

CHAPTER 15-INDIA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN BASIN

Coming into India from the north through the Khyber Pass were numbers of invaders, including Alexander the Great, nomadic Turks, and Muslims. Muslim traders began to establish small communities in the major cities on the west coast of India and soon the Turkish migrants and some Indians began to convert to Islam. Then in the 1200s Mahmud of Ghazni invaded northern India and established control over the area. His successors expanded that territory and it became an Islamic state known as the Delhi Sultanate.

The south of India remained Hindu and relatively free of Muslim influence although politically divided. The large Chola kingdom (850-1297 C.E.) conquered Ceylon and dominated the waters of the South China Sea. In 1336 two Indian brothers established the Vijayanager kingdom (1336-1565 C.E.), covering much of the same territory. Although the brothers were originally Muslim, they converted to their Hindu faith and the south remained Hindu.

One of the greatest influences on India was not a person but nature in the form of the monsoons. These spring and summer rains bring the water India needs, and the development of reservoirs and canals used to store and transport this water led to huge population growth and, with it, urban growth. Trade in metals, spices and crops first developed internally in southern India. The Hindu temples that operated not only as religious centers but also as tax collectors and banks helped propel this expansion.

The caste system played a part in trade by helping immigrants find a place in society. Trade boosted expansion of the caste system, creating new sub castes (*jatis*) for the new professions and people. The trade in the Indian Ocean basin was linked to this internal trade as part of a vast trade network. The trade in the basin was multi-product and cross-cultural, including silk from China, spices from Southeast Asia, cotton from India, horses from Arabia, and gold and slaves from east Africa.

Religiously India was split between the Muslims in the north and the Hindus in the south. The Sufi missionaries allowed the old rituals and the bhakti movement tried to bring Islam and Hinduism together. Indian influence reached into Southeast Asia in a number of ways. Merchants spread the Muslim and Hindu religions, the Funan of the Mekong River area adopted Sanskrit, and the city of Angkor reflected a Hindu world view. Islam was spread by the Sufis and eventually Melaka became the most powerful Islamic state in the fifteenth century.

Key Concept 3.1. Expansion and Intensification of Communication and Exchange Networks

- I. Improved transportation technologies and commercial practices led to an increased volume of trade, and expanded the geographical range of existing and newly active trade networks.

III. Cross-cultural exchanges were fostered by the intensification of existing, or the creation of new, networks of trade and communication.

Key Concept 3.2. Continuity and Innovation of State Forms and Their Interactions

I. Empires collapsed and were reconstituted; in some regions new state forms emerged.