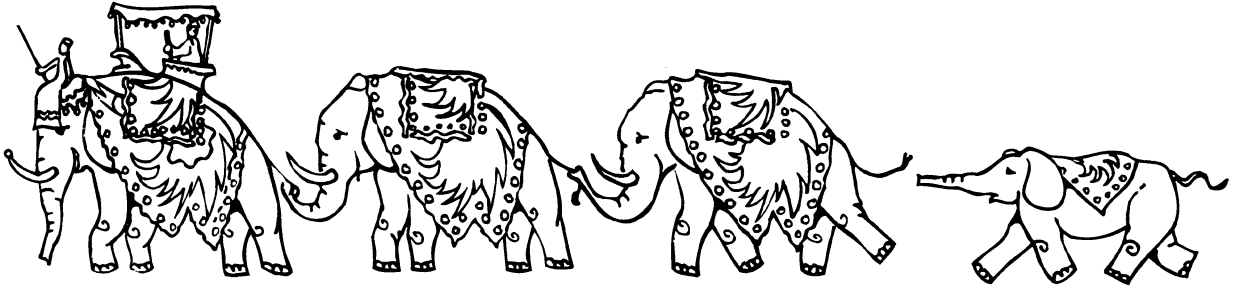


# The History of India

*"Truth alone triumphs" . . . state emblem*



No other country except China has such a long history as India. The first people in India, Dravidians, are known to have lived near the rivers in the north as early as 2500 BC. They were conquered by the Aryans in 1500 BC. Many of the Dravidians did not want Aryan rule and fled to the south. A form of the Hindu religion began during this time.

In the sixth century AD, the Huns came to northern India from Asia. This was about the same time that Buddha began teaching. Buddhism was the preferred religion of several rulers, especially Asoka, who spread it throughout India.

The Gupta kings, who were in power from AD 320 until the end of the fifth century, encouraged the fine arts. Writers, poets, actors, musicians, and artists were encouraged during their reign. India became a center of art, medicine, and learning.

The first Mogul conqueror, Babur, led a series of raids into India in 1526. He was successful in Delhi. During this time, the country was ruled by a group of princes called *Rajputs*. They were the finest soldiers in India, but because they rode elephants into battle, they were unable to defeat the Moguls who used faster, more manageable horses.

The Moguls brought the small kingdoms of India under one government. Because they were Moslems, the Islamic religion became important. The greatest Mogul leader, Akbar, wanted the Hindus and Muslims to live together in peace. Akbar was a wise and successful ruler. He began trade with Europe, created a new way of collecting taxes, and wrote a system of laws that was fair to both Muslims and Hindus. Akbar encouraged architecture, painting, and literature.

The next king was Akbar's son, Jahangir. He was married to a woman of Persian nobility. When Jahangir ruled India, people became interested in Persian art, clothing, and language. His son, Shah Jahan, was the builder of the Taj Mahal.

By the 1600s, India was one of the most highly-developed countries in the world. Europeans were eager for Indian exports, such as sugar, spices, rice, pearls, and diamonds. The British opened a trading post, the East India Company, in 1611. They encouraged the small Indian kingdoms to go to war against one another. The Mogul Empire became weak and broke up with the British rise to power.

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