I. **The Indo-European migrations and early Aryan India**

A. **The Aryans and India**

1. **The early Aryans**
   a. Depended heavily on a pastoral economy
   b. No writing system, but had orally transmitted works called the Vedas
   c. Sacred language (Sanskrit) and daily-use language (Prakrit)

2. **The Vedic Age: 1500-500 B.C.E.**
   a. A boisterous period; conflicts with indigenous peoples
   b. Called indigenous people *dasas*—"enemies" or "subject people"
   c. Indra, the Aryans' war god and military hero
   d. Aryan chiefdoms fought ferociously among themselves
   e. Most chiefdoms had leader *raja*, king

3. **Aryan migrations in India: first Punjab and by 500 B.C.E. in northern Deccan**
   a. Used iron tools and developed agriculture
   b. Lost tribal organizations but established regional kingdoms

B. **Origins of the caste system**

1. **Caste and varna**
   a. The meaning of *caste*: hereditary, unchangeable social classes
   b. The Sanskrit word *varna*, "color," refers to social classes

2. **Social distinctions in the late Vedic Age**
   a. Four main varnas, recognized after 1000 B.C.E.: *brahmins* (priests), *kshatriyas* (warriors and aristocrats), *vaishyas* (cultivators, artisans, and merchants), *shudras* (landless peasants and serfs)
   b. Later the category of the untouchables was added

3. **Subcaste, or jati**
   a. Represented more elaborate scheme of social classification; developed after the sixth century B.C.E.
   b. *Jati*, or subcastes, were determined by occupations
   c. Elaborate rules of jati life: eating, communication, behavior

4. **In caste system, social mobility difficult but still possible**
   a. Usually a result of group, not individual, effort
   b. Foreign peoples could find a place in society of the castes

C. **Development of patriarchal society**

1. **Patriarchal and patrilineal society**

2. **The Lawbook of Manu**
   a. Prepared by an anonymous sage, first century B.C.E.
   b. Dealt with moral behavior and social relationships
   c. Advised men to treat women with honor and respect
   d. Subjected women to the control and guidance of men
   e. Women's duties: to bear children and maintain the household

3. **Sati**, social custom in which widow throws self on funeral pyre

II. **Religion in the Vedic Age**

A. **Aryan religion**

1. **Aryan gods**
   a. War god, Indra
   b. Gods of the sun, the sky, the moon, fire, health, disease
   c. God Varuna: ethical concern, cosmic order

2. **Ritual sacrifices were more important than ethics**
   a. Priests were specialists of the ritual sacrifices
   b. Ritual sacrifices for rewards from the divine power
   c. Sacrifices, chants, *soma*

3. **Spirituality underwent a shift after about 800 B.C.E.**
   a. Thoughtful individuals retreated to forests as hermits
   b. Dravidian notions of transmigration and reincarnation were adapted

B. **The blending of Aryan and Dravidian values**

1. **The Upanishads, works of religious teachings (800-400 B.C.E.)**
   a. The religious forums: dialogues between disciples and sages
   b. Brahman: the universal soul
   c. Highest goal: to escape reincarnation and join with Brahman
d. Samsara: an individual soul was born many times

e. Karma: specific incarnations that a soul experienced

f. Moksha: permanent liberation from physical incarnation

2. Religion and Vedic society

a. Samsara and karma reinforced caste and social hierarchy

b. Upanishads were also spiritual and intellectual contemplations

c. Taught to observe high ethical standards: discourage greed, envy, vice

d. Respect for all living things, a vegetarian diet