

# Organization and Reorganization of Human Societies "Classic Period" 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.

## SNAPSHOT (what was generally taking place at beginning of period)

- early stages of new wave of urban, centralized civilizations in Persia, China, India,, eastern Mediterranean, & Mesoamerica that created enduring religious, cultural, artistic, & political legacies
- codification and strengthening of enduring religious and philosophical belief systems
- nomadic cultures interactions w/ sedentary, agriculture based urban civilizations included: trade, diffusion/spread of ideas and technologies, and conflict
- established regional grasslands, desert, and sea trade routes in the Eastern Hemisphere

## ***Key Concept 2.1 Codification and Continued Development of Religious and Cultural Traditions***

### **1. Codifications and further developments of existing religious traditions provided a bond among people and an ethical code to live by**

- A. Monotheistic Judaism - codification of Hebrew Scriptures  
conquest of various Jewish states led to Jewish Diaspora (dispersal), forming often segregated, Jewish communities throughout Middle East and Mediterranean
- B. Core beliefs in Sanskrit scriptures formed basis for Vedic religions (Hinduism later)  
multiple manifestations of Brahma promoted teachings about reincarnation  
caste system established - based on economic, social, and political status

### **2. New belief systems and cultural traditions emerged and spread, often asserting universal truths**

- A. Core beliefs about desire, suffering and search for enlightenment preached by the historic Buddha a reaction, in part, to Vedic/Hindu beliefs and rituals  
Buddhism changed over time as it diffused/spread throughout Asia through efforts of Mauryan Emperor Ashoka, missionaries, merchants, Buddhist schools
- B. Confucianism sought to promote social harmony by clarifying social relationships and proper rituals for all Chinese - including the rulers
- C. Daoist core belief of balance between humans and nature assumed Chinese political system would be altered indirectly - One Required illustration of Daoist influence on Chinese culture: medical theories/practices, poetry, metallurgy OR architecture
- D. Christian core beliefs of divinity of Jesus of Nazareth drew on Judaism, but rejected Roman influences - initial Roman imperial hostility, but efforts of missionaries and merchants eventually gained Roman support from Emperor Constantine
- E. Greco-Roman core ideas of philosophy and science emphasized logic, empirical observation, and the nature of political power and hierarchy

### **3. Belief systems impacts on gender roles - Buddhism and Christianity encouraged monastic life; Confucianism emphasized filial piety (children respect parents and family elders, look after their welfare, support in old age, remember them and ancestors after their deaths)**

### **4. Other religious and cultural traditions continued parallel to the codified, written belief systems in core civilizations**

- A. Animism & shamanism daily reliance on natural world continued to shape lives of many within and outside of core civilizations
- B. Ancestor veneration (respect and rituals) continued in many regions - One Required example from a region: Africa, Mediterranean, East Asia, OR Andes mtn region

### **5. Arts show distinctive cultural characteristics, development - including: literature, drama, architecture, and sculpture**

- A. Literature and drama acquired distinctive forms that influenced neighboring regions' arts and later time periods - One example: Greek plays OR Indian epics
- B. Distinctive architectural styles - One example: India, Greece, Roman Empire OR Mayan

## ***Key Concept 2.2 Development of States and Empires***

### **1. Dramatic increase in size and number of key states and empires by imposing political unity on regions of previously competing states**

Required Examples - know location and names:

Southwest Asia: Persian Empires (Achaemenid, Parthian, OR Sassanid empires)

East Asia: Qin Dynasty and Han Empire/Dynasty

South Asia: Maurya and Gupta empires

Mediterranean region: Phoenicia and colonies, Greek city-states and colonies,  
Hellenistic Empire, Roman Empire

Mesoamerica: Teotihuacan, Mayan city-states

Andean South America: Moche

### **2. New techniques of imperial administration based, in part, on successes of earlier political systems**

- A. Imperial administrative systems created by rulers included:
  - centralized governments AND elaborate legal systems and bureaucracies
  - One example: China, Persia, Rome, OR South Asia
- B. Imperial governments projected military and other power over larger areas using:
  - a. diplomacy
  - b. developing supply lines
  - c. building fortifications, defensive walls, and roads
  - d. drawing new soldiers and officers from local or conquered peoples
- C. Promotion of trade and economic integration by building and maintaining roads and by issuing currencies helped strengthen success of empires

### **3. Unique social and economic characteristics developed in imperial societies in Afro-Eurasia and the Americas**

- A. Cities were centers of trade, public performances of religious rituals, and political administration of imperial provinces
  - One Example: Persepolis, Chang'an, Pataliputra, Athens, Carthage, Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople, OR Teotihuacán
- B. Social hierarchies (rigid socio-economic classes) included: farmers, laborers, slaves, artisans, merchants, elites - or caste groups
- C. Imperial cultures used a range of methods to maintain production of food and provide rewards for the loyalties of the elites - One Example: corvee labor, slavery, rents and tributes, peasant communities, OR family and household production
- D. Patriarchy continued to shape gender and family relations in all imperial societies.

### **4. Roman, Han, Persian, Mauryan, and Gupta empires experienced political, cultural, and administrative problems they could not manage - led to their decline, collapse, and transformation into successor empires or states**

- A. Excessive exploitation of natural resources caused environmental damage and created social tensions and economic difficulties by concentrating wealth to elites
  - One Example: deforestation, desertification, soil erosion OR silted rivers
- B. Threats to security from potential and real foreign invasions across frontier borders
  - One Example of external problems along frontiers: Han China and the Xiongnu, Gupta and White Huns OR the Romans and their northern and eastern neighbors



## **Key Concept 2.3 Emergence of Transregional Networks of Trade, Exchange, and Communication**

- 1. Existing land & water routes became the basis for larger transregional (across several regions) trade, communication, and exchange networks in the Eastern Hemisphere**
  - A. Climate and location of the routes, typical trade goods, and the ethnicity of the people involved shaped the distinctive characteristics of the following trade routes:
    - Eurasian Silk Roads
    - Trans-Saharan caravan routes
    - Indian Ocean sea lanes
    - Mediterranean sea lanes
  
- 2. New technologies facilitated (assisted) long-distance trade, communication, and exchange**
  - A. New technologies enabled domesticated pack animal to transport goods longer distances - One Example: yokes, saddles, or stirrups  
One Example of domesticated pack animal: horses, oxen, camels, llamas
  - B. Maritime technologies innovations and advanced knowledge of monsoon winds stimulated Indian Ocean trade/exchanges from East Africa to East Asia  
One Example: lateen (triangular) sail OR dhows
  
- 3. Religion and cultural beliefs, food crops, domesticated animals, diseases, people, and technologies also moved along the trade routes**
  - A. Spread of crops, including rice and cotton from South Asia to the Middle East encouraged changes in farming and irrigation techniques  
Required example: qanat irrigation system
  - B. Diseases spread, decreased some urban populations, contributed to the decline of some empires - One Example: effects of disease on Roman OR Chinese empire
  - C. Religions and cultural transformed as they spread - Required examples: Christianity, Hinduism, AND Buddhism

### **CONTINUITIES (what generally stayed the same during time period)**

- importance of religion or philosophical beliefs in various cultures
- forced labor - slavery generally consequence of conquest, debts, or poverty  
(selling children into slavery) - not race/ethnicity based
- patriarchy
- interactions between settled and nomadic cultures - conflict and/or trade & exchanges
- Chinese dynastic cycle

A. Aiken, Boulder H.S.