PARK EAST HIGH SCHOOL
Purpose, Preparation, Pride

Name: _____ Date: _____

India as Colony: 1850 to 1947

The British Crown took over direct control of India from the East India Company in 1858. Economic exploitation increased. A determined and mostly nonviolent freedom movement emerged and finally succeeded, resulting in the formation of modern India and Muslim Pakistan in 1947.



Soldiers on parade receive King George V and Queen Mary as they enter Mumbai in 1911 through the "Gateway of India" especially built for their arrival. The last British soldiers left through it in 1948.

Note to Students, Parents and Teachers

This Educational Insight is the fourth chapter in our series on Hindu history intended for use in US primary and secondary schools. Like preceding chapters, it openly discusses topics that are neglected or covered only briefly in current American curricula. We summarize the political history of India between 1850 and 1947, then tell the story of two influential men: Swami Vivekananda, who presented to the Western world a view of Hinduism as a tolerant, sophisticated faith, and Mahatma Gandhi, who taught the world the power of nonviolent political action. Finally, we explore Hindu food, dress, rites of passage and initiations. Overall, the student is provided a glimpse into the beliefs, traditions, practices and refined culture that enabled Hinduism to survive the onslaught of conquest and colonialism. This lesson was written and designed by the editorial staff of HINDUISM TODAY in collaboration with Dr. Shiva Bajpai, Professor Emeritus of History, California State University, Northridge, Los Angeles.

Academic reviewers: Dr. Klaus Klostermaier, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Manitoba; Dr. Jeffrey D. Long, Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Elizabethtown College; Dr. Anantanand Rambachan, Professor of Religion, St. Olaf College; Dr. T.S. Rukmani, Professor and Chair in Hindu Studies, Concordia University; Dr. Michael K. Ward, Visiting Lecturer in History, California State University, Northridge. Educational Consultant: Justin Stein, Lecturer at Windward Community College, Hawaii, and former middle school teacher in New York.

SECTION 1

British Rule's Mixed Blessings

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. India became a British colony following the 1857 uprising.
2. Under British rule, India suffered poverty, famine and lack of freedom. These inspired the Indian independence movement.
3. Through mostly nonviolent means, India won independence after World War II, but Pakistan was divided off for Muslims.

The Big Idea

After ten centuries of alien occupation and a century of struggle, the Indian people regained their independence.

Hinduism Today's Teaching Standards

This column in each of the three sections presents our subject outline for India and Hinduism from 1850 to 1947.

1. Assess the impact of colonization, especially English education, on the people of India.
2. Explain how the uprising against the East India Company led to the establishment of the British Raj.
3. Describe the history of India's movement for independence, including the role of Gandhi's nonviolent campaigns.

If YOU lived then...

You are a Hindu sepoy in the Indian army in 1857. New rifle cartridges have been issued. To use them, you have to bite off the tip, which is smeared with beef fat. You have never eaten or even tasted meat, as killing animals, especially cows, goes against your religious beliefs. If you refuse, you will be arrested—and possibly executed. If you run away, you risk the same fate. **What do you do, and why?**

Building Background: Nationalism or patriotism is love and devotion to one's country. Before the 19th century, people felt loyalty to their regional ruler and culture. They were less concerned about the country they shared with others. Starting in the 19th century, people developed political sentiments for their country as a whole and promoted a national identity.

Understanding Colonialism

As we learned in the last lesson, the British East India Company came to dominate India through its clever use of political strategy, **intrigue** and military force. In 1858 India became a colony of the British Empire. Powerful nations, including England, Spain, Portugal, France and Holland, had used their financial and military power to establish colonies in Asia, Africa and the Americas. Many colonies, such as in North America and in Australia, were created by military conquest. The conquerors drove out or killed the native peoples, whom they regarded as subhuman. They then settled the land with immigrants from their own countries. Other colonies, such as India, were first opened through trade and commerce which eventually led to their foreign economic domination and political control. England's colonies included India, Burma, Ceylon, Malaysia, Singapore and hundreds of other territories large and small worldwide. The English defended their conquests by claiming that they were a superior race with a noble mission: to spread Western civilization. This sounds very racist today. But it was then a firm belief of most Englishmen.

While England profited from its colonies, the colonies suffered oppression and disease. In the 19th century, the British did bring notable advances of the Industrial Revolution to India. But a century

of British rule drove a wealthy and vital India into poverty and weakness.

Britain introduced English education in 1835 to strengthen its power. Indians excelled in the new education system, with unintended results. They read, in English, how the American colonies banded together in 1776 to free themselves from Britain and establish a democracy. They learned how the French gained freedom by overthrowing their king in 1789. Indians rightly concluded that their ancient land—Bharat Mata, "Mother India"—had the same right as America and France to be free and independent. But it would take a century to achieve this goal.



The red areas were under direct British control. The yellow areas, called "Princely States," had local Indian rulers who answered to the British.

The 1857 Revolt

The East India Company dominated India until the 1850s. A huge uprising in 1857 led to the direct and official takeover of India by the British government.

Many Indians were unhappy with the Company. It took over previously independent kingdoms within India. Its economic policies made most people poor. Its British-run police and law courts were inadequate or corrupt. Within their army, the British officers had little respect for their Indian soldiers or *sepoys*, and in some cases promoted their conversion to Christianity.

A relatively simple incident triggered the massive revolt. A new type of greased cartridge was issued for the sepoys' Enfield rifles. Word spread that the grease was beef and pork fat. To load a cartridge, one had to bite off the greased tip. The sepoys refused to use them: the Hindus because they considered the cow sacred; the Muslims because they considered the pig unclean. The sepoys **mutinied**, attacking and killing their British officers.

The revolt spread across North India, as Hindus and Muslims, elites and commoners, joined forces against the British. Many landlords, left impoverished, joined the rebellion. Within a year, the British ruthlessly crushed the revolt, killing hundreds of thousands (some say millions) of soldiers and civilians.

Stories (some true, some false) of British women and children being killed by the rebels **inflamed** public opinion in England. Charles Dickens, author of *A Christmas Carol* and other famous stories, wrote that if he were commander-in-chief in India he would "strike that Oriental Race … proceeding, with merciful swiftness of execution, to blot it out of mankind and **raze** it off the face of the Earth." Although Dickens championed the poor in England and opposed slavery in America, he held a **rabidly** racist view of Indians.

The British were shocked by the uprising, which recalled the American Revolution. To protect their power, investment and income, they tightened their grip on the subcontinent by transferring rule from the East India Company to the British government.

Academic Vocabulary

intrigue
secret planning to harm another

mutiny
a revolt by soldiers or sailors against their officers

inflame
to cause strong emotions

raze
to destroy completely

rabid
extreme or fanatical support of a belief

The British Raj

The new government of India was called the Raj, a Sanskrit word meaning to reign or rule. Its first steps were to ensure that no future rebellion would take place. The ratio of English soldiers in the army was greatly increased. Sepoys of various castes, religions and regions were assigned to separate units to prevent possible **conspiracy**. The population was disarmed. Ownership of guns was allowed by license only. Generally, Indians had no rights and no voice in their own rule.

The Raj expanded the rail and road system which allowed **duty-free** British products to be sold all over India. This, unfortunately, caused the collapse of major native industries such as cotton textiles.

Tax revenues from agriculture and industry that should have benefitted India instead went to England. Between 1770 and 1857, mismanagement worsened the effects of twelve major **famines** and many minor ones. According to official figures, 28 million Indians starved to death between 1854 and 1901. India's share of world income shrank from 22.6% in 1700 to 3.8% in 1952.

As early as the 1820s, many Indians wrote about the need to end British rule in India. The peaceful demand for freedom by nationalist political organizations continued decade after decade, at times turning into violent but unsuccessful uprisings.

The British improved India's legal, justice and civil service systems, introduced better military training, built a few universities and created telegraph, postal, rail and road networks. They did so primarily for their own political and economic gain, not to benefit the Indian people.

The Road to Independence

Mohandas K. Gandhi, born in 1869, is honored in India as the "father of the nation." After becoming a lawyer in England, he moved to South Africa. There he won political rights for Indian immigrants by nonviolent means. In 1915 he returned home to India and joined the freedom struggle.

On April 13, 1919, British General Dyer led an attack upon a peaceful political meeting of unarmed men, women and children at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. In ten minutes, 400 people were shot dead and 1,200 seriously injured. Instead of being punished for his crime, Dyer was honored as a hero.

The **ruthless** massacre in Amritsar

Academic Vocabulary

conspiracy secret plotting by a group

duty free being exempt from import and other taxes

famine extreme shortage of food

ruthless cruel; lacking pity for other's suffering

partition to set off or divide from

Timeline: 1857 to 1947 ce

1857 British government suppresses widespread uprising and begins formal imperial rule of India

1860 First Indian indentured laborers arrive in South Africa; tens of thousands more eventually go to Africa, Fiji and the Caribbean

1863 Birth of Swami Vivekananda, India's first Hindu missionary to the West

1869 Birth of Mohandas K. Gandhi who won India's independence by nonviolent means



GANDHI MUSEUM

Mahatma Gandhi



RK MISSION

Vivekananda

1876 Queen Victoria of England is proclaimed Empress of India

1876-1890 Fifty-volume *Sacred Books of the East* is published, English translations of Indian and other Eastern scriptures

1885 Indian National Congress is founded to voice Indian concerns to the British government

1893 Swami Vivekananda represents Hinduism at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago

1896 Lokmanya B. G. Tilak starts Ganesha and Shivaji festivals in Bombay to mobilize mass Indian nationalism

1860 1870 1880 1890 1900

convinced Gandhi that only a mass struggle against foreign rule would save India. From 1920 on, he led a national movement for freedom based on his philosophy of nonviolent resistance called *satyagraha*, "force of truth." Indian nationalists stopped cooperating with the government, refused to pay taxes and burned English goods in public. Gandhi and his followers were repeatedly beaten and jailed.

During the freedom movement, Hindus and Muslims disagreed about the democratic government they hoped to build. Muslims did not want to be a permanent minority in India and demanded their own country, an idea that Gandhi opposed.

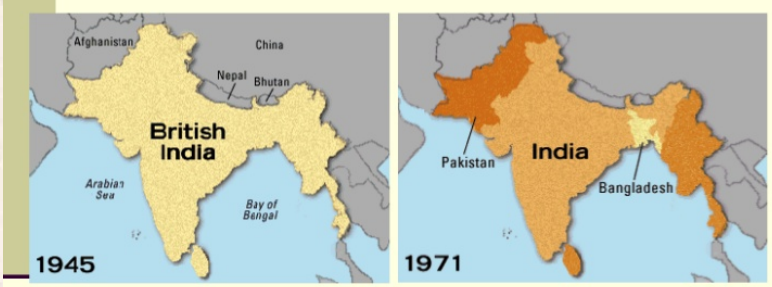
World War II began in 1939 as Germany and Japan sought to add countries to their empires by force, just as Britain had done a century earlier. The war put Britain in the awkward position of defending its own freedom and democracy against Germany while continuing to deprive India of hers.

The Quit India movement was launched in 1942. Soon afterwards, Gandhi and other leaders were arrested. The movement became violent at some places, with hundreds shot and killed by police.

Britain's military force in India was composed of Indian soldiers and sailors commanded by British officers. By the 1940s, the loyalty of these hired servicemen to their foreign masters diminished as the demand for freedom swept over India. A 1946 mutiny by Indian sailors of the Royal Indian Navy convinced the British that it was only a matter of time before the entire military might revolt.

Crippled by World War II and nearly bankrupt, Britain gave up India and other colonies, including Burma and Ceylon. India's transition to freedom on August 15, 1947, brought with it a terrible tragedy. Pakistan was **partitioned** from India on the basis of religion. A huge relocation followed as 7.5 million Muslims moved to Pakistan from India and an equal number of Hindus and Sikhs fled Pakistan. A million died from hardship, attacks and riots. On January 30, 1948, a Hindu, enraged over the partition, assassinated Mahatma Gandhi.

Basic Maps of the Partition



These two maps show how India was divided after gaining independence from the British in 1947. The first shows India under British rule, before the partition. The second shows how the region was divided after gaining independence and the breakaway of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) from West Pakistan (Pakistan today) in 1971 through the Bangladesh Liberation War.



SANATAN.ORG

B.G. Tilak

1910 B. G. Tilak declares, "Independence is our birthright"

1918 17 million people, 5% of India's population, die in Spanish flu pandemic; 50 million perish worldwide



TIME MAGAZINE

Man of the Year

1930 Gandhi named Time Magazine "Man of the Year" as his fame grows in the West following the successful Salt March

1943 Three million Bengalis die in famine caused by British negligence

1910 1920 1930 1940

1900 India's population is 290 million, 18% of the world's people

1919 General Dyer orders troops to fire on an unarmed political gathering, killing hundreds; Gandhi begins noncooperation movement

1921 Subhash Chandra Bose advocates armed rebellion. In 1943 he forms the Indian National Army of 40,000 troops which fought against British troops in Burma.

1939 Beginning of World War II, which ultimately results in the death of 60 million people

1947 India gains independence. Pakistan is divided off along religious lines for Muslims

SECTION 2

The Challenge of Ideas

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Missionaries and colonists believe that their culture is superior to all other cultures.
2. Swami Vivekananda popularized the Hindu belief that all religions are valid paths to God.
3. Gandhi's satyagraha campaign brought independence to India and inspired nonviolent movements for freedom and civil rights around the world.

The Big Idea

Hindu ideals of nonviolence and religious tolerance have helped shape today's world.

Key Terms

satyagraha, p. I-8
colonized mind, p. I-9

Hinduism Today's Teaching Standards

5. Describe the conflict of ideas between prominent Hindus, including Vivekananda and Gandhi, and British missionaries and colonists.

6. Identify the influence of Swami Vivekananda on modern ideas of religious tolerance.

7. Explain how the Hindu principles behind satyagraha have improved the lives of people around the world.

If YOU lived then...

It is May 4, 1963, Birmingham, Alabama, USA. A thousand students from the city's all-black high school join the nonviolent freedom protest led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to **desegregate** the city. Police knock them down using high-powered fire hoses and arrest hundreds. Your 17-year-old daughter is arrested and jailed for three days.

What do you say to her when she returns home?

Building Background: Dr. King went to India in 1959 to study Gandhi's methods. He adopted satyagraha, calling it "nonviolent direct action." King said it should so "dramatize an issue that it can no longer be ignored." Gandhi translated *satyagraha* as "truth force" or "soul force." Satyagraha, he taught, forbids inflicting violence on one's opponent.

Understanding the Power of Ideas

In the 19th century, India was fighting the British in a war of ideas. One battle was over religion: Christian missionaries believed it was their sacred duty to convert all Indians. Another was over colonialism: the British were ruling India by military force, supported by the idea that they were a superior race. Many thinkers and activists, key among them Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, challenged these ideas. Today nearly all colonies have been freed. Few countries, if any, would claim a moral right to colonize another. But religious conflict remains a crucial issue. Vivekananda's teaching of equal respect for all religions is more relevant today than ever before.

A Young Monk with a Message of Tolerance

The story of Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) starts with a temple priest named Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) who lived near Calcutta. He was a mystic, a person who had visions of God and many profound spiritual experiences. Though not formally educated, he attracted followers from the city's prominent families. One was an 18-year-old college student named Narendranath Dutta.

When they first met, Narendra asked Ramakrishna why he believed in God. Ramakrishna replied, "Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much more intense sense." Narendra took

Swami Vivekananda's Address to the Parliament of the World's Religions

On September 11, 1893, Swami Vivekananda began his address with the words, "sisters and brothers of America," resulting in a two-minute standing ovation. He continued, "It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

"I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions to be true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth.

"I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: 'As the different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea, O Lord, so the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'

"Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have possessed long this beautiful earth. It has filled the earth with violence, drenched it often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for this horrible demon, human society would be far more advanced than it is now.

"But its time has come, and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention will be the death-knell to all persecutions with the sword or the pen, and to all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal."



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Ramakrishna as his guru and was trained by him for the next five years.

After Ramakrishna's death, Narendra took vows as a Hindu monk, becoming Swami Vivekananda. He gave up his further education and instead set off on **pilgrimage** across India. He deeply impressed many people in Madras. They raised money door to door to pay for his travel to America for the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions.

At that interfaith congress in Chicago, the cultured and **eloquent** 30-year-old swami was well received. In his opening talk, he declared, "We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions to be true." The popularity of this Hindu message of respect and tolerance alarmed some Christian participants who had hoped the Parliament would prove their religion superior to others.

The *New York Herald* reported at the time, "Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him, we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation." Another reporter wrote, "The **impertinence** of sending half-educated **theological** students to instruct the wise and **erudite** Orientals was never brought home to an English-speaking audience more forcibly."

Vivekananda returned to India a hero. He aroused a new pride among Hindus and kindled in India's youth a nationalist spirit. Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission as a religious and educational institution to address India's social problems. He died on July 4, 1902, at age 39. Freedom fighter Subhash Chandra Bose aptly called Swami "the maker of modern India."

Vivekananda was not the first Indian religious and social reformer of the 19th century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy sought to counter the criticisms of Hinduism made by the British missionaries. He founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 as a new religion with Christian-style services. Swami Dayananda Saraswati was a Hindu traditionalist. He began the Arya Samaj in

Academic Vocabulary

desegregate allow equal access to public places for all races

pilgrimage to travel to a sacred place for worship

eloquent pleasant, fluent, convincing in speech

impertinence lack of respect, rudeness

theological having to do with the study of religious concepts

erudite scholarly; having great learning

In 1930 Gandhi led a march to challenge laws that taxed salt and imposed burdens on the poor. His public spectacle of breaking the law by collecting salt at the sea was a turning point for the organized opposition to Britain's tyranny.



NATIONAL GANDHI MUSEUM

Academic Vocabulary

egalitarian the principle that all people deserve equal rights and opportunities

callous lacking mercy

tyranny cruel and unjust use of power or authority

1875 to revive Vedic society and religion. He believed Hinduism could be purified by a return to the teachings and practices of the *Vedas*. Both the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj encouraged Indians to be **egalitarian** and do more social service for the poor.

Vivekananda, on the other hand, had a powerful impact both on India and the West. In particular, he introduced the Hindu idea that all religions deserve respect as valid paths to God, an idea now firmly established in America. In 2008, polls found that while 76% of Americans identify themselves as Christian, 65% believe that "many paths other than my own can lead to eternal life." How different from Vivekananda's time, when most Americans were staunch Christians who believed theirs was the only way to God!

Satyagraha: Fighting without Violence

Mahatma Gandhi was a devout Hindu, a skilled lawyer and a master politician. His strategy to gain India's freedom was *satyagraha*, "truth force," the application of righteous and moral force in politics. Satyagraha is based on Hindu principles, including nonviolence, the ultimate goodness of the soul and a belief in the existence of God everywhere and in everyone. Satyagraha requires a core group of self-sacrificing and disciplined activists. To be successful, it must have widespread publicity, generating national concern and international pressure.

Since Gandhi's time, satyagraha has been used to win civil rights for blacks in America, improve conditions for California farm workers, end apartheid in South Africa and publicize human rights abuses in Myanmar.

Gandhi used the power of satyagraha to oppose the British salt tax to tighten its stranglehold on India's economy. The Raj imposed strict controls on salt production and a stiff tax on its sale. People could be arrested for making or selling salt. This **callous** tax on a basic necessity of life especially burdened the poor. To Gandhi, the

salt tax symbolized the **tyranny** of the Raj.

Gandhi's dramatic revolt, the Salt March, began on March 12, 1930. Tens of thousands of people cheered as he walked 390 kilometers from his Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, to Dandi Beach. After morning prayers on April 6, he collected salt on the seashore and proclaimed, "With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire." Hearing this, people all across India freely collected and sold salt. Tens of thousands were arrested, including 18,000 women. The march was closely covered by the international press, making Gandhi famous in Europe and America.

Six weeks later, hundreds of marchers attempted to take over the Dharasana Saltworks, 300 kilometers north of Bombay. The ensuing clash was reported worldwide by Webb Miller of United Press International: "Police charged [the marchers], swinging their clubs and **belaboring** the raiders on all sides. The volunteers made no resistance. As the police swung hastily with their sticks, the natives simply dropped in their tracks. Less than 100 yards away I could hear the dull impact of clubs against bodies. The watching crowds gasped, or sometimes cheered, as the volunteers crumpled before the police without even raising their arms to ward off the blows."

Professor Richard Johnson wrote, "It is widely believed that the Salt Campaign turned the tide in India. All the violence was committed by the British and their Indian soldiers. The legitimacy of the Raj was never reestablished for the majority of Indians and an ever increasing number of British subjects." The independence struggle was now truly a mass movement.

In a similar way, in 1963 Martin Luther King forced the desegregation of Birmingham, Alabama. **Civil rights** activists were arrested by the hundreds as they attempted to peacefully **integrate** the city's restaurants, shops and churches. Violent attacks by police on unarmed, nonresisting marchers attracted worldwide attention. The United States was shamed and embarrassed as a result. New laws were soon passed requiring equal rights for all.

The Colonized Mind

The nonviolent strategies of satyagraha helped Indians and black Americans attain freedom after centuries of domination. But decades later, they and their descendants still felt inferior to white people. This condition, called "the colonized mind," can persist long after physical freedom is won.

Many of India's colonized people, especially those educated in English schools, came to believe that everything about themselves was inferior to that of the British. Thus they considered English superior to any Indian language, English manners better than Indian manners, a suit and tie better than a kurta shirt and pants, and white skin better than brown skin.

Overcoming, or "decolonizing," the colonized mind requires a multicultural education, self-examination and rejection of externally created ideas of inferiority. The colonized mind is the most lasting negative impact of colonialism.

THE IMPACT TODAY

In accepting the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, President Obama said, "As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr. King's life work, I am living testimony to the moral force of nonviolence. I know there's nothing weak, nothing passive, nothing **naive** in the creed and lives of Gandhi and King."

Academic Vocabulary

belabor
to beat severely

civil rights
political and social freedom and equality

integrate
to end the separation of people by race

naive
innocent; lacking experience

