

The Mughal Empire

Preview

- Main Idea / Reading Focus
- Muslim Rule in India
- A New Empire
- Faces of History: Akbar
- Height of the Mughal Empire
- Quick Facts: Achievements of the Mughal Emperors
- Map: Mughal Empire



The Mughal Empire

Main Idea

Mughal rulers created a powerful empire in which military might and artistic culture flourished.

Reading Focus

- How was Muslim rule first established in India?
- What was the new empire created by Babur and Akbar like?
- What achievements were made by the rulers who held power at the height of the Mughal Empire?

Muslim Rule in India

After the fall of the Gupta Empire in the 500s, India broke apart into a number of small kingdoms.

The Arrival of Islam

- During period of small kingdoms, Arab Muslim traders arrived in India for first time
- Traders sailed to ports on west coast in search of goods such as spices
- Over time, traders settled in India, lived peacefully beside Hindus, Buddhists

Muslim Raiders

- Next Muslims to arrive not so peaceful
- Early 700s, Muslim raiders invaded, conquered region of Sind, in what is now Pakistan
- 300 years later, Muslims poured into north India from Afghanistan
- By 1200s, most of northern India under Muslim control

Delhi Sultanate

- Once Muslims took control of north India, established new government for region based in city of Delhi
- Government became known as Delhi sultanate
- Rulers in sultanate tolerant, allowed traditional customs, religions

Blending of Cultures

- Rulers also worked to spread Muslim culture through India
- Invited artists, scholars from other parts of Islamic world to Delhi
- New culture formed, blending Muslim, Indian elements
- Example: new language, Urdu, formed from combination of Arabic, Sanskrit

Sequence

How did Muslims come to rule India?

Answer(s): Muslim raiders conquered the region in the early 700s; in the 1200s the Delhi sultanate was established

A New Empire

- The Delhi sultanate remained strong for about 300 years.
- By the early 1500s, its power was weakening.
- This weakening left India open to invasion.

Babur

- Young Central Asian conqueror named Zahir ud-Din, better known as **Babur**, “the tiger,” took advantage of India’s weakness

Mughal Empire

- Tried, failed to create empire in Central Asia
- Next turned to India
- By 1526, had defeated rulers of Delhi, founded **Mughal Empire**

Wealth, Power

- Name comes from Persian word *Mogul* for “Mongol”
- Mughals reigned as India’s first great Muslim empire
- Great civilization, known for wealth, power

Akbar the Great

Babur's Grandson

- Babur died shortly after conquest of India, task of organizing what he conquered fell to descendants
- Most done by grandson, **Akbar the Great**

Diverse Population

- Akbar took throne at age 13, but became greatest of all Mughal rulers
- Realized India had diverse population, which could lead to breakdown of empire; did everything he could to win people's loyalty

Expanding Rule

- Akbar married daughter of local noble to win noble's support
- Brought sons of other nobles to live at court
- Did not hesitate to fight to prevent rebellion
- 1605, Akbar died; at time, Mughals ruled most of north India, much of interior

Akbar's Achievements

Religious Tolerance

- Akbar worked to unify diverse empire by promoting religious tolerance
- Held that no one religion could provide all answers to life's problems
- Did not want to discourage people from practicing any religion, discriminate against anyone for their beliefs

Reforms

- Abolished taxes placed on non-Muslims by earlier rulers
- Appointed Hindus to several influential positions in government
- Encouraged discussions, debates among Muslims, Hindus, Christians, people of other religions

Firm Grip on Finances

- Established centralized government that gave him supreme civil, military authority over his empire
- Reformed tax system, appointed officials to oversee it
- Majority of officials from outside Mughal Empire

FACES OF HISTORY

AKBAR

1542–1605



A Mughal emperor of India, Akbar united Indian territory north of the Vindhya Range under one empire. His rule is noted for many

reforms, including the abolition of slavery and the development of trade. He was a patron of the arts and encouraged the development of science. Although himself a Muslim, his tolerance for non-Muslims in his empire was remarkable. His enlightened leadership became a model for later Mughal rulers.

Analyze Why was Akbar considered a great ruler?

Back

Next

Previous

Main

Explain

How did Babur and Akbar the Great help create a new empire in India?

Answer(s): by commitment to justice, religious tolerance, and the expansion of the empire

Height of the Mughal Empire

Jahangir(Akbar)

- Babur, Akbar laid foundation for powerful empire
- Rulers who followed built upon foundation, raised Mughal India to new heights of power, wealth
- Akbar's son, Jahangir, intelligent, impatient to rule, rebelled against father; later reconciled
- In 1605 became emperor after Akbar's death

Rule

- Ruthless start, but good ruler
- Continued religious tolerance; supported arts; adopted Persian influences into Indian society
- Acceptance of Persian customs inspired by Persian-born wife, Nur Jahan
- Powerful woman who ruled for several years while husband ill

Sikhism

During reign, Jahangir came into conflict with religious group, Sikhs

- Some Sikhs had supported rebellion against Jahangir
- **Sikhism**, blended elements of Islam, Hinduism
 - Like Muslims, believe in one God, who created world, who has no physical form
 - Unlike Muslims, who believe in afterlife, believe in reincarnation
 - Believe goal of existence to be freed from cycle of rebirth, attain unity with God
 - Do not practice rituals like pilgrimage, yoga, from the earlier religions

Shah Jahan

- Jahangir's (*Akbar*) son and successor, **Shah Jahan** shared his father's love of literature and art.
- During his reign the Mughal Empire experienced a cultural golden age.

Taj Mahal

- Greatest example of Mughal architecture, **Taj Mahal** built during his reign
- Designed by Persian architects, displays elements of Indian, Persian, Muslim architectural styles
- Built as tomb for Shah Jahan's wife

Symbol of Mughal Majesty

- Shah Jahan also built new capital for India at Delhi
- At heart, chamber that held magnificent Peacock Throne
- Flanked by two sculpted peacocks, encrusted with gold, diamonds, emeralds, other gems

The cost of building monuments such as the Taj Mahal and the palaces of Delhi was enormous.



Taxes

- Needed funds to pay for monuments
- Shah Jahan imposed heavy taxes on people
- Demanded half of all crops grown in the country
- Led to hardship, famine for many

Wars

- Series of wars against India's neighbors also added to Shah Jahan's need for money
- Many wars fought in name of Islam against Christians, Hindus
- Unlike father, grandfather, Shah Jahan was Muslim who did not practice religious tolerance

Aurangzeb

Power Struggle

- 1657, Shah Jahan grew terribly ill
- Sons began to maneuver to take throne
- Soon war broke out between them

Succession

- Shah Jahan unexpectedly recovered but son **Aurangzeb** captured him
- After locking father in prison, killed all rivals
- Brought head of brother in box to show father; then declared himself emperor

Reign

- Early in reign, concerned with expanding India's borders
- Empire reached greatest size at this time
- Later, Aurangzeb turned more to domestic affairs

Domestic Affairs

Muslim Views

- Worked to impose own strict religious views on society
- Issued strict decrees about morality, personal behavior

Crushing Protesters

- Crowds of Shia, Sufi Muslims gathered to protest actions
- Aurangzeb ordered soldiers mounted on elephants to crush them

Religious Persecution

- Persecuted Hindus, Sikhs
- Taxed them, forbade them high positions in government
- Destroyed their temples

God of All

- Restrictions, persecution led many to rebel
- One wrote: “*God is the God of all mankind...not the God of Muslims alone.*”

Decline of the Mughals

Civil War

- Aurangzeb enlarged Mughal empire, however his actions marked beginning of its end
- Due to harsh measures of regime, frequent rebellions broke out in later 1600s
- When Aurangzeb died, rival claims to throne led to civil war

Power and Territory Loss

- Soon invaders poured into India from north
- Mughals continued to rule for about 150 more years, but held little power, controlled far less territory
- Eventually India fell under colonial sway of British as part of their global empire

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MUGHAL EMPERORS

QUICK FACTS

Mughal rulers unified vast lands and peoples, and left a spectacular cultural legacy.

Babur (1526–1530)

- Conquered India
- Founded the Mughal Empire

Akbar (1556–1605)

- Expanded the size of the Mughal Empire
- Built a strong central government
- Promoted religious tolerance

Jahangir (1605–1627)

- Encouraged Persian culture in India
- Supported art and literature

Shah Jahan (1628–1658)

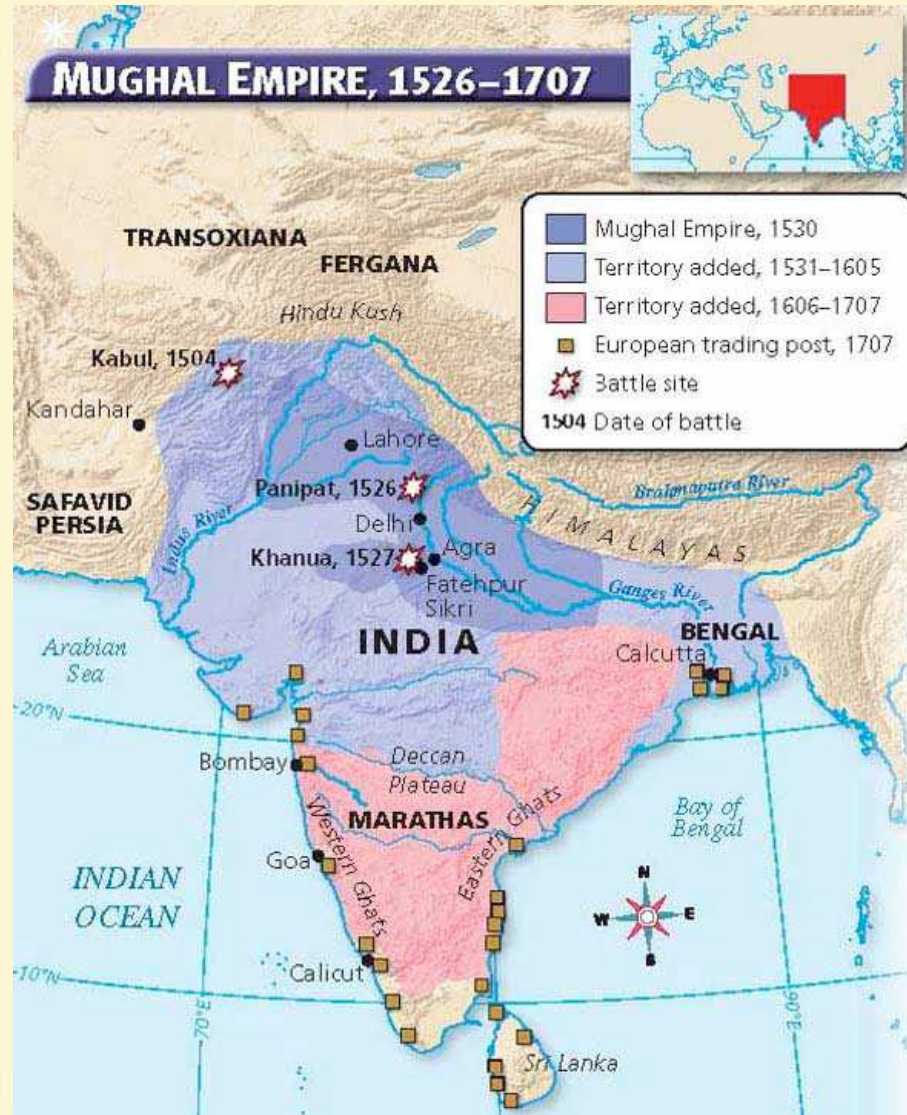
- Promoted literature and arts
- Built the Taj Mahal and a capital at Delhi

Aurangzeb (1658–1707)

- Supported the growth of Sunni Islam
- Increased the empire to its largest size

New Asian Empire

Section 2



Summarize

How did Aurangzeb contribute to the Mughals' decline?

Answer(s): His harsh regime led to rebellions.