Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.4—Quotations on How Life Changed

Document A.

Statement by Chief Kabongo, born in the 1870s, as told to Richard St. Barbe Baker in the 1950s

Kabongo was a chief of the Kikuyu people in what is today Kenya.

Something has taken away the meaning of our lives; it has taken the full days, the good work in the sunshine, the dancing and the song; it has taken away laughter and the joy of living; the kinship and the love within a family; above all, it has taken from us the wise way of our living in which our lives from birth to death were dedicated to Ngai, supreme of all, and which, with our system of age groups and our Councils, insured for all our people a life of responsibility and goodness. Something has taken away our belief in our Ngai and in the goodness of men. And there is not enough land on which to feed.

These good things of the days when we were happy and strong have been taken, and now we have many laws and many clothes, and men dispute among themselves and have no love. There is discontent and argument and violence and hate, and a vying with each other for power. And men seem to care more for disputes about ideas than for the fullness of life where all work and live for all.

The young men are learning new ways, the children make marks which they call writing, but they forget their own language and customs, they know not the laws of their people, and they do not pray to Ngai. They ride fast in motorcars, they work fire-sticks that kill, they make music from a box. But they have no land and no food and they have lost laughter.


How does Chief Kabongo characterize the differences regarding life in Kenya between the days before British conquest and the 1950s? What words and phrases does Kabongo use to express his emotions and attitudes regarding the changes? [Common Core State Standards, 9-10, Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.] Might a teenager growing up in Kenya in the 1950s have had a different view? In what ways?
Document B.

Historian Ian Whyte on some ecological consequences of imperialism

At a global scale, the most significant change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the tremendous expansion of cultivable land at the expense of natural ecosystems. It has been estimated that, from 1860 to 1920, 432 million hectares (1,069 million a) of land worldwide was taken into cultivation. Even in India, already well populated and exploited when the British arrived, colonial rule led to the large-scale conversion of grassland and forest to arable land, and instead of intensifying production on the existing acreage, the cultivated area was expanded. Colonial administrators were also prone to write off indigenous systems of cultivation and other forms of land management as inefficient and wasteful, rather than ecologically balanced. In central India, slash-and-burn agriculture and the grazing of cattle in the teak forests were seen as backward practices by administrators who wanted a sedentary, controlled peasantry. In humid tropical areas, slash-and-burn agriculture was suited to an environment in which the vegetation had a higher nutrient capital than the soil. In India, however, colonial officials saw the system as wasteful and destructive of the forests, a basically disorderly system. Shifting agriculture was made illegal and the forests were reserved as a state resource. New systems of agriculture had to be developed with permanent fields and ever-shorter periods of fallow, which led to declining yields and erosion. In traditional Indian society, hunting, whether at the aristocratic or the subsistence level, had been carefully controlled. British attitudes, deriving from a country in which large predators had long been exterminated, were to try to eliminate wolves, wild dogs, and big cats systematically in order to protect the local population. The removal of the predators disrupted local food chains and caused an upsurge in the population of herbivores such as deer, until they, too, began to be shot for sport on a large scale.

As had occurred in the Caribbean in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, plantation agriculture expanded rapidly in many parts of Asia in the nineteenth century, transforming the landscape. In India the crucial date was 1833, when the East India Company’s new charter allowed foreigners to own rural land. Tea began to be cultivated in Assam and Sikkim from the 1830s. By 1900, there were 764 tea plantations in Assam, producing 66 million kg (145 million lb) of tea a year for export. At the end of the nineteenth century, rubber provided an equally profitable crop in Ceylon, Singapore, and especially Malaya.


How would you describe Ian Whyte’s point of view regarding environmental change in Asia under colonial rule? [Common Core State Standards, 11-12, Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence.]
Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.5—Images on How Life Changed

A. Warfare

Samurai from the Bakumatsu-Meiji period, later nineteenth century

Source: Nagasaki University Library, Japanese Old Photographs in Bakumatsu-Meiji Period
http://oldphoto.lb.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/unive/target.php?id=13

Japanese soldiers during the Russo-Japanese War (1904)

Source: Japanese soldiers near Chemulpo Korea August September 1904, Russo Japanese War,
Musée de l’Armée, Paris, Wikimedia Commons,
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_soldiers_near_Chemulpo_Korea_August_September_1904_Russo_Japanese_War.jpg
B. Cities

**Bombay Harbor, 1731**


**Bombay (Mumbai), Kalbadevie Road, ca 1890**

*Source:* A Photographic Trip around the World (Chicago: John W. Illiff, 1892), Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BombayKalbadevieRoad1890.jpg
C. Labor

Textile worker in India, ca 1873

Source: Unknown

Opium factory in India, 1882

D. Architecture

Rani Mahal Palace in Uttar Pradesh (India), built in the eighteenth century. It was the residence of Queen Lakshmibai of Jhansi. She fought against the British in the Great Indian Rebellion of 1857-58.


The Koti Residency in Hyderabad, India. James Kirkpatrick, the British Resident (Governor) in Hyderabad, undertook construction in 1803.

*Source:* Curzon Collection, Views of HH the Nizam’s Dominions, Hyderabad, Deccan, 1892, Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chaderghat_residency.jpg
Warfare:

How do the two images express changes in military culture, attitudes, and fighting methods in Japan between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

Cities:

What do the two images suggest about changes in urban life and economy in Bombay (Mumbai) between 1731 and 1890?

Labor:

What do you think the two images tell us about change in economy and labor methods in India in the 1870s and 1880s?

Architecture:

Can you identify in what specific ways these two buildings, one the palace of an Indian queen, the other the residency of a British governor, look different from each other? What do you think might have been the cultural sources of the architectural ideas and concepts applied in building these two structures?