

# ***INDIA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN BASIN***

THE POST-CLASSICAL  
WORLDS OF SOUTH AND  
SOUTH-EAST ASIA

# Northern India

- **Huns and the Guptas**
  - White Huns invade India during late 6<sup>th</sup> century
  - Guptas defeated Huns
  - Victory left Guptas weak, divided; empire collapsed
  - Regional states under Hindu kshatriyas re-emerged
  - Hinduism linked all societies despite political divisions
- **North India**
  - Tension among regional kingdoms
  - Nomadic Turks became absorbed into Indian society
  - Harsha (reigned 606-648 C.E.) temporarily restored unified rule
- **Rajputs**
  - Warrior-Princes (Kshatriyas) of Northern India
  - Intermixture of Aryans, Kushans, Huns, some Muslims
  - Rajputs generally Hindu
- **Introduction of Islam to northern India**
  - The Sind were conquered by Arab Muslims in 711
  - Muslims limited to Indus Valley
  - Muslim merchants formed communities
    - Major cities of coastal India
    - Linked Africa, SW Asia and Coastal India in Trade

# Turks in India

- **Turkish migrants and Islam**
  - **Most Turks convert to Islam in tenth century**
    - Some moved to Afghanistan
    - Others pushed into Anatolia
  - **Mahmud of Ghazn**
    - Turkish leader in Afghanistan
    - Established a Muslim state there
    - Made expeditions to northern India
- **The sultanate of Delhi (1206-1526 C.E.)**
  - Mahmud's successors conquered north India, 1206
  - Established an Islamic state, Sultanate of Delhi
  - Slave soldiers called Mameluks ruled the state
  - Sultans' authority limited to Ganges-Indus Valley
  - Islam began to have a place in India

# Islam

- Cordial, if superficial, foreign relations with Abbasid Caliphate
  - Relations were correct
  - Owed other Muslims no allegiance
- Law
  - Based on the **Quran** and the **Sharia**
  - Non-Muslim subjects could practice their religion if they paid **Jizya**
- The Sultans ruled from urban centers
  - Military camps and trading posts provided the nuclei for towns
  - Insulated the subcontinent from the potential devastation
    - Of other Muslim raides
    - From the Mongols
- Syncretism In Northern
  - Ushered in a period of Indian cultural renaissance.
  - “Indo-Muslim” fusion in architecture, music, literature, and religion.

# Southern India

- **The Hindu South**
  - Politically divided but relatively peaceful
  - Focus was on Indian Ocean and overseas trade
  - A Golden Age of Hindu Cultures and Arts
- **The Chola kingdom (850-1267 C.E.)**
  - Was a large kingdom
    - Ruled Coromandel coast, Deccan Plateau
    - At high point, conquered Ceylon, parts of southeast Asia
    - Dominated waters from South China Sea to Arabian Sea
    - Not a tightly centralized state
    - Local autonomy was strong
  - Began to decline by the twelfth century
- **The kingdom of Vijayanagar (1336-1565 C.E.)**
  - Established by two Indian brothers
  - Renounced Islam in 1336, returned to Hindu faith

# The Monsoon World

- The monsoons (rains in spring and summer)
- Irrigation systems were needed for dry months
  - No big river in south India
  - Waterworks included dams, reservoirs, canals, wells
    - Stored rain in large reservoirs connected to canals
    - One reservoir of the eleventh century covered 250 square miles
- Population growth
  - 53 million in 600 C.E.
  - 105 million in 1500 C.E.
  - Urbanization
    - New capital: Delhi
    - Large port cities

# Trade & Development In S. India

- **Internal trade**
  - Self-sufficient in staple food
  - Rare metals, spices, special crops
  - South India, Ceylon experienced economic growth
- **Temples and society in south India**
  - Hindu temples served as economic, social centers
  - Possessed large tracts of land
  - Hundreds of employees
  - Temple administrators maintain order, deliver taxes
  - Served as banks; engaged in business ventures

# Indian Ocean Trade

- **Dhows and junks**
  - Large ships involved in maritime trade in Indian Ocean
- **Indian port cities**
  - Called emporia
  - Were clearinghouses of trade, cosmopolitan centers
- **Indians, Arabs, Chinese divided region into zones**
  - One ethnic group controlled trade in each region
  - Exchanged goods at emporia, entrepot cities for other regional goods
- **Trade goods**
  - Silk and porcelain from China
  - Spices from southeast Asia
  - Pepper, gems, pearls, and cotton from India
  - Incense and horses from Arabia and southwest Asia
  - Gold, ivory, and slaves from east Africa
  - Rice, wood were only staple goods traded
- **Specialized production**
  - Production of high-quality cotton textiles thrived
  - Sugar, leather, stone, carpets, iron and steel



# Hinduism

- **Religious geography in India**
  - Hinduism predominated in southern India (Deccan)
  - Islam in the north (Ganges-Indus River Plain)
  - Buddhism in Ceylon, foothills of the Eastern Himalayas
  - Tribal religions in the hills of Eastern India
- **Caste helped to integrate immigrants into Indian society**
  - Caste and social change: guilds and subcastes (*jatis*)
  - Expansion of caste system, especially to southern India, Southeast Asia
- **Vishnu and Shiva (Brahma)**
  - Decline of Buddhism benefited Hinduism
  - Development of Trimurti
  - Devotional cults
    - Achieve mystic union with gods as way of salvation
    - Most popular were devotion to Vishnu and Shiva
- **Shankara**
  - Philosopher (ninth century)
  - Preferred disciplined logical reasoning
- **Ramanuja**
  - Philosopher (eleventh and twelfth centuries)
  - Devotion more important than understand reality

# Islam in South Asia

- **Conversion to Islam occurred in slow, gradual way**
  - Some converted for improving their lower social statuses
  - Often an entire caste or sub-caste adopted Islam en masse
  - By 1500, about 25 million Indian Muslims (1/4 of population)
  - Conquest did not play a major part in conversion
- **Sufis**
  - Most effective missionaries, devotional approach to Islam
  - Followers observed old rituals, venerate old spirits
  - Emphasized piety and devotion
- **The bhakti movement**
  - No distinction between Hinduism, Islam
  - Taught universal love, devotion
  - Guru Kabir (1440-1518)
    - Important bhakti teacher
    - Shiva, Vishnu, and Allah were one deity