

THE ANCIENT
SOUTH
ASIAN
— WORLD —



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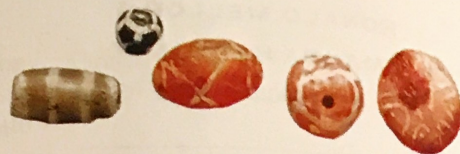
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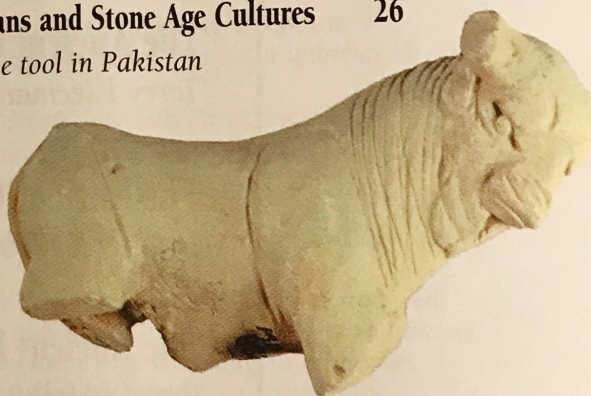
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Because The World in Ancient Times covers many cultures, we use the abbreviations BCE for "Before the Common Era" and CE for "Common Era." The traditional equivalents are BC for "Before Christ" and AD for "Anno Domini," Latin for "In the Year of Our Lord," referring to the birth of Jesus Christ.

Alexander the Great, 356–323 BCE
• Macedonian Greek ruler who conquered Egypt, Persia, and northern India



Ambhi (AHM-bhi), fourth century BCE • King of Taxila, ally of Alexander the Great, and opponent of King Porus

Arjuna (AHR-jun) •
Legendary warrior prince who is the hero of the *Bhagavad Gita*



Aryabhata (AHR-yuah-BHUH-tuh), 476–550 CE • India's greatest ancient scientist and author of the *Aryabhatiyam*

Ashoka (uh-SHOK-uh), reigned 269–232 BCE • Greatest of the Mauryan emperors; made Buddhism popular

Bharata (BHAH-ruh-tuh) • Rama's half brother who ruled in Rama's name during his exile

Bindusara (BIN-doo-SAH-rah), reigned 297–277 BCE • Mauryan king; son of Chandragupta and father of Ashoka

Buddha (BOO-dhuh), d. about 420–350 BCE • Born Prince Siddhartha Gautama in what is now Nepal; founder of Buddhism

Chandra Gupta I (CHUN-druh GOOP-tuh) I, reigned 320–335 CE
• Founder of Gupta dynasty; father of Samudra Gupta and grandfather of Chandra Gupta II

Chandra Gupta II (CHUN-druh GOOP-tuh) II, reigned 376–415 CE • Greatest ruler of the Gupta era, a time when the arts flourished in India

Chandragupta Maurya (CHUN-druh-GOOP-tuh MAOW-ryuh), reigned 321–297 BCE • One of India's great leaders; founder of the Mauryan dynasty

Cyrus the Great, 585–529 BCE
• Founder of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia; conquered parts of Afghanistan and the Indus Valley



Darius I (DAHR-yuhs), 521–486 BCE • Achaemenid emperor who extended his power to the Indus and set up his regional capital at the ancient Vedic city of Taxila

Draupadi (DRAOW-puh-dee) • Legendary wife of Arjuna and his four brothers

Fa-Hien (fah-HYEN) • Chinese pilgrim who visited India to collect Buddhist scriptures in 405–411 CE

Firdausi (fir-DOW-see), 935–1020 CE • Persian poet who compiled accounts of Alexander the Great

Gautama, Siddhartha (GOW-tum-uh, si-DAHR-thuh) • see Buddha

Hanuman (HUH-noo-mahn) • Monkey king in the *Ramayana* who helps Rama recover Sita; later worshipped as a god

Kaikeyi (kai-KAY-ee) • Rama's stepmother and one of the villains of the *Ramayana*

Kalidasa (KAH-li-DAH-suh) fifth and sixth centuries CE • Great poet and writer of Gupta era

Kanishka (kuh-NISH-kuh), first century CE • King of the Kushana who briefly united the northern subcontinent



Kannaki (KUH-nuh-kee) • Fictional wife in “The Ankle Bracelet”

Kashyapa (kuh-SHYUH-puh) • Mythical sage who saved the Nagas from the demons of Satisar Lake

Kauravas (KAOW-ruh-vuhs) • 100 brothers whose war with their cousins, the Pandavas, is described in the *Mahabharata*

Kautilya (kaow-TIL-yuh), fourth century BCE • Chandragupta Maurya's great political adviser, author of the *Arthashastra*

Ketu (KEY-tu) short for Shvetaketu (shvey-tuh-KEY-tu), a Brahmin boy mentioned in the *Upanishads* (composed 600–500 BCE) who becomes a philosopher

Kovalan (KOH-vuh-luhn) • Fictional husband in “The Ankle Bracelet”

Mahavira Vardamana (muh-hah-VEE-ruh vuhr-duh-MAH-nuh), sixth century BCE • Founder of the Jain religion; taught the importance of living simply and practicing nonviolence

Manu (MUH-noo) • Mythical author of the Laws of Manu

Muhammad (muh-HAH-mudh), 580–632 CE • Prophet of Islam; born in Arabia

Pandavas (PAHN-duhv or PAHN-duh-vuh) • Five brothers whose war with their cousins, the Kauravas, is told in the *Mahabharata*



Porus (POHR-us), fourth century BCE • King in the Punjab and opponent of Alexander the Great

Puabi (poo-AH-bee), about 2500 BCE • Queen of Ur who was buried with incredible wealth, including beads from the Indus region

Rama (RAHM-uh) • Hero of the *Ramayana*; believed to be a form of the god Vishnu

Rama Gupta (RAHM-uh GOOP-tuh), reigned 376 CE • Cowardly son of Samudra Gupta

Ravana (RAH-vuh-nuh) • Evil ten-headed demon of the *Ramayana* who captured Sita

Samudra Gupta (suh-MOO-druh GOOP-tuh), reigned 335–376 CE • Gupta emperor and brilliant military leader

Skanda Gupta (SKUHN-duh GOOP-tuh) reigned 455–467 CE • Gupta emperor who defeats the first Hun invaders

Siddhartha • *see* Buddha

Sita (SEE-tah) • Rama's wife, heroine of the *Ramayana*

Valmiki (vahl-MEE-kee), fourth century BCE • Author of the most widely used version of the *Ramayana*

Xuanzang (shwen-dzang), 602–648 CE • Chinese Buddhist monk who traveled to India and wrote *A Record of the Western Regions*



SOME PRONUNCIATIONS

Baluchistan (buh-LOO-chih-stahn)
 Dholavira (dho-lah-VEER-rah)
 Dilmun (DIL-moon)
 Euphrates (yoo-FRAY-teez) River
 Ganga River (guh-n-GAH)
 Gujarat (goo-juh-RAHT)
 Gulf of Khambhat (khuhm-BHAHT)
 Harappa (huh-RAH-puh)
 Hastinapura (huh-STEE-nah-poo-RAH)
 Kabul (KAH-bul)
 Karakoram (kah-rah-KOHR-ahm)
 Kashmir (kuhsh-MEER)
 Kausambi (kaow-SHAHM-bee)
 Kushana (koo-SHAH-nuh)
 Magadha (muh-GUHDGH)
 Mathura (MUH-thoo-ruh)
 Mehrgarh (MAIR-gahr)
 Mesopotamia (MES-uh-puh-TAY-mee-uh)
 Mohenjo Daro (mo-HEN-jo DAH-ro)
 Pataliputra (pah-tuh-lee-POO-trah)
 Persepolis (per-SEP-uh-lus)
 Prayaga (pruh-YAHG)
 Punjab (puhn-JAHB)
 Sravasti (SRAH-vuhs-tee)
 Tamralipti (tahm-rah-LIP-tee)
 Taxila (tuhk-SHI-lah)
 Tigris River (TIE-griss)
 Ujjain (ooj-JAHYN)
 Vindhya (VIN-dhyuh)
 Yamuna River (yuh-MOO-nah)

Over the last 100 million years or so, the landmass that we call India has been sliding toward the much larger Eurasian plate, which includes Europe, Russia, and China. When India ran into Eurasia about 10 million years ago, the site of the collision crumpled into the world's tallest fender bender, three ranges of mountains that are called the Himalaya, the Karakoram, and the Hindu Kush. Today the area south of these spectacular mountains is known as South Asia. As is often the case with ancient civilizations, scholars disagree about exact locations, as with, for example, the lost city of Magan.

THE ANCIENT SOUTH ASIAN WORLD

--- Sarasvati River, 1900–1700 BCE

