

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **EARLY AFRICAN SOCIETIES AND THE BANTU MIGRATIONS**

### INTRODUCTION

Cultivation and domestication of animals transformed African cultures, like cultures in southwest Asia, into distinctive societies with more formal states, specialized labor, and more elaborate cultural traditions. The region around the Nile River, Egypt to the north and Nubia to the south, supported the fastest growing and most complex societies in Africa. These societies were noted for their

- Centralized political authority embodied in the absolute ruler the pharaoh in Egypt and the person of the king in the region of Kush (Nubia)
- Imperialist expansion in the second millennium B.C.E. as the Egyptian army pushed into Palestine, Syria, and north Africa and south into Nubia and as the Kushites later conquered Egypt and expanded their influence to the south
- Highly stratified and patriarchal societies based on an agricultural economy
- Development of industries, transportation, and trade networks that facilitated economic growth and the intermingling of cultural traditions
- Writing systems: hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic, and Coptic scripts in Egypt and the yet-to-be-translated Meroitic inscriptions in Nubia
- Organized religious traditions that include worship of Amon and Re, sun gods, the cult of Osiris, pyramid building, and in Egypt, mummification of the dead

At the same time that Egypt and Nubia were becoming increasingly complex societies, the Bantu-speaking peoples to the south were undertaking gradual migrations from their homeland in west central Africa and displacing or intermingling with the foraging peoples of the forests. These migrations, and others, helped to spread both agricultural technology and, after 1000 B.C.E., iron metallurgy throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

### OUTLINE

#### **I. Early agricultural society in Africa**

- A. Climatic change and the development of agriculture in Africa
  1. Sahara region used to be grassy steppe lands with water (10,000 B.C.E.)
    - a) Abundant hunting, fishing, wild grains
    - b) Eastern Sudan begins to herd cattle and collect grains (9000 B.C.E.)
    - c) Permanent settlements and the growing of sorghum and yams (7500 B.C.E.)
    - d) Small states with semidivine rulers (5000 B.C.E.)
  2. Climate becomes hotter and drier after 5000 B.C.E.

- a) People are driven into river regions—Nile
  - b) Annual flooding makes rich soil for agriculture
- B. Egypt and Nubia: “gifts of the Nile”
- 1. Egypt—lower third of Nile River; Nubia—middle third of Nile
  - 2. After 5000 B.C.E. peoples cultivate gourds and watermelons, domesticate donkeys and cattle (from Sudan), and grow wheat and barley (from Mesopotamia)
  - 3. Agriculture easy in Egypt (due to Nile flooding) but more work in Nubia
  - 4. States begin to emerge by 4000 B.C.E., small kingdoms by 3300 B.C.E..
- C. The unification of Egypt
- 1. Strong Nubian realm, Ta-Seti (3400–3200 B.C.E.)
  - 2. Egypt, large and prosperous state by 3100 B.C.E.
    - a) Menes at Memphis unites Upper and Lower Egypt
    - b) Pharaoh, absolute ruler and owns all land
  - 3. Archaic Period (3100–2660 B.C.E.) and Old Kingdom (2660–2160 B.C.E.)
    - a) Great pyramids of Giza built during this period; Khufu the largest
    - b) Violence between Egypt and Nubia (Egypt dominates from 3000 to 2400 B.C.E.)
    - c) Nubia later develops into Kingdom of Kush
    - d) Interaction through diplomacy, Nubian mercenaries, and intermarriage
- D. Turmoil and empire
- 1. Period of upheaval after Old Kingdom (2160–2040 B.C.E.)
  - 2. Middle Kingdom (2040–1640 B.C.E.)
  - 3. Nomadic horsemen, Hyksos, invade Egypt
    - a) Using bronze weapons and chariots (Egypt does not have)
    - b) Captures Memphis in 1674 B.C.E.
    - c) Causes revolts in Upper Egypt
  - 4. New Kingdom (1550–1070 B.C.E.)
    - a) Pharaoh gains power, huge army, large bureaucracy
    - b) Building projects: temples, palaces, statues
    - c) Tuthmosis III (1479–1425 B.C.E.) built empire including Palestine, Syrian, Nubia
    - d) Then Egypt falls into a long period of decline
  - 5. Egyptians driven out of Nubia in 1100 B.C.E.
    - a) Nubian Kingdom of Kush; capital is Napata
    - b) King Kashta conquers Thebes (in Egypt) in 760 B.C.E.
  - 6. Assyrians with iron weapons invade from the north

7. After sixth century B.C.E., series of foreign conquests

## II. The formation of complex societies and sophisticated cultural traditions

### A. The emergence of cities and stratified societies

1. Cities are not as prominent in Egypt as in Mesopotamia (agricultural villages)
  - a) Memphis, head of the delta
  - b) Thebes, administrative center of Upper Egypt
  - c) Heliopolis, center of sun-god cult
  - d) Tanis, important seaport on Mediterranean
2. Nubian cities
  - a) Kerma, dominates trade routes
  - b) Napata, most prosperous city after Nubian conquest of Egypt
  - c) Meroë, most influential city after Assyrian invasion because it is farther south
3. Social classes
  - a) Egypt: peasants and slaves (agriculture), pharaoh, professional military and administrators
  - b) Nubia: complex and hierarchical society (can tell from tombs)
4. Patriarchy in both but women have more influence than in Mesopotamia
  - a) Women act as regents, like female pharaoh Hatshepsut
  - b) Nubia: women serve as queens, priestesses, and scribes

### B. Economic specialization and trade

1. Bronze important but copper and tin rare and expensive
2. Iron metallurgy develops independently in Sudan
3. Transportation: sailboats, carts, and donkey caravans
4. Trade networks
  - a) Egypt and Nubia: exotic goods from Nubia (ebony, gold, gems, slaves) and pottery, wine, linen, decorative items from Egypt
  - b) Egypt and the north: especially wood, like cedar from Lebanon
  - c) Egypt with Africa: Punt (east Africa)

### C. Early writing in the Nile valley

1. Hieroglyphics found on monuments and papyrus by 3200 B.C.E.
2. Hieratic script, everyday writing 2600–600 B.C.E.
3. Demotic and Coptic scripts adapt Greek writing
4. Scribes live very privileged lives
5. Nubia adapts Egyptian writing until Meroitic in fifth century B.C.E. (untranslated)

D. The development of organized religious traditions

1. Principal gods: sun gods Amon and Re
2. Brief period of monotheism: Aten
  - a) Pharaoh Akhenaten's idea of a new capital at Akhetaten
  - b) Orders all other gods' names chiseled out; their names die with him
3. Mummification
  - a) At first only pharaohs are mummified (Old Kingdom)
  - b) Later ruling classes and wealthy can afford it
  - c) Eventually commoners have it too (Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom)
4. Cult of Osiris
  - a) Brother Seth murders Osiris and scatters his body
  - b) Wife Isis gathers him up and gods restore him to life in underworld
  - c) Becomes associated with Nile, crops, life/death, immortality
  - d) Osiris judges the heart of the dead against the feather of truth
5. Nubians combine Egyptian religions with their own

**III. Bantu migrations and early agricultural societies of sub-Saharan Africa**

A. The dynamics of Bantu expansion

1. Bantu—language group from west central Africa
  - a) Live along banks of rivers; use canoes
  - b) Cultivate yams and oil palms
  - c) Live in clan-based villages
  - d) Trade with hunting/gathering forest people
2. Early migrations of Bantu (3000–1000 B.C.E.)
  - a) Move south and west into the forest lands
  - b) Move south to Congo River and east to Great Lakes region
  - c) Absorb much of the population of hunter/gather/fisher people
  - d) By 1000 B.C.E. occupy most of Africa south of the equator
3. Features of the Bantu
  - a) Use canoes and settle along banks of rivers; spread from there
  - b) Agricultural surplus causes them to move inland from rivers
  - c) Become involved in trade
4. Bantu rate of migration increases after 1000 B.C.E. due to appearance of iron
  - a) Iron tools allow them to clear more land for agriculture
  - b) Iron weapons give them stronger position

B. Early agricultural societies of sub-Saharan Africa

1. Many other societies besides Bantu migrate
2. Spread of agriculture to most of sub-Saharan Africa by 1000 B.C.E.
3. Mostly small communities led by chiefs with “age sets” and initiation rites
4. Religious differences by area
  - a) Some worship single, impersonal divine force representing good and bad
  - b) Many individuals pray to ancestors and local gods for intervention
5. Much mixing and intermingling of cultures

IDENTIFICATION: PEOPLE

What is the contribution of each of the following individuals to world history? Identification should include answers to the questions *who, what, where, when, how, and why is this person important?*

Menes/Narmer

Khufu/Cheops

Harkhuf

Tuthmosis III

King Kashta

Hatshepsut

Akhenaten

Herodotus

IDENTIFICATION: TERMS/CONCEPTS

State in your own words what each of the following terms means and why it is significant to a study of world history. (Terms with an asterisk are defined in the glossary.)

Sudan

Nile River

Nubia\*

Memphis

Upper Egypt

Lower Egypt  
Pharaoh\*  
Horus  
Apedemak  
Sebiumeker  
Amon Re\*  
Archaic Period  
Old Kingdom  
Pyramids  
Kush\*  
Kerma  
Middle Kingdom  
Hyksos\*  
New Kingdom  
Napata  
Patriarchy  
Thebes  
Heliopolis  
Tanis  
Coptic  
Ta-Seti  
Meroë  
Bronze metallurgy  
Iron metallurgy  
Punt  
Hieroglyphs\*

Papyrus

Hieratic script

Aten\*

Tell el-Amarna

Mummification

Osiris

Bantu\*

Niger-Congo

Mande

Age sets

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How did Egyptian religious beliefs reflect their society, lifestyle, and geographic location?
2. How did climatic change influence the early development of African cultures?
3. How did the institution of the pharaoh evolve, and what was the nature of the pharaoh's power through the Old Kingdom period?
4. Describe the early Kingdom of Kush. What was its relationship with Egypt like?
5. How did the invasion of the Hyksos influence the later development of Egypt?
6. In what ways was the New Kingdom period of Egypt different from the earlier ones? What were the relations with Kush like during this period?
7. What was society like in Egypt and Nubia in terms of both social classes and gender roles?
8. What kind of transportation systems did the Egyptians use, and how did their transportation influence the development of their trade networks?
9. What was the significance of the cult of Osiris?
10. How did the Bantu migrations influence the development of the societies of sub-Saharan Africa?

## INQUIRY QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast Egyptian and Nubian society. Why is there so much more known about Egypt? Come up with at least five good reasons.
2. Herodotus said that Egypt was the “gift of the Nile.” What does this mean? In what ways did the Nile affect Egyptian culture? Hint: think about more than just agriculture.
3. Agriculture spread through sub-Saharan Africa considerably later than it did through other parts of the world. Why do you think this is so? Come up with at least three possible explanations.

## STUDENT QUIZ

1. The Greek historian Herodotus proclaimed Egypt “the gift of the Nile” because, in his account,
  - a. the process of desiccation forced paleolithic human groups to migrate from the Sahara to the valley of the Nile.
  - b. the Egyptians depended on the Nile for drinking water.
  - c. the reliable rhythm of the Nile created fertile land, which supported a remarkably productive agricultural economy.
  - d. Egyptian myth had their people emerging out of the river.
  - e. all of the above.
2. Around 5000 B.C.E. the climate in northern Africa began to change by getting
  - a. colder and wetter.
  - b. colder and drier.
  - c. hotter and wetter.
  - d. hotter and drier.
  - e. rainier.
3. Which of the following is true of the Nile?
  - a. By worldwide standards it is a relatively short river.
  - b. It is unusual in that it is navigable throughout its length.
  - c. It used to flood very predictably.
  - d. It flows from north to south.
  - e. None of the above.
4. In contrast to Egypt, Nubian agriculture
  - a. had to rely on rainfall.
  - b. required extensive preparation of the soil.
  - c. relied on a floodplain.
  - d. was not an important factor in their economy.
  - e. none of the above.

5. Unification of Egyptian rule came about through the conqueror
  - a. Menes.
  - b. Hatshepsut.
  - c. Ta-Seti.
  - d. Khufu.
  - e. none of the above.
  
6. The Egyptian pyramids
  - a. were built during the Old Kingdom.
  - b. served as royal tombs.
  - c. are testimony to the power of the pharaoh.
  - d. stand at Giza.
  - e. all of the above.
  
7. Mummification, pyramids, and funerary rituals in ancient Egypt were extremely costly and troublesome. The customs prevailed for several thousand years because
  - a. the ruling elites perceived a need for demonstrating their power and wealth.
  - b. Egyptians believed in an afterlife.
  - c. the pharaohs tried to solve the problems of population pressure and unemployment.
  - d. the pharaohs had slaves who could perform all these tasks.
  - e. all of the above.
  
8. In ancient Egypt, the largest pyramid was that of
  - a. Khufu.
  - b. Menes.
  - c. Horus.
  - d. Tuthmosis III.
  - e. Akhenaten.
  
9. After the Hyksos invasion,
  - a. the Middle Kingdom began.
  - b. the Egyptians started using iron.
  - c. the Nubians rose up and pushed them out.
  - d. the Egyptians adopted horses and chariots in their military.
  - e. all of the above.
  
10. After the tenth century, the Kingdom of Kush
  - a. conquered Egypt.
  - b. established a capital at Napata.
  - c. claimed the title of pharaoh.
  - d. warred with the Assyrians.
  - e. all of the above.
  
11. Which of the following was *not* an important city in ancient Egypt?
  - a. Meroë
  - b. Tanis
  - c. Heliopolis
  - d. Thebes
  - e. Memphis

12. Unlike Egypt, Nubian society
  - a. was very egalitarian.
  - b. did not include slaves.
  - c. was patriarchal.
  - d. saw many more women rulers.
  - e. all of the above.
  
13. Technologically speaking, the Nile societies
  - a. were slower to develop metallurgy than Mesopotamia was.
  - b. learned iron metallurgy from sub-Saharan African cultures.
  - c. developed systems of water transport like the sailboat.
  - d. produced fine linen textiles.
  - e. all of the above.
  
14. Which of the following is true of Egyptian writing?
  - a. It has not been translated yet.
  - b. Most writing was done on clay tablets.
  - c. It was unintelligible to the Nubians.
  - d. It included hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic, and Coptic scripts.
  - e. None of the above.
  
15. All of the following were important Egyptian gods *except*
  - a. Osiris.
  - b. Amon.
  - c. Aten.
  - d. Sebiuwerker.
  - e. Re.
  
16. A significant difference between Nubian and Egyptian religion was that
  - a. Nubians did not build pyramids.
  - b. Nubians did not recognize Egyptian sun gods.
  - c. Nubians did not mummify their dead.
  - d. Nubians did not have priests.
  - e. all of the above.
  
17. The original Bantu people
  - a. spoke a language in the Niger-Congo family.
  - b. settled mostly on the banks of rivers.
  - c. came from what is now Nigeria.
  - d. cultivated yams and palm oils.
  - e. all of the above.
  
18. With regard to the Bantu migrations,
  - a. their suddenness suggested displacement by hunting/gathering people.
  - b. they placed pressure on the forest dwellers by moving inland.
  - c. they never migrated south of the equator.
  - d. they gave up living along rivers for moving inland.
  - e. all of the above.

19. Iron metallurgy

- a. was learned by the Africans from the Hittites.
- b. eventually was displaced by bronze metallurgy.
- c. never spread south of the Sahara.
- d. helped the Bantu expand their agricultural land.
- e. none of the above.

20. Which of the following is associated with agricultural societies south of the Sahara?

- a. cultivation of yams, oil palms, and sorghum
- b. herding sheep, cattle, pigs
- c. age sets and initiation rites
- d. monotheistic religions
- e. all of the above

MATCHING

Match these figures with the statements that follow.

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| A. Khufu         | E. Hatshepsut   |
| B. Narmer        | F. Amenhotep IV |
| C. Kashta        | G. Herodotus    |
| D. Tuthmosis III | H. Harkhuf      |

- 1. \_\_\_ Female pharaoh during the New Kingdom.
- 2. \_\_\_ Imperialistic pharaoh of the New Kingdom.
- 3. \_\_\_ Ancient Greek historian who traveled to Egypt and wrote about the culture.
- 4. \_\_\_ King of Kush who conquered Egypt.
- 5. \_\_\_ Promoted first monotheistic religion on record.
- 6. \_\_\_ Name associated with legendary conqueror and unifier of Egypt.
- 7. \_\_\_ Royal official and governor of Upper Egypt who wrote autobiography.
- 8. \_\_\_ Pharaoh who had largest pyramid in Egypt built for his tomb.

## SEQUENCING

Place the following clusters of events in chronological order. Consider carefully how one event leads to another, and try to determine the internal logic of each sequence.

A.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent settlements appear in eastern Sudan and sorghum is cultivated.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Extended period of climatic change begins in north Africa.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cultivators and herders migrate to bodies of water.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Peoples of north Africa adopt iron metallurgy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Peoples of Sudan hunt wild cattle on the grasslands and collect wild grains.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Small kingdoms appear in Egypt and Nubia.

B.

- \_\_\_\_\_ City of Memphis is founded.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assyrians conquer Egypt.
- \_\_\_\_\_ King Kashta conquers Egypt.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hyksos invade Egypt.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Great pyramids are built at Giza.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Egypt conquers Palestine and Syria.

## QUOTATIONS

For each of the following quotes, identify the speaker, if known, or the point of view or the subject. What is the significance of each passage?

1. "How many are your deeds, Though hidden from sight, O Sole God beside whom there is none! You made the earth as you wished you alone."
2. "How [the gods] rejoice: you have strengthened their offerings! How your [people] rejoice: you have made their frontiers! . . . How Egypt rejoices in your strength: you have protected its customs!"
3. "When you overflow, O Hapy, Sacrifice is made for you; Oxen are slaughtered for you, A great oblation is made to you. Fowl is fattened for you, desert game snared for you, As one repays your bounty."
4. "The majesty of [Pharaoh] Mernere, my lord, sent me together with my father . . . to . . . Yam to open the way to that country. I did it in seven months; I brought from it all kinds of beautiful and rare gifts, and was praised for it greatly."

## MAP EXERCISES

1. On the outline map of Africa below, color and write in the following locations: Sahara, Sudan, Egypt (Upper and Lower), Nubia, Red Sea, Nile (delta, first cataract, source), Memphis, Giza, Kush, Kerma, Napata, Thebes, Heliopolis, Tanis, Meroë, Punt, Tell el-Amarna, Aswan, Elephantine, Palestine, Syria, Bantu Homeland, Lake Chad, Congo River, Lake Victoria.



2. Study the map of Bantu migrations on page 81 in the textbook. Then find a website that shows the distribution of Bantu-speaking peoples today. In what modern countries are they located? How many of those cultures could trace their migration back to the period studied in this chapter? How many must have migrated later?

## CONNECTIONS

In fifty words or less, explain the relationship between each of the following pairs. How does one lead to or foster the other? Be specific in your response. (May be done individually or in small groups.)

- Nile and mummification
- Ta-Seti and Archaic Period
- Bantu and iron
- Osiris and papyrus
- Bantu migrations and canoes

## FILMS

*The Ten Commandments* (1956). Classic epic film about Moses leading Hebrews out of Egypt. First part contains some excellent views of Egyptian culture. With Charlton Heston.

*Pharaoh* (1966). Little-known but critically acclaimed Polish film about Pharaoh Ramses III as he battled the high priest for economic and military control of Egypt.

*The Prince of Egypt* (1998). Animated musical version of the story of Moses leading Hebrews out of Egypt. Worth watching for the artwork depicting Egyptian cities and costumes. Voices of Val Kilmer and Ralph Fiennes.

*Egypt: Beyond the Pyramids*. The History Channel.

*Egypt: Land of the Gods*. 2 vols, The History Channel.

*Mummies and the Wonders of Ancient Egypt*. The History Channel.

*The Curse of King Tut*. The History Channel.

*The Assassination of King Tut*. The Discovery Channel.

*Building the Great Pyramid*. The Discovery Channel.

*Mummies: The Real Story*. The Discovery Channel.

*Nefertiti Resurrected*. The Discovery Channel.

*Quest for the Lost Pharaoh*. The Discovery Channel.

*Riddles of the Desert: Mummies*. The Discovery Channel.

*Pyramids, Mummies and Tombs*. The Discovery Channel.

*The Face of Tutankhamun*. 4 parts, A&E.

*Egypt – The Quest for Immortality*. Time/Life, Lost Civilizations.

## CHAPTER 4

### EARLY SOCIETIES IN SOUTH ASIA

#### INTRODUCTION

An agricultural economy and its accompanying neolithic communities emerged on the Indian subcontinent some time after 7000 B.C.E. Eventually some of the neolithic villages further evolved into urban societies. The earliest such society was Dravidian and was known as the Harappan society. It flourished along the Indus River valley in the third millennium B.C.E. Coinciding with the decline of the Harappan society, large numbers of Indo-European migrants were moving into India from central Asia beginning around 1900 B.C.E. These peoples, known as Aryans, brought with them cultural traditions sharply different from the earlier societies. After a period of turmoil the Aryan and Dravidian cultures merged to generate a distinctive Indian society characterized by

- Regional states with kingship (*rajas*) as the most common form of government.
- The caste system, a complex social class system that served as a vehicle for imparting a powerful sense of group identity, as a stabilizing influence in Indian society and as a foundation for the religious belief system.
- A distinctive set of religious beliefs encompassing the doctrines of *samsara* and *karma* along with the notion of a universal soul, or Brahman.
- A rich literary religious tradition based on centuries of oral transmission that included such classics as the Vedas and the Upanishads.

#### OUTLINE

##### **I. Harappan society**

###### A. Background

1. Neolithic villages in Indus River valley by 3000 B.C.E.
2. Earliest remains inaccessible because of silt deposits and rising water table
3. Also little known because writing not yet translated

###### B. Foundations of Harappan society

1. The Indus River
  - a) Runs through north India, with sources at Hindu Kush and the Himalayas
  - b) Rich deposits but less predictable than the Nile
  - c) Wheat and barley were cultivated in Indus valley
  - d) Cultivated cotton before 5000 B.C.E.
  - e) Complex society of Dravidians, 3000 B.C.E.
2. No evidence about political system
3. Harappa and Mohenjo-daro: two main cities

- a) Each city had a fortified citadel and a large granary
- b) Broad streets, marketplaces, temples, public buildings
- c) Standardized weights, measures, architectural styles, and brick sizes

C. Harappan society and culture

- 1. Social distinctions, as seen from living styles
- 2. Religious beliefs strongly emphasized fertility
- 3. Harappan society declined from 1900 B.C.E. onward
  - a) Ecological degradation led to a subsistence crisis
  - b) Another possibility: natural catastrophes such as floods or earthquakes
  - c) Population began to abandon their cities by about 1700 B.C.E.
  - d) Almost entirely collapsed by about 1500 B.C.E.
  - e) Some Harappan cultural traditions maintained

**II. The Indo-European migrations and early Aryan India**

A. The Aryans and India

- 1. The early Aryans
  - a) Depended heavily on a pastoral economy
  - b) No writing system, but had orally transmitted works called the Vedas
  - c) Sacred language (Sanskrit) and daily-use language (Prakit)
- 2. The Vedic age: 1500–500 B.C.E.
  - a) A boisterous period; conflicts with indigenous peoples
  - b) Called indigenous people *dasas*—“enemies” or “subject people”
  - c) Indra, the Aryans’ war god and military hero
  - d) Aryan chiefdoms fought ferociously among themselves
  - e) Most chiefdoms had leader, *raja* (king)
- 3. Aryan migrations in India: first Punjab and by 500 B.C.E. in northern Deccan
  - a) Used iron tools and developed agriculture
  - b) Lost tribal organizations but established regional kingdoms

B. Origins of the caste system

- 1. Caste and *varna*
  - a) The meaning of *caste*: hereditary, unchangeable social classes
  - b) The Sanskrit word *varna*, “color,” refers to social classes
- 2. Social distinctions in the late Vedic age
  - a) Four main *varnas*, recognized after 1000 B.C.E.: *brahmins* (priests),

*kshatriyas* (warriors and aristocrats), *vaishyas* (cultivators, artisans, and merchants), *shudras* (landless peasants and serfs)

- b) Later the category of the untouchables was added
- 3. Subcaste, or *jati*
  - a) Represented more elaborate scheme of social classification; developed after the sixth century B.C.E.
  - b) *Jati*, or subcastes, were determined by occupations
  - c) Elaborate rules of *jati* life: eating, communication, behavior
- 4. In caste system, social mobility difficult but still possible
  - a) Usually a result of group, not individual, effort
  - b) Foreign peoples could find a place in society of the castes
- C. Development of patriarchal society
  - 1. Patriarchal and patrilineal society
  - 2. The *Lawbook of Manu*
    - a) Prepared by an anonymous sage, first century B.C.E.
    - b) Dealt with moral behavior and social relationships
    - c) Advised men to treat women with honor and respect
    - d) Subjected women to the control and guidance of men
    - e) Women's duties: to bear children and maintain the household
  - 3. *Sati*, social custom in which widow throws self on funeral pyre

### **III. Religion in the Vedic age**

- A. Aryan religion
  - 1. Aryan gods
    - a) War god, Indra
    - b) Gods of the sun, the sky, the moon, fire, health, disease
    - c) God Varuna: ethical concern, cosmic order
  - 2. Ritual sacrifices were more important than ethics
    - a) Priests were specialists of the ritual sacrifices
    - b) Ritual sacrifices for rewards from the divine power
    - c) Sacrifices, chants, *soma*
  - 3. Spirituality underwent a shift after about 800 B.C.E.
    - a) Thoughtful individuals retreated to forests as hermits
    - b) Dravidian notions of transmigration and reincarnation were adapted
- B. The blending of Aryan and Dravidian values

1. The Upanishads, works of religious teachings (800–400 B.C.E.)
  - a) The religious forums: dialogues between disciples and sages
  - b) Brahman: the universal soul
  - c) Highest goal: to escape reincarnation and join with Brahman
  - d) *Samsara*: an individual soul was born many times
  - e) *Karma*: specific incarnations that a soul experienced
  - f) *Moksha*: permanent liberation from physical incarnation
2. Religion and Vedic society
  - a) *Samsara* and *karma* reinforced caste and social hierarchy
  - b) Upanishads were also spiritual and intellectual contemplations
  - c) Taught to observe high ethical standards: discourage greed, envy, vice
  - d) Respect for all living things, a vegetarian diet

#### IDENTIFICATION: TERMS/CONCEPTS

State in your own words what each of the following terms means and why it is significant to a study of world history. (Terms with an asterisk are defined in the glossary.)

Indra\*

Aryans\*

Dravidians\*

Harappan society\*

Indus River

Harappa

Mohenjo-daro

Sanskrit

Pakrit

Vedas\*

*Rig Veda*

*Raja*

Punjab

Ganges River

Caste

*Varna\**

*Dasas*

*Brahmins*

*Kshatriyas\**

*Vaishyas\**

*Shudras\**

*Jati\**

Patriarchy

*Lawbook of Manu*

*Sati\**

Varuna\*

*Soma*

Upanishads\*

Brahman

Samsara\*

Karma\*

*Moksha\**

Yoga

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is so little known about the Harappan society? What is it that we *do* know about the nature of that society?
2. How do historians and archaeologists explain the decline of the Harappan culture?
3. How were the Indo-European migrants different from the cultures that already existed in India?

- Trace the origins of the caste system, making sure to include a discussion of *varna* and *jati*.
- Discuss the nature of patriarchy in early Indian societies. What is the *Lawbook of Manu* and how does it relate to gender roles?
- What are the Vedas and what do they teach us about early Indian societies?
- What are the fundamental religious teachings of the Upanishads?
- How did the religious beliefs as expressed in the Upanishads dovetail with the social order during the Vedic age?
- In what ways did the religion of the Upanishads include an ethical system?
- How did the Dravidian and Aryan cultures blend during this period?

### INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- There are very few names of prominent individuals included in this chapter. Why is this so? What is it about the nature of the society and the available historical sources that makes it difficult to discern individuals?
- What were the advantages of the caste system to the development of Indian societies during this time period? Why do you believe this system managed to persist for millennia?
- The religious beliefs of this period emerged as a result of the blending of Aryan and Dravidian traditions and significant developments in the later Vedic age. These beliefs were the underpinnings of the Hindu religion, which is still the most prevalent religion of the Indian subcontinent. What aspects of this belief system make it so appealing to people? How did it both reflect and support other social institutions?

### STUDENT QUIZ

- Our understanding of Harappan society depends entirely on
  - written records uncovered in Harappa and other Dravidian cities.
  - archaeological discoveries of Harappan physical remains below the water table.
  - archaeological discoveries of Harappan physical remains above the water table.
  - the Vedas and the Upanishads.
  - all of the above.
- The inhabitants of Harappan society enjoyed a rich variety of diet. Their food included
  - wheat, barley, chicken, cattle, sheep, goats.
  - soybeans, sorghum, rice, pigs, fish.
  - sweet potatoes, tomatoes, maize, cacao beans.
  - millet, yams, legumes, no meat.
  - none of the above.

3. In the sites of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, archaeologists have found a high degree of standardization of weights, measures, architectural styles, and even brick sizes. Such standardization may suggest that
  - a. the Harappan state was very oppressive, forcing different racial groups to adopt the same standards.
  - b. there might have been a central authority powerful enough to reach all corners of society.
  - c. there was a high degree of commercialization in the economy.
  - d. these cultures actually migrated from Mesopotamia.
  - e. none of the above.
4. Archaeologists claim that there were sharp social distinctions in Harappan society, which can be illustrated by the people's
  - a. gold, gems, and decorative items.
  - b. bathrooms, showers, and toilets.
  - c. foods, clothes, and hairstyles.
  - d. houses, ovens, and wells.
  - e. all of the above.
5. Harappan religion reflected a strong concern for fertility. We know this because
  - a. it was very common for the peoples in other early agricultural societies to honor fertility gods or goddesses.
  - b. the bronze figurine of a dancing girl discovered at Mohenjo-daro reveals this point.
  - c. of the similarities between the images of Harappan deities and the images of Hindu fertility deities.
  - d. there is written documentation to support it.
  - e. none of the above.
6. By about 1700 B.C.E., the residents of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro began to abandon their cities because
  - a. frequent epidemics made city living impossible.
  - b. deforestation of the Indus River valley brought about ecological degradation.
  - c. the horse-riding Aryans began to invade the cities.
  - d. the Indus River dried up.
  - e. all of the above.
7. The Aryans
  - a. forcibly drove the Harappans out of their cities.
  - b. came suddenly, in a massive migration.
  - c. entered the Indus valley at the height of the Harappan society.
  - d. refused to intermingle with the Dravidians.
  - e. none of the above.
8. The Indo-Europeans who migrated to the Indian subcontinent
  - a. were primarily herders.
  - b. utilized horses for transportation.
  - c. judged wealth by the number of cattle.
  - d. called themselves Aryans.
  - e. all of the above.

9. The period of Indian history from 1500 to 500 B.C.E. is called the Vedic age. It is so called because
- this was how the Aryans referred to this period.
  - the four earliest religious texts were compiled in this period.
  - this was the period in which the Indians were particularly religious.
  - the major god was Vedas.
  - none of the above.
10. The Aryans' term for their four original castes was
- jati*.
  - brahmins*.
  - varnas*.
  - shudras*.
  - none of the above.
11. The Indian caste system
- was a central institution that served to promote social stability.
  - was incapable of accommodating social changes.
  - was actually not much of a restriction on the upward mobility of individuals.
  - did not persist beyond the Vedic age.
  - none of the above.
12. One of the hymns in the *Rig Veda* offered a brief account of the origins of the four *varnas* (castes). It was said that
- the four castes were created according to the wills of Indra and Agni (the god of fire).
  - Purusha, a primeval being, sacrificed himself in order to create the four castes.
  - the brahman priests created the four castes with themselves at the top.
  - the four castes emanated from the four parts of Purusha when the gods sacrificed him.
  - none of the above.
13. Which of the following was evidence of the subordination of women to men in Aryan society?
- patrilineal descent
  - the *Lawbook of Manu*
  - the practice of *sati*
  - women had no responsibilities for religious rituals
  - all of the above
14. Aryan religion during the early Vedic age was relatively unconcerned with ethics, but concerned itself more with
- ritual sacrifices and the god of war.
  - fertility and immortality.
  - spirituality and meditation.
  - building religious buildings.
  - all of the above.

15. The Upanishads can be best characterized as
- the spiritual longing of the Aryans.
  - the further development of the religious tradition of the Dravidians.
  - a how-to book of religious ritual.
  - the blending of Aryan and Dravidian values.
  - none of the above.
16. According to the teachings of the Upanishads, the highest goal of the individual soul was
- to attain the state of *samsara*.
  - to attain the state of *moksha*.
  - to avoid one's karma.
  - to separate from Brahman.
  - to practice yoga.
17. According to the Upanishads,
- each person is part of a larger cosmic order.
  - the highest goal of the individual is to escape the cycle of birth and rebirth.
  - individuals who live virtuous lives and do their duty can expect rebirth into a purer form.
  - asceticism and meditation are vehicles for escaping the cycle of birth and rebirth.
  - all of the above.
18. In the *Chandogya Upanishad*, a man explained to his son how
- bees made honey.
  - to remove salt from water.
  - the subtle essence of Brahman pervades everything.
  - individuals were separate in universal reality.
  - none of the above.
19. According to the teachings of the Upanishads, an individual should
- be attached to the material world as closely as possible.
  - ignore ethical standards, since these standards were not the ultimate reality.
  - observe high ethical standards like honesty, self-control, and charity.
  - avoid any inclinations to gain self-knowledge.
  - none of the above.
20. Believers in the Upanishads
- often are vegetarians.
  - believe you should respect all living things, even animals and insects.
  - believe that animals might be holding incarnations of unfortunate souls.
  - believe humans should have compassion for the suffering of the souls in animals.
  - all of the above.

## MATCHING

Match these terms with the statements that follow.

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| A. <i>Soma</i>     | G. Karma             |
| B. <i>Moksha</i>   | H. Upanishad         |
| C. Samsara         | I. <i>Jati</i>       |
| D. <i>Sati</i>     | J. <i>Dasas</i>      |
| E. <i>Rig Veda</i> | K. <i>Varna</i>      |
| F. Brahman         | L. <i>Kshatriyas</i> |

1. \_\_\_ The Indian custom in which a widow throws herself on her husband's funeral pyre to join him in death.
2. \_\_\_ Aryan term for the Sanskrit word meaning "color"; refers to the major social classes.
3. \_\_\_ A hallucinogenic drink used in religious ceremonies.
4. \_\_\_ A universal soul: permanent, unchanging and eternal.
5. \_\_\_ Aryan term for the indigenous people of India; technically it means "enemies" or "subject peoples."
6. \_\_\_ The warrior and aristocratic class of the Vedic age.
7. \_\_\_ The doctrine that held that after death individual souls go to the World of the Fathers and then return to earth in a new incarnation.
8. \_\_\_ "A sitting in front of"; it refers to the practice of disciples gathering before a sage.
9. \_\_\_ A collection of over 1,000 hymns addressed to the Aryan gods.
10. \_\_\_ The doctrine that accounted for the specific incarnations of the soul based on deeds in previous incarnations.
11. \_\_\_ A state like deep, dreamless sleep that comes with permanent liberation from physical incarnation.
12. \_\_\_ A subcaste usually based on occupation.

## SEQUENCING

Place the following cluster of events in chronological order. Consider carefully how one event leads to another, and try to determine the internal logic of the sequence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Harappan society covers a territory larger than Mesopotamia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inhabitants abandon Mohenjo-daro.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Regional kingdoms replace chiefdoms in most parts of northern India.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aryan priests begin to compile the *Rig Veda*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indo-Europeans migrate into Indus valley.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indus valley inhabitants begin cultivating cotton.

## QUOTATIONS

For each of the following quotes, identify the speaker, if known, or the point of view or the subject. What is the significance of each passage?

1. "So mighty is his greatness; yea, greater than this is Purusha. All creatures are one-fourth of him, [the other] three-fourths [of him are] eternal life in heaven."
2. "Women are to be honored and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law, who desire much prosperity. . . . Houses, cursed by women and not honored, perish utterly as if destroyed by magic."
3. "Now as a man is like this or like that, according as he acts and according as he behaves, so will he be: a man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad. He becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds."
4. "Believe it, my son. That which is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and you, Svetaketu, are it."

## MAP EXERCISES

1. Examine Map 2.4 (page 53) and Map 4.1 (page 90) showing the Indo-European migrations and the Harappan society. What kinds of contact might the Harappan people have had with the Indo-Europeans before the Indo-Europeans began migrating into the Indus valley? Where did their paths cross? What routes did the Indo-Europeans take into India? Explain the progress of their migrations over a fifteen-hundred-year period.

## CONNECTIONS

In fifty words or less, explain the relationship between each of the following pairs. How does one lead to or foster the other? Be specific in your response. (May be done individually or in small groups.)

- Caste and Upanishads
- Harappan society and cattle
- The Vedas and the *Lawbook of Manu*
- Karma and vegetarianism
- Aryans and *rajas*

## FILMS

*Lost Treasures of the Ancient World 3: Ancient India* (2000).

*Origins of India's Hindu Civilization* (1994).

*The Mahabharata*. VHS. Les Productions du 3ème Etage, based on the RST/CICT stage production adapted by Jean-Claude Carrière; produced by Michel Propper; directed by Peter Brook. New York, NY: Parabola Video Library, 1989.

*Altars of the World* (1999). VHS. New York, NY: Wellspring Media. Distributed by Fox Lorber Associates. On Hinduism.