

## Chapter 11.4 Notes: India after the Gupta's and Empires in SE Asia

### Buddhism in India

- **Split among India's Buddhists:** Although Buddhism had been widely accepted in India, differing interpretations of the Buddha's teachings led to a split of Buddhism into two schools—Theravada and Mahayana.
- **Theravada Buddhism:** Believing that they were following the Buddha's original teachings, adherents of Theravada Buddhism focused on gaining self-knowledge as a way of attaining nirvana.
- **Mahayana Buddhism:** Adherents of Mahayana Buddhism thought that the Theravada teachings were too strict. They viewed Buddhism as a religion and the Buddha as a divine figure, devotion to whom could earn believers salvation after death.
- **Decline of Buddhism in India:** Buddhism failed to retain its popularity in the country of its origin. By the seventh century A.D., the Theravada school had declined, and the Mahayana school had been absorbed into Hinduism. The religion did, however, remain popular in the countries of East Asia and Southeast Asia to which it had been introduced.

### Eastward Expansion of Islam

- **Islam's arrival in India:** After the fall of the Gupta Empire, India was politically fragmented, with a number of small states engaging in continual warfare. In the early eighth century, Islamic armies took advantage of this situation to move into frontier regions in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent.
- **Islamic state of Ghazna:** At the end of the tenth century, a new Islamic state called Ghazna arose in the northwest. One of its rulers, Mahmūd of Ghazna, began attacking neighboring Hindu kingdoms and eventually extended his power in the upper Indus River valley.
- **Resistance by the Rajputs:** Hindu warriors called Rajputs attempted to push back the Islamic invaders but were largely unsuccessful. Mahmūd's successors continued to expand Islamic control in northern India.
- **Consolidation of Muslim power in Delhi:** By the beginning of the thirteenth century, Muslims had taken control of the whole

north Indian plain, where they established the sultanate of Delhi. The sultanate was to grow further before beginning to decline in the later fourteenth century.

- It was said that Mahmūd of Ghazna (971–1030) vowed to invade India once a year until it fell. Over the years, he led some 17 invasions of India. During one campaign, in 1001, Mahmūd's troops defeated Jaipāl, the ruler of the Punjab, despite facing an army of 12,000 horse troops, 30,000 foot soldiers, and 300 elephants. After the defeat, Jaipāl's son Ānandpāl appealed to other Indian states for help and began to build a huge force to fight the Muslims. In 1008, the two armies finally met. Mahmūd's troops were attacked with such ferocity that he was about to call a retreat when Ānandpāl's elephant panicked in the chaos and ran away. The Indian troops, believing Ānandpāl to be fleeing, retreated from the battle, leaving Mahmūd victorious.

### **The Impact of Timur Lenk**

- **Invasion of Timur Lenk:** As the Delhi sultanate declined, the Mongol ruler Timur Lenk led an invasion that raided its capital and slaughtered about 100,000 prisoners. Born in Samarqand, Timur Lenk had already conquered a sizeable region of Asia located to the west of India.
- **Calm following Timur Lenk's death:** Timur Lenk's death in 1405 ended a major threat to the states of the Indian subcontinent, but after about a century of relative calm, new threats to stability would appear in the form of the Moguls and Portuguese traders.

### **Tensions Between Conquerors and Conquered**

- **Muslim rulers and Hindu subjects:** Muslim rulers in India attempted to strictly separate themselves from their Hindu subjects. Although they strove to convert the Hindus to Islam and succeeded in imposing Islamic customs in their domains, most had little choice other than to tolerate religious differences.
- **Life in the countryside and the cities:** Most Indians were peasant farmers who, through their landlords, paid a share of their harvest to their rulers. The landed elite and merchants lived in cities, as did the rulers, who were often very wealthy and enjoyed luxurious lifestyles.
- **Trade in India:** Although trade within India may have declined because of the continual warfare among the various states, India

continued to engage in a robust foreign trade, located as it was along traditional routes between Southwest Asia and East Asia.

- **Architecture:** Religious architecture flourished during this period, with magnificent and ornately designed Hindu temples being built.
- **Literature:** Prose fiction was also well established in India at the time, long before it appeared elsewhere in Asia or in the West. A notable example is *The Adventures of the Ten Princes* by Dandin.

### **Southeast Asian States**

- **Geographic barriers:** Southeast Asia consists of a mainland region, which is divided by several mountain ranges, and a vast group of islands. Because of the geographic barriers, it has never been politically unified and has been home to a number of distinct cultures.
- **Vietnam:** Although Vietnam was conquered by China, the Vietnamese maintained their own identity. After overcoming their Chinese rulers, however, they adopted the Chinese system of government in their new state of Dai Viet. Over centuries, Dai Viet expanded southward.
- **Khmer kingdom of Angkor:** In the ninth century, the Khmer people were unified in the kingdom of Angkor, which became the most powerful state in the mainland part of Southeast Asia. Eventually, the capital of Angkor Thom fell to the Thai, and Angkor's rulers established a new capital to the southeast.
- **The Thai people:** Originating on the southern fringe of China, the Thai moved into Southeast Asia. After conquering Angkor, they established a capital of their own and adopted Buddhism and political ideas from India, while retaining a distinctive culture.
- **Burmese kingdom of Pagan:** The Burmese people established the kingdom of Pagan in the eleventh century, also adopting aspects of Indian culture and political practices. Mongol attacks led to the decline of Pagan in the late thirteenth century.
- **Majapahit and Melaka:** The first powerful state to arise among the communities of the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian islands was Majapahit, which eventually came to control most of the archipelago. It was rivaled and then superseded by the Islamic sultanate of Melaka, and the majority of the people in the region converted to Islam.

### **Life in Southeast Asia**

- **Agriculture and trading:** The economies of Southeast Asian states were based either on agriculture, as in Vietnam, Angkor, and Pagan, or on trading, as in the sultanate of Melaka. Trade in the region increased greatly after the emergence of the Southeast Asian states.
- **Characteristics of Southeast Asian societies:** Hereditary aristocrats living in the major cities dominated the politics and economies of most Southeast Asian societies. The majority of the population consisted of poor peasant farmers who, like fishers, artisans, and merchants, lived outside the major cities. Women's status was somewhat higher than in China and India.
- **Chinese and Indian influences:** Chinese culture had its greatest influence in Vietnam; the other Southeast Asian states were influenced more by Indian culture, especially in their architecture, as seen in the temple complex of Angkor Wat.
- **Religion:** Hinduism and Buddhism spread from India to Southeast Asia, where they became blended with local beliefs. Buddhism became the most prevalent religion in the region.
- Melaka was founded in about 1400 by a prince of Sumatra named Paramesvara. Paramesvara had fled his native land during attacks by people from Java. He first settled in Tumasik, which is now Singapore, and then moved on to Melaka. Paramesvara converted to Islam and took the Muslim title Sultan Iskandar Shah in 1414. He took advantage of Melaka's excellent natural harbor and strategic location to establish trade relations with the Ming dynasty in China. The port came to dominate Southeast Asian trade as the network of trading relationships was extended to Indian, Arab, and Persian merchants.