QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Fill out your Summary for India. Describe the main features of the subcontinent of India. To what extent did these help shape India?

2. Why is the period between 1500 and 500 BCE called the “Vedic Age?” Discuss the major social and political changes that took place during this period. Why did the system of varna develop and how did Brahmanic teachings about varna and caste (jati) help “regulate relations between different groups?”

3. What was the relationship between class and caste systems and the idea of reincarnation, which included such elements as atman, karma, dharma*, and moksha*?

4. Why did two new sects appear after 700 BCE? What threats did they pose to the Vedic religion and to the authority of the Brahmin priests? In what ways did Jainism differ from Brahmanism?

5. Who was Siddhartha Gautama? What was the significance of the “Middle Path”, “Four Noble Truths”, and the “Eightfold Path” in Buddha’s teaching? How did Buddhism change after Buddha’s death?

6. What were some of the changes that took place as the Vedic religion evolved into Hinduism? What elements were adapted from Buddhism and the Dravidian tradition? How did the roles of the gods change? Why was Hinduism successful in driving Buddhism out of India?
7. What were the main features of the Mauryan Empire? Why was Ashoka such a “towering figure in Indian history”? What happened after the empire declined? What is the *Mahabharata*? Why is it so significant?

8. Compare the main elements of the Gupta Empire with those of the Mauryan. How did the Xiongnu and Harsha affect Indian history after the decline of the Gupta Empire?

9. Describe some of the changes in women’s positions after the Vedic Age. Compare the position of women in post-Vedic India with that of women in the Tamil culture of southern India.

**TERMS TO KNOW**

- *Vedas, Rig-Veda*
- *Upanishads*
- *Vedic age*
- *Aryas*
- *Dasas*
- *Dravidian*
- *Varna*
- *Brahmin* (priests)
- *Kshatriya* (/warriors)
- *Vaishya* (merchants)
- *Shudra* (peasants)
- *Jati* (caste)
- Reincarnation
- *Atman*
- *Karma*
- *Moksha*
- *Nirvana*
- Jai*nism*
- *Prince Siddhartha*
- **Buddha**
- “Middle Path”
- “Four Noble Truths”
- “Eight-fold Path”
- **Bodhisattvas**
- Mahayana Buddhism
- Theravada Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Vishnu
- Shiva
- Devi
- Mauryan Empire
- Chandragupta
- Ashoka
- Pataliputra (Patna)
- *Mahabharata*
- Mahavira
- *Bhagavad-Gita*
- *Ramayana*
- Gupta Empire
- Chandra Gupta
- Kalidasas
- Sanskrit
- Arabic numerals
- *Sati*
- *Dharma*
- Harsha
- Southeast Asia