

during a time when Rome had a string of incompetent, often corrupt emperors. Although the strong emperor **Diocletian** stopped the slide temporarily, the problems continued. As in the waning days of the republic, the empire by the 3rd century C.E. was rife with class struggles over land, since large estates that used slave labor had taken up most free land. Contact through easy trade and transportation had its downside as well, in the form of devastating epidemics that followed the trade routes, killing large numbers of people as they spread.

In the 4th century C.E. the Roman Emperor **Constantine** established a second capital city in the east that he named "Constantinople" in order to have better connections in that part of the empire and to escape the threatening attacks of Rome by nomads. This move had the effect of gradually sacrificing the western provinces to the Germanic groups, including the Franks, Saxons, Angles, Vandals, Visigoths, and Ostrogoths. By the early 5th century, Rome itself was sacked by the Visigoths, and the last Roman emperor was deposed in 476 C.E.

QIN AND HAN CHINA

At the same time that Rome was increasing its influence around the Mediterranean Sea, China was recovering from the **Warring States Period** at the end of the Zhou Dynasty. The Warring States Period was a time of political turmoil, with regional warlords constantly challenging the authority of the Zhou. However, it was also a period that prompted much debate about how to solve China's many problems, resulting in the origins of three influential belief systems:

- 1) **Legalism** – Legalist thinkers believed that humans were naturally evil and would only obey authority through force. They advocated strict laws, harsh punishments, and sacrifice of personal freedom for the good of the state.
- 2) **Daoism** – A philosopher named **Laozi**, who reputedly lived during the 6th century B.C.E., reacted to the constant warfare by encouraging people to avoid useless struggles by following the **Dao**, or the "path." He shunned political and military ambitions as lacking morality and meaning, and guided his followers toward nature for comfort and understanding. Daoism emphasizes acceptance and individual retreat from society.
- 3) **Confucianism** – The philosopher Confucius emphasized the importance of hierarchical, harmonious relationships in the creation of an orderly society. Everyone has a place in society, from the ruler to his lowliest subject, and all have responsibilities in their relationships with others. Confucius believed that the family was the foundation of society that served as a model for benevolence, duty, and courtesy.

The Qin Dynasty

Legalism met an enthusiastic response from the Qin leaders, who used the philosophy of harsh, strict rule to dominate their neighbors in western China. The Qin army was well organized and equipped with the best available iron weapons, and it defeated one state after the other, until finally it controlled China. Since the Qin government had much stronger centralized authority than the previous dynasties had, the king declared himself "The First Emperor," or **Shi Huangdi**, who ruled from 221-210 B.C.E. The dynasty only survived for a few years after his death, but its brevity does not reduce its significance in the development of the Chinese state.

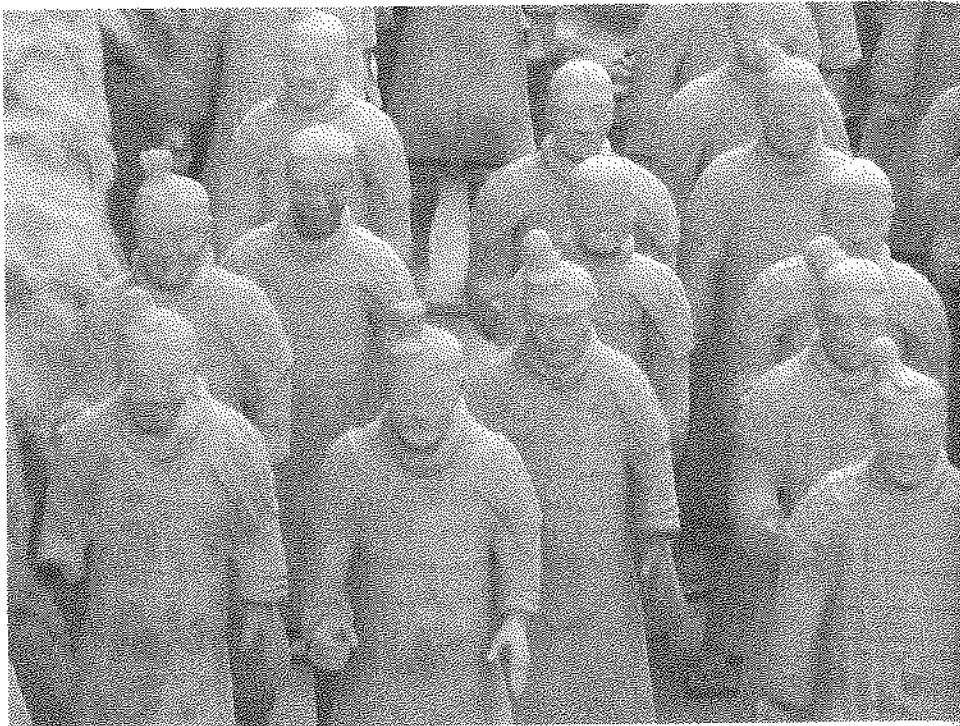
Shi Huangdi ruled his empire through a centralized bureaucracy from his capital near the modern city of Xi'an. The tenets of legalism served him well as he stripped the nobility of power and divided China into administrative provinces governed by administrators that served at his pleasure. He built roads to facilitate communications and move his armies. He also forced his subjects to contribute their labor to build public works, including the first fortifications of the **Great Wall** of China. Confucians widely criticized the harsh rule of the emperor, who responded by sentencing them to death. Quite famously, he demanded the burning of all books of philosophy, ethics, history, and literature, and only allowed books of practical use (such as medicine and agriculture) to be spared.

Despite his harshness, Shi Huangdi strengthened China in many ways. He standardized laws and currencies, so that they were the same across all regional states. An important step in the unification of China was his mandate that the Shang version of Chinese script be used all over the empire. The regions continued to speak their own languages, but the common script enabled people across China to communicate with one another through writing.

Although Shi Huangdi today is seen as one of the greatest figures in Chinese history, his strict rule made him quite unpopular. Shortly after his death, revolts began, resulting in the overthrow of the dynasty in 207 B.C.E., when state buildings were destroyed and government officials killed, paving the way for the Han Dynasty.

The Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.)

Instead of falling into years of chaos, as had happened during the Warring States Period at the end of the Zhou Dynasty, China was brought under control quickly by Liu Bang, who was not a particularly talented military commander, but was a strong ruler, partly because he picked able bureaucrats who organized the new dynasty efficiently.



The Terra Cotta Army. Shi Huangdi was buried in a magnificent underground palace, surrounded by thousands of terra cotta soldiers, crafted specifically to guard the ruler after his death. These soldiers each had individual features, poses, and dress, and they were accompanied by horses and weapons. The site of the tomb and the soldiers has only been excavated since 1974, when a Chinese farmer digging for water accidentally discovered a piece of a soldier. New discoveries continue to be made, so no one yet knows just how many soldiers were created for Shi Huangdi.

Political Development

Like their contemporaries, the Romans, the Han organized and controlled the realm through a strong, nonhereditary bureaucracy. Although they kept many of the structures created by Shi Huangdi, the Han de-emphasized legalism in favor of a government based on Confucian values. The family hierarchy became the basis for government structure, with subjects owing the emperor the same obedience that children gave to their fathers. The old Zhou belief in the "mandate of heaven" was incorporated into Confucian values; the emperor had the support of the heavens as long as he was a good ruler, and people owed him their fealty. The Han brought forward the Confucian value of benevolence to substitute for the Qin strictness and reliance on force.

Liu Bang was followed by several able rulers, most notably **Han Wudi** (140–87 B.C.E.), who issued a royal decree that required nobles to divide their land between all their sons so that large estates would be broken up, checking the

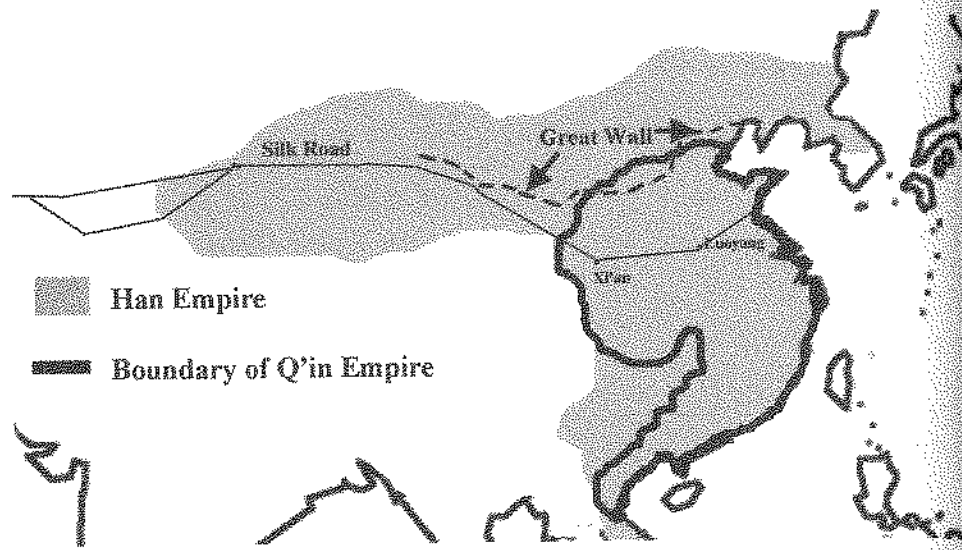
lords' power. The emperor's appointees expanded their authority at the expense of local lords and centralized power in the central government, sometimes going so far as to confiscate land in the name of the emperor.

Even more than Shi Huangdi, the Han rulers expanded the Chinese frontiers west, north, and south. These conquests brought the Chinese into contact with other civilizations, including the Romans, although probably only through intermediaries. Other trade contacts included India, northeast Asia, and Southeast Asia. The nomadic groups to the north were a big threat to Han stability, as they had been for the Qin. The beginning structures of the Great Wall were built to keep them out, but these skilled horsemen constantly got around it to attack settlements to the south. Han Wudi's forces defeated the nomads and annexed their pasture lands to the Han domain, although the annexation only brought temporary relief. In the east, the northern parts of Korea were conquered, and many of the various groups in Southeast Asia also came under Han control.

Economic Developments and Social Distinctions

Like Rome, Han China was an urban empire that ruled a rural and peasant population. Urban areas of China grew rapidly during this era, with the population of Xi'an (also called Chang'an) reaching about 100,000 within the city walls, with thousands of others outside the walls and in neighboring communities. The emperor lived in the **forbidden city**, so called because only his family, servants, and closest advisors were permitted within its boundaries. Administrative buildings and houses of aristocrats and the scholar-gentry surrounded the forbidden city, and the streets bustled with commerce. Other urban areas grew as well, so that as much as 30% of the population lived in towns and cities. Canals were built, and the road system expanded to improve communication and commerce. The most important export was silk, and its production from cocoons on the leaves of mulberry trees was a closely guarded secret that gave the Chinese a silk monopoly.

Despite the importance of trade to the empire's prosperity, merchants did not have a high social status. Instead, the highest regard was for the **shi**, or the scholar bureaucrats (sometimes called mandarins). The shi generally fared much better under the Han than they did under the Qin, largely because their affinity for Confucianism had brought Shi Huangdi's disfavor. The Han rulers after Liu Bang increasingly promoted Confucianism, and thorough knowledge of Confucian teachings became essential for promotion in the Han government. A university was founded in Xi'an to educate young scholars to prepare them for jobs in the bureaucracy, and an examination system was set up in the last century B.C.E. to help the government to identify the best candidates for the bureaucracy. The examinations were based almost exclusively on knowledge of the Confucian texts. Theoretically, any Chinese man could take the exams,



Qin and Han China. Both dynasties were expansionist, with the Han extending to the north to try to placate invading nomads, south to take over various people of Southeast Asia, and west to protect and control trade along the Silk Road.

but only the sons of the wealthy had the leisure to study for them, so the bureaucracy was generally filled from aristocratic and scholar-gentry families. The importance of social class was reinforced by the fact that many government positions were still hereditary, and automatically passed from father to son.

Three main social classes characterized Han China:

- 1) **The scholar-gentry** – This class was linked to the shi, and eventually superseded it. Their status was based on control of large amounts of land and bureaucratic positions in the government. Wealth from landholding supported their brightest sons to study for and win important administrative positions. These families tended to maintain homes in both the city and the countryside, and they passed wealth and status down to their children, sometimes for many centuries.
- 2) **Ordinary, but free, citizens** – The common people included a broad range, with the majority being peasants. Some peasants had significant amounts of land, and occasionally might support a son to study for government examinations. Most peasants who had a decent-sized plot of land lived well. However, others were forced to work for landlords, and still others did not have enough to eat. All peasants were required to work a designated number of days each year on public works, and they also could be forced to join the army.

- 3) **The underclass** – This broad category consisted of many different groups, including non-Han Chinese on the fringes of the empire. Some were shifting cultivators driven out of their areas by the growing Han population. They were described in various accounts as bandits, beggars, and vagabonds. Slavery did exist, but it was far less prominent than it was in Ancient Rome. During the Warring States Period, dependent peasants as well as slaves worked the large estates. The Qin government tried to abolish slavery, but it persisted into the Han era. However, only a small fraction of the population was enslaved, and most people that were slaves served as domestic servants.

Although they were not given high status by the scholar-gentry, the artisan and manufacturing classes grew during the Han period as a result of numerous inventions and technological innovations. The introduction of the brush pen and paper greatly facilitated the work of the scholar-gentry, and the demand for their manufacture increased. The Han Chinese also developed water mills for agriculture, rudders and compasses for ships, and new mining techniques for iron and copper. Skilled artisans were in high demand, and most probably lived more comfortable lives than the peasants, although their social status was not high. Even though trade expanded greatly during the Han era, Confucian scholars continued to regard merchants and traders with disdain, and their status remained low.

Like all other ancient civilizations, China was a patriarchy, but most historians believe that women's status during the Han period was higher than it was in later periods of Chinese history. Marriages were arranged according to family ties, but neither young men nor women had much say about who their partners



MARKER EVENT: THE EXAMINATION SYSTEM IN CHINA

Even though most government jobs in the Han Dynasty were filled according to heredity, the Chinese first experimented with the idea that administrative offices should be filled on the basis of merit and effort. They set up an examination system that measured a young person's knowledge of Confucian texts, and only those that passed the exams could work in certain positions in the emperor's government. This idea may seem commonplace today, but it was revolutionary in ancient times.



SEEING SIMILARITIES: ROME AND HAN

Often it is easier to see the differences between two societies than it is to see their similarities. However, the great empires of Rome and Han China had more in common than you might think.

Both Rome and China were huge empires with long borders to defend. Each built walls and maintained a chain of forts and garrisons. Both spent a great deal of time, effort, and money trying to defend their borders from nomadic attack, and both ultimately failed.

The economies of both societies were based on agriculture, but both grew into wealthy urban-based empires. Their free peasantry came into conflict with wealthy aristocrats over land ownership, and peasants in both societies rebelled when they were reduced to dependent tenant farmers.

Both Rome and Han Empires spread from a homogeneous core to encompass many diverse people. Each brought a cultural unity that conquered people came to value, and each had to delegate ruling authority to local officials. Both developed a competent bureaucracy that allowed the empires to thrive for a number of years.

would be. Powerful relatives usually protected their daughters from abuse by the husband's family, and women of upper-class families were often educated in writing, the arts, and music. Still, women at all social levels remained subordinated to men. Families were run by older men, and male children were favored over their sisters. Political positions were reserved for men, and only boys could sit for the examinations. Women from peasant families played traditional roles as cooks, house cleaners, and support for men in the fields. All were legally subordinated to their fathers and husbands.

Han Culture and Science

The Han were interested in decorative arts, and their bronze and ceramic figures, bowls, vases, jade and ivory carvings, and woven silk screens were of very high quality. One of the highest art forms was **calligraphy**, or the artistic rendering

of the written word, a skill that is still highly prized in Chinese society. Historical record-keeping was important for the Han, with some scripts surviving until today. Mathematics, geography, and astronomy were also valued, especially for the practical inventions that were based on these sciences. An interest in the sciences led to more intensive knowledge of the parts of the body and their functions, including the circulation of blood. Acupuncture was first mentioned in the historical records of the Han Period. All and all, the Chinese were more drawn to practical scientific experimentation than theory.

Decline of the Han Empire

Although the Han Dynasty lasted for more than four hundred years, its last two hundred years were a time of gradual decline. Defending the long borders from nomadic invasions remained a problem, and the expense became burdensome. The early emperors were successful in reducing the wealth and landholdings of the aristocracy, but by the late Han era, many had regained huge tracts of land and local nobles again controlled peasants in their areas. Official corruption and inefficiency marred the government's ability to effectively rule, and peasant uprisings destabilized many parts of the empire. Like the Zhou before, the Han Dynasty suffered the ill effects of the dynastic cycle, and a period of chaos followed its downfall in 220 C.E. that lasted for 135 years.

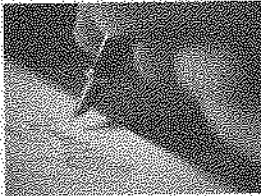
MAURYAN AND GUPTA INDIA

Before the fall of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa in the Indus River Valley, the Aryans had migrated into the Indian sub-continent from their home north of the Black Sea. After 1000 B.C.E., they began to settle in the area between the Himalayan foothills and the Ganges River, and by 500 B.C.E., they had migrated as far south as the Deccan plateau in the south central part of the sub-continent. At first, they probably had a fairly simple society consisting of herders and farmers led by warrior chiefs and priests. As they settled, however, their social complexity grew, especially as they interacted with the native Dravidians.

The Development of the Caste System

The term **caste** – a social class of hereditary and usually unchangeable status – was first used in India by Portuguese merchants and mariners during the 16th century C.E. when they noticed sharp social distinctions on the Indian sub-continent. The Aryans used the term **varna**, a Sanskrit word meaning “color,” to refer to their social classes. By about 1000 B.C.E., four major varnas were recognized, as explained in a creation myth in which a primordial creature named Purusha was sacrificed:

- **Brahmins** – The highest social classes were the priests and scholars, who sprang from Purusha’s mouth, and represented intellect and knowledge.
- **Kshatriya** – Warriors and government officials sprang from the arms of the creature.
- **Vaishya** – From Purusha’s thighs came the third layer of people – landowners, merchants, and artisans.
- **Shudra** – The creature’s feet were represented by common peasants and laborers.



ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS: THE LAWBOOK OF MANU

Original documents often reflect the values and beliefs of their authors and offer us insight into the societies they belonged to. A good example is the *Lawbook of Manu*, written by an anonymous scribe in the 1st century B.C.E., who attributed it to Manu, founder of the human race according to Indian beliefs. What do these excerpts tell us about early Indian society and culture?

“It is the nature of women to seduce men in this world; for that reason the wise are never unguarded in the company of females...

When women are honored, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honored, no sacred rite yields rewards...

In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent.

She must not seek to separate herself from her father, husband, or sons; by leaving them she would make both her own and her husband’s families contemptible...”

Source: Andrea, Alfred, and James H. Overfield, *The Human Record, Vol. 1*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

During the era between 600 B.C.E. and 600 C.E., the caste system became much more complex, with each caste further subdivided into **jati**, or birth groups, each with its own occupation, duties, and rituals. Each jati had very little contact with others, and its members intermarried and followed the same occupations of the ancestors.

Early Religion and Culture

The period from 1500 to 500 B.C.E. is called the “Vedic Age,” after the **Vedas**, religious texts that were passed down from generation to generation of Aryans in the form of hymns, songs, prayers, and rituals honoring the Aryan gods. The most important is called the **Rig Veda**, compiled between about 1400 and 900 B.C.E., but was not written down until about 600 B.C.E. The Vedas reflect the conflicts between the Aryans and Dravidians, and they identify Indra as the Aryan war god and military hero, as well as gods of the sun, sky, moon, fire, and the underworld. Over the years the Aryan religion blended with beliefs of the Dravidians, as reflected in a body of works called the **Upanishads**, which appeared in the late Vedic Age, about 800 to 400 B.C.E. The Upanishads spoke about a universal spirit known as Brahman, who is eternal and unchanging. A central belief was that through **reincarnation**, the rebirth of a soul after the body dies, the human spirit (**atman**) could eventually join the universal spirit, as long as the human being behaved ethically. Eventually these beliefs came to be called **Hinduism**, the religion of most people that live today in the Indian sub-continent.

A second major world religion, **Buddhism**, began in India during the 6th century B.C.E. Its founder was **Siddhartha Gautama** (563–483 B.C.E.), born to a kshatriya family in the north of India. Although his life as a prince was comfortable and satisfying, he left his family to seek the meaning of life, and eventually experienced an enlightenment that became the foundation of the faith. Siddhartha was called the Buddha (“Enlightened One”), and spent the rest of his life in the area around the Ganges River Valley spreading his knowledge to others. He never claimed to be a god, but after his death, some of his followers elevated him to that status. Although the religion spread, most Indians remained faithful to the old beliefs, and by the 3rd century B.C.E., it looked as if Buddhism was destined to be a small regional religion.

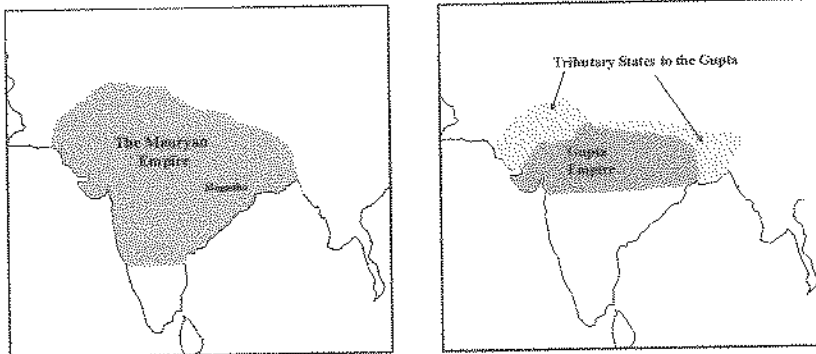
Political Development

Political developments in India greatly impacted the growth of Buddhism, particularly after **Ashoka**, the third and greatest ruler of the **Mauryan Dynasty** converted to it. Before the 4th century B.C.E. India was politically fragmented into separate kinship groups and independent groups. Different terrains – moun-

tains, river valleys, plains, forests, steppes, and deserts – made transportation and communication difficult, and various languages and cultural practices developed. The caste system was in place across the sub-continent, and although religious beliefs were shared, hundreds of jati separated people into groups of identification, so political authority was of only secondary importance. Despite these divisions, the Mauryan Dynasty came to rule a good part of the area for almost 300 years, beginning in the kingdom of Magadha, in eastern India. The kingdom was wealthy and strategically located along the trade routes of the Ganges River Valley, and its leader, Chandragupta Maurya expanded it into India's first centralized empire. His grandson, Ashoka, ruled over the entire sub-continent except for the southern tip of the peninsula. A large imperial army helped the dynasty to maintain control of the area.

Ashoka's early life was spent conquering different regions of India until, according to his own account, he was shocked by the bloodshed at the battle of Kalinga at the midpoint of his reign. He turned to Buddhism because of its emphasis on peace, tolerance, and nonviolence, and he spent the remainder of his years promoting these values. Ashoka's dominant image in Indian history is of a young warrior turned responsible monarch who saw himself as the father of his people. The Mauryan Empire lasted for a time after Ashoka's death in 232 B.C.E., but eventually it collapsed from the pressure of attacks in the northwest. In 184 B.C.E. India returned to its usual political arrangement – fragmented, regional kingdoms – for more than 500 years.

In the early 4th century C.E., a new empire rose to centralize power once again, although it never was as large as the Mauryan Empire had been. The **Gupta Empire** began in the same powerful area, Magadha, with its founder, Chandra



Classical India. Two great empires rose on the Indian subcontinent during the era from 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.: the Mauryan Empire (324-184 B.C.E.) and the Gupta Empire (320-550 C.E.). During the 500+ years between empires, India reverted to the fragmented regional rule that it knew before. The map shows that the earlier empire was quite a bit larger than the later one, which is depicted as it was about 400 C.E.



COMPARISONS: THEATRE STATE IN THE PERSIAN AND GUPTA EMPIRES

A technique used by both the Persians and the Gupta is "theatre state," or the art of awing subjects into remaining loyal to the ruling family. In both empires the ruler took the title "King of Kings," and both required tribute to be brought to their capitals, where a splendid palace, magnificent buildings, beautiful grounds, spectacular entertainment, and ornate court costumes were designed to impress the visitors.

At the Persian capital of Persepolis, visitors first entered the Gate of All Nations, a grand hall where a pair of Lamassus (bulls with the head of a bearded man) stand on the western threshold, and another pair with wings and a Persian head on the eastern entrance, to reflect the Empire's power. The palace at the Gupta capital of Pataliputra was described by a Buddhist monk, Faxian, as too beautiful to have been built by human hands, but instead was "all made by spirits which [King Ashoka] employed."

Reference: Legge, James, *The Travels of Fa-hien: Fa-hien's Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*. Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1971.

Gupta, modeling himself after the Mauryan founder by borrowing his name. The Gupta Empire was not only smaller, but it also never had as much control over regional lords as the Maurya had, particularly under Ashoka. The Gupta did not build a genuine bureaucracy to rule their subjects, but instead were content to draw tribute from them, allowing regional warrior elites a great deal of autonomy to rule their areas.

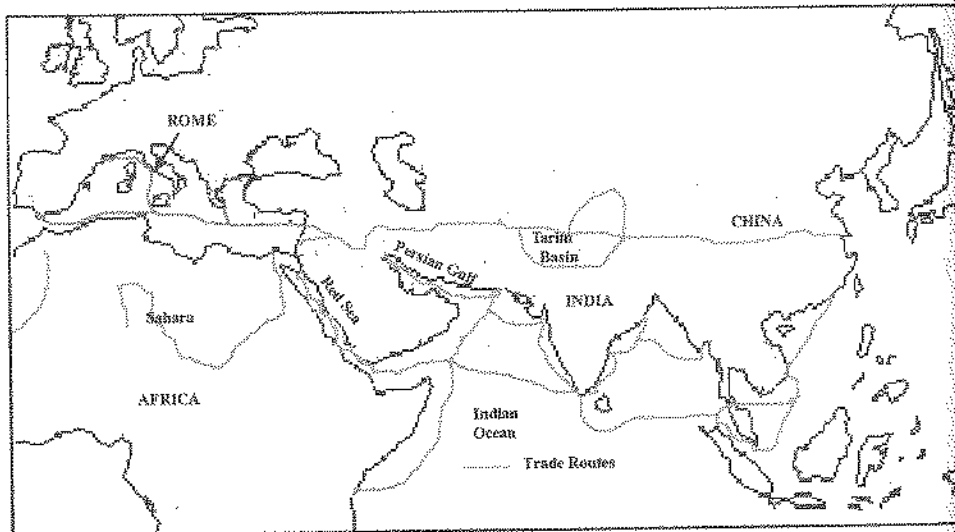
TRANSREGIONAL TRADE PATTERNS AND CONTACTS

One important change in world history between 600 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. was the intensification and expansion of trade networks and communication patterns among the major civilizations. These trade networks were often controlled by nomads that lived in the vast expanses between civilizations and on their outskirts. As a result of these growing networks, many more areas of the world were interacting and becoming increasingly dependent on one another. Three large trade networks that developed in the Eastern Hemisphere between 300 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. were the Silk Road, the Indian Ocean trade, and the Saharan trade.

The Silk Road

This fabled trade route that extended overland from Xi'an in China to the eastern Mediterranean had its beginnings in the late 2nd century B.C.E. when a Chinese general named Zhang Jian made his way to the Tarim Basin in central Asia on an exploratory journey. There he discovered "heavenly horses" that were far better than any that had been bred in China. The Chinese had many goods to trade, including their highly prized silk, and with the discovery of the horses, they now had something that they wanted in return. The Tarim Basin was connected by trade routes to civilizations to the west, and by 100 B.C.E. Greeks could buy Chinese silk from traders in Mesopotamia, who in turn traded for the silk with nomads that came from the Tarim Basin. Although the Romans and Chinese probably never actually met, goods made it from one end of the Silk Road to the other, making all people along the route aware of the presence of others. Traders going west from China carried peaches, apricots, cinnamon, ginger, and other spices, as well as precious silk. Traders going east carried alfalfa (for the horses), grapes, pistachios, sesame, and spinach. Many other goods travelled along parts of the route, so that inventions in any place within access could make their way to other people. For example, the **stirrup** was probably invented in what is now northern Afghanistan, and warriors in many places realized what an advantage the stirrup gave them in battle, so its use spread to faraway China and Europe.

The Silk Road was essentially held together by pastoral nomads of Central Asia who supplied animals to transport goods and food and drink needed by



Trade Routes. Extensive interconnecting trade routes developed in the Eastern Hemisphere during the time period between 300 B.C.E. and 600 C.E.

the caravan parties. For periodic payments by merchants and bureaucrats, they provided protection from bandits and raiding parties. They insured the smooth operation of the trade routes, allowing not only goods to travel, but also ideas, customs, and religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism.

The Indian Ocean Maritime System

Water travel from the northern tip of the Red Sea southward goes back to the days of the river valley civilization, with the Ancient Egyptians probably trading with areas along the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Likewise, other shorter water routes had developed in coastal areas around the Indian Ocean. During this era, however, these routes connected to one another to form a vast trade network that extended from southeastern China to Africa. Like the traders along the Silk Road, most Indian Ocean traders only traveled part of the route back and forth on one of its three legs: 1) southeastern China to Southeast Asia; 2) Southeast Asia to the eastern coast of India; and 3) the western coast of India to the Red Sea and the eastern coast of Africa.



COMPARISON: TRAVEL ON THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

Differences in the physical geography of the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea shaped different techniques and technologies for water travel in ancient times. The Mediterranean's calm waters meant that sails had to be designed to pick up what little wind they could, so large, square sails were developed. The most famous of the ships, the Greek trireme, also had three tiers of oars operated by 170 rowers. In contrast, sailing on the Indian Ocean had to take into account the strong seasonal monsoon winds that blew in one direction during the spring and the opposite direction during the fall. Indian Ocean vessels did without oars, and used the **lateen sail** (roughly triangular with squared off points) for maneuverability through the strong winds. The boats were small, with planks tied together by palm fiber, whereas Mediterranean sailors nailed their ships together. Mediterranean sailors usually stayed close to shore because they could not rely on winds to carry them over the open water. In contrast, the monsoon winds allowed Indian Ocean sailors to go for long distances across water.

Countless products traveled along the Indian Ocean routes, including ivory from Africa, India, and Mesopotamia; frankincense and myrrh (fragrances) from southern Arabia; pearls from the Persian Gulf; spices from India and Southeast Asia; and manufactured goods and pottery from China.

Trade Routes across the Sahara

In earlier times, the vast Sahara Desert of northern Africa formed a formidable geographic barrier between the people of Sub-Saharan Africa and those that lived to its north and east. The introduction of the camel to the area (probably in the 1st century B.C.E.) made it possible to establish trade caravans across the desert. Camels probably reached the Sahara from Arabia by way of Egypt, and in both areas effective camel saddles were developed to allow trade goods to be carried. One incentive for Saharan trade was the demand for desert salt, and traders from Sub-Saharan Africa brought forest products from the south, such as kola nuts and palm oil, to be exchanged for the salt. Extensive trade routes connected different areas of Sub-Saharan Africa, so that the connection of eastern Africa to the Indian Ocean trade meant that goods from much of Sub-Saharan Africa could make their way to Asia and the Mediterranean. These desert routes were to extend substantially in later years, but the connections of these early years were an important beginning.

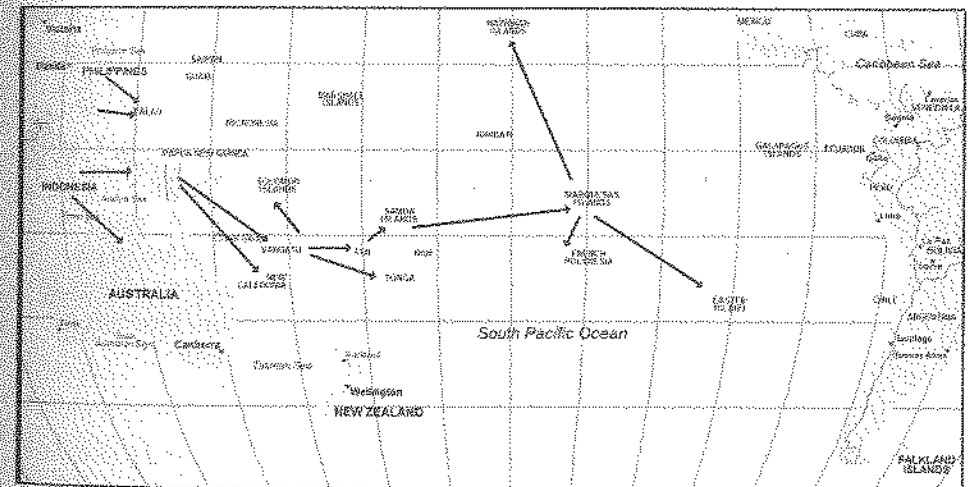
SIGNIFICANT MIGRATIONS

Between 200 and 600 C.E., for reasons that are not all clear, a number of major migrations occurred, with some directly impacting the major civilizations. Some of these migrations are:

- **The Huns** – During the late 4th century C.E. the nomadic Huns began an aggressive westward migration from their homeland in central Asia. They had invaded China centuries earlier, and their motivation for movement in this later era was probably related to drought and competition for grazing lands. During the mid-5th century, **Attila** organized the Huns into a great attacking army, invading Hungary, crossing Roman frontiers in the Balkans, and venturing into Gaul and northern Italy. By the late 5th century the Huns were pouring into the Indian subcontinent. Defense of the frontier exhausted the Gupta's treasury, and the empire collapsed by 550.
- **Germanic People** – As the Huns moved westward, they competed for pasture land with various Germanic people who they displaced. The Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Angles, Saxons, and Vandals began to move as well. Even though the Huns dispersed after Attila's death, they showed the vulnerability of the Romans, and the Germanic groups took

full advantage. They spent much of their time fighting one another, and the Romans encouraged this behavior to keep them weak. However, by the 4th and 5th centuries the Germanic tribes roamed through the western provinces without much resistance from the Romans, and the tribal war chiefs began creating their own kingdoms that eventually evolved into European countries. For example, the Franks settled in what would become France, and the Angles and Saxons invaded and conquered England in the 5th century.

- **Bantu** – The Bantu most likely originated in an area south of the Sahara Desert in the region around modern Nigeria. They may have begun leaving their homeland as early as 2000 B.C.E., possibly because of **desertification**, or the expansion of the Sahara Desert that dried out their agricultural lands. They traveled for centuries all over Sub-Saharan Africa, but retained many of their customs, including their Bantu language. As their language spread, it combined with others, but still retained enough similarity to the original that the family of Bantu languages can still be recognized over a huge expanse of territory. Unlike the surges by the Huns and Germanic people, the Bantu migrations were quite gradual, so that by 600 C.E., the Bantu migrations had introduced agriculture, iron metallurgy, and the Bantu language to most regions of Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Polynesians** – Although their efforts did not immediately impact civilizations on mainland Eurasia, the peopling of the islands of the Pacific Ocean (**Oceania**) was quite a remarkable feat. Like the Bantu, the migration was gradual, but between 1500 B.C.E. and 1000 C.E., almost all the major



islands west of New Guinea were visited, and many were settled. The people, now called Polynesians, came from mainland Asia, and expanded eastward to Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. They left no written records, so our knowledge of them relies on archaeological evidence, accounts by early European sailors, and oral traditions. Their ships were great double canoes that carried a platform between two hulls and large triangular sails that helped them catch ocean winds. The distances they travelled were remarkably long, and by the time the Europeans arrived in the 18th century, the Polynesians had explored and colonized almost every habitable island in the vast Pacific Ocean.

THE FALL OF GREAT EMPIRES

In the centuries between 200 and 600 C.E., Rome, Han China, and the Gupta Empire collapsed, at least in part. The western part of the Roman Empire fell, the Han Dynasty ended in disarray, and the Gupta Empire in India fragmented into regions. Some common reasons include:

- **Attacks by nomadic groups** – The migration of the Huns from their homeland in central Asia impacted all three civilizations as they moved east, south, and west. Their movement caused other groups to move out of their way, causing a domino effect that put pressure on Rome, India, and China.
- **Serious internal problems** – All the empires had trouble maintaining political control over their vast lands, and were ultimately unable to keep their empires together. No governments had ever spread their authority over so much land space, and perhaps it was inevitable that their sheer sizes could not be maintained. In Rome and Han China, disputes between large landowners and peasants created instability and unrest.
- **The problems of interdependence** – Just as the earlier civilizations collapsed or suffered severe strain in the time period around 1200 B.C.E., these civilizations all ended before 600 C.E. When one weakened it impacted all, as trade routes became vulnerable when imperial armies could no longer protect them or when the economic resources necessary for trade were no longer available. Disease spread along the trade routes, killing people that would not have died had they not been in contact with others. Some estimates are that each civilization lost as many as half its citizens during this time.

Despite their similarities, decline and fall had very different consequences for the three civilizations. Only one – Rome – did not retain its identity after it fell. India and China lost their political unity, but they did not permanently lose their

identity as civilizations, and both eventually reorganized into major world powers. The Roman Empire was destined to never regain its former identity, but instead fell into many pieces that retained separate orientations. Why? What were the differences? Part of the answer lies in what happened next in the story of the world – political power is not the only “glue” that holds a civilization together. In the period before and after 600 C.E. the most important sources of identity were religious, with older religions and philosophies, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism growing in influence that transcended political boundaries. An important new religion was on the horizon as well. Islam was destined to become the force behind one of the most remarkable land expansions in world history, a path made easier because it appeared at a time when the old political empires of Rome, China, and India had fallen.

In this new era of religious unity, Rome fell short. Christianity had become its official religion during the 4th century C.E., too late to be a unifying force for the failing empire. When political and military power failed, nothing was left except crumbling material architecture, symbols of a past era. However, the Indian subcontinent was bound together by Hinduism, and the intricate caste loyalties that supported it, so that the fall of the Gupta had only a limited impact on the civilization’s development. Likewise, Confucianism had become such a part of the identity of the Han Chinese that the fall of the dynasty was not a fatal blow to the civilization. Chaos did characterize the period, but the Chinese civilization lived on to reassert its true character when political stability returned.

CONCEPTS AND IDENTIFICATIONS

1. “3rd century crisis”
2. Actium
3. Alexander the Great
4. Aristotle
5. Ashoka
6. atman
7. Attila
8. Augustus Caesar (Octavian)
9. Buddhism
10. calligraphy
11. castes, varna, jati
12. Cleisthenes
13. Cleopatra
14. Confucianism
15. Constantine
16. consuls (Rome)
17. Cyrus the Great

↳ See vocab chart for what to include!
 ✱✱ Please # each vocab card for pd. #2 - Classical Civs.

18. Daoism
 19. Delian League
 20. desertification
 21. Diocletian
 22. equites
 23. Etruscans
 24. forbidden city
 25. Great Wall
 26. Greek "Classical Age"
 27. Gupta Empire
 28. Han Wudi
 29. Hellenic culture
 30. Hellenistic synthesis
 31. helots
 32. Hinduism
 33. hoplites
 34. Julius Caesar
 35. Laozi
 36. lateen sail
 37. Law of the Twelve Tables
 38. Legalism
 39. Marathon
 40. Mark Antony
 41. Mauryan Dynasty
 42. Minoans
 43. monarchies, aristocracies, democracies
 44. Mycenaeans
 45. natural law
 46. Oceania
 47. patricians, plebeians
 48. patron-client relationships
 49. Pax Romana
 50. Peloponnesian War
 51. Pericles
 52. Phoenicians
 53. phonetic alphabet
 54. Plato
 55. polis
 56. princeps
 57. Punic Wars
 58. Qin Dynasty
 59. reincarnation

60. Roman Republic, Roman Empire
 61. satraps
 62. scholar-gentry
 63. secularism
 64. Senate (Rome)
 65. Shi Huangdi
 66. Siddhartha Gautama
 67. Socrates
 68. stirrup (importance of)
 69. Terra Cotta Army
 70. tribunes (Rome)
 71. Triumvirate (Rome)
 72. tyrants (Greece)
 73. Upanishads
 74. Vedas, Rig Veda
 75. Virgil
 76. Warring States Period (China)
 77. Xerxes