Week 5: Chapter 3: Part 1: Terms

**Deccan Plateau** - region in India, extending south of the Narmada River to the Nilgiri and Palni hills, and bordered by the Western and Eastern Ghats mountain ranges. The Deccan Plateau has an undulating terrain, with elevations averaging about 600 m (about 2,000 ft). However, some hills reach 1,200 m (4,000 ft). At the plateau's margins in the Western Ghats, a steep escarpment drops sharply to the narrow Malabar Coast on the Arabian Sea. To the east the plateau descends more gradually to a broader alluvial plain extending into Andhra Pradesh and Orissa states. The Deccan Plateau has a dry season that lasts six to nine months. Much of its surface is covered by thorn scrub forest interspersed with small areas of deciduous broadleaf forest. The term “Deccan” comes from the Sanskrit word *dakshina*, meaning “the south.” It is also applied more generally to the entire Indian Peninsula. (Wikipedia)

**Monsoons** - wind that changes direction with the change of seasons. The monsoon prevails mainly in the Indian Ocean. It blows from the southwest, generally from April to October, and from the opposite direction, the northeast, from October to April.

The southwest, or summer, monsoon occurs when warm, moist air from the Indian Ocean flows onto the land. It is usually accompanied by heavy rain in the areas of India and Southeast Asia, and is the dominant climate event of the area. The northeast monsoon occurs in India when cold, dry winter air flows out of the interior of Asia from the northeast and brings the cool, dry winter season. The summer monsoon is crucial to agriculture in much of the region, but can sometimes result in destructive flooding. (Wikipedia)

**Vedic and Epic ages** - India’s history begins not with independence in 1947, but more than 4,500 years earlier, when the name *India* referred to the entire subcontinent, including present-day Pakistan and Bangladesh. The earliest of India’s known civilizations, the Indus Valley civilization (about 2500 to 1700 BC), was known for its highly specialized artifacts and stretched throughout northern India. Another early culture—the Vedic culture—dates from approximately 1500 BC and is considered one of the sources for India’s predominantly Hindu culture and for the foundation of several important philosophical traditions.

In about 1500 BC the Aryans, a nomadic people from Central Asia, settled in the upper reaches of the Indus, Yamuna, and Gangetic plains. They spoke a language from the Indo-European family and worshiped gods similar to those of later-era Greeks and northern Europeans. The Aryans are particularly important to Indian history because they originated the earliest forms of the sacred Vedas (orally transmitted texts of hymns of devotion to the gods, manuals of sacrifice for their worship, and philosophical speculation). By 800 BC the Aryans ruled in most of northern India, occasionally fighting among themselves or with the peoples of the land they were settling. There is no evidence of what happened to the people displaced by the Aryans. In fact they may not have been displaced at all but instead may have been incorporated in Aryan culture or left alone in the hills of northern India.
The Vedas, which are considered the core of Hinduism, provide much information about the Aryans. The major gods of the Vedic peoples remain in the pantheon of present-day Hindus; the core rituals surrounding birth, marriage, and death retain their Vedic form. The Vedas also contain the seeds of great epic literature and philosophical traditions in India. One example is the *Mahabharata*, an epic of the battle between two noble families that dates from 400 BC but probably draws on tales composed much earlier. Another example is the *Upanishads*, philosophical treatises that were composed between the 8th and the 5th centuries BC.

As the Aryans slowly settled into agriculture and moved southeast through the Gangetic Plain, they relinquished their seminomadic style of living and changed their social and political structures. Instead of a warrior leading a tribe, with a tribal assembly as a check on his power, an Aryan chieftain ruled over territory, with its society divided into hereditary groups. This structure became the beginning of the caste system, which has survived in India until the present day. The four castes that emerged from this era were the Brahmans (priests), the Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), the Vaisyas (merchants, farmers, and traders), and the Sudras (artisans, laborers, and servants).

**Sanskrit** - the classical sacred and literary language of the Hindus of India, belonging to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-Iranian languages, a subfamily of the Indo-European languages. Since roughly the beginning of the Christian era, Sanskrit has been more or less artificially maintained as the literary language of the priestly, learned, and cultivated castes of India, and it retains this position in the 20th century. During its early centuries, and increasingly later, Sanskrit came to mean the language as “perfected” by the rules of the Indian grammarian Panini (flourished about 400 BC).

**Rig-Veda** - (Sanskrit, “knowledge”), the most ancient sacred literature of Hinduism, or individual books belonging to that literature. This body of ancient literature consists primarily of four collections of hymns, detached poetical portions, and ceremonial formulas. The collections are called the *Rig-Veda*, the *Sama-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, and the *Atharva-Veda*. They are known also as the Samhitas (roughly “collection”).

**Mahabharata** - (Sanskrit, *The Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty*), longer of the two great epic poems of ancient India; the other is the *Ramayana*. Although both are basically secular works, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are ritually recited and are thought to confer religious merit on their hearers.

The central theme of the *Mahabharata* is the contest between two noble families, the Pandavas and their blood relatives the Kauravas, for possession of a kingdom in northern India. The most important segment of the poem is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, a dialogue between Krishna, the eighth incarnation of the god Vishnu, and the Pandava hero Arjuna on the meaning of life. It has influenced devout Hindu believers for centuries. The *Mahabharata* was composed beginning about 400 BC and received numerous additions until about AD 400. It is divided into 18 books containing altogether about 200,000 lines...
of verse interspersed with short prose passages. The *Harivansha*, one of several late appendixes to the poem, discusses at length the life and genealogy of Krishna.

**Ramayana** - (Sanskrit, “Way of Rama”), shorter of the two great Sanskrit epics of ancient India, the other being the *Mahabharata*. Rich in its descriptions and poetic language, it consists of seven books and 24,000 couplets and has been translated into many languages. It was probably begun in the 3rd century BC, with the beginning and possibly the ending added later. The *Ramayana* tells of the birth and education of Rama, a prince and the seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu, and recounts his winning of the hand of Sita in marriage. Displaced as rightful heir to his father's throne, Rama goes into exile, accompanied by Sita and by his brother Lakshmana. Sita is carried off by the demon king Ravana. With the aid of the monkey general Hanuman and an army of monkeys and bears, Rama, after a long search, slays Ravana and rescues Sita. Rama regains his throne and rules wisely. In the probable addition, Sita is accused in rumors of adultery during her captivity. Although innocent, she bears Rama's twin sons in exile, sheltered by the hermit Valmiki, said to be the author of the poem. After many years Rama and Sita are reunited.

**Upanishads** - Hindu esoteric and mystical writings grouped in the Aranyakas, which are part of the Veda. The philosophical concepts contained in the Upanishads served as the basis of one of the six orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy, Vedanta. Some 150 Upanishads exist (108, according to the traditionally accepted number). Most are written in prose with interspersed poetry, but some are entirely in verse. Their lengths vary: The shortest can fit on 1 printed page, while the longest is more than 50 pages. They are believed to have been composed between the 8th century BC and the 5th century BC.

The underlying concern of the Upanishads is the nature of Brahman, the universal soul; and the fundamental doctrine expounded is the identity of *atman*, or the innermost soul of each individual, with Brahman. Formulations of this doctrinal truth are stressed throughout the Upanishadic writings. Other topics include the nature and purpose of existence, various ways of meditation and worship, eschatology, salvation, and the theory of the transmigration of souls.

**Indian caste system** - The caste system is pervasive in India. Although it is entwined in Hindu beliefs, it encompasses non-Hindus as well. A caste (*jati* in Sanskrit) is a social class to which a person belongs at birth and which is ranked against other castes, typically on a continuum of perceived purity and pollution. People generally marry within their own caste. In rural areas, caste may also govern where people live or what occupations they engage in. The particular features of the caste system vary considerably from community to community and across regions. Small geographical areas have their own group-specific caste hierarchies. There are thus thousands of castes in India. In traditional Hindu law texts, all castes are loosely grouped into four *varnas*, or classes. In order of hierarchy, these varnas are the Brahmans (priests and scholars), the Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), the Vaisyas (merchants, farmers, and traders), and the Sudras (laborers, including artisans, servants, and serfs). The varnas no longer strictly
correspond to traditional professions. For example, most Brahmans today are not priests, but farmers, cooks, or other professionals.

Ranked below the lowest caste were the people of no caste, the Untouchables or Harijans (“People of God,” a term first used by Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi). Untouchables traditionally performed tasks considered “polluting,” such as slaughtering animals or leatherworking. Physical contact with these people was viewed as defiling. The practice of labeling people Untouchable was outlawed by India’s constitution, although Harijans continue to face discrimination in getting work and housing. Today many former Untouchables prefer to be called dalits (Hindi for “oppressed ones”).

Since independence the importance of caste has declined somewhat in India. Modern travel has brought people of every caste in contact with one another, since it is impossible to avoid physical contact with a former Untouchable in a crowded bus or train. Although caste is intimately linked with the giving and taking of food, no one can be certain of the caste of a person who cooks food in the restaurants and food stalls of towns and cities. There are no particular castes linked to the modern professions of bank clerk, postal worker, teacher, and lawyer. Many people have also been influenced by the nationalist movement’s ideological commitment to the equality of men and women, and lower castes have increasingly used the power of their numbers and their right to vote to gain social status in their local community. Yet castes have shown no sign of disappearing altogether, mainly because of the system of marriage. Almost all Hindu marriages in India are arranged, and almost all arranged marriages occur between people of the same caste. Only a handful of young people make “love marriages” across caste lines, and many suffer socially when they do so.

Muslims are often treated as just another caste, particularly in India’s villages. There are castelike categories among the Muslims as well. These are called brotherhoods in northern India, and they identify Muslims with their traditional occupations, such as butchers or leatherworkers. As with Hindus, Muslims marry within their brotherhood. Among Christians as well, in the 19th century and to a much less significant extent more recently, converts and their descendants continued to be identified by their Hindu caste of origin.

**Untouchables** - the Harijan caste, the lowest class under Hinduism. Ranked below the lowest caste were the people of no caste, the Untouchables or Harijans (“People of God,” a term first used by Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi). Untouchables traditionally performed tasks considered “polluting,” such as slaughtering animals or leatherworking. Physical contact with these people was viewed as defiling. The practice of labeling people Untouchable was outlawed by India’s constitution, although Harijans continue to face discrimination in getting work and housing. Today many former Untouchables prefer to be called dalits (Hindi for “oppressed ones”).

**Chandragupta** - (?-286 BC), first king (321?-298? BC) of the Maurya dynasty of the ancient kingdom of Magadha (now Bihār State), India. As “a young stripling,” whom the Greeks called Sandrocottus, he is said to have met Alexander the Great in Punjab in 326
BC. Shortly afterward, Chandragupta raised an army and conquered Magadha, defeating the Nandas. He then took advantage of Alexander's death and wrested the Punjab region from the Macedonian forces. By further conquest he extended Magadha until it comprised all northern India between the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. Chandragupta's power was challenged by King Seleucus I of Syria, Alexander's successor, who invaded the northern subcontinent in 305 BC, but suffered a crushing defeat. Chandragupta thereupon added to his lands all the territory north to the Hindu Kush, including Baluchistan and Afghanistan. According to traditional accounts, Chandragupta abdicated, became a monk, and, while in voluntary exile in the south of India, committed suicide by fasting to death. The Maurya Empire was further extended by his grandson, Ashoka.

Maurya dynasty/Maurays - (322–185 B.C), ruled by the Mauryan dynasty, was geographically extensive, powerful, and a political military empire in ancient India. Originating from the kingdom of Magadha in the Indo-Gangetic plains (modern Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bengal) in the eastern side of the Indian subcontinent, the empire had its capital city at Pataliputra (near modern Patna). The Empire was founded in 322 BCE by Chandragupta Maurya, who had overthrown the Nanda Dynasty and rapidly expanded his power westwards across central and western India taking advantage of the disruptions of local powers in the wake of the withdrawal westward by Alexander the Great's Greek and Persian armies. By 320 BCE the empire had fully occupied Northwestern India, defeating and conquering the satraps left by Alexander.

At its greatest extent, the Empire stretched to the north along the natural boundaries of the Himalayas, and to the east stretching into what is now Assam. To the west, it reached beyond modern Pakistan, annexing Balochistan and much of what is now Afghanistan, including the modern Herat and Kandahar provinces. The Empire was expanded into India's central and southern regions by the emperors Chandragupta and Bindusara, but it excluded a small portion of unexplored tribal and forested regions near Kalinga.

Ashoka - (?-232 BC), third king of the Maurya dynasty, who ruled almost the whole of the Indian subcontinent from about 269 to 232 BC (see Mauryan Empire). Ashoka stands unique among emperors in world history: After successfully concluding a major military campaign, he was so disturbed by the suffering that it had caused that he forsook war and thereafter endorsed nonviolence and peaceful persuasion in consolidating his vast empire.

Kushans - (1st century BC-230? AD), rulers of an ancient empire stretching from Central Asia to northern India. The dynasty emerged from the Yue-chi, a seminomadic people of northwestern China. The Yue-chi overran the area from modern Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan by about 125 BC, but they were not united under a single ruler. Between 27 and 2 BC, one of the Yue-chi kings, Kadphises, brought them together into a single confederation and established a ruling dynasty. In the 1st century AD, the Kushānas (named for the Hindu Kush mountains) took over Kashmir and most of northwestern India. They reached their greatest strength under Kanishka, who ruled in the late 1st century. Kanishka commanded the Central Asian territories as well as northern India. There, the Kushānas extended as far south as Gujarāt in the west, the Narmada River in central
India, and Bihār in the east. Kanishka’s armies also campaigned in Bengal to the east and Parthia to the west.

**Guptas - Indian dynasty:** an Indian dynasty of the 3rd to 6th centuries that established an empire in much of South Asia. Their rule, during which the arts, architecture, and literature flourished, is generally regarded as the Golden Age of India. (320-550?), line of rulers of ancient India. Among the most important of India’s early unifiers, the dynasty controlled an empire stretching across north India at its peak in the 5th century. Inscriptions describe the originators of the dynasty as a local ruler named Gupta and his son Ghatotkacha, who lived at the beginning of the 4th century. The first imperial ruler, a 'supreme king of kings,' was Chandragupta I (320-353?). He married a princess from the ancient noble clan of the Licchavis and based his power at the ancient imperial capital of Pāṭaliputra (now Patna), located on the Ganges River in what is now the state of Bihār.

**Hinduism** - a religious tradition of Indian origin, comprising the beliefs and practices of Hindus. The word Hindu is derived from the river Sindhu, or Indus. Hindu was primarily a geographical term that referred to India or to a region of India (near the Sindhu) as long ago as the 6th century BC. The word Hinduism is an English word of more recent origin. Hinduism entered the English language in the early 19th century to describe the beliefs and practices of those residents of India who had not converted to Islam or Christianity and did not practice Judaism or Zoroastrianism.

**Dharma** - Dharma is an all-important concept for Hindus. In addition to tradition and moral order, it also signifies the path of knowledge and correct action. Because of Hinduism’s emphasis on living in accordance with dharma, anyone who is striving for spiritual knowledge and seeking the right course of ethical action is, in the broadest sense, a follower of sanātana dharma.

**Gurus** - Hindu or Sikh leaders or religious teachers. Guru is Hindi for teacher. (http://encarta.msn.com)

**Vishnu** - major god of Hinduism and Indian mythology, popularly regarded as the preserver of the universe. In the ancient body of literature called the Veda, the sacred literature of the Aryan invaders, Vishnu ranks with the numerous lesser gods and is usually associated with the major Vedic god Indra in battles against demonic forces. In the epics and Puranas—writings belonging to subsequent periods in the development of Hinduism—Vishnu (especially in his incarnations) becomes prominent. Some Puranic literature refers to him as the eternal, all-pervading spirit and associates him with the primeval waters believed to have been omnipresent before the creation of the world. So regarded, Vishnu is depicted frequently in human form, sleeping on the great serpent Shesha and floating on the waters. The concept of Vishnu as preserver is comparatively late. It is based chiefly on two beliefs: humans may attain salvation by faithfully following predetermined paths of duty, and good and evil powers (gods and demons) contend for dominion over the world. Occasionally, the balance of power is upset in favor of evil, and then Vishnu is believed to descend to earth in a mortal form (his avatar) to save humankind or the world. Ten such avatars (descents or incarnations) are commonly
recognized, of which Rama and Krishna are the most important. Nine descents are thought to have already occurred; the tenth and last is yet to come. Scholars believe that Vishnu's role as preserver (or redeemer) arose from the characteristic practice of assimilating local legendary heroes and gods into the Hindu pantheon by attributing their deeds to one of the major Hindu deities.

Vishnu is depicted as dark blue or black (his avatars appear in other colors). Normally, he is depicted with four arms: One hand holds a lotus; a second holds a conch; a third holds a discus (which always returns by itself after being thrown); and the fourth carries a mace. The petals of the lotus are believed to symbolize the unfolding of creation; the conch is said to symbolize that from which all existence originates; and the discus and the mace reputedly were obtained by Vishnu as rewards for defeating the god Indra. Vishnu is said to possess also a special sword called Nadaka and a special bow called Sarnga. His wife is Lakshmi (also known as Shri), goddess of beauty and fortune. He rides a huge creature, half bird and half man, called Gandara. His home is in a heaven called Vaikuntha (where the Ganges River is believed to flow from its source at Vishnu's feet). The god has a thousand names, the repetition of which is regarded as an act of devotion.

**Shiva** - (Sanskrit for “auspicious one”), also called Siva, Hindu god who personifies both the destructive and the procreative forces of the universe. As the destroyer, he is represented wearing a necklace of skulls and surrounded by demons. His reproductive aspect is symbolized by the lingam, a phallic emblem. Shiva is also the god of asceticism and of art, especially dancing. He rides on the bull Nandi, and his consort is the mother goddess Uma, or Kali. Some Hindus worship Shiva as the supreme deity and consider him a benevolent god of salvation as well as a god of destruction.

**Bhagavad Gita** - (Song of the Lord), a Sanskrit poem, consisting of 700 verses divided into 18 chapters, that is regarded by most Hindus as their most important text—the essence of their belief. Almost every significant Hindu philosopher has written a commentary on the Gita, and new translations and interpretations continue to appear.

**Buddha (Gautama)** - (563?-483?BC), Indian philosopher and the founder of Buddhism, born in Lumbini, Nepal. He was the son of the head of the Sakya warrior caste, with the private name of Siddhartha; in later life he was known also as Sakyamuni (Sage of the Sakyas). The name Gautama Buddha is a combination of the family name Gautama and the appellation Buddha, meaning “Enlightened One.”

**Nirvana** - (Sanskrit, “extinguishing”), in Indian religious philosophy, a transcendent state free from suffering and individual phenomenal existence, an ultimate religious goal most frequently identified with Buddhism. The word is derived from a verb meaning “to become cool,” or “to blow out,” as in the extinguishing of a candle. The connotation is that only in nirvana are the flames of lust, hatred, greed, and ignorance extinguished. With the attainment of nirvana, the otherwise endless cycle of rebirths is broken (see Transmigration). Its nature has been much debated in Western scholarship, some scholars maintaining that it involves total annihilation and others interpreting it as eternal bliss. Both views are problematic, for nirvana is ultimately indescribable and can only be
known directly. Mahayana Buddhists in East Asia interpret nirvana not as an external
goal, but as one's own innermost nature, which needs only to be recognized. They speak
of it as Buddhahood, suchness, and emptiness.

**Kama-sutra** - Sexuality and lovemaking techniques have been studied in various
cultures since ancient times. The *Kama Sutra*, written in India in the 2nd century BC, is
one of the best-known ancient sex manuals. It discusses the spiritual aspects of sexuality
and presents many sexual positions and techniques for enhancing enjoyment of
intercourse.

**Stupas** - also tope or dagoba, hemispheric or bell-shaped masonry monument designed as
a Buddhist (or occasionally Jain) shrine or reliquary. The stupa form derives from the
eight mounds under which the remains of the Buddha were buried after his death,
following Hindu burial custom. It became the basis of Buddhist temple architecture.
Excavated stupas at the ancient Buddhist site of Vaishāli in India were found to contain
ashes, presumably those of the Buddha himself.

Stupas range in size from small, rudimentary structures to massive, ornately decorated
monuments. In many cases a number of smaller stupas surround the main stupa. The
elaborately decorated Great Stupa at Sanchi (3rd century BC to 1st century BC) in the
Indian state of Madhya Pradesh is considered to be the finest surviving example.

**Bibliography**
(http://en.wikipedia.org)

**Week 5: Chapter 3: Part 2: Questions**

1. How did geography and environment influence Indian civilization?

The vast Indian subcontinent is partially separated from the rest of Asia, and particularly
from East Asia, by northern mountain ranges, notably the Himalayas. Important passes
through the mountains, especially in the northwest, linked India to other civilizations in
the Middle East. The divisions within the subcontinent made full political unity difficult,
thus India had greater diversity than China’s Middle Kingdom. Two great rivers, Indus
and Ganges helped the agriculture to grow greatly. Seasonal monsoon rain also affected
agriculture. There was active trading and seafaring economy in Deccan Plateau. The
separate regions explain the economic diversity, racial diversity, and lingual diversity.

2. Describe Aryan society and their social and religious institutions.

Aryans had a literary language called Sanskrit, and people wrote lots of epic poems that
are preserved till present and are helping the historians in studying Aryan society. Aryan
had one leader of the village who organized defenses and also regulated property
relationships among families. In families, patriarchal control was emphasized. Aryan
society had a clear idea about the social level, and there was caste system that also
enforced divisions familiar in agricultural societies.
3. Explain the major tenets of Hinduism and its evolution from the Aryans to the Guptas.

Hinduism believes in reincarnation and that gods decide the fates of people according to their conduct in this life. Major gods are Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer. Hinduism was largely open to interpretations and changes in its developing period, and this helped it to endure and morph into a comprehensive religion with much diversity in it. The Aryans brought to India a religion with many gods and goddesses who had human qualities. During Epic Period, people offered hymns and sacrifices to the gods. Gradually this religion became more elaborate and embraced the idea of afterlife that was present in epic poems. In Hinduism, nature was seen as informed not only by specific gods but also by a more basic divine force. In Gupta dynasty period, king Ashoka kindly sponsored Hinduism even though he was a Buddhist.

4. Describe the Hindu political hierarchy, caste structure and gender relations.

The political structure of India was not very elaborate. Politics were not stressed as highly as religion – leading holy men and priest to be seen as sources of authority. This emphasis on religion helps pave the way for the caste system. The caste system originated with 5 castes, but over time split into more than 300 subcastes. Upward mobility was limited to primarily economic wealth rather than marriage. And though it was almost impossible to move up due to marriage, it was possible to drop a level due to marrying someone outside of your caste. In its origin, the caste system provided a way for the peoples of India to live without conflict or integrating cultures. It also prevented the use of slaves, having the free lower classes (the untouchables) delegated to many of the menial jobs. Detailed rules governed each caste creating more of a political framework than the politicians did. Rights of women were severely limited, one code of law even went as far as to recommend a wife worship her husband as a god. Women gained economic influence as agricultural workers, but as agricultural methods became more efficient women lost these freedoms. Arranged marriages were commonplace as parents attempted to secure economic partnerships. Ironically, it was urged for wife and man to be best friends. The worship of goddesses also helped pave the way for many strong willed women to take center stage, contributing to the idea that often the restrictions over women were harsher in theory than in practice.

5. What were the teachings of Buddha and how did it change Hinduism? How did Hinduism react to the Buddhist challenges?

Buddha focused on the afterlife, nirvana. The ultimate goal in Buddhism is to achieve Nirvana by following the 8-fold path. Self-control was stressed, as was the ability to live a holy life no matter which caste you may belong to. Hinduism retained many of its followers by emphasizing its mystical side in response to the growing popularity of Buddhism. In the end, Hinduism came to terms with the existence of other religions and small pockets of Buddhism continued particularly in the North.

6. Describe the Maurya and Gupta political and economic structures.
Political – Political systems were less structured than in other areas. The caste system served to create a more formal political organization. Regionalism was more common than a unified nation although a uniform code of laws did exist. The failure to establish a national language contributed significantly to the regional power structure.

Economic - Occupations were determined via the caste system. Agriculture became more sophisticated. Marriages became more of an economic union as parents chose partners for their offspring based on economic alliances. There was massive wealth in the upper classes and India rivaled China for it’s technological innovations. Textiles and iron making procedures became increasingly sophisticated. India perhaps placed the most importance on trade based on the Asian nations. Merchants were welcomed into the higher levels of society and traders ventured to the Roman Empire, Asia and the Middle East.

7. What were the intellectual accomplishments of the Mauryas and Guptas?

Indian literature, epics, drama, establishment and support of one of the worlds first university systems, accomplishments in astronomy and medicine (including calculating the solar year, prediction of eclipses, identification of 7 planets, treatments for smallpox, sterilization of wounds, etc), concept of 0, decimal system, Arabic numbering system, negative numbers, more exact calculation of pi.

8. How and where did Hinduism and Buddhism spread?

Hinduism and Buddhism spread by trade and intermarriage with the locals in new areas. The two religions found followers in Thailand, Indonesia, China, and Vietnam.

9. Compare the status of women in classical India with other contemporary societies.

Though just as subordinate as in China, in India found many strong-willed and clever women, owing much to the tradition of worshipping female gods alongside the male ones. In India as well as other European and Asian nations, society was patriarchal. However, with an emphasis on women as partners in a marriage (a wife should be a man’s “truest friend” p. 60), women saw a more equal role in their relationships.