

Name _____

CLASSICAL INDIA PRIMARY SOURCES

Source: *The Bhagavad Gita*, India, circa 1200 B.C.E.

Having regard to your own duty also, you ought not to falter, for there is nothing better for a Kshatriya [warriors] than a righteous battle.... The fourfold division of castes was created by me according to the appointment of qualities and duties.... The duties of Brahmins, Kshatriya, and Vaisyas, and of Sudras too... are distinguished according to the qualities born of nature. Tranquility, restraints of the senses, penance, purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness, also knowledge, experience, and belief in the future world, this is the natural duty of Brahmins. Valor, glory, courage, dexterity, not slinking away from battle, gifts, exercise of lordly power, this is natural duty of Kshatriyas. Agriculture, tending cattle, trade, this is the natural duty of Vaisyas. And the natural duty of Sudras, too, consists in service. Every man intent on his own respective duties obtains perfection.

Questions

Use specific quotes from the document to support your responses.

1. What information does the *Bhagavad Gita* provide about the caste system?

2. What is the impact of Hinduism on the social structure of India during the Classical period?

Source: *Ramayana*, Indian epic, attributed to Valmiki, original version written during the 3rd century B.C.E. Definitive version written in 200 C.E.

The sweet-speaking Sita, worthy of Rama's love, thus being instructed to remain in Aydodyha, though filled with affection, indignantly replied, "... A wife enjoys the fortune of her husband since she is a part of himself. I am therefore entitled to share thy father's command and also go into exile."

"The happiness of a woman depends on her husband, neither father, mother, relative, or companion avail her at death: in this world and in the other world, the husband alone is her all-in-all...."

Questions

Use specific quotes from the document to support your responses.

1. What information does the *Ramayana* provide about the role and status of women in India?

2. How do the expectations of women in India compare to those in China during the Classical period?