which extended into the Ghaggar-Hakra River valley, the Ganges-Yamuna Doab, Gujarat, and southeastern Afghanistan.

The civilisation was primarily located in modern-day India (Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan provinces) and Pakistan (Sindh,Punjab, and Balochistan provinces). Historically part of Ancient India, it is one of the world's earliest urban civilisations, along withMesopotamia and Ancient Egypt. Inhabitants of the ancient Indus river valley, the Harappans, developed new techniques in metallurgy and handicraft (carneol products, seal carving), and produced copper, bronze, lead, and tin.

The Mature Indus civilisation flourished from about 2600 to 1900 BCE, marking the beginning of urban civilisation on the subcontinent. The civilisation included urban centres such as Dholavira, Kalibangan, Ropar, Rakhigarhi, and Lothal in modern-day India, as well asHarappa, Ganeriwala, and Mohenjo-daro in modern-day Pakistan. The civilisation is noted for its cities built of brick, roadside drainage system, and multistoreyed houses and is thought to have had some kind of municipal organization.

During the late period of this civilisation, signs of a gradual decline began to emerge, and by around 1700 BCE, most of the cities were abandoned. However, the Indus Valley Civilisation did not disappear suddenly, and some elements of the Indus Civilisation may have survived, especially in the smaller villages and isolated farms. The Indian Copper Hoard Culture is attributed to this time, associated in theDoab region with the Ochre Coloured Pottery.

# Stone Age

## Paleolithic

"Paleolithic" means "Old Stone Age," and begins with the first use of stone tools. The Paleolithic is the earliest period of the Stone Age.

The early part of the Paleolithic is called the Lower Paleolithic, which predates Homo sapiens, beginning withHomo habilis (and related species) and with the earliest stone tools, dated to around 2.5 million years ago.[10]Evidence of control of fire by early humans during the Lower Paleolithic Era is uncertain and has at best limited scholarly support. The most widely accepted claim is that H. erectus or H. ergaster made fires between 790,000 and 690,000 BP in a site at Bnot Ya'akov Bridge, Israel. The use of fire enabled early humans to cook food, provide warmth, and have a light source at night.

Early Homo sapiens originated some 200,000 years ago, ushering in the Middle Paleolithic. Anatomic changes indicating modern language capacity also arise during the Middle Paleolithic. During the Middle Paleolithic Era, there is the first definitive evidence of human use of fire. Sites in Zambia have charred bone and wood that have been dated to 61,000 B.P. The systematic burial of the dead, music, early art, and the use of increasingly sophisticated multi-part tools are highlights of the Middle Paleolithic.

Throughout the Paleolithic, humans generally lived as nomadic hunter-gatherers. Hunter-gatherer societiestended to be very small and egalitarian, though hunter-gatherer societies with abundant resources or advanced food-storage techniques sometimes developed sedentary lifestyles with complex social structures such as chiefdoms, and social stratification. Long-distance contacts may have been established, as in the case of Indigenous Australian "highways" known as songlines.

## *Mesolithic*

The "Mesolithic," or "Middle Stone Age" (from the Greek "mesos," "middle," and "lithos," "stone") was a period in the development ofhuman technology between the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods of the Stone Age.

The Mesolithic period began at the end of the Pleistocene epoch, some 10,000 BP, and ended with the introduction of agriculture, the date of which varied by geographic region. In some areas, such as the Near East, agriculture was already underway by the end of the Pleistocene, and there the Mesolithic is short and poorly defined. In areas with limited glacial impact, the term "Epipaleolithic" is sometimes preferred.

Regions that experienced greater environmental effects as the last ice age ended have a much more evident Mesolithic era, lasting millennia. In Northern Europe, societies were able to live well on rich food supplies from the marshlands fostered by the warmer climate. Such conditions produced distinctive human behaviours that are preserved in the material record, such as theMaglemosian and Azilian cultures. These conditions also delayed the coming of the Neolithic until as late as 4000 BC (6,000 BP) in northern Europe.

Remains from this period are few and far between, often limited to middens. In forested areas, the first signs of deforestation have been found, although this would only begin in earnest during the Neolithic, when more space was needed for agriculture.

The Mesolithic is characterized in most areas by small composite flint tools — microliths and microburins. Fishing tackle, stone adzes and wooden objects, e.g. canoes and bows, have been found at some sites. These technologies first occur in Africa, associated with the Azilian cultures, before spreading to Europe through the Ibero-Maurusian culture of Northern Africa and the Kebaran culture of the Levant. Independent discovery is not always ruled out.

## Neolithic

"Neolithic" means "New Stone Age." Although there were several species of human beings during the Paleolithic, by the Neolithic onlyHomo sapiens sapiens remained.[14] (Homo floresiensis may have survived right up to the very dawn of the Neolithic, about 12,200 years ago.) This was a period of primitive technological and social development. It began about 10,200 BC in some parts of the Middle East, and later in other parts of the world[16] and ended between 4,500 and 2,000 BC. The Neolithic is a progression of behavioral and cultural characteristics and changes, including the use of wild and domestic crops and of domesticated animals.

Early Neolithic farming was limited to a narrow range of plants, both wild and domesticated, which included einkorn wheat, millet and spelt, and the keeping of dogs, sheep and goats. By about 6,900–6,400 BC, it included

domesticated cattle and pigs, the establishment of permanently or seasonally inhabited settlements, and the use of pottery. The Neolithic period saw the development of early villages,agriculture, animal domestication, tools and the onset of the earliest recorded incidents of warfare.[17] The Neolithic era commenced with the beginning of farming, which produced the "Neolithic Revolution". It ended when metal tools became widespread (in the Copper Age orBronze Age; or, in some geographical regions, in the Iron Age).The term Neolithic is commonly used in the Old World, as its application to cultures in the Americas and Oceania that did not fully develop metal-working technology raises problems.

Settlements became more permanent with some having circular houses with single rooms made ofmudbrick. Settlements might have a surrounding stone wall to keep domesticated animals in and protect the inhabitants from other tribes. Later settlements have rectangular mud-brick houses where the family lived together in single or multiple rooms. Burial findings suggest an ancestor cult where peoplepreserved skulls of the dead. The Vinča culture may have created the earliest system of writing. Themegalithic temple complexes of Ġgantija are notable for their gigantic structures. Although some late Eurasian Neolithic societies formed complex stratified chiefdoms or even states, states evolved in Eurasia only with the rise of metallurgy, and most Neolithic societies on the whole were relatively simple and egalitarian. Most clothing appears to have been made of animal skins, as indicated by finds of large numbers of bone and antler pins which are ideal for fastening leather. Wool cloth and linen might have become available during the later Neolithic, as suggested by finds of perforated stones which (depending on size) may have served as spindle whorls or loom weights.

## Chalcolithic

In Old World archaeology, the "Chalcolithic", "Eneolithic" or "Copper Age" refers to a transitional period where early copper metallurgy appeared alongside the widespread use of stone tools. During this period, some weapons and tools were made of copper. This period was still largely Neolithic in character. It is a phase of the Bronze Age before it was discovered that adding tin to copper formed the harderbronze. The Copper Age was originally defined as a transition between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. However, because it is characterized by the use of metals, the Copper Age is considered a part of the Bronze Age rather than the Stone Age.

An archaeological site in Serbia contains the oldest securely dated evidence of copper making at high temperature, from 7,500 years ago. The find in June 2010 extends the known record of copper smelting by about 800 years, and suggests that copper smelting may have been invented in separate parts of Asia and Europe at that time rather than spreading from a single source.[25] The emergence of metallurgy may have occurred first in the Fertile Crescent, where it gave rise to the Bronze Age in the 4th millennium BC (the traditional view), though finds from the Vinča culture in Europe have now been securely dated to slightly earlier than those of the Fertile Crescent. Timna Valley contains evidence of copper

mining 9,000 to 7,000 years ago. The process of transition from Neolithic to Chalcolithic in the Middle East is characterized in archaeological stone tool assemblages by a decline in high quality raw material procurement and use. North Africa and the Nile Valley imported its iron technology from the Near East and followed the Near Eastern course of Bronze Age and Iron Age development. However the Iron Age and Bronze Age occurred simultaneously in much of Africa.

## Bronze Age

The Bronze Age is the earliest period in which some civilisations have reached the end of prehistory, by introducing written records. The Bronze Age or parts thereof are thus considered to be part of prehistory only for the regions and civilisations who adopted or developed a system of keeping written records during later periods. The invention of writing coincides in some areas with the early beginnings of the Bronze Age. Soon after the appearance of writing, people started creating texts including written accounts of events and records of administrative matters.

The term Bronze Age refers to a period in human cultural development when the most advanced metalworking (at least in systematic and widespread use) included techniques for smelting copper and tin from naturally occurring outcroppings of ores, and then combining them to cast bronze. These naturally occurring ores typically included arsenic as a common impurity. Copper/tin ores are rare, as reflected in the fact that there were no tin bronzes in Western Asia before 3000 BC. The Bronze Age forms part of the three-age system for prehistoric societies. In this system, it follows the Neolithic in some areas of the world.

While copper is a common ore, deposits of tin are rare in the Old World, and often had to be traded or carried considerable distances from the few mines, stimulating the creation of extensive trading routes. In many areas as far apart as China and England, the valuable new material was used for weapons but for a long time apparently not available for agricultural tools. Much of it seems to have hoarded by social elites, and sometimes deposited in extravagant quantities, from Chinese ritual bronzes and Indian copper hoards to European hoards of unused axe-heads.

By the end of the Bronze Age large states, which are often called empires, had arisen in Egypt, China, Anatolia (the Hittites) and Mesopotamia, all of them literate.

# Iron Age

The Iron Age is not part of prehistory for all civilisations who had introduced written records during the Bronze Age. Most remaining civilisations did so during the Iron Age, often through conquest by the empires, which continued to expand during this period. For example, in most of Europe conquest by the Roman Empire means that the term Iron Age is replaced by "Roman", "Gallo-Roman" and similar terms after the conquest.

In archaeology, the Iron Age refers to the advent of ferrous metallurgy. The adoption of iron coincided with other changes in some past cultures, often including more sophisticated agricultural practices, religious beliefs and artistic styles, which makes the archaeological Iron Age coincide with the "Axial Age" in the history of philosophy. Although iron ore is common, the metalworking techniques necessary to use iron are very different from those needed for the metal used earlier, and iron was slow-spreading and for long mainly used for weapons, while bronze remained typical for tools, as well as art.

# Vedic period (ca. 1500 BCE–500 BCE)

The Vedic period is named after the Indo-Aryan culture of north-west India, although other parts of India had a distinct cultural identity during this period. The Vedic culture is described in the texts of Vedas, still sacred to Hindus, which were orally composed inVedic Sanskrit. The Vedas are some of the oldest extant texts in India. The Vedic period, lasting from about 1750 to 500 BCE and contributed the foundations of several cultural aspects of Indian subcontinent. In terms of culture, many regions of the subcontinent transitioned from theChalcolithic to the Iron Age in this period.

## Vedic society

Historians have analysed the Vedas to posit a Vedic culture in the Punjab region and the upper Gangetic Plain. Most historians also consider this period to have encompassed several waves of Indo-Aryan migration into the subcontinent from the north-west. The peepal tree and cow were sanctified by the time of the Atharva Veda. Many of the concepts of Indian philosophy espoused later like Dharma, Karma etc. trace their root to the Vedas.

Early Vedic society is described in the Rigveda, the oldest Vedic text, believed to have been compiled during 2nd millennium BCE in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent. At this time, Aryan society consisted of largely tribal and pastoral groups, distinct from the Harappan urbanisation which had been abandoned. The early Indo-Aryan presence probably corresponds, in part, to the Ochre Coloured Pottery culture in archaeological contexts.

At the end of the Rigvedic period, the Aryan society began to expand from the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent, into the western Ganges plain. It became increasingly agricultural and was socially organised around the hierarchy of the four varnas, or social classes. This social structure was characterized both by syncretising with the native cultures of northern India, but also eventually by the excluding of indigenous peoples by labelling their occupations impure. During this period, many of the previous small tribal units and chiefdoms began to coalesce into monarchical, state-level polities.

## Sanskritization

Since Vedic times, "people from many strata of society throughout the subcontinent tended to adapt their religious and social life to Brahmanic norms", a process sometimes called Sanskritization. It is reflected in the tendency to identify local deities with the gods of the Sanskrit texts.

The Kuru kingdom was the first state-level society of the Vedic period, corresponding to the beginning of the Iron Age in northwestern India, around 1200 – 800 BCE, as well as with the composition of the Atharvaveda (the first Indian text to mention iron, as śyāma ayas, literally "black metal"). The Kuru state organized the Vedic hymns into collections, and developed the orthodox srauta ritual to uphold the social order. When the Kuru kingdom declined, the center of Vedic culture shifted to their eastern neighbours, the Panchala kingdom. The archaeological Painted Grey Ware culture, which flourished in the Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh regions of northern India from about 1100 to 600 BCE, is believed to correspond to the Kuru and Panchala kingdoms.

During the Late Vedic Period, the kingdom of Videha emerged as a new center of Vedic culture, situated even farther to the East (in what is today Nepal and Bihar state in India). The later part of this period corresponds with a consolidation of increasingly large states and kingdoms, called mahajanapadas, all across Northern India.

## Sanskrit Epics

In addition to the Vedas, the principal texts of Hinduism, the core themes of the Sanskrit epics Ramayana and Mahabharata are said to have their ultimate origins during this period. The Mahabharata remains, today, the longest single poem in the world. Historians formerly postulated an "epic age" as the milieu of these two epic poems, but now recognize that the texts (which are both familiar with each other) went through multiple stages of development over centuries. For instance, the Mahabharata may have been based on a small-scale conflict (possibly about 1000 BCE) which was eventually "transformed into a gigantic epic war by bards and poets". There is no conclusive proof from archaeology as to whether the specific events of the Mahabharat have any historical basis. The existing texts of these epics are believed to belong to the post-Vedic age, between c. 400 BCE and 400 CE. Some even attempted to date the events using methods of archaeoastronomy which have produced, depending on which passages are chosen and how they are interpreted, estimated dates ranging up to mid 2nd millennium BCE.

# "Second urbanization" (500–200 BCE)

During the time between 800 and 200 BCE the Shramana-movement formed, from which originated Jainism and Buddhism. In the same period the first Upanishads were written. After 500 BCE, the so-called "Second

urbanization" started, with new urban settlements arising at the Ganges plain, especially the Central Ganges plain. The Central Ganges Plain, where Magadha gained prominence, forming the base of the Mauryan Empire, was a distinct cultural area, with new states arising after 500 BC during the so-called "Second urbanization". It was influenced by the Vedic culture, but differed markedly from the Kuru-Panchala region. It "was the area of the earliest known cultivation of rice in South Asia and by 1800 BC was the location of an advanced neolithic population associated with the sites of Chirand and Chechar". In this region theShramanic movements flourished, and Jainism and Buddhism originated.

## Mahajanapadas (600–300 BCE)

In the later Vedic Age, a number of small kingdoms or city states had covered the subcontinent, many mentioned in Vedic, early Buddhist and Jaina literature as far back as 500 BCE. sixteen monarchies and "republics" known as the Mahajanapadas—Kashi, Kosala, Anga, Magadha, Vajji (or Vriji), Malla, Chedi, Vatsa (or Vamsa), Kuru, Panchala, Matsya (or Machcha),Shurasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhara, and Kamboja—stretched across the Indo-Gangetic Plain from modern-day Afghanistan to Bengal and Maharashtra. This period saw the second major rise of urbanism in India after the Indus Valley Civilisation.

Many smaller clans mentioned within early literature seem to have been present across the rest of the subcontinent. Some of these kings were hereditary; other states elected their rulers. Early "republics" such as the Vajji (or Vriji) confederation centered in the city of Vaishali, existed as early as the 6th century BCE and persisted in some areas until the 4th century CE. The educated speech at that time was Sanskrit, while the languages of the general population of northern India are referred to as Prakrits. Many of the sixteen kingdoms had coalesced to four major ones by 500/400 BCE, by the time of Gautama Buddha. These four were Vatsa, Avanti, Kosala, and Magadha. The Life of Gautam Budhha was mainly associated with these four kingdoms.

This period corresponds in an archaeological context to the Northern Black Polished Ware culture.

## Upanishads and Shramana movements

The 7th and 6th centuries BC witnessed the composition of the earliest Upanishads. Upanishads form the theoretical basis of classical Hinduism and are known as Vedanta (conclusion of the Vedas).[81] The older Upanishads launched attacks of increasing intensity on the ritual. Anyone who worships a divinity other than the Self is called a domestic animal of the gods in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The Mundaka launches the most scathing attack on the ritual by comparing those who value sacrifice with an unsafe boat that is endlessly overtaken by old age and death.

Increasing urbanisation of India in 7th and 6th centuries BCE led to the rise of new ascetic or shramana movements which challenged the orthodoxy of rituals. Mahavira (c. 549–477 BC), proponent of Jainism, and Buddha (c. 563-483), founder of Buddhism were the most prominent icons of this movement. Shramana gave rise to the concept of the cycle of birth and death, the concept of samsara, and the concept of liberation Buddha found a Middle Way that ameliorated the extreme asceticism found in the Sramana religions.

Around the same time, Mahavira (the 24th Tirthankara in Jainism) propagated a theology that was to later become Jainism. However, Jain orthodoxy believes the teachings of the Tirthankaras predates all known time and scholars believe Parshvanath, accorded status as the 23rd Tirthankara, was a historical figure. Rishabhdeo was the 1st Tirthankara. The Vedas are believed to have documented a few Tirthankaras and an ascetic order similar to the shramana movement.

### *Magadha Empire*

Magadha formed one of the sixteen Mahā-Janapadas or kingdoms in ancient India. The core of the kingdom was the area of Biharsouth of the Ganges; its first capital was Rajagriha (modern Rajgir) then Pataliputra (modern Patna). Magadha expanded to include most of Bihar and Bengal with the conquest ofLicchavi and Anga respectively, followed by much of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. The ancient kingdom of Magadha is heavily mentioned in Jain and Buddhist texts. It is also mentioned in the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas.[88] A state of Magadha, possibly a tribal kingdom, is recorded in Vedic texts much earlier in time than 600 BC. Magadha Empire had great rulers like Bimbisara and Ajatshatru.

The earliest reference to the Magadha people occurs in the Atharva-Veda where they are found listed along with the Angas, Gandharis, and Mujavats. Magadha played an important role in the development of Jainism and Buddhism, and two of India's greatest empires, the Maurya Empire and Gupta Empire, originated from Magadha. These empires saw advancements in ancient India's science, mathematics, astronomy, religion, and philosophy and were considered the Indian "Golden Age". The Magadha kingdom included republican communities such as the community of Rajakumara. Villages had their own assemblies under their local chiefs called Gramakas. Their administrations were divided into executive, judicial, and military functions.

## Persian and Greek conquests

In 530 BC Cyrus the Great, King of the Persian Achaemenid Empire crossed the Hindu-Kush mountains to seek tribute from the tribes of Kamboja, Gandhara and the trans-India region (modern Afghanistan and

Pakistan). By 520 BC, during the reign of Darius I of Persia, much of the northwestern subcontinent (present-day eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan) came under the rule of the Persian Achaemenid Empire, as part of the far easternmost territories. The area remained under Persian control for two centuries. During this time India supplied mercenaries to the Persian army then fighting in Greece.

Under Persian rule the famous city of Takshashila became a centre where both Vedic and Iranian learning were mingled. Persian ascendency in Northwestern South Asia ended with Alexander the Great's conquest of Persia in 327 BC.

By 326 BC, Alexander the Great had conquered Asia Minor and the Achaemenid Empire and had reached the northwest frontiers of the Indian subcontinent. There he defeated King Porus in the Battle of the Hydaspes (near modern-day Jhelum, Pakistan) and conquered much of the Punjab.[93] Alexander's march east put him in confrontation with the Nanda Empire of Magadha and the Gangaridai of Bengal. His army, exhausted and frightened by the prospect of facing larger Indian armies at the Ganges River, mutinied at the Hyphasis (modern Beas River) and refused to march further East. Alexander, after the meeting with his officer, Coenus, and learning about the might ofNanda Empire, was convinced that it was better to return.

The Persian and Greek invasions had repercussions in the Northwestern regions of the Indian subcontinent. The region of Gandhara, or present-day eastern Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan, became a melting pot of Indian, Persian, Central Asian, and Greek cultures and gave rise to a hybrid culture, Greco-Buddhism, which lasted until the 5th century AD and influenced the artistic development of Mahayana Buddhism.

## Maurya Empire (322–185 BCE)

The Maurya Empire (322–185 BCE) was the first empire to unify India into one state, and was the largest on the Indian subcontinent. At its greatest extent, the Mauryan Empire stretched to the north up to the natural boundaries of the Himalayas and to the east into what is now Assam. To the west, it reached beyond modern Pakistan, to the Hindu Kush mountains in what is now Afghanistan. The empire was established by Chandragupta Maurya in Magadha (in modern Bihar) when he overthrew the Nanda Dynasty. Chandragupta's son Bindusara succeeded to the throne around 297 BC. By the time he died in c. 272 BC, a large part of the subcontinent was under Mauryan suzerainty. However, the region of Kalinga (around modern day Odisha) remained outside Mauryan control, perhaps interfering with their trade with the south.

Bindusara was succeeded by Ashoka, whose reign lasted for around thirty seven years until his death in about 232 BCE. His campaign against the Kalingans in about 260 BCE, though successful, lead to immense loss of life and misery. This filled Ashoka with remorse and lead him to shun violence, and subsequently to embrace Buddhism. The empire began to decline after his death

and the last Mauryan ruler, Brihadratha, was assassinated by Pushyamitra Shunga to establish the Shunga Empire.

The Arthashastra and the Edicts of Ashoka are the primary written records of the Mauryan times. Archaeologically, this period falls into the era of Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW). The Mauryan Empire was based on a modern and efficient economy and society. However, the sale of merchandise was closely regulated by the government. Although there was no banking in the Mauryan society, usury was customary. A significant amount of written records on slavery are found, suggesting a prevalence thereof. During this period, a high quality steel called Wootz steel was developed in south India and was later exported to China and Arabia.

### Sangam Period

During the Sangam period Tamil literateure flourished from the 3rd century BCE to the 4th century CE. During this period the 3 Tamil Dynasties Chera dynasty, Chola dynasty and the Pandyan Dynasty ruled parts of southern India. The Sangam literature deals with the history, politics, wars and culture of the Tamil people of this period. The scholars of the Sangam period rose from among the common people who sought the patronage of the Tamil Kings but who mainly wrote about the common people and their concerns. Unlike Sanskrit writers who were mostly Brahmins, Sangam writers came from diverse classes and social backgrounds and were mostly non-Brahmins. They belonged to different faiths and professions like farmers, artisans, merchants, monks, priests and even princes and quite few of them were even women.

# Classical period (200 BCE–1100 CE)

The time between 200 BCE and ca. 1100 CE is the "Classical Age" of India. It can be divided in various sub-periods, depending on the chosen periodisation. The Gupta Empire(4th–6th century) is regarded as the "Golden Age" of Hinduism, although a host of kingdoms ruled over India in these centuries. Also, The Sangam literature flourished from the 3rd century BCE to the 3rd century CE in southern India.

### *Early Classical period (200 BCE–320 CE)*

#### *Satavahana Dynasty*

The Śātavāhana Empire was a royal Indian dynasty based from Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh as well as Junnar (Pune) and Prathisthan (Paithan) in Maharashtra. The territory of the empire covered much of India from 230 BCE onward. Sātavāhanas started out as feudatories to the Mauryan dynasty, but declared independence with its decline. They are known for their patronage of

Hinduism and Buddhism which resulted in Buddhist monuments from Ellora (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) to Amaravati. The Sātavāhanas were one of the first Indian states to issue coins struck with their rulers embossed. They formed a cultural bridge and played a vital role in trade as well as the transfer of ideas and culture to and from the Indo-Gangetic Plain to the southern tip of India. They had to compete with theShunga Empire and then the Kanva dynasty of Magadha to establish their rule. Later, they played a crucial role to protect a huge part of India against foreign invaders like the Sakas, Yavanas and Pahlavas. In particular their struggles with the Western Kshatrapas went on for a long time. The notable rulers of the Satavahana Dynasty Gautamiputra Satakarni and Sri Yajna Sātakarni were able to defeat the foreign invaders like the Western Kshatrapas and to stop their expansion. In the 3rd century CE the empire was split into smaller states.

*Shunga Empire*

The Shunga Empire or Shunga Empire was an ancient Indian dynasty from Magadha that controlled vast areas of the Indian subcontinent from around 187 to 78 BCE. The dynasty was established by Pushyamitra Shunga, after the fall of the Maurya Empire. Its capital was Pataliputra, but later emperors such as Bhagabhadra also held court at Besnagar, modern Vidisha in Eastern Malwa.[102]Pushyamitra Shunga ruled for 36 years and was succeeded by his son Agnimitra. There were ten Shunga rulers. The empire is noted for its numerous wars with both foreign and indigenous powers. They fought battles with the Kalingas, Satavahanas, the Indo-Greeks, and possibly the Panchalas and Mathuras. Art, education, philosophy, and other forms of learning flowered during this period including small terracotta images, larger stone sculptures, and architectural monuments such as the Stupa at Bharhut, and the renowned Great Stupa atSanchi. The Shunga rulers helped to establish the tradition of royal sponsorship of learning and art. The script used by the empire was a variant of Brahmi and was used to write the Sanskrit language. The Shunga Empire played an imperative role in patronizing Indian cultureat a time when some of the most important developments in Hindu thought were taking place.

*Kharavela Empire*

Kharavela, the warrior king of Kalinga, ruled a vast empire and was responsible for the propagation of Jainism in the Indian subcontinent.

During the reign of Khārabēḷa, the Chedi dynasty of Kaḷinga ascended to eminence and restored the lost power and glory of Kaḷinga, which had been subdued since the devastating war with Ashoka. Kaḷingan military might was reinstated by Khārabēḷa: under Khārabēḷa's generalship, the Kaḷinga state had a formidable maritime reach with trade routes linking it to the then-Simhala (Sri Lanka), Burma (Myanmar), Siam (Thailand), Vietnam, Kamboja (Cambodia), Malaysia, Borneo, Bali, Samudra (Sumatra) and Jabadwipa (Java). Khārabēḷa led many successful campaigns against the states of Magadha, Anga, Satavahanas till the southern most regions of Pandyan Empire (modern Tamil Nadu).

The Kharavelan Jain empire included a maritime empire with trading routes linking it to Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Borneo, Bali, Sumatra, and Java. Colonists from Kalinga settled in Sri Lanka, Burma, as well as the Maldives and Maritime Southeast Asia.

*Northwestern kingdoms and hybrid cultures*

The northwestern kingdoms and hybrid cultures of the Indian subcontinent included the Indo-Greeks, the Indo-Scythians, the Indo-Parthians, and the Indo-Sassinids.

Indo-Greek Kingdom: The Indo-Greek Menander I (reigned 155–130 BCE) drove the Greco-Bactrians out of Gandhara and beyond theHindu Kush, becoming a king shortly after his victory. His territories covered Panjshir and Kapisa in modern Afghanistan and extended to the Punjab region, with many tributaries to the south and east, possibly as far as Mathura. The capital Sagala (modern Sialkot) prospered greatly under Menander's rule. The classical Buddhist text Milinda Pañha praises Menander, saying there was "none equal to Milinda in all India". Lasting for almost two centuries, the kingdom was ruled by a succession of more than 30 Greek kings, who were often in conflict with each other.

Indo-Scythian Kingdom: The Indo-Scythians were descended from the Sakas (Scythians) who migrated from southern Siberia toPakistan and Arachosia to India from the middle of the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century BCE. They displaced the Indo-Greeks and ruled a kingdom that stretched from Gandhara to Mathura. The power of the Saka rulers started to decline in the 2nd century CE after the Scythians were defeated by the south Indian Emperor Gautamiputra Satakarni of the Satavahana dynasty. Later the Saka kingdom was completely destroyed by Chandragupta II of the Gupta Empire from eastern India in the 4th century.

Indo-Parthians Kingdom: The Indo-Parthian Kingdom was ruled by the Gondopharid dynasty, named after its eponymous first rulerGondophares. They ruled parts of present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northwestern India, during or slightly before the 1st century AD. For most of their history, the leading Gondopharid kings held Taxila (in the present Punjab province of Pakistan) as their residence and ruled from there, but during their last few years of existence the capital shifted between Kabul and Peshawar. These kings have traditionally been referred to as Indo-Parthians, as their coinage was often inspired by the Arsacid dynasty, but they probably belonged to a wider groups of Iranian tribes who lived east of Parthia proper, and there is no evidence that all the kings who assumed the titleGondophares, which means ”Holder of Glory”, were even related.

The Sassanid empire of Persia, who was contemporaneous with the Gupta Empire, expanded into the region of present-day Balochistan in Pakistan,

where the mingling of Indian culture and the culture of Iran gave birth to a hybrid culture under the Indo-Sassanids.

*Travels to India*

According to Poseidonius, later reported in Strabo's Geography, the monsoon wind system of the Indian Ocean was first sailed by Eudoxus of Cyzicus in 118 or 116 BC. Poseidonius said a shipwrecked sailor from India had been rescued in the Red Sea and taken to Ptolemy VIII in Alexandria.

Strabo, whose Geography is the main surviving source of the story, was skeptical about its truth. Modern scholarship tends to consider it relatively credible. During the 2nd century BC Greek and Indian ships met to trade at Arabian ports such as Aden(called Eudaemon by the Greeks). Another Greek navigator, Hippalus, is sometimes credited with discovering the monsoon wind route to India. He is sometimes conjectured to have been part of Eudoxus's expeditions.

Buddhism entered China through the Silk Road transmission of Buddhism in the 1st or 2nd century CE. The interaction of cultures resulted in several Chinese travelers and monks to enter India. Most notable were Faxian and Xuanzang. These travellers wrote detailed accounts of the Indian Subcontinent, which includes the political and social aspects of the region.

*Kushan Empire*

The Kushan Empire expanded out of what is now Afghanistan into the northwest of the subcontinent under the leadership of their first emperor, Kujula Kadphises, about the middle of the 1st century CE. They came of an Indo-European language speaking Central Asian tribe called the Yuezhi,[114][115] a branch of which was known as the Kushans. By the time of his grandson, Kanishka, they had conquered most of northern India, at least as far as Saketa and Pataliputra, in the middle Ganges Valley, and probably as far as the Bay of Bengal.

They played an important role in the establishment of Buddhism in India and its spread to Central Asia and China. Historian Vincent Smithsaid about Kanishka:

He played the part of a second Ashoka in the history of Buddhism.

The kingdom linked the Indian Ocean maritime trade with the commerce of the Silk Road through the Indus valley, encouraging long-distance trade, particularly between China and Rome. The Kushans brought new trends to the budding and blossoming Gandhara Art, which reached its peak during Kushan Rule. H.G. Rowlinson commented:

The Kushan period is a fitting prelude to the Age of the Guptas.

By the 3rd century, their empire in India was disintegrating and their last known great emperor was Vasudeva I

## *Classical period (320-650 CE)*

### Gupta Empire - Golden Age

Classical India refers to the period when much of the Indian subcontinent was reunited under the Gupta Empire (c. 320–550 CE). This period has been called the Golden Age of India and was marked by extensive achievements in science,
technology, engineering,art, dialectic, literature, logic, mathematics, astronomy, religi on, and philosophy that crystallized the elements of what is generally known as Hindu culture. The Hindu-Arabic numerals, a positional numeral system, originated in India and was later transmitted to the West through the Arabs. Early Hindu numerals had only nine symbols, until 600 to 800 CE, when a symbol for zero was developed for the numeral system. The peace and prosperity created under leadership of Guptas enabled the pursuit of scientific and artistic endeavors in India.

The high points of this cultural creativity are magnificent architecture, sculpture, and painting. The Gupta period produced scholars such as Kalidasa, Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Vishnu Sharma, and Vatsyayana who made great advancements in many academic fields. The Gupta period marked a watershed of Indian culture: the Guptas performed Vedic sacrifices to legitimize their rule, but they also patronized Buddhism, which continued to provide an alternative to Brahmanical orthodoxy. The military exploits of the first three rulers – Chandragupta I, Samudragupta, and Chandragupta II - brought much of India under their leadership. Science and political administration reached new heights during the Gupta era. Strong trade ties also made the region an important cultural centre and established it as a base that would influence nearby kingdoms and regions in Burma, Sri Lanka, Maritime Southeast Asia, and Indochina. For these reasons, historian Dr.Barnett remarked:

The Gupta period is in the annals of classical India almost what the Periclean age is in the history of Greece

However, some historians like D.N.Jha disagree:

The much published Hindu renaissance was, in reality, not a renaissance, much less a Hindu one.

The latter Guptas successfully resisted the northwestern kingdoms until the arrival of the Hunas, who established themselves in Afghanistan by the first half of the 5th century, with their capital at Bamiyan. However, much of the Deccan and southern India were largely unaffected by these events in the north.

#### *Vakataka Dynasty*

The vakataka Empire was a royal Indian dynasty that originated from the Deccan in the mid-third century CE. Their state is believed to have extended from the southern edges of Malwa and Gujarat in the north to the Tungabhadra River in the south as well as from the Arabian Sea in the western to the edges

of Chhattisgarh in the east. They were the most important successors of the Satavahanas in the Deccan and contemporaneous with the Guptas in northern India.

*Kadamba Dynasty*

Kadamba (345 – 525 CE) was an ancient royal dynasty of Karnataka, India that ruled northern Karnataka and the Konkan from Banavasi in present-day Uttara Kannada district. At the peak of their power under King Kakushtavarma, the Kadambas of Banavasi ruled large parts of modern Karnataka state. The dynasty was founded by Mayurasharma in 345 CE which at later times showed the potential of developing into imperial proportions, an indication to which is provided by the titles and epithets assumed by its rulers. King Mayurasharma defeated the armies of Pallavas of Kanchi possibly with help of some native tribes. The Kadamba fame reached its peak during the rule of Kakusthavarma, a notable ruler with whom even the kings of Gupta Dynasty of northern India cultivated marital alliances. The Kadambas were contemporaries of the Western Ganga Dynasty and together they formed the earliest native kingdoms to rule the land with absolute autonomy. The dynasty later continued to rule as a feudatory of larger Kannada empires, theChalukya and the Rashtrakuta empires, for over five hundred years during which time they branched into minor dynasties known as the Kadambas of Goa, Kadambas of Halasiand Kadambas of Hangal.

*The White Huns*

The Hephthalites (or Ephthalites), also known as the White Huns, were a nomadic confederation in Central Asia during the late antiquity period. The White Huns established themselves in modern-day Afghanistan by the first half of the 5th century. Led by the Hun military leader Toramana, they overran the northern region of Pakistan and North India. Toramana's son Mihirakula, a Saivite Hindu, moved up to near Pataliputra to the east and Gwalior to the central India. Hiuen Tsiang narrates Mihirakula's merciless persecution of Buddhists and destruction of monasteries, though the description is disputed as far as the authenticity is concerned. The Huns were defeated by the Indian kings Yasodharman of Malwa and Narasimhagupta in the 6th century. Some of them were driven out of India and others were assimilated in the Indian society.

*Empire of Harsha*

Harsha Vardhana ) c. 590–647), commonly called Harsha, was an Indian emperor who ruled northern India from 606 to 647 from his capital Kannauj. He was the son of Prabhakarvardhana and the younger brother of Rajyavardhana, a king of Thanesar in present-day Haryana. At the height of his power his kingdom spanned the Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bengal, Odisha and the entireIndo-Gangetic plain north of the Narmada River.

After the downfall of the prior Gupta Empire in the middle of the 6th century, North India reverted to small republics and small monarchical states ruled by Gupta rulers. Harsha was a convert to Buddhism. He united the small republics from Punjab to central India, and their representatives crowned Harsha king at an assembly in April 606 giving him the title of Maharaja when he was merely 16 years old. Harsha belonged to

Kanojia. He brought all of northern India under his control. The peace and prosperity that prevailed made his court a center of cosmopolitanism, attracting scholars, artists and religious visitors from far and wide. The Chinese traveler Xuan Zang visited the court of Harsha and wrote a very favorable account of him, praising his justice and generosity.

*Late Classical period (650–1100 CE)*

The "Late Classical Age" in India began after the end of the Gupta Empire and the collapse of the Empire of Harsha in the 7th century CE, and ended with the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire in the south in the 16th century, because of pressure from Islamic invaders to the north.

From the fifth century to the thirteenth, Śrauta sacrifices declined, and initiatory traditions of Buddhism, Jainism or more commonlyShaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism expanded in royal courts. This period produced some of India's finest art, considered the epitome of classical development, and the development of the main spiritual and philosophical systems which continued to be in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Emperor Harsha of Kannauj succeeded in reuniting northern India during his reign in the 7th century, after the collapse of the Gupta dynasty. His empire collapsed after his death.

North-Western Indian Buddhism weakened in the 6th century after the White Hun invasion, who followed their own religions at the beginning such as Tengri, but later Indian religions. Muhammad bin Qasim's invasion of Sindh (modern Pakistan) in 711 CE witnessed further decline of Buddhism. The Chach Nama records many instances of conversion of stupas to mosques such as atNerun.

In the 7th century CE, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa formulated his school of Mimamsa philosophy and defended the position on Vedic rituals against Buddhist attacks. Scholars note Bhaṭṭa's contribution to the decline of Buddhism. His dialectical success against the Buddhists is confirmed by Buddhist historian Tathagata, who reports that Kumārila defeated disciples of Buddhapalkita, Bhavya, Dharmadasa, Dignaga and others.

Ronald Inden writes that by 8th century CE symbols of Hindu gods "replaced the Buddha at the imperial centre and pinnacle of the cosmo-political system, the image or symbol of the Hindu god comes to be housed in a monumental temple and given increasingly elaborate imperial-style puja worship". Although Buddhism did not disappear from India for several centuries after the eighth, royal proclivities for the cults of Vishnu and Shiva weakened Buddhism's position within the sociopolitical context and helped make possible its decline.

From the 8th to the 10th century, three dynasties contested for control of northern India: the Gurjara Pratiharas of Malwa, the Palasof Bengal, and the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan. The Sena dynasty would later assume control of the Pala Empire, and the Gurjara Pratiharas fragmented into various states. These were the first of the Rajput states. The first recorded Rajput kingdoms emerged inRajasthan in the 6th century, and small Rajput dynasties later ruled much of

northern India. One Gurjar Rajput of theChauhan clan, Prithvi Raj Chauhan, was known for bloody conflicts against the advancing Turkic sultanates. The Chola empireemerged as a major power during the reign of Raja Raja Chola I and Rajendra Chola I who successfully invaded parts of Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka in the 11th century. Lalitaditya Muktapida (r. 724 CE–760 CE) was an emperor of the Kashmiri Karkoṭa dynasty, which exercised influence in northwestern India from 625 CE until 1003, and was followed by Lohara dynasty. He is known primarily for his successful battles against the Muslim and Tibetan advances into Kashmiri-dominated regions. Kalhana in his Rajatarangini credits king Lalitaditya with leading an aggressive military campaign in Northern India and Central Asia. He broke into the Uttarapatha and defeated the rebellious tribes of the Kambojas, Tukharas (Turks in Turkmenistan and Tocharians in Badakhshan), Bhautas (Tibetans in Baltistan and Tibet) and Daradas (Dards). His campaign then led him to subjugate the kingdoms of Pragjyotisha, Strirajya and the Uttarakurus. The Shahi dynasty ruled portions of eastern Afghanistan, northern Pakistan, and Kashmir from the mid-7th century to the early 11th century.

*Chalukya Empire*

The Chalukya Empire was an Indian royal dynasty that ruled large parts of southern and central India between the 6th and the 12th centuries. During this period, they ruled as three related yet individual dynasties. The earliest dynasty, known as the "Badami Chalukyas", ruled from Vatapi (modern Badami) from the middle of the 6th century. The Badami Chalukyas began to assert their independence at the decline of the Kadamba kingdom of Banavasi and rapidly rose to prominence during the reign of Pulakeshin II. The rule of the Chalukyas marks an important milestone in the history of South India and a golden age in the history of Karnataka. The political atmosphere in South India shifted from smaller kingdoms to large empires with the ascendancy of Badami Chalukyas. A Southern India-based kingdom took control and consolidated the entire region between the Kaveri and the Narmada rivers. The rise of this empire saw the birth of efficient administration, overseas trade and commerce and the development of new style of architecture called "Chalukyan architecture". The Chalukya dynasty ruled parts of southern and central India from Badami in Karnataka between 550 and 750, and then again from Kalyani between 970 and 1190.

*Rashtrakuta Empire (8th–10th century)*

Founded by Dantidurga around 753, the Rashtrakuta Empire ruled from its capital at Manyakheta for almost two centuries. At its peak, the Rashtrakutas ruled from the Ganges River and Yamuna River doab in the north to Cape Comorin in the south, a fruitful time of political expansion, architectural achievements and famous literary contributions.[citation needed] The early kings of this dynasty were Hindu but the later kings were strongly influenced by Jainism. Govinda III and Amoghavarsha were the most famous of the long line of able administrators produced by the dynasty. Amoghavarsha, who ruled for 64 years, was also an author and wrote Kavirajamarga, the earliest known Kannada

work on poetics. Architecture reached a milestone in the Dravidian style, the finest example of which is seen in the Kailasanath Temple at Ellora. Other important contributions are the sculptures of Elephanta Caves in modern Maharashtra as well as the Kashivishvanatha temple and the Jain Narayana temple at Pattadakal in modern Karnataka, all of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Arab traveler Suleiman described the Rashtrakuta Empire as one of the four great Empires of the world. The Rashtrakuta period marked the beginning of the golden age of southern Indian mathematics. The great south Indian mathematician Mahāvīra (mathematician) lived in the Rashtrakuta Empire and his text had a huge impact on the medieval south Indian mathematicians who lived after him. The Rashtrakuta rulers also patronised men of letters, who wrote in a variety of languages from Sanskrit to the Apabhraṃśas.

*Pala Empire (8th–12th century)*

The Pala Empire flourished during the Classical period of India, and may be dated during 750–1174 CE. Founded by Gopala I, it was ruled by a Buddhist dynasty from Bengal in the eastern region of the Indian subcontinent. Though the Palas were followers of the Mahayana and Tantric schools of Buddhism,[163] they also patronised Shaivism and Vaishnavism. The morpheme Pala, meaning "protector", was used as an ending for the names of all the Pala monarchs. The empire reached its peak under Dharmapala and Devapala. Dharmapala is believed to have conquered Kanauj and extended his sway up to the farthest limits of India in the northwest. The Pala Empire can be considered as the golden era of Bengal in many ways. Dharmapala founded the Vikramashila and revived Nalanda, considered one of the first great universities in recorded history. Nalanda reached its height under the patronage of the Pala Empire. The Palas also built many viharas. They maintained close cultural and commercial ties with countries of Southeast Asia and Tibet. Sea trade added greatly to the prosperity of the Pala kingdom. The Arab merchant Suleiman notes the enormity of the Pala army in his memoirs.

*Chola Empire (9th–13th century)*

Medieval Cholas rose to prominence during the middle of the 9th century C.E. and established the greatest empire South India had seen. They successfully united the South India under their rule and through their naval strength extended their influence in the Southeast Asian countries such as Srivijaya. Under Rajaraja Chola I and his successorsRajendra Chola I, Rajadhiraja Chola, Virarajendra Chola and Kulothunga Chola I the dynasty became a military, economic and cultural power in South Asia and South-East Asia. Rajendra Chola I's navies went even further, occupying the sea coasts from Burma to Vietnam, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Lakshadweep (Laccadive) islands, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia and the Pegu islands. The power of the new empire was proclaimed to the eastern world by the expedition to theGanges which Rajendra Chola I undertook and by the occupation of cities of the maritime empire of Srivijaya in Southeast Asia, as well as by the repeated

embassies to China. They dominated the political affairs of Sri Lanka for over two centuries through repeated invasions and occupation. They also had continuing trade contacts with the Arabs in the west and with the Chinese empire in the east. Rajaraja Chola I and his equally distinguished son Rajendra Chola I gave political unity to the whole of Southern India and established the Chola Empire as a respected sea power. Under the Cholas, the South India reached new heights of excellence in art, religion and literature. In all of these spheres, the Chola period marked the culmination of movements that had begun in an earlier age under the Pallavas. Monumental architecture in the form of majestic temples and sculpture in stone and bronze reached a finesse never before achieved in India.

*Western Chalukya Empire*

The Western Chalukya Empire ruled most of the western Deccan, South India, between the 10th and 12th centuries. Vast areas between the Narmada River in the north and Kaveri River in the south came under Chalukya control. During this period the other major ruling families of the Deccan, the Hoysalas, theSeuna Yadavas of Devagiri, the Kakatiya dynasty and the Southern Kalachuri, were subordinates of the Western Chalukyas and gained their independence only when the power of the Chalukya waned during the later half of the 12th century. The Western Chalukyas developed an architectural style known today as a transitional style, an architectural link between the style of the early Chalukya dynasty and that of the later Hoysala empire. Most of its monuments are in the districts bordering the Tungabhadra River in central Karnataka. Well known examples are the Kasivisvesvara Temple at Lakkundi, the Mallikarjuna Temple at Kuruvatti, the Kallesvara Temple at Bagali and the Mahadeva Temple at Itagi. This was an important period in the development of fine arts in Southern India, especially in literature as the Western Chalukya kings encouraged writers in the native language of Kannada, and Sanskrit like the philosopher and statesman Basava and the great mathematician Bhāskara II.

*Early Islamic intrusions into India (8th–12th century)*

The early Islamic literature indicates that the conquest of India was one of the very early ambitions of the Muslims, though it was recognized as a particularly difficult one. After conquering Persia, the Arab Umayyad Caliphate incorporated parts of what are now Afghanistan and Pakistan around 720. The book Chach Nama chronicles the Chacha Dynasty's period, following the demise of the Rai Dynasty and the ascent of Chach of Alor to the throne, down to the Arab conquest by Muhammad bin Qasim in the early 8th century AD, by defeating the last Hindu monarch of Sindh, Raja Dahir.

In 712, Arab Muslim general Muhammad bin Qasim conquered most of the Indus region in modern-day Pakistan for the Umayyad Empire, incorporating it as the "As-Sindh" province with its capital at Al-Mansurah, 72 km (45 mi) north of modern Hyderabad in Sindh, Pakistan. After several incursions, the Hindu kings east of Indus defeated the Arabs at the Battle of Rajasthan, halting their expansion and containing them at Sindh in Pakistan. The south Indian Chalukya

empire under Vikramaditya II, Nagabhata I of thePratihara dynasty and Bappa Rawal of the Guhilot dynasty repulsed the Arab invaders in the early 8th century.

Several Islamic kingdoms (sultanates) under both foreign and, newly converted, Rajput rulers were established across the north western subcontinent (Afghanistan and Pakistan) over a period of a few centuries. From the 10th century, Sindh was ruled by the Rajput Soomra dynasty, and later, in the mid-13th century by the Rajput Samma dynasty. Additionally, Muslim trading communities flourished throughout coastal south India, particularly on the western coast where Muslim traders arrived in small numbers, mainly from the Arabian peninsula. This marked the introduction of a third Abrahamic Middle Eastern religion, following Judaism and Christianity, often in puritanical form. Mahmud of Ghazniin the early 11th century raided mainly the north-western parts of the Indian sub-continent 17 times, but he did not seek to establish "permanent dominion" in those areas.

*Hindu Shahi*

The Kabul Shahi dynasties ruled the Kabul Valley and Gandhara (modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan) from the decline of the Kushan Empire in the 3rd century to the early 9th century. The Shahis are generally split up into two eras: the Buddhist Shahis and the Hindu Shahis, with the change-over thought to have occurred sometime around 870. The kingdom was known as the Kabul Shahan or Ratbelshahan from 565-670, when the capitals were located inKapisa and Kabul, and later Udabhandapura, also known as Hund[184] for its new capital.

The Hindu Shahis under Jayapala, is known for his struggles in defending his kingdom against the Ghaznavids in the modern-day eastern Afghanistan andPakistan region. Jayapala saw a danger in the consolidation of the Ghaznavids and invaded their capital city of Ghazni both in the reign of Sebuktigin and in that of his son Mahmud, which initiated the Muslim Ghaznavid and Hindu Shahi struggles. Sebuk Tigin, however, defeated him, and he was forced to pay an indemnity. Jayapala defaulted on the payment and took to the battlefield once more. Jayapala however, lost control of the entire region between the Kabul Valley and Indus River.

Before his struggle began Jaipal had raised a large army of Punjabi Hindus. When Jaipal went to the Punjab region, his army was raised to 100,000 horsemen and an innumerable host of foot soldiers. According to Ferishta:

The two armies having met on the confines of Lumghan, Subooktugeen ascended a hill to view the forces of Jeipal, which appeared in extent like the boundless ocean, and in number like the ants or the locusts of the wilderness. But Subooktugeen considered himself as a wolf about to attack a flock of sheep: calling, therefore, his chiefs together, he encouraged them to glory, and issued to each his commands. His soldiers, though few in number, were divided into squadrons of five hundred men each, which were directed to attack

successively, one particular point of the Hindoo line, so that it might continually have to encounter fresh troops.

However, the army was hopeless in battle against the western forces, particularly against the young Mahmud of Ghazni. In the year 1001, soon after Sultan Mahmud came to power and was occupied with the Qarakhanids north of the Hindu Kush, Jaipal attacked Ghazni once more and upon suffering yet another defeat by the powerful Ghaznavid forces, near present-day Peshawar. After the Battle of Peshawar, he committed suicide because his subjects thought he had brought disaster and disgrace to the Shahi dynasty.

Jayapala was succeeded by his son Anandapala, who along with other succeeding generations of the Shahiya dynasty took part in various unsuccessful campaigns against the advancing Ghaznvids but were unsuccessful. The Hindu rulers eventually exiled themselves to the Kashmir Siwalik Hills.