

Chapter 1 – Early River Valley Civilizations

Origins of civilization – date to 3500 BCE, but most in decline by 1000 BCE

- 1st civilization: Middle East along banks of Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the Fertile Crescent, Mesopotamia
- Northeast Africa: Egypt, along Nile
- northwestern India: around 2500 BCE, along Indus River
- northern China (approx. 2500 BCE) – developed separately from other 3 civilizations
- Central America: developed independently

Spread of people: small groups spread to all corners of world (little contact with each other). Spread of farming and new technology cuts into local isolation. Trade enters picture, producing more contacts. At first, commerce centered on regional contacts, then spread to include outlying areas, and some routes went even greater distances.

Civilization: from the Latin term for “of the citizens”. First used by the Romans.

Barbarians: Term used by the Greeks to refer to all outsiders, means “those who cannot speak Greek”.

Chinese, Aztecs, Greeks, and Romans all saw the boundaries between the civilized and barbarian as cultural, not biological.

All societies produce cultures – but not all societies generate surplus production that permits levels of specialization, scale, and complexity that distinguish civilizations from other modes of social organization.

Tigris-Euphrates Civilization: Mesopotamia

- developed from scratch, with no examples from any place else to imitate
- familiar with bronze, copper
- developed wheel
- well-established pottery industry
- irrigation needs required high coordination, leading to development of complex political structures
- business class more independent than that found in Egypt
- **Sumerians:**
 1. developed 1st known human writing – cuneiform alphabet (scribes wrote on clay tablets)
 2. dev. system of numbers based on unites of 10, 60, 360 still used in calculating circles and hours
 3. charts of major constellations
 4. used wheeled carts, developed fertilizer
 5. religion: polytheistic, many gods in natural forces and natural objects. belief in afterlife of punishment (hell)
 6. first monumental architecture: ziggurats (religious temples)
 7. political: tightly organized city-states, king with divine authority, state with defined boundaries, court system

- 8. social: king with a military leader. Land in hands of king, nobles, priests. Land worked by slaves
- 9. slavery: warfare needed to ensure supply of slaves, many slaves able to earn money and some buy their freedom.
- 10. economy: adopted silver as means of exchange
- Sumerians conquered by Akkadians, who in turn, were conquered by **Babylonians**.
 1. Ruler of note: King Hammurabi
 2. Law Code: procedures for courts of law, regulated property rights, duties of family members, harsh punishment for crimes

Egyptian Civilization:

- formed by 3000 BCE
- benefited from trade and technological influence of Mesopotamia
- less open to invasion
- Political: remained unified thru most of its history. King: godlike status, had immense power.
- Economy: more govt. directed than Mesopotamia, possibly because of irrigation needs of people.
- Monumental architecture: pyramids (burial tombs), palaces
- Influence: spread up Nile to area now called Sudan and kingdom of Kush, (architectural forms are example)
- Technology: math more advanced than in Mesopotamia, produced the idea of a 24-hour day
- Believed in the afterlife
- Influence of Egypt: seen in temple buildings in Greece
- invasion and political decline marked firm break between river valley institutions and those that would later develop

Indian Civilization:

- urban civil. developed along Indus River by 2500 BCE
- cities: Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro
- recurrent contact with Mesopotamia through trade and war
- houses had running water
- Writing: distinctive alphabet (not yet deciphered)
- waves of invasion produce a break in the history, which accounts for lack of knowledge about links between river valley institutions and those that would later develop

Chinese Civilization:

- developed along Hwang He (Yellow River)
- developed in isolation – some overland trading contacts with India and Middle East

- Political: organized state that carefully regulated irrigation, Shang ruling by 1500 BCE
- Technology: ride horses, used bronze, producing iron by 1000 BCE, worked with coal
- Writing: from knotted ropes to ideographic symbols
- Artistic achievement: pottery making, no monumental architecture due limited natural resources (houses made of mud), production of silk (traded with Egypt)
- Hwang He civilization flowed more fully into later Chinese civilizations (in contrast with India and Egypt)

Influence of Mesopotamia and Egypt:

- seen along eastern shores of Mediterranean
- Middle East sees rise of smaller regional cultures – who survive, thrive, and influence other parts of the world
- Phoenicians:
 1. simplified alphabet with 22 letters – Greeks would add final 4 letters
 2. great traders – set up colony cities in North Africa and coasts of Europe
 3. by 1000 BCE, trading with Britain for metals (bought lead to make bronze)
- Lydians:
 1. first introduced coin money
- Jews:
 1. developed 1st monotheistic religion: a single god Jehovah guided people, God had special compact with the chosen Jewish people.
No focus on converting non-Jews.
Religion and moral code persisted through domination by other peoples.
Distinctive Jewish culture remains to this day.
Basis for development of both Christianity and Islam.
 2. Religion was for the Jews a way of life
 3. settled around Mediterranean around 1200 BCE

Middle East in general:

- where civilization first appeared
- break between riverine empires and civilizations of Greece and Persia that would later dominate region
- development of smaller cultures provided bridge linking river valley period and later Middle Eastern society

Chapter 2 Classical Civilization: China

Patterns in classical China:

China maintained clearest links to classical past - **the dynastic cycle**: a family of kings, called a dynasty, would start rule in China with great vigor (seen in political, economic, and social terms), then dynasty grew weaker and tax revenues declined. Internal rebellions or invasions hastened decline. Another dynasty arose to take its place, and pattern started again.

Dynasties of classical China:

1. Zhou 1029-258 BCE (flourished until 700 BCE).
 - starting in 700 BCE, saw decline in political infrastructure, frequent invasions by nomadic peoples
 - during times of strength, did not establish powerful govt, but ruled through alliance system, involving regional princes and noble families
 - rule through **alliance system (used in Japan, India, Europe, Africa)**: no way to control large territories directly, so gave regional estates to family members and other supporters. Hopefully everyone would remain loyal. These people were to provide central govt with troops and tax revenues.
 - came into China from north, displacing the Shang rulers. Used political concept of the **Mandate of Heaven**: justification for Chinese rule, heaven transferred its mandate to rule from one dynasty to another (people knew because dynasty was experiencing trouble, and problems were attributed to the gods or heaven withdrawing favor from the dynasty).
 - extended territory of China – took over Yangtze River valley. The stretch from the Hwang He to Yantze became China's core – called the **Middle Kingdom**.
 - rich agricultural lands – wheat in the north, rice in the south.
 - promoted linguistic unity, early support for standard language (Mandarin) for educated officials. Still relied on regional dialects
 - regional rulers formed independent armies
 - **Era of the Warring States**: 402-201 BCE. Period during which the Zhou system disintegrated.
2. Qin 221-202 BCE
 - Regional ruler Qin Shih Huangdi deposed last Zhou emperor. Took name of **First Emperor** and gave China the **Qin** dynasty
 - Political: classic model of central govt - assumed control of estates, organized into large provinces ruled by bureaucrats appointed by emperor. Emperor's ministers given control of special areas such as finance, justice. Armies crushed resistance. Attacked local rulers, provided single law code, established uniform tax system

- Territory: extended south to Hong Kong on South China Sea, influenced northern Vietnam.
- Protection: built **Great Wall** – over 3000 miles, wide enough for chariots, built by forced labor from the peasantry
- Huangdi became unpopular: autocratic rule, high taxes. Died in 210 BCE – massive peasant revolts followed.

Qin Achievements:

- national census to determine taxes and labor force.
- standardized coinage, weights, measures
- road planning, irrigation projects, promoted manufacture of silk cloth
- made Chinese written script uniform, creating single basic language

3. Han 202 BCE – 220 CE

- established by peasant leader in 202 BCE
- territory: expanded into Korea, Indochina, central Asia. Led to direct trade with India and indirect trade with Roman Empire.
- Wu Ti – most famous Han ruler – enforced peace
- dynasty marked by peace and prosperity
- govt officially promoted values of Confucian philosophy (Confucian 5 relationships)
- economy: organized production of salt and iron. Standardized currency, weights, and measures, for purposes of trade. Sponsored public works – irrigation, canals
- decline of the Han: central control weakened, invasions by Huns (nomadic people from central Asia)

Politics during the Han (bureaucracy):

- Politics: realized importance of large, highly skilled bureaucracy. Wu Ti **established examination system for bureaucrats – first example of civil service exams that many govts use today.** expanded powers of bureaucracy. This structure allowed for effective rule of vast empire – **Chinese empire largest political system in classical world.** Most tightly governed people in world.
- Examinations: covered classic Chinese literature, law, Confucian principles.
- Good prospects for political service: man who demonstrates proper family virtues
- Bureaucrats: Wu Ti established school to train men of ability for the national exams. Most bureaucrats from landed upper classes (they had free time to study), some from lower ranks occasionally recruited. Referred to as scholar-bureaucrats.
- Bureaucracy: checks on complete upper class rule, limited arbitrary power of emperor
- **Chinese bureaucracy lasted from Han period until 20th century**
- operated military (but not highly militaristic)
- judicial system: courts, strict code of law, torture and execution widely used
- obligations of citizens: pay taxes, required annual labor on part of every male peasant

Political framework characteristic of both dynasties:

- strong local units never disappeared, but they were not most distinctive feature of Chinese govt
- • relied heavily on patriarchal families (Confucian 5 relationships)
- • among wealthy, family authority enhanced by practice of ancestor worship
- ordinary people relied more on village authority than family rule
- attacked local warrior-landlords

Religion and Culture:

1. Leaders stressed harmonious earthly life.
 - harmony includes rituals: chopsticks used at end of Zhou, encouraged politeness
2. Confucius: philosopher, devoted life to teaching
 - preached ideas of political virtue and good govt
 - **Chinese govt is unusual in that the dominant values were secular rather than religious.**
 - Confucian 5 relationships (the hierarchy) lead to balance and harmony in society
 - leaders should behave modestly, venerate custom and ritual, love wisdom, and live without excess
 - Confucianism was system of ethics – do unto others as your status and theirs dictate. Doctrine found in book called *Analects*.
 - emphasized personal restraint, careful socialization of children
 - ideal gentleman: generous, self-controlled, courteous, eager to serve, anxious to learn
3. polytheistic beliefs, especially spirits of nature, persisted among peasants
3 systems of beliefs guaranteed that China would not be united by single religion or philosophy
- 4. Legalism – system of political thought
 - human nature was evil and required restraint
 - favored rule by force – use of army
- 5. Daoism – more religious philosophy
 - arose same time as Confucianism
 - Lao-zi (Lao-tsu) person associated with Daoism.
 - Nature contains divine impulse that directs life. Withdraw from world and meditate on the life force, called Dao, or the *way of nature*.
 - political activity and learning irrelevant to a good life
6. Art/architecture
 - Five Classics – literature consisting of poems, speeches, historical treatises
 - art largely decorative – calligraphy important art form, carved jade and ivory, wove silk screens

ruler to subject
husband to wife
older bro to younger
father to son
friend to friend

- no monumental architecture – except Great Wall, some palaces.
- achievements: accurate calendar with 365.5 days, calculated movement of planets, seismograph, math stressed the practical.

Economy and Society

3 Social classes in classical China: (from top to bottom)

- top – landowning aristocracy and educated bureaucrats (Mandarin)
- next – laboring masses and peasants (life of hard manual labor), urban artisans (who manufactured goods).
- “mean” people – applied to those without meaningful skills. Performing artists and household slaves in this group. Lowest possible status.
- large gap between upper class (controlled landed estates) and the masses, mainly farmer-peasants (subsistence agriculture)

*** China did not depend on slaves

→ Trade:

- became increasingly important (especially during the Han)
- Confucian emphasis on learning and political service honored: making money was not. Merchants did not enjoy status in Confucian China.
- **NOTE:** gap between the wealth and importance of the merchant class and their low status the enduring legacy in Confucian China.

→ Tech advancements: **China reached higher levels of technical expertise than Europe or western Asia in same period – maintained lead for long period of time.**

- ox-drawn plows
- new collar for draft animals (preventing choking)
- iron mining with pulleys and winding gears
- first water-powered mills introduced during Han period
- paper invented during the Han period
- highly skilled in pottery and textile production

→ Economy: China maintained its reliance on agriculture despite the available technology.

Family:

- culture emphasized the family as the center of an orderly, serene society
- Confucian Five Relationships stressed: husband to wife, father to son, friend to friend, ruler to subject, employer to employee
- women: subordinate, clearly defined roles.
- children: boys superior to girls, oldest son superior to other siblings
- inheritance rules same for everyone: primogeniture – oldest male child inherits property and position

Wrap-up on Classical China:

- evolved with little outside contact- this unusual isolation is persistent in later world history
- Chinese saw all outsiders as barbarians who had nothing to offer other than invasion
- belief systems – Buddhism from India, Confucianism, Daoism

Chapter 3 Notes Classical India

Contrast:

China – focus on politics and related philosophical values

India – religion and social structure (pol. structure less cohesive and central)

Framework for Indian history:

India open to influence

- from Middle East, Mediterranean, Persian empires
- Alex the Great invaded India, allowed Indian contacts with Hellenistic culture.

Importance of topography: divisions within the subcontinent made full political unity difficult

- agricultural regions along Indus and Ganges
- herding along mountainous northern regions
- southern coastal rim – trade and seafaring economy
- NOTE: separate regions explain economic diversity but racial and language differences

Formative period: includes the Vedic and Epic Ages

- time of Aryan invasions – Indo-European migrants, hunting and herding peoples originally from Central Asia.
- Aryans responsible for literary epics – first in oral tradition, later written in **Sanskrit**, first language of new culture.
- Epics: *Rig-Veda*, *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Upanishads*
- beginning of **caste system** – way to establish relationships between Aryan conquerors and indigenous people, whom Aryans regarded as inferior.
 1. **Brahmins** priestly class at top.
 2. **Kshatriyas** warrior or governing class
 3. **Vaisyas** - traders and farmers
 4. **Sudras** - common laborers (worked on large estates)
 5. **Untouchables** – fifth group that evolved, confined to a few jobs like transporting dead bodies or hauling refuse

Gradually these 5 groups became hereditary – marriage between castes forbidden and punishable by death. Basic castes divided into smaller subgroups – **Jati**

- Religion: Aryans brought polytheism.
 1. Certain animals regarded as sacred, embodying the divine spirit.
 2. Rituals become important
 3. Religion incorporates elements of mystical nature – idea of divine force and the desire to seek union with this force.
 4. Toward end of Epic Age, one religious leader **Gautama Buddha** built on this mysticism to create what became **Buddhism**.

Patterns in classical India:

- end of formative period approx. 600 BCE
- 16 major states existed by 600 BCE in plains of northern India
- 327 BCE Alexander the Great established small border state of Bactria

Mauryan Empire

- 322 BCE - reaction against invasion by Alexander prompted young soldier named Chandragupta to seize power along Ganges River
- first of the Mauryan dynasty of rulers
- also includes Ashoka

Chandragupta:

- autocratic ruler – used his personal and military power
- chose female warriors to guard his palace
- unified much of the subcontinent
- Using Persian and Alexander's example, he maintained large armies and elephant-borne troops
- developed substantial bureaucracy and postal service
- improved trade and communication

Ashoka: Chandragupta's grandson

- great figure in Indian history
- conquests: gained control of all but southern tip of India through fierce fighting, known for bloodthirsty methods
- converted to Buddhism: believed in **dharma** or the law of moral consequences
- promoted Buddhism while honoring Hinduism
- sent out Buddhist missionaries
- sponsored extensive road network with wells and rest stops for travelers
- after Ashoka died, empire began to fall apart. Regional kingdoms surfaced as well as invaders (Kushans, who collapsed about 220 CE)

Gupta Empire

- Begin 320 CE – established a large empire
- did not produce individual rulers as influential as Chandragupta and Ashoka
- Gupta rulers preferred to negotiate with local princes and intermarry with their families. Way to expand influence without constant fighting
- 200 years of Gupta rule gave India its greatest period of political stability
- overturned in 535 CE by invasion of nomadic warriors, the **Huns**.

Political Institutions

- did not develop solid political traditions and institutions like Chinese
- most persistent political features: regionalism, diversity in political forms
- Gupta
 1. demanding taxation system
 2. did not create extensive bureaucracy – allow local rulers they had defeated to maintain regional control as long as they deferred to Gupta dominance.
 3. Sanskrit became language of educated people – diversity of popular, regional languages remained
 4. **political service or interest in politics not characteristic of India – but it was very important in China, Greece, and Rome.**
 5. Religion did not stress importance of politics
- 6. caste system and performance of duties served purposes normally expected of conventional govt structures
- 7. caste system most rigid social structure of any classical civilization
- 8. Caste system provided way for diverse peoples to live together peacefully.
- 9. Extensive outright slavery was avoided
- 10. the rules for each caste made complex political administration less necessary
- 11. religion was the cultural cement – Buddhism, Hinduism

Religion and Culture

Hinduism:

- majority religion
- no single founder, no central holy figure
- different forms of religion: strictly ritualistic to mysticism (gurus seeking communion with the divine soul)
- Hinduism's success due to its ability to adapt to needs of various groups. Was tolerant and able to coexist with other religions
- Hinduism became an increasingly formal religion
- basic holy essence, called **Brahma**, formed part of everything in this divine principle. Brahma enters the gods, like Vishnu and Shiva
- belief in reincarnation: souls do not die when bodies do but pass into other beings, either human or animal. Where soul goes, depends on how good a life the person had led. Soul reaches full union with soul of Brahma, and worldly suffering stops.
- worship of these gods aids process of reincarnation to higher caste
- central emphasis on the moral law of **dharma** as guide to living
- Hinduism reinforced the caste system

Buddhism:

- 563 BCE – Indian prince Guatama born
- Guatama called “Buddha” and “enlightened one”
- lived life as Hindu mystic – fasting and torturing his body
- Rejected: caste system
ritual and ceremony
priests
- ultimate goal – union with the divine essence, a state called **nirvana**
- Buddhism grew due to conversion by Ashoka
- did not see a permanent following in India
- Buddhism sees greatest success in: Southeast Asia, island of Sri Lanka, China, Korea, and Japan

Achievements:

- calculated the daily rotation of the earth
- predicted and explained eclipses
- developed theory of gravity
- identified 7 planets
- Medicine: bone setting, plastic surgery, vaccine against smallpox (use cowpox serum)
- numbering system we use today (we call it Arabic because Europeans imported it secondhand from Arabs), invented concept of zero and decimal system
- concept of negative numbers
- calculated square roots and a table of sines
- computed value of π more accurately than Greeks
- steel was best in world (alloy of iron, nickel)
- textile techniques advanced – subcontinent became the first to manufacture cotton cloth, calico, and cashmere

Economy and Society

As agriculture became better organized and improved technology reduced women’s economic contributions, the stress on male authority expanded. Common pattern in agricultural societies.

- low caste peoples had few legal rights, servants often abused by masters
- dominance of husbands and fathers remained strong
- rights of women became increasingly limited as Indian civilization took shape
- arranged marriage to ensure solid economic links
- married young girls had no voice in their new family
- emphasis on loving relations and sexual pleasure
- small children often pampered
- families formed economic units: children expected to work hard, adults assist older relatives
- patriarchal family: when compared to China, subtle difference. Women just as subordinate, but Indian culture allowed for strong-willed women to develop.

- economy in classical period rivaled China in technology and surpassed it in prosperity of upper classes

Trade:

- emphasis on trade and merchant activity was far greater in India than China or the Mediterranean world
- • merchants enjoyed relatively high caste status – not so in China
- traded by land and by sea to Middle East and East Asia
- southern Indians (Tamils) traded cotton and silks, dyes, drugs, gold, ivory
- traders returned with pottery, wine, metals, some slaves, gold
- trade with Southeast Asia very active
- **economy remained firmly agricultural – most people lived at subsistence level**
- wealth unevenly divided

Indian Influence: serves as early example of major civilization expanding its influence well beyond its own regions

- Indian Ocean, dominated by Indian merchants and missionaries, most active link among cultures
- carried goods and influences well beyond the subcontinent's borders
- many Indian merchants married into local royal families
- Buddhism spread from India to many parts of Southeast Asia
- Hinduism converted many upper-class people

Wrap-up:

- • classical period lasted longer than that of China and Rome
- even after the Guptas were gone, an identifiable civilization remained in India