India’s Great Civilization

AP NOTES: CHAPTER 4
EURASIAN EMPIRES: CLASSICAL INDIA
Aryans

- Developed a new civilization in modern-day India
- Located in the Ganges Plain & the Indus River Valley
Ways of Life

- Loosely organized into tribes of nomadic herders
  - Each tribe was led by a rajah = chief
- Cattle were the basis of their diet & economy
  - Also served as money
- Tribes were often at war; raided each other’s cow herds
Ways of Life

- Indus River Valley was ideal for farming — so people eventually settled down into agricultural communities
- People also hunted game; ate bananas & cucumbers
- Men dominated the society
  - Women didn’t challenge their authority
- Boys & girls of high rank attended school
Mauryan Empire

- Led by Chandragupta Maurya
  - Strong leader
  - Developed a postal system
  - Maintained a strong army
- Located in northern & central India
Mauryan Empire

- Ashoka = Chandragupta’s grandson
  - Indian civilization blossomed under his reign
  - His empire covered 2/3 of the subcontinent
  - Gained this land with fierce wars of conquest & merciless armies
  - After witnessing the horrors of battle, he vowed to never go to war again
  - Followed the teachings of Buddha
Ashoka

- Created laws called the Rock Edicts --> laws were carved on rocks throughout the empire
  - Stressed concern for other human beings
- Set up free hospitals, roads, and rest houses
Mauryan Empire

- Empire declined after Ashoka’s death
  - His successor’s charged heavy taxes
  - Also took crops from poor workers
  - People turned against them
Gupta Empire

- Developed 500 years after the Mauryan Empire (around 310 AD)
- Started by Chandragupta I (no relation to the other)
- Ruled northern India for more than 200 years
- This period is called India’s Golden Age
  - Arts & sciences flourished
- Maintained authority with trained soldiers, spies, & assassins
Gupta Religion

- Hinduism was the official religion
- Built Hindu temples
- Temples decorated with brightly painted sculptures of Hindu epic tales
Gupta Life

- Empire reached its height under Chandragupta II who gave people more freedom

- However, status of women declined
  - Parents chose husbands/wives for their children
  - Child marriages were common
Gupta Achievements

• Court welcomed poets, playwrights, philosophers, and scientists
• Learning & education promoted
• Writing focused on religion & folktales
Gupta Achievements

- Made advances in mathematics --> mostly algebra
  - Invented concept of zero
  - Explained concept of infinity
  - Created Arabic Numberals (#s 1-9)
Gupta Achievements

- **Astronomy**
  - Said the Earth was round
  - Had some knowledge of gravity

- **Medicine**
  - Set bones, performed surgery, invented instruments
End of the Gupta Empire

- Empire failed after Chandragupta II’s death in 415 CE
- As government weakened, the empire faced invasions