

Chapter 6 – Ancient India



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Geography and Early India



6.5.1
6.5.2

The Big Idea

Indian civilization first developed on the Indus River.

Main Ideas

- The geography of India includes high mountains, great rivers, and heavy seasonal rain.
- Harappan civilization developed along the Indus River.
- The Aryan invasion of India changed the region's civilization.

Indian Geography

Mountains

- North: The Himalayas are the highest mountains in the world.
- West: The Hindu Kush provide protection from enemies.

Plains and Plateaus

- Rivers and melting snow kept the plains fertile.
- Both sides of the river thrived.

Water

- Monsoons
- Heavy rainfall
- Civilizations arose around seasonal rainfall.



Harappan Civilization

People

- Population grew in the Indus River Valley.
- Growth came as irrigation and farming techniques improved.
- Cities were built as surplus food was produced.

Cities

- Harrapa
- Mohenjo Daro
- Fortresses for defense against enemies
- Well-planned public areas

Achievements

- Wells and indoor plumbing
- Pottery, cotton clothing, jewelry
- India's first known writing system



Aryan Invasion

Invaders from the West

When the Harappan civilization dissipated in 1700 BC, a group called the Aryans began taking over territory.



Religion

The Aryans left behind vast collections of sacred texts, myths, and rituals. They also had mostly religious writings known as Vedas.



Government

No central government: small communities ruled by rajas



Language

Sanskrit is the root of many modern South Asian languages.



Summary

Harappan Civilization

- Two major cities: Harappa, Mohenjo Daro
- Advanced civilization that thrived between 2300 and 1700 BC
- Culture, artistry, city planning



Aryan Invasion

- Aryan warriors pushed through the Hindu Kush mountains and settled in the Indus Valley.
- Oral tradition in religion and mythology resulted in the most important language of ancient India: Sanskrit.





6.5.3

6.5.4

Origins of Hinduism

The Big Idea

Hinduism, the largest religion in India today, developed out of ancient Indian beliefs and practices.

Main Ideas

- Indian society divided into distinct groups under the Aryans.
- The Aryans practiced a religion known as Brahmanism.
- Hinduism developed out of Brahmanism and influences from other cultures.
- The Jains reacted to Hinduism by breaking away to form their own religion.

Indian Society Divides

Varnas

Social divisions in Aryan society



Brahmins

Priests



Kshatriyas

Rulers and warriors



Vaisyas

Farmers, craftspeople, and traders



Sudras

Laborers and non-Aryans



Caste System

Individuals

- Place in society based on birth, wealth, or occupation
- 3,000 castes once existed in India.
- Individuals could rarely change castes.

Caste Rules

- Sutras (guides) listed all the rules for the caste system.
- Breaking rules resulted in a transfer to a lower class.



Brahmanism develops into Hinduism

Brahmanism

- Aryan priests were called Brahmins.
- Wrote Vedic texts, which were their thoughts about the Vedas

Evolving Beliefs

The Vedas, Upanishads, and other Vedic texts began blending with beliefs from different cultures, creating Hinduism.

Hinduism

- Many deities
- Reincarnation: could be born into new forms and castes
- Helped preserve the caste system in India



Jains React to Hinduism

Origins of Jainism

- 599 BC, established as an alternative to Hindu ritualism
- Based on the teachings of Mahavira, who abandoned his life of luxury to become a monk



Four Principles of Jainism

- Injure no life.
- Tell the truth.
- Do not steal.
- Own no property.





Origins of Buddhism

The Big Idea

Buddhism began in India and became a major religion.

Main Ideas

- Siddhartha Gautama searched for wisdom in many ways.
- The teachings of Buddhism deal with finding peace.
- Buddhism spread far from where it began in India.

Siddhartha

Quest for Answers

- Siddhartha was born a prince, but he questioned the meaning of life.
- Determined to find answers using:
 - Meditation
 - Fasting
 - Learning from different teachers





Enlightenment

- Found it under the Tree of Wisdom while meditating
- Called the Buddha (Enlightened One)
- Spent the rest of his life traveling and teaching his ideas



Teachings of Buddhism

Four Noble Truths

1. Suffering and unhappiness are a part of human life. No one can escape sorrow. 
2. Suffering comes from our desires for pleasure and material goods. 
3. People can overcome desire and ignorance and reach **nirvana**, a state of perfect peace. 
4. People can overcome ignorance and desire by following an eightfold path that leads to wisdom, enlightenment, and salvation. 

Challenging Hindu Ideas

Ancient Ways

- The Buddha taught that following the Vedic texts was unnecessary.
- Challenged the authority of Hindu priests

Changing Society

- A more individualistic approach to enlightenment
- Rebirth as a means to evolve

Caste System

- Opposed caste system
- The Eightfold Path could lead any individual to nirvana.
- The Buddha's teachings reached all classes.



Buddhism began in India and then became a major religion.

Buddhism branches out

- Asoka, one of the most powerful kings in India, became a Buddhist and spread Buddhism in India and foreign lands.
- Buddhist missionaries traveled the world to teach enlightenment.



Buddhism splits

- Buddhism split into two main sects: Theravada and Mahayana.
- Members of the Theravada followed the Buddha's teachings exactly.
- Members of the Mahayana believed that individual interpretation was important.





Indian Empires

The Big Idea

The Mauryas and the Guptas
built great empires in India.

Main Ideas

The Mauryan Empire unified most of India.

- Gupta rulers promoted Hinduism in their empire.

Mauryan Rule

Chandragupta Maurya

- Chandragupta seized control of northern India and created a society dominated by war.
- Chandragupta became a Jainist monk and gave up his throne.

Asoka

- The grandson of Chandragupta extended Mauryan rule over most of India.
- Asoka converted to Buddhism and stopped waging war, choosing instead to rebuild cities and spread Buddhist teachings.



Gupta Empire

- After the decline of the Mauryan Empire, India remained primarily Buddhist for 500 years.
- Under the rule of Chandragupta I, India became unified and prosperous again.



- Gupta rulers spread Hinduism in their empire through the building of temples and the promotion of Hindu writings and rituals.
- Widespread religious tolerance was encouraged for Buddhists and Jainists.



Chandragupta II

Growth

Under Chandragupta II, the Gupta Empire reached the height of its power. It spread across northern India and prospered.



Economy and Culture

The economy boomed, allowing citizens the time and money to create great works of art and literature.



The Caste System

It was believed that keeping citizens under strict caste rule would stabilize the empire.



Social Ramifications

Women in the caste system were not seen as equals and had few basic rights.



Time Line

- **320 BC** Chandragupta Maurya becomes the first Mauryan emperor.
- **301 BC** Chandragupta Maurya relinquishes the throne to become a Jainist monk.
- **270 BC** Asoka becomes the second Mauryan emperor.
- **261 BC** Asoka's empire gains great power, and he leaves to become a Buddhist.
- **AD 375** Chandragupta I invades and conquers northern India and brings Hinduism, prosperity, and a strict caste system back into popular culture.

Indian Achievements



6.5.7

The Big Idea

The people of ancient India made great contributions to the arts and sciences.

Main Ideas

- Indian artists created great works of religious art.
- Sanskrit literature flourished during the Gupta period.
- The Indians made scientific advances in metalworking, medicine, and other sciences.

Religious Art: Temples

- Both Hindu and Buddhist temples began flourishing under Gupta rule.
- Once simply constructed meeting places, Hindu temples became complex towers covered with intricate carvings.
- Buddhist temples were large and impressive, some carved out of mountainsides.
- Buddhist stupas were built to house sacred objects from the life of the Buddha. They were covered with detailed carvings.

Religious Art: Paintings and Sculpture

- Great artists were commissioned by rich and powerful members of society.
- Paintings offered a perspective on the daily life and religious belief of the ancient Indians; many of these paintings could be found on the walls of temples.
- Indian sculptors carved columns, statues, and entire temples in the likenesses of the Buddha and Hindu deities.

Sanskrit Literature

Mahabharata

- One of the world's longest sacred texts
- Tells of two Indian families struggling for control of a kingdom
- Many long passages of Hindu beliefs and practices



Ramayana

- The story of a deity, Vishnu, who has taken human form
- According to Hindu tradition written prior to the Mahabharata
- Contains models for the ideal ruler (Rama) and the ideal mate (Sita)



Sanskrit Literature

Other Works

- Chandragupta II hired a famous writer named Kalidasa to write plays for the royal court. 
- The *Panchatantra*, a book of stories intended to teach moral lessons and quick thinking, was translated into many languages. 

Scientific Advances

Metalworking

Pioneers of metallurgy, the Indians created tools and weapons by mixing iron and other metals together.



Mathematics

The Indians invented the concept of zero and developed a sophisticated number system, the Hindu-Arabic numerals.



Medicine

Using plants and minerals, Indian doctors made advances in medicinal science. They were among the first to practice inoculation and perform surgery.



Astronomy

Indian astronomers knew of seven about the nine planets in the solar system and could predict eclipses of the sun and moon.



History Close-up

Life in Mohenjo Daro

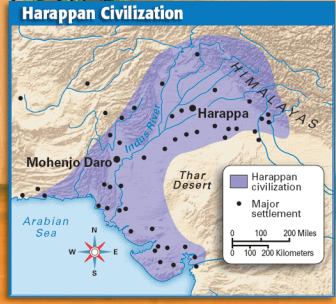
Mohenjo Daro was one of the two major cities of the Harappan civilization. Located next to the Indus River in what is now Pakistan, the city probably covered one square mile. The people who lived in the city enjoyed some of the most advanced comforts of their time, including indoor plumbing.

Next to the city was a huge citadel, or fortress, to guard against invasions.

The houses of Mohenjo Daro had flat roofs. Many had staircases that allowed people to climb to the roof from the street.

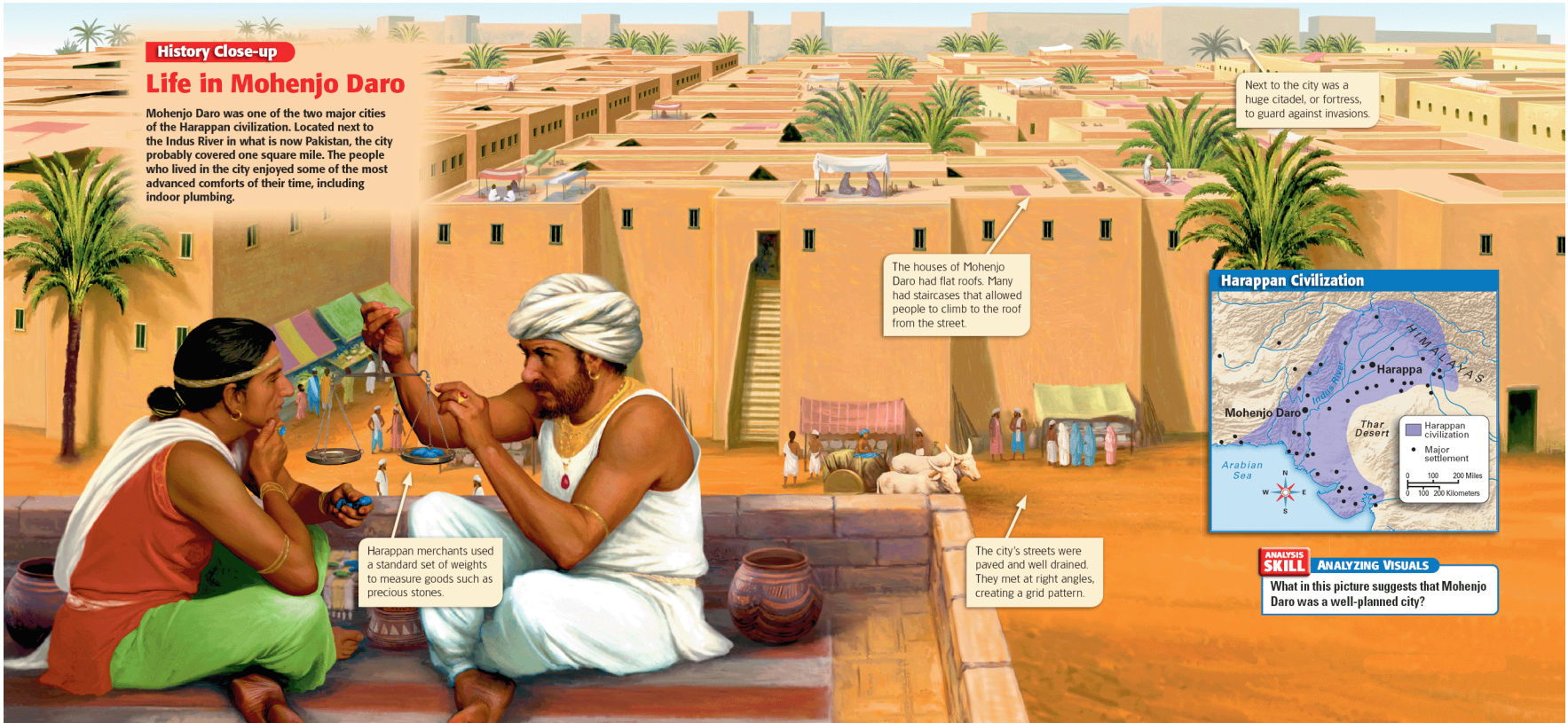
Harappan merchants used a standard set of weights to measure goods such as precious stones.

The city's streets were paved and well drained. They met at right angles, creating a grid pattern.



ANALYSIS SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS

What in this picture suggests that Mohenjo Daro was a well-planned city?



Harappan Art

Like other ancient peoples, the Harappans made small seals like the one below that were used to stamp goods. They also used clay pots like the one at right decorated with a goat.





The Great Departure

In this painting, Prince Siddhartha leaves his palace to search for the true meaning of life, an event known as the Great Departure. Special helpers called *ganas* hold his horse's hooves so he won't awaken anyone.

Temple Architecture



This Hindu temple is covered with incredibly detailed carvings and decorations. Many individual sculptures are images of important Hindu deities, like the deity of Vishnu above.

India: Physical



The highest mountains in the world, the Himalayas, separate India from the rest of Asia.

India is a huge peninsula, so large it's called a subcontinent.

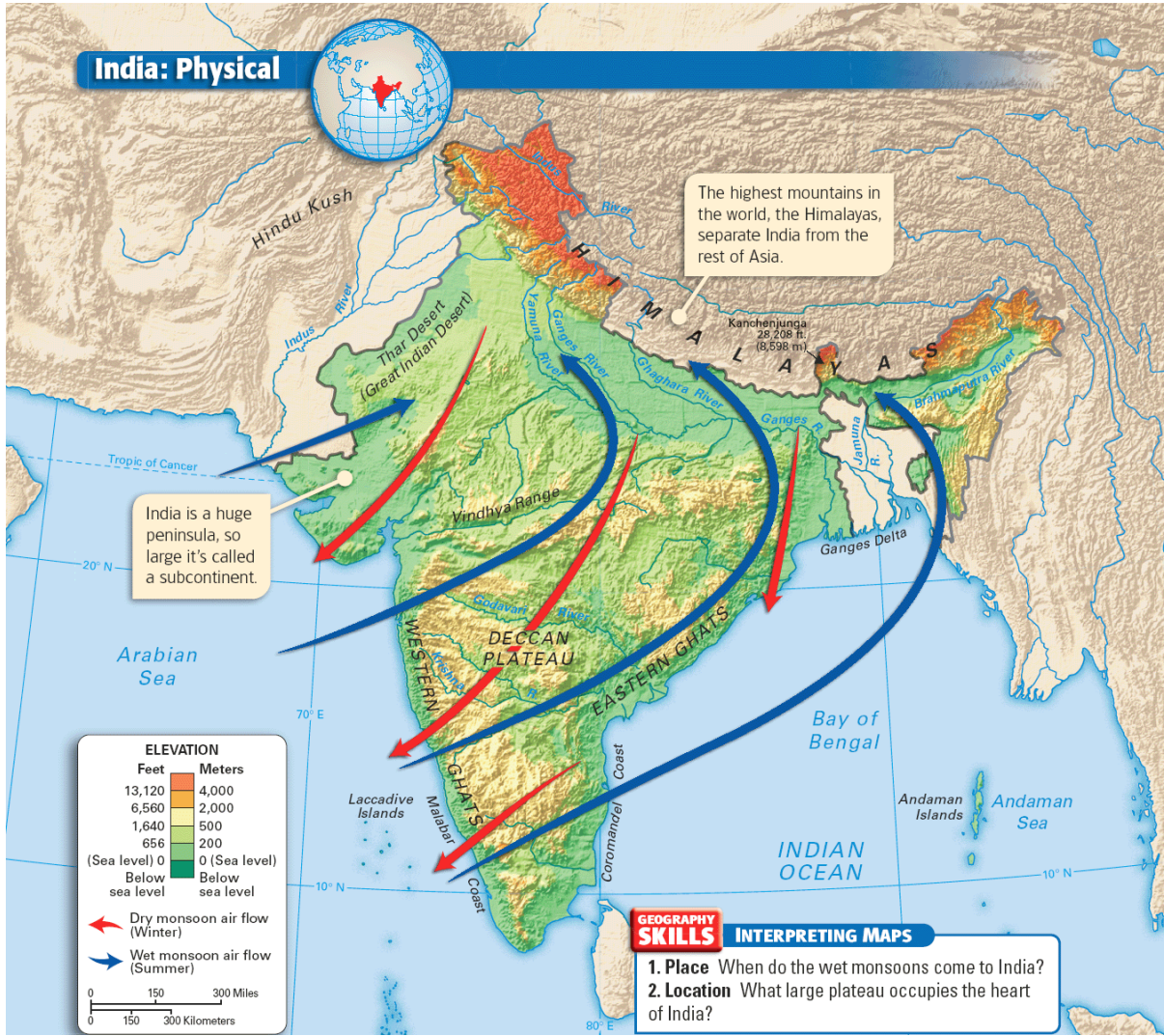
ELEVATION	
Feet	Meters
13,120	4,000
6,560	2,000
1,640	500
656	200
(Sea level) 0	0 (Sea level)
Below sea level	Below sea level

Dry monsoon air flow (Winter)
 Wet monsoon air flow (Summer)

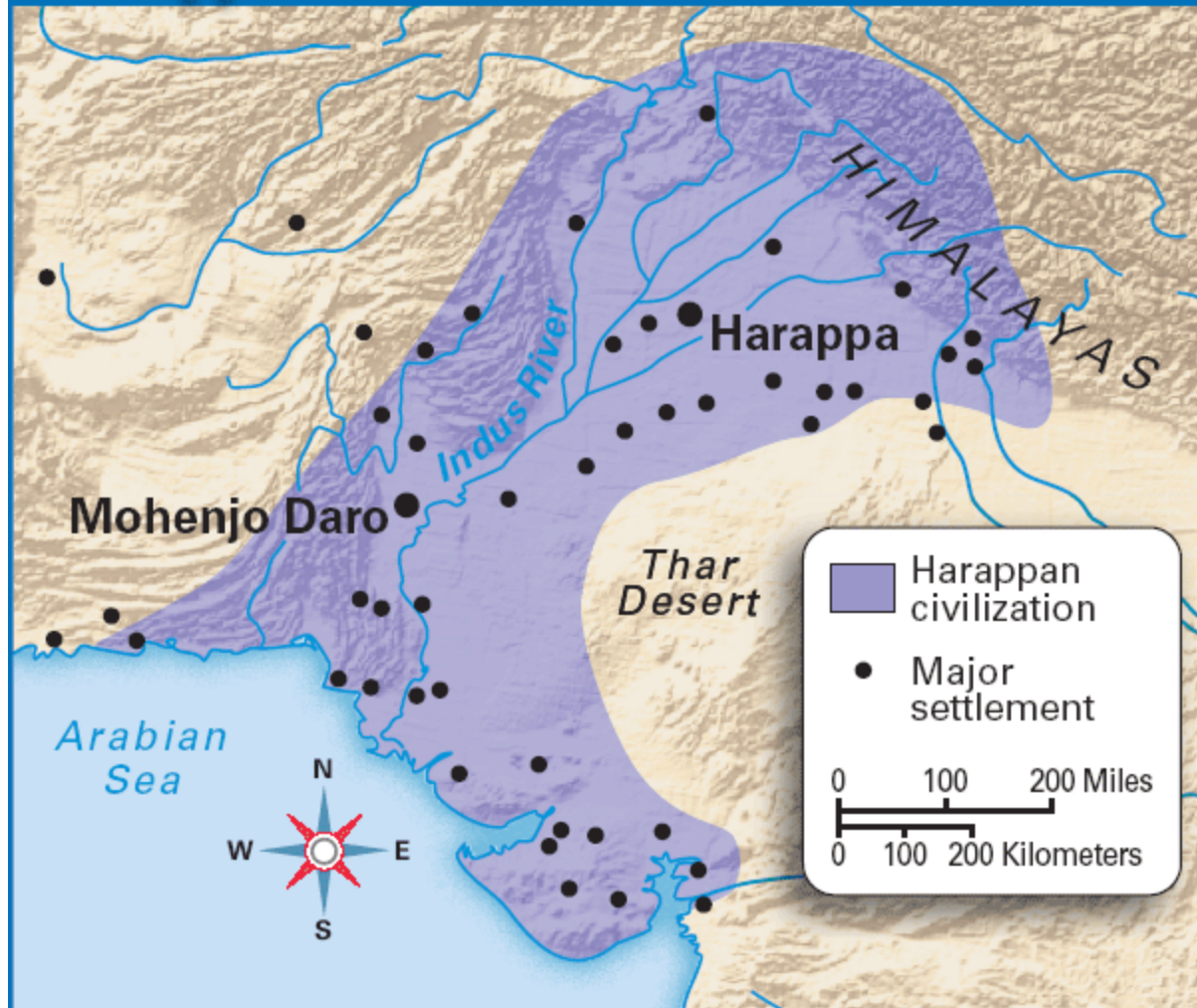
0 150 300 Miles
 0 150 300 Kilometers

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

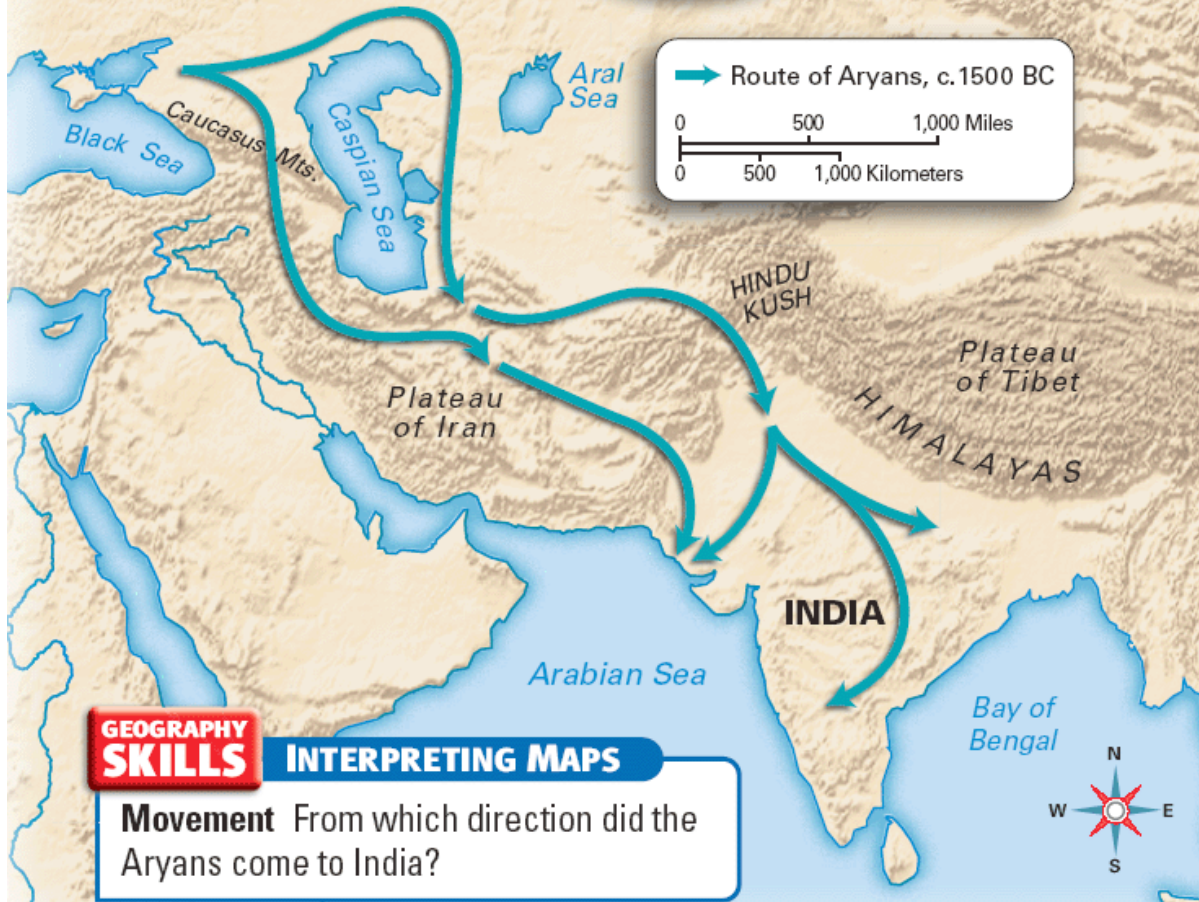
- Place** When do the wet monsoons come to India?
- Location** What large plateau occupies the heart of India?



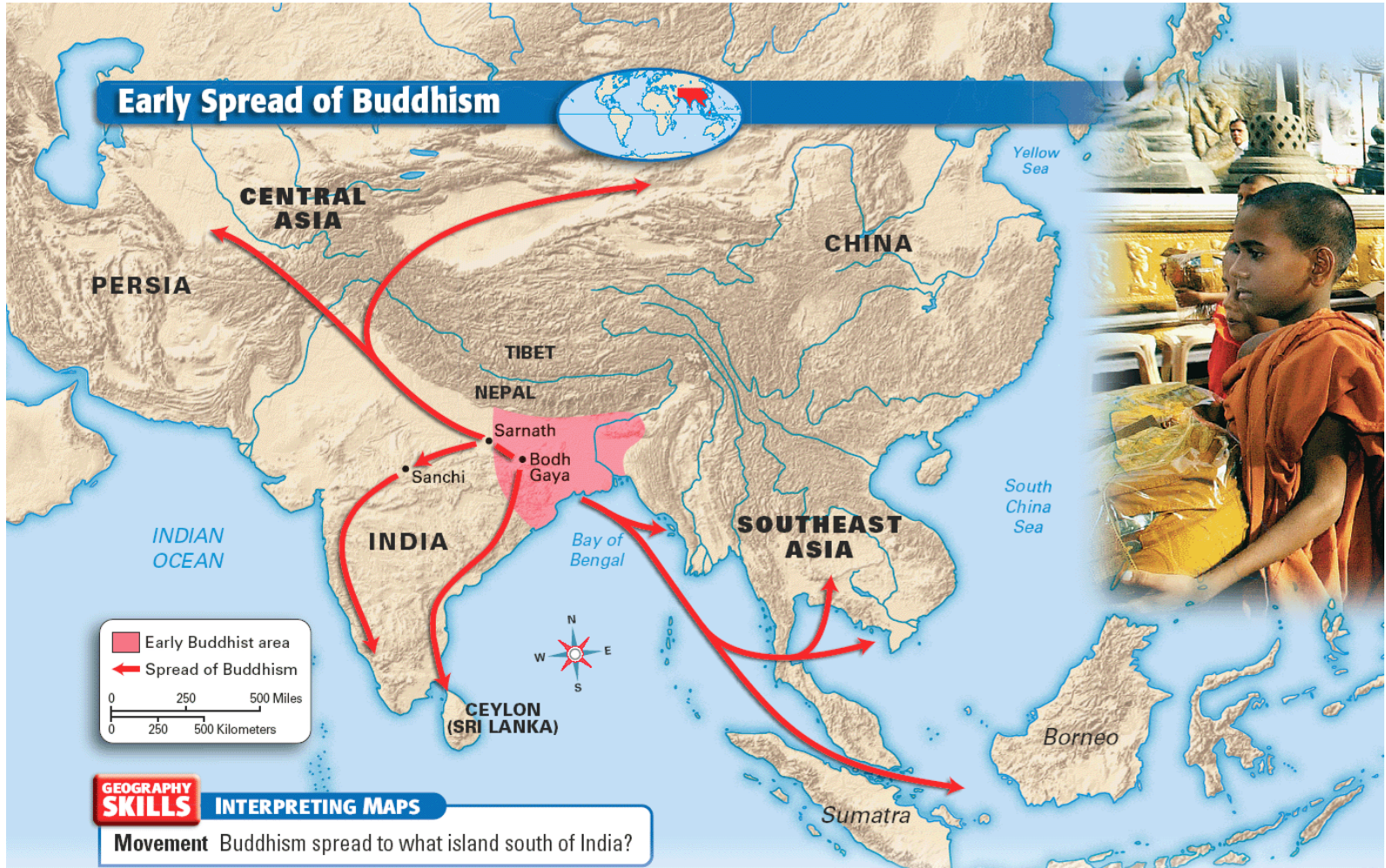
Harappan Civilization



Aryan Invasions



Early Spread of Buddhism

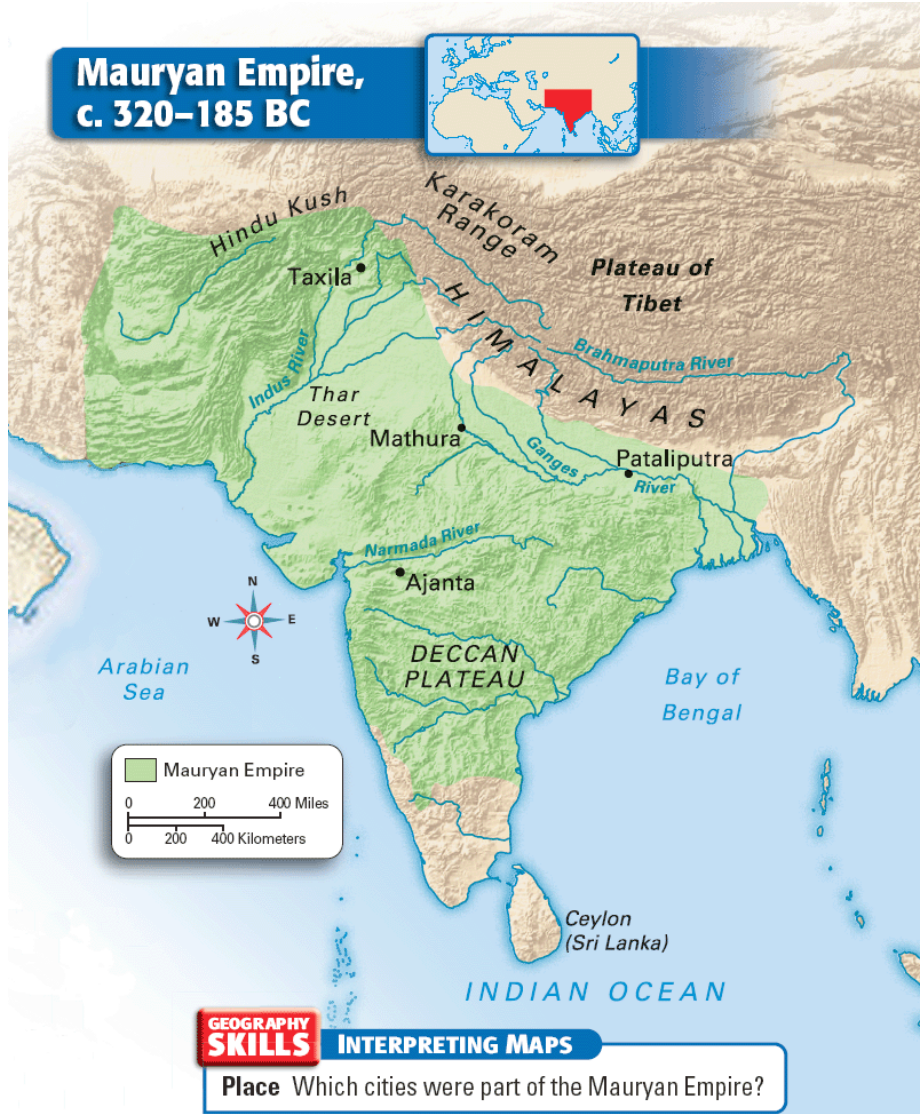


GEOGRAPHY
SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

Movement Buddhism spread to what island south of India?

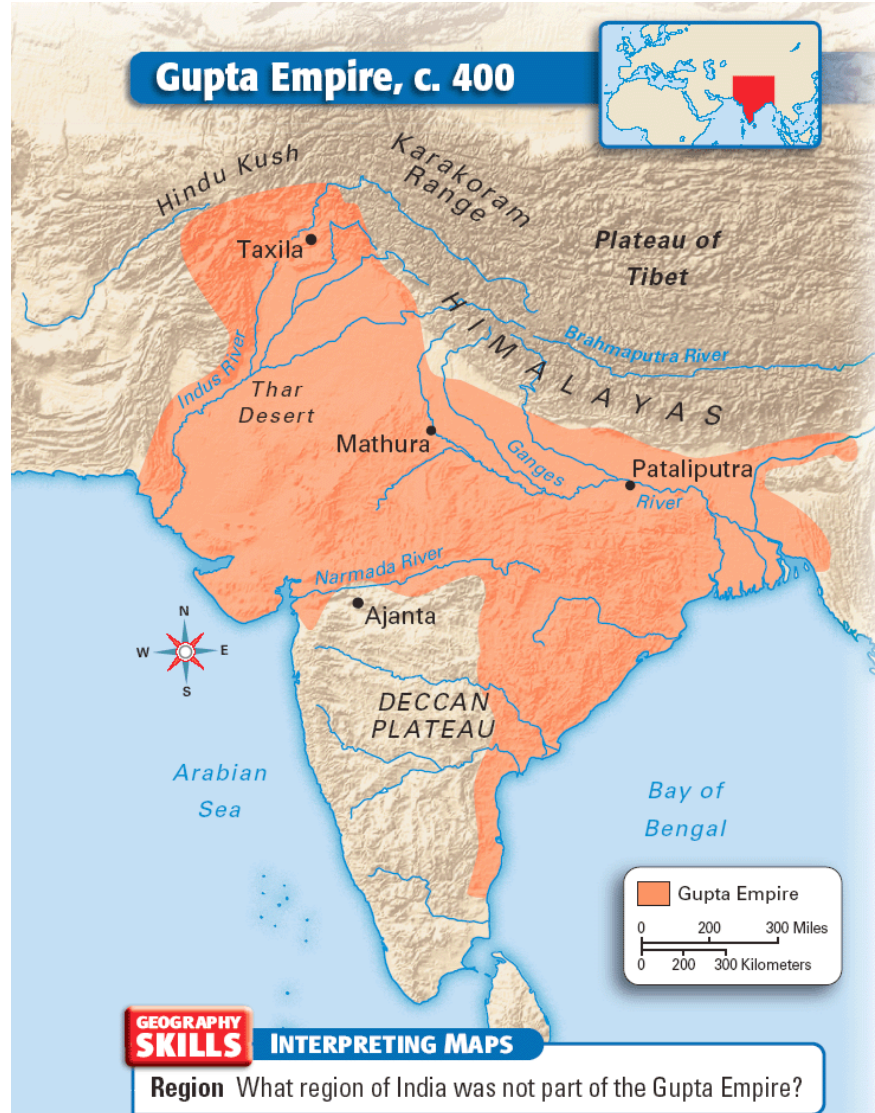
Mauryan Empire, c. 320–185 BC



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

Place Which cities were part of the Mauryan Empire?

Gupta Empire, c. 400



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

Region What region of India was not part of the Gupta Empire?



The Varnas

QUICK FACTS



Brahmins
Brahmins were India's priests and were seen as the highest *varna*.



Kshatriyas
Kshatriyas were rulers and warriors.



Vaisyas
Vaisyas were farmers, craftspeople, and traders.



Sudras
Sudras were workers and servants.

ANALYSE SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS

Why do you think priests were at the top of Indian society?

Hindu Deities and Beliefs

Hindus believe in many deities, but they believe that all the deities are aspects of a single universal spirit called Brahman. Three aspects of Brahman are particularly important in Hinduism—Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu.

Major Beliefs of Hinduism

QUICK
FACTS

- A universal spirit called Brahman created the universe and everything in it. Everything in the world is just a part of Brahman.
- Every person has a soul or *atman* that will eventually join with Brahman.
- People's souls are reincarnated many times before they can join with Brahman.
- A person's karma affects how he or she will be reincarnated.



The deity Brahma represents the creator aspect of Brahman. His four faces symbolize the four Vedas.



Siva, the destroyer aspect of Brahman, is usually shown with four arms and three eyes. Here he is shown dancing on the back of a demon he has defeated.



Vishnu is the preserver aspect of Brahman. In his four arms, he carries a conch shell, a mace, and a discus, symbols of his power and greatness.

The Eightfold Path

QUICK
FACTS



- 1 Right Thought**
Believe in the nature of existence as suffering and in the Four Noble Truths.



- 2 Right Intent**
Incline toward goodness and kindness.



- 3 Right Speech**
Avoid lies and gossip.



- 4 Right Action**
Don't steal from or harm others.



- 5 Right Livelihood**
Reject work that hurts others.



- 6 Right Effort**
Prevent evil and do good.



- 7 Right Mindfulness**
Control your feelings and thoughts.



- 8 Right Concentration**
Practice proper meditation.

Visual Summary

Use the visual summary below to help you review the main ideas of the chapter.

QUICK
FACTS



The Harappan civilization began in the Indus River Valley.



Hinduism and Buddhism both developed in India.



Indians made great advances in art, literature, science, and other fields.

