

Slide 1

Vedic Period or Vedic Age

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 2

Vedic Period (1500 BCE to 500 BCE)

- Early Vedic Period (1500 BCE to 1000 BCE)
- Later Vedic Period (1000 BCE to 600 BCE)
- Epic Period (600 BCE to 500 BCE)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 3

Vedic Period

Early Vedic Age: The Vedic age began in India in about 1500 BC and extend up to 600 BCE with the coming of the Aryans, who scattered on the plains of northern India. Max Muller believes Aryan connotes nothing but language.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 4

**Vedas**

- Aryans developed Vedic culture based on Vedas. The meaning of the word Veda is "knowledge", the best of all knowledge in the eyes of Hindus.
- It is a collection of hymns, prayers, charms, litanies and sacrificial formulae.
- There are four Vedas, namely, **Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda** and **Athar Veda**.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 5

**Origin**

- Some scholars, such as Max Muller and Dr. Thapar, believe that originally, the Aryans seem to have lived somewhere in the area east of Alps, in the region known as Eurasia, the region of the Caspian Sea and the southern Russian steppes, and gradually dividing into a number of tribes migrated in search of pasture, to Greece and Asia Minor, to Iran and to India.
- By that time, they came to be known as Aryans. This is proved by some Aryan names mentioned in the **Kassite** inscriptions of 1600 BC and the **Mitanni** inscriptions of the fourteenth century BC, found in Iraq which suggest that from Iran a branch of the Aryans moved towards the west.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 6

**Various theory  
Original Home of Aryans**

<b>Region</b>	-	<b>Theorist</b>
• Central Asia	-	Max Muller
• Tibet	-	Dayanand Saraswati
• Arctic Region	-	B.G. Tilak

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





Slide 13

**Rig veda**

- Collection of hymns
- Oldest of all vedas
- Associated of 1017 hymns or **Suktas**
- Compiled in 10 'mandalas' & 8 'Akhtaks'.
- Also contains the famous **Gayatri Mantra**
- II, III, IV, V, VI & VII are oldest mandalas
- I, VIII, IX, X are latest mandalas.
- The Tenth "Mandalas" or chapter which has the "**Purushasukta**" hymn, was probably added later.
- Mandala IX is completely devoted to 'Soma'.
- Mandala II to VII were created by Grita Samada, Vishwamitra, Vamadeva, Atri, Bharadwaj, Vashistha,
- VIII Kanwa and Angira, IX Soma

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

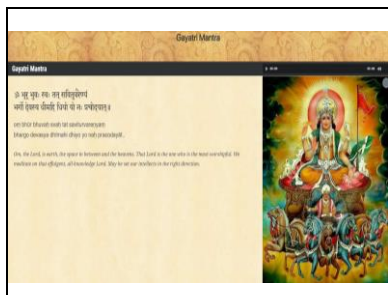
---

---

---

Slide 14

Gayatri Mantra



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for the Gayatri Mantra. On the left, the Sanskrit text is displayed: 'ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय' and 'ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय'. Below it, the English translation is provided: 'Om, the Lord, is worshipped in Brahman and the Brahman. That Lord is the one who is the most worshipped. He is the one who is the most worshipped. He is the one who is the most worshipped.' On the right, there is a vibrant, colorful illustration of a deity, likely Lord Venkateswara, seated on a throne and surrounded by devotees.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 15

**Sama veda**

- Rhythmic compilation of hymns for Rigveda
- "Book for Chants" contains 1,549 hymns, meant to be sung at the 'soma' sacrifice by a special class of Brahmanas called Udgatris.
- But the *Samaveda* has very little original value.
- Has only 75 fundamental hymns
  - Karnataka - Jaiminga
  - Gujarat - Kanthun
  - Maharashtra - Ranayaniya
- Sung by Udgatri

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 16

**Yajur veda**

- Book of sacrificial prayers
- Rituals of yajnas
- Is sung of priest "**Adhvaryu**"
- Its mantras tell us how the sacrifices were to be performed and what part the "**Adhvaryus**"- the Brahmanas who performed the manual work in the arrangement of sacrifice were to play at the time of sacrifice.
- Has been compiled in "fourth path"
- Has been divided into, Krishna (black) Yajurveda & Shukla (white) Yajurveda
- Prose text

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 17

**Athar veda**

- Mantras for magic spells
- Populate ritualistic system & superstitions
- Associated with "Saunkhya" and "Paiplad" community
- Collection of 711/731/760 hymns
- Has been divided in 20 "Kandas"
- 18th, 19th & 20th 'Kandas' are later works
- Provides freedom from evils spirits.
- Oldest text on Indian Medicine.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 18

**The vast literature of the Aryans is divided into two parts - **Sruti** and **Smriti****

- **1. Sruti Literature:** The word Veda has been divided from the Sanskrit word **Ved**, which means 'spiritual knowledge'. The Vedas are four in number - **Rig Veda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda**. The Rig Veda contains a references only to the first three Vedas, which suggests that the fourth **Veda** was composed at some later date.
- The Vedic literature is usually divided into three periods:-
- The Mantra period when the Samhitas were composed
- Brahaman period when the Brahmanas, Upanishads and Aranyakas were composed
- the Sutra period.
- These three periods succeeded or overlap each other.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 19

**Brahmanas**

- **Brahmanas** are massive prose text which contain speculation of the meaning of the hymns, give precepts for their application, relate stories of their origin in connection with sacrificial rites and explain the secret meaning of the later.
- Vedas and their Brahmanas 1. Rigveda Aitereya and Kaushitaki 2. Samaveda Tandya and Jaiminiya 3. Yajurveda Tattiriya and Satpatha 4. Atharvaveda Gopatha

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 20

**Aranyakas**

- The **Aranyakas** are the concluding parts of the Brahmanas. It does not lay much stress on rites, rituals and sacrifices, but merely contain the philosophy and mysticism. The lead with the problems of soul, origin and elements of universe and the creation of universe.
- Aranyaka Literarily, it means 'Jungle'
- Provides description of Moral Science and Philosophy
- Provides details of hermits and saints who lived in Jungles
- Give stress on meditation
- Protests the system of 'Yajnas'

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 21

**Upanishadas**

- It would be appropriate to describe Upanishadas as mystic writings. There are 108 Upanishads in all, the most prominent of them being *Ish, Prasana, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chandogaya, Kathoupanishad, Ishopanishad, Brehadaranyaka*, etc.
- Literary meaning is 'Satra' (to sit near masters feet) in which Guru offers band of knowledge to their disciples
- Is a combination of Tatva-mimansa and philosophy
- They are also called "**Vedanta**"
- Primitive upanishada are "**Brahadaranyaka**" and "**Chandogya**"
- Later Upanishada like "Katha" and "Swetaswata" have been written in poetic forms.
- Brahma is the summary of philosophy, which is the only a 'truth' in the world.
- Knowledge awards salvation says Upanishadas
- Oldest possibility Narsinghpurvatapani
- Latest possibility Allopianishada in Akbar's reign

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





Slide 28

• **Varna System:** Varna was the term used for colour, and it seems that the Aryans were fair and the indigenous inhabitants dark in complexion. The dasas and dasyus, who were conquered by the Aryans, were treated as slaves and sudras. Gradually, the tribal society was divided into three groups-warriors, priests and the people. The fourth division called the Shudras appeared towards the end of the Rig Veda period. In the age of Rig Veda, divisions based on occupations had started. But this division was not very sharp.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 29

**Occupation**

• Their earliest life seems to have been mainly pastoral, agriculture being a secondary occupation. The Aryans did not lead a settled life. Although they used several animals, the horse played the most significant role in their life. The Rig Vedic people possessed better knowledge of agriculture. Ploughshare is mentioned in the earliest part of the Rig Veda though some consider it an interpolation. The term for war in the Rig Veda is *gavisthi* or 'search for cows'. The Rig Veda mentions such artisans as the carpenter, the chariot-maker, the weaver, the leather worker, the potter, etc. This indicates that they practiced all these crafts. The term, *ayas* used for copper or bronze shows that metal working was known.

- Metals Known to Rig Vedic People
- Gold - Hiranya
- Iron - Shyama
- Copper - Ayas

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 30

• **Diet:** The Indo-Aryans, while sharing the ancient Iranian veneration for the cow, felt no scruple about sacrificing both bulls and cows at weddings or on other important occasions. The persons who took part in the sacrifice ate the flesh of the victim, whether bull, cow, or horse. But meat was eaten only as an exception. Milk was an important food supplemented by cakes of barley or wheat (*yava*), vegetables and fruit.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 31

• **Strong Drinks:** The people freely indulged in two kinds of intoxicating liquor, called *soma* and *sura*. *Sura* probably was a kind of beer. Soma juice was considered to be particularly acceptable to the Gods, and was offered with elaborate ceremonial. The Sama Veda provides the chants appropriate for the ceremonies.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 32

• **Amusements:** Amusements included dancing, music, chariot-racing, and dicing. Gambling with dice is mentioned so frequently in both the Rig Veda and the later documents that the prevalence of the practice is beyond doubt.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 33

**Rig Vedic Gods**

• The early Vedic religion was naturalistic. Evidently, there were neither temples nor idols. The mode of prayer was recitation of mantras. Sacrifice was offered for *Praja* (children), *Pasu* (cattle) and *Dhana* (wealth) and not for spiritual upliftment or misery.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 34

**Early Vedic Religion**

- Believed in one Supreme God
- Did not believe in idol worship
- Worshipped the forces of nature as the manifestation of one Supreme God
- Vedic Gods have been classified into 3 categories - Terrestrial, Atmospheric and Celestial
- Indra, Agni, Varuna, Surya, Rudra, Yama, Soma, Marut, Dyaus, Vayu and Prajanaya. Prithvi, Saraswati, Usha, aditi were female deities. They were not given the same position as male Gods.
- People did not worship for spiritual reasons but for the welfare of *Praja & Pashu*
- Recitation of prayers, chanting of Vedic hymns and sacrifices or yajnas were an important part of the worship.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 35

**Rig Vedic Gods**

- **Indra** He was the most important divinity. He played the role of a warlord, leading the Aryan soldiers to victory against the demons. 250 hymns are devoted to him in the Rig Veda. He was associated with thunder and storm and is addressed by various names: *Ratshethha, Itendra Somsoya, Purandraya, Varitrahon and Maghayam*
- **Agni** He was the second important divinity. He was intermediary between Gods and men. 200 hymns of the Rig Veda are devoted to him.
- **Varuna** He was the upholder of Rita or cosmic order or natural order. He personified water.
- **Soma** He was considered to be the God of plants. An intoxicant drink was also called soma.
- **Yama** He was the guardian of the world of dead.
- **Surya** Similar to that of the Greek God Helios

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 36

**Cont...**

- **Savitri** The famous Gayatri mantra is addressed to Savitri
- **Pusan** Lord of jungle path, main function was that of guarding of roads, herdsmen and cattle. **Vishnu A** relatively minor God at that time.
- **Vayu** Wind God
- **Dyaus** Father of Heaven
- **Aditi** Goddess of Eternity
- **Maruts** Storm Spirits
- **Gandharvas** Divine Musicians
- **Asvins** Healers of diseases and experts in surgical art
- **Rikhus** Gnomes
- **Apsaras** Mistresses of Gods
- **Rudra** An archer of God, whose anger brought disease
- **Vishvadeva** Intermediate Deities
- **Aranyani** Goddess of Forest
- **Usha** Goddess of Dawn
- **Prithvi** Goddess of Earth

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 37

**Political Organisation**

- In later Vedic times, the *vidatha* completely disappeared. The *sabha* and *samiti* continued to hold the ground, but their character changed. Women were no longer permitted to sit in the *sabha*, and it was now dominated by nobles and Brahmanas. The formation of wider kingdoms made the king more powerful. Tribal authority tended to become territorial.
- The term *rajya*, which indicates territory, first appears in this period. The King performed the *rajasuya* sacrifice, which was supposed to confer supreme power to him. He performed the *asvamedha*, which meant unquestioned control over an area in which the royal house ran uninterrupted. He also performed the *vojapeyo* or the chariot race, in which the royal chariot was made to win the race against his kinsmen. During this period collection of taxes and tributes, the king officer called *sangrihitri*.
- Even in later Vedic times the king did not possess a standing army. Tribal units were mustered in times of war, and, according to one ritual for success in war, the king had to eat along with his people from the same plate.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 38

**Regions and Kings**

- Eastern King Samrat
- Western King Suvrat
- Northern King Virat
- Southern King Bhoja
- King of middle country Raja

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 39

**Officials in Later Vedic Period**

- Purohita Chief Priest, in also sometimes referred to as *Rashtragopa* Senani Supreme Commander of army  
*Vrajapati* Officer-in-Charge of pasture land *Jivagribha* Police Officer *Spasas/Dutas* Spies who also sometimes worked as messengers *Gramani* Head of the village  
*Kulapati* Head of the Family *Madhyamasi* Mediator on disputes *Bhagadugha* Revenue collector *Sangrahitri* Treasurer *Mahishi* Chief Queen *Suta* Charioteer and court minstrel *Govikartana* Keeper of games and forests *Palagala* Messenger *Kshatri* Chamberlain *Akshavapa* Accountant *Sthapati* Chief Justice *Takshan* Carpenter

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 40

**Kingdoms in the Later Vedic Age**

- **Kingdom Location** Gandhar Rawalpindi and Peshawar districts of Western Punjab Kekaya On the bank of River Beas, east of Gandhar kingdom Uttar Madra Kashmir Eastern Madra Near Kangra Southern Madra Near Amritsar Kushinagar Northern region of modern Uttar Pradesh Panchal Bareilly, Badayun and Farrukhabad districts of modern Uttar Pradesh Kashi Modern Varanasi Koshal Faizabad region of today's Uttar Pradesh

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 41

**Occupation**

- The Aryans now lived a sedentary life, domesticated animal and cultivated on a greater scale than earlier sugar-cane. Cattle still constituted the principal form of movable property. Elephants were tamed. However, the idea of private possession of land gradually began to crystallize. Wheat was also cultivated during this period along with barley. Rice is mentioned in sources but was not an important crop at this time. Beans and Sesame and pulses such as Mung, Urad etc. were also known. New arts, artists and craftsmen also emerged i.e. smelters, ironsmiths, carpenters, weavers, leather workers, jewellers, dyers and potters. Trade was also boosted.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 42

**Pottery**

- The later Vedic Aryans used four types of pottery- Black and Red Ware, Black Slipped Ware, Painted Grey Ware(PGW), and Red Ware. The black and red earthen pots were used around 600 BC by the people of Koshala. The Aryans knew copper or bronze and Iron. They introduced the PGW in northern India. It consisted of bowls and dishes, which were used either for rituals or for eating or both. These were mostly found to the upper Gangetic basin.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 43

### Currency

- A gold piece of specific weight called *Satamana* is mentioned in *Sathapatha-Brahmana*. *Nishka* was the popular currency. *Suvarna* and *Krishnala* were two other classes of coins of circulation. Barter system continued in spite of the presence of metallic coins. Money-lending was a lucrative trade and the interest on loan was moderately charged. The usurer is mentioned as *Kusidin*.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 44

### Social Organisation

- The later Vedic society came to be divided into four varnas called the *Brahmanas*, *rajanayas* or *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas* and *shudras*, each varna was assigned with its duty. Brahmanas conducted rituals and sacrifices for their clients and for themselves, and also officiated at the festivals associated with agricultural operations. They prayed for the success of their patron in war, and in return the king pledged not to do any harm to them.
- Sometimes, the brahmanas came into conflict with the rajanayas, who represented the order of the warrior-nobles, for position of supremacy. Towards the end of the Vedic period, they began to engage in trade. All the three higher varnas shared one common feature, they were known as *Dvijas* (twice born), i.e., they were entitled to *upanayana* or investiture with the sacred thread according to the Vedic mantras.
- The fourth varna was deprived of the sacred thread ceremony, and with it began the imposition of disabilities on the shudras. Outside the caste-system, there stood two important bodies of men, namely, *Vraiyas* and *Nishadas*.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 45

### Cont...

- According to the *Aitareya Brahmana*, in relation to the prince, the brahmana is described as a seeker of livelihood and an acceptor of gifts but removable at will. A *vaisiya* is called tribute-paying, meant for being beaten, and to be oppressed at will. The worst position is reserved for the *shudra*. He is called the servant of another. Certain section of artisans such as *rathakara* or chariot-maker enjoyed a higher status, and were entitled to the sacred thread ceremony. The term *Nagara* appears for the first time showing joint beginnings of town life. Women were generally given a lower position. Although some women theologians took part in philosophic discussions and some queens participated in coronation rituals, ordinarily women were thought to be inferior and subordinate to men.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 46

**Types of Marriages in the Later Vedic Age**

- Brahma Marriage of a duly dowried girl to a man of the same varna with Vedic rites and rituals.
- Daiva Father gives the daughter to the sacrificial priests as part of fee or dakshina.
- Arsa - token bride-price of a cow and a bull is given.
- Prajapati Marriage without dowry and bride-price.
- Gandharva Marriage by the consent of two parties, often clandestine. A special form of it was *swayamvara* or self choice.
- Asura Marriage by purchase.
- Paisacha -seduction of a girl while asleep, mentally deranged or drunk, hence it can hardly be called a marriage
- Rakshasa - marriage by Capture

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 47

**Marriage**

- Eight types of marriage were prevalent in the later Vedic age. Of these, four (Brahman, Daiva, Arsa and Prajapati) were generally approved and were permissible to Brahmins. These were religious marriages and were indissoluble.
- **Anuloma Marriage:** Marriage of a man below his varna was called Anuloma. It was sanctioned by the sacred texts.
- **Pratiloma Marriage:** Pratiloma marriage was the marriage of a girl or women to one lower than her own varna. It was not sanctioned by the sacred texts.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 48

- **Gotra System:** The institution of *gotra* appeared in later Vedic times. Literally, it means the cow-pen or the place where cattle belonging to the whole clan are kept. The *gotra* has been regarded as a mechanism for widening the socio-political ties, as new relationships were forged between hitherto unrelated people. People began to practise *gotra* exogamy. No marriage could take place between persons belonging to the same *gotra* or having the same ancestor.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 49

• **Ashrama System:** Ashramas or four stages of life were not well established in early Vedic times. In the post-Vedic texts, we hear of four ashramas: that of *brahmachari* or student, *grihastha* or householder, *vanaprastha* or partial retirement and *sanyasa* or complete retirement from the world. But only three are mentioned in the later Vedic texts. The last or the fourth stage had not been well-established in Later Vedic times. 4th Ashrama only mentioned in Jabala Upanishad.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 50

• **Food and Drinks:** The staple diet was milk and ghee, vegetables, fruit and barley. Wheat was rarely eaten. On ceremonial occasions at a religious feast or the arrival of a guest, a more elaborate meal usually including the flesh of ox, goat, sheep and birds were taken after being washed with *sura*. Fish and other river animals were also relished upon. The guests were never served vegetarian foods, or at least one non-vegetarian food was compulsory.

• **Dress:** Clothes were simple. Two piece clothes were normally worn: *utariya* or the upper garment and *antariya* or the lower garment. There was no difference between the clothes of male and female. Ornaments were used by both the sexes and bangles were worn by privileged few. Shoes were used. Use of oil, comb, mirror razors, hair ointment and a few cosmetics was known.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 51

• **Amusements:** Music, both vocal and instrumental, was the major source of amusements. Playing of veena, drum flute, harp and cymbals were more common, also were dance. Chariot-racing and gambling were other sources of amusement.

• **Education:** It was for a privileged few. Only Brahmanas and Kshatriyas were allowed to get education. Even women education was discouraged and the study of Vedic literature were forbidden to women in spite of the fact that a few gifted women scholars were present at the time and female teachers were also there. The subject taught were *veda*, *itihasa*, *grammar*, *mathematics* *ethics*, *dialectics*, *astronomy*, *military science*, *fine arts*, *music* and *medical science*.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 52

Religion in Later Vedic Period

- The two outstanding Rig Vedic gods, Indra and Agni, lost their former importance. On the other hand Prajapati, the creator, came to occupy the supreme position in later Vedic pantheon. Rudra, the god of animals, became important in later Vedic times and Vishnu came to be conceived as the preserver and protector of the people. In addition, some symbolic objects began to be worshipped, and we notice signs of idolatry. Pushan, who was supposed to look after cattle, came to be regarded as the god to the *sudras*.
- Important female deities during the Later Vedic Age were: Usha (goddess of Dawn), Aditi (Mother of gods), Prithvi (Earth Goddess), Aryani (Forest Goddess) and Saraswati (River deity). The mode of worship changed considerably. Prayers continued to be recited, but they ceased to be the dominant mode of placating the gods.
- Sacrifices became far more important, and they assumed both public and domestic character. The guest were known as the *goghna* or one who was fed on cattle. The priests who officiated at sacrifices were regarded generously and given *dakshinas* or gifts.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 53

- Chief Priests The Chief priests who were engaged in performing the sacrifices were:- **Hotri**: The invoker, he recited hymns from Rig Veda
- **Adhvaryu**: The executor, he recited hymns from Yajur Veda.
- **Udgatri**: The singer, he recited hymns from Sama Veda
- The Chief Priests received voluntary offering from the people called *Bali*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 54

Important Vedic Rituals

- **Rajasuya**: The King's influence was strengthened by rituals. He performed this sacrifice, which was supposed to confer supreme power on him.
- **Asvamedha**: A King performed the *Asvamedha*, which meant unquestioned control over the area in which the royal horse ran uninterrupted. The ceremony lasted for three days at the end of which horse sacrifice was performed.
- **Vajpeya**: A king performed the *Vajpeya* or the chariot race, in which the royal chariot was made to win the race against his kinsmen. The ritual lasted for seventeen days and was believed not only to restore the strength of the middle-aged king but also to elevate him from the position to *raja* of that of *samrat*.
- **Garbhadhana**: A ceremony which is performed to promote conception in women
- **Pumsayam**: This ritual is performed to procure a male child
- **Semantonayam**: It is ritual performed to ensure the safety of the child in the womb.
- **Jatkarma**: It is a birth ceremony performed before the cutting of the umbilical cord.
- **Culakarma**: It is a ritual, also known as tonsure, performed for boys in their third year.
- **Upanayana**: It is an initiation ceremony to confer *dvija*(twice horn) status of boys of the higher varnas in their eight year.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 55

**Epic Period: (Next week)**

- Some historians regard the Later Vedic Period as the Period of Epics.
- The *Mahabharata* and
- The *Ramayana*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 56

**Ramayana**

- It is said to have been composed by the sage, Valmiki. The incident related in it precedes the *Mahabharata* by about a hundred and fifty years. The story of Ramayana is of indigenous origin and had existed in ballad form in Prakrit, in more than one version. It was rewritten in Sanskrit and augmented with many 'Shlokas'. The epic was given a Brahmanical character which was not visible in the original work. It is also known as *Adi Kavya*. Evidence places the oldest part of the Ramayana to before 350 BC. The reference in the epic to the mingled hords of Yavanas and Shakas suggests that it received accretions in the Graeco-Scythian period and may have acquired its final shape by about AD 250.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Slide 57

**Mahabharata**

- The Mahabharata is the bulkiest epic consisting of 100,000 verses and is divided into 18 paravas (books). This book is usually assigned to Rishi Ved Vyas, but scholars have expressed doubts if such a great work could have been accomplished by one single person. The story itself occupies only about one-fourth of the poem. It is a tale about conflict between Aryans-Kaurava and Pandava. The rest is episodical comprising cosmology, theogony, state craft, the science of war, ethics, legendary history, mythology, fairy tales and several digressional and philosophical interludes, of which the best known is the *Bhagavad Gita*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---