Chandragupta Maurya Encyclopedia Article

Chandragupta Maurya

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Contents

Chandragupta Maurya Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Chandragupta Maurya.....3

Chandragupta Maurya

r. 324-301 B.C.

Indian emperor and founder of the Mauryan Empire (324-184 B.C.). Born a peasant, Chandragupta rose to overthrow the Nanda dynasty in the Magadha state of eastern India. Inspired by Alexander the Great's (356-323 B.C.) conquests in western India, he raised a vast army, and created an empire that extended to include almost the entire subcontinent. His capital city at Pataliputra was said to be the greatest city of its time. Chandragupta later converted to Jainism and, in sorrow over a famine, starved himself to death.