
Chapter – 5 History

What Book and Burial tell us

- The oldest book known all over the world is supposed to be that of the Vedas.
 - They were written about 3,000 years back and are the earliest literary source available.
 - **The Vedas:**
 - (i) The word, Veda means Knowledge. There are four Vedas: Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda.
 - (ii) The Rigveda is the oldest Veda. It was composed about 3,500 years ago.
 - (iii) The hymns have been compared by sages. These hymns were recited and passed from one generation to another until they were written down.
 - (iv) These hymns are in praise of different gods such as Indra (the god of warrior), Agni (the god of fire), Varun (the god of sky) and many others.
 - **How do Historians study the Rigveda:**
 - (i) While studying about the past, historians examined written sources.
 - (ii) They studied the Rigveda. Most of the hymns in Rigveda were in the form of dialogues.
 - (iii) Historians study these dialogues to arrive at conclusions.
 - **Rigveda: What does it tell us about Prayers and Battles:**
 - (i) Most prayers in the Rigveda are for cattle, children and horses.
 - (ii) Horses were yoked to chariots and used in battles.
 - (iii) Battles aimed to capture cattle, land, pasture, water and people.
 - (iv) A portion of the wealth was used for performing Yajnas or sacrifices in which offerings were put into fire, for gods including ghee, grains and rare animals.
 - **Political Life:**
 - (i) The Vedas even tell us about political life of this sage.
 - (ii) The head of state was called Raja.
 - (iii) The Raja had no capital, palaces, armies or right to collect taxes.
 - **Occupations:**

Agriculture, cattle-rearing, chariot-making, pottery, jewellery-making tanning and metal-work were the main occupations.
 - **Dasas/Dasyus**
 - (i) While Aryans composed Vedas, another group of people opposed to Vedas.
 - (ii) They were called Dasas or Dasyus or slaves.
 - **Social Differences: Burials**
 - (i) Archaeologists assume that objects discovered with a skeleton, probably belonged to the dead person.
 - (ii) In Brahmagiri, a skeleton was buried with 33 gold beads, 2 stone beads, and one conch shell whereas other skeleton only had a pot.
 - (iii) This shows the difference in status, amongst the people who were buried. Some were rich while other were poor.
 - (iv) Sometimes, megaliths have more than one skeleton. It indicates that people belonging to the same family were buried at same place though at different times.
 - (v) Special burials took place at Inamgaon.
 - (vi) Animals were used as food.
 - (vii) Skeletal studies tell us about better way of identifying dead bodies.
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