

Chapter 8: India's Great Civilization

Section One: Origins of Hindu India

- People of Indus-river Valley were invaded around 1500 BC by the Aryans
 - By Indo-Europeans from N of black and Caspian Sea
 - Invasion over several generations- entered through pass in mts.
Pass- Hindu Kush (modern fighting India and Pakistan)
- Aryans
 - Loose tribes of nomadic herders-each led by chief (rajah)
 - Cattle base of diet and economy
 - Measured wealth w/ cattle –often fought over
 - B/c fertile land-began farming
 - Still herded cattle-sheep-goats
 - Men dominant but women could:
 - Partake in religious ceremonies – social affairs- remarries if widowed
- Both boys and girls of high social rank attended school
- No written language at first- spoke Sanskrit
 - Share root words w/ English-Spanish-French- and German
 - Epics and songs passed down generations
 - Families of warriors and priests had responsibility
 - Eventually written Sanskrit developed
 - Priests collected hymns-stories-songs-legends-rituals
 - Written in several holy books-Vedas
 - “The Book of Knowledge”
 - Vedas important b/c Aryans left no artifacts
 - 1200-500 BC known as Vedic Age
 - Rig- Veda oldest 1000 BC
- Social Structure (pg 203)
 - 4 main classes- classes called Varnas
 - Priests (Brahmans)-performed sacrifices and hymns
 - Warriors (Kshatriyas) “Ksha-tree-uhz”
 - Commoners (Vaisyas) “Vysh-yuhz”
 - Servant and unskilled laborers (Sudras)
 - Slaves (Pariahs)- unclean work- lived outside village
 - Slaves not considered in system
 - Early beginning – warriors more important- changed over time
 - Each Varna had a duty
 - “Brahmans” –only priests read Vedas and teach
 - “Ksha-tree-uhz” – warriors more important- changed over time
 - “Vysh-yuhz”- common people-tended cattle- traded goods- lent \$\$
 - “Sudras”- servants- helped other Varnas as needed
 - Around 500 BC division w/ Varnas more rigid
 - Divided into smaller groups (jati) by occupation
 - Each Jati had own social rules
 - Did not live or mix w/ other Jati groups
 - People born into Jati stay and do not mix

- Stay in social order and not marry out to others
- Caste system is European name to describe Varnas and Jati
- Duty (dharma) outlined in Vedas
 - To particular caste or varnas
 - Must follow despite hardships
 - Follow duty expected of age
 - Men
 - Occupation according to class
 - take a wife and run family
 - Retire in old age
 - Near death leave family and friends to pray
 - Women
 - Educated in household tasks
 - Married and serve husband until death
 - Then be taken care of by son and family
- Religion
 - Concept of good and evil addressed in 2 epics
 - Tale of Arjuna/ Ramayana
 - Written in Mahabharata
 - Lg. as Old Testament
 - Have various deities mixed w/ history and philosophy
 - Hinduism
 - Aryans believed in many deities
 - With political and social evolution- religion slowly changed to
 - Hinduism- now national religion of India
 - Not founded by one person or have one main book
 - Different sources from beliefs and practices
 - From Vedas and epic stories
 - 3 main gods: Brahma (creator)- Vishnu (preserver) Siva (Destroyer)
 - Universal Spirit
 - One main spirit- Brahman Nerguna
 - All share- gods- humans- animals part of spirit
 - All have souls
 - Bodies tie the soul to earth for short time
 - Written by religious thinkers 900-400 BC
 - Upanishads “oo- pan-nih-shads”
 - Reincarnation- soul passes through several lifetimes
 - Cycle of rebirth determined by Karma
 - Must lead good life in dharma to move up
 - Fosters non-violence toward all life- ahimsa
 - Continues until reach perfection- moshka
 - A release from pain and suffering from birth and rebirth

-Jainism

- Belief that one cannot kill any life and that all life is sacred
 - Not plow the earth- walk with broom to sweep away insects so not stepped on
- Turned to commerce
- Reject sacrifices and rigid social divisions
- Founded by Maravira “muh-hah-vee-ruh” 500 BC
 - Wealthy noble / gave up all and wandered in country

Section Two- The Rise of Buddhism

- Many Hindus did not like external rituals- want only meditation
- The Buddha
 - Siddhartha Gautama (Sih-Dahr-Tuh- Gow-Tuh-Muh)
 - Founder – born in wealthy family and prince 566 BC
 - Sheltered life but took chariot ride and saw poverty and sickness
 - Decided to find out why poverty and sickness exist
 - Wandered India – fasting and meditation- lived as hermit
 - Had flash of insight and “enlightenment”
- Philosophy of Buddha
 - 4 Truths
 - All people suffer and know sickness
 - People suffer because desires bind them to the cycle of rebirth
 - People can end suffering by eliminating desires
 - Eliminate desires by following the eightfold path
 - Know the truth
 - Resist evil
 - Say nothing to hurt others
 - Respect life
 - Work for the good of others
 - Free mind of evil
 - Control own thoughts
 - Practice meditation
 - Follow all eight and attain nirvana- freedom of rebirth
 - Oneness with the universe
- Rejected Varna system
- 2 major divisions of Buddhism
 - Theravada in South and Southeast Asia
 - Closest to original and regarded Buddha as teacher
 - Mahayana dominate in Korea, China and Japan
 - Buddha is worshipped and believed to be divine and savior

Section Three- Indian Empires

- Mountains in North not keep India safe from invaders
 - Aryans/ Persians –Darius I / Alexander the Great
- During Darius I invasion- 1 prominent kingdom Magadha was expanding
 - Magadha one of many city-states fighting Darius I
 - 321 Magadha overthrown by Chandragupta Maurya
 - “Chun- druh- gup- tah/ Mah-oor-yah”
 - Became ruler
- Mauryan Empire 321- 184 BC
 - Efficient postal system/ strong army/ spy network
 - Asoka (grandson to Mauryan) 274 spread to cover 2/3
 - Fierce warrior and leader but renounced violence because gruesome
 - Followed teachings of Buddha
 - Made laws to assure life and free hospitals and rest homes
 - Written in local language so all can read
 - On rocks and pillars – Rock of Edicts
 - Collapse
 - No strong leaders after Asoka
 - Heavy taxes and took large % of land
 - General revolts brought empire down
- Gupta Empire 310 AD –600 AD
 - Chandragupta I made Magadha center
 - Art and Science advance
 - Smaller Empire than Mauryan- never took Indus Valley
 - Strong army and spy network and assassination to keep control
 - Hinduism official religion
 - Height under Chandragupta II 375- 415 AD
 - No capital punishment
 - Low taxes
 - Rules and rituals for everything –eating to writing
 - Women respected but no real power
 - Arranged marriages
 - Learning and knowledge expanded
 - Royal court wanted scholars and philosophers
 - Most writing about religion and folktales and epics
 - Contributed to algebra
 - Invented concept of “0” and infinity explained
 - Devised roman numeral system
 - Earth round and knowledge of gravity
 - Medicine –set bones- operations- invented instruments
 - Ended with death of Chandragupta II in 415 decline began
 - Weak rulers and invaders from N.W
 - By 600 AD Empire collection of small states