

# HISTORY TEACHING GRADES 4 - 8



SIMON SHIRLEY



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WRITTEN FOR

THE EAST AFRICAN WALDORF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

BY

SIMON SHIRLEY

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## *Acknowledgements*

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**Catherine van Alphen:** Catherine van Alphen has contributed in various ways to this manual. She wrote Chapter 2 on "Why do we teach History?" and "The Journey of the Soul". She supplied additional information, stories and biographical material for the sections on the Ancient Civilizations, especially Rome, the Middle Ages and Voyages of Discovery. She also gave ideas for painting, creative projects and the poem "Brahma's Dream". The front cover and all black and white illustrations unless otherwise indicated were done by her.

**Editors:** **Catherine van Alphen; Peter van Alphen**

This manual is indebted to the Waldorf tradition of teaching according to the principles of Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925), as developed by many generations of teachers.

They say “the job not started is the most difficult one”. So, after finding as much source material as I could, which was rather sparse (see the bibliography list at the end of this manual), I just began to write, trusting that everything would come together well. My purpose with this manual is primarily to help teachers (and not just in Africa) teach the important threads of human history with special regard to Africa. Most books have traditionally ignored the history of Africa before the arrival of the Europeans but this is beginning to change. Africa is often called “the world's oldest continent” or “the cradle of mankind”, so people must have been living there for millions and millions of years. Who were they and how have their lives impacted on our own? A second purpose is to facilitate and encourage a creative approach to teaching history, especially through an imaginative and artistic method. Hence I include a number of drawings, poems, pieces of music and ways of making relevant artefacts in this manual.

But this is only a manual, a guide for teachers. You, the teachers, have to do your own research and preparation to make the history lessons come alive for your pupils. I hope this manual serves as a good beginning on your journey.

I wish to extend my appreciation to all those who assisted me: Ian Botting, the librarian at Michael Hall in England, who lent me many books, amongst which was HEAR THE VOICE OF THE GRIOT! By Betty K Staley; and Peter van Alphen for guidance, questions and editing. I have been a teacher for many years and have worked extensively with Class Teaching and Drama. But I have never written anything as long or as detailed as this manual. I have learnt hugely from the whole experience!

Simon Shirley



## The East African Waldorf/Steiner Teacher Development Programme

The East African teacher development programme was started by the late Adeline Mlai, a Tanzanian, in Dar-es-Salaam in 1997. Adeline recognised the developmental value of Waldorf education and invited Peter van Alphen and Ann Sharfman, teacher educators with experience working in African settings in Cape Town, South Africa, to start a teacher development programme in Dar-es-Salaam. This programme was set up for teachers from Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

After the first year, difficulties securing the funds for continuing the programme were experienced, and in 1999 the programme was relocated to Nairobi, Kenya, as a more central venue for the three countries. The Rudolf Steiner School in Mbagathi was able to secure funding for its continuation, and in the eleven years that followed an ever-increasing number of teachers from East African countries joined the programme.

Our grateful thanks go to GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung (Bochum, Germany) and Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners (Berlin, Germany) for their continued support of the programme from 1999. We also wish to thank Sanduko a Ndege (Vejle, Denmark), Internationaal Hulpfonds (Amsterdam, Netherlands), Acacia (Basel, Switzerland), Stichting Helias (Netherlands) and the Iona Stichting (Amsterdam, Netherlands) for their additional support.

### About this Manual

This manual answers the need for teachers (or student-teachers) to have notes on the modules they attend. This manual is written for Primary School teachers attending Module 9 in the program, and is an extension of the second module of the program in which a detailed study of Rudolf Steiner's concept of child development was given.

The second module included details of curriculum, to show how all teaching needs to grow out of an understanding of the developmental stages of the children at each age. Although there is a brief section on the developmental changes that take place in children around the years from 9 to 14 years, teachers wishing to use this manual are asked to first study the manual on Child Development, so that everything written here can be seen in the light of a broader understanding.

This manual is intended to guide teachers through the teaching of the Grade 4 to 8 history curriculum. It is written to assist teachers new to Waldorf Education to see examples of how the educational principles given by Rudolf Steiner can be applied in daily teaching.

Everything written here needs to be seen as possible examples, rather than “this is the way we teach the Grade 4 to 8 history curriculum in Waldorf Schools.” Every teacher needs to adapt the suggestions given here according to the children in his or her class, their cultural background, the local environment, etc., so that the needs of the children are served, rather than following an imported curriculum.

This manual is intended to be handed out at the end of the module for revision and further study. The suggestion is that participants study together in groups in their respective schools.

We trust that the material provided will be useful in Waldorf training programmes in many countries around the world. Comments and suggestions are welcomed, and can be sent to Peter van Alphen on [peterva@mweb.co.za](mailto:peterva@mweb.co.za).

## INDEX

<i>Chapter 1: History in Relation to the Child</i> .....	7
<i>Chapter 2: Why do we teach History?</i> .....	13
<i>Chapter 3: The Teaching of History</i> .....	20
<i>Chapter 4: History in Grade 4</i> .....	27
<i>Chapter 5: History in Grade 5</i> .....	58
<i>Chapter 6: History in Grade 6</i> .....	113
<i>Chapter 7: History in Grade 7</i> .....	153
<i>The Struggle for Independence in Africa</i> .....	192
<i>Bibliography</i> .....	211



## ***Chapter 1: History in Relation to the Child***

### ***What is History?***

*History is the story of the development of mankind but as humanity is made up of individuals, history is also the story of human beings. The human being himself goes through an evolution and here we are not thinking of the Darwinian sense, but in a sense the development of the mind.*

*The human mind works in a certain way. In ancient times it was different. It is this change in the state of mind which brings about the external changes, i.e. the scenes of history. (from Teaching History by Roy Wilkinson)*

The question of what history is, particularly for children, lies to a certain extent in the word itself. “His-story”, or “Her-story” to be totally complete, shows that it is the narrative story of individual people's lives who live in the world. You could also add “Our-story” or “Their-story” because no man is an island. It is the very interweaving of these stories, which leads to the events which we recognise as historical events.

As a teacher one must try to see the impulses and direction of these events. This makes history worthwhile and educative for young people. They can see, in either a narrative<sup>1</sup> “story” way or in a more conscious way, the effect that human behaviour has on society and therefore how human beings have changed the face of history over time.

As the mind of mankind has developed over the span of human history, so does the child's mind develop over her young life towards adulthood. And there is a direct link, for those who wish to know, between the development of the child and the development of human history.

Firstly there will now be a choice as to which bit or bits of history are relevant to a young person at a certain age. This should not be an arbitrary<sup>2</sup> decision by each

<sup>1</sup> Narrative = a description in words; telling about something through a story

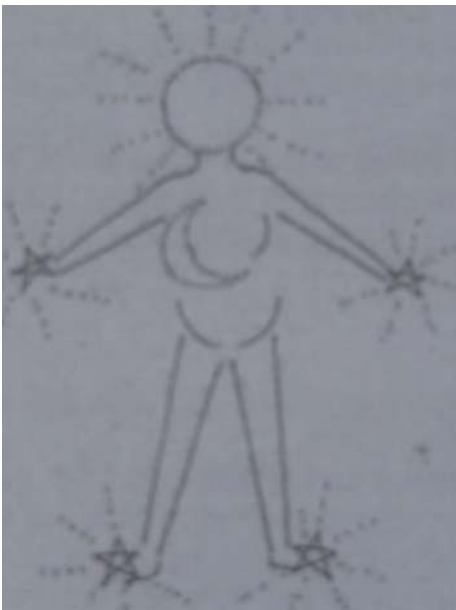
<sup>2</sup> Arbitrary = a decision without proper reasoning

and every teacher, but rather through understanding, based on a clear view of the development of the children in the class.

However, I wish to point out that the role of the teacher is not to sway or influence the attitude of the student. He or she should not “politicise” the student by advocating this or that mindset before the class. Rather, the teacher needs to present the facts as they are, as he has researched and read them. It does not mean one should have no opinions, for that is impossible in a human being. But one needs to process the information oneself, and to present it in as objective way as possible.

The teacher needs to present the material in an interesting way and be committed to presenting the true facts of a situation, at the same allowing questions to arise in the children, as well as encouraging the students to try to find their own answers and not churn out students who all think like the teacher. The goal of any worthwhile education is to allow the students to be able to think clearly and form their own judgements when they become adults.

### *The 3-fold Human Being*



If one looks at any human being at any age, one is immediately struck by the fact that the physical organisation is composed of three major elements; the head, the trunk and the limbs.

The head is rounded, rather like the dome of the heavens, and contains the brain and the major sense organs of sight, hearing, smell and taste. The trunk contains a number of important organs, which all obey their individual rhythmic patterns. All are important but for now let me highlight the heart, with its constant beat from birth to death, and the lungs, which express the rise and fall of the breath. The elongated limbs, the arms and legs, connect us

to the world we live in. With our feet we are able to walk upon this earth, and with our hands and arms we can create and work in the world.

What do we also do in these three regions of the human body?

The head's primary task is thinking. Here we receive the many percepts<sup>3</sup> we take

<sup>3</sup> Percepts = sense impressions (the word “percept” comes from “perception”, “perceiving”)



in from our senses and process them in a cognitive<sup>4</sup> way. We also create thoughts of a moral, creative or ideal nature.

In the rhythmic realm of the trunk, feeling is the dominant activity. As the breath rises and falls, so do our feelings move and change with our environment. Within the rhythms of opposites we can love and hate, feel happy or sad, etc.

With our arms and our legs we are able to affect our surroundings. With these limbs we are able to do things in the world. And this doing reflects our inner intent or will to affect our world in whatever way we may wish.

## *Child Development*

No-one would deny for a minute that a young child is in many ways very different from an adult - and yet in many educational methods today the young child is taught in a similar manner to an adult! Yes, both the adult and the child have primarily a head, a trunk and limbs, but the relationship between the three is very different in the development from childhood to adulthood.

If one looks at a baby, the head is large and well-formed. Only the jaw area is small and undeveloped. But the brow, the eyes and the ears are similar to those of the adult. The trunk is of course much smaller than in the adult, but the organs are all there and active, and the beat of the heart, and rise and fall of the breath, can be clearly seen.

However, when one come to the limbs, one sees immediately that neither the arms, hands nor legs are capable of functioning as they will in later life. The arms can only reach out irregularly, the hands can grasp a little and the legs are completely unable to carry the body. Unlike the young antelope, the young human cannot run after half an hour!

So we can see that on the journey through childhood to adulthood, the young human being needs to grow greatly in his limbs, quite a lot in his trunk and least in his head. This growth which we see is an outward sign of inner changes which are going on in the child and adolescent.

We need only look at human beings socialising to see the differences between adult and child behaviour. Whereas the adults will probably be sitting and talking for hours at a time, the children will be running around and playing. To sit still for

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<sup>4</sup> Cognitive = we "know" something

an hour is hard for a young child, while running around most of the day without stopping is hard for most untrained adults.

So, what is going on in the process of growing up?

Some people have said that “growing up” is the wrong expression. We should say “growing down”, for as we can see, it is the limbs that do the most growing in a young person. Interestingly enough, before the change of teeth at the age of 6 or 7 years, it means that the child is living predominately in his or her doing, in their will. It does not mean of course that the young child does not think or feel, but their thinking is of a different quality to that of an adult.

Although a young child may remember something, he or she does not reflect on it enough to form judgements. Their “judgements” are told to them by their parents or teachers. How many little children have to be held back from crossing a busy road or jumping into a swimming pool? We, as adults, have the responsibility to guide the children here.

So, as educators, we should concentrate on educating younger children through their doing, through their willing. Little children are brilliant imitators, so before the age of 7 years, if we wish to teach them well, we should do things with them and let them copy us. A good kindergarten is busy every day making bread, cleaning the room, baking, cutting and colouring paper to make pretty things, etc. As the teacher does, so do the children learn by imitating.

The teacher doesn't need to spend hours explaining everything he or she does – it would bore the children to death! The teacher needs to be well-prepared so he or she can show the children how to do something.

### ***The Primary School child***

At the change of the teeth about 6 or 7 years of age, a change comes in the development of the child. The limbs continue to keep on growing – they still love to run about and play – but now there is more energy available to develop the organs of the trunk. The child now is more able to “feel” the world they meet around them.

A story, an incident, even a subject at school, can appeal more to their feelings. They can feel sad or happy, angry or calm, about something presented to them from the outside. Their interest is in the person, “Were they good or bad, nice or nasty?” Their connection is with the feeling part of themselves. We even say, “She's learnt it by heart.”

The very young child grows up in a world in which they are bound up in. They do not question anything in their world. Their connection with everything around and within them is so natural that they accept all that is presented to them. As long as nothing dreadful happens, they enjoy their world. This continues right through the change of teeth up to about the age of 9 years. At this age the first beginnings of a “separation” from their environment begins, the beginnings of a “me” and “everything else”:

*Now the children notice a stronger division between themselves and the grown-ups. Unconsciously at first, they begin to question the teacher's authority, which they have hitherto accepted unquestioningly as being almost like a law of nature. They now want to know whether what the teacher says is really securely based on a wide-ranging experience of the world and life.*

*On the whole this question remains at the sub-conscious level and is rarely put verbally. The children now want to admire the teacher, where formally they loved in a child-like way, but they want to know that their admiration is justified. This means that a new teaching method is called for.*

*The aspects of the world presented in school have to take account of this distancing process, while at the same time the children need to be accompanied and supported in the right way as they step out of the golden background of childhood into the colourful reality of a world differentiated by a new, if naïve, perspective. In other words, confronting them with the world as it really is does not mean that they must immediately be presented with cold or sobering scientific facts entirely detached from human life.*

*Between the ages of 9 and 12 years, rhythmical memory is at its strongest, and children can learn a great deal at this age if the teaching method draws on the child's natural interest in the world, and structures the content rhythmically.*

*(from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

So, out of this 9-year old experience, the child may ask themselves questions that were not present before, such as: “Where do I come from?”, “Are you my real mummy and daddy, or was I adopted?”, “Who am I?”, etc.

Children at this age will begin to look out at the world with greater interest. Things

which they had not noticed before are suddenly interesting. They ask far more questions and we need to give them answers which they can understand.

And with this new interest in the world comes the beginnings of the feeling for time. Before, the child lived in the “eternal now”. Often, when a younger child returns from school, his parents may ask him: “And what did you do today at school?” The child may answer in a few words or not at all. Now he is at home. School has gone off into the past. He lives from experience to experience in the now. But after the age of 9 comes an understanding of what has happened in the past, what is happening in the present, and even what will happen in the future.

With this awareness of time we can begin to teach the children History. The following quotation, coming from a European setting, could be adapted for children living in other parts of the world:

*Rudolf Steiner said: History is to do with time; and if we want to teach it rightly, we must give due consideration to the time element within it. We shall be failing if we only give pictures in our lessons.*

*Suppose I were to tell a child about Charlemagne (a European king who lived in the 9th century) almost as though he might be the child's grandfather, who is still living! I should be leading that child astray. If I speak to him of Charlemagne, I must see that he realises how far removed Charlemagne is from us in time.*

*I could bring it home to him, for example, by saying: “Imagine you are standing here, and holding your father's hand.” The child can picture that. Then I must make sure he understands that his father is much older than himself. And now I tell him: “Imagine that your father is holding the hand of his father, and that he is holding the hand of your father's grandfather.” I shall have led the child back about 60 years. And now I can go still further back and get the child to think of a series of, let us say, 30 ancestors one behind the other, and explain that the thirtieth might have been Charlemagne.*

*In this way the child gets a feeling of distance in time. He should never have isolated facts presented to him; the history lesson should always create a sense of distance in time.*

*(from Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools by K Stockmeyer)*

## ***Chapter 2: Why do we teach History?***

In Grade 4, the children have lost the sense of oneness they experienced in earlier childhood. They experience the world differently now, and so the unspoken question they have is, “Where do I really belong in this strange, new world?”

And so the curriculum is designed to help them through this stage and orient them in their environment, by studying a combination of local geography and history. The study of early indigenous peoples of the area enables them to find the roots of their ancestors and to connect to the place in which they live.

In Africa, when we begin to teach about the indigenous people, like the San who were hunter-gatherers, the Maasai who were herders and the Kikuyu farming tribe, we also explore their spiritual roots. (This would apply to any country who would then study their own indigenous peoples and the religion of these early people.)

This is because we need to remember that we all come originally from God. Our inner being, our soul has its origins in the spiritual world. And the greatest security lies in our connection to ourselves and to the spiritual world, no matter what faith or belief we are born into. As teachers, our own inner security gives the children a sense of safety in their lives.

### ***History as the Journey of the Human Soul***

When we teach history, we need to be able to perceive the journey of the human soul that is visible in every culture in the world, expressed through the life style, the art and artefacts of its history.

We can observe a progression from the hunter-gatherer to the herder to the farmer; not only in the development of tools and weapons, in the way they obtained their food and the methods of building shelters or houses. There is also a progression in the way these different indigenous peoples experienced their gods.

The San had an innate connection to every living thing. Their gods were present and spoke to them through animals and plants, so they became aware of where to hunt, to find water and to find food or herbs for healing. And this spiritual connection was also expressed in their beautiful rock paintings. Thus they were always close to the gods, quite naturally, rather like the children in the kindergarten.

Coming to the herders, we see that they are connected to the earth in a different way from the San, through their reed or stick and clay houses and their ownership

of cattle. They are slightly less connected to the gods but have a security built up through their clan and tribal customs. They also like to move around following the grazing patterns of their cattle. They have grown up or evolved beyond the San people.

The farmers are even more established on the earth, having more possessions: mud-and-dung houses with reed roofs, pots, mats, different clothes and tools. They are becoming more individual, but are still bound to the laws and customs of the tribe. They look to their gods, but are obedient to their chief and the wisdom of the shaman who advises them.

The more a tribe or individual is grounded in earthly customs, the less dependent he or she is on the gods. So the life style of a people is a window to their inner development and their connection to the gods or the spiritual world.

### ***The Ancient Civilizations: Coming down to Earth***

We can see a similar progression in the Grade 5 studies of Ancient civilizations from Ancient India to Ancient Greece.

The Ancient Indians, rather like the San, were continually aware of the gods in aspect of life: every tree, animal, mountain and weather. They believed that the earth was “Maya” or illusion and they longed to return to the reality of the spiritual world after death. Their great gift of spiritual wisdom has been passed down in their scriptures: the Hindu Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita as well as poetry, songs, legends and philosophy. Even their art teems with life and colour, joy and abundance; everything is rich in symbolism. The things of this earth were but a cover, a metaphor for the attributes of heaven. In the early times, the Ancient Indians were hunter-gatherers but through the ages they passed through all the stages of development that followed. Their long and exciting epic stories show their oral culture at its heights, though all was written down at a later stage.

The Ancient Persians, however, were more down to earth than the Indians. They saw Twin Powers of Good and Evil, Light and Darkness in the gods called Ahura Mazdao whose light shone in the sun and the wicked Ahriman who opposed him! They were in eternal battle as Night and Day follow each other in constant succession. Their spiritual leader, Zarathustra (or Zoroaster) urged them to claim the earth for Ahura Mazdao, by taming animals and planting crops, especially grain. Thus bread was considered a holy food, as is still seen in the Christian sacrament



today.

In Ancient Mesopotamia, we see a further descent of the human soul towards the earth, in the way these people learnt to trade using weights and measures, working with money, inventing the wheel and the beginnings of writing. Up to that time people had no need of writing things down. Their cultural memory was good while their clairvoyant<sup>5</sup> connection to the gods was strong. Rudolf Steiner said that writing only emerged as the people's memory faded and this was in direct relation to their loss of awareness of the gods. As they began to focus on material matters, so their spiritual connection lessened. This was why Gilgamesh in the famous story from this era, went on a search to find immortality. This was never a question for doubt in earlier times, but now, Gilgamesh needed confirmation through connecting to someone who lived in the spiritual world. And on this journey, when he could not gain immortality, he realised that every person must die!

In Egypt, however, the spiritual connection was kept far longer through the power of the priesthood that initiated the Pharaohs and ensured that the divine experience was maintained in spite of material developments. There was much advancement such as the building of temples and pyramids, geometry, crafts and trading just as in Mesopotamia, whose culture was parallel in time to that of Egypt. Nevertheless, hieroglyphics were developed at the same time as cuneiform, because only the initiated retained their clairvoyance. In Egypt we see the human being steadily coming down to earth and now needing to hold the spiritual connection consciously rather than naturally as in Ancient India. Egypt managed to hold that balance, hence the long period of the power of the Pharaohs. The temples of Egypt attracted many seekers from other countries who wished to achieve this spiritual clairvoyance.

In the massive stone statues of Egypt we experience the power and awe felt by the people for the gods and for the Pharaohs, their representatives on earth. The perfection of their proportions; many Pharaohs identical in size and features, contribute to a sense of eternal life and omnipotence. The gods, as painted in pictures and on walls and columns often had animal heads, expressing the highly developed senses and innate wisdom of each particular animal. Thus Horus has the far-seeing eyes and powerful wings of the hawk, his emblem, while Thoth, the wily baboon-headed god, is imbued with crafty intelligence. The all-seeing gaze of the Sphinx is symbolic of the spiritual man's ability to hold the three aspects of his animal nature in perfect balance: thought – swift as the eagle, the warm-hearted

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5 Clairvoyance: the faculty for seeing spiritual beings from the spiritual world.

courage of the lion and the energy of the bull.

From the great land of Egypt, it is a short journey by sea to the small country of Greece, surrounded by islands. It is partly the varied geography of the islands, surrounded by restless seas, that indicates the potential for change that lay in the rebellious Greeks. For here the birth of thinking as we know it today took place, where men began to take their lives into their own hands, to make their own decisions and to work ideas out for themselves. Here myth becomes history as seen in the example of the Wooden Horse of Troy. It was as much the inquisitive, argumentative minds of the Greeks that led them to democracy, as a desire for self-rule. No wonder this flowered into the Golden Age of Greece. But there was a price to pay for this development of the ego: the loss of the connection to the spiritual world. The Greeks feared death and said: Better a slave on earth than a King in the Underworld.

Greek art is well known for its beauty and perfection of the physical form, especially in the statues, carved in marble. They are so natural and lifelike: energy ripples through them as if they were alive. That fountain of creativity expressed itself in all the arts, flowing into every arena from medicine to drama to philosophy. And drawings on the clay pots showed a delightful sense of humour. But the gods were no longer so distant; they had become more human in their petty jealousy and revenge, as well as their courage and wisdom. The human being now equalled the gods and each person might see him or her reflected in their attributes. With the power of the mind now activated, what could equal the human being?

The Class 5 child is very much at the Greek stage. The birth of thinking is gradually beginning, and a greater sense of individuality is present. They are no longer simply accepting everything the teacher tells them, but are still prepared to accept things that intuitively 'feel true'. Physically they are beautifully balanced and graceful at this age, as in the Greek art mentioned above.

### ***Masters of the World***

After the Greeks, the noble Romans take the stage, learning organisation of army and government. We can rule ourselves, they claim, and they can also conquer and rule the whole of the known world. But when the emperors think that they are gods, Rome burns. Pride comes before a fall.

The Roman art is an imitation of the Greeks, but tends to be stiff and lifeless. Their portraits in marble are literally correct, if somewhat heavy or unattractive. It is as if in the Roman obsession with laws, goals and achievements they have forgotten to

live naturally. Their achievements in building roads and aqueducts, being functional, were far more successful and attractive.

Roman thinking has become too materialistic, too fixed, like their art. A little spontaneity is needed. But it seems too late to change. What will happen now that the soul has become too earthbound, too focussed on control of outer things? Now that the gods are meaningless, is it not time to rediscover the connection to the spiritual world in a new way? But human beings want to cling to what they know for security. We only change when there is no other alternative!

The history of Rome is reflected in Class 6 students. They too become too earthbound and less graceful than they were before. They also seek control of the material world, and their minds tend towards more materialistic aims. They love ordered thinking, and are fascinated by the cleverness of the Roman and later African leaders in warfare and statesmanship. As puberty starts to make itself felt, they become self-conscious, also of the body, which loses its flexibility due to growth spurts in their arms and legs.

### ***Questions of the Soul***

In the lack of control that followed the fall of the Roman Empire, we see the insecurity of the Dark and Middle Ages where people retreated into monasteries to save their souls, while nobles built stone castles on the hill-tops to save their lives. In the darkness of fear and uncertainty came many questions: Who am I? Will I be accepted by God and go to Heaven? I feel so cut off! The issues of the soul have suddenly become vitally important at this time. We may see a comparison between the Middle Ages and the children around the age of puberty with their sense of being misunderstood.

The tall arches of the Gothic Cathedrals and their rich stained glass windows symbolise the yearning of the soul to find God and the search for the light of truth to bring comfort in the shadows of a wicked world.

Thus the progression through these cultures also mirrors the development of the child from youth to maturity. The teacher needs to observe the students to see when they are ready for studying the Dark and Middle Ages, with its soul-searching questions. This may already be in Class 6, or only in Class 7. It is comforting for the students to study cultures that reflect where they are in their own development. If the teacher understands the special gift of each culture, he or she can emphasise it in presenting the culture through examples and questions.

## ***Africa***

So, when looking at the tribal customs and art of Africa, try to see what it is telling one about the consciousness of the people. We do not intellectualise this in any way with the children through explaining stages of consciousness, but as teachers understand that it is there and ask the students what the special gift or quality of each culture is for them. They may well be able to sense this. Africa is a highly spiritual continent and the people are rich in feeling and poetry. So the gift may be unspoken. Let them *feel* what it is.

The children will experience the history more richly if the teacher uses and encourages various forms of art to express the history. The development of artistic skills is as important for them as it was for their ancestors.

By looking at different religions and attitudes to the spiritual world, the children may learn tolerance and acceptance of other peoples' ideas and beliefs, qualities much needed in today's world. This will be more easily achieved if the teacher is also broad-minded and accepts that each person has a right to their own beliefs and each religion deserves respect and tolerance.

## ***Voyages of Discovery***

In Grade 7 the children's expanding consciousness is offered the exciting voyages of discovery: Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama and Columbus, giving the feeling that the world is waiting to be explored. The Renaissance also explodes with new ideas and developments in art and science! There is so much to be explored in the inner worlds of mind and heart!

## ***But what of the modern world?***

In Grade 8 the students want to meet the modern world through the study of the road to freedom and independence in their own country.

So we must challenge the children in Grade 7 and 8 to discuss both strengths and weaknesses in the biographies of important characters and discover what they feel is right and wrong. They need to write down their ideas, feelings and experiences in poetry and creative writing. They must be given the opportunity to express themselves through the medium of historical drama.

The gifted history teacher will create dialogues as Socrates did in the Greek times. He or she will bring questions that activate the students' thinking and feeling,

maturing the judgement through discussion and debate, and lifting their minds to ideals beyond their present time. Teachers have the opportunity to educate the children towards the “consciousness soul” that seeks not only its own advancement, but the well-being of those around them. The children need to grow into the awareness that the world is their home and all people are their family. Then they will be prepared to address the question of democracy in their own country when they are old enough.

This was why Rudolf Steiner called the first Waldorf School a “Free” Waldorf School. He wanted children to grow up as free beings, able to think, feel, speak and act freely, taking their destiny into their own hands and fulfilling the potential of their lives.

## Chapter 3: The Teaching of History

*History is a vast subject, and to teach only bits and pieces of it is not very satisfactory. It is obvious therefore, that the teaching must be in broad outline, and that there must be economy. The widest picture must be given in the shortest time. It is quite possible to take a whole period and develop a feeling for the important events of the period. (from Teaching History by R Wilkinson)*

How do you as a teacher make history come alive in the classroom? Any subject needs preparation and history is no exception. So, what do you need to prepare? Obviously the subject matter, but how to prepare such a large and diverse subject?

As was quoted above, the teacher has to narrow the subject to the essentials that he wishes to teach. One has to read and know the facts, be it stories, cultural life or whatever, organising the material so that one thing leads on to another, and therefore there will be a historical thread running through your lesson.

But how to remember it all, as we are only human? I have found it valuable to write down the main headings for my lesson on a piece of paper, and to keep it on my desk. If I get lost in my delivery, or forget where I am in my lesson, I can retreat to my desk, glance at the piece of paper and continue.

You also need to prepare how you will teach the lesson. As the major delivery in a history lesson is through narrative<sup>6</sup> and story, you need to speak through some of the material the night or the weekend before, so you are confident in teaching the subject. The story needs to be told in an interesting way, with a good vocabulary and a varied manner of speaking. Work on temperaments is useful, as well as practise in the clarity of your speech. You should know where you are going with the subject from one day to the next.

Lastly, you have to be interested in your subject! You must feel an enthusiasm for the people and times you are teaching about. If there is a glow in your voice, the students will pick up on it and, any deficiency in the quality of your presentation, will be made up by the interest you show in your subject.

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<sup>6</sup> Narrative = full, rich description that is presented to an audience



## ***The Role of the Teacher***

*Pictorial representations of events, and particularly of people, will find the greatest response from the students, especially in the pre-pubescent<sup>7</sup> years. It is a matter of characterising, not defining. Vivid descriptions of events and personalities are the required food. (from Teaching History by R Wilkinson)*

From Grade 4 to Grade 6, you need to bring lots of stories to the lesson. You can make up a continuous story about, say, a Maasai family and follow them through their daily life. Alternatively you bring many Maasai stories to the lessons.

From Grade 6 to Grade 8 the narrative element is contained in the biographies of major figures of the time. It is good to ask the students to discuss the characters of important people, looking at both good and bad sides to them and then deciding what particular gift did they bring to their society or country.

In the older classes the questions can lead on to discussions. The teachers should be prepared to channel these questions, and guide the discussion where necessary. The students may have ideas about things, which they feel strongly about. Your lessons should so touch the students' feelings that they want to talk about historical events, even if you may not always agree with what they say. It is important that they come to an understanding of what can be learnt from any experience, however difficult, rather than just dwelling on injustice or cruelty, of which there is plenty in history. Discuss both positive and negative aspects to every event, encouraging the students to develop the ability to see both sides of a question and not to judge everything too quickly.

## ***The Main Lesson***

In Steiner schools the main subjects, such as history, are taught in Main Lesson blocks of 3 to 4 weeks. Rudolf Steiner maintained that forgetting was an important part of remembering, so that between blocks a sort of *inner digestion* is going on in the student.

For any particular block the teacher should roughly prepare the whole subject matter of a particular epoch, so it flows from one thing to another. You can do this in the holidays, or when you have a good amount of free time. You should have an overall objective of what you wish to teach.

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<sup>7</sup> Pre-pubescent = just before puberty begins

Before and during the block, at each weekend, you can prepare in more detail the next week's lessons. You can write down an outline scheme of the subject matter, the objectives and the activities you wish the students to do.

Then lastly you come down to preparing the individual lesson of the day ahead in detail, what is called the Main Lesson of the day. You write up a plan of the order you will do things in, and the time each part of the lesson will take – all in note form.

There should be a rhythm in the lesson, i.e. times when the students are listening and you are active – the students are *breathing in* - counter-balanced with times when the students are busy doing things, such as a class discussion or working together in discussion groups, writing or drawing, and you are more passive, helping individual students – the students are *breathing out*.

Rudolf Steiner has written about how to present the history lesson. Firstly the teacher should give a brief overview of the facts and how they occurred in time. In this way, Steiner says, “I am... claiming ... the child's whole being.”

Then the teacher should then tell the story, describing it in vivid detail. This appeals to the rhythmic system of the child because the feelings are involved. On the following day, the child comes to school with inner pictures in his head of the story from the previous day. The teacher brings questions for discussion arising from the story that encourages the child to relive the story and to engage consciously with the ideas, so that he makes the experience his own.

And Rudolf Steiner concludes: “By this method I shall bring it about that the three members of the threefold human being interwork and interweave with each other in the right way.”

### ***The Children's or Students' Activities***

I have described at some length above, and written in the following chapters about *the breathing in* part of the lesson, i.e. what the teacher talks about, how you organise and deliver your lessons, etc.. But now it is time to look at *the breathing out* part of the lesson, where the children or students express what they have learned.

In Waldorf Schools the Main Lesson of the day will usually be 2 hours long. It is divided into 3 parts:

- ❖ a *rhythmic/feeling* part of about 40 minutes, where the children/students sing,

speak and do bodily movements, led by the teacher;

- ❖ a *thinking* part of about 30 to 40 minutes, where they recall the important parts of the lesson from the day before, and then hear the lesson of today, and/or any story, told by the teacher – this may also include questions and discussion;
- ❖ and a *doing* part, taking the rest of the lesson time, where they either write, draw, model, paint, do maths or science, make things, do drama or anything else the teacher may decide on out of the work of the lesson, so they can express what they have learnt.

In this way we are always moving from teaching the class as a whole group, to giving individuals the attention they need.

In the rhythmic/feeling part of the lesson, we focus on doing the activities in a way that expresses deep feeling, rather than simply “going through the motions”, encouraging high quality, expressive singing, speaking and moving. We address the thinking when they listen to the content of the lesson. When we engage them in listening to the deeds of history or the stories of Africa, their feelings are also stirred; and we engage the will in the first and last part of the lesson, when they are moving, singing, speaking and doing.

In most education today it is the *thinking* which is educated. In education systems of the future, such as Steiner education, it is the *will* we spend most time educating. It is only when the students use their own will, working with lesson material through their own efforts, that real learning takes place. Students need to be *active learners*, being fully engaged, and not *passive learners*, merely receiving information which has to be memorised.

This means finding as many opportunities as possible to get the students to think for themselves, work things out by themselves, express what they have learnt through the arts, and transform their main lesson books and their classroom into a living exhibition of the subject they are studying.

If *thinking* and *will* activities are done imaginatively and creatively, they will give rise to intensive feelings. It is time to develop a balance between the thinking, feeling and willing in our lessons. The human being of the future will need to be an integral being, who is balanced within him- or herself, if our world is to have peace and develop in a more spiritual way.

## Writing

Writing is a primary way that we ask students to record and remember the material of the History main lesson. This can be done in a number of ways to increase the students' writing skills depending upon their age.

As for most African children English is their second or third language, at the beginning of Grade 4 it is best to write what you learned about yesterday simply on the blackboard and to ask the children to copy it. And in their best handwriting – that is the artistic element in the exercise. They can read it aloud in unison, or to each other, the next day.

You can also work together with the class. While you are remembering yesterday's lesson, you ask questions which ask the children to make up the text of the writing bit by bit. This you write on the blackboard as you go. When it's finished, they copy it. You can lead it, but the words are theirs too.

In Grade 5, or earlier if the children are quite skilled, you can write up most of it, but leave gaps, words or phrases that the children have to fill in on their own. These gaps can increase until you ask the children to write out their own accounts in their own words. This they can do into practise books, which you can correct, and then they put it into their main lesson books.

In Grade 6 you can begin dictations. You give out a sheet of paper the day before, or put it on the blackboard, and the students work on it so they know the spellings and understand what it is about. The next day you speak it out and they copy it straight into their main lesson books.

In Grade 7 you can at first write up the most important events of the lesson on the blackboard in note form, which the students copy down. Later they can write their own notes as you speak. You are introducing them to taking notes, which is a very important skill they will need in secondary school.

In Grade 8 you can begin giving *blind dictations*, where you speak out a text which the students have never heard before, and they have to write it down to the best of their ability.

You may also wish to give them another alphabet, the Greek for example, as it is easy and corresponds to the English alphabet. They can copy it down and write *secret* notes, which their friends must translate.

## *Objectives in Teaching*

It is important to have clear objectives of what you are teaching, how you are teaching it, and why you are teaching it. This is why preparation, both as a teacher and as a human being, is very important. We should want to do our best for the children placed in our charge, because we *love* them. A teacher needs to organise his or her life in such a way that he or she has adequate time for the needs of the children, and adequate time for the needs of himself.

If you have a clear objective in every lesson, then you can craft your lesson around that and it will make your preparation easier. This, in turn, enhances your confidence, the most important attribute of any teacher, and you end up giving a better lesson.

And, afterwards, in assessing your lesson, you are left with the question? What do I think I taught the students today? Or, what did the children learn today? In reflecting upon this you can improve greatly as a teacher.

Do we want the students to learn skills or facts, or a mixture of both? And if the latter, then in what proportion? It seems to me that it is not only important to learn the date when Vasco de Gama landed in Malindi, but also how he used his sails and the navigational instruments to reach there. Also, what his boat looked like and what it was like to travel in a small caravel open to the changing weather.

Of course, memory is not just in the head, and improved through thinking. We increase a child's memory through learning to make things with his hands and through dancing, singing and speaking rhythmically. By engaging the feelings in the story, or through painting, drawing, modelling, drama or any artistic activity, we are educating the child's imagination, and therefore strengthening his memory.

By educating the thinking through telling the children the history of the human race, and asking them to listen and then to express what they have heard, we are helping them to take their place successfully in the world they have chosen to live in. And if we love the human race and recognise the good in the bad and the bad in the good of every event, we will help our children to understand the purpose of history. They can discover that everything that happens has a gift to be learnt, if we have the patience to find it and the wisdom to accept it.

By asking them to express what they have learnt in their own unique way in their *Main Lesson Book*, which they get to keep, educates all three attributes of the

human being: the thinking, the feeling and the will (or doing). All educational systems, mostly products of the last two hundred years, have sought for a balanced way of teaching young people, because a balanced education helps to create a well-balanced adult human being.

*The students should also be given many interesting examples of how our culture today is founded on the achievements of past ages. This can enable a feeling to arise in them that the different flowers of human civilisation unfold in the many peoples of the earth, that every culture has its own essence, and yet at the same time contributes to the history of humanity and to our own civilisation.*

*In this way the horizon of the youngsters is stretched far beyond their own geographical boundaries, and the foundation is laid for an understanding of how culture belongs to humanity as a whole.*

*(from the Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*



## ***Chapter 4: History in Grade 4***

### ***Where do we begin?***

*In Grades 4 and 5 when the pupils are 10 and 11 years-old, the midway point of childhood is reached. The transition from early childhood is complete, the transition towards puberty has not yet begun. This centre-point ... is referred to in Steiner pedagogy as the “heart of childhood”.*

*The self-activity of the child brings about a harmony between the breathing and the blood circulation. Confidence in their new state is expressed in a quality of vigour and an eagerness to look at and learn about the world.*

*(from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

It is far easier to tell a child where they are than who they are. With the former, you draw attention to the world around them and lead them through it. With the latter, it will take them a lifetime to find out, if they find out at all, and most of that work they will have to do without their teacher.

So, we begin in Grade 4 by giving them lessons about their local surroundings. [We draw their attention to their home and the walk or drive to school.] We show them how to draw maps and help them to understand the perspective of the angels or aeroplane pilots, i.e. to see the world from above. Then we tell them about their countryside and village or town from a geographical and human point of view.

This should then lead to important questions, such as: *Why do people farm or fish here? Where did their ancestors come from? And so on.* We are now looking at economic geography and this leads us towards questions which are essentially historical. This link between geography and history needs to be cultivated in the awareness of the children, especially as they learn about the history of different people and cultures in different countries.

As geography leads to an understanding of oneself in space, so history leads to an understanding in time.

At this age we should convey our lessons in an imaginative, narrative<sup>8</sup> way. This means a teacher does not read out or tell the facts like a man reading a bus timetable. Rather, he or she needs to tell the story of the people in history in such a rich and interesting manner that the children hang on every word spoken.

The teacher can make up characters and stories to illustrate what he or she wants to present to the children. This helps the children to identify with the different characters, making them live on in their imagination and memory. And the words, carefully chosen and clearly spoken, should carry his young audience through joy or sorrow, heroism or despair, endurance and reaching the final goal, and every kind of emotion that the stories can evoke.

If the teacher can inform all his narrative with imagination, not just the stories, but also the pictures he brings in words before the children, then he will see the interest in every child's eye and will have little trouble with discipline.

*The narrative content of many lessons gives them archetypal<sup>9</sup> pictures of human relationships and challenges, whilst familiarising them with the social relationships of older cultures between kings, queens, peasants, holy men and women. Such myths and legends also provide them with an understanding of narrative, the primary mode telling history itself. (from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

Although the above was written in a European context, the same holds true for Africa, and its rich cultural history. The children learn much through stories from long ago, and through the teacher's descriptions begin to get a sense of historical time.

The teacher needs to think how the local past can best be brought to the children in more practical ways, such as visiting old buildings, outdoor museums showing how the local people made their dwellings and indoor museums showing archeological finds from the distant past. The making of little models of the way dwellings were made or built in the past, using clay and natural materials from one's own environment, is a wonderful way to allow children to connect with their past. The teacher can use his or her creative ideas for letting them "live" the olden times

<sup>8</sup> Narrative = giving a description (in our terms a "rich description")

<sup>9</sup> Archetypal = following basic human patterns

through making items, decorations, paintings, poster drawings, etc, transforming the classroom into a living exhibition of history!

### *The first history lesson*

We begin the first History lesson by looking at the history of the most immediate environment.

Who are the people who lived here and shaped this land where we live now? And in Africa this will be the tribes who have lived, worked and died here over the past 500 years or so.

So, the teacher does not begin at some arbitrary date that he or some educational authority decides. Rather he begins with the children. Where do they live? This is the world they know and are familiar with. This is the world into which they have been born. How did this small part of Africa, where these children live, come about?

In a simple way we begin to answer the most important human question: “Who am I?” and “How did I get here?”

Because it is in Africa, and even more than that, because it is local, the response to their question begins by being very individual. It is not any bit of Africa, nor any bit of Kenya, Uganda or Tanzania but the place where the children live, Ongata Rongai or Dodoma; their own village or suburb.

If you are teaching in a rural or homogeneous area where one or two tribes predominate, then your choice of subject is easy. But what if you are teaching in Nairobi or Kampala or Dar-es-Salaam, where many, many tribes from all over the country are now living? Which tribes should you pick when the children in your class may be from 6 or 7 different tribes?

I suggest that the best way to approach this is to look at how various tribes live in their environments, drawing on all the backgrounds of the children in discussion, even when only certain tribes will be dealt with in detail. What is the tribe's primary economic and social way of life?

Wherever one looks in Africa, one sees three different types of tribal ways of life, either hunter-gatherers, herdsmen or farmers.

It has been discovered by archaeology that 500 years and more ago hunter-gatherers roamed the vast plains and mountains of Africa. There are cave paintings showing animals being hunted from the Tassili mountains of the Sahara –

6,000 years ago the desert was green and fertile – to the veld of South Africa. They did not own land yet the whole landscape belonged to them as they followed the animals they hunted and the wild fruits, grains and roots they gathered to keep them healthy. For thousands of years these simple, but superbly organised, people lived their lives all over the continent.

Then, little by little, other migrating tribes from the north, south, east and west slowly took over their traditional lands. They were eased or driven out and now only a few hunter-gatherer tribes are left, such as the San of Namibia and Botswana, the Hadza of Tanzania and the Mbete of the Congo. Yet for the children these tribes are very important to know about, because they have an innocence and a sense of oneness with their environment that young children still have. For them everything is alive, the trees, the rocks, the rivers, everything.

Herdsmen and farmers have a different relationship with their world. Because of the cattle they graze or the food plants they grow, they have what we could call a more evolved view of life. They have developed the building of huts from wattle branches covered with mud and live a more settled life style, although they can still move to another place for better grazing. In this they are like the young person at school who is learning many things without fixing his or her ideas about who he or she is and what he or she will do later in life.

So, by introducing one by one these 3 different types of local tribes we are showing the children innately how different people have changed over time in the way they view the world, and how they have shaped the environment they now live in.

Of course, today few tribes follow exclusively one way of life. Maasai herdsmen may despise farming but I have seen that, when there are good rains in the Rift Valley, they are not averse to planting maize and having an extra source of food. Similarly most Kikuyu farmers keep a few cows for milk and dung. And many San and Mbete hunter-gatherers, are now under increasing pressure to give up their land and way of life, and can be seen herding goats, farming or even buying most of their food in the shops if they have any money!

But the teacher must remember the age of the children. They are still young and he is not teaching modern history yet nor the exact chronological sequence of African development, but rather a picture to show the child where he or she has come from in this world.

In East Africa the predominately herding tribes are the Maasai, the Samburu, the Karomonjong, the Nuer, the Dinka, etc. What we could call the farming tribes are

the Kikuyu, the Chagga, the Baganda, the Bunyoro, etc.

Of course many tribes practise both herding and farming, like the Kalenjin and the Alur, while other tribes fish the rich waters of the sea or inland lakes, such as the Luo and the Mijikendas.

Teachers can choose the tribes that are local and/or fulfil the criteria of farming and herding. If the tribes do both activities, all is well and good. The teacher can show how the two activities dovetail into one another. Each tribe develops crafts and cultural activities like beading, pottery, weaving and woodcarving that show their development in other practical ways.

### ***The hunter-gatherers: The San people***

Although Rudolf Steiner has said that it is very important to give the children some idea of the sense of time that people lived, the San people have been in the Kalahari Desert and much of the rest of Africa for more than 50,000 years, and so we cannot follow his example quoted above. We know from the archaeological work done in Kenya and Tanzania that the remains of human bones and artefacts found go back a long, long way as the earliest examples of humankind have been found here.



These people who lived and hunted in the then swamps of the Rift Valley were



probably much like the San. So, finding an imaginative way to convey to the children just how long ago these San ancestors must have lived is similar to saying 'Once upon a time' as in the fairy tales. So it is better not to attempt to try to find literal ways of placing the San people in a time frame. And then one can tell the children that the San used to live all around when the earth was still young, the fields were forests and wild animals walked everywhere, not just in game parks like we have it now.

Told well, this picture will grab the children's attention and they will want to know who these people, maybe their ancestors, were. And one can tell the children how since then the San moved southwards following the wild animals who needed grazing as the Sahara dried up. This caused them to be moved away by the herding tribes who wanted grassland areas for their cattle. Finally, their lands were taken over by more powerful tribes in search of fertile farming, so the San were pushed even further away until now they live far, far away in a dry desert called the Kalahari. Do the children know what a desert is? The teacher could give an imaginative picture of a desert that makes them feel its heat, dryness and the vastness of it.

What do the San look like? They are known as 'the small people', being short in stature, with fine bones, a light yellowish-brown skin and flattish faces.

The San is not what they call themselves. It means gatherer and is what other tribes around call them. They call themselves "Juwasi", which means *the real people* in their language. They are also known as *the red people*, probably because the dust in the Kalahari is brick-red. Whenever the clan were led by a shaman (wise man/woman) in a trance-dance to connect them to the gods to bring guidance and healing to the clan, everyone used to decorate themselves with the red clay.

The San people are known for the beautiful petroglyphs and rock paintings that they carved and painted on the rocks and caves in their surroundings. The petroglyphs were spirals and symbols scratched into the rocks whereas the paintings depicted animals being hunted and certain scenes which have been recognised as shamanistic experiences that connected the people to the gods. The San also recognised that the gods appeared to them in the form of creatures e.g. the Eland and the praying mantis. They used pigments of clay, charcoal and other substances containing natural oils that enabled the colours to stick to the rocks. These paintings have allowed us to discover how the San people lived so long ago.

The San traditionally have a rich and varied way of life. These scenes show men hunting and of medicine men dancing.



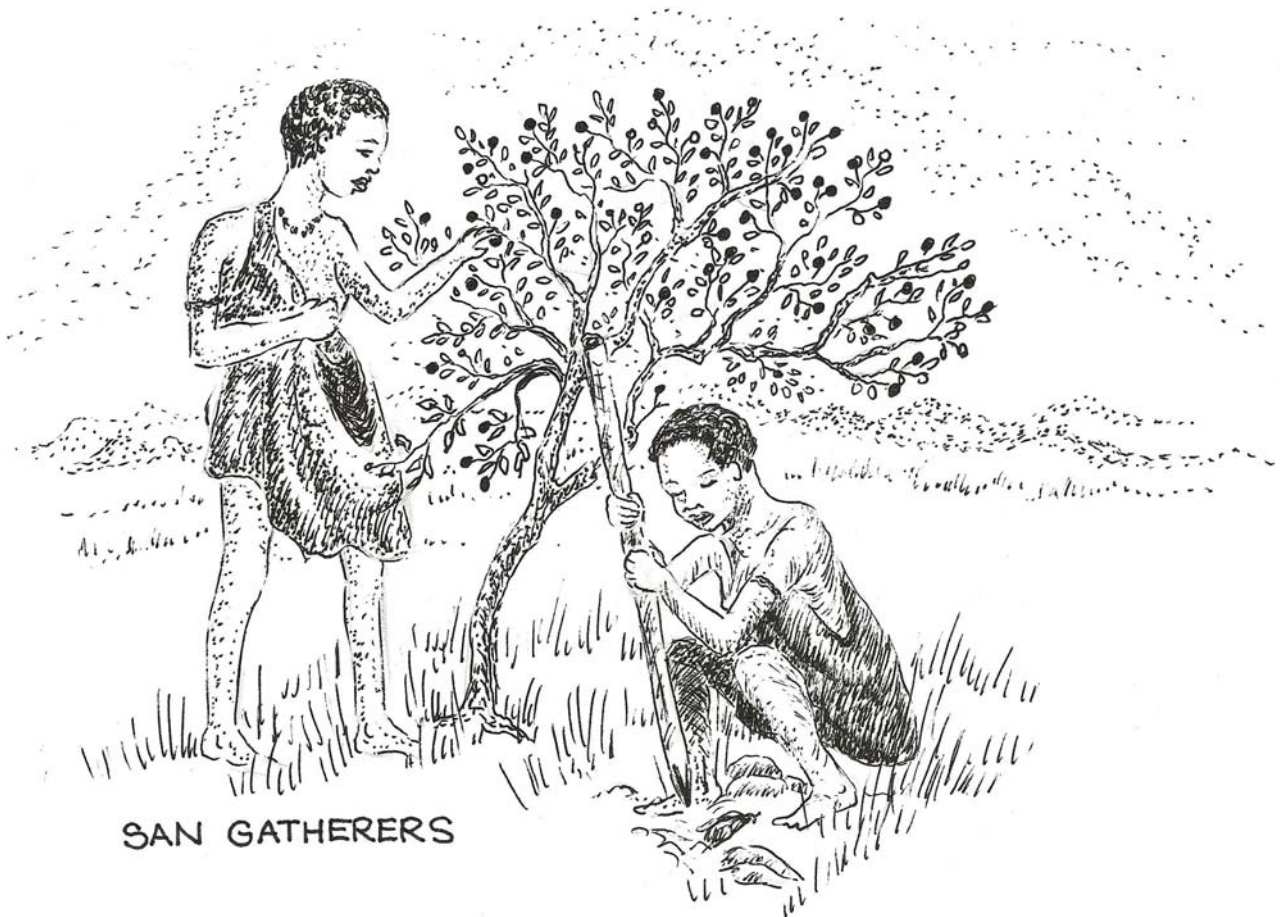
Their language uses every part of the tongue and throat and has more different sounds than any other language. Remarkably, they have, as well as vowels and consonants, click sounds; not just one but five. It's fun to say a few words using click sounds. The teacher can find out how to make the click sounds and then show the children. Children always love it, and it develops their diction.

The men and boys do the hunting. They hunt with bows and arrows with tips on which they smear a poison made from the juice of a beetle. Groups of two to four men set out from camp in search of a gemsbok or wild antelope which is common in the Kalahari. When they site fresh dung, the men fall silent, communicating to each other through sign language and pre-arranged birdlike calls. They make sure the prey is upwind so that they will not be detected.

When they are about 25 metres from their prey, a hunter lets fly a poisoned arrow. If it hits its mark, the men hunt down the animal to its final resting place, where they finish it off with a spear. They are superb stalkers following footprints, smells, sounds and any other sign that keeps them on track. A good hunter is very proud of his skill and other San have great respect for him. The men divide up the meat with the hunter who killed the animal taking the first choice. They will not hunt again for several days. Later the San domesticated the dog, and with its help they tracked down game.

The women and girls do the gathering, going out every day to collect "mongongo" nuts, wild honey, leaves, berries and flowers for eating and healing, and they dig for roots with sticks. They use over 200 different plants, knowing where each kind is found, and when it can be harvested.

The hunter-gatherer probably lives closer to his environment than any other human-being. He or she can "smell" water up to 10 miles away in the desert. Both men and women know which plants yield underground tubers for food, which plants will heal them from sickness, which are poisonous, which are good for bows and arrows, which are good as containers, etc. They can dry nuts and wild seeds and store them. They cook and eat together, sharing the food communally.



The San make simple shelters out of wood or branches with grass and leaves for a roof, living there till they need to move on; or even simple rain shelters out of a few sticks, some cloth or animal hide and bits of grass.

Each family has a territory and has rights to waterholes. If these dry up, then they use *sip wells*. They will scrape a deep hole where the sand is damp. Into this hole they put a long hollow grass stem. The water is carefully sucked up the stem from the sand into the mouth and then squirted out from the sides of their mouths into an ostrich egg to collect the precious water.

### ***Social Life***

San children have few social duties. They learn everything by imitation from their parents and other relatives.

*My father taught me about his father, who taught him about the foods of our land. Your father's father teaches you. People have taught*

*each other and taught each other and taught each other. People have died but the teaching has gone on.*<sup>10</sup>

Each child is named after their grandparents or another relative. Children spend a lot of time playing. Like their parents they love to talk, sing songs, play music, tell stories, laugh and play games. The young boys practise hunting birds and squirrels, often using sticks. Leisure is treasured in San communities.

The family travels from one waterhole to the next throughout the year. They hold their land communally. They say: *We are not a people who buy land. Instead we are born on land.* They have no chiefs. *Each one of us is a chief,* they say. Leadership is something that emerges from the community. No-one is born to be a leader. Women are as important as men. Decisions are made together out of a consensus.

The San say: *The worst thing for us is not giving gifts. If two people don't like each other, one gives a gift and the other has to take it. This brings peace between them. We always give to one another. This is the way we live together.* They call this *hxaro*, the system of sharing. Each person creates a network of "sharing relationships" with others in the group. The average number of *hxaro* partners is 25.

The San decorate their possessions with their own designs. They make beautiful jewellery, using beads made from ostrich eggshells. They sing to accompany their dances, and also play a number of musical instruments. Mouth bows are played with one end of the bow in the mouth, while the string is tapped with a finger or a stick. Thumb pianos are blocks of wood with prongs that can be plucked with the thumbs. Singing and dancing are also important in religious ritual. The San believe that spirits affect human beings by shooting them with invisible arrows carrying disease, death and misfortune. The healing medicine dance moves in a large circle around a fire, usually in the middle of the camp. The women and girls do most of the singing. They sit by the fire and clap in different rhythms as they sing. The men and teenage boys dance around the woman, and one or two will go into trance. They say that the *power* or *medicine* in them "boils". Then they can fly across the sky to the realm of the gods.

These medicine people usually men but sometimes women, can then use their spiritual powers to heal other members of the tribe. They place their hands on people's shoulders to *pull* illnesses from them, including the bad feelings that sometimes affect small groups of people living so close together.

<sup>10</sup> From a pamphlet; source not acknowledged

These days the San live in small family groups, although they do not have the freedom to move around to hunt and gather in fresh areas. Certain parts of the country have been set aside for the San people so that their cultural heritage is not lost entirely. They visit their relatives in other bands frequently, for often keeping alive means keeping in touch. Most of the older people do not read or write, although they are encouraged to get the children into school.

### ***The Tug of War - a San Story***

One day God decided to hold a tug of war. He made a rope. He gave one end to the San and the other end to a neighbouring tribe, the Tswana. They pulled and they pulled. Eventually the rope broke.

The Tswana found that the end they now held was made of leather. The end the San now had was made of grass. From that time, the Tswana have kept cattle for leather while the San have lived in the bush and gathered wild plants.<sup>11</sup>

### ***The Herdsmen: The Maasai***

In the beginning was the great god, Enkai. He made everything, the sun, the moon and the stars, the wind, the grass, cattle and the Maasai. All lived together for there was no separation.

Then, one day, Enkai split the earth from the sky and the Maasai found themselves down on the earth with nothing to eat. They prayed to Enkai to help them. So he created a bridge made of bark and sent all the cattle down to the Maasai from heaven. The Maasai received them with joy and reverence. But one jealous group received no cattle. They became very angry and cut the bark bridge, severing the earth from the sky.

And that is why, to this day, the Maasai love all cattle so much, for they came originally from the high god, Enkai, who meant that all cattle should belong to the Maasai.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> From same pamphlet, as above

<sup>12</sup> From same pamphlet, as above





MAASAI WARRIOR

The Maasai are tall, thin and graceful in build, with a very dark skin. They are usually wrapped in their traditional brilliant red blanket and carry a long stick or staff. Often they stand on one leg for a long time in perfect balance and watch the wide, grassy plains when guarding their cattle.

What a huge breakthrough in food security it must have been to those early ancestors when they began to tame cattle. Suddenly your food, milk, meat and blood, moved with you

through the landscape. You no longer had to rely on being able to find the edible plants or hunt a wild animal. Now you could wake up in the morning and there was your food before you, a cow gently chewing away.

But, being dependant on your cattle, gave you added responsibilities. They had to find good grass to eat, which meant you had to move to good grazing areas. And in Africa, which is so full of wild predators, it meant you had to protect your cattle constantly. When guarding their cattle the Maasai, often standing on one leg, watch the wide grassy plains for any lions or cheetahs.

Grass is a remarkable plant. In the dry season it can seem dead, even disappeared, but once it begins raining again, it can spring up, green and fresh. This means that the herders can follow the rains from green grass to green grass.

The above could be a good way to introduce the Maasai tribe as herders. The early cattle, or *aurochs*, lived in North Africa when the Sahara desert was much greener than it is today. They were far bigger than modern cattle and were probably hunted before they were domesticated. Archaeological remains show that they had huge horns, much like the *Watutsi* cattle today in Rwanda. They were fierce and it must have taken many generations of careful breeding before they became the docile cattle we see in Africa today.

The Maasai too came from the north, following the Rift Valley. Of course, they met earlier tribes who had already settled there. But they were a warlike tribe who scorned the planting of vegetables and exalted the warriors, the *morans*. When a Maasai greets another Maasai, when they meet along a path in the savannah, he says: *I hope your cows are well.*

Other tribes laugh at them for they say they love their cattle far more than their wives! The Maasai do not like to kill their cattle and have huge herds roaming throughout Kenya and Tanzania. Their whole life revolves around their animals. Traditionally they received their daily nourishment from them. They would milk the cows and then carefully cut into the jugular vein with a hollow tube. They would collect the blood into a leather gourd, mix it with the milk and drink the mixture, *the saroi*. They will only kill cattle for meat at a festival when the animal is first offered to God. The cow is linked to the grass and the grass to the land. These are both very sacred. When a Maasai wants to show he comes in peace, he will hold some grass in his hand.

It is beneath their dignity to pierce the ground and cultivate the land. Traditionally the Maasai did not even bury their dead, preferring to abandon the corpse to the wild animals. The land is sacred to the point that they did not dare to offend it, not even digging a well for water, but rather continuing to make use of the streams and natural wells which they came across in their wanderings.

When we first hear of them, the Maasai were fighting the other tribes, ruling over land from Lake Victoria to the Indian Ocean, and from Mount Kenya to mount Kilimanjaro. Two great chiefs, Mbatyani and Nelion, ruled over them – and the two highest peaks of Mount Kenya are named after them.

But then came two disasters. First there was a pestilence, called *reindepest*, which killed many of their cattle. If that wasn't bad enough it was followed by a terrible drought. Without food or water the Maasai died in great numbers. Mbatyani died too and his sons, Lenana and Sendeu, fought for the succession. After these



calamities the Maasai were no longer able to rule other tribes. They now live on the fertile grasslands of East Africa.

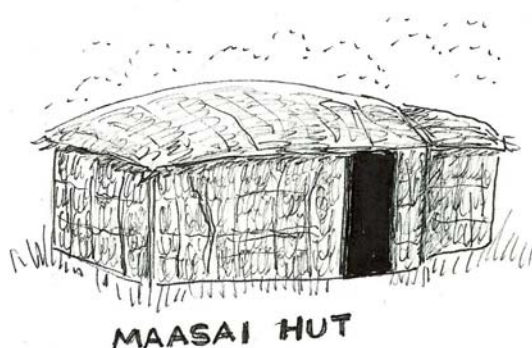
## ***Social Life***

Young boys of 14 or a bit older leave their families and walk with boys of the same age to a sacred place. Here they build an enclosure of huts, surrounded by a fence of thorns, normally acacia tree cuttings. Here they live together for a long period of time, up to eight years. They learn the traditions of their fathers, the songs, dances and how to fight. In the past they would often go and steal the cattle of their neighbours, for did not Enkai give the world's cattle to the Maasai?

The Maasai youth has to learn the taboos of the tribe, what he can and cannot do. For example, he must not let a woman see him eating meat or he must throw it away. He is forbidden to drink alcohol or chew tobacco. In the old days he had to go and kill a lion, and then he could wear the magnificent mane to show his bravery.

When these young men have completed their training, a priest announces it is time for the first part of the circumcision ceremony. The night before, the young men must sleep outside in the forest. At dawn the next day they must return like raiders. Then they dance for four days, the traditional Maasai dance where they jump higher and higher into the air.

A leader is chosen from among the young men. He is given a club blackened in mud as a staff of office. A bullock is slaughtered and he is the first one to drink its blood. The young men have to wait for another two years. Then another ceremony occurs where a young man must knock down a strong bullock by his horns. Now each one returns to his own home and is circumcised. They are now morans and are allowed to marry. Each one must carry a heavy spear and be responsible for large herds of cattle.



The girls stay at home and learn how to clean house, gather food and look after babies and the compound. They marry soon after puberty. They live with their families in an *enjang*, made up from between 20 and 50 houses. A thick, thorny hedge protects them from lions, leopards, etc. There are small gaps in the hedge corresponding to the number of families living there. The hut of the first wife is on the

right of the entrance, that of the second on the left, the third wife on the right, and so

on. A man may marry many wives.

These Maasai houses rarely reach the height of a man and it is impossible to stand upright. You enter through a narrow tunnel, built on to the side of the wall. Just below the roof there is an attic made from manure and grass, where newly-born kids and lambs are kept dry and warm.

The houses have no windows or chimneys, but a little air circulates through the walls and entrance, which at night is covered over with skins and sticks. During the day the inside of the hut is cool, while at night there is a natural warmth. A cow skin thrown on the ground suffices for a bed. Sometimes a large bed is built from branches woven together with grass laid on top, over which a cow skin is thrown as a cover or blanket. The boys will all sleep together on one side of the hut, the girls on the other side.

The fire place is made from three rocks. Fire is made anew every day by rotating a soft stick inside the hole of a hard piece of wood until a spark comes. This spark is transferred to some dry grass and, when this little fire catches alight, dry sticks and wood are added to make a good fire for cooking. Large and small gourds serve as containers and cooking pots.



The Maasai dress simply; a piece of red cloth tied round the middle for a man and a larger cloth tied at the shoulder for the women. The men always carry a stick so they can herd cattle at any time, and a heavy cane with a hard ball at one end, a *rungu*, with which they can protect themselves. The women and men wear the most beautiful bright beaded jewellery and both sexes are particular about their hairstyles.

After the birth of a child, the women in the compound come together to celebrate. Each brings a gourd of milk for the mother to

drink in. They spit frequently to show their goodwill because the Maasai believe that water, or spit, helps remove any evil a person may think or speak. A sheep is

slaughtered, and each woman is offered a slice of freshly killed and cooked mutton – a great treat.

Naming the child is the next important ritual. The father chooses a perfect black bullock, which is killed and roasted, and the guests are offered slices of it. The women bring gourds of milk which they hand to the mother. In the evening, while the mother is out milking, the elders and the father decide on the child's name. The mother comes in, holds the child and the name is spoken.

The child remains near his or her mother, usually nursing<sup>13</sup> until about the age of two. The mother is relaxed with her child, not forcing the little one into any early training or specific patterns of behaviour. She does cultivate her child's beauty, by rubbing the face with a mixture of sheep fat and red clay so that the skin shines a golden brown, and by adding rounded weights to the child's ear lobes.

Children play at being herders, enacting the care of the cattle and the reliance on them for milk, blood and meat. A Maasai version of hide-and-seek centres on raiding cattle. One boy selects a cow while the others hide. When he is ready he calls them, and they run and pretend they are the cattle raiders. The boy fights them off with a stick, and if the stick touches a *raider*, he is considered *killed* and is out of the game.

## ***The Farmers: The Kikuyu***

### ***A Creation Story***

Long, long ago, when the land around the shining Mount Kenya was inhabited only by animals, the great god, Ngai, appeared many times to the first man, Gikuyu.

Once he took him to the top of the great mountain on the snow-covered peaks, where no man had ever set foot before. From there he showed him the beautiful landscape below, with the winding silvery rivers, the dark valleys, the various animals grazing on the green grasslands, and he told him, "All this is yours!"

Gikuyu's heart was filled with joy and he lifted his arms in gratitude, and said, "My father, I have no words to thank you for such a gift. I am speechless in front of your magnificence. You are the great Wisdom, the ruler of the sky and the earth. Accept

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<sup>13</sup> Nursing = drinking from the mother's breast

me as your warrior ready to serve you.”<sup>14</sup>

Ngai answered, "Your words have touched my heart. I promise you that your sons will increase and multiply beneath this mountain. May my blessing be upon you and all your children."

Then Ngai ordered Gikuyu to build a house in the middle of the land he had given him, by a large fig tree. He gave him a wife called Mumbi, the first woman. They had 9 daughters but no sons. Sadly there were no young men to marry these daughters. So Gikuyu prayed to Ngai and he replied, "Go and offer me a sacrifice beneath the fig tree. Take with you your wife and your daughters. On the next night come alone under the tree.." Gikuyu obeyed the god's command. He took a she-goat and a lamb, lit a fire and offered them in sacrifice.

The following night when he returned, he could hardly believe his eyes. On the cold ashes of the fire now stood nine strong young men. Gikuyu invited them to his house where they met his daughters, who happily chose them as husbands. And each new family grew with many children, the first Kikuyu.

## ***Social Life***

Here we have the creation myth of the Kikuyu, a Bantu tribe who are settled now all around the slopes of Mount Kenya.

Interestingly enough anthropologists agree that the Kikuyu in fact came from far away and migrated here maybe 500 to 1,000 years ago from West Africa. But we do not tell the children that yet because the children live still in story and not in chronological time. These Bantu migrations we will teach them in Class 6 when they have a clearer sense of time and also a knowledge of African geography.

What do the Kikuyu look like? Though all the East African tribes are generally tall with handsome features, the Kikuyu have broader faces with large, expressive eyes. The Kikuyu tribe farm the fertile volcanic lands around Mount Kenya, growing maize, millet, bananas, vegetables, etc. The mountain attracts adequate rainfall which vegetables need. They also keep cattle, sheep and goats but, unlike the Maasai, these are not their first interest.

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<sup>14</sup> From same pamphlet, as above

They follow the rhythms of the seasons, ploughing at the end of the dry season in September and March and planting at the beginning of the rains in April and October. Then the whole family joins in and helps to weed the young plants as they are growing before they harvest in July and December.

They break the soil with the *djembe*, or mattock, and harvest with the *panga*, a spear or sickle. The Kikuyu live in *nyumbas*, or family units; a man with his wife and children. This family is joined with other families to form a *mbari*, or sub-clan, and these mbaris join together to form one of the nine clans of the Kikuyu, which are descended from one or other of Gikuyu's daughters.

The girls learn the skills of the home with their mothers, caring for the younger children and working in the fields.

Like the Maasai, the teenage boys are initiated into the ways of the tribe with circumcision in order to become a man. The young men get married, have children and learn to manage their *shambas*, or farms. When they grow old, they become the elders of the tribe. They are then called *athuuri*, a name that conveys a sense of sacred respect. Many of them like to show off their authority by wearing the hair from the tail of a cow or giraffe and a necklace, sitting on a 3-legged stool and taking snuff from a traditional box made from the horn of an animal. When they sit together, they make the laws of the tribe and punish those who break them.

The most powerful of the elders are:

- the chiefs, who are descended from the chiefs of the past
- the *mgangas*, or shamans – the word “witch doctor” is insulting – and
- the blacksmiths

The Mgangas: people go to the mganga to hear about the future, to be healed from disease and to put spells on others. The mganga collects many things which he uses in his rituals, small bones and sticks, old coins, pieces of glass and any other object which grips his imagination on his walks. He keeps all these in a gourd, which he carefully looks after. He must also know all the stories of the tribe in which the history, customs, laws and religion of the Kikuyus are handed down. He will tell these around the fire under the moon accompanied by a drum; myths and fables told to the circle of children, who wait eagerly to hear them; poems and songs of wisdom and virtue are recited or sung.

The Kikuyus, like most African tribes, did not have the art of writing, so their history



was passed on from generation to generation through these stories. With the advent of the modern media, especially the television, these stories are in danger of being forgotten.

So, like in Europe in the early 19th century when the Grimm brothers wrote down the ancient fairy tales, it is time now that teachers and others collect the old stories of Africa, write them down and publish them as books or on the internet so that the history of Africa is not forgotten.

The blacksmiths: iron was first smelted in Africa many years ago by the Bantu tribes. With the iron plough, drawn by oxen, or the iron-headed djembe and panga, they could clear the forest and break into the hardest of soils. They could travel to new lands and grow their crops, protecting them with thorn hedges against wild animals and fighting other tribes for the best land.

### ***Wanjiru - a hero story***

The sun beat mercilessly and there was no sign of any rain. This happened one year, and it happened again a second year, and even a third year, so that the crops died and the men, women and children found themselves close to starvation.

Finally, the elders of the village called all the people together, and they assembled on the scorched grass under the fig tree at the foot of the hill, where they had sung and danced in happier times. Sick and weary, they turned to each other and asked helplessly, "Why is it the rains do not come?"

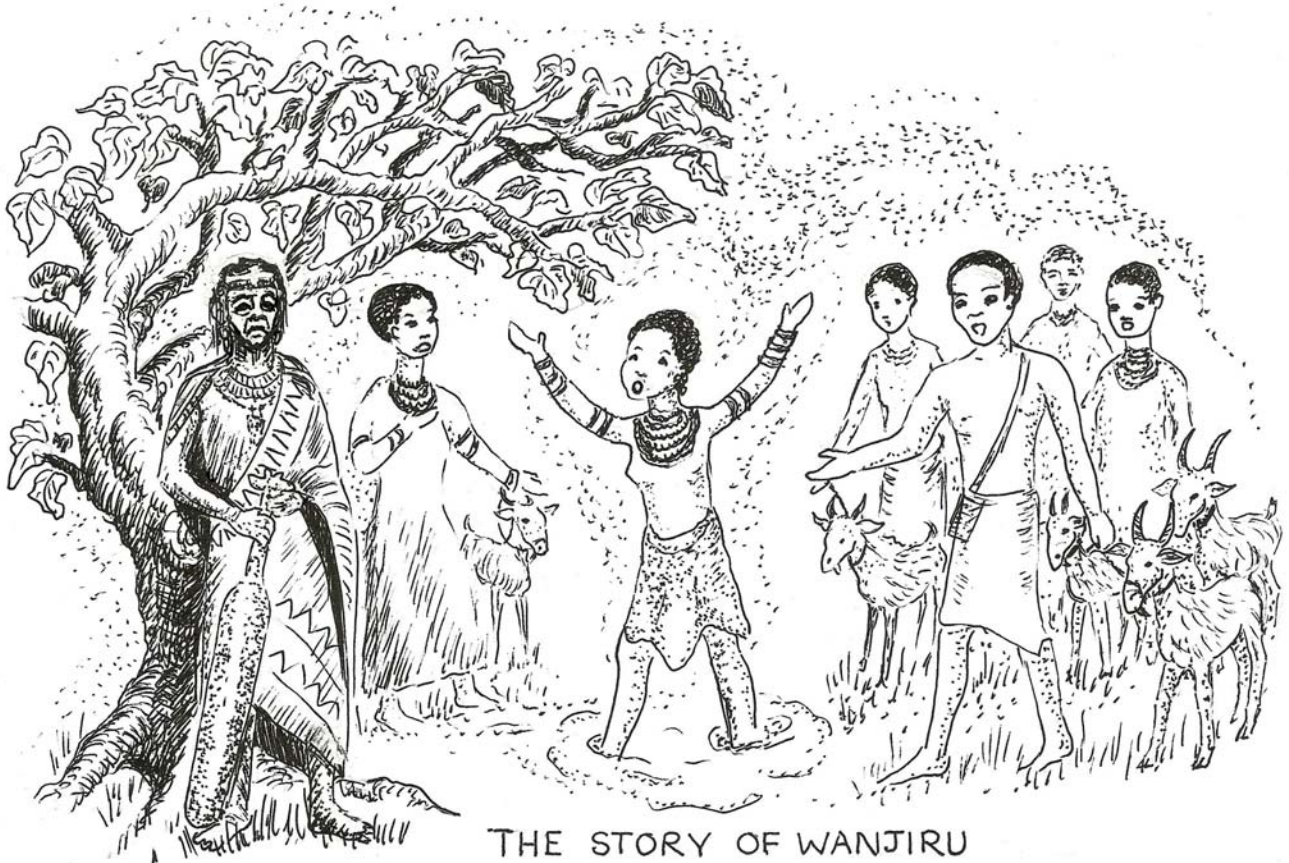
Not one among them could find an answer, and so they went to the house of the mganga and asked him the same question. The mganga took hold of his gourd, shook it hard and poured its contents on the ground. After he had done this three times, he spoke gravely, "There is a young girl called Wanjiru living among you. If you want the rain to fall, she must be brought here. In two days time you should all return here, and every one of you, from the eldest to the youngest, must bring with him a goat for the purchase of the girl."

And so, on the appointed day, the people gathered together again, each one leading a goat to the foot of the hill, where the mganga waited to receive them. He ordered the crowd to form a circle and called for Wanjiru to come forward and stand in the middle with her relatives to one side of her. One by one, the people began to move towards Wanjiru's family, leading the goats in payment, and as they approached, the feet of the girl began to sink into the ground. In an instant she had sunk up to her knees, and she screamed in terror as the soil tugged at her limbs, pulling her closer



down into the earth.

“I am lost”, the girl cried out, “but much rain will come.” She sank to her breast, and as she did so, heavy black clouds began to gather overhead. She sank even lower, up to her neck, and now the rain started to fall from above in huge drops.



Wanjiru's family attempted to move forward to save her, but yet more people came towards them, pressing them to take goats in payment, and so they stood still, watching as the girl wailed, “My people have forsaken me! I am undone.” Soon she had vanished from sight. The earth closed over her, the rain poured down in a great deluge and the villagers ran to their houses for shelter without pausing to look back.

Now there was a fearless young warrior, who had been in love with Wanjiru ever since childhood. Several weeks had passed since her disappearance, but still he could not reconcile himself to her loss and repeated continually to himself, “Wanjiru is gone from me and her own people have done this thing to her. But I will find her. I will go to the same place and bring her back.”

Taking up his shield and spear, the young warrior left his home in search of the girl he loved. For almost a year he roamed the countryside, but still he could find no trace

of her. Weary and dejected, he returned to the village, and stood on the spot where Wanjiru had vanished, allowing his tears to flow freely for the first time. Suddenly his feet began to sink into the soil, and he sank lower and lower until the ground closed over him and he found himself standing in the middle of a long, winding road beneath the earth's surface.

He did not hesitate to follow this road, and after a time, he spotted a figure up ahead of him. He ran towards the figure and saw that it was Wanjiru, even though she was scarcely recognizable in her filthy, tattered clothing. "You were sacrificed to bring the rain," he spoke tenderly to her, "but now that the rain has come, I shall take you back where you belong." And he lifted Wanjiru carefully on to his back and carried her, as if she were his own beloved child, along the road he had come by, until they rose together into the open air, and their feet touched the ground once more.

"You shall not return to the house of your people," the warrior told Wanjiru. "They have treated you shamefully. I will look after you instead." So they waited until nightfall, and under cover of darkness, the young warrior took Wanjiru to his mother's house, instructing the old woman to tell no one the girl had returned.

The months passed by and Wanjiru lived happily with mother and son. Every day a goat was slaughtered and the meat served to her. The old woman made clothes from the skins and hung beads in the girl's hair so that soon she had regained the healthy glow she once had.

Harvest time was now fast approaching, and a great feast was to be held among the people of the village. The young warrior was one of the first to arrive but Wanjiru waited until the rest of the guests had assembled before she came out of the house to join the festivities. At first, she was not recognized by anyone, but after a time one of her brothers approached her and cried out, "Surely that is Wanjiru, the sister we lost when the rains came." The girl hung her head and gave no answer.

"You sold Wanjiru shamefully," the young warrior intervened. "You do not deserve to have her back." And he beat off her relatives and took Wanjiru back to his mother's house. But the next day, her family knocked on his door asking to see the girl. The warrior refused them once more, but still they came, again and again, until, on the fourth day, the young man relented and said to himself, "Those are real tears her family shed. Surely now they have proven that they care."

So he invited her father, her mother and her brothers into his home and sat down to fix the bride-price for Wanjiru. And when he had paid it, the young warrior married

Wanjiru, who had returned to him from the land of shadows beneath the earth.  
(African Myths and Legends by O.B. Duane)

## *Telling Stories*

When children are turning 10 years of age, it is important to tell stories from all over Africa, to show in a pictorial way how the universe began. They have heard in the previous year in Class 3 the biblical version of creation and now they are ready to hear other narratives of how mankind began.

Now, with the increased individualism of the 10 year-old child, they hear about the hero, who has to face great dangers, even death, and conquers all before him to arrive at his goal. One must remember that the children before puberty, when they hear a story or watch a play or film, do not experience it objectively as adults do. Rather, they enter into it subjectively with their feelings, and identify completely with the hero. The next day they will probably play at being that hero in the playground with their friends.

One can also see how, in a story, you can tell the children so much about the tribe but in a living, interesting way. In the Kikuyu story it is the man who makes the decisions, pointing to the patriarchal nature of Bantu society.

Similarly, it is best if the teacher can create stories about the different tribes using a family group who experience the various rituals of growing up with some exciting adventures thrown in to keep the story alive. It is important not to merely relate facts but to allow the people in the stories to express feelings in response to the different activities e.g. the son may miss his mother when he goes off for initiation but is very proud when he comes through it successfully.

These stories carry their own moral, which should not be explained to the children. The young take in the moral of the story by themselves, through experiencing the truths in their souls. By telling the moral of the story, or asking the children questions about the story after telling it, destroys their own experience - an experience of deeply felt truth, which needs to be allowed to live on in their souls.

## ***Grade 4: History Main Lesson Block***

There is usually one History main lesson block allocated for Grade 4. It should come after the Local Geography main lesson block, preferably in the previous term, to allow the lesson learnt to sink in to the children. The length of the main lesson block is 3 to 4 weeks long. A suggested order of teaching could be as follows:

### **1st week: A hunter-gatherer tribe, the San or Mbeti, or *pygmies*.**

Geographical background

Physical description

How they hunt game and gather wild plants and water

How they build their shelters and what tools they use

How they order their social life with relation to marriage, children and other groups

Their stories

The teacher must feel and imagine the quality or character of the San people so as to sense how and why they act and react to the environment in the way they do:

How they feel at one with the surrounding nature

How they relate to their gods

### **2nd week: A herding tribe, the Maasai, Samburu, Karomonjong, etc.**

How they live, herding their cattle nomadically – how they feed and look after their animals.

The technology they use in their lives – tools, milking or killings of their cattle, houses, etc.

Their social life – marriage and family life, initiation and religion, education, various positions within the tribe etc.

Their stories.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Week: A farming tribe, the Kikuyu, the Chagga, the Baganda, etc.**

How they live to grow their food – the passage of the seasons, planting, weeding and harvesting.

The technology they use in their lives – tools, houses, granaries, etc.

Their social life – marriage and family life, initiation and religion, education, various positions within the tribe, etc.

Their stories.

The teacher needs to choose the tribes most relevant to the class. Themes can be introduced through a story, and then developed over the next 2 or 3 days. If 4 weeks is chosen and there is time, the teacher may introduce a fourth tribe to show how there is overlap between the different types of tribe to make their lives more successful.

### ***An Example of Teaching about a Tribe: The San. The Three-Day Rhythm of the Main Lesson***

#### **Day 1**

A picture of a San hunter stalking an animal is drawn on the blackboard before the main lesson begins.

Rhythmic section: include miming different animals, learn different animal hand signals

Introduce the San people, how they live in small clans, their shelters,

Discussion on survival in the desert

Tell hunting story.

Draw heading and San picture into the Main Lesson Book

Complete any notes from a previous lesson

Poem or song, if appropriate.



**Day 2**

Rhythmic section – include a San poem; mime moving as a hunter stalking prey.

The children do a recall of yesterday's presentation on the San people, the teacher only asking questions where needed and initiating group discussion

Story of the girls and women going off to gather food, including finding different sources of water.

Tell about the customs and any anecdotes you know about the San

Begin writing of notes on the San from yesterday's presentation (which was recalled today) in the main lesson book.

Introduce San children's game, *Wi Um*, or *One, Two* if time

**Day 3**

Diagram of a San bow and arrow on the board, drawn before children enter the classroom.

Rhythmic section – include working on San poem and movement, 'Sharing activity'.

Play San children's game, *Wi Um*, or *One Two*. (*Not too long*)

The children do a recall of yesterday's presentation and discussions, with the teacher asking further, deeper questions.

Give a rich description about children's games, celebrations, a trance-dance and the role of the shaman to bring about healing.

Tell traditional San story that would be told around the fire.

Read yesterday's notes written in the main lesson book.

Writing notes about the San people from yesterday's presentation.

Begin making a bow and arrows as used by hunters.

**Day 4.**

A drawing of San cave paintings on the board, before the children enter the classroom.

Poem



Recall and discussion

A story or rich description about San paintings in a cave.

Write notes from 2<sup>nd</sup> day : gathering food and water

Let the children do a San cave drawing in their books.

A painting should be done in painting lesson.

Complete bow and arrow.

## **Day 5**

*Poem*

Recall and discussion

The Story of Mantis: the San and their Gods

Where are the San today?

Construct a San shelter (in the school garden or where there are materials available) and place San items in the shelter

Complete notes, pictures, activities, etc.

## ***Creative Ideas for Teaching***

The teacher needs to do his or her own research. This manual provides some material, but not enough for the teacher to make his or her rich imaginative pictures to convey to the class. There are beautiful books full of pictures available in print and much factual information on the internet.

Then the teacher needs to sift through the information – one cannot tell everything one reads – and choose is essential to present to the children.

Then one creates the most imaginative descriptions for telling to them. This collecting of information and then forming it into a lesson is the all-important preparation that leads to a good lesson and good teaching.

What do the San look like? What is the world they live in? What do they do in their

lives, and what and how do the children learn? Who are their gods and how do they worship them? What do they make in the way of tools, art and adornment? And what are their stories? For in their stories we can hear the history and life of the tribe.

Stories should show how and where the hunter-gatherers live, not from a geographical point of view but rather from an environmental one. You can tell the children how people have wandered all over Africa to find food and water. The San people were driven out of the forests and away from the grasslands. Where do they live now? In the deserts far to the south. Why did this happen? Firstly, because the San followed the wild animals as they moved southwards to find water when the Sahara became too dry. Secondly, because more powerful herding and farming tribes took over the land for their own use, leaving the San to adapt to the dry wastes of the desert.

You can ask the children to imagine a world where wild animals roamed everywhere, trees and grass grew and there were no roads or cities. How would you live if there were no shops or cars? How would you gather food and where would you get water? The class could be asked to discuss what the San people would need to survive in the desert. What are their priorities? Let the children come up with their own ideas, and also decide what is most important. What about food, water, shelter, a social structure, play, friendship, religion?

It works well if the teacher then creates a story about a San family, giving them San names and telling about their daily life and their adventures. The teacher can describe the desert and tell how the family and clan set up camp and build a shelter.

The children may hear how the boy learns from his father to make poison for the tips of the arrows before going hunting. He knows the hand signals and the tracks of the different animals and he has an exciting adventure learning to track down the buck and kill it!

On the following day the children may hear the story of the girls who go off to help the women find grasses and gather wild fruits and other food, and even to find water in the desert. How will they bring it home? Then there will be a day of games and dances and perhaps a celebration with a San story. The children must feel that they too are part of the San family.

San songs and/or poems can be learnt.

Each day the teacher will ask the children to remember what they have listened to the day before. And, out of this recall, they can work with aspects of the San life: draw it,

model it, paint it and also write about it. The whole classroom needs to be changed into a San “exhibition” through displaying the drawings, models, paintings, bows and arrows, ostrich eggs, etc.!

It is important that children not only retell the details of the story in sequence but also discuss how the San children felt about what they were doing. How would you feel if you were a San child? The teacher also creates opportunities and questions inviting the children in the class to discuss issues or to express their own feelings and ideas.

To go deeper into the experience, the children can make bows and arrows, to mime stalking animals, play San games or make and paint jewellery from eggshells – chicken eggs unless you are lucky enough to find ostrich eggs nearby. These activities give the children a feeling for what it is like being a San hunter-gatherer. The aim is to get the children as fully and actively engaged, so they become San people. The experience taps into their feelings and strengthens their rhythmic/trunk area which is developing so strongly at this age. This type of teaching, where you do as well as listen, heightens the enthusiasm of the children and brings the blood into their cheeks.

*The aim of the teacher in Grade 4 is first and foremost to channel positively the powerful energy which ten year olds bring to the classroom. Pupils need to be challenged and stretched in every possible aspect of their work. “Work, work and lots of it” is the best motto for Grade 4. (from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

Some further activities:

You can ask the children what they know about the plants growing around the school. Go out around the school and point out to them different plants. Ask them or tell them the different uses for various plants – you see how education is as much for the teacher as the student!

The class can enact the way the San are always giving gifts to each other, especially when they see that something pleases another person. Let each child take something attractive that they own that will be their gift. Everyone mingles with the whole group and they go around offering gifts to each other or going up to someone and saying “I like that jacket of yours.” The other child will respond by saying, “Would you like to have it?” They then swap items and put them on if they are clothing. Then they go on to the next person and find new things to give to each other. At the end of ten minutes or more, everyone can return the different items to the correct owners.

They can also discuss how they felt doing this game of giving. Some enjoy giving things away, others do not and are relieved to get their possessions back again. How amazing that San people did not need to hold on to their possessions!

### ***A San Children's Game***

This game is called *Wi Um*, which means *one, two* in San. It is called this because it involves counting. The San do not have game boards so they lay out their game area in the earth or sand.

They make up to 64 small holes, set out in 4 rows; a back row and a front row for each of the 2 players. They play the game with small stones for counters, starting with 2 in each of the holes in the back rows and in half of the holes in the front rows. Each player drops stones in each of the holes in turn.

If they land on a hole in just the right way, they can collect the other person's stones and continue the round. If they miss, then they give up their turn, and the other person may win their stones. If this sounds complicated, it is! The teacher can change the rules to make it simpler and the children will love to play a new game.

When teaching about the Kikuyu who farm the land, the teacher can refer to the Farming Main Lesson from the year before. The class can also create a garden and grow their own vegetables if time allows.

### ***Artistic Activities***

With every main lesson it is important to allow the students to experience the content material in artistic as well as intellectual ways. This enables them to *live into* the learning process and thereby to make it their own. Students come to understand what they are studying in greater depth because they are given time to visualise it and *feel* it through the artistic medium.

Rudolf Steiner says that if we only learn something intellectually, we would become weak-willed people. Learning can develop the whole human being, but then the feelings and will have to be involved. For this, we need to make use of the arts.

### ***Writing***

Writing is a primary way that we ask students to record and remember the material of the History main lesson. This can be done in a number of ways to increase the

students' writing skills, depending upon their age.

As for most African children English is their second or third language, at the beginning of Grade 4 it is best to write what you learned about yesterday simply on the blackboard and to ask the children to copy it. It is very important that the children are able to read it aloud in unison, or to each other, the next day. In this way the history lesson supports the language development and gives the children a sense of joy and achievement. If some children struggle with reading the history notes, the

teacher must work with the words in the language lesson or simplify the writing. And they must write it in their best handwriting – that is the artistic element in the exercise.

The teacher can also work together with the class. While the children are recalling yesterday's lesson, the teacher involves the children in making up the text of the writing bit by bit. The teacher writes it on the blackboard. When it's finished, they copy it. The teacher leads the writing of the text, but the words can be mostly those of the children.

### ***Drawing***

Drawing is an important artistic medium when studying history as it increases the imaginative faculties.

When drawing a scene from a historical event, or an artefact from the times, the observation needed brings it to life. Sometimes the students can copy a drawing, other times they can make up their own, as long as they know the dress, utensils, weapons, dwellings, etc., of the time.

The teacher needs to find *good* drawings to copy on to the blackboard and she should have good chalks. Drawings can also be made onto large pieces of paper with wax crayons to pin up onto the wall or blackboard. Through drawing the teacher increases his own understanding of a historical period.

The teacher encourages and guides the children in their history drawings so that they learn to draw well. From Grade 4 onwards the children become self-critical and sometimes feel they cannot draw. Hence it is important for the teacher to have good drawings for them to copy, while making it clear to the more able children in the class that they are allowed to use their own ideas. The children should be using good quality pencil crayons and the teacher must insist that they fill the area of the picture with colour. When children use pencil crayons, drawings mostly will not take up the full size of a page. This tends to encourage rough drawing. It is far better to do a smaller drawing, doing it with care and using colourful details.

### ***Music and Dance***

Songs and dances from the relevant tribes or parts of history you are teaching about can be learnt by the children. One can do this in the rhythmic part of the lesson. It is easier to start with the rhythm of the music, clapping it or tapping it on the desks. Then one can teach the melody, or tune. Finally you teach them the words.

Dances should be repeated daily and can even be done after the history main lesson block is finished.

### ***Painting***

The teacher should try to paint a simple scene that is characteristic of the tribe that is being studied.

- ❖ When learning about the San people, it is great fun to copy a San rock painting. This is best done in mixed media. The children can use crayons in the correct colours (reddish brown, orange, brown, black and white) to draw the people and animals. Then they can paint a wash of golden yellow (or brown) and light vermillion over the whole surface, giving the impression of the rough surface of the rock.
- ❖ For the herders, whether Maasai or another tribe, the emphasis is on the wide open spaces of the grasslands. It is good if the children have had a chance to draw the cattle in their books beforehand. Otherwise the teacher needs to guide the children carefully in a demonstration of how to paint the cow. The teacher can also choose to paint the Maasai hut. The three basic colours of Prussian blue, yellow (lemon yellow for a fresh green and golden yellow for a dark green) and vermillion red will be needed for this painting.
- ❖ In the painting of the farming tribe, it is good if the children can paint some huts with maize growing nearby. The teacher may also decide just to let the children draw this scene as it works best when full of detail of the farm animals and colourful huts.

### ***Making Cultural Objects***

It is really good if a teacher decides to let the children make some cultural objects. However, it is important that good materials are chosen and that the teacher organises it properly so that the objects are completed successfully.



A San bow and arrow is great fun to make, but the teacher must ensure that it works well. Perhaps there is a father or woodwork teacher who can assist the class when making it. The children also need to be trained to use the bow and arrow correctly and safely with a target for them to practise their shooting. In this way no child will be hurt by careless shooting of arrows.

The Maasai hut needs to be made from flexible branches and good clay (black cotton clay is not suitable because it cracks as it dries). The teacher has to organise the whole procedure carefully so that the children really enjoy the experience and do their best. The teacher should not tackle too many projects in one main lesson as they take quite a long time and may require several art/craft lessons or extra lessons to complete. If the children take the project home, it is very likely that parents or older siblings will do the work instead of they themselves, so this should be avoided. A simple choice of project that can be completed in class is the best.

## ***Chapter 5: History in Grade 5***

### Essential Reading:

Charles Kovacs. *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Stourbridge, UK: Wynstones Press

Charles Kovacs. *Ancient Greece*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Floris Books

### ***Child Development and Human Cultural History***

In Grade 4 we have begun to answer the children's question: *“Where do I come from?”* by introducing them to the people who have lived here before: the hunter-gatherers, herdsman and farmers. We considered them from the economic perspective of: *“What do they do to keep themselves alive?”* From this study we have also seen how the different environment and circumstances brought about different views of life.

In a way this reflects a certain development of consciousness as the tribal system evolves through time. We have seen how the farmer has a different relationship with his environment to the herdsman and the hunter-gatherer. There is something more *child-like* in the latter, and more *adult* in the former.

Here we see an interesting parallel: the way in which humankind developed is the same way in which children develop. In both cases we see a development of consciousness, from being totally part of the environment towards more and more becoming conscious. This process in history is mirrored in child development.

### ***The Child***

*“How can we understand the experience of growing-up, and so deepen it for the child?” How can our teaching meet the inner development of the child, so that they receive that which nourishes their body, soul and spirit?” This is the basic question within Steiner education.*

*At this age [the child in Grade 5, around 11 years old] the child attains a certain ease and grace of movement, that is co-ordinated, balanced and harmonious....Out of the growing memory powers, the sense for time has developed....This age is a time for rapidly flowering capacities...This year marks the pivotal point between childhood and puberty, and for a short moment each child is poised on the crest of a wave, marking the end of the first part of their school years.*

*(from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

The child has the lively curiosity of earlier years, with an eagerness to take up everything the teacher has to offer. Of course, there are questions and discussions now, but the enthusiasm for engaging in new ideas and activities is alive and present. There is also a love of beautifying everything as his or her skills have improved through the developing co-ordination of hand and eye, so drawing and painting may reach new heights if well guided by the teacher. Horizons of the mind are opening in this time of the heart of childhood and so the study of plant and animal nature, geography and history are most appropriate.

### ***The Development of Consciousness in History***

So how does the history curriculum meet this? In studying World History, it takes them on a journey, the human journey through time from the ancient civilisations of the east to the ancient civilisations of the west, from India, or China, through Persia, Mesopotamia and Egypt to that of Greece. In this journey the child will see how human beings *woke up* in various ways more and more as time progressed.

World history shows these changes very clearly, and we can study this first in Grade 5, followed by showing similar trends in African civilisations later, especially in Grade 6 when learning about the African Kingdoms.

The ancient Indian had a different way of seeing human concerns from the ancient Greek. When faced with birth, death or fear, we see that each culture deals with these problems in a different way. This is the way humanity has *grown up* or evolved as time passed.

And whereas we start this journey back in the mists of time, in the mythology and legend of India, Persia (Ancient Iran), Chaldea/Babylon (Ancient Iraq) and Egypt, when we come to the later Greek period, after 600 BCE, we enter *history proper*

where writing has recorded the reality of historical figures. Their feet are on the ground, so to speak, through the deeds that they did, just as the children's feet are standing squarely on the earth by the 12th year.

*It is quite possible to take a whole period and develop a feeling for the important events of this period... In dealing with the Greeks, it is not only a matter of describing outer events, but of giving a picture of the general trend. That is to say, one gives the basic characteristics of Greek history, some information about the cities, regulations, arts, the general contribution of the Greeks to human development, and one shows what here in the present is derived from them, e.g. democracy, taxation, etc. (from Teaching History by R Wilkinson)*

The important word here is “feeling”. At this young age we are not interested in bombarding the children with facts, but of giving them a series of imaginative pictures, which will live in their souls and help them to understand the characteristics of each civilisation through their particular gifts and their place in the world today. They will feel enthusiastic for the subject if they are shown that in the midst of our present-day life there are still immediate living forces at work which have their roots in, for example, the Greek ages.

The teacher can use not only his verbal skills here, but can deepen the child's experience through writing and drawing, Greek art and drama, music, etc. For a short time the children can actually *become* Greeks and live in the world of ancient Greece.

*Steiner says: Now you must give them pictures of isolated human situations which either arouse pleasure through their goodness, truth and so on, or displeasure through the opposite qualities. History too must be related to the life of feeling, to sympathy and antipathy. Give the children complete pictures of events and personalities, but pictures that are kept mobile and alive. (from Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools by K Stockmeyer)*

We will give a few general indications so as to characterise the nature of these ancient civilisations. The children should also come to understand how each civilisation developed something new and unique in their own culture due to the changing consciousness that expressed itself differently in each one.

## ***Ancient India***

India is about one and a half times bigger than East Africa and is shaped like a triangle. It has the sea on two sides, and across its northern boundary the huge mass of the snow-covered Himalaya mountains, the highest in the world. The Himalayas were considered to be the sacred mountains, reaching up to the heavens.

From these mountains come the three great rivers, the Ganges, the Indus and the Brahmaputra, providing life to the plains of India. The plains teem with life, abounding in fertile land on which animals and humans could live and thrive.

Not only is there an enormous human population, but there is abundant animal and plant life. There are jungles with monkeys, tigers, elephants, snakes and crocodiles, quite like in Africa. In the plains people grow crops such as maize, wheat, millet, rice, sugar, bananas, tea, etc. Some areas in India are very hot and dry, while others are well-watered from the annual monsoon, or yearly rains.

The monsoon rains are heavy and bring the much-needed water to India during the hot summer months (June to September). The rains allow people to farm vegetables and provide them with water for the rest of the year. The monsoon rains bring loud thundering and frightening lightning flashes, followed by heavy downpouring of rain - but everyone gets very excited by all of this, welcoming nature's dramatic displays. The children dance and play in the rain, and everyone rejoices. In some parts of India, the rains flood the land with water for about 1½ to 2 months!

To help the children to get a 'feeling' experience of the tropical climate of India, the teacher can ask questions such as, "Can you imagine having so much rain?" "How would you like to live in a country that is really very hot, and have the pouring rains for days and days to cool you?"

The teacher can draw a colourful map with the children to give them an idea where everything is.

Thousands of years ago India was peopled by mixtures of dark-skinned races, but then a new lighter-skinned people swept down from the north. The new conquerors were called *Aryans*. They came from beyond the northern mountains and there is an old legend which tells how they got there – a story similar to that of Noah.

## *The Story of Manu<sup>15</sup>*

Once upon a time a holy *rishi*, or teacher, called Manu, was walking by a stream when a fish rose up and asked for protection. He took it home and the fish grew bigger and bigger, and finally asked to be put into the sea. This was done, and then it said, "Build an ark, take samples of all the seeds, and the 7 holy rishis. There will be a flood. I will reappear as a horned fish. When you see me, follow me."

All this happened, and the horned fish towed the ark to dry land and revealed himself as the god, Brahma. The land was India. He then gave instructions to Manu how all things were to be organised.

## *Manu's Laws*

There is a story that the god Brahma had a dream in which a priest rose from his head, a warrior sprang from his chest, a merchant rose from his thighs and peasants came from the soles of his feet. These became the four castes of India<sup>16</sup>.

*Manu divided the people into 4 castes, which were social functions:*

- ❖ *the Brahmans, or priests, who guarded the ways of religion and prayer, and looked after the temples, or churches.*
- ❖ *the Kshatriyas, or warriors, who guarded the people and were kings and administrators.*
- ❖ *the Vaishyas, or merchants, craftsmen and farmers.*
- ❖ *and the Sudras, or peasants, who worked for other people and tilled the earth.*

*These divisions are still there today, and people are expected to marry others of the same caste. (adapted from Teaching History by R Wilkinson)*

<sup>15</sup> Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK.

<sup>16</sup> Poem of Brahma's Dream - see below



## GREAT BRAHMA'S DREAM (© Catherine van Alphen)

In ancient times great Brahma slept

And as he dreamed, he said:

I see a man all dressed in white

Arising from my head:

Pure of thought and wise of heart,

Fit to guide, advise and lead,

With shaven head and beads for prayer -

A priest whom all should heed.

In ancient times great Brahma slept

And as he dreamed he cried:

I see a man prepared for war

Leap strongly from my side;

With flashing eye and ready hand

For sword or spear or bow-

A warrior who will bravely stand

And fight against the foe.

In ancient times great Brahma slept

And as he dreamed, he spoke:

I see a man spring from my thighs

Ready to do much work;

With every tool, with plough and hoe

And scythe to reap the grain;

He builds and makes and buys and sells-  
His trade will bring much gain.

In ancient times great Brahma slept  
And as he dreamed, he sighed:  
Alas a man crawls from my feet  
Wretched and despised;  
A misery, a slave to all,  
He begs from door to door  
With woeful eye and helpless stance,  
The poorest of the poor.

And these four castes shall evermore  
Be seen on every hand  
To rule, protect, to work and slave  
Through India's ancient land.

In the ancient Indian stories there is a continual interweaving of life between gods and mankind. The gods appear in human form and are to be obeyed. Human beings can talk with them but their feelings are often controlled by the gods, so they must bow to the will of the gods and accept their fate.

As the goal of life is to live with the gods, human beings often undergo hardship and sacrifice to reach the higher world of the gods, who live in paradise in the Himalaya mountains.

Men may be endowed with heavenly weapons and have power over nature. Demons abound. Nature and the world are peopled by gods and spirits. People are born again and again on earth, or reincarnated, depending on the actions of a former life. Being born is seen as a banishment from heaven.

*But as one lays his worn-out robes away  
And takes new ones and says, "These will I wear today",  
So puts by the spirit lightly its clothes of flesh,  
And passes to inherit another home afresh.  
(from Teaching History by R Wilkinson)*

Just as the people of ancient India looked up to the mighty Himalayas and revered the great rivers that gave them life, so they also lived in continual connection and awe of the spiritual world that was around them. These people *lived* with the spiritual in every part of their lives, from morning till night. Because they knew they had come from the spirit, they always longed to return to their spiritual home.

The Indians had one God, *Maheshwara*, the great god, but also there are many, many other gods: some powerful, others merely the god of a particular tree or river. The world of Ancient India was alive with gods!

But God's activities are split into *Brahma*, the Creator or Generator, *Vishnu*, the Conserver or Operator and *Shiva*, the Transformer or Destroyer; sometimes remembered as G-O-D<sup>17</sup>! There is also *Indra*, the king of the lesser gods, who brings thunder and rain and is a friend of mankind; *Agni*, the god of fire, *Varuna*, the god of the sea, and many, many others. Most of them have wives, who also wield great power.

There are numerous evil spirits, or *Rakshasas*, who bring darkness, drought, fear and confusion. They mislead humanity, such as disturbing them at their prayers. This begins one of the great epics of Indian legend, the Ramayana.

### ***The Ramayana***<sup>18</sup>

Once upon a time there was an evil king of the rakshasas, called Ravana, who ruled over the island of Sri Lanka, the jewel-shaped island that sits just below India. He was a torment to the people and disturbed them at their prayers.

At last the people went to Brahma, the creator, and begged him to intervene. Brahma replied that only a man could overcome Ravana. So Vishnu said he would take birth on earth in order to destroy the rakshasa.

<sup>17</sup> G = Generator; O = Operator; D = Destroyer; they form the "trimurti" or "trinity" of the Hindu religion.

<sup>18</sup> A summary of the story is given here. However, for telling to the children a fuller version is needed. Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK.

Now Dasaratha, the king of the northern kingdom of Ayodhya, had 3 wives and Vishnu was born as the eldest son of the eldest wife, and was named Rama.

Everybody loved Rama for he was kind, virtuous and brave. All the people wanted him to rule the land after his father's death; that is, with one exception. The youngest wife of the king wanted her son, Bharata, to be the new king. She reminded the old king how he had promised her anything she wished for, as she had nursed him before in sickness, and saved his life. Now she demanded that promise be fulfilled. The king had to agree.

Rama was banished into the jungle for 14 years with his wife, Sita, and his younger brother, Lakshmana. But Bharata did not want to rule, so he placed Rama's shoes upon the throne and said he would guard the kingdom until his return.

Sita was very beautiful. Rama had won her by bending a great bow that nobody else could lift and hitting the target with an arrow. After travelling through half of India, they went to live in a hut in the forest. But one day, when Rama was out, Ravana, disguised as a holy man, tricked Lakshmana and stole Sita away. Rama and Lakshmana searched for a long time in vain. At last they gathered an army of monkeys and bears. They all set out to rescue Sita from Sri Lanka. Rama asked Varuna, the sea god, for permission to cross, and then they built a bridge over the sea to Ravana's kingdom.

Then began a fearsome battle with the rakshasas. One by one they were killed, but nobody could kill Ravana, for he had 22 heads, and once one was cut off, two more grew in their place. At last Rama fired an arrow through his heart and killed him. He rescued Sita and they flew back to Ayodhya, where Bharata crowned Rama king and they ruled for a golden age until it was time for them to leave the earth. (from Teaching History by R Wilkinson)

This story is still hugely popular in India. As Rama travelled all over India, so many places are revered where events in the story occurred.

Rama is one of the ten *avatars* of Vishnu, when the god takes on a human form to uphold good and defeat evil. The Indians believe there have been 9 avatars so far. They are still waiting for the 10th.

## **Krishna<sup>19</sup>**

There are many stories of the 9th avatar of Vishnu, who was called Krishna. They are especially good to tell to children, for many of them show his wondrous and naughty childhood. He loved to play tricks on people but he also protected them from the rakshasas who came to kill him and destroy the villages. Like Jesus, Krishna was hidden away from a wicked king who wanted to kill him. He grew up with his foster-parents in a rural garden of Eden, a paradise. Again, everybody loved him, particularly the girls. There is a lovely story of how Krishna met a group of shepherd girls in the forest one night and they all danced together and Krishna made it appear that he was dancing with each girl at the same time.

At last, as a young man, he returned to the town, vanquishes the evil king and takes the rightful throne himself. He ruled for many years and helped later heroes defeat wicked men in the longest of Indian legends, the Mahabharata.

There are temples, or churches, to Krishna to this day all over India. He is always portrayed with blue-black skin, often playing the flute and dancing, which attracts his devotees who adore him. He is especially loved for he is often remembered as a child, full of love, who had a wonderful sense of fun.

## **The Buddha<sup>20</sup>**

Once upon a time a north Indian king had a dream. In it he was told that his eldest son would either be a very wise man or a powerful emperor. His father, a Kshatriya, naturally wanted him to be a powerful emperor. So, when he was born, Siddharta was given a beautiful garden surrounded by a wall, but he was never allowed to go outside, so he would never see human suffering. But, unknown to his father, Siddharta had lived many lives on this earth and was born to become the wisest of men, who would help mankind.

So, one day, he quietly ordered his charioteer to take him out into the streets of the town. On the first day he saw a sick person, on the second an old person, on the third a dead one and on the last day he saw a holy man, without family or position,

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<sup>19</sup> This is a summary; for telling to the children, read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK.

<sup>20</sup> This is a summary of the story. For telling to the children, read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK.

who had renounced the world to find God. That evening, after wishing his wife and young son goodbye, he left the palace to live with hermits and wise men to find God, to seek enlightenment.



**BUDDHA**

At first Siddharta fasted till he was as thin as a rake. But later he found a spiritual teacher, who taught him how to pray and meditate. He went and sat alone for 3 days and 3 nights under the Bo tree. Demons tried to disturb him but he was protected by a divine force around him.

After 3 days he had understood the cause and the cure for human beings' sufferings and dissatisfactions. He went all over India preaching and showing people the spiritual truth he had understood in what is now called "The Noble Eightfold Path" that tells people the right way to think, speak and behave. He was now called the

Buddha, which means *one who understands*.

This last story shows how much Indian society had moved on. The Buddha of the Buddhist religion no longer relies completely on the gods for salvation but has to rely on his own inner powers to overcome demons and find enlightenment, and to establish a paradise on earth, not in heaven. Strangely enough, though Buddha had many disciples in his day and Buddhism was very strong in India for 1,500 years after his death, today there are only small groups of Buddhists in India itself. Buddhism is strong in other countries in Asia, like China, Thailand and Japan.

### **Cultural Activities**

It is possible for the teacher to bring India alive in the lessons within the classroom, especially if there is an active Indian culture in the area. The teacher can get some Indian material and decorate the room like an Indian temple. The children can be dressed up in the traditional *sari* for girls, or using *lessos* or *kikois* the boys can be dressed in long robes and turbans. If they do a class play out of the Indian lesson, then these will feature as the set and the costumes. There are beautiful poems that can be learnt, full of the wisdom of Ancient India.

An Indian meal can be prepared and parents invited. Such food as *chapatis*, *rotis*



*and chai* were brought to East Africa by Indian immigrants not so long ago. One can ask local Indians how to prepare a traditional Indian curry with the right spices, but it should not be too hot for the children.

The teacher can also bring to the children Indian chants, dances and religious practices by going to an Indian centre or temple or learning the relevant material from an Indian parent or someone who knows the culture well.. The children can make wreaths out of flowers. The teacher can burn incense and the children can learn to chant the OM. They can also learn a simple Indian dance, or do some easy yoga exercises with someone who can teach these activities. These sorts of activities help the whole lesson come alive for the children, for they are still young enough to imagine for a little time that they really are in India.

### **Poetry**

Learning poetry is a good way of entering into the *feeling* of a historical period. For this is the way people spoke or felt about things. If the poems are spoken clearly and together, the students can get into the mood of that particular civilization.

### **Making a Marigold Wreath**

Marigold flowers are popular in India for their bright golden colour and the fact that they last for a long time. The teacher can find yellow or orange crinkle paper that can be cut into strips about 30 cm long and 4 cm wide. The top edges of the petals may be cut with a scissors to form the shape of the petals. The strip is wound round tightly at the bottom, but is looser at the top to form the petals of the flower. The lower end of the flower needs to be held in place with wire or sticky tape and attached to a stem made from paper rolled up small that would be connected to the next flower. It is best that each child makes one or two flowers and they are all joined together to form one wreath.

### **Creative Writing**

All Creative writing and suggestions for main lesson texts are given at the end of this chapter on Class 5 History.

### **Painting**

If the teacher chooses the right colours, he or she will capture the mood of a historical civilisation. By painting the Himalaya mountains of India or the desert of Egypt, it will help the students to understand the landscape, in which the people lived, and how it shaped their culture. As long as they are guided by the teacher, who must have an

understanding of the process of wet-on-wet colour painting, the class will manage well.

The teacher chooses a few colours that suit the mood of the scene or character to be painted. Imagine the feeling you want to express and decide what area of the picture should be darkest and where the lightest part will be. Through the interaction of dark and light, the painting becomes more dramatic and the colours breathe. Light creates space and focus in a painting, while darkness helps to bring about depth and distance. Keep the idea simple and mix the colours on the wet page with the paint brush to get a variety of tones.

The procedure for the painting lesson: allow the paper to drain or dry off a bit before the children begin painting. Begin by reminding the children of the scene, and the mood of that scene, which they are going to paint. At this stage it is possible to do the painting in four stages:

1. Paint a background wash of colour for the environment in which the painting will happen.
2. Then when the painting has dried to some extent, paint your idea (a camel caravan or a slave ship, for example) over the background wash.
3. When you have your main idea on the paper, add more colours and details, including completing the background. Take care to paint as dry as possible so that the form is clear and the colours well blended. Get the children to paint the whole of the paper, not leaving white areas.
4. When the paper is dry enough, add the smaller details to complete the picture.

Ancient India is so full of beautiful pictures that it is easy to find themes for painting. However it is important NOT to get into too much detail, but rather to focus on the *mood or feeling* of India.

- ❖ An image that could represent Ancient India is the Lotus, growing in the deep blue (the element of darkness) of the lake and rising above the large green leaves to open its pink-petalled flower in the light of the sun. The colours used are Carmine red for the lotus petals, Prussian blue and Lemon yellow for the leaves, the lake and the sun.
- ❖ Paint the Himalayas in Prussian blue and Lemon yellow, leaving snow white peaks (leave the paper white for this or use a damp brush without colour) and

going from dark blue mountains to green hills and finally to light green fields as the foothills get closer and closer.

- ❖ It will take courage to paint a “Dancing Shiva” with a background of golden yellow. When the paper is dry or nearly dry, the image of Shiva dancing in a ring of fire can be painted in Vermillion red. The teacher needs to be able to show a picture of Shiva or to guide the painting with a demonstration.
- ❖ It is good to paint the Buddha under the Bo Tree using golden yellow and Prussian blue. Paint the background pale golden yellow in a circular movement to show the radiation of Buddha's enlightenment. Then, on one side of the page paint a large tree with a long branch that arches over the top of the page under which the Buddha will sit. If the paper is fairly dry, paint the Buddha (in golden yellow) seated in meditation, facing forward. Use touches of light blue to bring out the form slightly. The effect should be of light radiating from a gentle form.

## ***Ancient Persia - (modern Iran)***

### ***Geographical Background***

Human beings are surrounded by a particular environment that shapes the way their society is organised. Therefore it is important that the teacher introduces a new study with a short introduction where he or she tells imaginatively of the geographical background of the culture. So, in this historical journey, where the scene has shifted westwards to Ancient Persia or Iran, a different group of people take a further step into the material world, in developing their skills for living on earth.

Geographically, a birds-eye view of the world would show a high plateau<sup>21</sup> broken by valleys and rocky gorges, with huge snow-capped mountains to the north and east. There are forests on the mountain sides, green oases in the valleys and arid deserts. There are no great rivers and water was obtained from wells. The land is full of contrasts, stormy in spring in March and April, hot and dry in summer from May to September. Winter is fierce and very cold.

Fruit trees and crops grow in the valleys where irrigation is possible. In the mountains there is often deep snow with many wild animals. The land makes people struggle for a living. It only yields its fruits through hard work, very different from the gentle fertility of India.

The land was inhabited by two different peoples; the Turanians, who worshipped the god Ahriman, the Prince of Darkness, and the taller Aryans, who worshipped Ahura Mazdao, the God of Light, who they saw in the light of the sun. Thus we see now that there was a strong duality between the two peoples; a struggle between them that reflected the sharp contrasts between summer and winter, the struggle to survive in the land and the struggle between good and evil.<sup>22</sup>

### ***King Jamshed's Dream***<sup>23</sup>

One of the Kings who ruled over the land of ancient Persia was called King Jamshed. He was a good and wise man who wished to serve Ahura Mazdao and to bring prosperity and peace to his people. One night King Jamshed had a dream in

<sup>21</sup> Plateau = a high area which is quite flat

<sup>22</sup> Read the full [story](#) in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK.

<sup>23</sup> Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK.

which a great Being in shining garments handed him a golden sword and told him to cut the earth with it. He was given a seed of grain and shown how to plant it and care for it until it sprang up from the earth and grew into a beautiful plant with a golden crown on its head. King Jamshed was told to teach his people to grow this plant for food. Then the Being disappeared and King Jamshed knew that this was Ahura Mazdao.

The next day King Jamshed gathered all his people together and showed them the golden knife and told them of his meeting with Ahura Mazdao in the dream. He taught his people to plough and tend the earth, and to claim the land for Ahura Masdao for otherwise the spirits of darkness would take possession of it. Agriculture became a sacred duty.

The first ploughing of the fields was blessed by the King or high priest who cut the earth with a golden knife in a special ceremony. He called on the angels of the four elements to bless the earth and the crops that they sowed and cultivated. The angel of the earth was called Armaiti, the angel of water was called Anahita, the angel of air was called Vaiyu and the angel of fire was known as Atar. They honoured these angels and the God Ahura Mazdao. The people now cultivated the wild grasses which became known as wheat and barley, the seeds of which they crushed into flour and baked to make bread. This bread was holy as it had been given to them by Ahura Mazdao.

The people of ancient Persia also learnt how to domesticate animals. They learnt how to raise sheep for wool, and cows for their milk, to tame and ride horses and also to make friends with the wolves which they tamed into dogs.<sup>24</sup>

## ***The Story of Zarathustra***<sup>25</sup>

### ***Birth story of Zarathustra.***

When the evil King Darunsarun ruled in ancient Persia, his soothsayers told him that a son of his sister would be the cause of his downfall. So when his sister fell pregnant, King Darunsarun was determined to slay the child as soon as it was born. The baby was born one night in a blaze of light and angels sang to welcome the child who laughed with joy when he was born. His mother called him Zarathustra, which means “golden star”.

<sup>24</sup> See “Hushang Discovers Fire” in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK, for the full story.

<sup>25</sup> Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK.

King Darunsarun told his soldiers to steal the child while the mother was busy. They did so and took the child away into the desert. There they built a huge fire and placed the boy on top of it, but he lay there laughing and playing with the flames that did not harm him. The parents came and discovered the little baby and took him back home again, fearful that the king would try to destroy him some other way. This time the king himself came to kill the child. He made his way into the house but as he stretched out his sword, his arm withered and he dropped the weapon in great pain. Now he realised that this was a holy child and he would not be able to harm him.

One day, a prince of the Aryans, called Arjasp, came into a beautiful valley at the end of which flowed a crystal clear spring of water. By the side of the spring stood a lady. Arjasp asked her, "To whom does this valley belong?"

She replied, "It belongs to a wise man, the guardian of fire, the servant of the god, Ahura Mazdao. I am called Adouizur, which means "the source of light" and I am named after this spring. But be careful should you drink of this water, for whosoever does so will have an unquenchable thirst which only a god can satisfy."

She then disappeared among the trees. Arjasp drank of the waters and went his way.

Years passed and the Turanian king ordered all the people to come to acknowledge his sovereignty in the temple of Ahriman. At the ceremony Arjasp was horrified to see Adouizur given in marriage to one of the king's chieftains. It was impossible for him to rescue her but, as she was carried away, he remembered her words at the spring and a burning thirst came over him to save her and the rest of the Aryan race from the followers of darkness.

He prayed to the guardian of fire, who told him that he must climb to the top of the highest mountain and there let his thoughts dwell on Ahura Mazdao, who would speak to him in time. And he received a new name, Zarathustra, which means *the splendour of the sun*.

Zarathustra spent ten years in the mountains, guarded by an eagle, a bull and a lion. He was tempted by evil demons who also tried to terrify him. Then one night, the Spirit of Light, Ahura Mazdao himself, appeared to him. Now with Ahura Mazdao as his guide, he taught and led his people, until after forty years of struggle, the Turanians were vanquished.

He taught the people always to speak the truth, for if they lied, they would be helping Ahriman, the Prince of Darkness. In the Zend Avesta, the holy book of the ancient



Persians or Parsees as we now call them, Zarathustra asks,

“O Maker of the World, what gives most pleasure to the earth?”

Ahura Mazdao replies, “When a pure human being walks over the earth.”

“And the second?”

“When a pure man builds a house.”

“And the third?”

“When he builds a fire to warm his wife and his children.”

“And the fourth?”

“When there are fine cattle and good flocks of sheep and goats in his pens”

“And the fifth?”

“When there is growing fine corn and fruit in his fields.”

When it was time for Zarathustra to leave the earth, he climbed the mountain again and saw a beautiful golden bridge in front of him. On it stood the radiant figure of Ardouizur to welcome him. As he turned to look at the earth below him he had a vision of the successful Aryan people marching into the west, led by the spirit, Ardouizur. (5)

We see from this story that something new has been gained for humanity while at the same time something else has been lost. We do not explain this to the children but rather let the story speak for itself:

By being given the practical experience of tilling the soil and domesticating wild animals, human beings develop a new relationship to the earth - a more earth-bound relationship. Whereas in the Indian civilisation people felt banished from heaven during their life and all they wanted to do was to get back to heaven to experience the joy of union with the gods, now in Ancient Persia, they are beginning to feel more secure on the earth through the actions they do with agriculture and having a family. Through their spiritual leader, who (after great preparation) could talk with the gods, they were directed towards engaging with and achieving physical mastery of the earth – a true picture of what is happening to the children of this age as they journey through childhood.

In later centuries the followers of Zarathustra were known as the Magi or wise ones. They studied the stars and observed the movements of the planets. They led lives of truth and purity, guided by the light of Ahura Mazdao. The three wise men who saw the star in the east that foretold the birth of Jesus were also Magi and they followed it to Bethlehem to worship the new-born child. Today the followers of the religion of Zarathustra are called Parsees, a name that comes from the word Persia.

## *Music and Dance*

The Zoroastrian Dance of the four Elements is very suitable for teaching to children learning about Ancient Persia. It can also be adapted to include the story of King Jamshed and the Golden Knife.

### Zoroastrian Dance of the Four Elements

*Everyone stands in a circle facing inwards, but not holding hands.*

- A. Take two steps inwards, each step is followed by a little bounce, singing Ahura Mazdao, Then two steps backwards, each with a little bounce, singing Ahura Mazdao.*

*(repeat A)*

- B. All turn to face right and walk round the circle singing the blessing of the four Angels and making movements to illustrate the different elements.*

*Armaiti (earth): hold both hands in front, palms down and gently move them outwards as if stroking the earth in blessing.*

*Anahita (water): move both hands from right to left as if flowing down and along.*

*Atar (fire): jump and clap hands on second syllable of Atar.*

*Vaiyu (air): turn full circle to the right moving arms around you as you continue walking.*

*(Repeat B 4x in total).*

To incorporate the story of King Jamshed into this dance, to create a ritual for

blessing the earth, do the following gestures:

*One child is dressed in white as Ahura Mazdao who stands in the centre of the circle, holding up a golden knife parallel to the earth in both hands. During the first time A is sung, another child dressed as King Jamshed walks into the circle in time to the singing and receives the golden knife. He steps backwards to join the circle.*

*The B section of the dance remains the same as above.*

*When A is sung again, everyone steps inwards making the gesture of cutting or ploughing the earth, led by King Jamshed. B is repeated.*

*When A is sung, all do the gesture of sowing seed; the next time, reaping the grain, then grinding the grain and on the last singing of A they step in and raise the bread in thanksgiving.*

*The children could all be dressed in costume if the dance is performed for others.*

## ***Painting***

Ideas for painting in Ancient Persia.

- ❖ Paint the battle between Light and Darkness (or Ahura Mazdao and Ahriman)! Yellow for the light and Prussian blue, red and yellow mixed together for the darkness. No forms are needed, just intense colours!
- ❖ The grain springing up from the earth can be painted in Prussian blue and lemon yellow with a yellow crown on the barley or wheat. Dark earth below and light above.
- ❖ King Jamshed receiving the golden knife from Ahura Mazdao

# *Ancient Mesopotamia - the land of the two rivers (modern Iraq)*

## *Cultural Life*

What was life like in the land between the two rivers all that time ago?

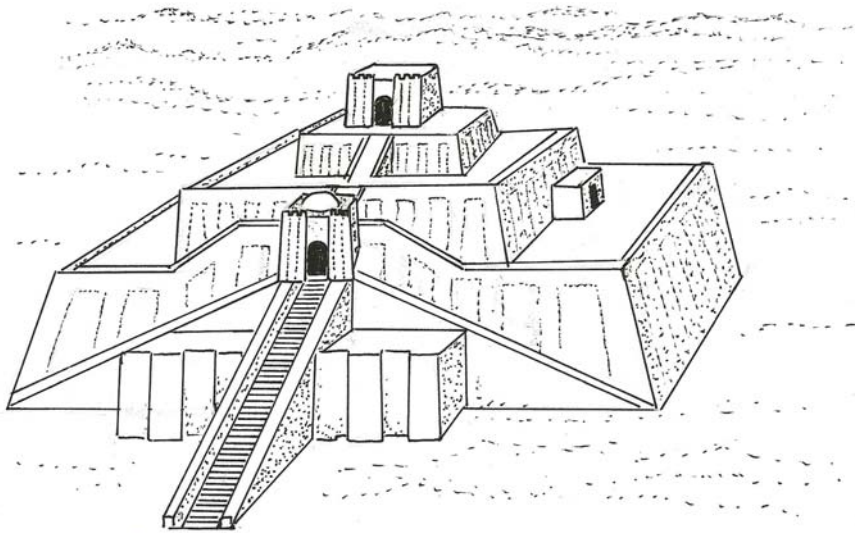
A few years ago I was flying from London to India and in the middle of the journey I was looking down over miles and miles of dull brown desert. Suddenly I saw two thin ribbons of green, snaking their way down to the blue, blue sea. These are the mighty Tigris and Euphrates rivers which meet together near Babylon, near modern Baghdad, and flow down to the Persian Gulf, bringing green life to Mesopotamia.

Travelling westwards from the mountainous extremes of ancient Persia, the flat and treeless plains of Mesopotamia were a wonderful invitation to the traders that passed through them. The two large rivers meant that the land would be immensely fertile if irrigated. Many people settled there, creating towns and city states, but there was soon strife as kings rose up against each other to conquer and claim the land for themselves.

Many different cultures rose and fell in the land of Mesopotamia, from the Sumerians who wore woollen skirts from sheep's wool to the black-bearded Assyrians who drove their chariots out to hunt lions and fight wars. In spite of this, a new way of life began as the different peoples learned to work together through the medium of trade.

How would people have lived in a fertile plain with trees growing a great distance away on mountains rich in copper and tin, and only the reeds and grasses growing beside the two great rivers? Ask the children to discuss this in groups and see what they discover. Without wood or stone in the river plains, they must build their houses using a different material. What can they find by the river? Reeds and clay. With careful questioning the children will come up with the answer: bricks made from clay and straw. The square or rectangular shape of the houses will be easy for them to guess. They were amongst the first people to use sun-dried bricks, and they built their houses, barns and even sewers from millions and millions of them dug out of the fertile mud.

## ZIGGURAT OF UR



The teacher can describe the enormous Ziggurats also built out of clay bricks. They were square towers with walls rising high off the plain to protect the buildings inside. Layer upon layer of buildings were built, each one built on top of the one below, yet smaller until the one at the top was only the

temple to the gods. The kings built palaces, while the priests built higher and higher ziggurats out of sun-dried bricks, buildings where they could view the stars.

The tower of Babel from the Bible was said to be a Ziggurat.

What else would they make from the clay? Bowls, jars and all forms of pottery. How might they have used the reeds? Woven baskets and mats would be an obvious answer. How might they have made their clothes? How would they travel on the river? How would they build a boat? (The teacher can find pictures of these original boats for the children to draw.) The people of Mesopotamia made reed boats that allowed them to sail up and down the river for trading their goods.

To do this the people upstream must agree with the people downstream on the flow of river water. Interestingly this seems to be the area where mankind first developed towns that traded and inter-acted with one another. All this trade meant that people learnt to relate to each other in a friendly way instead of fighting. It was now to their advantage to sell goods to foreigners!

Now the teacher may tell a story about a father and son who go off to trade in another city and discover the need to use weights to measure out the produce so that the exchange was done fairly. Barley was used as a uniform weight until little weights made of lead and silver replaced it. In time coins were made with which to pay for the goods.

Another important change was that people discovered that they needed to record their sales to ensure accuracy and honesty, especially if the languages were slightly

different and so they created a system of marks scratched on clay tablets that eventually became writing.

They hand-crafted clay tablets about 25 centimetres square and on them pressed short lines, like bird' feet marks into the wet clay in patterns. Then they left them to dry in the sun, like the bricks. Different patterns formed different letters and so many tablets made a story book or an accounts ledger or a set of laws.

There was a famous king called Hammurabi who built a huge library of clay tablets in which was written the story of Gilgamesh. He also drew up laws, known as the Hammurabi Code, which were also written on clay tablets, in one of the first written scripts. He set up courts of law to enforce them and punish those who broke them; everyday laws about irrigating fields, trespassing animals, stealing, labourers' wages, etc. But Hammurabi wrote that these laws were not created by human beings, but rather they were received from Shamash, the sun god. His most famous law was “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Below are some examples of this law.

*“If anyone strikes a pregnant woman and causes her to lose her baby, his family must pay her a fine. If the woman dies, the daughter of the person responsible shall be killed.”*

*“If a house falls down and kills the owner, the builder shall die. If it kills the owner's son, then the builder's son shall die.” (from Teaching History by Roy Wilkinson)*

This script<sup>26</sup> is called Cuneiform writing, and its system of individual letters was later developed into the Greek and then the Roman script, which we use today.

Another invention emerged in Mesopotamia which changed the world as radically as did the invention of writing. It was the invention of the wheel. Was it perhaps someone using logs as rollers to move heavy objects from one place to another who thought of attaching short rolling logs to a flat wooden surface and thus created a wagon? However it happened, it resulted in the invention of wagons for carrying goods and chariots for driving kings and warriors to war! It led to the potter's wheel and innumerable inventions that followed, speeding up progress in many ways from that day to this. Perhaps the children can think of different objects and tools that use wheels.

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<sup>26</sup> Script = style of writing



Like most farmers the people were dependant on the ebb and flow of the seasons and the rise and fall of the two rivers. Their high priests looked up into the sky and mapped out the stars and the planets into the symbols and pictures which we still use today in astrology. They saw the gods and goddess in these huge star pictures above them: Shamash (the sun) and Ishtar (goddess of the morning star), *Ea*, the river god, *Marduk*, the god of light, *Tiamat*, the dragon of darkness.

The many towns dotted across the flat plains beside the life-bringing rivers lasted for many hundreds of years but, slowly but surely, through conquest and marriage, the larger towns grew to include the smaller ones until great cities, like Babylon and Nineveh, expanded and flourished - but eventually they too were conquered, died down and disappeared.

### ***The Story of Gilgamesh***<sup>27</sup>

Gilgamesh was the tall and handsome king of Uruk. He had built a temple and great walls for the city but this did not fulfil his ambitions, so he became dissatisfied with his life. So he became arrogant and selfish and he lorded it over his people.

They resented this treatment and prayed to their god, Anu, for help. Anu then instructed Aruru, the goddess of creation, to make a being who would be the equal of Gilgamesh. The goddess formed an image in her mind, dipped her hands in water and pinched off some clay which she let fall in the wilderness. Thus was Enkidu born in the wild places. His skin was rough and hairy. He ate grass and drank only water. He lived with the animals and saw no human beings.

One day a hunter met him on the path and ran away, terrified. He ran back to the city and told his father of this strange creature. The father advised him to go to Gilgamesh and tell him about the wild man. He said, "Tell Gilgamesh to entice him into the city by sending out a beautiful woman." The plan succeeded and Enkidu fell in love with the woman. Now the animals rejected him. The woman taught him how to speak and to wear clothes, how to cook his food and herd sheep, and how to hunt the lion and the wolf. She told him about Gilgamesh and his interest was so roused that he decided to meet the king and challenge him. So he entered the city of Uruk.

Meanwhile Gilgamesh had had two dreams. In the first he foresaw the coming of Enkidu and in the second he was told that the stranger would become his best friend. When Enkidu met the king in a wrestling match, he was thrown after an epic

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<sup>27</sup> Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies: India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK

contest, and they did become the best of friends. They decided to go on a journey to the Country of the Living to destroy the giant Humbaba. Gilgamesh's mother begged Enkidu to protect her son.

They set out and, after enormous distances, they arrived before the Cedar Forest, whose gate they broke down and then entered the lands of the goddess, Ishtar. Gilgamesh had many dreams; in one he dreams a mountain falls on him and he is rescued by a blazing light ; in another the daylight disappears, the clouds lower, lightning flashes and a deep darkness falls. His fire goes out and everything turns to ashes.

Eventually the two heroes met Humbaba. Gilgamesh called on the Sun God, Shamash, for help, who sends *“the great wind, the north wind, the whirlwind, the storm and the icy wind, the tempest and the scorching wind; they came like dragons, like a scorching fire, like a serpent that freezes the heart; and a destroying flood and the lightning's fire.”* They fought and Humbaba was forced to yield. Gilgamesh wanted to spare his life, but Enkidu did not and killed him.

On their way home they met the beautiful goddess, Ishtar. She fell in love with Gilgamesh but he rejected her. In revenge she asked the gods to send down the Bull of Heaven to lay waste the fertile land around Uruk. But the two friends attacked the bull and killed him.

Now Enkidu had a dream. He dreamt that, because the two have killed Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven, one of them must die. Then Enkidu fell ill and died. Gilgamesh was devastated and wept, full of sorrow and lamenting his friend, *“What is this sleep which holds you? You are lost in the dark and you cannot hear me.”* Then Gilgamesh fell sick too. He hears of one man who was immortal, his ancestor, Utnapishtim. He resolves to find him to learn the secrets of death and immortal life.

Gilgamesh, though still ill, travelled far over dark roads into the heart of darkness. He slew lions guarding mountain passes until he arrived before the mountain which guards the rising and setting sun. At the gate in the mountain stood two monsters, half-men, half-dragons, who were astounded that a mortal had come this far. They explained that the passage under the mountain was twelve leagues of darkness, but Gilgamesh was not put off so they let him pass.

Gilgamesh made the journey safely and arrived at the garden of the gods where he met Shamash himself. Next he met a woman who barred his way, advising him to eat, drink and be merry. But he told her he was searching for Enkidu, so she told

him to find the ferryman who could take him across the ocean. He found him, told him why he was there and the ferryman rowed him across to the other side of the ocean.

There he met Utnapishtim. He asked him about the living and the dead. "How did you gain eternal life?" he asked. Utnapishtim told him the story of the flood and how the gods had granted him immortality because he knew their secret. But for Gilgamesh and his generation, he said, things must be different. The times had changed and now all men must die. However, if Gilgamesh could stay awake for six days and seven nights, then he would acquire immortality too. He tried to do so but failed, falling asleep after 3 days and 3 nights.

Then Utnapishtim's wife gave him some magic food and he awoke refreshed. The old couple led him to the Fountain of Healing and he was cured of his sickness. They gave him fresh clothes and a magic plant to keep him forever young, but it was stolen from him by a serpent on the way home to Uruk.

Gilgamesh still grieved for his friend, praying to the gods to restore him. At last the god of death allowed Enkidu's ghost to appear to him and answer questions about the underworld. In due course Gilgamesh died and his people mourned him.

In the far distant past people did not experience the world as we adults do today. Rather they experienced things more as children do. Often in Kenya I hear people saying, when talking of their children: *They are angels come to live with us.*

People in ancient cultures were far closer to the spiritual world, also in the time before birth and after death. They were far more aware of how the spirit enters into the events of day-to-day living. There was no sharp division between the physical and spiritual worlds.

Hence in Mesopotamia there was no death as we understand it. The spirit left the body but could still be seen by many. This was everlasting life, or the continuity of consciousness, as we may call it today. The search for the secret of death and the search for everlasting life are the same thing. But Gilgamesh and the ancient culture of Mesopotamia lived as this consciousness was changing. The *golden age* was passing, just as it does as we progress through childhood. The physical world was becoming more real as the spiritual world seemed further away and less clear. The inner soul of man, gaining a new individuality in the force of the Ego, became stronger:

Gilgamesh builds temples and walls, he lords it over his people, but most importantly he feels dissatisfied. Enkidu is born as pure spirit and has to be educated by a woman into human behaviour. When he comes to the city, he is no longer living mostly in the spiritual world like a little child. So, in a way, the two heroes find this spiritual world anew in the friendship they kindle between them. They are visited with dreams which guide or warn them on their way. The journey to Humbaba and Gilgamesh's journey to Utnapishtim are soul experiences which speak to the soul of the children without any explanation. They will listen intensely to the story, but also experience it as spiritual teaching.

The goddess Ishtar is the soul of the tribe. Gilgamesh rejects her as he is finding a new individuality free from the tribe. He calls her names – *“kitchen fire, or jiko, that smoulders in the cold, a back door which keeps out neither wind nor storm, a sandal that trips up the wearer”* - and she gets angry and curses him with the Bull of Heaven and it is because of Ishtar that Gilgamesh loses Enkidu. In actual fact Gilgamesh has to leave behind the instinctive and childlike connection to spirit that Enkidu possesses and seek the spirit consciously when he travels to Utnapishtim.

Death, like birth, is in many ways the biggest thing that happens in our lives. Children are aware of death all around them, but now they begin to ask: *Why do people die?* Utnapishtim, like Noah, is of another age, an age when we were one with the gods. For good or ill, things have moved on. Now we must learn to mourn those we love and accept death as inevitable.

It is reassuring for children to hear this as they wrestle with the realities of human existence. A story like Gilgamesh has been a tool for teaching for thousands of years. The past can teach us many things if we know what the important processes at work within history are, which are both relevant and educative. These will mirror what is happening in our own and human development.

## ***Artistic Activities***

### ***Clay Modelling***

Clay Modelling is a very suitable activity for children learning about Ancient Mesopotamia.

- ❖ Let each child make a clay tablet and practise writing the cuneiform marks with a little stick that has a flat edge, making a wedge shape (see pictures of Mesopotamian clay tablets)

- ❖ Model a simple Ziggurat with three levels.

## *Painting*

The story of Gilgamesh has many pictures that could be painted, for example:

- ❖ The wrestling match: paint a lively background of vermillion and golden yellow. When it is almost dry, paint in the two figures, using a combination of vermillion and Prussian blue. Squeeze out the brush before dipping in the paint to get the colours as dark as possible. Sketch out each figure as a stick figure first and fill it out if the paper is dry enough. Remember that Enkidu has bull's legs and a tail! Add more colours around the figures to bring out the energy of the fight!
- ❖ The battle between Gilgamesh, Enkidu and Humbaba: In Vermillion, Prussian blue and golden yellow, paint a wild, stormy scene on the mountain with whirling wind and trees bending vigorously! Add the figures of Gilgamesh and Enkidu struggling against the wind! The shape of the wind could suggest Humbaba.
- ❖ Crossing the River of Death: In Prussian blue and mauve (purple), paint a boat crossing a still passage of water. Arching above the boat paint the sky darkest at the edge of the page and lightest close to the boat. Add the boatman and Gilgamesh last, when the paper is dry enough.

## *Ancient Egypt*

When introducing children to the wonders of Ancient Egypt, a teacher can remind them of the Biblical stories which relate to Egypt, such as Joseph and his coat of many colours and the story of Moses; and in the New Testament how Joseph and Mary fled from Herod's anger into Egypt. The children may have heard these stories in school, but in East Africa they will certainly have heard them in the church or mosque. They may also have seen a picture of the pyramids standing elegantly by the River Nile.

For here, on our historical journey, we now arrive in Africa, on the banks of a river that rises deep in the centre of the continent from its mightiest lake, Victoria. The Nile is the only river that crosses the Sahara desert, the largest desert in the world, to flow into the Mediterranean Sea. No river defines a country as the Nile does Egypt. Without it, neither ancient nor modern Egypt would have existed.

But the Sahara was not always desert. 6,000 years ago it was much greener, as we will tell the children in more detail in Class 6. As the rain ceased to fall over the Sahara, so the people were forced more and more to withdraw to the edges of the newly-formed desert or to the banks of the only river to find water.

From the beginnings of the Old Kingdom over 5,000 years ago to the last Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, living around the time of the birth of Jesus, is a long and complicated story. For children of this age we are not attempting to depict historical events and sequences, but rather to give an idea of the essence of Ancient Egyptian culture.

Egypt is a gift of the Nile. In Upper Egypt, higher up the river and below the first cataract, the land is more hilly with rocks of sandstone and granite. In Lower Egypt, nearer the sea, the land is flat like Mesopotamia, with vast horizons of sand dunes under a burning sun with no rain.

Every year the river rose and flooded the land for 100 days, bringing down rich silt from the Ethiopian highlands. The priests of Pharaoh came and measured the land so that the people were given the correct portion to farm. Then people were able to irrigate the fertile soil for about 10 kilometres inland on both sides of the river – a ribbon of green beside a dry brown expanse of desert. The people were grateful for



this promise of new life, so they praised and thanked the Sun-god Ra for bringing the flooding of the Nile, at his great festival both in the temple and at home.

*Hail to thee, O Ra,  
who gives life unto Egypt.  
You hide your coming in darkness.  
The day of your coming is sweet.  
Bring life to all that do thirst.  
Refuse to give drink to the desert.  
Overflow, O water of heaven.  
Sibu, the Earth-God awaits you.*

This overflowing of the river determined the passage of the year; the flood from June to September when planting took place; the growing season from October to February; and lastly the harvest and festival season from March to May.

After the sheep and pigs had grazed on the land to fertilise it, it was lightly ploughed and then raked flat. The Egyptians grew millet, barley and wheat, as well as many different kinds of vegetables, such as onions, leeks, beans, garlic, lentils, spinach, carrots, lettuce and cucumbers and fruit like figs, dates, apples, pomegranates, melons and grapes.

They planted their seeds, weeded them diligently and then harvested them by sickle and hand. They ate meat, beef, goat and chicken, as well as fish and eggs. They had a lot of milk from their cows, which they made into butter and cheese as well. They drank wine and beer.

Due to the hot climate, they dressed simply in white cotton or linen, and adorned themselves with fine necklaces and jewellery of gold, silver and precious stones like turquoise and lapis lazuli. They used cosmetics on their skins. The poorer people built their houses of clay bricks, while the rich and the *Pharaohs* or kings, built palaces, temples and pyramids out of stones.

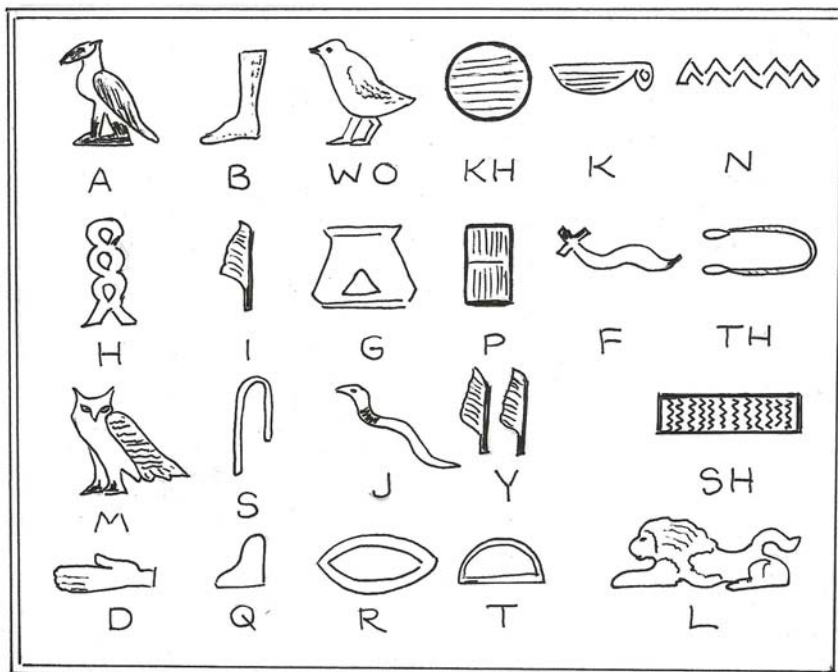
These stones were of limestone, quarried in many places along the Nile river. Harder stones, of granite and alabaster came from far upstream and were floated downstream with the current of the Nile, while the empty boats returned with the constant north wind in their sails.

But the Egyptians were wonderful craftsmen. They worked copper, gold and silver and made fine pots on the potters' wheel. They carved ivory and wood, were glass blowers, mat and basket makers who wove together palm leaves. They grew flax

for linen, ropes and thread. The rich had beautiful wooden furniture while the poor lived on the floor with simple implements.

Boats, called dhows, with sails and oars for rowing, were made of wood imported from Lebanon, near Palestine. The Egyptians used saws, chisels, ladles, razors and mirrors. Soldiers were armed with spears, clubs, daggers and battle-axes. Chariots were used to carry warriors in war. But most long-distance travel was up and down the Nile. Business was done using money along with a banking system.

Like the Mesopotamians, the Egyptians were star gazers with an intimate knowledge of the movement of the heavens. They were great healers and doctors, able to set bones as well as cure with herbs. They developed dentistry, mathematics and geometry.



## HIEROGLYPHS

Along the banks of the river grew papyrus reeds. The Egyptians cut them, washed them and beat them into a pulp and then dried them flat into sheets of paper. On these they drew, painted and wrote. They evolved a written language, called "Hieroglyphics" or "sacred writing", which only certain priests and scribes knew. It did not consist of individual

letters like our writing, but was made up of pictures, like Chinese. The scribes, like all priests, were very important members of the society.

They counted differently from us. They counted in units and tens without any numbers from 2 to 9.

Thus:  $5 = 1+1+1+1+1$

$13 = 10+1+1+1$

$124 = 100+10+10 +1+1+1+1$

$$2352 = 1000+1000+100+100+100+10+10+10+10+10+1+1$$

The teacher can have fun doing maths with the children using this system of writing numbers.

Egypt was ruled by the Pharaoh, the priest-king, who was thought of as half-god, half-man, and in touch with the divine. Below him were the priests. Every Pharaoh underwent a careful training in the temple to prepare him for the spiritual task of guiding the people of Egypt. He was advised by the priests to make sure that all laws and decisions were just and advantageous for the whole land of Egypt. Most of the time people were content because they felt that the Pharaoh and the priests were in touch with the gods and so, everything they did was part of a divine plan; much as children feel in the hands of a good teacher.

In order to obtain powers certain people underwent *initiation*. They had to undergo a vigorous training whereby they too could see into the spiritual world. These often happened in the great temples of Thebes or Luxor, and the initiates would go on to become priests.



TUTEN KAMEN

Many of the Pharaohs built pyramids. The Great Pyramid of Giza is made of limestone, covered with a harder limestone. It had a golden capstone on top that reflected the light of the sun. The Pharaohs built tombs inside the pyramids, often made of granite, the hardest and longest-lasting stone. Here they were buried, surrounded by all their beautiful possessions and things they would need in their next life with the gods. In this way they felt they would overcome death.

The Pharaohs guided and ordered Egyptian society harmoniously over many thousands of years. Ancient Egypt was the longest-lasting civilisation known to us, spanning

about 5,000 years.

All the people had to give their extra time to till the Pharaoh's fields and to build public works. The Egyptians built profusely. With modern satellite imagery we are just beginning to realise how many huge temple and palace sights there were in Ancient Egypt. These were the centre of social and religious life and were often on a vast scale. Two temples at Thebes had 90,000 workmen, 500,000 head of cattle, 400 orchards, 80 ships and 50 workshops. They drew their income from 65 of the most prosperous towns in the land. The priests ordered everything; when to plant and when to harvest.

The Egyptians had many gods, overseen by *Ra*, the sun god, and *Thoth*, the scribe, and the first Pharaoh, called *Osiris*. The wife of *Osiris* was the goddess *Isis* and their son was *Horus*, the falcon-headed god. The goddess *Maat* presided over the judgement of souls after death, weighing their hearts against a feather to see if they were pure enough to enter heaven.

### ***The Story of Osiris***<sup>28</sup>

Osiris was a good king, much concerned with the welfare of his people. He taught them how to plough and how to prepare food. He built cities, and instructed them in law and speech. He travelled throughout the land teaching, and sought to convert not by the sword but by persuasion.

Now Osiris had a beautiful wife, called *Isis* and a wicked brother, *Seth*, *the dry one*. *Seth* made a wooden chest, secretly to *Osiris*' measurements, and when *Osiris* returned from one of his journeys, he gave a feast and offered the chest to whomsoever it fitted. When *Osiris* lay down in it, the lid was shut fast and he was imprisoned.

The chest with its contents was thrown into the Nile. It was eventually cast up upon dry land and found by *Isis*, who was searching for it. In the meantime *Seth* had made himself king.

He learned of her discovery and ordered the body to be cut into 14 pieces, and each piece to be buried in a different place. *Isis* built a temple where each piece lay and

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<sup>28</sup>From Roy Wilkinson *Teaching History*. Read the fuller story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Mythologies:*

*India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt*. Wynstones Press, UK



these became the holiest temples in Egypt.

While Isis had been wandering, she had given birth to a son, Horus. When he had grown up, he fought Seth and drove him out, ruling in his place. His father, Osiris, became the king of the dead who judged their souls after death.



All great stories are told in pictures which symbolise the realities within our human condition. Osiris represents the human being, with a heart naturally warm and caring; his brother, Seth, the dryness of the desert, but also the drought of a mind seething with anger, greed and all the negative feelings. These material forces threaten to imprison and destroy Osiris.

Osiris, as image of the human being, is buried and cut up. This represents the next stage of our development: that we 'die' to spirituality, and we become 'fragmented' in our way of thinking: we lose the connections to the whole.

Isis, representing the soul in us, searches for him everywhere. She raises a temple over each place and reconnects the physical with the spiritual again. When we awaken in the soul, we seek to understand the separated parts, bringing them back

to wholeness.

She bears a son, Horus, who brings new forces into the physical world which can enter into matter in a different way. So Horus drives out Seth, back into the desert. Horus is that force that we need to discipline ourselves to find the true way back to spiritual awareness, the union of heaven and earth.

The spiritual world is the land of the dead, and now the father, Osiris, has become the ruler there. We have Osiris in us, as our conscience, weighing up our deeds, causing us always to want to improve and grow in our humanness.

The famous inscription to Isis reads: *I am the All. I am the Past, the Present and the Future. No mortal may lift my veil.* We mortals are now shut out from consciousness of the whole of existence, and our perceptions are limited to the world of the senses. Our future development belongs on the earth.

We are discovering day by day, through archaeology, anthropology and new computer technologies, how much this Ancient Egyptian culture has influenced Africa. Not surprisingly since it originated and existed in Africa for over 5,000 years.

They practised male circumcision with an age-mate (boys of the same age) system of relationships that exists now all over Africa. They worked many different types of metal, long before we think the Bantu started to work with iron. They traded both up and down the Nile and across the slowly drying-up Sahara. Wild animals prowled their civilised strip of land, lions, elephants and hyenas, with crocodiles and hippos in the Nile itself.

But with the drying out of the Sahara and the growth of the Sudd swamp on the Sudanese Nile, communications with the rest of Africa became less and less frequent. After the magnificent civilisation that Egypt was for thousands of years, it was invaded from Asia by the Hyksos, later the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs and finally the British. But Egyptian culture and knowledge was so awe-inspiring that other cultures and tribes were inevitably influenced by them.

The Egyptians circumnavigated the whole of Africa by boat, and traded down the Red Sea and into Ethiopia too, where kingdoms grew up later. Their influence penetrated Asia and Europe. Many of the vegetables they ate, ways of working stone and metal, studies in mathematics and geometry, the religious gods themselves, radiated out of Egypt to influence the surrounding peoples.



## ***Journey to the Land of Punt***<sup>29</sup>

Queen Hatshepsut was a gentle ruler who did not want to engage in war and destroy other countries. Instead she developed peaceful relations with other countries through trade. In the ninth year of her reign she heard the voice of the sun god Ra telling her, *“Seek out ways to Punt and open the paths to the mountains of myrrh!”* Until then, myrrh from the land of Punt had been passed from hand to hand. Never had incense trees been taken from Punt to another land.

Hatshepsut equipped her ships for an expedition to Punt. Five barges, each with a set of sails and 30 oarsmen, were laden with provisions and gifts, food and drink, and bales of cloth. Before the expedition set sail, she made a sacrifice to Hathor, the goddess of Punt. Then the queen's fleet set sail towards the east. The winds were favourable and they landed successfully on the coast of Punt.

The Egyptians were amazed to find huts shaped like beehives set upon high piles<sup>30</sup> among incense trees. In this way the inhabitants would be safe from wild beasts and enemy attacks. The prince of Punt, Paruhu, met the visitors. Behind him came his wife sitting astride a donkey. She was so fat she had to be helped off the donkey.

The Egyptians laid out tables with all kinds of treasures – daggers, axes and necklaces. A statue of Queen Hatshepsut together with the god Amun was presented to the king as a gift. A feast was served of wonderful food from the bountiful resources of Egypt.

The people of Punt gave them many gifts in return. Sailors built gangplanks out of fine hard woods so they could load the ships with gifts of incense, ebony, ivory, gold, fragrant woods, skins, eye paint, baboons, long-tailed monkeys, fast-running dogs, slaves and especially incense trees. As the sailors sailed home to Egypt they were amused by the monkeys who had been set free and who entertained the sailors by climbing up the masts and jumping around the ship.

When the ship landed in Thebes the people were amazed by the exotic gifts. 31 incense trees had survived the journey and were planted out in the temple gardens. This temple and gardens filled the queen's heart with joy.

She had other temples built including the great temple at Karnak. There, in the

<sup>29</sup> It is not known where the Land of Punt is; possibly along the coast of the Red Sea, such as Eritrea, or further down the East African coast (horn of Africa or Somalia). Some think it is a mythical name for a general area along the coast rather than a specific place.

<sup>30</sup> Houses on poles, so that people are protected from wild animals

middle of the garden, she had two obelisks erected, one of them over 30 metres tall and hewn out of a single block of granite. The peaks of the obelisks were covered with pure gold which shone like the morning sun. (from Hear the Voice of the Griot by Betty Staley)

## ***Egyptian Drawing***

With children you can let them enjoy the feeling of Egypt through drawing. We are fortunate in having found many beautiful pictures in the underground tombs where so many Pharaohs and important people were buried. They were painted with a life-like beauty and in a way that it is easy for the children to learn from. Let the teacher guide and encourage the children to copy them as beautifully as possible.

Now, at this age, you can teach the children to use the way Egyptians painted and drew. They dealt with perspective by making the most important people the biggest. So Osiris is big wherever he is in the picture and his human devotees are much smaller.

People were drawn with their bodies facing forwards, but with their heads, hands and feet facing sideways. Try it! It's much easier than struggling with how to draw someone 3/4 on, which they can learn later. And lastly you indicate many of something, for example a row of farmers or birds, by drawing the same thing over and over again in an identical way. It is simple, easy and beautiful, something halfway between child-like art and adult art, just as the children are at this age.

## ***Painting***

The children will enjoy painting from Ancient Egypt.

Using golden yellow and vermillion red paint the desert sands with a large reddish pyramid and a golden capstone on top. Add a palm tree beside the blue Nile in the foreground.

## *Ancient Greece*

Greece, on the other side of the Mediterranean sea, is very different geographically from Egypt. It is a small peninsula shaped like an outstretched hand and surrounded on three sides by the sea. It is a hilly, even mountainous country, with river-valleys in between. Around its coasts lie many islands both large and small.

The winter is short and wet, while the summer is long, dry and often very hot. Although today Greece is a rather barren land, in those early days there were many trees and it was green. In these valleys there grew at first a small town surrounded by fields where people grew wheat, barley, vegetables, olives and fruit, especially grapes. They also drank beer and wine.

*They loved to hear the story-tellers who travelled from town to town, the most famous of whom was called Homer. In the evening, when the sun sank into the glittering blue sea, the people stopped work. The men returned from the fields, the fishermen came back from the shore, the women came out of their little houses, the children stopped playing and they all gathered in the market-place and sat down around the story-teller. (from Teaching History by Roy Wilkinson)*

He got out his harp, and told and sang the stories of how at first the great gods, led by Zeus, had created the world and overthrew the giants or Titans. They had imprisoned them in caves underground for ever. All except two.

### *The Coming of Fire*

At that time life on earth was difficult. There were many wild animals around but people had no weapons to fight them with, and lived in fear. But Zeus did not want to see them become more powerful.

Now Prometheus took pity on the human beings and decided to help them. He would steal *the red flower* of the gods, fire. The Ancient Greeks believed the sun was a fiery chariot drawn by the sun god, Helios, across the sky. Prometheus climbed a high mountain, and as Helios' chariot drove by, he held out a long dry stalk of the fennel plant. It struck the wheel of the chariot and it soon began to smoulder. Then he rushed down the mountain to give this gift to the human race.

The people looked on in wonder when, from tiny sparks, he kindled a roaring fire. Then he showed them how to cook their food and boil water. He told them the fire would keep away the wild animals. He showed them how to use fire to make metal from the earth into tools and weapons.

Zeus was very angry and called his two servants, Cratos and Bia, which means strength and force. He ordered them to take Prometheus to a high mountain and to chain him there for ever. They dragged the titan there and left him hanging in chains from a rock as a punishment for his disobedience.

In the summer, the sun scorched his skin, and in the winter he shivered in the snow. An eagle constantly pecked at his liver. There he stayed for many, many years until the hero, Heracles, rescued him. (from Ancient Greece by Charles Kovacs)

One can see from this story how different the Greek gods are from the serene Indian or Egyptian gods. The Greek gods enter into human emotions, becoming angry or sad. The goddesses are often jealous of their husbands as they fell in love with human maidens, and they are also jealous of each other. Human beings could relate to the actions and feelings of the gods as they were so similar to them. However, the gods were still powerful and worshipped by the Greeks.

### ***Pandora's Box***<sup>31</sup>

Now Prometheus had a brother, called Epimetheus. He had often warned him never to accept a gift from Zeus. One day Epimetheus received a visit from Hermes, the messenger of the gods, who had wings on his cap and feet, and could fly faster than lightning. And he brought with him from Zeus a beautiful young woman, called Pandora, which means *One Who Has All the Gifts*, and carried a lovely little box, which he must never open.

Pandora was so beautiful that Epimetheus decided to forget his brother's warning and accepted both gifts. For a time all went well. But one day, when Pandora was at home alone, she wondered what was inside the lovely box. In the end her curiosity got the better of her and she lifted the lid.

As soon as the lid was open, many little winged creatures flew through the house and out of the windows. But they were not bees; they were illnesses and diseases, anger and sorrow, aches and pains, fear and hatred; all the negative things in our

<sup>31</sup> A summary of the story. Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Greece*. Edinburgh: Floris Books

world.

When Pandora saw what she had done, she quickly shut the box. But it was too late and only one little winged creature remained in the box, begging to be let out. In the end she opened the box again and a shining white butterfly flew out. This was Hope.

## ***The Trojan War***<sup>32</sup>

When the King of Troy's son Paris was born, it was foretold that he would be the cause of the destruction of the entire city of Troy. Horrified at this prophesy, the king ordered the baby to be left on the hillside to die. However, a passing shepherd heard the child's cries and took the baby home where he was brought up by the shepherd and his wife.

Years later, as a young man, Paris was on the hillside tending sheep when three beautiful women appeared before him. They were the goddesses Hera, Aphrodite and Athena, who offered Paris an apple. They told him that he was really the son of King Priam and they asked him to choose one of them by giving her the apple. Hera offered to make Paris the most powerful man in Greece; Athena said that she would give him the gift of wisdom, while Aphrodite promised him the most beautiful woman in the world for his wife. Paris gave the apple to Aphrodite.

Paris set off to travel round Greece and ended up at the court of Menelaus, in the city of Mycenae, where he met the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, who was also Menelaus' wife – Helen. Menelaus was often away and Paris spent much time in the company of Helen. The two soon fell in love and decided to run away together. When Menelaus came home and found that Paris and Helen had gone off to Troy, he was very angry and called on all his fellow Greek nobles to raise an army against Troy. They gathered from far and wide, among them being the wily Odysseus, ruler of Ithaca and the mighty hero, Achilles. They set sail in their ships and headed for the mainland of Asia Minor, the coast of Ilium and the city of Troy.

Paris and Helen were welcomed back in Troy with mixed feelings because King Priam knew that the Greeks would not take the insult kindly. The Greek ships arrived with thousands of soldiers and camped in front of the city. Every day a

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<sup>32</sup> A summary of the story. Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Greece*. Edinburgh: Floris Books

champion from each side would ride out and fight. But they were supported on each side by different gods and the winners changed all the time. Eventually many of the heroes on both sides were killed. For ten years the Greeks challenged the Trojans but neither side could win outright and it seemed as if the war would go on forever. (The exploits of this war can be read in Homer's Iliad.)

Finally Odysseus, who was guided by the goddess Athena, thought of a plan. He called the other Greeks and said: "Let us pretend that we have had enough of this war and are going home. We will pack up our ships and sail out of sight around the next headland. But we will leave a special gift of peace for the Trojans, a large wooden horse. This horse will be big enough to hold twelve armed warriors inside its belly. The Trojans will drag it inside the city and then they will celebrate their victory over us. While they are rejoicing and feasting at night, we will sail back to Troy under cover of darkness. The warriors will climb out of the horse and open the gates. We will enter the city and slay them all!"

So the Greeks stopped fighting and the next days were spent building the wooden horse. When it was ready, they packed up and sent a messenger to King Priam to announce their departure. They dragged the huge wooden horse up to the gates of the city and told the Trojans that the horse was a peace offering and should be placed outside the temple in the city to honour the gods. A priest tried to warn them but the Trojans took no notice. They opened the gates and dragged the horse up to the temple. The Greeks set sail in their ships and the Trojans were overjoyed at their easy victory. They feasted and celebrated late into the night till they were drunk and fast asleep. Then the warriors climbed out of the wooden horse and opened the gates. The Greek army marched in and set the whole city on fire, slaying everyone: man, woman and child. Troy was burnt to the ground and the prophesy about Paris was fulfilled.

This story is very important as it indicates the bridge between myth and history. It shows the time when individual people began to think for themselves instead of relying wholly on the gods. Although the gods play an important part in the story of the Trojan War, and at the same time it was an event that really happened. This was born out when the archaeologist Schliemann found the original site of Troy by using the story of Homer to guide him. It also showed that human beings were becoming more individual; they were developing their egos and making their own decisions. We see this more and more as we follow the history of Greece. Another story about the hero Theseus, who really lived and who later became the king of Athens also demonstrates this bridge between myth and history.



## ***King Minos' Labyrinth***

There are many islands lying like jewels in the sea around Greece, and the largest of these is Crete, which lies halfway between Greece and Egypt. The local people were very surprised when archaeologists came and dug up the earth in Crete and uncovered the ruins of houses and ancient palaces.

These buildings from the past were often 3 or 4 stories high, their walls decorated with wonderful paintings, showing how people lived in those far-off times. They showed that the most popular sport of that time was *the bull dance*, where teenage boys and girls somersaulted over a bull's back.

The palace had been enormous, containing temples for the worship of the gods, workshops for skilled craftsmen who made fine vases and jewellery, and huge storerooms where food for hundreds of people could be kept. Rich merchants sent brave sailors far and near to return laden with copper, silver and tin.

The king of Crete, Minos, was very powerful and ruled over other islands and gained tribute<sup>33</sup> even from mainland Greece. One day he made a promise to Poseidon, the sea god, as he was returning over the sea, avoiding a storm. He said he would sacrifice his finest bull to the god if he came home safely. The king may have been rich, but he was mean. He did sacrifice a bull but the thinnest one he could find. Poseidon was very angry and, soon after, the king's wife gave birth to a baby with a human body, but a bull's head. They called it the *Minotaur* and fed it on human flesh.

The king got a clever craftsman, Daedalus, to build an underground maze, or *labyrinth*, and imprisoned the Minotaur there, for it could never find its way out.

## ***Theseus and the Minotaur***<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, in Athens, a city on the mainland, Theseus was reunited with his father, King Aegeus, after many adventures. After a feast of reunion, they walked down to the harbour. The king pointed out a sad group of young people boarding a ship.

<sup>33</sup> Tribute = a yearly payment made by a country that was conquered by a more powerful country

<sup>34</sup> A summary of the story. Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Greece*. Edinburgh: Floris Books

The king said, "My dear son, you have come at a time of sorrow. Tomorrow Athens will lose 7 of its most handsome young men and 7 beautiful maidens."

Then he told Theseus about King Minos, the tribute that had to be paid every year, and the Labyrinth where the Minotaur lived. But brave Theseus replied, "I will go with them myself as one of the 7 young men."

Then the ship hoisted black sails as a sign of mourning for the doomed youths. As they bade farewell King Aegeus said to Theseus, "Promise me one thing. If the gods favour you and you really can save yourself and the others, hoist a white sail on your return journey so that I can see from afar that all is well." Then they set sail for Crete.

When they arrived King Minos and his daughter, Ariadne, were waiting at the harbour. When Ariadne saw the tall handsome Theseus, she fell in love with him and decided to help him escape the Minotaur. At night, when everyone was asleep, she led him to the entrance of the labyrinth.

She said, "Noble Theseus, you must promise to take me with you to Athens, for my father will kill me if he finds out I have helped you." And he promised he would do so.

She gave him a magic sword and a ball of thread, and told him to tie the end of the thread to the door-post at the entrance. "As you go along the passages, let the ball unwind and then, when you have dealt with the Minotaur, you can follow the thread out again."

He did as she told him and, after a great battle, he killed the Minotaur and came out again. With Ariadne and his companions he ran down to the ship and escaped from Crete at dawn. In the morning King Minos found the Minotaur dead, the prisoners gone and his daughter vanished.

The Greeks believed that with every happiness the gods always mix a little unhappiness to stop human beings getting too proud.

On the return voyage to Athens they put into the island of Naxos, as they saw a storm coming. That night, as they slept, Theseus dreamt that Dionysus, the god of wine and drama, said to him, "Ariadne is not for you. No mortal man shall be her husband. You must sail away from this island without her."

The next day they sailed away. When Ariadne awoke and found that Theseus had deserted her, she wept bitter tears. But Dionysus appeared and comforted her, and in the end she became his bride.

Meanwhile Theseus and his companions had almost reached Athens. They were so happy to have survived that the promise to hoist a white sail if all went well was forgotten.

Now, every day King Aegeus stood on a steep rock watching for the white sails that would tell him his son was safe. At long last he saw in the distance the ship that he knew so well. When the king saw those black sails, he threw himself into the sea where he drowned.

In port Theseus learned that his own forgetfulness had caused his father's death. But the Athenians cheered him and made him their new king, for he had brought back their children from Crete and overcome the Minotaur.



GREEK HOPLITE OR FOOT SOLDIER

## *Athens*

Many years passed; many generations came and went. The towns in the valleys grew into small cities. And each city became a state on its own, jealously guarding its independence with frequent wars. Each one had its own laws, its own customs, its own kings or rulers, its own army and its own fleet of ships.

But they all spoke the same language and now had their own alphabet with which they were able to write things down. All went to the oracle at Delphi, where a priestess sat by a cave over a cleft in the earth. Smoke rose through the cleft and every word the priestess spoke in trance was seen as coming from Apollo, the god of music and poetry.

The most powerful city states were Athens and Sparta, both very different from one another. The Athenians loved music, poetry and beauty, and dressed with great care. They loved eloquence, the art of speaking, and enjoyed

drama. They loved to listen to people who could speak well.

The Athenians liked to gather in the market place, or *agora*, below the hill of the

Acropolis where sat the temple to the city's goddess, *Pallas Athena*, and discuss the events of the day. Every year the adult men of the city would elect 9 *archons*, who would rule in their name. This was the world's first democracy.

They were skilled craftsmen and artists. They were also clever traders, merchants and businessmen, and their ships sailed the seas bringing home great wealth to the city.

As time went by, the rich became very rich while the poor got poorer and poorer. The poor had to borrow from the rich and, if they could not repay the loan, then the rich would take their house and land. So many of the poor became beggars and even slaves.

But the city now became dangerous as the poor robbed from the rich to eat. The people went to Solon, a wise merchant and a friend to rich and poor alike, and they asked for his help to bring peace. He told them to return in a month after he had finished thinking. When they returned, the first thing he did was to cancel everybody's debts. He also said all those who had become slaves were to be set free. Lastly he told the rich they must pay 10% of their income to the archons, who were magistrates elected to govern the city and who would distribute it among the poorest Athenians. These were the first taxes paid.

Solon's laws brought peace and the Athenians were so grateful that they asked him to rule the city for the rest of his life. But Solon refused and said, *"I warn you against ever allowing one man to rule your city. Such a man would be a tyrant; he could do just what he liked and you would lose the freedom to choose other rulers if you were not satisfied. Athens would no longer be a democracy."* From that time on, Athens never allowed a king to rule them.

## ***Sparta***

The Spartans thought there was only one task worthy of a man – and that was fighting. A man should be strong, and skilled with sword, javelin and spear. All else was shameful, even work. So all the farmers and craftsmen were slaves.

The Council of Elders chose two kings every year, who ruled the city together. Every baby born in Sparta was brought before them. If it was weak it was left on the hillside and left to die. All boys were taken away from their parents at 7 years and sent to a military school till they were 21 years. There were no beds; they had to sleep on the bare floor on reeds from the riverbed.

Food was scarce and the boys were always hungry. If they wanted more food they were told to steal it. They were flogged for breaking any rule. If they cried out or showed any pain during the flogging, then they were beaten all the harder.

In summer and winter they wore the same thin tunic. They always practised the arts of war outside in sun, rain or snow. To get warm they rubbed their bodies with oil and sand. They were brought up to speak as little as possible.

Here are some Spartan laws:

Every Spartan had to marry at the age of 30; not before and not after.

Each man had to build his own house using nothing but an axe and a saw.

At night no lights were allowed in the streets or houses so that, in a war, the Spartans would be trained to see in the dark.

No Spartan family had its own kitchen or was allowed to choose its own food. Every 14 families had a community kitchen where the same plain food was cooked by slaves for all of them, every day.

No one was allowed to own any gold or silver. The Spartans thought they were luxuries that would only make people soft. And the only money they had were coins of iron.

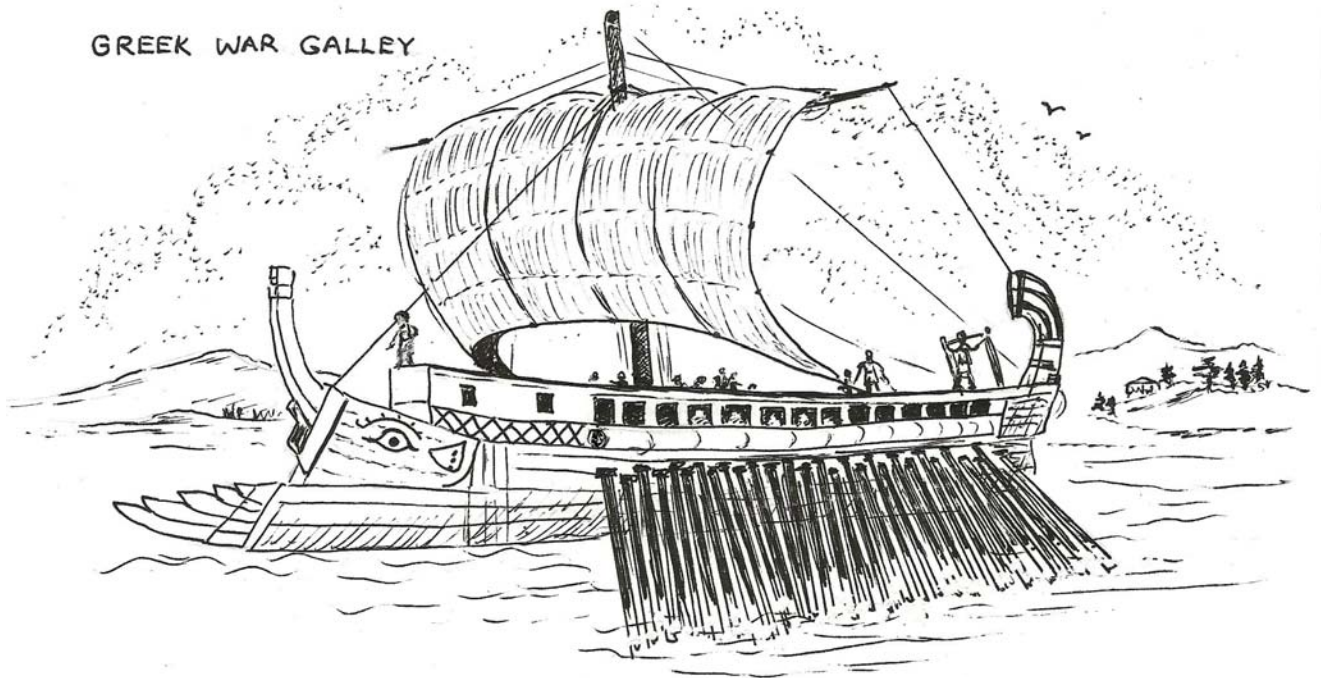
It is interesting for the teacher to ask the children, girls as well as boys, in which city they would prefer to live. Would they prefer to be artists and craftsmen or fierce warriors? Why would they choose one or the other?

## ***The Battle of Marathon***

Across the Aegean Sea lay the enormous empire of the Persians. They had conquered a number of coastal city states. One city, Miletus, rose up against them and begged the Athenians to come and help them. So they sent 20 ships. But Miletus could not hold out and surrendered to the Persians.

When King Darius saw the ships sailing away, he was very angry. He said, "What is Athens? Just one city while I am king over hundreds of cities. I have only to threaten these Greeks with my power and they will surrender."





So he sent two messengers to every Greek city and demanded earth and water, which symbolised he was their overlord. Many surrendered but the Spartans, being men of few words, simply killed their messengers. The Athenians threw one into a ditch, saying: "Here is your earth" and the other into a river, saying: "Here is your water." Then they sent them back to their master.

Darius was furious. He ordered his workmen to build a huge fleet of ships to carry an army of a hundred thousand men across the Aegean Sea to Athens. The Athenians had only ten thousand men. They hoped Sparta would come to their aid. So when the Persian army landed at the bay of Marathon, Athens sent Phidippides, their fastest runner to Sparta. He ran 250 kilometres over river and mountain in a day and a half.

The Spartans were holding a festival in honour of the sun god, so they told him they would arrive by the full moon in a week's time. So he ran back to Athens in the same time. Many people in the city thought there was no hope.

But the archon, Miltiades, gave them courage. He led the army along the sea to Marathon. They camped in the mountains above the Persians, who stayed close to their ships. On the third day he led them running downhill hurling their spears and they routed the Persians and drove them into the sea, where many were drowned. They were utterly defeated.



They asked Phidippides to run to Athens to tell them the good news. So he ran the 40 kilometres to the city without stopping. When he reached the agora, he shouted, "We have won!", and fell down dead.

This was the first marathon ever run and from that time a running race over a long distance, called a 'marathon', was included in the Olympic Games.

## *The Olympic Games*

The Greek city states were often fighting amongst themselves but, once every 4 years, they came together at Olympia, in a wooded setting by the temple to Zeus, to celebrate the Olympic Games. No one was allowed to carry weapons of any kind. They loved gymnastics and athletics, for the Greeks felt that heaven was alive in their bodies and the more beautiful they were, the closer they were to the gods.

They practised five disciplines; running, jumping, wrestling, and throwing both the discus and the javelin. The winners were rewarded with a crown of laurel leaves and, when they returned to their cities, they were treated as heroes.



At this age around 11 years in Class 5, where the children are poised between childhood and puberty, it is most educative to practise these five disciplines with them. Running short distances and a mini-marathon, say 2 kilometres, as well as high and long jumping, are easy to set up. Wrestling is done in a circle about 4 to 5 metres in diameter, and the first one to be pushed out of the circle is the loser.

When I was teaching discus and javelin in Kenya, we used heavy metal plates for discus and straight bamboo poles for javelins. If your school has the money to buy the real thing, all the better.

In Waldorf Schools world-wide, every year the Class 5's from various schools come

together to celebrate the Olympic Games every year. They are invited to attend for one, two or three days. They are organised into cities, not into their own classes, so they meet and join with other children, under the guidance of their archons, the teachers attending.

They are marked not just by how fast they run or how high they jump, but also for the beauty and style they do it with. Every child receives a medal to show that they have attended.

Having been fortunate enough to attend over ten of these Olympic Games, I have seen that they are always very popular with both children and their parents. There is always an atmosphere of both enthusiasm and calm. I look forward to one day seeing an Olympic Games happen in East Africa. With many of the world's greatest runners coming from Kenya and Ethiopia, it would be nice to celebrate the original idea with children.

### ***The Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis***

Refer to Charles Kovacs, *Ancient Greece*. Edinburgh: Floris Books

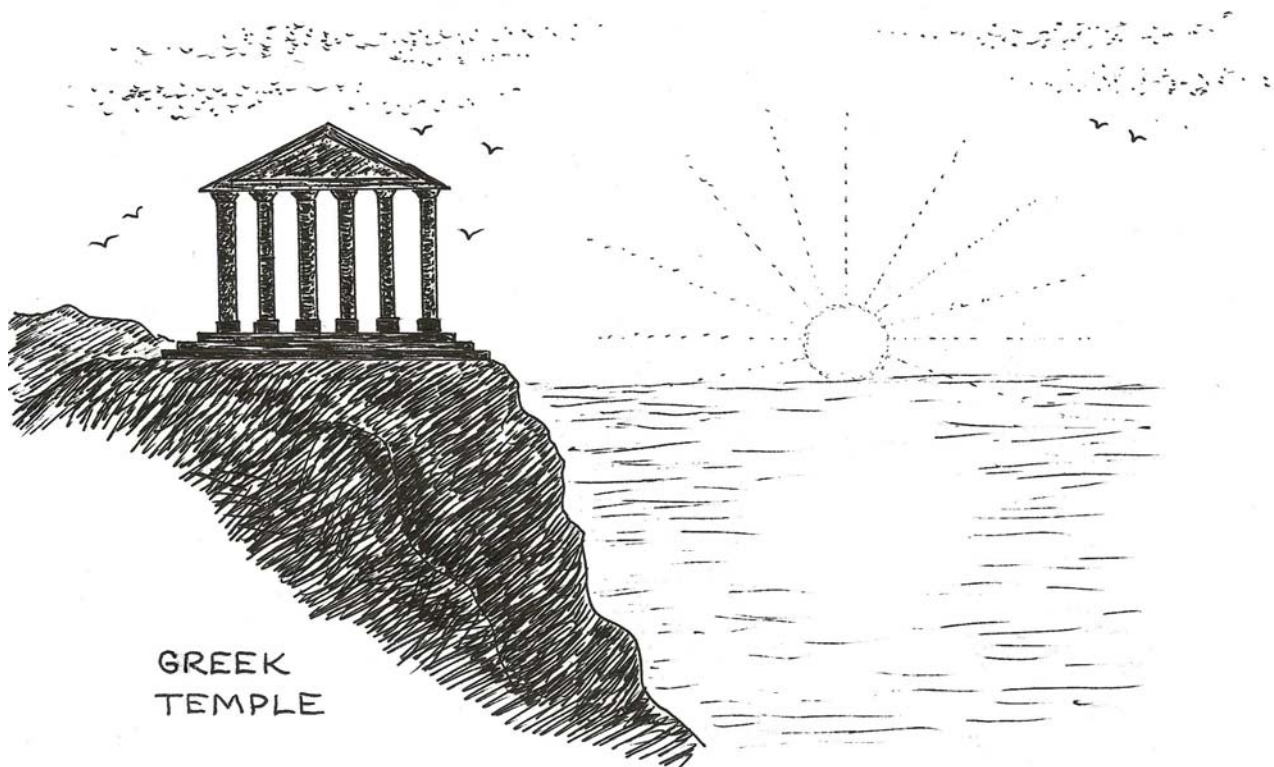
### ***The Golden Age of Greece***

After Athens had proved herself by winning the wars against Persia, Greece moved into a time known as the Golden Age. One of the archons, called Pericles, used the growing wealth of Athens to beautify the city and to encourage the development of all the arts. Painters, sculptors, musicians, poets and writers were all paid to produce their best works of art. Humorous comic and serious tragic plays were written and Greek drama flourished as never before. Theatres were built and the plays were produced with actors wearing masks and costumes, while the chorus narrated an important comment to the play.

Apart from the arts, philosophy, mathematics, science, politics and medicine rose to great heights as inspired men and women wrote about new ideas and experiments that were being made at this time. These ideas have been the basis of intellectual and artistic development in many other cultures that followed, right up to the present day.

The teacher needs to bring in many pictures of Greek art to show the children.

These could be seen in books; alternatively, the teacher could photocopy them, enlarging the pictures onto A3 paper and displaying them on the classroom walls.



## **Alexander the Great<sup>35</sup>**

Having taken the children on this historical human journey from east to west, we finish the Class 5 curriculum by returning them from west to east. About 300 years before the birth of Christ, there was born in Macedonia, one of the lesser city states in the north of Greece, a boy who was called Alexander. His father, King Philip of Macedonia had conquered most of Greece and he had great ambitions for his young son. He brought him up to be a strong and able warrior, excellent at horse-riding and fighting with the sword. Alexander was also tutored by the wise philosopher and scientist, Aristotle, who had a powerful influence on the young man.

When Alexander was only twelve years old, the horse traders brought a wild black horse, Bucephalus, that no-one was able to ride. Alexander took up the challenge

<sup>35</sup> A summary of the story. Read the full story in Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Greece*. Edinburgh: Floris Books

and tamed the stallion, riding him for many years when he led his father's soldiers into battle.

King Philip died when his son was only twenty. Alexander gathered an army and set out to conquer the lands outside of Greece. He came to the Gordian knot, a very complicated knot of ropes and he cut it in two with his sword. The prophecy was that whoever untied it would become the master of Asia. Alexander led his soldiers into the lands of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia, up to the gates of India. All the countries were conquered or surrendered before his powerful armies.

But Alexander was not just a soldier. He took with him scribes, philosophers, artists and mathematicians so he could take Greek culture to these lands. Greece had received the wisdom of the east and transformed it, and he wanted to return this new wisdom as a gift to the people.

He set up Greek states all through Asia and North Africa. He may have even gone on to China but at the river Indus in India, his soldiers mutinied, as they missed their wives and families. On the return journey he died of a fever at Babylon, only 33 years old. In his brief life time he had changed the world.

We have taken the children on a journey. They have experienced the ancient cultures which have shaped our world. We have led them from mythology and legend into recorded history. Now they are ready to hear about the great spiritual and historical forces that have shaped their own continent, Africa. Each school will do the same with their own country or continent, whether small or large.

## *Creative Writing*

In Grade 5, the teacher can use a variety of techniques for creating a suitable text for each day's writing in the main lesson book:

- ❖ He or she can write notes on the board for the children to copy. It is important that the teacher uses beautiful, rich language in this writing, checking his or her own spelling, punctuation and grammar, as this is the example the children will follow.
- ❖ It is good to get the class to suggest what to write in the notes, so that the text is made together as a class, with the teacher making sure that the language is imaginative and yet simple enough for them to read. This develops their ability

to write in logical sequence.

- ❖ If the children are more able, the teacher can write up most of the notes, but leave gaps, words or phrases that the children have to fill in on their own. The teacher chooses a short excerpt to be written, as children vary considerably in ability at this stage. This they can do into practise books, which the teacher corrects, and then they write it into their main lesson books.
- ❖ These gaps can increase until asking the children to write out their own notes in their own words. The teacher prepares the children for writing their own notes by writing key words (and any words that are difficult to spell) on the board, so that the children have a logical framework to support them in their writing.
- ❖ The children can write poems instead of notes, either together as a class with the help of the teacher, or their own individual poems, or a good poem chosen by the teacher from a book.
- ❖ The teacher needs to use the history themes for creative writing in the English language lesson. Here again it is best to choose short excerpts, whether descriptions of scenes, or character sketches of people, or dialogues that can first be enacted and then written, or a section of the story.
- ❖ You may also wish to give them another alphabet, the Greek for example, as it is easy and fairly closely corresponds to the English alphabet. They can copy it down and write some notes in this alphabet. They will delight in writing *secret* notes, which their friends must translate.

## ***Reading***

Daily reading is important, which can be done in different ways:

- ❖ From the Main Lesson books
  - If the notes were written from the board, the class can read them aloud together several days running
  - If the notes were written by individuals, let the children read to each other in pairs (either one reading his or her writing to the other child, or swapping books and each child reads aloud what the other has written).



- ❖ From a class reader: if possible, select a reader from which the whole class can read together, on Greek mythology or Greek history. The class can read together (in chorus) or each student can read 2 or 3 sentences. The teacher can create exercises from the book, for example: write direct speech into indirect speech, find all the adjectives (or other parts of speech) in a certain passage, write a summary of a certain part of the story.

## *Drama*

There is no better way to bring a historical period to life for the class than doing a play. But it is very good to practise acting on a regular basis by working with dialogues. Every story has a key scene in which the characters face difficult issues and acting out these dialogues in pairs allows everyone to take part in the experience. The scene may only last a few minutes but each group will express the content in their own way, often learning from each other if they present it to the others. The class will have great fun acting out the dialogue and it need not take too much time out of the whole main lesson. Dialogues are mini-plays and will encourage both teacher and class to tackle the challenge of a play.

You can write your own plays or use other people's which you may want to alter to make it suit the class better. It can be very effective to choose a particular scene from a play rather than doing the whole play.

It is also possible to get the children to write sections of the play in their own words which may be included in the class play if the teacher is writing it. The teacher needs to explain very clearly as to the content and purpose of what needs to be written if this is to be successful. He or she can select who plays a certain character to give a particular student a challenge, to help them overcome a problem or because you feel that this part is right for them.

You can rehearse in a part of the main lesson, building up to a performance for other classes or parents after 5 or 6 weeks. You can make props<sup>36</sup> and the set<sup>37</sup> with the children, and ask parents and other teachers to help with the costumes<sup>38</sup>. A play always brings the group together and helps to sort out any social problems the class may have.

<sup>36</sup> The things you put on the stage, for acting the play.

<sup>37</sup> The background, often cloths hanging down, or "walls" made of cardboard to give the idea of being inside a room.

<sup>38</sup> The clothes the children wear, in this case the way the Greeks dressed themselves.



## *Painting*

There are many wonderful themes for painting from the Greek Stories.

- ❖ The wooden horse at the gates of Troy
- ❖ The burning of Troy: fire in the foreground and the blackened remains of the city behind.
- ❖ A Greek Temple on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea at sunset.
- ❖ Alexander taming the wild horse Bucephalos!
- ❖ A Greek ship in a storm (voyage of Odysseus).

## *Grade 5 History Main Lesson Blocks*

Depending on how much material and time you have, you can give either one or two History main lesson blocks in Grade 5. They are usually of 3 to 4 weeks long. Here follow some suggestions how the teacher might structure his or her History main lesson blocks:

### **1st Main Lesson**

#### 1st week:

The history of Ancient India

#### 2nd week:

The history of Ancient Persia

The history of Ancient Mesopotamia

#### 3rd week:

The history of Ancient Egypt.

These are only guidelines regarding time taken. You decide how long you take over each subject.

It is also possible to have the first two weeks of this main lesson at the beginning of

the year and the second two weeks later on in the year to allow time to tell more of the stories of Ancient India and Persia during other main lessons e.g. mathematics.

The myths of the gods of Ancient Greece can easily be combined with a language main lesson on the parts of speech. Alternatively they can be told during other main lessons.

## **2nd Main Lesson**

### 1st week:

Introduction to the mythology of Ancient Greece

The Trojan War

Solon

### 2nd week:

Athens and Sparta

Persian Wars

The Golden Age of Greece

### 3rd week:

Alexander the Great

## *Chapter 6: History in Grade 6*

### *Child Development*

At this age the child's (though one could really say now, the student's) growth begins to express itself in the skeleton. The limbs begin to lengthen and they move more awkwardly. The 12 year-old experiences the weight of gravity through the skeleton, and some of the boys and girls are beginning to go into puberty.

*The physical change is accompanied by the first experience of causation in the thinking realm, while psychologically, the student enters a phase which may be characterised as the “changeling” period. The 12 year-old witnesses what may be described as the death of childhood and the birth-pangs of the individual.*

*At this age the teacher aims to work with the students' growing orientation towards the outer world. Their dawning critical faculties should be directed towards observing the natural world from a scientific standpoint and their increasing interest in social relationships should provide many opportunities for the students to take responsibility for their own class community. The aim is to forge a new social relationship between each other and the teacher.*

*(from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

The young person now begins to grow a lot as his or her body prepares to carry the body and soul into puberty. The natural grace of the 11 year-old child begins to fade. If one were to note the beauty and harmony of an Olympic Games, with the emphasis on style as much as speed, and then, the next year, observe the same students at a School Sports Day, one would now see a more angular movement and a strong desire to win.

This transformation also is present in their thinking. The student can begin to place one event next to the other whereby he not only compares them, but can see how one event leads to another. He begins to be more aware of his own actions and can realise the effect they have in the world and on other people.

The teacher, as the adult, needs to observe this change in the students over the year.

He must continue to use narrative as a major way to teach history but now the way of teaching needs to change. He must start to bring historical processes to the students so they can begin to see how one thing leads on to another.

*Rudolf Steiner says: and so, at about 12 years old, the student begins to enter this period of introspection when one can introduce the concept of cause and effect in history. During this period, history makes the transition from the origins of civilisation to the dimension of human events. The leading historical personalities emerge as representative of social groupings.*

*In this context he notes that, suppose you are telling a student about Julius Caesar (a Roman emperor,) you will not be content to relate only what Caesar did, but you will try to give the student at the same time an imaginative picture of him. You will describe the historical situation in such a way that the student cannot help having in his or her imagination a kind of picture of Julius Caesar – he sees him walk, he follows him about.*

*(from Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools by K Stockmeyer)*

In this new world which the student is entering, he needs guidance to help him along the way. So similarly did historical mankind as they entered a new epoch.

Class 6 students want to be able to organise themselves in the same ways. They want to discuss the rules of the class and decide what is fair and right in different circumstances. This does not mean that the teacher allows the children complete freedom, but allows them to express their own points of view, stimulating them to stretch and develop their powers of thinking. As many countries today are seeking freedom of thought, religion and speech through democracy and the right to vote, it is important for the children to experience this in the classroom in an appropriate way.

## ***The Class 6 History Curriculum***

Rudolf Steiner's history curriculum for Class 6 begins with the study of Ancient Rome. He saw the development of the Roman culture arising from the ideas of the Greeks: the democracy, laws, organisation and strategy in warfare as being consistent with the development of the child in Class 6. The young person in Class 6 seeks to

understand *how* and *why* events happened and who the personalities that caused the changes in history were.

However, it is valid for cultures outside of Europe to begin with a focus on *their own historical and cultural* development.

So, we return again to the peoples of Africa but this time our study in Class 6 has to do with the creation of tribal laws, the customs and organisation within various tribes, their civilisations and religions.

Later, one can turn to world history to study the Romans, as their influence on *westernisation*<sup>39</sup> has been profound and is now felt in all countries, all over the world.

### ***The Continent of Africa***

It is necessary at the beginning of this age to introduce students to the geography of Africa, if they have not studied it before, in a main lesson before the history main lesson block.

Whereas in Grade 5 they looked at the geography of their own country, be it Kenya, Uganda or Tanzania (and perhaps being introduced to East Africa), now they are able to grasp a clear picture of the continent, which will be invaluable in their historical studies. Teachers in other cultures will need to do the same in their own context.

In earlier times the two most important historical events to happen in Africa were the drying up of the Sahara that occurred between 6,000 and 2,000 BC, and the migrations of the Bantu up till as recently as 500 years ago. To understand these events and what they led to, the students must see the whole continent.

*Africa looks like the form of the human heart. The land form itself, including the Arabian peninsula, is like the four chambers of the heart with the Nile basin, including the Great Rift Valley leading down to Table Mountain, dividing it from north to south, and the Congo Basin dividing it from west to east. The eastern part with its warm fiery volcanic forces resembles the arteries; the western part with its cooler hardening forces can be likened to the veins.*

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<sup>39</sup> Westernisation = the culture of the West (European and European-American ways of living; now the dominant culture all over the world) as opposed to the East (Asian, native-American, before westernization set in).

*The heart has to do with circulation and breathing. Africa stands between Asia and the Americas, between Europe and the South Pole. Africa has been a meeting place of Asians, Europeans, and North and South Americans with the indigenous African people, and Africans have either migrated or been brought forcefully to these other continents, and have intermarried with their inhabitants, creating a new mix of people. (from Hear the Voice of the Griot by B Staley)*

## **Tribes and Kingdoms of Africa**

We looked at the three stages of early human life in Grade 4, Chapter 2 of this manual, those of hunter-gatherers, herders and farmers. Now in Grade 6, we can look at the tribes and kingdoms of Africa, in terms of their *history, laws and social organisation*.

It is important for students to realise the amount of migration that has occurred in Africa before the end of the 19th century. With the stable boundaries of modern Africa, only pastoral tribes like the Maasai wander across international boundaries at will. Before this, groups of people migrated to different parts of the continent, due to the circumstances that they encountered.

A tribe's history is normally held in their oral tradition, and students can follow this through story and song. Similarly, with the laws and social organisation. They can see how varied the different methods are throughout Africa. Also how a tribe's ways have changed with time, through contact with Islam, slavery or through intermarriage.

It is important for them to feel the vibrancy and diversity of human life that existed before the advent of colonialism and direct rule by the Europeans. This will help them to understand the tribal diversity that exists within each of their countries, which sometimes spills over into discord or violence in times of economic tension or political rivalry.

As a teacher you can contrast different tribal cultures within the same country, or find similarities between tribes from different countries. This can lead to discussions on the strengths and weaknesses of different systems. Students need to understand that they are growing up in one of the most diverse regions of the world.

One aspect of tribal organisation that makes Africa somewhat unique was the prevalence of separate male and female age-mate systems. Age-mates are groups of people in the same that were born approximately within the same two or more years. Each age group is allocated a standard set of social and political duties. As



individuals got older, so did the set of social and political duties change into different ones. Later, they became elders and ruled the ways of the tribe.

This led to a conservative attitude within the tribe. As long as the system enabled the survival of the tribe in a hostile environment, why change it? But it sometimes led to a democratic system, as there was not necessarily a kingship defined by blood, and this kept tribal units quite small.

Let us look at two tribes to see the similarities and differences that have evolved in Africa. The teacher can pick any tribe, but it is more useful to contrast say a Bantu tribe with a Nilotic or Cushitic tribe or a desert tribe as opposed to a rain forest or savannah tribe.

Now the teacher enters into more detail than he did two years ago. The criteria for the tribe to be studied are:

1. Their location and migrations
2. The geography and environment in which they live
3. Their history and language
4. Their economy: how they keep themselves alive
5. Their social structure and religion
6. Their culture – art and music, etc

As an example, here are two descriptions, the Luo and the Baganda:

### ***The Luo***

The Luo tribe lives now mostly in western Kenya, or Nyanza, northern Tanzania, and eastern Uganda, around Lake Victoria, the largest lake in Africa. They are part of the dark-skinned Nilotic people<sup>40</sup> with close cultural ties to other Nilotic tribes, especially the Alur and Acholi of Uganda.

Their stories tell of their migration south from the Sudan along the river Nile. This did not happen all at once, but over many years, when one group, or clan, after another moved with their herds of cattle bit by bit. Maybe they lost a war with

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<sup>40</sup> Nilotic tribes are said to have come from the middle Nile Valley, from today's Sudan and West Ethiopian countries. Its members are generally tall.

another group, or maybe they suffered from the periodic droughts which afflict southern Sudan. The Luos arrived around 1500 on the shores of the lake where rainfall is steady and adequate. The landscape is hilly with some fertile flat land like the Kano plains. The warm climate was a good breeding ground for malarial and tsetse fly insects, which kept some areas uninhabited until recently.

When the Luos arrived from the north, they spread slowly around the lake, intermarrying with Bantu tribes already there, like the Luhya and the Soba. The tall Luo men often married the shorter Bantu ladies. There was a mixing of blood and of cultures. But they also drove the Kisii and Nandi away into the hills. The Luo language, *dholuo*, often became the dominant tongue, though it incorporated many words from other languages.

Although the Luos were primarily cattle herders, they obviously fished in the Nile. On arrival at Nam Lolwe, as they call Lake Victoria, they took to single sail boats, and fish such as tilapia and Nile perch became the most important part of their diet. However they also settled into farming, growing millet, ground nuts, beans, bananas, mangoes and various vegetables, and later sugar and maize.

Since independence they have greatly valued education and many have become engineers. Sadly, they have often had to move away to find work, although this has benefited the rest of Kenya.

The Luos – many today are now devout Christians or Moslems - have always believed in a supreme creator, Nyasaye, and have revered their ancestors, who stand between them and God and can influence events here on earth. They have a great respect for funerals. However, they have a strong belief in the supernatural, or *ju ju*, often going to mgangas or shamans to put spells on people or to save themselves from those placed upon them by others.

Traditionally each clan was ruled by a king, or *ruoth*. They were often older men, who were respected by the clan as long as they were good leaders, but if not, the men would choose another ruoth. They had a very democratic system, though this did not always extend to women.

Traditionally couples were introduced to each other by matchmakers. The bridegroom was expected to give a number of cattle to the bride's father as a dowry. A year later he gave a blanket to the bride's mother if he was happy with his wife. If not, he could send her back to her home. A man would often marry many wives, in exceptional cases even 50 or more! The more children he had, the greater respect he had in the tribe.

The men were not circumcised, but the young men were taught the laws and customs by the tribal elders. Girls learnt from their mothers. The first wife would live in her house on the right, the second next to hers on the right, the third on the left, and so on. Farms, or shambas, were passed down through the male line, with the eldest son being the most senior.

Music was, and still is, the most widely-practised art form for the Luos. Now it is often for entertainment, but in the old days it was for religious, ceremonial or political purposes. Music and dancing were performed at funerals to praise the departed, to express feelings and to keep away evil spirits. It welcomed back warriors from war, celebrated courtship and games and brought people together in work.

The Luos are traditionally very good with their hands, often working as carpenters and builders. They are excellent wood carvers and the women weave fine baskets.

## ***The Baganda***

The Baganda are the most numerous tribe in Uganda, living on the northern shore of Lake Victoria next to the Luos. They migrated, like all the Bantus, from West Africa probably about one thousand years ago, and are a much shorter, lighter people than the Luos. They live on hilly and flat swampy land around the lake where rainfall is heavy and the soils are fertile. The young river Nile, emerging from the lake passes through their land.

Buganda, the country, has a long history, unified under the first king, or *kabaka*, in the 14th century. They defeated other tribes and carved out a large kingdom under an absolute king, or "kibaka". Newly conquered lands were placed under chiefs nominated by the king. Buganda's armies and the royal tax collectors travelled swiftly to all parts of the kingdom along specially constructed roads which crossed streams and swamps by bridges and viaducts. On Lake Victoria a royal navy of outrigger canoes, commanded by an admiral could transport Baganda warriors to raid any shore of the lake.

The journalist Stanley counted 125,000 troops marching off on a single campaign to the east, where a fleet of 230 war canoes waited to act as auxiliary naval support. At Buganda's capital, he found a well-ordered town of about 40,000 people surrounding the king's palace, which was situated atop a commanding hill. A wall more than four kilometres in circumference surrounded the palace compound, which was filled with grass-roofed houses, meeting halls, and storage buildings. At the entrance to the

court burned the royal *gombolola*, or fire, which would only be extinguished when the Kabaka died.

Thronging the grounds were foreign ambassadors seeking audiences, chiefs going to the royal advisory council, messengers running errands, and a great number of young pages, who served the Kabaka while training to become future chiefs. For communication across the kingdom, the messengers were supplemented by drum signals. (picture on left – the Kabaka of the Baganda)

Baganda villages, sometimes as large as forty to fifty homes, were generally located on hillsides, leaving hilltops uninhabited, to be used for crops or pastures. The villages surrounded the home of a chief, which provided a common meeting ground for members of the village. The chief collected tribute from his subjects, provided tribute to the Kabaka, distributed resources among his subjects, and maintained order through his decision-making skills.

The banana was introduced into Africa probably by the Romans about 2000 years ago. It is easy to grow in the wet tropics, does not take a lot of labour and provides a good surplus of food. This frees the villagers to do other things. So in the fields the main crop was bananas and vegetables, from which they made a stew, *matoke*. Cattle were herded by slaves, while women grew the food and men were traders and warriors.

The family was the centre of Baganda life. The father was revered as the head of the family. Children were sent away as young as 3 years to live with an elder, wealthier family member, to further their chances in the future.

Authoritarian control was an important theme of Baganda culture. Obedience to the king was a matter of life and death. This was a centralised state, totally unlike the semi-democracy of the Luos.

A second major theme of Baganda culture was the emphasis on individual achievement. An individual's future was not only determined by status at birth. Instead, individuals carved out their fortunes by hard work as well as by choosing friends, allies, and patrons.

Baganda culture tolerated social diversity more easily than many other African societies. Many villages included residents from outside Buganda. Some had arrived in the region as slaves, but by the early 20th century, many stayed in Buganda to farm.

Marriage with non-Baganda was fairly common, and many Baganda marriages ended in divorce. Unlike most Bantu societies boys were not circumcised, but they were initiated into the laws of the tribe by an elder or a social superior.

Like the Luo the Baganda were superb musicians and dancers, who performed for the kabaka and amongst themselves for celebration, funerals, initiations and to keep the demons, or juju, away. They were fine wood and stone carvers as well as excellent builders.

### *How Wulakaga Answered the King - a Baganda story*

Wulakaga, the blacksmith, was by far the most gifted blacksmith in the village, capable of turning his hand to all kinds of metalwork. Every morning a crowd usually gathered at his home, amazed at the speed with which he produced spears and axes, shovels and hoes, and a whole variety of objects for their benefit. His fame had spread far and wide, so that even the king took an interest in his work and lined his courtyards with his iron figures.

One day a messenger from the palace arrived at the blacksmith's home to announce that the king wished him to perform a special task. Walukaga was delighted by the news, for nothing pleased him more than to serve the king. He put on his red robe and a beautifully decorated head-dress. Then he followed the messenger to the palace.

He was immediately shown to the king's private room and, as soon as the king clapped his hands, servants appeared carrying several trays of iron figures and implements.

"I have a very special job for you, Walukaga," the king announced. "I was staring at those fine figures you made for me when I thought how nice it would be to have a life-size metal man for a companion. And I don't mean just a statue. I want an iron man who can walk and talk, who has blood in his veins, wisdom in his head and feelings in his heart."

Walukaga almost collapsed with shock. He stared long and hard into the king's eyes looking for a sign that the whole thing was some kind of a joke, but the king's stern look filled him with despair. From that moment he had no peace of mind, for he knew that failure to obey the king's wishes would mean certain death for him and his family.

"I will do my very best to please you," he replied in a sad voice, and arranged for the iron to be delivered to his forge later that same day.

Early next morning Walukaga visited the neighbouring houses to see if his friends could help him out. One recommended he build a metal shell and put a real man inside it, saying the king would never notice the difference. Another suggested that he flee the country and remain in hiding until the whole affair had been forgotten. A third even advised him to bribe the palace cook to poison the king's food. He returned home in the afternoon and shut himself away in his room.

A few days later, as he walked through the bush deep in thought, he strayed from his usual path and found himself wandering through a deserted place. Suddenly he discovered a filthy-looking man sitting on the ground chattering away to himself. The blacksmith recognised him as someone from the village, who had suffered so much as a youth, that he had gone mad and taken refuge in the bush.

Although frightened, Walukaga soon realized that the madman was harmless and accepted the cup of water offered him in friendship. They began talking and, after a little, he asked him what he should do to fulfil the king's impossible command.

The madman's eyes narrowed and he answered clearly, "Go to the king and tell him that, if he really wants you to make this remarkable iron man, you must have only the very finest materials. Let him send word to the people of the village that they must shave their heads and burn the hair until they have produced a thousand loads of charcoal; and let him order them to weep into their water-bowls until they have given him a hundred pots of tears."

The blacksmith thought this was by far the best advice he had received so far. But when he turned to thank the madman, he saw that he had begun rocking back and forth laughing hysterically and shaking his head. Walukaga hurried off, and in spite of the late hour, listed these things that he would need to complete the work.

The king listened patiently and agreed to everything demanded. The next day he ordered the people to shave their heads and weep into their bowls. Nobody dared disobey the king's command. But after seven days, when they all had shaved their heads and wept until their eyes were red and raw, there was still not enough charcoal to make up even a single load, or enough tears to fill half a water-pot.

The elders of the kingdom had little choice but to confess to him their lack of success. They stood before the king quaking with fright, but to their surprise the king answered reasonably and sent for the blacksmith.

"Walukaga," he said, "you may stop your work on the iron man I asked you to build for me. You have asked for something impossible and my people cannot deliver the materials you need. Go home and continue with work you are best at."



The blacksmith answered nervously, "I hope you will not be angry with me, Your Majesty, but, because you asked the impossible of me, I knew I had to do the same in return."

But the king was not in the least bit angry, for he was pleased to have such a clever and honest man among his people. (from African Myths and Legends by O.B. Duane)

What is so good about this story is that it shows us the autocratic nature of the old kingdom of Buganda in a humorous way. Everyone is frightened by the king's command but only a madman has the answer. Also it shows how important iron-making was among the Bantu tribes. It reinforces everything the teacher teaches by way of imagination and story. For this age group he needs to find stories which show the nature and customs of the tribe studied.

## ***The Great Civilisations of Medieval Africa***

I use the word medieval here to mean the time after the ancient civilisations (such as Egypt or Rome) but before the coming of the Europeans in the 16th century. As there are few written records, historians used to think there were no great civilisations in Africa at this time. But now thanks to archaeology and aerial photography we are finding more and more evidence throughout Africa. It will take time and a lot of work before we discover their extent.

### ***The Kingdom of Nubia***

Nubia is the land lying in the bend of the River Nile in what is today northern Sudan. 2500 years ago rainfall was more reliable, the river was navigable and it lay at the end of the caravan route from the Red Sea. The people benefited from the trade and skills of Egypt, while they gave their labour to their powerful northern neighbour.

As Egyptian power began to wane, the Nubians invaded Egypt in the 8th century BCE and ruled Upper Egypt for a hundred years. They then moved their capital southwards to Meroe, where it was safer from the Persians, who had invaded Egypt.

The kingdom had an abundance of iron and timber, and was famous for its iron implements. They had their own writing, based on an alphabet that has not yet been

deciphered. Urban lifestyles, town and temple buildings, metal manufacture, international trade and farming marked this period.

Camel caravans went to ports on the Red Sea, and so linked up with trading routes to India and the Roman Empire. By 200 BC Nubia was at the height of its power. But with the increasing dryness of the Sahara it declined from 400 after the birth of Christ.

## *The Kingdom of Ghana*

As the Sahara dried out, the desert yielded up salt to the peoples of western Africa and the Sahel. But there was as yet no way of moving it. Then around the 5th - 7th century, the camel was introduced into North Africa from Asia. The camel needs drink only once deeply in 9 days, and its feet do not sink into the sands of the desert.

When the Moslem Berbers<sup>41</sup> first crossed the Sahara in the 8th century, they traded salt for gold with the people of the Senegal river. Trade grew to include cattle, sheep, silver, jewellery, honey, pottery, hides and slaves from the south; cloth, books and wheat from the north.

This wealth supported a well-organised society with a large army, buildings of wood and stone and mosques for the newly-converted Moslems. The capital was composed of twin cities, joined by an avenue of 10 kilometres. One city was the commercial centre, the other the spiritual centre, where the king lived in his palace of clay and straw roofing, surrounded by a high wall.

The kings combined the functions of commander-in-chief of the army, high priest and chief judge, much as the Egyptian Pharaohs did - Ghana meant *warrior king* in the Mande language of the people. He had absolute power.

He decided who was to be punished and who freed; whether they went to war or made peace. He appointed governors of the territories; he decided on marriages within the royal families. He listened to petitions and decided what to do about them.

When he met with his people, he was dressed in the finest robes with a turban of gold. The court *griot*, or singer, called out his many titles and his subjects bowed before him, sprinkling dust upon their heads. Only the Moslems were excused because they were not allowed to kneel before an earthly ruler. Instead they clapped their hands or nodded their heads.

The kings of Ghana grew rich on taxes paid to them by foreign traders. Most of the people were peasants, who farmed using traditional methods. However they

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<sup>41</sup> Berbers = the original inhabitants of North Africa, before the Arab invasions

overgrazed the land, causing it to lose its fertility. In the 11th century the reformist Moslems from Morocco, the Almoravids, seized the towns at either end of the western trans-Saharan trade route and the kingdom of Ghana declined rapidly.

### ***The Kingdom of Mali***

The towns of the central delta of the River Niger had long practised a self-sustaining trading system that benefited them all. This had made Mali a land of plenty. The land was fertile, flooded with fresh silt annually by the river - it forms a huge inland delta for 6 months of the year - and people grew a wide variety of crops such as cotton, millet, rice, sweet potatoes, yams, beans and onions. They raised chickens, cattle, sheep and goats and hunted game, antelope, hippopotamus and buffalo.

Whereas the Soninke people of Ghana mostly held their traditional beliefs, the Mandingo people of Mali accepted Islam and in the 12th century they became a key region in the Islamic world. The great universities and mosques of Timbuktu, Jenne and Gao were built.

The towns on the River Niger grew rich, especially as they now took over the trans-Saharan gold-salt trade. The Mali craftsmen were skilful woodcarvers, silversmiths, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, weavers and tanners.

### ***Sundiata the Hero of Mali***

The great hero of Mali was Prince Sundiata, whose name means *hungry lion*. The day he was born thunder shook the earth. However he was a sickly child, partially paralysed, and though his mother took him to many healers, he could not be cured.

Now the king's second wife, Sassouma Berete, hated him and, after the king's death, she convinced the royal council to declare her son the new king. She humiliated Sundiata and his mother, forcing them to live in a storage shed and laughing at his paralysis.

At this time Mali was invaded by its neighbour and the new king, Sumanguru, married Sassouma Berete and ruled harshly, levying heavy taxes, stripping the land of its wealth and selling its women into slavery. In his determination to walk, Sundiata approached the blacksmith and had him make braces for his legs. With practice he was able to leave aside the brace and walk on his own.

He became an excellent horseman, an archer and a fearless hunter. His mother taught him to respect the laws of the land, to follow the traditions of his people and to

show compassion to the people.

When Sassouma Berete heard about his ability to walk, she went to the Nine Witches of Mali and asked them to kill him. They tried but his kind heart and compassion weakened their juju and they could not. Then his mother fled with Sundiata and her other children. They wandered here and there but no one would give them refuge as they were afraid of Sassouma Berete.

At last he was granted protection by a distant king. Meanwhile the wicked King Sumanguru even drove Sassouma Berete and her son away. In 1230 the people of Mali begged Sundiata to return and drive out Sumanguru. The king, who had sheltered Sundiata, had come to love him as a son, led his army into Mali.

The war raged for five years, until the two armies faced each other for the final battle on the plain of Krina. The night before the battle, Sumanguru took on the form of an owl, a bird of ill omen among the people of Mali, and came to Sundiata.

Sumanguru: I am the king of Mali by conquest and force of arms.

Sundiata: Then I will take Mali from you by force of arms and chase you from my kingdom.

Sumanguru: Know that I am the wild yam of the rocks; nothing will make me leave Mali.

Sundiata: Know that I have in my camp seven master smiths who can shatter rocks. Then, yam, I will eat you.

Sumanguru: Behave yourself, boy, or you will burn your foot, for I am the red-hot cinder.

Sundiata: But me, I am the rain that puts out the cinder. I am the waters that will carry you away.

Sumanguru: Enough of this argument. You shall not have Mali.

Sundiata: Know that there is not room for two kings in the same skin. Sumanguru, you will let me have your place.

Sumanguru was sure his magic protected him, but Sundiata had the stronger magic. His blacksmith made a poison from the blood of a white cockerel stolen from his enemy's camp. He dipped the cockerel's claw nail into the blood and tied it to an arrow.

During the battle, first one army and then the other had the advantage. At last Sundiata's army was winning and Sumanguru hid behind his men. Sundiata now took careful aim and shot the arrow, grazing Sumanguru's shoulder. The wicked

king now recognized Sundiata's greater magic and fled, never being seen again.

The triumphant Sundiata now became king, built a new capital city and brought peace and order. He restored the trans-Saharan trade route, bringing wealth to the kingdom. He taught the farmers new methods of growing crops and raising animals until he died in 1260. Mali reached the height of its power before declining in the 15th century. (from *Hear the Voice of the Griot* by Betty Staley)

## ***The Songhay Empire***

Songhay had been a state paying tribute to the kingdom of Mali. But under Sunni Ali, who ruled from 1464 to 1492, they took Mali without destroying it. Sunni Ali professed to being a Moslem, but he tried to curb Moslem influence. He conquered Timbuktu but spent seven years trying to conquer Jenne.

Gao became the new capital and they kept a fleet of armed canoes on the River Niger. It was during Sunni Ali's rule that Europeans began to come in contact with West Africans, as the Portuguese began to sail down the west coast.

His successor, Askia Mohammed 1, was a generous and caring ruler, who considered it his duty to spread Islam throughout his empire. He journeyed to Mecca accompanied by 500 horsemen, 1000 foot soldiers and 300,000 pieces of gold, one third for gifts in Mecca and Medina, one third to pay travelling expenses and one third for purchases to bring home. He brought back scholars to Timbuktu, where African writers published books on Islamic law and wrote historical accounts.

In the 16th century the Songhay army crossed the desert and tried to capture the salt mines of Morocco, but the plan backfired. Instead Moroccan armies plundered Songhay over the next 200 years and gained control over the gold and salt trade. By the 17th century the golden age of Songhay had come to an end.

## ***The Kingdom of Zimbabwe***

The kingdom of Zimbabwe began to grow in the 12th century. The capital city at its peak could have housed up to 18,000 people and surrounded by walls up to five metres high. Here was the royal palace of the king and the centre of power. The origin of the word "Zimbabwe" comes from the Shona and means "large houses of stone"

In 1531 a Portuguese captain, Vicente Pegado, described Zimbabwe thus:

*Among the gold mines of the inland plains between the Limpopo and*

*Zambezi rivers there is built of stones of marvelous size, and there appears to be no mortar joining them.... The native country call these edifices Symbaoe, which according to their language signifies court.*

The most important artefacts recovered from this site are the eight Zimbabwe birds, carved from soapstone and placed on the tops of columns the height of a person. Other artefacts include soapstone figurines, pottery, iron gongs, elaborately worked ivory, iron and copper wire, iron hoes, bronze spearheads, copper ingots and crucibles and gold beads, bracelets, pendants and sheaths.

Zimbabwe became a centre for trading with people from the coast and for a short while even with Chinese merchants for about five years. This international trade was mainly in gold and ivory - some believe that more than 20 million ounces of gold were extracted from the ground around - and it was in addition to the local agricultural trade, in which cattle were especially important.

Zimbabwe declined probably because of deforestation, water shortage and famine in the 15th century.

### ***Clay modelling and Woodwork***

Africa has a long artistic history of sculpture in wood and clay, to represent everything from the gods to ghosts, as well as cloth making and pottery. To make relevant artefacts from the period under study increases a student's understanding.

You can also make<sup>42</sup> and play your own instruments from a particular tribe or an epoch. Playing music together brings the students together.

Poems, songs and games can be found in Betty Staley; *Hear the Voice of the Griot*.

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<sup>42</sup> For making instruments, see Betty Staley; *Hear the Voice of the Griot*. Pages 343 onwards.



## *The Romans*

It is important that children in Class 6 experience the history of Rome as well as the history of their own country. Today we see their influence in government, laws, roads and the obsession for structure and order in society.

Who were the Romans? Rome, a city halfway down the long peninsula that is Italy, a country in southern Europe, was founded, according to legend, 753 years before Jesus' birth.

The story goes that it was founded by twin brothers who were born to the daughter of a king of one of the tribes of Latium. However, due to strife between different tribes, the twins were stolen and left on the hillside to die. Somehow they were heard by a mother wolf who had lost her cubs. She took them to her cave and suckled them. Later they were found by a shepherd who brought them up. In time they grew up and claimed their right to rule the kingdom. Their names were Romulus and Remus.

The twins decided to build a city over seven hills, under the protection of Mars, the god of war! One can already see that the Romans were going to become war-like people, in choosing Mars as the god of their city. Remus was killed and the name of the city was called Rome after Romulus. Throughout the history of the Romans, the strength of their armies led to them becoming the most powerful nation of their time and they eventually built up a huge empire.<sup>43</sup>

For the first 200 years of its history, Rome was ruled by seven successive kings, who conquered the towns in the vicinity. The last of these kings was Tarquin the Proud, an evil king. The Romans eventually turned against him, and from that time the city decided to become a republic known as the SPQR or in the Latin language: Senatus Populus Que Republicum (The Republic of the Senate and the People.)<sup>44</sup>

Rome was now ruled by two *consuls*, elected every year. The city split between the *patricians*, or wealthy citizens, who elected these consuls and the *plebeians*, or poorest class people, who elected the tribunes.

The well-known story of Horatius can be told and a section of the poem by Lord Macaulay can be learnt.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup>See Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Rome*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, for the full story of Romulus and Remus.

<sup>44</sup> See Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Rome*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, for stories of the Etruscans and The Republic of Rome.

<sup>45</sup> Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Rome*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, for How Horatius Kept the Bridge

## *Horatius defends the Bridge*

The time after the kings of Rome was a turbulent one. Many kings of neighbouring tribes often attacked, hoping to gain the favoured position that Rome held on the River Tiber. In one of these battles, Lars Porsena, King of Clusium, had gathered a number of other tribes and made an army that far outnumbered that of the Romans. A small army, led by Spurius Lartius and Titus Herminius went out to face them, but all too soon they realised that they were no match for the huge and powerful force supporting Lars Porsena. Terrified, the soldiers began to hurl down their weapons and race across the bridge to the safety of the city of Rome. The enemy army followed in hot pursuit, eager to kill the cowardly, retreating soldiers and enter the city. Suddenly the leaders of Rome were faced with a dilemma! What could be done to save the city against this horde?

Horatius Cocles (the one-eyed), an officer in the Roman army stepped forward and spoke: "We must cut down the bridge so that none of the enemy can cross over." "But what of our soldiers fleeing to safety," asked another captain? Horatius spoke up again: "I will stand on the other side and defend the bridge against the enemy, only allowing our soldiers to cross over. In the meantime, the bridge must be cut down. But I need two men to help me hold the bridge. Is there anyone who will stand beside me?" At this, the other two captains, Spurius Lartius and Titus Herminius spoke up. Spurius declared that he would stand on one side and Titus agreed to join Horatius on his other side.

Swiftly the three moved across the bridge and the stream of retreating soldiers parted to let them through, grateful that they would now be protected from the enemy. The opposing army hesitated when they saw Horatius and the other two captains take up their places on the narrow bridge. Some soldiers jeered at the idea that three men could withstand so great an army, but when they were attacked, the enemy soldiers were quickly cut down by the strength and skill of the three officers. Again and again the enemy attacked but each time they could not break through the guard of the three brave captains.

By now the last of the fleeing Roman soldiers had reached safety in the city and the wooden beams of the bridge were tottering. "Come back," shouted the Romans, "Come back!" Realising that the bridge was about to fall, Spurius and Titus turned and raced across the beams that shuddered under their every step. But Horatius stood firm, determined that none of the enemy should enter the city. Now he was wounded and the bridge began to creak and groan as the beams cracked and broke. Turning towards the river and glancing up at the towers of Rome, he prayed to the

gods: "Take me under your care. Protect me. I surrender myself to you." And with that, he leaped into the river.

Everyone gasped and gazed to see where he had fallen into the water. Surely he would drown with his heavy armour. Surely the powerful tide would sweep him away. To their surprise they saw Horatius' head rise above the waves and slowly he swam towards the bank on the side of Rome. At times he disappeared under the water, but again he rose and finally he reached the other side. People rushed down to the water's edge and dragged the exhausted captain out. Cheers rang out on all sides! Even the opposing army cheered for this brave man who had survived such odds.

Horatius was carried high on the shoulders of the ecstatic crowd into the city. His name has gone down in history for his great bravery in the face of danger.

As Rome became more powerful, they improved the organisation of their armies. They had proper armour and weapons and they had leaders for the different sections of the army. A legion was 5000 men and was divided into cohorts with a centurion commanding 100 men.

The Romans began to develop war machines to help them attack towns, like the battering ram to break down the wooden gates of a city and a catapult that could throw buckets of stones over the walls of a city. They also realised that it would be quicker and easier to transport their armies by sea, so they began to build fleets of ships to protect their country and their merchant ships by sea.

## ***The Carthaginians***

At that time the most powerful fleet of ships belonged to the Carthaginians from around Tunis in North Africa. The Romans then entered a life and death war with Carthage, who had the greatest general of the time leading their armies. His name was Hannibal.

The story goes that Hannibal's father took the young Hannibal, aged nine years old to the altar of their gods and there he swore to fight the Romans until he had conquered them. But Hannibal was not merely a brave soldier, he was very clever too. When, as a general, he realised that Rome was aiming to attack Carthage, he decided to beat them in another way. So he gathered an enormous army and many elephants to terrify the Romans and he marched them northwards through Spain, over the high snowy mountains of the Alps and into North Italy.

This took the Romans by surprise and so Hannibal won many battles and marched on towards Rome. The Romans tried to stop him but he kept tricking them with clever strategic plans. He ambushed them when they least expected it, so that the Romans became very scared. There are many stories about how the Romans eventually defeated Hannibal and went on to conquer Carthage, but they only began to win battles when their general Fabius, who was called the Delayer, also used clever plans and strategy instead of just relying on strength of numbers.<sup>46</sup>

As the Roman armies became more powerful, so did the people who wished to rule Rome. To become Consul was a great honour, but to encourage the people to favour one, made many men try to buy votes. But people were also in favour of brave leaders who returned from war. These generals marched their army with all the great wealth and many slaves of cities they had conquered through a huge arch in the city of Rome, and this became known as a “triumph”. These leaders were often elected Consul after such a triumph. One man who decided to become Consul and rule Rome in this way was called Julius Caesar.

## ***Julius Caesar***<sup>47</sup>

Julius Caesar came from a rich patrician family who made sure that their intelligent and good-looking son was well educated, for they had high hopes of him. So Julius grew up, convinced he could have everything he wished and this made him very ambitious. He was very charming and all the ladies fell in love with him while all the men hated him or were jealous of him. He fell in love with a woman of lower rank than his family and he married her against the wishes of his family and the ruling consul, who ordered him to divorce her. Divorce was easily granted in Rome at that time, but Julius refused and was consequently exiled.

There is a story that during his exile he was on a ship sailing in Asia Minor, when pirates attacked and captured the ship. When they discovered that he was from a rich family, they decided to ransom him, demanding money from his family if they returned him safely. Julius Caesar complained that he was worth more than the ransom that they asked and told them that he would come back and kill them later. They laughed at his brave talk, but unfortunately for them he kept his word.

<sup>46</sup> See Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Rome*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, Chapters 12 - 14 for the whole story of Hannibal

<sup>47</sup> See Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Rome*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, Chapters 28 - 35 for the whole story of Julius Caesar

After this, Julius was allowed to return home and now his ambitions turned to politics. When Julius saw that the people of Rome did not take him seriously enough to vote for him, he decided to prove his leadership qualities by taking an army to conquer Spain and Gaul.

As captain of the army, Julius lived simply. He did not give himself special comforts, but ate and slept under the same hardships as his soldiers. Many times he demonstrated his caring for them, so that they came to respect and love him. On one occasion he gave up his bed to a elderly soldier who was sick. His skill in planning battles enabled him to conquer the wild tribes of Gaul. He kept a written record of his expeditions, known today by Latin scholars as “Caesar's Gallic Wars.”

When he eventually returned in triumph from war he was enthusiastically welcomed by the people of Rome, who wanted to elect him consul. But Julius knew that he needed more than the good will of the people to rule Rome well. So he formed a group of three powerful men that were called the “Triumvirate”. The three men were Crassus, the richest man in Rome, Pompey, a brave and powerful general and himself, of course.

But Julius was no longer a wild and arrogant young man. He had matured into a clear thinking and broad-minded leader and he had many ideas for the improvement of Rome. He began to implement these ideas. He saw that many of the middle class and poor people were unhappy and unfairly treated while the wealthy patricians became richer and richer, demanding more and more privileges. He realised it would undermine the strength of Roman rule in the long run. So he decided to improve the situation by making a law that prevented the patricians from buying votes.

This angered the rich patricians who felt that he should be supporting their desire for wealth and power. But Julius strengthened the middle class further by also giving them privileges. He and Pompey disagreed, mainly because Pompey was jealous of Julius' popularity with the people.

The difficulties culminated in Julius Caesar being called to the Forum to meet with other members of the senate. Julius' wife begged him not to go as she had had a dream that he would die. However, he knew that he would have to face his enemies at some time and so he walked along to the Forum. The members of the senate gathered around him, even his friend Brutus was among them. They took out their swords and stabbed him to death.

The people mourned him deeply and discovered that in his will he had left a sum of money to every man in the city, as well as donating his home and gardens for

everyone to walk in. The long list of improvements he had planned was later continued by his nephew Octavius.

The Romans went on to conquer the whole of southern Europe, Greece and North Africa, so that they controlled the Mediterranean Sea. By the time of Christ's birth they ruled from France to Babylon, from the Atlantic Ocean to Mesopotamia.

However, in 33BC the patrician, Octavius, defeated his rival, Anthony and the last Pharaoh of Egypt, Queen Cleopatra<sup>48</sup>, and ruled as an absolute emperor or Caesar, changing his name to Augustus. He appointed Pontius Pilate as the Protector of Syria, who ruled over the unruly Israelites of Palestine.

In their military discipline there was something Spartan about the Romans, but they borrowed freely from Athenian and Egyptian culture in religion and art. They were superb engineers who built aqueducts for carrying water across the country and excellent roads for transporting their well-trained soldiers to every corner of the empire. However, they also extended Roman citizenship to conquered nations and treated these new citizens as equals. Thus the laws of Rome influenced the governing of all the countries under their rule and many countries today still base their laws on those of the ancient Romans.

### ***Jesus and the Roman Empire***

*And it came to pass in those days,  
that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus,  
that all the world should be taxed.  
And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.  
And Joseph also went up from Galilee,  
out of the city of Nazareth,  
unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem*

These famous words from Luke's gospel begin probably the most well-known story in the world, the life of Jesus. I am not going to tell it here. If you don't know it, read the four gospels in the Bible. The Israelites, or Jews, had always felt themselves to be a people chosen by God. They were waiting for a Messiah, or Anointed One, who would deliver them from Roman power and lead their nation into a golden age.

<sup>48</sup> See Charles Kovacs: *Ancient Rome*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, Chapter 37, for the story of Anthony and Cleopatra



Their disappointment was so great when they realised that Jesus was promising them a spiritual kingdom rather than a material one, that the priestly cast, in league with the Romans, crucified him.

### *The Beginnings of Christianity*

Only one writer of the time mentions Jesus at all while he was alive, as the Gospels were only written later. The Christians were a small persecuted sect for 300 years after Christ's death. But in 333AD things were to change. The patrician, Constantine, on the eve of the battle with his rival, dreamt that Christ on the cross hovered above him urging him on to victory.

Sure enough, Constantine won and began to change the Roman religion from the worship of the Greek and Egyptian gods to Jesus the Christ. Christianity now became the religion of the Roman Empire. Churches and monasteries were built.

St Benedict of Nursa in Italy (430AD) decided to withdraw from the world and found a monastery. He created the Rule of Benedict which became the basis for all Christian religious communities at the time. These monasteries were not only places of peace and holiness, they were also sanctuaries against robbers and armies trying to gain power over the country. The ideal of living a simple life and sharing everything with the other monks became popular. Many men and women followed his example and went to live in the forests and deserts to live a life of prayer and solitude.

The Roman empire was now weakening; the weight of the huge empire put stress on keeping all the various countries under control. Rebellions broke out that needed to be crushed as tribes began to take advantage of the unstable governing powers of Rome. Later there were invasions that weakened the power of the armies still further. Constantine felt that a single unifying religion was needed to bind the various peoples together.

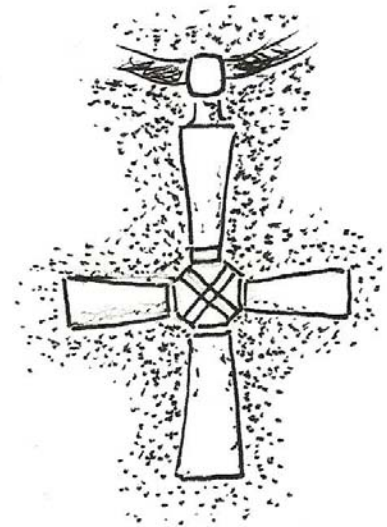
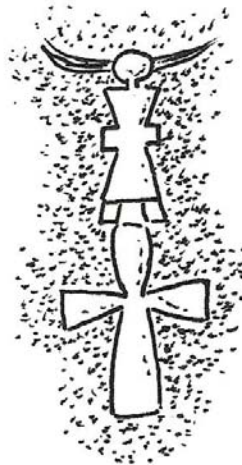
Missionaries were sent all over the empire and beyond. The persecuted had suddenly become the persecutors. Through this decree the religion of Christianity spread through the ranks of the Roman army and was carried far and wide on the network of Roman roads to the ends of the empire.

Constantine split the empire into an eastern and western half. The former, Byzantium, flourished into the 15th century, while Rome declined and soon disappeared altogether (476 AD). Rome, the greatest power of its time had fallen. But the flame of Christianity continued and grew bigger over time.

## *Christianity in Ethiopia*

Ethiopia had been at the centre of the trading routes from India, Egypt and Africa through the Red Sea for a very long time, trading in ivory, fine crystal glass, brass and copper jewellery, precious woods and perfumes. The Sahara was not so dry as today, so traders could travel down into East Africa or across to West Africa.

### CHRISTIAN CROSSES FROM ETHIOPIA



In the bible Queen Sheba goes to Jerusalem to marry King Solomon, and a son, Menelik, was born that legend says was the first emperor of Ethiopia. Later powerful kingdoms grew up in Yemen and around Axum in northern Ethiopia on either side of the Red Sea.

They spoke and wrote the language, *Ge'ez*. Great columns like Egyptian obelisks were built of stone. Many Jews came to live here and Judaism became the central religion. Ethiopian Jews call themselves *Beth Israel*, meaning House of Israel, while other Ethiopians call them *falashas*, which means outsiders and is considered insulting.

In 320AD the young king, Ezana, converted to Christianity, brought by two young Syrian businessmen who travelled down the Red Sea. One of them was made the

first bishop of Ethiopia by the Archbishop of Alexandria in Egypt. He took the name, Abba Salama, *Father of Peace*.

The Ethiopian bible, *the Kebra Negast*, the Glory of the Kings, was written. New monasteries became centres of learning, and art, music and literature became enthused with Christianity. As travellers approached the city, they saw beautiful statues of unicorns and household pets, such as giraffes and elephants, **roaming** through the king's palace.

For 400 years, Axum flourished under King Ezana's successors. But then Islam was brought by the followers of Mohammed and the port cities along the Red Sea were lost. The Ethiopians turned their attention inland and spread their Orthodox Christianity into the highlands of the south.

## ***King Lalibela***

When a boy was born in Ethiopia to King Zagwe and his second wife, sometime in the 1200's, in a cave in the rocks, a dense cloud of bees surrounded the child. His mother, who claimed they represented the soldiers who would serve her son, named him *Lalibela*, which means The Keeper of the Bees.

The legend tells that angels came and took the boy into the sky where they showed him the first three of the seven heavens. There God showed him magnificent churches carved from rock. God told Lalibela he was going to be the Emperor of Ethiopia and he would build such churches on earth. The churches would be beyond human ability so God would reveal to him the way to construct them. Then the angels returned him to earth.

When he grew up, his half-sister was so jealous of him that she put poison given to her by a black magician in his food. He then fed his servant and his dog, who both died, so he decided to die with him. But when he ate the food, though he entered the sleep of death, he wasn't fully dead. His half-sister was afraid of burying him alive, so they left him in an open grave, where he rose on the third day.

He wandered the world for 40 years. He visited Egypt where he learnt the wisdom of Ancient Egypt. He journeyed to Persia where he learned the wisdom of Zarathustra. He journeyed to Greece where he learnt the wisdom of the Ancient Greeks.

Lastly he went to Jerusalem where he met Christians from all over the world. He was baptized by the Angel Gabriel in the River Jordan. He heard Christ tell him to

build three sacred building complexes on the earth; the Ark of the Covenant in gold; the Temple of Solomon in wood, marble and stone; and ten churches embedded in rock. The ten churches would be an expression of the Ark and the Temple of Solomon.

Then he found himself again in his own land. His half-brother, the king, was visited by Christ, who asked him to give up his kingship to Lalibela, who was also reunited with his wife, Makal Gebra, whose name means *the one who owns the Cross on which Christ was crucified*.

Then the angels led Lalibela to the rock caves and where they worked night and day to carve out the ten churches. When they were completed he gave up the throne to his nephew and became a priest. He taught people the wisdom of life, until Christ appeared to him again as a shining light. Soon afterwards, a man dressed in skins visited him and led him out into the wilderness, from where an angel led him to the place where he died. (from *Hear the Voice of the Griot* by Betty Staley)

Each church is carved from one gigantic mass of rock. Arching vaults and columns are decorated with intricate designs, and flower-like motifs and Maltese crosses adorn the window frames. They are covered inside and out with frescoes depicting the lives of Christ and Mother Mary, Saint Michael holding back King Solomon's army taking the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem, and many others.

The largest is over 35 metres long and 25 metres wide. Its upper windows are shaped like the tall obelisks of Axum, so that only pale light fills the church, while at certain times of the day, the sun's rays fall on the altar. Beneath the churches, through the bedrock, the area is riddled with caves, passages and crypts. The most sacred is underneath the Church of Golgotha Michael. Priests of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church walk into the crypt to this day, carrying candles to perform their holy rituals. (Find a picture of the Lalibela church for drawing with the children)

## *The Life of Mohammed*

To the millions of Moslems in Africa, the story of Mohammed is central to their faith. For students to hear the story of other religions beside their own, will help their understanding and tolerance in later life.

Mohammad was born in 570 in Mecca, in Arabia. His father, died almost six months before he was born and at the age of six Muhammad lost his mother to illness and he became fully orphaned. He was brought up for two years by his grandfather of the powerful Quraysh tribe.

When he was eight, his grandfather also died. He now came under the care of his uncle Abu Talib. While still in his teens, Mohammad accompanied his uncle on trading journeys to Syria, gaining experience in trade and meeting Christians and Jews.

He then married Khadijah, a rich 40 year-old widow. Mohammad started meditating alone for several weeks in a cave on Mount Hira near Mecca. The angel Gabriel appeared to him on various occasions giving him verses which he wrote down to become the Koran, or Moslem bible.

At first Mohammad was deeply distressed by his revelations, as most people would not listen to him. After returning home, he was often consoled by Khadijah. There followed three years of further prayers and meditations until the Angel Gabriel commanded him to begin preaching.

Mohammed's wife, Khadija, was the first to believe he was a prophet. She was soon followed by his close friend Abu Bakr, and his adopted son, and around 613 he began his public preaching. Most Meccans ignored and mocked him, while a few others became his followers.

The opposition in Mecca started when he condemned idol worship. As the number of followers increased, he became a threat to the local tribes and the rulers of the city, whose wealth rested upon the *Ka'aba*, the focal point of Meccan religious life, which Muhammad threatened to overthrow.

His denunciation of the Meccan traditional religion was especially offensive to his own tribe, the Quraysh, as they were the guardians of the Ka'aba. Some of Muhammad's followers emigrated to the Christian Ethiopia and founded a small colony there under the protection of the emperor.

In 620, Muhammad experienced a miraculous journey with the Angel Gabriel in one night. In the first part of the journey, he travelled from Mecca on a winged horse to

*the farthest mosque* and to have toured heaven and hell, and spoken with earlier prophets, such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

His wife Khadijah and his uncle Abu Talib both died in 619, the year thus being known as the *year of sorrow*. With the death of Abu Talib, Muhammad was placed in danger of death. He took this opportunity to look for a new home for himself and his followers in Medina, a town a few days journey to the north.

Being alarmed at the departure of the Muslims, the Meccans plotted to assassinate Muhammad. With the help of Ali, he fooled the Meccans who were watching him, and secretly slipped away from the town to Medina with Abu Bakr in 622.

Following the emigration, the Meccans seized the properties of the Muslim emigrants. The Muslims now turned to raiding Meccan caravans. These attacks interfered with trade, and allowed them to acquire wealth, power and prestige while working towards their ultimate goal of inducing Mecca's submission to the new faith.

In March of 624, Muhammad led some three hundred warriors in a raid on a Meccan merchant caravan. The Muslims set an ambush for them. Though outnumbered more than three to one, the Muslims won the battle. Muhammad and his followers saw in the victory a confirmation of their faith.

In 630, Muhammad marched on Mecca with an enormous force, said to number more than ten thousand men. With minimal casualties, they took control of Mecca. He forgave those who had mocked him. Most Meccans converted to Islam and Muhammad subsequently destroyed all the statues of Arabian gods in and around the Ka'aba.

In the same year, Muhammad made an expedition against the rest of Arabia and all the local chiefs of the region adopted Islam. He abolished all old blood feuds<sup>49</sup> and asked his male followers *“to be good to women; for they are powerless captives in your households.”*

A few months later Muhammad fell ill and suffered for several days with a fever. He died on Monday, June 8, 632, in Medina, at the age of 63, with his head resting on his wife's, Aisha's, lap. He was buried within the Mosque of the Prophet in the city of Medina.

## ***Islam in Africa***

Muhammad united the tribes of Arabia into a single Arab Muslim religious nation in the last years of his life. With his death, disagreement broke out over who would

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<sup>49</sup> Feuds = quarrels between different leaders that usually led to wars



succeed him as leader of the Muslim community, until Abu Bakr was made the first *caliph*. Abu Bakr's immediate task was to make an expedition against the Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantium.

The Moslem soldiers overcame all before them, utterly routing the Romans and the Persians. They conquered the whole of North Africa and arrived at the gates of India. But they came to stay, not just to conquer. The Islamic faith spread gradually from commanders to soldiers, from Arab governors to local clerks and officials, from masters to servants, from nomads to farmers.

To become a Moslem was simple. One had only to adopt the five pillars of Islam, or *submission before God, or Allah*.

1. The *Shahada* – to declare before a Moslem audience that there is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is His messenger.
2. *Salat* – to pray five times daily in the direction of Mecca.
3. *Sawm* – to fast for one month during the month of Ramadan.
4. *Zakat* – to give a certain amount of your wealth to the poor.
5. *Hajj* – to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during your lifetime if your finances and health will permit.

The trade routes across the Sahara took Islam southwards. Even though far from home, the Sudanese traders experienced a deep sense of community within the Moslem brotherhood. Islam exerted a stronger influence in the towns than in the countryside where the people held to their traditional faith.

But by the 11th century kings too were becoming Moslem converts. Whereas before Islam was spread by warriors, now it was spreading by trade and missionaries. Schools of law and theology were set up in the kingdoms of the Sahel<sup>50</sup> and locals began to learn Arabic, the language of the Koran. Towns throughout West Africa, such as Timbuktu and Jenne, became centres of Islamic learning.

Moslem sailors and merchants travelled down the coast of East Africa bringing Islam with them. However, whereas in West Africa and Sudan regular contact could be maintained by travelling across the desert or along the rivers, in East Africa contact could only be maintained along the coast. The rivers were not navigable, and there was tsetse fly. Arab settlers married local women, and an urban Swahili culture grew up in coastal Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia with its own language, literature and identity.

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<sup>50</sup> Sahel = in present day Mali, Burkino Faso, Chad and Southern Sudan

## ***An Example of Teaching About Mohammed and Early Islam in Grade 6***

### ***Preparation***

The teacher needs to have a clear understanding that he is presenting to the students the inspirational story of Mohammed's life, and not trying to influence them one way or another religiously. The aim is for all children, whatever their religion, to have a deep understanding and respect for Islam, as we would for every religion in the world.

Therefore the teacher will tell the stories of Mohammed and Islam that are appropriate to the age of the children, to awaken this understanding and respect.

The teacher needs to feel a warmth towards the teachings of Islam, and certainly no hostility or judgements. We try to present everything in an objective way, with respect and warmth. It is good to inspire the students to be tolerant and inquisitive, and you will probably have Muslim students in your class. I have noticed in Kenya how proud they are when I have taught about their religion.

The teacher needs to research thoroughly:

- ❖ The story of Mohammed's life
- ❖ The events in the early spread of Islam, especially in Africa
- ❖ The important aspects of being a Moslem
- ❖ Some Islamic art and calligraphy or writing
- ❖ Any other interesting information on Islam.

The teacher must be clear in:

- ❖ How to tell the story in an interesting and imaginative way
- ❖ How to express the explosive expanse of Islam in the 200 years after Mohammed's death
- ❖ How Islam affected those people of Africa, who came in contact with it.

All the information collected needs to be changed into vivid descriptions using good imagery to tell the story of early Islam.

## ***Presentation***

The first verse of the Koran (find a picture of Koran writing), which every Moslem must learn to say, can be learnt in Arabic.

The teacher needs to draw a good, clear picture of Mohammed receiving the teachings from the Angel Gabriel on the mountain on the blackboard before the lessons begin. The picture should include the dryness of the desert surroundings.

You have already told the day before the beginning of Mohammed's story up until the time that he began his preaching to the people of Mecca. You now tell over the next two days the story of his flight from Mecca and his life in Medina, followed by his triumphant return to Mecca, his early organisation of his followers and his death. On the third day you can tell the story of what happened after Mohammed died, and the conquest of Arabia and North Africa.

Each daily presentation should be no longer than 15 to 20 minutes. Try to portray the dignity and power of Mohammed through your voice and the words you choose. You wish the students to feel a reverence for him and the events surrounding him.

By putting a simple map on the blackboard you can help the students see the enormous distances travelled by the early Muslim conquerors. Then you can tell them how the Roman empire had lost its way and was decadent. The new conquerors brought a simple new dynamic faith, that anybody could follow regardless of their wealth or status.

You can draw with them some simple Arabic calligraphy as beautifully as you can. You can point out that Arabic writing runs from right to left, the opposite of English and Kiswahili script. You can tell them that calligraphy is regarded by Muslims as the highest art form, as they regard Mohammed as too important to be drawn.

## ***Class Discussions in Grade 6***

As stated before, students in Grade 6 go through a deep internal change, as reasoning begins to develop. The teacher needs to provide time for more intensive class discussions, so the young people can exercise their reasoning powers. If the teacher does this successfully, they will feel immensely satisfied whenever they are challenged to think for themselves. You can develop this in this lesson block by considering these questions:

- ❖ Of all the 5 pillars of Islam, which would you find easiest and which hardest to perform?

- ❖ Why do you think people converted to Islam so easily in Africa?
- ❖ How was Mohammed a great leader?
- ❖ If you had lived in Mecca at that time, how would you have reacted to Mohammed?
- ❖ What made the followers and soldiers of Mohammed so brave and fearless?
- ❖ How is Islam similar to Christianity?
- ❖ How is Islam different from Christianity?
- ❖ At times in history Muslims and Christianity have fought wars. Why do you think this is so?
- ❖ In East Africa Muslims and Christians are friends. Why do you think this is so?
- ❖ Should people of different religions get along together? If so, why? If not, then why not?

## *The Middle Ages*

Many centuries passed and the monasteries became places both of worship and learning. They kept the holy books of the bible and monks were taught to read and write. They spent many hours copying the bible in beautiful script which they illuminated by adding colourful and decorative headings and borders. These were bought by the churches who revered them and used them in the daily services of worship as well as for the monks to study. Other writings by learned and holy men were also copied so that the monasteries steadily built up libraries of sacred texts.

Noble families sent their sons to study under the monks and so schools sprang up around these monasteries. It became the custom for noble families with several sons to choose a younger boy to enter holy orders and become a monk if he was found suitable. A rich family often patronised the monastery, presenting them with valuable gifts and money to adorn their churches and finance the monastery.

### *St Bernard of Clairvaux*

Bernard was born in 1090, the third son of a rich nobleman of Burgundy, in France. Before he was born, it was foretold that he would have a great destiny of piety and learning. So Bernard's parents saw to it that he received a careful education under excellent scholars. From a young age Bernard developed a special love for the Blessed Virgin Mary and later wrote much about her. His own mother died when he was about 19 years old.

People were drawn to Bernard because of his goodness and also because of his ability to express himself clearly on spiritual matters. At the age of 23 he led a group of 30 young men to the Abbot Stephen of Citeaux where they asked to be admitted to his monastery. After 3 years, the Abbot, recognising the quality of this young monk, asked Bernard to found a new monastery in another valley. Bernard called his monastery Clairvaux.

There he lived for the next 40 years. His great friend Bishop William persuaded Bernard not to make his rules too harsh as they were affecting his health. Nevertheless, people flocked to his monastery due to his inspiring words and pious personality. So Bernard founded many more monasteries to cope with the numbers of people who asked to be admitted. Even his father and 5 brothers joined him at Clairvaux.

However things were not completely easy for Bernard. Universities were springing up and there was eager discussion on all spiritual topics, often just for the sake of ambition and fame. So Bernard was challenged by these university intellectuals and he wrote several articles, called apologies, to defend the scriptures and to put forward what he felt were the correct interpretations of the Catholic beliefs. One famous scholar was called Abelard and these two once had a debate on certain issues. However, Bernard expressed his ideas so well that Abelard was unable to answer him.

Bernard died at the age of 63 in his monastery at Clairvaux and was later made a saint.

## ***The Feudal System***

Not only the monks needed places of peace and shelter. Every village and town and country was open to attack from raiding tribes like the Vikings from Norway, as well as robbers in every forest who became rich by stealing from the travellers who passed by. The poor suffered the most, but even farms and noblemen could be attacked and killed and their houses burnt to the ground. So everyone was in a state of fear as any day might be their last.

So, it was natural that the peasants who worked for a nobleman appealed to him for protection. The nobleman agreed, provided they would serve in his army. They would protect the nobleman's lands in times of danger and he in turn would protect them. To strengthen their situation the noblemen appealed to the king for protection and a similar agreement was made. The nobles would swear fealty<sup>51</sup> to the king, promising to bring their armies to fight for him when he had to go to war and he would protect them in turn, bringing his armies to defend them if they were attacked. There were other minor agreements and taxes that bound them all together in a network of support that became known as the Feudal System.

## ***Knights and Castles***

However, the king and nobles were determined to fortify themselves against attack, especially as wooden houses could be burnt so easily. So they began to build castles on the tops of hills and mountains where they could have a good view of the surrounding country and see any approaching army well in advance. They used

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<sup>51</sup> Fealty = loyalty, promised to a king or queen



local stone and built towers at every corner of the wall around the castle where they could place sentries on guard to warn them of any attack. They also dug a deep moat or channel around the outside of the castle walls which was filled with water so that the enemy could not get across. The only entrance was across a bridge which could be raised and lowered. They also had an iron grill in front of the gateway to keep people out.<sup>52</sup>

The king's army consisted firstly of mounted cavalry or knights on horseback. Each knight was covered from head to foot in steel armour and sometimes even his horse carried armour on its head and neck. The knight could only be recognised by his coat of arms<sup>53</sup> which was colourfully painted on his shield and on the flag flying from his long spear. The coat of arms would also be worn by his men. The knight would carry a long sword and a short dagger for individual combat with another knight.

After the knights came the archers<sup>54</sup> on foot, wearing leather armour and carrying long bows or crossbows, both of which were deadly in battle. Behind them came the footsoldiers carrying whatever weapons they were given, sometimes an axe, iron mace, or even a farm implement.

The king also had his coat of arms and this was carried by his trumpeter or herald. Thus the art of heraldry<sup>55</sup> sprang up with the flag showing not only who the king or nobleman was, but also the family from which he came.

In times of peace, the king and the nobles organised tournaments or competitions where the knights fought against each other to prove their strength and skill. Each knight would choose a noble lady and wear a scarf in her honour. The ladies enjoyed being included in the tournament in this way. These contests were called jousts where two knights rode against each other, each trying to unseat their opponent. After one knight had fallen off, the knights might continue the fight using swords until one was called the victor. There were rules to avoid the knights actually killing each other, but sometimes the wounds were serious. At the end of the tournament they had a grand feast for everyone to celebrate the winner.

This became known as the Age of Chivalry where knights honoured and protected the fair ladies as well as the poor and weak in the area. This ideal encouraged knights and noblemen to treat women with respect and courtesy or good manners. At the courts of the king and his nobles, the great halls were used for feasts that were

<sup>52</sup> Find books that have pictures and explanations of castles, weapons, armour, etc. of those times

<sup>53</sup> Coat of Arms = a specially designed emblem by which a group of people belonging together could be recognized

<sup>54</sup> Archers = soldiers who use bows and arrows

<sup>55</sup> Heraldry = the art of making coats of arms for each noble or royal family

often accompanied by music. Troubadours, who were travelling musicians, would sing romantic songs about brave deeds in battle and beautiful ladies in distress, and they played an instrument called a lute, which looked like an early guitar.

This is a good time to introduce the stories of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table that express the ideals and romance of this historical period that is suited to the growing awareness of the boys and girls for each other. They contain a mixture of magic and reality that is attractive to this age group.

## *The Crusades*

During the Middle Ages, the Holy Land, as the Christians called the birthplace of Jesus, was in the hands of the Moors or Arabs, who were Muslim by religion. A new group of Arabs took over, resulting in Christian and Jewish pilgrims being forbidden to visit Jerusalem.

The Pope decided to call for a Crusade, a volunteer army whose goal it would be to recapture Jerusalem. In 1095, 30,000 men gathered in an army for the first Crusade to the Holy Land. They were united in having a large red cross stitched to their shirt or tunic which meant that nobles and footsoldiers alike were fighting together for the cause of the Crusade. For the knights, it gave them a chance to practise their skills and win fame and perhaps fortune. For the poor people it was a change from their dreary lives and a possibility of adventure.

After two years of harsh travelling in freezing winter weather or hot dry deserts, with little food and too much disease, they arrived at Jerusalem. After a 2 month siege<sup>56</sup>, the city fell to the crusaders. Some men stayed behind and built a new life for themselves. Those who returned brought back new foods, silk clothing and the new culture of the Arabs.

However, 50 years later, the Arabs under their leader, Saladin, recaptured Jerusalem. The pope called for another Crusade but the second Crusade was unsuccessful. A third Crusade was begun with the famous King Richard of England, King Frederick of Germany and King Philip of France.

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<sup>56</sup> Siege = an army surrounds a city, closing it off from all outside help to get food, etc., forcing them to give themselves up

King Richard was well-known for his bravery and strength in battle as well as his military and political abilities. On his way to Jerusalem, he stopped in Cyprus and married the beautiful Berengaria, daughter of the King of Navarre.

THEN he proceeded to Acre where they defeated the city. Shortly afterwards Richard defeated Saladin and captured the city of Joppa. When he wanted to continue to Jerusalem, the other two kings disagreed with him continually, being jealous of him and unwilling to hand over any power to him. This split the strength of the army. After a year of disputes and arguing, Richard made a truce with Saladin and returned home.

He unwisely decided to go overland from Venice and he was discovered and captured by King Leopold of Austria. Richard was handed over to the Emperor of Germany, who asked for a huge ransom of 150,000 marks. Queen Berengaria raised the ransom for him using her precious jewels. Richard was released and returned to England. He did not remain long there, but returned to Normandy where he spent the last 5 years of his life fighting Philip of France. He died in an insignificant fight, aged 41.

In 1212 a tragic Crusade, known as the Children's Crusade, took place in which thousands of French and German children died from disease, starvation and icy winter conditions. They thought that God would look after them because they were children and they expected the Mediterranean Sea to part and let them walk through to Jerusalem. When this did not happen they went home dismally disappointed. No more Crusades took place after this.

However, the Crusades had a powerful influence on Europe in other ways. They opened up opportunities for trade in the east, especially after soldiers brought home spices for cooking and preserving food, as well as rich silks, jewels and other valuable items. They also opened people's minds to new ideas, for they found that the Arabs were highly advanced and cultured, with a knowledge of mathematics and science far greater than their own.

In the Italian cities, merchants grew rich from trading with eastern countries and demanded better education, desiring more power in governing their cities. Many changes were on the way.

Other personalities of the Middle Ages whose life stories can be told are St Francis of Assisi, and Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans who freed France from the English army and was eventually tried and burnt at the stake by her own people.

## *Grade 6 History Main Lesson Blocks*

There are usually two main lesson blocks allocated for Grade 6. The length of each main lesson block is usually 3 to 4 weeks. A suggested order of teaching could be as follows (two possibilities are shown):

### **1<sup>st</sup> Main Lesson Block**

<b>4-WEEK MAIN LESSON BLOCK</b>
<p><u>1<sup>st</sup> Week:</u> Roman History</p>
<p><u>2<sup>nd</sup> Week:</u> Roman History</p>
<p><u>3<sup>rd</sup> Week:</u> Story of Jesus Early Christianity Monasteries Saints</p>
<p><u>4<sup>th</sup> Week:</u> The story of Mohammed Islam</p>

This material can easily be taught over 4 weeks. The teacher can take his time over the material to allow for thorough comprehension and work by the students. This can also allow for more discussion on moral and religious themes.

## 2nd Main Lesson Block

<b>4-WEEK MAIN LESSON BLOCK</b>
<p><u>1<sup>st</sup> Week:</u> The laws, history and social organisation of two or three African tribes (in the example above of the Luo and Baganda)</p>
<p><u>2<sup>nd</sup> Week:</u> The history of the Kingdom of Nubia The history of the Kingdom of Ghana.</p>
<p><u>3<sup>rd</sup> Week:</u> The history of the Kingdom of Mali. The history of the Kingdom of Songhay The history of the Kingdom of Zimbabwe</p>
<p><u>4<sup>th</sup> Week:</u> Knights and Castles The Crusades</p>

You can add the history of any other civilisation you research, such as the Kingdom of Congo from the 15th to the 18th century. Also you can teach about the older history, laws and customs of any relevant tribe in Africa.

## *Creative Ideas for Teaching in Class 6*

Many creative ways of bringing history to children have already been discussed in the chapter on Class 5. The teacher needs to teach poems and songs from the themes being presented. There are many opportunities for drawing pictures in their main lesson books, especially as both the Roman History and the Middle Ages have wonderful books full of colourful pictures in the children's libraries.

### *Writing in the Main Lesson Book*

Apart from previous suggestions for main lesson writing (see chapter on Grade 5), in Grade 6 the teacher can also begin to give dictations. The teacher writes the

dictation for him- or herself, based on what the students have learnt in the main lesson. He or she then goes through the new or difficult words of the dictation with the class, by writing them on the board, and the students write them down and learn to spell them for homework. The teacher checks that they understand the meaning of the words. The next day the teacher dictates the passage, and the students write it straight into their main lesson books.

## ***Ideas for Painting***

### ***Roman History and the Middle Ages:***

- ❖ Paint Horatius defending the bridge of Rome
- ❖ Paint Hannibal crossing the Alps with his elephants. Paint a mountain scene with steep mountains and snow in Prussian blue. Add elephants and an army very small on the road along the huge mountains.
- ❖ Paint an aqueduct bringing water from one side of the mountain to the other.
- ❖ Paint a castle only using Prussian Blue as it brings out the sense of perspective with the different tones from light to dark. It is best if the children have already copied a picture of a castle into their main lesson books. Let the paper dry considerably before painting.
- ❖ Paint a medieval lady sitting sadly at her arched window, with her needlework in her hands, waiting for her knight husband to return. Prussian blue, purple and red.
- ❖ On a background of golden yellow that is almost dry, paint a knight on horseback in vermillion red.

## ***Combining History with Other Subjects***

When faced with such a lot of history material to be covered, the teacher must become creative. He or she needs to take some of the story material into the English language lesson, not only telling the story, but learning words for spelling, using the stories for grammar and comprehension exercises, and for writing of poetry and creative writing. Every day at the end of a mathematics main lesson or the end of the school day, 10 to 15 minutes can be used to continue telling stories from history that could not be fitted into the History main lesson block itself. Poems can be learnt in the rhythmic time of the main lesson even when the History main lesson block is over.



## Chapter 7: History in Grade 7

### *The Age of Discovery*

In Grade 7 the students turn 13 years and become teenagers. There comes about a thirst for knowledge about world phenomena<sup>57</sup> and a budding capacity for reflection, even self-reflection. The physical changes, which establish sexual identity and capacity, begin to manifest more clearly.

*However, these physical changes tend to be somewhat in advance of the psychological development. While a feeling for independence and solitude<sup>58</sup> may be experienced, a certain anxiety, emotional sensitivity and embarrassment can run alongside. Sporadic bursts of energy vie<sup>59</sup> with periods of lethargic<sup>60</sup> heaviness.*

*The teacher should provide the adolescents<sup>61</sup> with new perspectives, particularly by directing their attention into the world. They should be shown how to formulate their own points of view as well as accepting that others may see the world differently. It is important to experience themselves both as world citizens but also as individuals who have social responsibilities.*

*(from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

Puberty is just round the corner and some students will look more grown-up than others, girls maybe starting their periods and boys dropping their voices. But there is still something very young about them still, and they live in two worlds at once, which leads to a certain emotional confusion.

There is a sense of adventure in their situation and we must lead them out into this new challenge. We must help them unfurl their sails, for in this adventure they will begin to find themselves as individuals, and we can help them to express this new sense of themselves.

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<sup>57</sup> Phenomena = the way things of the world present themselves to us

<sup>58</sup> Solitude = being alone

<sup>59</sup> Vie = compete

<sup>60</sup> Lethargic = not wanting to do things because of lack of energy

<sup>61</sup> Adolescents = young people on the way to becoming adults

It is as if the young person has been absorbed in himself so much that to a certain extent she has *dreamt* the world around them. At last they begin to see it as it is. So the teacher has to find a new way to meet these young people. The main narrative content becomes the biographies<sup>62</sup> of real historical figures, and not necessarily only the famous ones. The student can see the drama of existence played out across a whole human life and can learn those lessons accordingly.

*At this age the students need to build bridges to the world based on their own personal powers of judgement. Their relationship to the teacher as an authority declines<sup>63</sup>. Therefore the type of teaching must change to enable them to accept the material of the history lessons through their own understanding.*

*The students should begin to learn that historical events belong to a broader context, and that the consequences<sup>64</sup> of these events can be equally wide-ranging. By telling the students about the discoveries and inventions, about art, and about new forms of trade and religious life, we show them what is new, what has never existed before.*

*It is also important to show them the new way in which people ... related to the world through their senses. They should learn how practical, mechanical and technical matters took an increasing hold of people's awareness, while their relationship to miracles and wonders, to holy things, waned<sup>65</sup>.*

*Since the students of Grade 7 are going through a similar shift of relationship, history does not take place outside of themselves, in a museum, but is always topical and contemporary.*

*(from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

As the students grow older, the certainties of childhood become less sure. The inner world becomes harder to explore as the outer world becomes more fascinating. At this period in human history, from the 15th century onwards, a new interest in the material world became apparent.

If we, the teachers, can make our lessons interesting and relevant by showing them

<sup>62</sup> Biographies = the stories of people's lives

<sup>63</sup> Declines = gets less

<sup>64</sup> Consequences = the results or effects of things that are done or that happen

<sup>65</sup> Wane = to become less

how new things were to the people of that time, we will help them to be interested in the world around them. This will help them to develop moral and social ideas, which are positive steps for themselves and others.

## ***The Renaissance in Europe***

Every so often in human history there comes a moment of great change that no one foresees. A number of human beings are born who initiate a whole new range of activities. Where did these new ideas come from? It is as if they appeared from the spiritual world to bring in a new age on earth.

Renaissance means *rebirth*, and it is the word describing the cultural movement that started in Italy in the 15th century and swept through Europe in the next 250 years. Its effect was felt everywhere, even in Africa, because the Europeans discovered the rest of the world at this time.

Since the end of the Roman Empire 1000 years before, classical knowledge – that is, the knowledge that Roman, Greek and earlier civilisations had - had been forgotten, and the church now dominated culture and philosophy.

For example, artists still used the Egyptian convention that the most important person in a picture was painted the largest.

Suddenly, in the middle of the 15th century, classical knowledge was rediscovered: Greek art and philosophy, Roman architecture, Indian mathematics, etc. Now, all of a sudden, a flowering of literature, painting, sculpture and architecture began in the town of Florence in Italy.

Artists wanted to represent the human figure and the landscape as they saw it, making the foreground larger and clearer while objects further away would be drawn smaller and in paler tones. So they developed a new scientific way of painting and drawing called perspective [– and fitting other objects into the middle and background harmoniously, just as we see the world. ] This showed that people were beginning to observe the natural world more objectively, leading to a development in scientific knowledge.

The German Luther led a revolt against the corruption of the Catholic church and questioned the authority of the Pope. He no longer recognised him as *God's representative upon earth* and led the revolt that developed into Protestantism.

Man, not God, became the centre of focus for the new Renaissance person. Questions were asked of religion and politics, and educational reform swept through

the wealthy families of Europe. At universities a new teaching, humanism<sup>66</sup>, based on the study of history, moral philosophy, grammar, poetry and rhetoric<sup>67</sup> was introduced.

Interest in this new objective way of looking at things led to what we call now a *scientific view* of the world. Copernicus upset the church when he placed the sun at the centre of the solar system, with the earth revolving around it. Galileo invented the telescope and changed the face of astronomy. There were huge advances in anatomy, biology and physics.

For the rest of the world, however, it was the invention of a new sailing ship, *the caravel*, by the Portuguese and the gunpowder-driven gun, which had the greatest effect on their lives. For it opened a new era of discovery and domination by the Europeans.

## **Marco Polo**

Marco Polo was born into a merchant family in the rich trading city of Venice. However, his father Niccolo and his uncle Maffeo were not at home as they had left for the east to establish trading possibilities there. They had taken a long camel voyage through Asia and finally met up with the Chinese Emperor, Kublai Khan. Kublai Khan was impressed with the two brothers and kept them in his service for as long as possible because they had experience of the trade routes through Asia. He finally let them return home provided they agreed to bring back other Europeans and letters from the pope in Rome.

In the meantime, young Marco's mother had died and he was brought up by an aunt and uncle. Marco went to school and was trained in merchant lore: learning about foreign currency, appraising the value of goods and how to handle merchant cargo ships. Then suddenly Marco's father and uncle arrived back home. He was now 15 years old and eager for adventure.

So Niccolo and Maffeo Polo prepared a return trip to China and this time they took the young Marco. They took a ship to Acre and then travelled overland on camels to the Persian port of Hormuz. They found the ships unseaworthy, so they continued their journey by camel to the Yuan court of Kublai Khan. The Polos presented oil from Jerusalem and letters from the Pope as they had promised. Kublai Khan was impressed with the intelligence of the young Marco and made him a government official, along with his father and uncle. Marco soon learnt the Chinese language and

<sup>66</sup> Humanism = a way of thinking that uses human reasoning rather than religious belief

<sup>67</sup> Rhetoric = ways of public speaking to get your audience to think for themselves, or think differently

eventually knew 4 languages in all. He was sent by Kublai Khan on many visits around the large country of China.

After some years, the Polos requested Kublai Khan to allow them to go back home to Italy, but the emperor refused as they were very useful working for him. They became worried that when the old emperor died, his enemies might turn against them. Then an opportunity arose for them to leave. Kublai Khan's great nephew wanted to get married and when Kublai Khan had assisted in finding him a suitable bride, Marco and his father and uncle were allowed to accompany the wedding party on a fleet of 14 junks. They sailed to Singapore and delivered the bride safely. Then they travelled overland, visiting Pandyan, that Marco later described as the "richest empire in existence." They crossed the Arabian Sea to Hormuz, then home to Italy via the Black Sea. Only 18 of their crew of 600 survived the journey. Marco had been away for 24 years!

They found that Venice was now at war with the city of Genoa and Marco was soon captured. While in prison, he dictated his exciting travels to a fellow prisoner who wrote it down in a book. After they were released, his friend published the book, along with interesting information about China, India and Japan. It was called "The Travels of Marco Polo." Marco went back to his merchant family and his company soon became very rich. He married and had three daughters but he never left Venice again.

Before Marco Polo's journey to the east, the maps in Europe were very simple, showing Jerusalem as the centre of the world and Africa as a land that stopped below the Sahara Desert. When he returned, he brought new maps, including a world map from Cathay, another name for China. From then on everyone knew that the world was far bigger than previously imagined and this made people eager to find a route to the east by sea instead of the dangerous route overland.

### ***Vasco de Gama and the Route to India***

We now know that the first sailors to arrive on African shores were the Indonesians who settled in Madagascar, bringing with them the banana, which changed eating habits on the island. In the early 15<sup>th</sup> century a Chinese expedition landed on the east coast and traded with the kingdom of Zimbabwe, but they sailed away and never returned.

By the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Moslems controlled North Africa and most of western Asia, cutting off trade to Christian Europe, with which they were at war. Spices from India, which made their food sweeter, were no longer available. The Europeans also heard

of a Christian king, Prester<sup>68</sup> John – probably the Emperor of Ethiopia – who they hoped would help them in their struggle against the Moslems.

Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal sent his new ships south to discover what lay beyond the world that was known by them. Little by little, for 50 years, they discovered first the coast of Morocco, then Senegal and West Africa until finally they rounded the Cape of Good Hope at the end of the continent and sailed into the Indian Ocean.

Then the new king of Portugal sent the sailor, Vasco da Gama, to discover a new trade route to India. The expedition set sail from Lisbon on 8th July 1497 and passed along the coast of Africa via the Canary and the Cape Verde Islands. After reaching the coast of present day Sierra Leone, da Gama took a course<sup>69</sup> south into the open ocean, crossing the equator and seeking the South Atlantic westerlies<sup>70</sup> that had been discovered on an earlier voyage.

On November 4th, 1497, the expedition made landfall<sup>71</sup> at the Cape of Good Hope. For over three months the ships had sailed more than 6,000 miles of open ocean, by far the longest journey out of sight of land made by the time.

By December 16th, the fleet had passed the Eastern Cape of South Africa and sailed into waters previously unknown to Europeans. With Christmas pending, da Gama and his crew gave the coast they were passing the name *Natal*, which means the "birth of Christ" in Portuguese.

The Moslems controlled the land all along the East African coast and traded across the Indian Ocean. They understood *the monsoon* or wind patterns of the Indian Ocean. These winds blow from north-east to south-west from November to February, and then turn round and blow from south-west to north-east from April to September.

In the vicinity of modern Kenya, the expedition resorted to piracy, looting Arab merchant ships, generally unarmed trading vessels without heavy cannons. The Portuguese became the first known Europeans to visit the port of Mombasa but were met with hostility<sup>72</sup> and soon departed.

In February 1498, Vasco da Gama continued north, landing at the friendlier port of Malindi, whose leaders were then in conflict with those of Mombasa, and there the

<sup>68</sup> The word "Prester" comes from "priest-king"

<sup>69</sup> Course = direction

<sup>70</sup> Westerlies = the western winds

<sup>71</sup> Made landfall = went onto land

<sup>72</sup> Hostility = threats of fighting



expedition first saw Indian traders. Da Gama and his crew contracted the services of a pilot whose knowledge of the monsoon winds allowed him to sail across the ocean to India.

The fleet arrived in Calicut in South India on 20th May 1498. Da Gama was received with traditional hospitality, including a grand procession of at least 3,000 armed soldiers, but an interview with the king failed to produce any concrete<sup>73</sup> results. The presents that da Gama presented as gifts from the Portuguese king, four cloaks of scarlet cloth, six hats, four branches of corals, a box with seven brass vessels, a chest of sugar, two barrels of oil and a cask of honey were trivial, and failed to impress.

While the king wondered why there was no gold or silver, the Muslim merchants, who considered da Gama their rival, suggested that the latter was only an ordinary pirate and not a royal ambassador. Nevertheless, da Gama's expedition was successful beyond all reasonable expectation, for he brought cargo from India that was worth 60 times the cost of the expedition.

Vasco da Gama set sail for home on 29th August 1498. Eager to leave, he ignored the local knowledge of monsoon wind patterns which were still blowing onshore. Crossing the Indian Ocean from Africa to India, sailing with the monsoon wind, had taken da Gama's ships only 23 days.

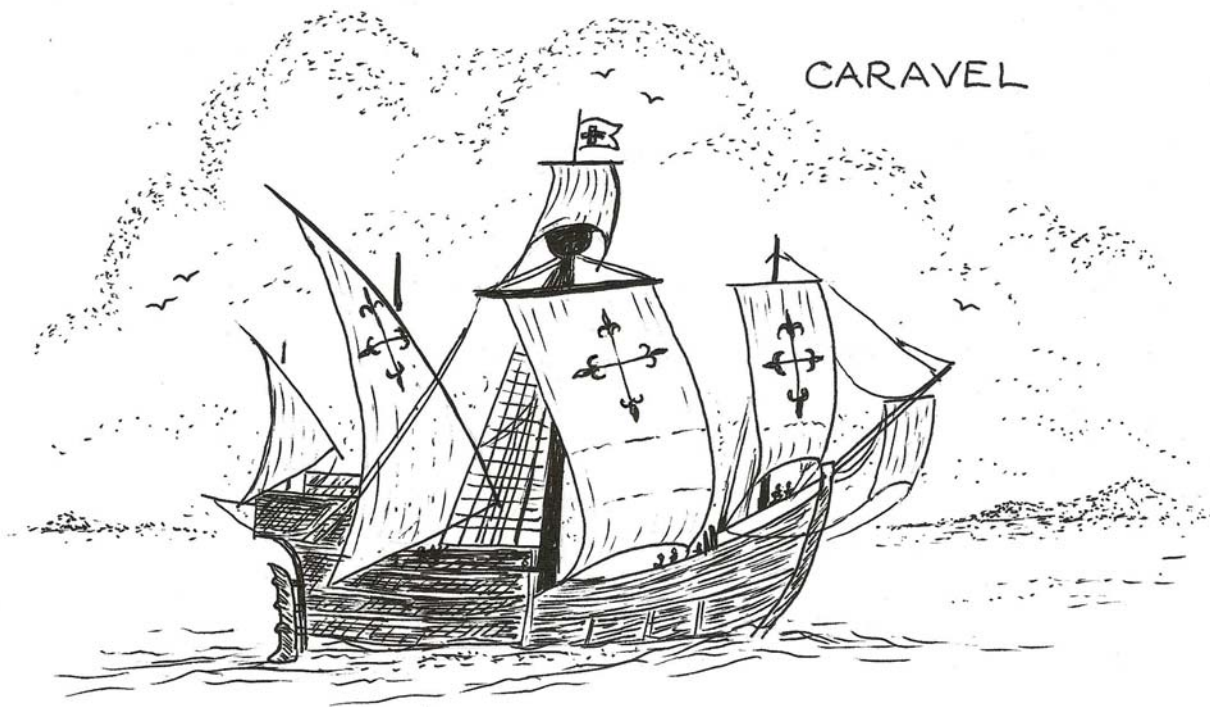
The return trip across the ocean, sailing against the wind, took 132 days, and he arrived in Malindi on 7th January 1499. During this return trip, approximately half of the crew died, and many of the rest were afflicted with scurvy.

Vasco da Gama returned to Portugal in September 1499 and was richly rewarded as the man who had brought to fruition a plan that had taken eighty years to fulfil. He was given the title *Admiral of the Indian Seas* and died in southern India in 1524. The spice trade would make Portugal rich and open a direct sea route to Asia.

The hostile forests, tribes, diseases and Moslems were enough to keep the Portuguese on the coast and to concentrate on the lucrative East Indian trade routes. They set up ports along the coast where their ship' crews could rest and stock up on food and water on their way to India. Catholic missionaries went to convert *the pagans*.

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<sup>73</sup> Concrete results = definite, clear results



## ***Christopher Columbus and the Route to the Americas***

In 1492 the Pope, at the Treaty of Tordesillas, split the world outside Europe between Portugal and Spain. He gave Portugal a monopoly over European exploitation in Africa and Asia, and Spain a monopoly in the Americas. Needless to say, he did not consult the other European powers, nor the peoples of Africa, Asia and the Americas!

Christopher Columbus was born in 1451 in Genoa, Italy. His father was a wool weaver. Columbus claims to have gone to the sea at the age of 10, and sailed all around Europe. He was not a scholarly man, yet he studied books and sea charts.

By the 1480s he had developed plans to reach the Indies by sailing from Europe west across the Atlantic, which shocked many as they considered the earth to be flat. He knew about the trade winds, which circulated round the Atlantic Ocean, and which would prove to be the key to his successful navigation, but it is unclear whether Columbus learned about the winds from his own sailing experience or if he had heard about them from others.

In 1485, Columbus presented his plans to the king of Portugal. He proposed the king equip him with three sturdy ships to search for a western route to India, but he was refused. At last, in 1492 he succeeded with his request with the Spanish king and queen.

On the evening of 3rd August 1492, Columbus departed from southern Spain with three ships; one larger one, named the *Santa Maria* and two smaller caravels, the

*Pinta* and the *Nina*. Local people were forced to be the crew for the expedition.

Columbus first sailed to the Canary Islands, where he restocked the provisions and made repairs. On 6 September he departed for what turned out to be a five-week voyage across the ocean. He sailed down the coast of Africa to Senegal where he picked up the north-east trade winds, which took the ships across the Atlantic Ocean.

A lookout on the *Pinta*, spotted land about 2 am on the morning of October 12th, and immediately alerted the rest of the crew with a shout. They landed and Columbus called the island, in what is now the Bahamas, *San Salvador*. The indigenous people he met were peaceful and friendly, bringing food and drink for the sailors.

He wrote in his journal, *"Many of the men I have seen have scars on their bodies, and when I made signs to them to find out how this happened, they indicated that people from other nearby islands come to San Salvador to capture them; they defend themselves the best they can. I believe that people from the mainland come here to take them as slaves. They ought to make good and skilled servants, for they repeat very quickly whatever we say to them. I think they can very easily be made Christians, for they seem to have no religion. If it pleases our Lord, I will take six of them to Your Highnesses when I depart, in order that they may learn our language. I could conquer the whole of them with 50 men, and govern them as I pleased."*

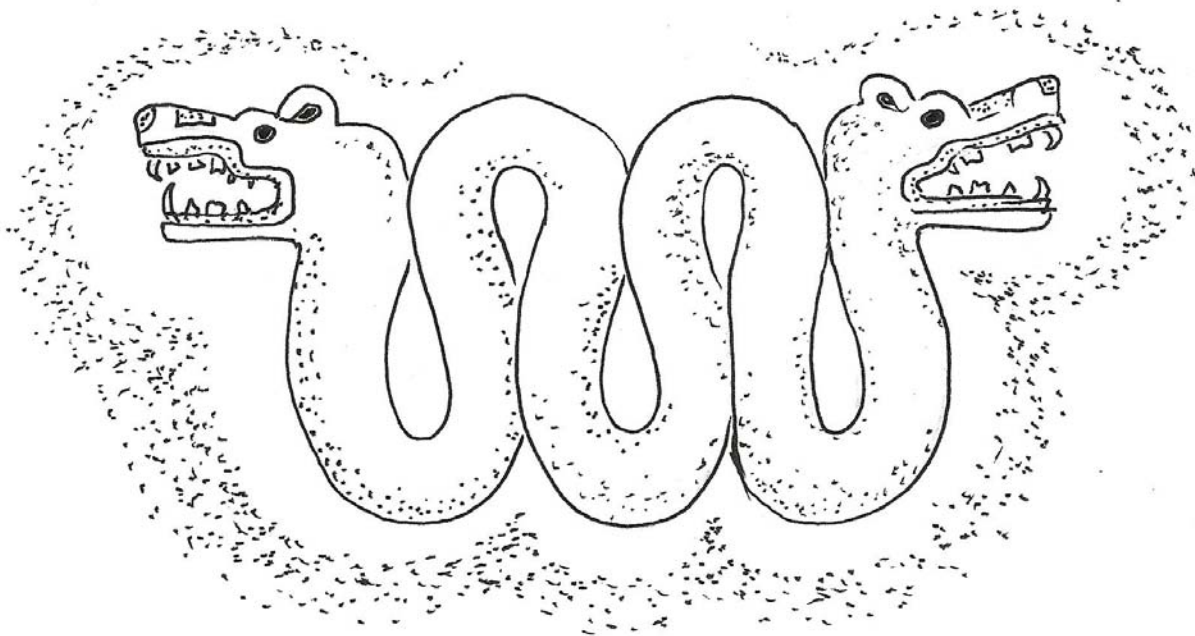
Columbus also explored the north east coast of Cuba and the northern coast of Hispaniola, both in the West Indies. Here, the *Santa Maria* ran aground on Christmas morning 1492 and had to be abandoned. Columbus left 39 men who founded the settlement in Haiti.

At the next landing he met some hostile natives and there was a short battle. Columbus kidnapped about 10 to 25 natives and took them back with him. Only seven or eight of the native *Indians* arrived in Spain alive, but they made quite an impression.

Columbus headed for Spain by following the westerly winds off the coast of North America and so completing a circle of the Atlantic Ocean, arriving back home on 15th March 1493. Word of his finding new lands rapidly spread throughout Europe.

The Spanish sent further expeditions to the West Indies searching for gold but at first did not find any. Like the Portuguese, they founded ports but they could not find a route into the Pacific Ocean and on to India and China.

## QUETZALCOATL (double-headed serpent)



### ***Cortes and the Conquest of Mexico***

Hernan Cortés was born in 1485 in Spain. His father was a soldier of good family but poor. Cortés was a pale, sickly child. At the age of 14, Cortés was sent to study at the university of Salamanca, Spain's great centre of learning. But after two years, Cortés, tired of schooling, returned home much to the irritation of his parents.

He was now restless yet proud. By this time, news of the exciting discoveries of Columbus in the New World was streaming back to Spain. He spent the next year wandering the country, probably spending most of his time in the heady atmosphere of Spain's southern ports, listening to the tales of those returning from the West Indies, who told of discovery and conquest, gold, Indians and strange unknown lands.

He finally left for Hispaniola in 1504 where he registered as a citizen, which entitled him to a building plot and land to farm. In 1506, Cortés took part in the conquest of Cuba, receiving a large estate of land and Indian slaves for his effort. Later he became the mayor of Cuba.

In February 1519 with 11 ships, 500 men, 13 horses and a small number of cannons, he landed in the Yucatan Peninsular in Mexico. In March, Cortés formally claimed the land for the Spanish crown.

(picture – Quetzalcoatl)

Mexico was controlled by the Aztecs, who lived in the central mountains. As they worshipped their gods by sacrificing captured soldiers from other tribes, many Mexicans were sympathetic to Cortes.

He won a battle against the Tabascan tribe, who then joined his army. He also received twenty young women who converted to Christianity. Among these women was La Malinche, his future mistress, who knew the Aztec language, and became a valuable interpreter and counsellor. Through her help, Cortés learned from the Tabascans about the wealthy Aztec Empire and its riches.

In the town of Veracruz, in order to eliminate any ideas of retreat, he scuttled<sup>74</sup> his ships. There he also met some ambassadors from Moctezuma, the Aztec emperor, who had heard of the Spaniards and was curious to find out more. Cortes asked them to arrange a meeting with Moctezuma, but Aztec emperor repeatedly turned down the idea. But Cortés was determined.

Leaving a hundred men in Veracruz, Cortés marched on Tenochtitlan, the Aztec's capital city, which was situated on an island in the middle of a lake. The capital city could only be reached by crossing a causeway. He marched with 600 men, 15 horsemen, 15 cannons, and hundreds of Tabascan carriers and warriors, always uphill and through heavy rain. In October 1519, Cortés and his men, arrived in Cholula, the second largest city in central Mexico.

There, Cortés, either in a pre-meditated effort to instil fear into the Aztecs waiting for him at Tenochtitlan or wishing to make an example when he feared treachery, massacred thousands of unarmed members of the nobility gathered at the central square. Then he partially burned the city.

Moctezuma deliberately let Cortés enter the heart of the Aztec Empire, hoping to get to know their weaknesses better and to crush them later. He gave lavish gifts to the Spaniards which enticed them to plunder vast amounts of gold.

At first the Aztecs believed Cortes to be Quetzalcoatl, their serpent god, who had a white skin and had been prophesied to return in 1519. Then Cortés learned that the Spaniards on the coast had been attacked, and so he decided to take Moctezuma hostage in his own palace, requesting him to swear allegiance to the Spanish king.

Now one of Cortés's lieutenants committed a massacre in the main temple, triggering a local rebellion. Cortés proposed an armistice, but Moctezuma, who agreed to the armistice, was stoned to death by his own people and Cortés decided to flee for his

<sup>74</sup> Scuttle = to sink a ship on purpose



life.

During the *Noche Triste*, or sad night, the Spaniards managed to escape from Tenochtitlan across the causeway over the surrounding lake, though their rearguard was massacred. Much of the treasure looted by Cortés was lost, as well as his artillery.

They wandered for days through the mountains. At last they saw in the plain below them a vast Aztec army. The soldiers asked Cortes what they should do. He led them in an immediate attack. Though heavily outnumbered, he led them in a wedge to attack the Aztec leader, a chief with a jaguar headdress. Once he fell, the rest of the Aztecs fled.

Cortés then laid siege to the island city of Tenochtitlan, cutting off all supplies. The Spaniards captured the new emperor and took the city, renaming it Mexico and claiming it for Spain. They destroyed the main temple and built a cathedral over the site. Cortes became the new governor.

## ***Slavery***

When the Portuguese began to trade seriously in Africa, their major wish was for gold from the Ashanti kingdom of Ghana. To pay for this, they bought slaves up from the Congo; and to pay for the slaves, they brought metal goods, cloth and guns from Portugal. So began a 350-year cycle of slavery which changed Africa and the Americas for ever.

Slavery had been in Africa for a long time, but it was fundamentally different from the European slavery practised later. African slaves were not sold to their masters for goods or money, but worked for them because of kinship or defeat in war. After some time they or their children were assimilated into the master's tribe. Once a slave you were not necessarily a slave forever.

The Arabs, arriving on the east coast in the 7th century, bought slaves from the local rulers and took them back to Arabia, the lands bordering the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. They worked for their masters but, after some time, and particularly if they converted to Islam, they were granted their freedom.

When the Portuguese first arrived back in Europe with these new slaves, they were seen as curiosities rather than people, reinforcing a view of Africans as *lesser* human beings, on a par with animals. A hundred years later, the Portuguese and the Spanish started a plantation system in South America to grow sugar, while the English and French challenged their supremacy on the high seas and conquered territory from them in the West Indies and North America.



The thirst for sugar, along with new tastes for tea and coffee, was insatiable<sup>75</sup> in Europe. European ships began putting in at African ports along the Atlantic Coast and buying slaves from local chiefs and merchants. At first the slaves were themselves locals, who were slaves within their own societies, but as the trade grew, slaves were brought from farther and farther away, being either kidnapped, sold, captured in war or guilty of crime or in debt.

The African merchants or chiefs had a huge advantage as they had the guns. They marched the slaves, shackled or yoked together and watched over by armed guards, down to the sea. There the slaves were sold to brokers or direct to European traders. They were imprisoned in forts or old ships for weeks on end, where they were examined naked by the ship's surgeon, who separated the strong ones from the weak.

The acceptable slaves were branded on the breast with a red-hot iron and taken on board ship. They were chained close together below deck, hand to hand and foot to foot, as the sailors feared a revolt. They were made to lie there among their own waste often for months during the *middle passage*, the journey from Africa to the Americas.

The slaves had no idea where they were going, and many believed the white men were cannibals, who would eat them on the way. They had to endure storms and wild seas, and many died on the way. Their bodies were thrown overboard.

Once in the new world they were taken to a slave market, examined naked in front of the buyers and sold off to work in the fields of the sugar plantations or in the big houses of the planters. They were thrown together with people of all tribes, with no idea of the language or the culture and, in many cases, worked to death. In the southern states of North America they worked 365 days a year – they didn't even get Christmas off - while in Brazil it was often cheaper to buy a new slave than to feed the existing slaves properly.

The traders made vast sums of money. At each stage of the journey they made big profits and finally, when they arrived back in Europe, they were paid in cash for the sugar they brought. With this money they bought large estates and built big houses. Much of the wealth of Europe and the Americas is founded on black African labour.

It is reckoned now that about 11 million slaves were taken from Africa to the Americas between 1500 and 1850, of whom one million died at sea in the middle passage. But

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<sup>75</sup> Insatiable = could never be satisfied, there was so much demand

it is also reckoned that, in this time, at least 20 million people were captured and endured some sort of slavery, many either dying on the forced marches to the sea or remaining in Africa if rejected by the slavers.

The effect on Africa was catastrophic. The continent had, up until recently at that time, always been sparsely inhabited. Now much of the labour force was exported and many of the old kinship ties were destroyed. The local chiefs, addicted to guns, metal trinkets<sup>76</sup> and European cloth, indulged in any sort of war or trickery to get more slaves, and so more goods from the slave traders.

The effects of the trade were felt as far afield as the Sahel, over 2000 kilometres from the Atlantic ports. Guns were rife in large parts of West Africa, the Congo and Angola, and the resulting lawlessness made stable government almost impossible. People saw other people as commodities rather than human beings.

But it is in the individual anguish of each and every slave where the trade was at its most barbaric; families torn apart, women treated without respect, inhuman conditions on the boats where some slaves were thrown overboard alive, back-breaking endless work on the plantations and everywhere fear, fear and more fear.

Strangely enough two new foods, imported into Africa from the Americas to feed the slaves, changed the Africans' diet; maize, mixed with water into *mealie maize*, or *ugali*, and cassava. Cassava grew well on poor soils and in drought, so much new land was now brought into cultivation, while maize was much richer in carbohydrate than either millet or yams.

## ***The Abolition<sup>77</sup> of Slavery***

Towards the end of the 18th century a number of religious and moral Europeans began to speak out against slavery and to call for its abolition.

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<sup>76</sup> Trinkets = small pieces of jewelry or ornaments, made of metal, not valuable

<sup>77</sup> Abolition = official ending of slavery



## AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER ?

Two images, later mass-produced, reinforced the message of the campaign. The first was a small medallion, which showed a black man on his knees and in chains, raising his hands and eyes in prayer. “*Am I not a Man and a Brother?*” the caption asks.

The second was a poster, which reproduced the drawings of the slave ship, *Brookes*, and showed how 450 slaves were jammed head to toe, elbow to elbow on the ship for months on end. In fact the ship often carried more than 600 slaves!

Then in 1791 the slaves rebelled on the French island of Haiti in the West Indies. The last European forces were evacuated seven years later and the independent black government of Haiti was established. The tide was now flowing in favour of abolition.

In the first half of the 19th century, freed slaves were returned to Sierra Leone and Liberia from England and the United States. Although now free there were many problems between the returned slaves and the indigenous African people.

The slave trade was abolished by England in 1807 and France, the United States, Portugal and Brazil followed within the next 25 years. But slavery itself still continued, so the English stationed warships off the coast of Africa to intercept any slave ships.

So now the trade shifted its emphasis to East Africa. The Moslems set up plantations in Zanzibar and the Swahili coast to grow cloves and other spices. Moslem-led expeditions marched inland to seize slaves and march them down to the coast to work in the spice fields.

The Europeans had never ventured far inland in Africa. Malaria and sleeping sickness wiped out those who dared. However, in the middle of the 19th century missionaries and adventurers, such as Livingstone and Speke, began to explore Central and East Africa. And everywhere they saw evidence of the slave trade; land depopulated, customs destroyed and cruelty.

They wrote letters to England and soon became moral heroes. The children of fathers who were themselves slave traders now spoke out against the trade. The United States went to war with itself over the issue of black slavery in the American Civil War. Finally in 1897 slavery was abolished in Zanzibar and the Swahili coast.

## *The Scramble for Africa*

The explorations into the middle of Africa in the nineteenth century caught the imagination of the European public, now entertained with newspapers, magazines and early photographs. They could see the wonders of the wildlife and tribal customs, but also the horrors of the slave trade. Public opinion in the democratic countries demanded that their governments do something about it.

Through the explorers and missionaries, such as Speke and Livingstone, this led to the creation of schools and missionary centres to spread writing and education throughout Africa.

Although this public no longer thought Africans should be treated as slaves, they nonetheless had a very paternalistic<sup>78</sup> attitude towards them. They thought that black people were less intelligent, had fewer morals and were unable to rule themselves properly.

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<sup>78</sup> Paternalistic = to assume others are not able to think for themselves

The governments wondered, now that slavery was abolished, whether there was any money to be made out of Africa. The new industries of the industrialising western world needed oil and rubber, both found in Equatorial Africa from the oil palm and the rubber tree.

The king of Belgium was the first to make his move, seizing the Belgian Congo by military force in the rain forest. England, with factories on the coast of West Africa, occupied land behind these ports and claimed them as their colonies. The use of quinine, from a tree in South America, to treat malaria suddenly made large parts of Africa accessible to the new colonists.

The French, fearful that England would take over all of West Africa, sent in their army, the Foreign Legion, to occupy large parts of the western Sahara. The Germans, fearful of falling behind the others, organised a conference in 1884 in their capital, Berlin, to which they invited all of the European powers.

There, sitting in front of maps of a continent they had never visited, the politicians proceeded to cut Africa up, just like you do a cake, and allocate the pieces to the different countries. Tribes were cut in half and ended up in neighbouring countries. Other tribes, traditional enemies for generations, ended up in the same country.

The Africans were not asked their opinions, only notified that they were now subjects of a particular European power and living in a colony with new boundaries. If they revolted against this state of affairs, as did the Nandi in Kenya, or the Maji-Maji rebellion in Tanzania, they were ruthlessly cut down. Pangas were little use against rifles or a machine gun.

Only two peoples experienced things differently. When the Italians, who had been given Ethiopia, invaded that country in 1896, they were beaten at the battle of Adowa and forced to retreat to the Red Sea. The Ethiopians, under their emperor and with a centralised kingdom and modern guns which they had bought from other Europeans, shocked the world, being the first Africans to defeat a white army.

The Dutch, or Afrikaners as they came to be called, were the first Europeans to settle at the southern end of Africa at the Cape of Good Hope, so they could restock the many ships passing by on their way to trade with India and the East. The climate there was much cooler, so malaria and other disease were not a problem, as they were elsewhere on the continent.

The colony grew bit by bit, overcoming the San who lived nearby. The English took over the colony at the beginning of the 19th century and, although the two people did not trust each other, they worked together as they were both whites. They expanded



their land at the expense of the Bantu tribes, such as the Xhosa and the Sotho. But then they came up against the warlike Zulus.

## *Shaka, the Great King of the Zulus*



SHAKA ZULU

In the 1780's a boy was born to the king of the tiny Zulu clan in the village, or *kraal*, of Bulawayo. The Zulu people were cattle herders, whose animals gave them meat, milk and dowries when they got married. As he grew bigger the boy, called Shaka, had the responsibility to look after the cattle, sheep and goats.

One day a wild dog came and killed a sheep, and the boy's father was very angry and scolded him. His mother defended him and answered back to her husband. The father then became so angry that he sent her and the boy back to her own clan. The mother's father had to return her dowry and both Shaka and his mother were humiliated. The other boys laughed and played

jokes on him.

That winter no rain fell. The sky was dry with dust. No corn grew in the fields. The clan decided they could not afford to feed two extra people so they sent Shaka and his mother away. Another clan took them in and were kind to them. Shaka was determined now to be strong and brave. He worked hard, day after day, learning how to throw a spear well.

At the circumcision ceremony, where he became a man, he was chosen as the leader of his group. Soon after, he looked up into a tree and saw a leopard peering down at him. The leopard leapt down on him but Shaka killed it with his spear. Now he became a hero.

Shaka's Zulu clan was part of a large empire under the chief, Dingiswayo, also known as the Great One. He needed an army of strong young men to expand his kingdom, so Shaka was taken into the army and given an ox-hide shield and a handful of



spears.

When the young men fought, they ran towards each other, making so much noise they couldn't hear anything, and then threw their spears. Shaka thought this was not the best way to fight. He got the blacksmith to make him a shorter, stabbing spear. Then he thought that his sandals got in his way when he was fighting, so he practised going barefoot until he could withstand stones and thorns.

When war broke out, he developed a way of hooking his shield into that of his opponent on the left side, leaving the other exposed on the right. Then Shaka could easily kill him. He killed many enemy warriors and was hailed as a great Zulu hero, being awarded many cattle as a gift.

He taught his men to be disciplined warriors, who fought as one man. He taught them to be quiet so they could hear his orders, instead of shouting and creating confusion. These changes in tactics made his army strong.

The Great One recognised Shaka's military genius and, when his father died, he made him the new chief of the Zulus. But he found the Zulus were a weak clan, with an unimpressive royal kraal, a few huts and some broken-down fences. He set about to change it so it would reflect the glory of the chief of the Zulus.

He started by bringing in good cooks from other clans to teach the Zulu cooks to prepare food the way he liked it. He reorganized the army, dividing it into four regiments, or *impis*, each with its own matching ox-hide shields and iron spears. He built a separate kraal for each regiment. No soldier could marry without his permission and, if he were especially brave, he was awarded the right to take a wife.

He allowed other people to join from outside the Zulu clan, but made Zulu the one language for all the soldiers, which brought unity. He used spies and surprise attacks on the enemies to build up their strength. They could walk further in a day than all the other armies. And they did it barefoot!

At first the soldiers did not want to go barefoot. So Shaka had a field covered with thorns and showed his men how to stamp on them without feeling pain. Some did it but some did not want to, and only made a weak attempt. Shaka had them killed. When he asked the others to do it again, they stamped again and again, as if they were dancing for their lives.

Shaka had created an army whose main purpose was to remain loyal to their chief, and to fight hard in his service. He conquered many other clans. He brought women into the army. His fame spread across the land.

When news came that the Great One had been murdered, he opposed the murderer. The two armies met and Shaka's was greatly outnumbered. He stationed his men around a hill. Food, water and medical supplies were stored in a hollow at the top of the hill. A regiment of men was hiding in the hollow as well.

He sent a few men to drive away his own cattle. A third of his enemy's soldiers went off to retrieve the cattle and claim them as their own. The rest attacked Shaka's army on the hill. The Zulu army sat motionless.

Then Shaka signalled and the army, as one man, stamped with their right feet and beat their shields with their spears. Then they charged and drove their enemies back down the hill. But, after a while, their enemies reformed and made their way back up the hill. When they neared the top, suddenly Shaka's soldiers, who had been hiding in the hollow, surrounded them seemingly out of nowhere.

The empire was now securely in Shaka's hands and he built up the Zulu nation. He ruled his people wisely and with discipline and greatly expanded his empire.

Then, in 1824, white men came from South Africa to trade in guns. They had hoped to set up a colony in the land, but had heard that the Zulus were strong fighters. One of the Englishmen, Henry Finn, went to the beach nearby, made a fire on the beach and boiled some coffee.

Suddenly he looked up and saw a column of impi soldiers coming towards him. He could not run away so he just waited. Shaka's army were surprised he was there. They had never seen a white man before. They tried to speak with him, but neither could understand the other's language. Finn said the word "*Shaka*", and the next day he was taken with his men to the Shaka's kraal.

Both gave gifts. The Zulus danced with great energy and power. Then the Englishmen galloped round the kraal and shot their guns into the air. Shaka's measure of wealth, the royal snow-white cattle, all 5,654 of them, were driven before the foreigners.

Then one of the Zulus misbehaved and Shaka had him killed on the spot. The Englishmen were shocked and tried to explain English law to the emperor. Shaka thought that their punishment of jail was far harsher than being killed on the spot.

Suddenly some spies from the clan he had defeated to gain the throne, emerged from the crowd and stabbed Shaka. Finn cleaned and bandaged the wound, but the wound was deep. Shaka lay close to death for four days but finally recovered.

Shaka was deeply grateful for Finn's help and, when Finn asked him to sign a paper

giving the English a large part of Zululand, he signed it. Although Shaka considered the English to be friends, this was not a true friendship and, years later, the English went to war with the Zulu nation.

But he now found his army too large to control. As he stayed at home and planned strategies, his warriors began to doubt his powers and transfer their loyalties to his officers. When his beloved mother died, he was beside himself with grief. He made all Zulus mourn for his mother, forbidding them to plant or cultivate their crops.

At last a brave man came forward and told Shaka that death was a natural part of life and he, like any other man, had to accept it. Shaka was shocked out of his depression by the man's words and acknowledged he was right.

But he still felt alone, and became obsessed with thoughts of death. He now drove his soldiers on relentlessly, not letting them rest between battles. They became angry and lost confidence in him completely.

Shaka was killed by his half-brothers and some of his soldiers. They buried him in an unmarked grave and covered over the place so no one would know where he was buried.

A few years later the English defeated the Zulus, the last of the free tribes of southern Africa, after a number of fierce battles and, by the turn of the century, by 1900, all Africans, apart from the Ethiopians, were living in a colony ruled directly or indirectly by Europeans. In 400 years the white-skinned intruders with their seaworthy boats and their guns, had taken over the land of the indigenous people and were ruling the people of Africa.

### ***Moshweshwe the Binder***

It was a terrible famine in the year of 1787 when a baby boy was born to the third wife of Mokhachane, the king of the Bamokoteli, a Sothu-speaking nation near the mountains in what the British called the Orange Free State. They were a weak tribe, who paid tribute to their tyrannical neighbours. Mokhachane called the baby Lepoqo, meaning disaster. When Lepoqo was old enough, his father took him to the famous seer, Mohlomi, to learn about law and wisdom to govern his people at a later stage. Mohlomi taught the boy that a wise ruler must show qualities of self-discipline, virtue and hard work as an example for his people, guiding them to peace with their neighbours at all costs and only fighting when there was no other alternative. Lepoqo followed these ideals all his life.

When Makara, a cattle-thieving chief sought safety with Mokhachane, the tribal

assembly wanted to have him executed. But Lepoqo spoke in his defense and his life was spared. Knowing that the anger of the tribe might turn against him, Lepoqo organised a cattle raid and captured 100's of cattle, which was quite a normal custom among these tribes. Lepoqo took on a new name, Moshweshwe, meaning 'the shaver' because he had 'shaved the beard' of the other chief by taking his cattle.

He went on another raid and captured more cattle. He also massacred the tribe that had suppressed them for so long. The Bamokoteli were jubilant! His father was now concerned that Moshweshwe was challenging his own popularity, but the young man stepped down and said that he had no such intention and wanted to make his own kraal against the nearby Butha-Buthe hills.

In 1921, Shaka, living on the other side of the mountains, decided to unite the Zulu tribes by conquering them. Many tribes were destroyed and the remnants fled into the caves of the Drakensberg mountains where they turned cannibal to avoid starvation. Moshweshwe took grain and water into the nearby caves, but when he lost a battle to Queen Mantatisi, he realised that he could not protect his people there. He immediately decided to move his people up into the Qilwane mountains beyond his kraal.. On the march, his grandfather Peete, his sister, Mamila, two of his wives and several babies were captured by the cannibals. Moshweshwe sent scouts who rescued two of the women but they reported that the others had been eaten, Moshweshwe continued climbing to the top of the mountain which he now called Thaba Bosiu (mountain rising out of darkness).

Then Moshweshwe sent messengers to Shaka offering to pay tribute and to make a truce. Now he knew the Zulus would not attack them. He also sent an army to round up the cannibals and they returned, bringing their chief, Rakotswane and some of his people. Moshweshwe spoke to them, saying that he understood that they had become cannibals because of starvation. He asked them to be purified by his medicine men. Then he sent them away with cattle and grain and asked them to lead a normal life from then on. The cannibals were amazed at such understanding and mercy and some of them wanted to stay with Moshweshwe.

Refugees flocked to join the tribe of Moshweshwe, until he had 5000 men in his army. He became known as "The Binder" for he bound many different peoples into the Basutho nation.

In later years, Moshweshwe's diplomacy was needed to conciliate the situation between his people and both the Boers and the British. When he was attacked by British forces, he asked for his people to become British subjects. So Lesotho became a British Protectorate.

Moshweshwe died in 1868, being baptised a Christian on his deathbed. He became famous for his peaceful negotiations, a diplomatic genius of his time.

## ***Grade 7 History Main Lesson Blocks***

There are usually two main lesson blocks allocated for Grade 7. The length of each main lesson block is usually 3 to 4 weeks. A suggested order of teaching could be as follows:

### **1st Main Lesson**

#### 1st week

Arab voyages to east Africa

The monsoon winds of the Indian Ocean

Chinese voyages to Africa in the 15th century.

#### 2nd week:

The Renaissance in Europe

Vasco da Gama's voyage to India and East Africa.

#### 3rd week:

Christopher Columbus' voyage to the Americas

Cortes' conquest of Mexico.

The teacher does not need to rush through the material. You can look at the effect these voyages made on the indigenous peoples and how it began to change their lives.

### **2nd Main Lesson**

#### 1st week:

The beginnings of slavery in Africa

The psychological and economic effects on the African population.

The height of the slave trade in the 18th century

The abolition of slavery.

#### 2nd week:

The Scramble for Africa

#### 3rd week:

Shaka and the Zulus.

You can add the experience of any local people of your area to their first direct contact with the Europeans. You can also tell the stories of other European explorers in Africa.

## ***Creative Ideas for teaching History in Class 7***

### ***Writing in the Main Lesson book***

In Grade 7 the teacher begins to teach the children to make up their own notes. He or she can at first write up the most important events of the lesson or story on the blackboard in point form, assisted by the students. These the students copy down. From this they can make up their own notes.

They should also be trained to create a brief summary using points. The teacher is introducing them to taking notes, which is a very important skill they will need in secondary school, where they may be able to write their own notes as you speak.

### ***Painting in Grade 7***

- Marco Polo coming to the court of Kublai Khan
- A Caravel sailing across the ocean
- Magellan sailing through the storms at the tip of South America
- A slave in chains

Many of the pictures from these stories are more suited as drawings in the main lesson book than painted, so just choose one or two of the best.

Similarly, Renaissance Art is difficult to draw, so choose an easy one like a sculpture or Leonardo's man in a circle.

### ***Discussions in Grade 7 History***

Grade 7 is full of themes asking to be discussed by these students eager to flex their thinking muscles. It is important that the teacher prepares questions that will stretch them morally as well as intellectually.

- What was the effect of seeing the world in perspective?
- Discuss Galileo's persecution by the Church on the theory that the world is not the centre of the universe.
- Why did the sailors on Columbus' ships mutiny? How did Columbus handle his sailors?
- How did Magellan's expedition change the ideas about the world?
- Issues about slavery Do we have any other forms of slavery today?
- Discuss the different characters of Shaka and Moshweshwe. What do you feel about their ways of ruling?



## ***Chapter 8: History in Grade 8***

### ***The Age of Revolution***

In many countries, the Grade 8 year represents a completion of primary school education. At 14 years the students are well into adolescence with great physical and psychological changes. Growth in height and sexual development are clearly established.

*The world of ideas begins to take on meaning for the young adolescent and the critical faculties of the 14 year-old are sharper. The accepted framework – rules for example – are questioned. Emotional turbulence<sup>79</sup> presents a challenge to both teachers and parents; to recognise that this state of crisis is part of a development.*

*The students should be led to bring together all that they have learnt into a meaningful world picture in which striving ethical human beings are at the centre.*

*(from The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Curriculum by M Rawson and T Richter)*

At this age it is as if a whole new human being is being born. The young adolescent is buffeted by the storms of emotional, sexual and physical change. New feelings arise, which he or she has never felt before. He knows he needs to find new paths to survive and enhance his life, but often he has no idea what these should be. He knows what he doesn't want, but not necessarily what he does want.

This turbulence is often full of anger and expresses itself in a number of ways. Boys may turn inwards into moody silences, while girls may become extremely sociable and giggly. Parents and teachers are challenged because their children's behaviour is no longer rational and they can be very rude. The adults feel rejected by their own children.

But we need to remember that this is a stage in their lives. Adolescence is the age where you begin to find out who you are, what you believe in and what goals you may have in life. To do this you have to push away the world around you, to push away the people who have shaped your life so far.

In Africa it was often around this age that young people were initiated into the tribe

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<sup>79</sup> Turbulence = uncontrolled, chaotic or violent behaviour

and were circumcised. They went into the experience as children and emerged from it as adults. Now they were ready to get married, have children and take their place responsibly in society.

In Waldorf/Steiner schools the students have had teachers who have been the *authority* in their school life. They have guided them through the curriculum and their growing up. The students have taken on board their ideas and ways of doing things.

But in the Secondary School this would be unhealthy. They need different adult influences which they can judge, accept or reject so that they can find their own way and become their own adult. An unconscious demand for this begins now.

The 14 year-old finds himself in a revolutionary situation. Little in his inner world is stable any more. His inner life can be in chaos, and he projects this chaos into the outside world.

So the history curriculum meets him with the history of the great revolutions, and brings him up-to-date with modern history. The emphasis is on the experience of the individual in a rapidly changing world. The ideologies<sup>80</sup> that motivated the revolutions are usually left until Class 9.

## ***Which Revolutions?***

The word *revolution* means a revolt, a transformation or a rotation<sup>81</sup>. Such events have occurred throughout human history. But if we take the last 400 years, then I think we are left with these defining revolutions.

- ❖ The English revolution – 1640 to 1649 – when the growing parliament ejected the king, went to war with him and finally executed him. The king was no longer ruling by divine right under God, as in the model of the Egyptian Pharaoh.
- ❖ The Industrial Revolution – 1720 to 1900 – is a period where major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology had a profound effect on the social, economic and cultural conditions of the times. It began in England and then spread throughout Europe, North America, and eventually the whole world. The Industrial Revolution marks a major turning

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<sup>80</sup> Ideologies = systems of ideas that influence societies, leading to revolutions, changes or developments, especially in politics

<sup>81</sup> Rotation = the turn of a wheel, for example

point in human history; almost every aspect of daily life was influenced in some way.

- ❖ The American Revolution – 1776 to 1783 – when the Americans were the first people to throw off colonial rule.
- ❖ The French Revolution – 1789 to 1799 – when the people demanded Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood from the king. When he dithered in granting them these rights, they executed him and founded a new republic ruled by elected representatives.
- ❖ The Haitian Revolution – 1791 to 1804 – when the Haitians were the first black people to throw off colonial rule.
- ❖ The Russian Revolution – 1917 to 1925 – where the Bolsheviks seized power, executed the *tsar*, or emperor, and founded the first *socialist* republic of workers.
- ❖ The Chinese Revolution – 1946 to 1950 – when a non-European people threw out the dominant military and financial powers and founded a new socialist republic of workers and peasants.
- ❖ The anti-colonial struggles for independence – 1947 to 1994 – where the peoples being ruled by European powers firstly threw them out, either peacefully or not, and then set up governments of various types to rule themselves.

This is my list and you may agree or disagree. It does not matter, for the teacher must be the one to decide which are the relevant revolutions for his class in his country. For the purpose of this manual for East African students, I am going to look at the industrial, French and anti-colonial revolutions in Africa.

The curriculum becomes so large in Grade 8, and the 14 year-old students demand such a lot of intellectual content now in their lessons, that the teacher has to be very selective. If he or she is teaching for an exam, then the syllabus is given. But if he is teaching to the inner needs of the developing student, then he is the one who must choose in such a way that the students gain what they need and the teachers himself finds the time and energy to prepare the lessons and deliver them.

New ways of teaching can be introduced where more responsibility is placed upon the students' shoulders; for example, debates and biographies.

## *A Debate*

The teacher introduces the topic on the first day. Two teams are chosen with a leader, or presenter, and a seconder in each. A question, or motion, is then presented to the teams; for instance: *Do you think Jomo Kenyatta was right to allow the Whites to keep their land in Kenya after independence, or should he have evicted them like Mugabe did in Zimbabwe?*

The question should carry a certain *feeling* within it so the students can feel one way or the other about it. He then appoints one of the leaders to prepare a short speech to introduce the motion, for or against it. The seconders must prepare a short speech backing up their leader.

The teacher has given the background information. You make sure through questions that the students understand the topic, and you give them homework to read their notes and think about the topic.

The next day the first leader introduces the debate on the motion. The other leader responds, arguing for the opposite point of view. The two seconders then speak, one for the motion, the other against. Then anyone can speak from the floor to argue their position. The teacher, or someone he nominates, or someone the students elect, can be the Speaker and keep order. At the end a vote can be taken for or against the motion.

By setting up a sort of parliament, which many African states did after independence, the teacher is letting the students express themselves in a coherent way, however extreme their views. They are experiencing what it is like to be an M.P. or a board chairman.

The teacher must help the process along and choose a topic that is relevant and interesting to the students. He must prepare the information well and encourage the more reticent to speak, and curb the loud-mouths, who always want to dominate proceedings.

## ***Biographies***

The story element in Grade 7 and 8 is taken up in the biography, the story of a real person's life. It fills the history lesson with both imagination and reality. It also shows what is going on through real people, and is a very efficient way to deal with the vastness of history.

The teacher should choose someone, who illustrates the times and also who you feel strongly about, one way or the other. Find a book, or go to the internet, to help with your research. As in all longer stories, you can tell it over two or three days, with a recall every day. Encourage the students to ask questions and have discussions.

As with stories in the younger classes, you should prepare your biography well, both with the content and the imaginative way of telling it. You should use a clear vocabulary and feel for the mood of the person's life. Marriage in someone's life is very different from exile.

You can choose a famous person's biography, or someone unknown, somebody you know or not, even a relative. Young people identify emotionally for or against people. You are educating their feelings and inspiring their courage and sense of endurance.

Through other's lives they can learn to consider, in a living way, the moral dilemmas and debates of our times. They can see how human beings live complete lives over many years from birth to death, and these may surprise the world by their destiny and their outcome.

## ***The Industrial Revolution***

When electricity is introduced into an African community, or a new paved road arrives, life changes dramatically. Whether it's taking a *matatu*<sup>82</sup> to see a friend or buying a pair of mass-produced trousers from the market, what we take for granted today would have been a miracle to our ancestors of 250 years ago.

For them, as it still is for a number of Africans, they went to bed at sunset and got up at sunrise. If you wanted to go to Nairobi, you walked, even if it was 400 kilometres away, as it was for President Obama's grandfather when he walked there from Nyanza over 100 years ago. No revolution has altered our way of life more than the industrial revolution. So how did it come about?

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<sup>82</sup> Mini-bus transport in Kenya

We have seen in chapter 7 how the Renaissance in Europe in the 16th century led to the beginnings of a scientific way of thinking. This process of developing farther, can be seen from earliest times: A San tribesman develops his technology to make better spears, for instance to kill game more effectively, through the development of his thinking. The Bantu smelted iron to make better and better djembes<sup>83</sup> to turn over the earth. They selected better plants and seeds, and evolved forms of agriculture, which worked well in an African environment. Again, we see new steps in the way the Bantu thought about life.

By the end of the 17th century the English scientist, Isaac Newton, looked into the physical world and tried to find out how it worked. In a way he, and many who thought in the same way, wished to take over from God, to understand how phenomena<sup>84</sup> in the universe happened.

This introduced a new investigative<sup>85</sup> scientific method. Phenomena were observed and measured, data was collected, and from them concepts were thought out. Scientific laws were then drawn up and new inventions in technology were developed from these conclusions by a number of remarkable inventors almost all born in England:

**Metallurgy** - The major change in the metal industries during the era of the Industrial Revolution was the replacement of organic fuels based on wood with fossil fuels based on coal. Coke, which is coal burnt without air, was finally applied to all stages of iron smelting, replacing charcoal. This had been achieved much earlier for lead and copper, and now started producing 'pig iron' (rough iron) in a blast furnace (a large industrial oven).

Coke pig iron was not used to produce bar iron in forges until the mid 1750s by which time coke iron was cheaper than charcoal iron. An improvement was made in the production of steel, which was an expensive commodity<sup>86</sup> and used only where iron would not do, such as for the cutting edge of tools and for springs. The supply of cheaper iron and steel aided the development of boilers and steam engines, and eventually railways.

Improvements in machine tools allowed for better working of iron and steel and further boosted the industrial growth of Britain.

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<sup>83</sup> Djembes = mattock

<sup>84</sup> Phenomena = the way things of the world appear to us

<sup>85</sup> Investigative = using experiments and scientific thinking to find out how something works

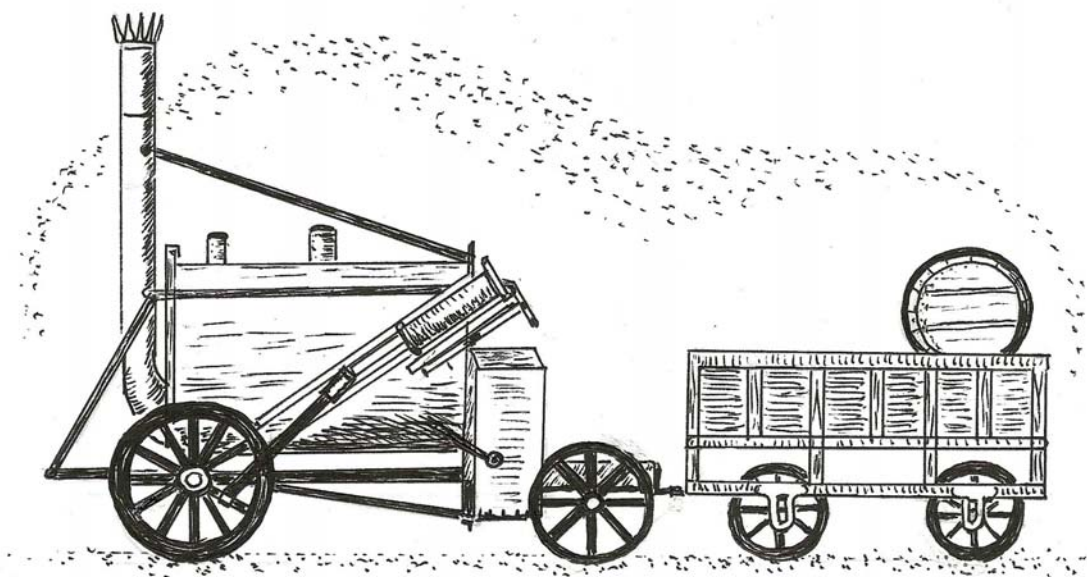
<sup>86</sup> Commodity = items that people buy because they need them



**Mining** - Coal mining in England had been in place for a number of years. But before the steam engine, pits were often shallow<sup>87</sup> following a seam<sup>88</sup> of coal along the surface. Shaft mining was done in some areas, but the limiting factor was the problem of removing underground water. It could be done by hauling buckets of water up the shaft but, in either case, the water had to be poured into a stream or ditch at a level where it could flow away by gravity.

The introduction of the steam engine greatly facilitated the removal of water and enabled shafts to be made deeper, enabling more coal to be extracted. Some degree of safety was provided by the safety lamp, which was invented in 1816 by Sir Humphrey Davy. However, the lamps proved a false dawn because they became unsafe very quickly and provided a weak light. Conditions of work were very poor as the lamps sometimes set off during explosions in the coal dust, and there were casualties too from rock falls.

## The Steam Engine



JAMES WATT'S STEAM ENGINE

James Watt succeeded by 1778 in perfecting his steam engine, which incorporated a series of radical improvements, notably the closing off of the upper part of the cylinder, thereby making the low pressure steam drive the top

<sup>87</sup> Shallow = close to the surface

<sup>88</sup> Seam = a long, thin layer of coal

of the piston inside a steam chamber. This meant that a more constant temperature could be maintained inside the cylinder and that the engine efficiency no longer varied according to atmospheric conditions. These improvements increased engine efficiency five-fold, saving 75% on coal costs.

The development of machine tools too, such as the lathe, where all the metal parts of the engines could be easily and accurately made, allowed people to build larger and more powerful engines. The steam engine was not only used for building locomotives<sup>89</sup> to pull train coaches. It was used wherever power was needed, for example in factories and steam-ships, and as mentioned above, in mine shafts.

**Building** - In 1824 a British bricklayer turned builder, developed a chemical process for making cement, forgotten since classical times. This process involved heating a mixture of clay and limestone to about 1,400° C, and then grinding it into a fine powder which was then mixed with water, sand and gravel to produce concrete. Concrete was used to build the first tunnel under the River Thames in London and in the construction of the London sewerage system.

**Gas lighting** - Another major industry of the later Industrial Revolution was gas lighting. Gas lighting had an impact on social and industrial conditions because it allowed factories and stores to remain open longer than with candles or oil lamps. Its introduction allowed night life to flourish in cities and towns as people could stay up at night as never before.

**Paper machine** - A machine for making a continuous sheet of paper on a loop of wire fabric was invented in 1798; the same type of machine is used to this day.

**Effects on Agriculture** - The invention of machinery played a big part in driving forward the agricultural revolution in England. These played a part in freeing up labour from the land to work in the new industrial mills of the 18th century. As the revolution in industry progressed, a succession of machines became available which increased food production with ever fewer labourers. As the population increased ten-fold in the industrial revolution, this was very

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<sup>89</sup> The vehicle at the front of a train that makes the train to move (sometimes the locomotive was placed at the back to push the rest of the train).

necessary.

Jethro Tull's seed drill was a mechanical seeder which distributed seeds equally and efficiently across a plot of land. The Rotherham plough of 1730, was the first commercially successful iron plough, and the new threshing mill of 1784 quickly separated the wheat seed from the husk<sup>90</sup>. As it needed only one or two men to operate it, the other farm labourers were forced to leave and find work in the new factories.

**Transport** - At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, inland transport was by navigable rivers and rough roads, with coastal vessels employed to move heavy goods by sea. Animals supplied all of the power on land, with sails supplying the power on the sea.

The Industrial Revolution improved Britain's transport infrastructure with a turnpike<sup>91</sup> road network, and a network of canals and railways. Raw materials and finished products could be moved more quickly and cheaply than before. Improved transportation also allowed new ideas to spread more quickly.

**Canals** - Canals began to be built in the late 18th century to link the major manufacturing centres in the Midlands and north of England with the seaports and with London, at that time itself the largest manufacturing centre in the country. Canals were the first technology to allow bulk materials to be easily transported across the country. A single canal horse could pull a load dozens of times larger than a cart, at a faster pace. By the 1820s a national network was in existence.

**Railways** - Steam-hauled public railways began in 1825. Construction of major railways connecting the larger cities and towns began in the 1830s. After many of the workers had completed the railways, they did not return to the countryside but instead remained in the cities. Soon the railways were the biggest employer in England. Railways helped Britain's trade enormously, providing a quick and easy way to transport goods, mail and news.

**Textiles** - Up to the mid 1700's in Britain, clothes were all made by hand. The women worked at home, carding the wool from the sheep and then spinning it

<sup>90</sup> Husk = the dry, outer cover of the wheat seeds

<sup>91</sup> Turnpike = a road for which you pay to use it (originally an American idea)

into fine thread and finally weaving it into woollen cloth on hand looms. They also knitted jerseys and other clothes. Flax and cotton, coming from warm countries like India, were also used, but needed so much preparation before processing that it took a long time to get anything made. These were known as “cottage industries”.

Then suddenly things began to change. A few small inventions in the textile industry started the ball rolling. James Hargreaves created a machine called a “Spinning Jenny” that speeded up the process so that much more wool and cotton articles could be produced. This was combined with Richard Arkwright's “water frame” and Samuel Crompton's “Spinning Mule” and soon large cotton mills were built to house all the machines producing cotton goods. Richard Arkwright not only financed the inventors to improve the different aspects of the spinning machines, but patented them and worked to develop first horse power and then water power to operate them. Later steam power was used to drive the machinery and thus the cotton industry became mechanised!

**Machine Tools** - Now they were able to create machine tools like the lathe and the drill that were used for the making of other machines. Chemicals of all kinds also began to be used in the processing of different substances and this too brought about big changes in industry, e.g. in bleaching cloth or making cement. Gas lighting began to be used instead of candlelight and meant that work could be done at night or underground in the mines or in dark places of a building.

The “cottage industries” suffered with this competition from the factories and people soon began to join the work in the factories as human labour was needed there. The concept of the assembly line was developed where each person worked on one part of the item to be made rather than doing the whole job. People flocked to work in the factories and so cities expanded very quickly. Houses for the poor were small and cramped as opposed to the luxurious mansions for the rich. Diseases spread rapidly as water easily became contaminated with filth.

## *Child Labour*

Children were employed from the age of 4 or 5 for a minimal wage with long hours and beatings in factories and mines. Many became ill and died. Others were maimed by unprotected machines. But this led people like Robert Owen to speak up for improved factory conditions and laws, called the Factory Acts were put in place. Health laws were put in place to ensure better working conditions. Actually child

labour was prevalent world-wide but the intensity of the factory conditions in Britain made people aware that a check had to be made to make sure that the treatment of children was satisfactory.

### ***Changes in Legislation***

Other philanthropists began to demand better education for children so schooling for all classes of people improved. Standards of living improved due to new laws. Trade unions were created to ensure that those working in factories were properly treated. A growing awareness of the needs of all people in a country was developing as well as the determination to fight for the rights of the human being.

So the Industrial Revolution brought change not only in the mechanisation of industry but also in the consciousness of human beings. This revolution spread throughout the world.

No revolution has had such an effect on us today as the industrial revolution, so the teacher can take time over things, and can bring it right up-to-date with the motor car, household gadgets like the washing machine, the entertainment revolution with the radio and T.V., and even the communications revolution with the computer, mobile phone, etc.

### ***Effects of the Industrial Revolution***

The teacher can ask the students many questions arising from the above changes as a result of the Industrial Revolution, for example:

1. What can you see in the picture (above) of the effect of the Industrial Revolution?
2. What happens when one burns huge amounts of coal to drive all the steam engines in the railways, mines and factories?
3. What do you think happened to all the farm workers when machines started taking over so much of their work?
4. When machines started doing the work of hundreds of people making textiles by hand, what do you think happened to all these workers?
5. Why did cities grow in population numbers so enormously during industrialisation? How do you think these vast numbers of people - most of them labourers in the factories - were housed?

The teacher can fill in on the many effects industrialisation had on people:



One could start - or end - with an image, something like this: Now that so many steam engines were used everywhere, and they all burned large amounts of coal, the cities and industrial areas became covered with black smog<sup>92</sup> that hung over them like a black, heavy cloud. It was as if a black cloth, such as we use at funerals to cover the coffin, had fallen on humankind. Gone were the days when people lived on the land, in harmony with nature, its beauty and the well-being it gives. Now, day after day, the black, dirty smog cut them off from the clear, shining light of the sun. It was as if they now were cut off from being humans who lived with joy and sunshine, to become labourers in factories that closely resembled hell. Humankind went into a dark age.<sup>93</sup>

Socially the Industrial Revolution witnessed the triumph of a middle class of industrialists over the nobility, who had owned most of the land. The new industries made the new businessmen richer. Ordinary working people found increased opportunities for employment in the new mills and factories, but these were often under harsh working conditions with long hours of labour, dominated by a pace set by machines.

With this shift in emphasis, a new *materialistic* way of thinking arose. People began to see the natural world as one big machine, to be exploited solely for the benefit of mankind and to make money for the industrialists. Rivers became polluted, towns were full of smoke and land began to be poisoned with chemical fertilisers and pesticide.

Industrialisation led to the creation of the factory. As large numbers of workers had to search for employment in the factories, we see the rise of the modern city. The transition to industrialisation was not without difficulty. For example, a group of English workers known as *the Luddites* formed to protest against industrialisation and sometimes sabotaged factories.

A few industrialists, like the pottery magnate, Josiah Wedgwood, provided housing for workers on site. But there was still limited opportunity for education and children were expected to work. Employers could pay a child less than an adult, even though they produced the same amount. There was no need for strength to operate an industrial machine, and since the industrial system was completely new there were few experienced adult labourers. This made child labour the labour of choice for

<sup>92</sup> Smog = dirty, polluted air from factories and engine fumes that are full of dangerous particles which are very unhealthy for humans, animals, plants and the earth itself.

<sup>93</sup> Image by Peter van Alphen



manufacturing in the early phases of the Industrial Revolution.

In England and Scotland in 1788, two-thirds of the workers in 143 water-powered cotton mills were children. Reports were written detailing some of the abuses, particularly in the coal mines and textile factories, and these helped to make the public aware of the children's plight. The public outcry, especially among the upper and middle classes, helped stir change in the young workers' conditions.

In 1833 and 1844, the first laws against child labour, the Factory Acts, were passed in England. Children younger than nine were not allowed to work, children were not permitted to work at night, and the work day of young people under the age of 18 was limited to twelve hours. Ten years later, the employment of children and women in mining was forbidden.

Living conditions during the Industrial Revolution varied from the splendour of the homes of the wealthy industrialists and successful professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, to the squalor<sup>94</sup> of the lives of many of the workers. Poor people lived in small houses in cramped streets, often five or more to a room. These homes would share outside toilets, with open sewers, and were often cold and damp in winter.

Disease was spread through a contaminated water supply. Chest illnesses in the mines, and cholera and typhoid were common, as was smallpox. Accidents in factories with child and female labour happened regularly, and strikes and riots were common.

## ***The French Revolution***

On my British passport is written: *Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State requests and requires in the name of her Majesty....to allow the bearer to pass freely.*

Now this is only requested through the grace of Her Majesty the Queen, for I am a subject of her Majesty under English law. And this was the state of affairs throughout the world in 1789. A human being's right to exist before the law was dependent on someone else, a king, or queen, or caliph, or the pope, or even God.

This was certainly the situation in France under the *Ancien Regime* or 'old regime'. It was the richest country in Europe at that time, and therefore in the world. And yet the peasants were some of the poorest in Europe after a series of terrible harvests.

The country was bankrupt, as the king, Louis XVI, and his ministers had spent vast sums of money on expensive foreign wars. At court, however, near Paris, the nobles

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<sup>94</sup> Squalor = the poor, often dirty and unhygienic conditions of living

lived a life of luxury, cut off from the people around them.

In May 1789 Louis was forced to call the Estates General together to beg them for money to continue governing. The Estates represented the nobility and church leaders, who owned most of the land but paid no tax, and the middle-classes, who paid most tax but were not represented in government. They had not met for over 150 years!

The Estates abolished the old system of feudalism and attempted to set up a representative form of government, the National Assembly, with a constitution. But the king dithered<sup>95</sup>, and the nobility and the church resisted it.

On the streets of Paris, however, only 20 kilometres away, the people rioted and burnt *the Bastille*, a fortress prison, to the ground. Then the women of Paris marched to the king's palace and forcibly brought him to live in the city. The cry was taken up all over the country: *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, which means: Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood. This was a new idea, that swept through the country like wild fire. It spoke of something new, a new way to live, and fired the imaginations of the people.

The National Assembly published the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Church land was sold to the highest bidder, and priests became employees of the state. Later religion was replaced by the Cult of Reason, and religious festivals replaced by civil ones.

By 1791 the unity within the National Assembly was beginning to collapse. Priests were being killed, churches destroyed and many of the nobility fled to other countries. King Louis tried to flee to but he was caught 150 kilometres from Paris, and brought back to the capital as a prisoner.

The National Assembly finally produced a constitution which would make France a constitutional monarchy like England – that is a country ruled by an elected government, but with the king as head of state. At that moment the king's brother, in exile in Germany, demanded Louis' freedom and with other monarchs, invaded France.

To everybody's surprise the new revolutionary army defeated the invaders and drove them back over the border. By now King Louis XVI was completely discredited and the more extreme members of the National Assembly, egged on by the poor workers of Paris, demanded he be put on trial.

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<sup>95</sup> Dithered = was uncertain as to what to do, and so hesitated

On 20th September 1792 France was declared a republic and, four months later, the Assembly voted, by 433 to 288 representatives, to execute the king. Louis was guillotined<sup>96</sup> to death on 21st January 1793. The old calendar was abolished and the new year was proclaimed as Year 1.

*A Reign of Terror* now lasted for one year. Many priests and nobles, and anyone in fact who was said to be a *counter-revolutionary*, were executed. As a result France found itself at war with all the old kingdoms of Europe.

Many representatives of the government now wished to export their revolution, and French armies swept across the borders, deposing kings and offering *Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité* to the people.

By 1799 the army was the most powerful force in the state, and the favourite general, Napoleon Bonaparte, seized power and ruled as emperor for the next 16 years. He took the ideals of the French revolution all over Europe and even into Egypt, before being defeated at the Battle of Waterloo<sup>97</sup> in 1815 and going into exile.

The ideals that inspired the revolutionaries lived on however, and though many kings returned to their thrones, the cry of liberty, equality and brotherhood has not gone away to this day.

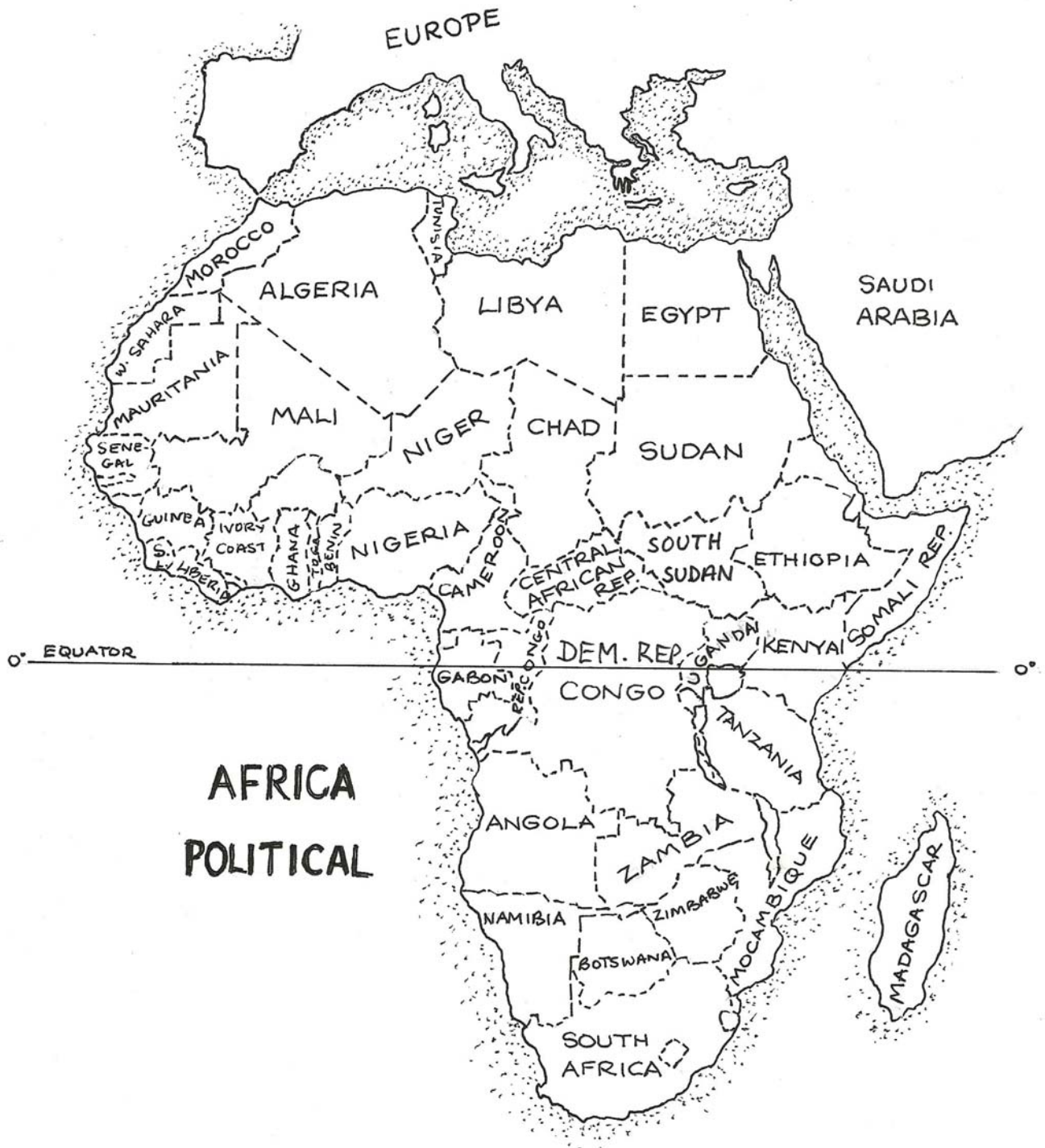
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<sup>96</sup> Guillotine = a machine used in the past for cutting off someone's head. It consisted of a heavy blade that slid down a tall wooden structure, cutting through their neck (from Windows dictionary)

<sup>97</sup> Waterloo is in present-day Belgium, south of Brussels

## *The Struggle for Independence in Africa*

### *Colonialism*



Africans experienced colonialism differently depending on who the colonisers were.

The Portuguese accepted *assimilados*, Africans who spoke fluent Portuguese and had adopted a Portuguese way of life, into the elite of their colonies but never gave any inkling that they would ever leave.

The English on the other hand saw their role in Africa as bringers of civilisation, who were custodians of the land until the Africans were ready to rule themselves. But no black African could join the club, where white men drank and played sport, however assimilated he may be. The French were in their attitude somewhere in between, while the Belgians made no attempt to either assimilate their Congolese subjects, nor to give them any hope they would ever leave.

But as regards time, all Africans went through a similar experience. The first 30 years or so till the end of the First World War were harsh. Then things got better between the wars, and for the Europeans it was Golden Age. Then, after the Second World War, it was very hard for some who endured a war of independence, but joyful for others as they reached their goal without too much strife.

In the 1890's a herd of cattle was imported from India into the Red Sea port of Massawa by the Italians, the new colonialists. Unknown to anyone these cattle carried an infectious viral disease, rinderpest, as yet unknown in Africa. The disease swept through the continent and in 10 years 80 to 90% of all the cattle were dead.

With no milk, blood or meat huge numbers of people faced starvation. Many reduced to beggars sold their land for next to nothing to the newly set-up colonial administrations. Many others simply died of hunger – it is not known exactly how many. It was a catastrophic disaster in a continent used to disasters.

The new colonial masters were intent on making their colonies pay their way, so schemes were introduced to mine the valuable metals of the cooler south, or to grow cash crops for export in the more humid centre. While in North Africa and the malaria-free areas of East Africa, Europeans were encouraged to come and farm the wide open spaces.

Africa was sparsely populated but now after the rinderpest epidemic, certain areas seemed deserted. But the ownership of land is, and has always, been very important for Africans. Everywhere is someone's ancestral land.

The new colonial government had a huge shortage of labour, while the Africans had little motive to work either in the new mines or farms, except every so often. They did not live within a money economy; by and large goods were still bartered.

So the governments decided to tax all African farmers, who often held land



communally. And they demanded the tax be paid in money. When Africans asked; *Where will we get this money?*, they were told it was to be had with the white mine-owners and settlers. So now they had to work and the colonial governments had their workers.

Thus began the system of migrant labour, where the head or some other male member or members would go off for months, or even years, at a time to work in the white man's cities. In the countryside many Africans found they were now squatters on farms they had once owned, and forced to work as labourers for the white boss.

At first the Europeans held the Africans in such low esteem that they ignored practices, which had been evolved over centuries, such as how to deal with sleeping sickness, endemic in parts of East Africa and the Sahel, and this led to a higher mortality rate. People began to have more children so that there would always be enough men to go away to work, and enough women to work on their shambas at home.

The Europeans brought new medicines and improved hygiene to their colonies, so that malaria deaths went down, and people began to live a little longer. After the disasters of the late 19th century, things began to get better as the 1920's began.

Now a small number of the new middle-class Africans began to have greater aspirations. Many had adopted the Christianity brought by the missionaries, and the few that could, enrolled in the new government and missionary schools. They learnt the ways of the white man and hoped to become lawyers, engineers, doctors, etc.

But now the Europeans, anxious that their monopoly and power and wealth might be challenged, tightened the existing laws on race. In a number of countries, Africans – or black people, the two are not necessarily synonymous – were not allowed to train for certain professions, paid much lower than their white counterparts though they did the same job, and even forbidden to enter certain areas or buildings.

But in some countries white, Afrikaner, Indian and Coloured people began to forge ahead. At first profits were to be made in palm oil, rubber, tea and coffee. During both world wars the disruption of worldwide trade meant African meat, grain, fruit and vegetables were for a time very valuable. With this and the low wages paid to African workers, many people became rich. But apart from South Africa, where gold and diamonds made trade very lucrative, the governments in Europe had to subsidise most of their colonies.



## *The Struggle for Independence*

After this general introduction to the colonial era, I think it is important that every teacher then teaches his own and therefore his students', country's route to independence. Each new state's emergence was unique. Every colonial master behaved in a different way in different countries.

The English negotiated their way out of Africa with the notable exceptions of Kenya and Zimbabwe, or Southern Rhodesia as it was called. Whereas the French left most of their possessions reasonably amicably, the war for independence in Algeria was savage.

The Belgians woke up to independence like a man waking up from a deep sleep, and were caught by surprise. The Portuguese, the oldest European power in Africa, had a revolution at home, which threw out the fascist government and negotiated with the freedom fighters after one or two ugly wars.

The notable exception was South Africa, the richest and most modern country in Africa. The English had granted the country freedom within the Commonwealth, ruled by a democratic government, though elected only by the white minority. Its story was like no other on the continent. Its drama was so extreme, its heroes so great that I think every teacher should teach about South Africa's path to independence as well as their own.

It is important not to dwell just on the politics of the situation; they are important, but only a part of the fabric of the whole society. The most imaginative way to teach the students, so they don't get lost in the many acronyms of African political parties, is to teach through the biographies of the leaders, like Jomo Kenyatta or Julius Nyerere. Their lives spanned the colonial era, the struggle for independence and independence itself, for they usually became the new country's head of state.

A good teacher tells of the new way that Africans were beginning to see themselves through their music, art and drama. He or she can speak about the growth of the new towns, like Nairobi and Kampala; whether the land was full of settlers, like Kenya, or not, like Uganda; how was the economy, etc? All the things that influenced the people as a whole.

The teacher can tell one country's story, or he could tell another's too and contrast them. Tanzania's path to independence was very different from Kenya's. Uganda has seen the bloodshed of the early post-independence years with Idi Amin, followed

by war and then the peaceful years with Museveni.

It is interesting to hear real stories of the time, especially about the teacher's own ancestors, if they were involved. The events themselves, the narrative, should be told as simply as possible so the students don't get lost in the detail. Encourage them to ask questions. Let them discuss events. Let them even disagree with the way you may see things.

Sing the national anthem and tell them how it came about. Keep a balanced attitude so you allow them the space to form their own judgements; that can be difficult when confronted by the atrocities committed in war. For teenage students in Africa, citizens of countries scarcely 60 years old, the story of the struggle for independence stirs their souls. It was a time of innocence, of stirring deeds done with great courage. Post independence has been far less black and white, far more grey.

Here follows an example of handling the subject matter for this age-group:

## *Kenya*

The land surrounding Lake Victoria and Mount Kenya has long been a meeting place of many African peoples. The increased amounts of rain, caused by the high mountains and the great lake make this an abundant land, and many tribes ceased their wanderings and settled here. For many years Kenya has been a melting pot in East Africa.

The Europeans, who came to Kenya, were no different. The rolling grazing lands both above and around Nairobi, too cold for the malarial mosquito, attracted many settlers. The Kikuyu, whose land this was, tell the story how, first the white men told them to close their eyes and fall on their knees to pray to their new Christian god, and then, when they had opened them, they realised their land had been stolen.

Nairobi soon became the centre of the country, where Luos from the west lived side by side with Maasai and many other tribes. Mombasa on the coast grew into a large port, importing goods for the whole of East Africa.

Education had grown by leaps and bounds, and many Kenyans had been involved in the Second World War and returned bringing new ideas about freedom and independence. The country was famous for its wild animals and beautiful beaches. Foreigners who came had only good words to say about the country.

However, underneath the surface, there were cracks in the fabric. The wealth and the best land was in the hands of the European and Indian minorities. As the

population grew, there was pressure on the land left to Africans. There was a racial colour bar in place, which humiliated native Kenyans, especially the small educated middle-class. And the Kikuyus still resented losing their ancestral lands.

### ***The Early Life of Jomo Kenyatta***

Jomo Kenyatta was born Kamau wa Mulgai in the village of Gatundu, in British East Africa, now known as Kenya, a member of the Kikuyu people. His date of birth, sometime in the early to mid 1890s, is unclear, and was unclear even to him, as his parents were almost certainly not literate, and no formal birth records of native Africans were kept in Kenya at that time. His parents died when he was young so the young Kamau went to live first with his uncle and then with his *mganga* grandfather, to whom he became very close.

He then left home to go to the Church of Scotland Mission school, close to Nairobi. He studied amongst other subjects, the Bible, English, mathematics, and carpentry. He paid the school fees by working as a houseboy and cook for a white settler living nearby.

In 1913 he underwent initiation and circumcision, and became a leading member of his age group. The following year he converted to Christianity, taking the name John Peter, which he then changed to Johnstone Kamau.

He worked as a carpenter and, during the First World War, he was forced, like many other Kikuyus, to work for the British authorities. To avoid this, he lived with his Maasai relatives in Narok, where he worked as a clerk for an Asian contractor.

In 1919 he married Grace Wahu, in a Kikuyu ceremony. When Grace got pregnant, his church elders ordered him to get married before a European magistrate, and undertake the appropriate church rites. Kamau's first son Peter Muigai, was born, so he eventually married Grace in a civil ceremony.

He entered politics by joining the KCA, the Kikuyu Central Association, in 1924 and rose up the ranks of the association. Eventually he began to edit the movement's Kikuyu newspaper. The paper, supported by an Asian-owned printing press, had a mild tone, and was tolerated by the colonial government. By 1928 he had become the KCA's general secretary.

In 1929 the KCA sent Kenyatta to London to lobby on its behalf with regards to Kikuyu tribal land affairs. He returned to Kenya a year later, where he took part, on the side of traditionalists, in the debate on the issue of the circumcision of girls.

He returned to London in 1931 and enrolled in a Quaker College in Birmingham. In 1932 to 1933, he briefly studied economics in Moscow, Russia, at the University of

the Workers of the East, before his sponsor, a communist, fell out with his Russian hosts, forcing Kenyatta to move back to London.

From 1935 he studied social anthropology at the London School of Economics. He published his thesis as *Facing Mount Kenya* in 1938 under his new name, Jomo Kenyatta. The name Jomo is translated in English as *Burning Spear*, while Kenyatta was said to be a reference to the beaded Maasai belt he wore, and later to *the Light of Kenya*. During this period, he was also an active member of a group of African, West Indian and Black American intellectuals. Later during his presidency, a number of streets in Nairobi were named after them.

During the Second World War, he worked as a labourer at an English farm, and lectured on Africa. In 1942, he married an Englishwoman. He also published *My People of Kikuyu*. In 1945, with other prominent African nationalist figures, such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Kenyatta helped organise the fifth Pan-African Congress held in Britain. Leaving his wife behind, he returned to Kenya in 1946, after almost 15 years abroad.

He married for the third time, to Grace Wanjiku, the daughter of Chief Koinange's, who later became a lifelong confidant and was one of the most powerful politicians during Kenyatta's presidency. Kenyatta then went into teaching as a headmaster.

In 1947, he was elected president of the Kenya African Union, KANU. He began to receive death threats from white settlers after his election. He toured around the country, lecturing and condemning idleness and robbery, and urging hard work, while campaigning for the return of land given to White settlers, and for independence within three years.

In 1951 Kenyatta married Ngina Muhoho. She was popularly referred to as Mama Ngina and was independent Kenya's First Lady, when Kenyatta was elected President. Then in October 1952 Kenyatta was arrested and indicted with five others on the charges of *managing and being a member* of the Mau Mau Society.

In January 1953, the six were put on trial, primarily to justify the declaration of the Emergency to critics in London. The trial itself was farcical, as it was not a fair trial. The main prosecution witness was later found to have lied in court; the judge was openly hostile to the defendants' cause.

The court sentenced Kenyatta on April 8, 1953 to seven years imprisonment with hard labour and indefinite restriction thereafter. The subsequent appeal was refused by the British government the next year.

## ***The Mau Mau Rebellion***

The origin of the term *Mau Mau* is uncertain. According to some members of Mau Mau, they never referred to themselves as such, instead preferring the military title Kenya Land and Freedom Army. Some claim that it was an anagram of *uma uma*, which means *get out, get out*, and was a military codeword based on a secret language-game Kikuyu boys used to play at the time of their circumcision. The British simply used the name as a label for the Kikuyu ethnic community.

At first the Mau Mau were groups of Kikuyus, who took an oath where they swore to support and defend each other to force the British to give up power in Kenya. By 1952, they had intimidated the authorities enough that the Governor of Kenya signed an order declaring a State of Emergency in the country. Early the next morning, the British carried out a mass-arrest of Jomo Kenyatta and 180 other alleged Mau Mau leaders within Nairobi.

News of the operation was leaked. Thus, while the moderates on the wanted list awaited capture, the real militants, fled to the forests. The day after the round up, a prominent loyalist chief was hacked to pieces, and a series of murders against white settlers were committed. The violent nature of British tactics during the months after the operation served merely to alienate and to drive many of the wavering Kikuyu majority into the arms of the Mau Mau.

Three battalions of the King's African Rifles were recalled from Uganda, Tanzania and Mauritius to Kenya, a total of 3,000 African troops in all. To placate settlers, one battalion of British troops was also flown in from Egypt.

Militarily, the British defeated Mau Mau in four years from 1952 to 1956. The onset of the Emergency led hundreds, and eventually thousands, of Mau Mau adherents to flee to the forests, where a decentralised leadership had already begun setting up platoons. The primary zones of Mau Mau military strength were the Aberdare mountains and the forests around Mount Kenya, whilst they were passively supported throughout many regions of Kenya.

By 1954, Nairobi was regarded as the nerve centre of Mau Mau operations. 25,000 members of British security forces were deployed as Nairobi was sealed off and underwent a sector-by-sector purge. All Africans were taken to temporary barbed-wire enclosures, where all Kikuyus, and Merus remained in detention for screening, while all the others were released.

Whilst the operation itself was conducted by Europeans, most suspected members of Mau Mau were picked out by African informers. Male suspects were then taken

off for further screening, whilst women and children were readied for *repatriation* to camps up-country.

The journey to these camps could sometimes last days. There was frequently little or no food and water provided, and seldom any sanitation. Once in camp, talking was forbidden outside the huts. Any communication was to encourage fellow detainees not to give up hope and so to minimise the number of those who confessed their oath and cooperated with camp authorities. Forced labour was performed and many detainees confessed to being members of Mau Mau.

While taking oaths in the camps was reduced to an absolute minimum, as many new initiates as possible were initiated. A newcomer who refused to take the oath was often murdered. *"The detainees would strangle them with their blankets or, using blades fashioned from the corrugated-iron roofs of some of the barracks, would slit their throats"*, wrote a camp authority. The authorities preferred method of capital punishment was public hanging, normally for administering oaths.

Sanitation in the camps was often appalling, and epidemics of diseases like typhoid swept through them. Official medical reports told of the shortcomings of the camps but their recommendations were ignored. Many suffered from malnutrition. It is now estimated that, over the 10 years of the Mau Mau rebellion, as many as 75,000 Kenyans may have died.

## ***Towards Independence - Uhuru***

Kenyatta remained in prison until 1959, after which he was detained in Lodwar, in northern Kenya.

The state of emergency was at last lifted on January 12, 1960.

Six weeks later, a public meeting of 25,000 in Nairobi demanded his release. On April 15, 1960, over a million signatures for a plea to release him were presented to the Governor. The next month he was elected KANU President *in absentia*.

A year later he was moved to Maralal with daughter Margaret where he met the world's press for the first time in eight years. On Aug 14 1961, he was released to a hero's welcome. No one has ever been able to prove whether Kenyatta had links with the Mau Mau or not.

Kenyatta was admitted into the Legislative Council after his release, when a friend gave up his seat for him. In 1961 and 1962, he led the KANU delegation to the first



and second Lancaster Conference in London, where Kenya's independence constitution was negotiated.

Elections were then held, pitting Kenyatta's KANU, who advocated a centralised state against KADU, the Kenya African Democratic Union, which advocated a federal state, or *majimbo*. KANU beat KADU by winning 83 seats out of 124.

On June 1, 1963, Kenyatta became prime minister of the autonomous Kenyan government, with Queen Elizabeth II of England remaining as Head of State, and now called the Queen of Kenya and represented by a Governor-General. He consistently asked white settlers not to leave Kenya and supported reconciliation between all the warring parties.

### ***Modern Kenya – Harambee or Pulling Together***

The new government introduced Swahili as the language throughout schools and this helped to bring together the diverse ethnic groups in the country. However the Kenyatta family took up large tracts of Kikuyu land north of Nairobi, and then moved these Kikuyus on to land in the Rift Valley, either sold off by the leaving Europeans or ancestral land claimed by the Kalenjins.

Many Kenyans migrated to the towns, especially Nairobi, where unemployment was a serious problem. Although the tourist industry grew fast and the standard of living for many grew too, there was widespread corruption and nepotism. The increase in population rocketed.

Oginga Odinga, the Vice-President, did not always agree with Jomo Kenyatta's policy, and he resigned his post to form a new political party. The friction between Odinga and Kenyatta continued, and in 1969 Odinga was arrested after the two verbally abused each other publicly at a chaotic function in Kisumu, Nyanza – and where at least 11 people were killed and dozens were injured in riots. He was detained for two years, and consigned to political limbo until after Kenyatta's death in August 1978.

Jomo Kenyatta died a very rich man and there were many who thought Kenya was riddled with corruption but dared not speak out. Now, the Vice-President, Daniel arap Moi, became President, and soon set up a one-party state. Moi retained the Presidency, being unopposed in elections held throughout the 1980's.

Following the failed coup of 1982 against Moi's government, Odinga was placed under house arrest. His son, Raila, was also placed under house arrest for seven

months after being suspected of collaborating with the plotters of the failed coup. He was later charged with treason and detained without trial for six years.

By now Moi was a dictator in all but name. Opponents were shot down in the street, or arrested and tortured in the notorious cells beneath Nyayo House, where people go today to get their passports. Corruption and nepotism grew worse.

The election held in 1988 had seen the advent of the *mlolongo*, or queuing system, where voters were supposed to line up behind their favoured candidates instead of voting in a secret ballot. This was seen as the climax of a very undemocratic regime and it led to widespread agitation for constitutional reform.

In 1991 Oginga Odinga co-founded and became the interim chairman of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy or FORD. The formation of FORD triggered a chain of events that were to change Kenya's political landscape, culminating in ending KANU's 40 years in power, eight years after Odinga's death in 1994.

At last in 2002, Moi was constitutionally barred from running and Mwai Kibaki, running for the opposition coalition, *the National Rainbow Coalition*, was elected President. The elections were judged free and fair by local and international observers, and seemed to mark a turning point in Kenya's democratic evolution, as power was transferred peacefully from one party to another.

Under Kibaki's presidency the new ruling coalition promised to focus its efforts on generating economic growth, combating corruption, improving education, and rewriting its constitution. A few of these promises have been met.

Following the the presidential election held on December 2007, the Electoral Commission in controversial circumstances declared Kibaki the winner, placing him ahead of Raila Odinga by about 232,000 votes. International observers faulted the election and recommended an independent recount of the vote.

Raila Odinga accused Kibaki of fraud, and violence broke out in the country. Old tribal wounds were reopened, especially in the Rift Valley. The protests escalated into violence and destruction of property. The dispute caused underlying tensions over land and its distribution to re-erupt, as it had in the 1992 and 1997 elections. More than a thousand people were killed and hundreds of thousands were forced off their land into camps.

Following two months of unrest, a deal between Raila and Kibaki, which provided for power-sharing and the creation of the post of Prime Minister, was signed in February 2008; it was brokered by former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan. Raila was sworn in as Prime Minister, alongside Kibaki as President, with the power-sharing cabinet, on April 17th, 2008.

Kenyan lawmakers unanimously approved the power-sharing deal aimed at salvaging a country, usually seen as one of the most stable and prosperous in Africa. The deal brought Kibaki's PNU and Odinga's ODM parties together and heralded the formation of a grand coalition, in which the two political parties would share power equally.

A referendum to vote on a proposed new constitution was held on 4th August 2010, and the new constitution passed by a wide margin. Among other things, the new constitution delegates more power to local governments and gives Kenyans a bill of rights. As of that day the new constitution, heralding the Second Republic, came into force.

### ***The Threefold Social Order***

Discussing politics is a time bomb even in a classroom. Many students in Grade 8 know little more than which party their parents vote for. This is a good opportunity to discuss ideas on an ideal level.

Rudolf Steiner wrote a book called “The Threefold Social Order” in which he proposed a threefold division of society where each section would operate in a different way. The three sections may be linked to the famous slogan of the French Revolution: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

### ***Liberty***

Rudolf Steiner said that in certain fields, people should be free to follow their own ideas e.g. religion, art and science. The artist does not want the government to tell him what to paint and be forced to do only that theme. Also the scientist: he has studied a particular aspect of science research and the government should not be forcing him to do another area. Education is another area where students should be free to study whatever they wish after the basic studies are completed satisfactorily. This would mean that education should be subsidised so that no one is kept out of school because of lack of money.

It is also important that the media is free to write the news honestly and not be forced to keep quiet when corruption is happening in certain areas. However certain governments feel it is expedient to have the power to silence the media when they wish. Is this right?

What other areas in life should be free? All things discussed so far lie in the realm of the soul of the human being. Nothing is material, so the human being should be free

to follow his or her own conscience, so long as it does not interfere with another person's freedom.

## ***Equality***

Where should we all be equal? This is the realm of the government: we should have laws that apply to everyone. For example, traffic laws should be for everyone. If a person is caught speeding at 150 km per hour, he or she should get a fine whether they are rich or poor, a shop owner or a lawyer or a Member of Parliament. No one should be let off! But perhaps the fine could be paid in a different way for poor people?

If someone goes to court because he has been robbed, the law must be the same for men and for women, for all different races and religions. It must also be the same for the rich and for the poor though in some places the rich are given better treatment, while the poor are passed over. A big business company may try to buy the lawyer to delay the case so that they do not need to pay up what they owe to the poor man. The law is meant to be fair but sometimes money corrupts the hearts of those who are working with it. What can be done to ensure the law is always fair?

What other areas should be equal? Health and medical assistance?

## ***Fraternity***

This is the area of commerce and trade. Instead of companies trying to outdo each other to get greater profits when selling goods, it is time to develop "fair trade". We should be working together so that goods are fairly priced, nether too high nor too low.

We should also be selling goods that are properly made and do not break after a year. At present the textile trade is based on fashion and many items fall apart in time for people to buy the next year's fashionable clothes.

How can we work together to create goods that are really needed? We should be encouraging people to grow their own healthy vegetables rather than buy unhealthy fast foods!

Many countries have a high level of unemployment. Can we create a situation where more people are able to use their skills to serve others and get paid for doing so? What if two people were to share one job and get paid enough for each one to live on?

In what other ways could we be working to achieve a world where everyone has enough food to eat, clothes to wear and a house to live in? What if everyone who needed it were to receive a basic wage each month or each week?

Fraternity is about brotherhood and sisterhood. The indigenous peoples cared for each other and shared everything with each other. No-one starved because they were part of the community. They all suffered together in times of famine but they also rejoiced together in times of plenty. We can learn from them. How can we apply their attitudes in our present era?

These discussions will help the students to understand how important it is to follow the right principles in governing a country. Where politicians use their power to gain more money while other people are paying heavy taxes, the students can realise that taxation is another area that could be used to prevent poverty, homelessness and starvation.

Take time to raise the questions and let the students find their own answers. Let them discover the power of freedom of thought and the knowledge that the future lies in their hands.

## ***An Example of Teaching About Post-independent Kenya in Grade 8***

### ***Preparation***

The teacher needs to have an overview of modern Kenya yet, at the same time, a clear objective of what he is teaching, as the subject is so huge.

The teacher needs, like with religion or slavery in Grade 7, to be sufficiently detached as to let the students be free to form their own opinions. This is not a *party political broadcast* for the T.V!

- ❖ A detailed biography of a major figure in modern Kenya; a politician, musician, social worker, ecologist, chief or whoever you wish to tell about. This will enable you, through their life, to teach about the larger Kenyan history.
- ❖ An knowledge of one of the moments of tension in Kenyan history, like the Rift Valley clashes of 1992, or the post-election violence of 2008.

- ❖ A knowledge of the local exam curriculum about government and social service
- ❖ A simple knowledge of Kenyan music, art or writing.
- ❖ Any other interesting information, particularly of a personal matter.

The teacher has often lived through this time. Nothing brings a history lesson more alive than the teacher telling about his own life experience during historical events. You don't have to *bare your soul*; just be honest. My mother was my most interesting history teacher, when she sat me down and told me her biography, and how she viewed the events around her. And she answered all my many questions!

Modern poems, prose, songs and national anthems could be learnt.

The teacher needs to draw a good, clear picture, or cut out and from a good, interesting artwork, magazine or newspaper of the time and stick it up, on the blackboard.

### *Presentation*

You can begin with a living picture of the first independence day celebrations in 1963. Talk to an old relative and ask what they were doing that day, and tell that to the students. Give a short general picture of Kenya that day, and what it must have meant to the various communities within Kenya. Talk about the hopes and the fears of that time.

Make sure everyone knows the Kenyan national anthem in Kiswahili and English. Sing it with the class. Start to learn a modern song, by contrast, in whatever style you like. Learn a poem about the glories of independence.

The students write the beginning notes from your presentation, and do the drawing into a new page of their main lesson books.

The next day, after the students recall the work of yesterday and ask questions,, you tell them about the last phase of Jomo Kenyatta's life. How did he leave the country, the *father of the nation*, whose face is on every bank note. Outline his good points and his bad points. What did he mean by *Harambee*? Has it worked or not? Look at the economy and the general life of Kenyans? Compare their lives before and after independence.

The students go on writing their notes. You tell them to do homework for a debate to be held tomorrow. You give them the motion and choose the teams and the two



leaders, or presenters, and seconders. Then you give them all the relevant questions, and make sure they understand what they are doing tomorrow.

On the third day you begin by asking the students to recall yesterday's presentation and to ask any questions they may have. You then present the crisis in democracy which occurred through Moi's presidency; the changes to the constitution and the fight by FORD, which led to the first genuine democratic election in Kenya in 2002.

Then you have the debate the class have prepared for.

### *A Debate*

The teacher introduces the topic on the first day. Two teams are chosen with a leader, or presenter, and a seconder in each. A question, or motion, is then presented to the teams; for instance: *Do you think Jomo Kenyatta was right to allow the Whites to keep their land in Kenya after independence, or should he have evicted them like Mugabe did in Zimbabwe?*

The question should carry a certain *feeling* within it so the students can feel one way or the other about it. He then appoints one of the leaders to prepare a short speech to introduce the motion, for or against it. The seconders must prepare a short speech backing up their leader.

The teacher has given the background information. You make sure through questions that the students understand the topic, and you give them homework to read their notes and think about the topic.

The next day the first leader introduces the debate on the motion. The other leader responds, arguing for the opposite point of view. The two seconders then speak, one for the motion, the other against. Then anyone can speak from the floor to argue their position. The teacher, or someone he nominates, or someone the students elect, can be the Speaker and keep order. At the end a vote can be taken for or against the motion.

By setting up a sort of parliament, which many African states did after independence, the teacher is letting the students express themselves in a coherent way, however extreme their views. They are experiencing what it is like to be an M.P. or a board chairman.

The teacher must help the process along and choose a topic that is relevant and interesting to the students. He must prepare the information well and encourage the

more reticent to speak, and curb the loud-mouths, who always want to dominate proceedings.

### *Biographies*

The story element in Grade 8 is taken up in the biography, the story of a real person's life. It fills the history lesson with both imagination and reality. It also shows what is going on through real people, and is a very efficient way to deal with the vastness of history.

The teacher should choose someone, who illustrates the times and also who you feel strongly about, one way or the other. Find a book, or go to the internet, to help with your research. As in all longer stories, you can tell it over two or three days, with a recall every day. Encourage the students to ask questions and have discussions.

As with stories in the younger classes, you should prepare your biography well, both with the content and the imaginative way of telling it. You should use a clear vocabulary and feel for the mood of the person's life.

You can choose a famous person's biography, or someone unknown, somebody you know or not, even a relative. Young people identify emotionally for or against people. You are educating their feelings and inspiring their courage and sense of endurance.

Through other's lives they can learn to consider, in a living way, the moral dilemmas and debates of our times. They can see how human beings live complete lives over many years from birth to death, and these may surprise the world by their destiny and their outcome.

In Grade 8 you can begin giving *blind dictations*, where you speak out a text which the students have never heard before, and they have to write it down to the best of their ability.

### *Painting in Grade 8*

- ❖ Painting of a coal factory billowing smoke
- ❖ Child labour

### *Grade 8 History Main Lesson Blocks*



There are usually 2 main lesson blocks allocated to Grade 8. The length of each main lesson block is usually 3 to 4 weeks. A suggested order of teaching could be as follows:

## 1st Main Lesson

### 1st week:

The Industrial Revolution. (Most of this main lesson is my idea. I think the Industrial revolution

Inventions: textile industry deserves three weeks!)

Development of Science: steam engine

### 2nd week:

The Industrial Revolution: mining

Important People

Factory conditions

### 3rd week:

The wide-spread effects of the Industrial Revolution

The change in consciousness as a result of the Industrial Revolution

[Another revolution you may think relevant, such as the American, Russian or Chinese revolutions.]

## 2nd Main Lesson

### 1st week:

Colonialism in Africa

Colonialism in your particular countryside or The Struggle for Independence



## *Bibliography*

Betty Staley - *Hear the Voice of the Griot – a guide to African Geography, History and Culture.*

John Reader - *Africa – a Biography of the Continent.*

O.B. Duane - *African Myths and Legends.*

R Wilkinson - *Teaching History.*

Jared Diamond - *Guns, germs and steel*; publ. Vintage London 1998

M Rawson and T Richter - *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum.*

Karl Stockmeyer – *Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools.*

I. Dinesen – *Africa; Memoirs and Letters of I. Dineson.*

Nelson Mandela – *The Struggle is my Life.*

Vusa'mazulu Credo Mutwa – *Indaba, my Children*

Charles Kovacs – *Ancient Mythologies*; published by Resource Books

Charles Kovacs – *Ancient Greece*; published by Floris Books

Charles Kovacs – *Ancient Rome*; published by Floris Books

Charles Kovacs – *The Age of Discovery*; published by Floris Books

Charles Kovacs – *The Age of Revolution*, published by Floris Books.

The following books are recommended by Betty Staley:

J.K. Adjaye – *Illustrated Games from West Africa.*

H. Baumann – *The World of the Pharoahs.*

L. Brooks – *Great Civilisations of Ancient Africa.*

Cheikh Anta Diop – *Great African Thinkers.*



Stewart Easton – *The heritage of Western Civilisation till 1715.*

Friends of the Baobab Centre – *Stories and Plays from Africa for Children.*

D. and T. Hoobler – *African Portraits.*

Jan Knappert – *Gods and Spirits from African Mythology.*

Patricia and Fredrick McKissak - *The Royal Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhay.*

Miriam Makeba – *Makeba: My Story.*

Jenny Seed – *African Tales of Creation.*

W. Soyinka – *Poems of Black Africa.*

David Sweetman – *Women Leaders in African History.*

Colin Turnball – *The Forest People: A Study of the Pygmies of the Congo.*

Laurens van der Post – *A Far-Off Place.*

F. Willett – *African Art.*

Good libraries and bookshops are few and far between in Africa. Also books are expensive. There are many pamphlets published, which can be found in some bookshops. They are cheaper than books.

However, the greatest resource that African teachers have these days is the Internet. Fibre-optic cables are coming into place in East Africa, and there are many inexpensive Internet centres. Schools are beginning to bring in their own computers, and using external modems or wireless connections.

If you *Google* in any subject matter, it will bring up a number of sites. You have to check them out. On the whole I find *Wikipedia*, the online encyclopedia, very useful. But you have to edit the information it gives, and remember, not everything it says is necessarily the gospel truth!