



## Class and Religion in Ancient India

Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya

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### Description

**An in-depth analysis of the interdependence between the class structure and the Vedic and Brahmanical forms of religion in ancient India.**

A fascinating read for scholars and general readers alike, *Class and Religion in Ancient India* highlights the interdependence between the class structure and the Vedic and Brahmanical forms of religion in ancient India. It seeks to demolish the myth that religiosity and spirituality were the distinctive characteristics of ancient Indian civilization. The author demonstrates that religion was a superstructure of class relations used primarily by the ruling class and the state to perpetuate a predatory class structure based on exploitation and oppression.

Buddhism, foreign immigrant communities, Atheist-rationalist philosophies and the rise of Shudra dynasties threatened to destabilize the class-caste structure that had come into existence in the late Rig Vedic period. However, the Brahmanical revival led by the ruling class and the state from the 2nd Century B.C. restored the Vedic religion and the class-caste structure in a slightly modified form. A thorough analysis of the Vedas and Upanishads, Manusmriti, Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas has been attempted in the context of the relevant period.

**Readership:** Academics and students of ancient Indian civilisation.

### Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations; Introduction; Class Formation in Vedic Society; Social Origins of Advaita Philosophy; Political Sociology of Bhagavadgita; Class Dynamics, Time Cycles and Avatar; State and Counter-Revolution; Bibliography; Index

### About the Author

Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya is Professor Emeritus of International Relations at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India.

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