* Ancient India and China
* Chapter 3
* Section 1-Early Civilizations of   
   India and Pakistan
* The Indus Valley is located in the region known as South Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent.
* The Indian subcontinent is a huge peninsula extending into the Indian Ocean.
* Today the Indian Subcontinent includes three of the world’s most populous countries:
  + India
  + Pakistan
  + Bangladesh
  + The Indian Subcontinent also includes the island nation of Sri Lanka, and the mountain nations of Nepal and Bhutan.
* Mountains of the subcontinent are the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas.
  + These mountains limited contact with other lands leaving India’s distinct culture to develop on its own.
* The India subcontinent is divided into 3 major zones:
  + **Gangetic Plain**-in the north, very fertile, watered by the Indus River, the Ganges River and the Brahmaputra River. The watering of these rivers helps make agriculture possible.
  + **The Deccan**-a plateau that lacks melting snow to feed the rivers so this area is dry and agriculturally unproductive and sparsely populated.
  + **The coastal plains**-separated from The Deccan by the Eastern and Western Ghats (mountains). Farming, fishing and trade happen here.
  + A defining feature of life in the Indian subcontinent is the monsoons.
* How have the monsoons shape Indian life?
  + Each year, people welcome the rains brought by the monsoons that are desperately needed to water the crops.
  + If the rains are late, famine and starvation may occur.
  + If the rains are too heavy, rushing rivers will unleash deadly floods.
* What are the possible “twin capitals” of the Indus Civilization? Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro
* Why do archaeologists think organized governments planned Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro?
  + Mohenjo-Daro was laid out in an organized pattern, with long, wide main streets and large rectangular blocks.
  + Houses were built with baked clay bricks
  + Indus houses had complex plumbing systems with baths, drains, and water chutes that led to sewers beneath the city streets.
  + Indus merchants used a uniform system of weights and measures.
  + The Indus are believed to be the first to cultivate cotton and weave its fibers into cloth.
* The Indus writing system was unique, showing no relationship to Sumerian cuneiform.
* Religiously, the Indus were polytheistic, meaning they worshipped more than one god.
* They had a mother goddess, who was the source of creation, and perhaps a male leading god.
* They viewed certain animals as sacred, including the buffalo and the bull. Scholars believe this influenced the later Indian practices of veneration of cattle.
* By 1900 BC, the quality of life in Mohenjo-Daro was declining. The capital was entirely abandoned. There are several possible expectations for the decline:
  + Invaders attacked and overran the cities of the Indus. This now seems unlikely.
  + Damage to the local environment was a factor. (Possibly too many trees were cut down for the baking of bricks.)
  + A disastrous flood.
  + A devastating earthquake.
* During the centuries between 2000 BC and 1500 BC, waves of nomadic peoples migrated slowly from Central Asia into the Indian subcontinent.
* These nomads intermarried with the local peoples forming a group who called themselves Aryans.
* Through acculturation the Aryans combined the cultural traditions of the nomads with those of earlier Indian people.
* Most of what we know about the Aryans comes from the Vedas. The period from 1500 BC to 500 BC is known as the Vedic Age.
* In the Vedas, Aryans appear as warriors who fought in chariots with bows and arrows.
* They enjoyed food, drink, music, chariot races, and dice games.
* Gradually, the Aryans gave up their nomadic ways and settled into villages to cultivate crops and breed cattle.
* The Aryans spread eastward and by about 800 BC they learned to make tools out of iron.
* Aryan tribes were led by chiefs who were called rajahs.
* A rajah was often the most skilled leader and had been elected to his position by an assembly of warriors.
* Aryans divided their society into ranked groups based on occupation.
  + The highest group was made up of Brahmins (priests).
  + Next was the Kshatriyas (warriors).
  + The third group were the Vaisyas, which included herders, farmers, artisans, and merchants.
  + The next group was people who had little or no Aryan heritage called the Sudras. This group included farmers, servants, and other laborers.
  + The lowest social group were the dalits. They were considered outside of the caste system. These people did work that others wouldn’t such as making leather from animal skins.
* The Aryans were polytheistic. They worshiped gods and goddesses who embodied natural forces such as sky, sun, storm and fire.
* The chief Aryan deity was fierce Indra, the god of war. Indra’s weapon was the thunderbolt, which he used to destroy demons and also to announce the arrival of rain, so vital to Indian life.
* Other major gods included Varuna, the god of order and creation. Agni, the god of fire and the messenger who communicated human wishes to the gods.
* Brahmins offered sacrifices of food and drink to the gods. Through the correct rituals of prayer, the Aryans believed they could call on the gods for health, wealth and victory in war.
* Over time, the Aryans began to believe in the notion of brahman and mysticism.
* Aryan mystics practiced meditation through yoga, spiritual and bodily disciplines designed to enhance the attempt to achieve direct contact with the divine.
* By 500 BC, Indian civilization consisted of many rival kingdoms.
* By this time the written language Sanskrit began to flourish in literary uses. It was used by priests to write sacred texts.
* The Aryans continued to memorize and recite ancient hymns, as well as two long epic poems, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. These Indian epics mix history, mythology, adventure and religion.
* *Mahabharata*
* India’s greatest epic.
* Tells of 5 royal brothers, the Pandavas, who lose their kingdom to their cousins. After a great battle that lasts 18 days, the Pandavas regain their kingdom and restore peace to India.
* One lengthy poem within the *Mahabharata* is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which reflects important Indian religious beliefs about the immortality of the soul and the value of performing one’s duty. The god Krishna instructs Prince Arjuna on the importance of duty over personal desires and ambitions.
* *Ramayana*
* Recounts the fantastic deeds of the daring hero Rama and his beautiful bride Sita.
* Early on, Sita is kidnapped by the demo-king Ravana.
* The rest of the story tells how Rama finally rescues Sita with the aid of the monkey general Hanuman.
* Like the Aryan religion, these epics evolved over thousands of years. Priest-poets added new morals to the tales to teach different lessons. For example, they pointed to Rama as a model of virtue or as an ideal king. Likewise, Sita came to be honored as an ideal woman who remained loyal to her husband through many hardships.
* Section 2
* Thousands of years ago, 2 major religions emerged in ancient India:
  1. Hinduism
  2. Buddhism
  3. Hinduism
* Unlike most major religions, Hinduism has no single founder and no single sacred text.
* Instead, it grew out of overlapping beliefs of the diverse groups who settled in India. The process probably began when the Aryans added the gods of the Indus civilization to their own.
* As a result, Hinduism has become one of the world’s most complex religions, with countless gods and goddesses and many forms of worship existing side by side.
* Despite this diversity, all Hindus share certain basic beliefs.
* Hindus believe that everything is part of the unchanging, all-powerful spiritual force called brahman.
* The most important Hindu gods are:
  1. Brahma (the Creator)
  2. Vishnu (the Preserver)
  3. Shiva (the Destroyer)
* Hinduism (continued)
* Each of the Hindu gods can take many forms, human or animal, to represent the various aspects of the brahman.
* Some Hindus also worship various forms of the powerful goddess Shakti.
* Shakti is both kind and cruel, a creator and a destroyer.
* Over many hundreds of years, Hindu teachings were recorded in the sacred texts of the Vedas.
  + The Upanishads are a section of the Vedas that address mystical questions related to Hinduism.
  + These sacred texts use vivid images to examine complex ideas about the human soul and the connectedness of all life.
* Hindu (continued)
* To Hindus, every person has an essential self, or atman.
* The ultimate goal of existence, Hindus believe, is achieving moksha, or union with brahman
* To do this, individuals must free themselves from selfish desires that separate them from brahman.
* Most people cannot achieve moksha in one lifetime, but Hindus believe in reincarnation, or the 87.
* Reincarnation allows people to continue working toward moksha through several lifetimes.
* In each existence, Hindus believe a person can come closer to achieving moksha by obeying the law of karma, which refers to all the actions of a person’s life that affect his or her fate in the next life.
* Hinduism (continued)
* Hindus believe all existence is ranked:
  + Humans are closest to brahma
  + Then come plants, animals and objects like rocks and water
* Those who live virtuously earn good karma and are reborn at a higher level of existence.
* Those who do evil acquire bad karma and are reborn into suffering at a lower level of existence.
* Hindus stress the importance of dharma, the religious and moral duties of an individual.
* These duties vary according to class, occupation, gender and age.
* Another key moral principle of Hinduism is ahimsa, or nonviolence. To Hindus, all people and things are aspects of brahman and therefore deserve to be respected.
  + The Aryan division of society led to a more complex system of castes, or social groups into which people are born and which can rarely be changed.
* Caste was closely linked to Hindu beliefs. To Hindus, people in different castes were different species of beings. For example, a high-cast Brahmin was purer and therefore closer to moksha than someone from a lower caste.
* To ensure spiritual purity, a web of complex caste rules governed every aspect of life –for example, where people lived, where they ate, how they dressed, and how they earned a living.
  + Rules forbade marrying outside one’s caste or even eating with members of another caste.
  + High-caste people had the strictest rules to protect them from the spiritually polluted, or impure, lower castes.
  + The lowest class was called “the untouchables.”
* For the untouchables, today called dalits, life was harsh and restricted.
* Other castes feared that that contact with an untouchable could spread pollution.
* Untouchables had to live apart and to sound a wooden instrument called a clapper to warn of their approach.
* Despite its inequalities, the caste system had some positive elements:
  + ensured social order (people believed that the law of karma determined their caste)
  + while they could not change their status in this life, they could reach a higher state in a future life by faithfully fulfilling the duties of their present caste
  + Gave people a sense of identity and interdependence (each caste had its own occupation and its own leaders, members cooperated to help one another)
* Buddhism
* Buddhism began with a reformer named Siddhartha Gautama who lived in the Himalayas.
* His teachings eventually became the core beliefs for one of the world’s most influential religions, Buddhism.
* Siddhartha was born a prince in about 563 BC.
* According to tradition his mother dreamed that a radiant white elephant descended to her from heaven. This sign led a prophet to predict that the boy would someday become a wandering holy man.
* Siddhartha’s father wanted him to become a ruler so, in order to prevent him from becoming a wandering holy man, he kept Siddhartha in the family’s palaces surrounded by comfort and luxury.
* At 16, Siddhartha married a beautiful woman and enjoyed a happy life.
* At age 29, Siddhartha took a ride beyond the palace. He saw an old man. On following rides he saw a sick person and a dead body. He became aware of human suffering for the first time.
* The reality of human suffering disturbed Siddhartha and so he left his family and the palace, never to return. He set out to discover “the realm of life where there is no suffering or death.”
* He wandered for years looking for answers. He fasted and meditated. At some point, he sat under a tree and was determined to stay there until he understood the mystery of life.
* Throughout the night, legend tells, evil spirits tempted Siddhartha to give up his meditations but he resisted. The next morning he believed he understood the cause of and cure for suffering and sorrow. He was no longer Siddhartha Gautama; he had become Buddha, or “Enlightened One.”
* The Buddha spent the rest of his life teaching others what he had learned.
* In Buddha’s first sermon after reaching enlightenment, he explained the Four Noble Truths that lie in the heart of Buddha:
  1. All life is full of suffering, pain and sorrow
  2. The cause of suffering is non virtue, or negative deeds and mindsets such as hatred and desire
  3. The only cure for suffering is to overcome non virtue
  4. The way to overcome non virtue is to follow the Eightfold Path
* The Eightfold Path are described as:

1. Right views
2. Right aspirations (desire or ambition to achieve something)
3. Right speech
4. Right conduct
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right contemplation (observation or examination)

* Eightfold Path…
* The first two steps involved understanding the Four Noble Truths and committing oneself to the Eightfold Path.
* Next, a person had to live a moral life, avoiding evil words and actions.
* Through meditation, a person might at last achieve enlightenment.
* For the Buddhist, the final goal is nirvana, or union with the universe and release from the cycle of rebirth.
* The Buddha saw the Eightfold Path as a middle way between a life devoted to pleasure and one based on harsh self-denial. He stressed moral principles such as honesty, charity, and kindness to all living creatures.
* Hinduism v. Buddhism
* How are the 2 alike:
  + Buddhism grew from the same traditions as Hinduism.
  + Both stress nonviolence and believe in karma, dharma and a cycle of rebirth (reincarnation).
* Yet they differ in several ways:
  + Instead of focusing on the priests, formal rituals and many gods of Hinduism, the Buddha urged each person to seek enlightenment through meditation.
  + Buddhist also reject the caste system, offering hope of nirvana to all regardless of birth.
* The Buddha attracted many disciples, or followers, who accompanied him as he preached across northern India.
* Legend says that at age 80 Buddha ate some spoiled food. As he lay dying, he told his disciples, “Decay is inherent in all things. Work out your own salvation with diligence.”
* After his death, Buddha’s followers collected his teachings into the *Tripitaka*, or “Three Baskets of Wisdom.”
* Missionaries and traders spread Buddhism across India to many parts of Asia. Gradually, Buddhism split into 2 major sects (subgroups):
  + Theravada Buddhism-closely followed the Buddha’s original teachings. Required a life devoted to hard spiritual work. Only the most dedicated seekers could hope to reach nirvana. Theravada Buddhism spread to Sri Lanka and SE Asia.
  + Mahayana Buddhism-this sect made it easier for ordinary people to achieve nirvana. Even though Buddha had forbid followers to worship him, Mahayana Buddhists pictured him and other holy beings as compassionate gods. People turn to these gods for help in solving daily problems as well as in achieving salvation. Mahayana Buddhism spread to China, Tibet, Korea and Japan.
* Section 3-Empires of India
* Chandragupta Maurya
  + Young adventurer who created the first Indian empire in 321 BC
  + Created a capital that boasted schools, a library, splendid palaces, temples and a huge wall surrounding the city
  + He first gained power in the Ganges valley and then conquered northern India
  + His son and grandson continued to grow the empire. The Maurya dynasty ruled over a vast, united empire from 321 BC-185 BC
  + Chandragupta maintained order through a well-organized bureaucracy
    - Royal officials supervised the building of roads and harbors to benefit trade
    - Other officials collected taxes and managed state-owned factories and shipyards
    - People sought justice through royal courts
  + Chandragupta’s rule was effective but harsh. A brutal secret police forced reported on corruption, crime and dissent (ideas that opposed those of the government).
  + The most honored Maurya emperor was Chandragupta’s grandson, Asoka.
* Asoka
  + Became emperor in 268 BC
  + Fought a long, bloody war to conquer the Deccan region of Kalinga
  + Horrified by the slaughter of the war, Asoka turned his back on more conquests. He turned to Buddhism, rejected violence and resolved to lead by moral example.
  + Asoka was a dedicated Buddhist. He sent missionaries to spread Buddhism across India and to Sri Lanka. By doing this he paved the way for the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia.
  + He preached Buddhism but also tolerated other religions.
  + Asoka’s moral rule brought peace and prosperity and helped unite the diverse peoples within his empire.
  + After his death, Maurya power declined. By 185 BC, the unity of the Maurya Empire was shattered as rival princes battled for power.
* Throughout its history, India has seldom remained unified for long.
* Why?
  + It has always been home to many people (much diversity)
  + Fierce rivalries kept it divided
  + Distance and cultural differences separated people of the north and the people of the Deccan in the south
  + Foreigners frequently pushed through the mountain passes into northern India (because they were always divided, they could not defend against these invaders)
* Like the Gangetic Plain the Deccan was divided into many kingdoms after the decline of Maurya power.
  + Each kingdom had its own capital with magnificent temples and workshops
  + The people of the Deccan were Dravidians with very different languages and traditions.
  + Deccan rulers generally tolerated all religions as well as foreigners.
  + In the Tamil kingdoms, which occupied much of the southern India, trade was important.
    - Tamil rulers improved their harbors to support overseas trade.
    - Tamil merchants sent spices, fine textiles and other luxuries west to the Roman Empire and also, later, to the Chinese.
    - The Tamil kingdoms had a rich literature in which poets described fierce wars, heroic deeds and festive occasions.
* The most powerful Indian states were in the north under the Gupta Dynasty (AD 320-540).
  + The Guptas organized a strong central government that promoted peace and prosperity.
  + Under the Guptas, India enjoyed a golden age, or period of great cultural achievement.
  + Under the Guptas, much power was left in the hands of the people.
  + Trade and farming grew across the empire.
  + The prosperity of the empire led to advancements in learning:
    - Students were educated in religious schools
    - They learned religion, mathematics, medicine, physics, languages, literature and other subjects
    - The advancement in mathematics impacted the rest of the world. They devised the system of writing numbers that we use today. They also originated the concept of zero and developed the decimal system that is used today.
    - Advancements in medicine included using herbs and other medicines to treat illness, setting bones and performing surgery, and vaccinations.
  + The Gupta empire declined for several reasons:
    - Pressure of weak rulers
    - Civil war
    - Foreign invaders (White Huns)
* Indian family structure
  + The ideal family was a joint family, in which parents, children and their offspring lived in the same dwelling.
  + Indian families were patriarchal meaning the father or oldest male in the family headed the household. Adult sons continued to live with their family even after they married and had children.
  + A father was taught to have wisdom and experience, and he enjoyed great authority. Even so, his power was limited by sacred laws and tradition. Usually he made decisions after consulting with his wife and other family members.
  + Property belonged to the entire family.
  + Family interests came before individual wishes. Children worked with older relatives in the fields and were educated on the caste system.
  + Daughters were trained to be good wives who served and obeyed her husband and his family.
  + Sons learned the rituals to honor the family’s ancestors.
  + For parents, an important duty was arranging good marriages for their children, based on the caste system and family interests. After marriage the daughter leaves home and becomes part of her husband’s family.
* Village structure
  + Each village included people of different castes who performed the necessary tasks of daily life.
  + It ran its own affairs based on caste rules and traditions and faced little outside interference as long as it paid its share of taxes.
  + Each village was run by a headman and a council.