

Chapter 4: Central Asia and India's Beginnings: 4-8b Key Terms
Book Title: World Civilizations
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Chapter Review

4-8b Key Terms

Aryans ((AIR-ee-ans) A nomadic pastoral people from central Asia who migrated into the Indus and Ganges River Valleys between about 1500 B.C.E. and 500 B.C.E.)

Ashoka ((ah-SHOH-kah) Greatest of the kings of ancient India. He greatly expanded the Mauryan kingdom through conquest. Later converted to Buddhism and encouraged its spread.)

Bactria ((also Gandhara) Ancient Central Asian region comprising parts of eastern Iran and modern Afghanistan and Pakistan. After the Islamic conquest in the seventh century C.E., it was known as Transoxiana.)

Bhakti Hinduism ((BAHK-tee) A popular form of Hinduism that emerged in India near the end of the first millennium B.C.E. The opposite of Brahmanism, it emphasizes individual spiritual devotion to a particular god, for example, Shiva, Vishnu, or Krishna.)

Brahman (or Brahma) ((BRAH-mahn) The title of the impersonal spirit responsible for all creation in Hindu theology.)

Brahmanism (The earliest form of Hinduism. Its practices and doctrines were restricted to the priests, or Brahmins.)

Brahmin ((BRAH-mihn) The caste of priests, originally limited to the Aryans and later allowed to the Indians, with whom they intermarried.)

caste (A socioeconomic group to which a person belongs based on birth.)

dharma ((DAHR-mah) A code of morals and conduct prescribed for one's caste in Hinduism.)

Eightfold Path (The Buddha's teachings on attaining perfection.)

Indus Valley civilization (Earliest known civilization of India that flourished c. 3000–1500 B.C.E. Largely known from archaeological discoveries at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.)

karma ((KAHR-mah) In Hindu belief, the balance of good and evil done in a given incarnation.)

Laws of Manu (A section of the Hindu Vedas that provides instruction in the rules of living for the various classes of society. The text is written as if the philosopher Manu

were speaking the lines.)

Mahayana Buddhism ((mah-hah-YAH-nah) A more liberal, looser form of Buddhism; originating soon after the Buddha's death, it deemphasized the monastic life and abstruse philosophy in favor of prayer to the eternal Buddha and the bodhisattvas who succeeded him.)

Mauryan Dynasty ((MOH-ree-yahn) The first great dynasty of rulers of India that reigned from 322 to 185 B.C.E.)

moksha ((MOHK-shah) The final liberation from bodily existence and reincarnation in Hinduism.)

nirvana ((ner-VAH-nah) The Buddhist equivalent of the Hindu moksha; the final liberation from suffering and reincarnation.)

purdah ((PER-dah) The segregation of females in Hindu and Muslim society.)

Rigveda ((rig-VAY-dah) The most ancient of the four Vedas, or Hindi religious epics, brought into India by the Aryans.)

sangha (A Buddhist monastery. Sanghas often served as havens for travelers, especially those on a religious pilgrimage.)

sati ((suh-TEE) In India, the practice in which a widow committed ritual suicide upon the death of her husband.)

Shiva ((SHEE-vah) A member of the high trinity of Hindu gods; lord of destruction but also of procreation; often pictured dancing.)

Siddhartha Gautama ((sih-DAHR-thah GAW-tah-mah) The proper name of the Buddha.)

Silk Road (One of the two most important trade routes of the premodern world. It and the Indian Ocean sea trade were the commercial backbones that brought together the trade of the Old World Eurasian and African continents. Actually comprising several major routes, the so-called Silk Road connected the ancient Mediterranean world with Iran, India, and China.)

steppe land (In physical geography, steppes and steppe lands generally are flat and are characterized by relatively low levels of rainfall and growth of short grasses, usually suitable only for livestock.)

Taxila (Central Asian city, along with Balkh and Peshawar, that was a western linchpin of the famed Silk Road trade routes connecting Iran, India, and China.)

Theravada Buddhism ((thayr-rah-VAH-dah) A strict monastic form of Buddhism entrenched in Southeast Asia; same as Hinayana Buddhism.)

Vedas ((VAY-dahs) The four oral epics of the Aryans brought into ancient India.)

Vedic Epoch (The period in Indian history when the Vedas were being recorded—roughly 1500 to 500 B.C.E.)

Vishnu ((VISH-noo) One of the high Hindu trinity of gods; the god who preserves the universe and karma.)

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