

The ramayana assignment



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Assignment Mythology in The Ramayana Ancient civilizations found their sense of identity and source of understanding of the world around them through their mythical folk tales. The narrative epics that these civilizations developed reflected important aspects of their overall world view. By reading these folktales you get a better understanding of how it was like to live in these ancient times. The characters of the stories go through and experience life in a sense that reflects greatly the way of life during those times.

The Ramayana reflects common, fundamental aspects of real life world civilizations; nevertheless it displays unique aspects of the Indian civilization. As a result we have a better idea and many examples of how life was lived in these ancient times. In the epic, The Ramayana women play important roles in the story. In the book we can see how Kaikeyi and Kausalya, wives of Dasharatha, ruled Kosala beside their husband. At one point of the story the queen Kaikeyi even caused the exile of Rama, Dasharatha's most beloved son and heir to the throne. Dasharatha was completely opposed to this decision but found himself cornered, due to his adherence

Dasharatha had to comply with Kaikeyi's demand. If women were to be seen as unimportant, insignificant beings Kaikeyi's demands would have been automatically discarded. Since Kaikeyi knew the role she played as the queen of Lanka, she had the courage to go ahead and demand Rama's exile and the crowning of her son, Bharat. This caused the story to take an unexpected turn of events but most of all it critically gave the story its plot. The woman in this case of The Ramayana, was such an important factor that if she had not made her selfish demands there would not have been a story to tell at all.

The rest of the book is about Rama's adventures during the exile. The way women were socially organized in The Ramayana is a reflection of how women were placed in ancient Egypt. In Egypt, history says that women of the royal family served as regents for young rulers. In Egypt, this gave women the opportunity to administer and make significant decisions for the young ruler while she was serving as a regent. For a short period of time, this made a women ruler of Egypt. Just like in the epic The Ramayana, women's decisions were able to greatly affect the estiny of a kingdom.

In Egypt, Just like in The Ramayana, royal women used their position to affect the air to the throne in favor of their sons. This included participation in plots, such as when Kaikeyi plotted against Rama to make her own son, Bharat, the king of Lanka. Religion is a very important aspect of the epic Folktales The Ramayana. In this epic story, Rama, the main character, is the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Vishnu is the Supreme God among the many deities of Hinduism. In The Ramayana the characters portrayed a religion in which they practiced polytheism.

Ancient Mesopotamia, specifically the Sumerian religion, also practiced devotion to many different deities. In the book of The Ramayana, we are introduced to the religion as a mythical point in which we see similarities to the form of religion used in Ancient Mesopotamia. The main character of The Ramayana was a demigod, which were in fact found in the Sumerian religion as well. Anthropomorphism is easily seen in The Ramayana because we can see where Rama is depicted with human emotions such as love, while still being a God. Gilgamesh was the king of Uruk starting from 2500 BC. As a

Mesopotamian king he also named himself a demigod with superhuman strength. People had faith in their king and believed the epic tale of Gilgamesh, which talked about his adventures as a demigod. The Epic of Gilgamesh can be easily compared to the epic tale of The Ramayana. In both stories, the main character was indeed a demigod, and the adventures of two valiant demigods were unfolded. Both Rama and Gilgamesh were granted with superhuman power and strength and were believed to be able to destroy anything on its path. In The Ramayana politics were combined with mythology, it is demonstrated when

Rama was going to be crowned king of Lanka. The book says, “ A little before the dawn, the holy fire was lit in which offerings were to be placed to please the Gods in heaven. ” As you can see the crowning of the new king, which was a historical event was also combined with a mythical aspect. In the book they combined these two aspects to make it very clear that Gods were very important in the character’s lives and in some distinct manner influence the reader. The Zhou dynasty, ruled most of Northern and Central China from 1045 BC to 256 BC.

You can see something similar appening, in the reality of the Zhou dynasty, when they justified political affairs with mythological explanation. The Zhou dynasty threw over the Shang dynasty, accusing them of being irresponsible, tyrant, drunks. According to the Zhou, earthly events came hand in hand with heavenly affairs. The Mandate of Heaven was a series of heavenly powers that granted the right to govern on earth. According to the Zhou, this privilege was only given to a chosen individual known as the son of heaven.

The Zhou dynasty officials said that the Shang dynasty lost the Mandate of Heaven due to their foul behavior.

In The Ramayana the stars had to be aligned a certain way when Rama was to be crowned, which is why he was to be crowned during an exact time. This showed how mythological balance was used in politics, according to the Zhou, the Shang lost the Mandate of Heaven when the cosmos fell out of balance. Balance was a very important part of being able to rule in the politics of both The Ramayana and in Ancient China. The marriage of Rama and Sita is portrayed as an example to the Indian people of how a marriage should be. When Rama fell in love with Sita he had to defeat a bow the size of a mountain that had Shiva's power inside of it.

Shiva was the supreme God; many men had tried to defeat the bow but were incapable of doing so due to the supreme power it had in it granted from a God. This was the condition that Sita's father gave in order to marry his daughter. This was a way for Rama to prove himself worthy of marrying princess Sita. This was also a way for Janaka to show how much his daughter was really worth. He even questioned if anyone would ever be able to defeat the bow but then he reminded himself that the person who was not able to do it, was not worth enough for his daughter.

In the Indian civilization they practice what they call a dowry before marriage. You can say that Rama defeated the mighty bow as a dowry to the family of his beloved Sita. Even though The Ramayana does not specifically mention a dowry it is in its nature very similar to the dowry that is given in the Indian culture. The dowry is an exchange of goods or money, from

eltner the groom's bride or bride's family. The dowry is a gift that in a way helps grant acceptance to enter the other's family. Rama was finally accepted by Sita's father when Rama defeated the mighty bow.

This is a historical way in which The Ramayana reflects a common aspect of the Indian civilization. The caste system is something that greatly identifies the Ancient Indian civilization and dates back all the way to 1200 BC. In India you were believed to be born and live your destiny according to your previous life. To maintain harmony in the universe one had to go on with their caste and religion obligations in life. Each person had to perform their dharma and when they successfully did it, the universe was in balance and in the next life; one would be on a higher rank in the caste system.

When Rama was exiled, by order of his own father, or as he thought, he not one complained. He never questioned why the sudden change of mind or what he did to deserve such a tragic penalty. Rama was showing the readers that he accept his destiny as to contribute to the balance of the universe.

This was the mentality of the early Indian civilization and we can see it reflected in The Ramayana. In many ways The Ramayana sets an example to the Indian people about how they should live their life. Here Rama is showing that complaining or questioning destiny will not help at all.