

Period 2 – Organization and Reorganization of Human Societies, 600 BCE to 600 CE, Bulliet, chapters 4-8; Strayer Online, chapters 3-6 (4 weeks, 15% of AP Exam)

• **Key Concept 2.1. The Development and Codification of Religious and Cultural Traditions**

As states and empires increased in size, and contacts between regions multiplied, people transformed their religious and cultural systems. Religions and belief systems provided a social bond and an ethical code to live by. These shared beliefs also influenced and reinforced political, economic, and occupational stratification. Religious and political authority often merged as rulers (some of whom were considered divine) used religion, along with military and legal structures, to justify their rule and ensure its continuation. Religions and belief systems also generated conflict, partly because beliefs and practices varied greatly within and among societies. **As states and empires increased in size and contacts between regions intensified, human communities transformed their religious and ideological beliefs and practices.**

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

A. The association of monotheism with **Judaism** further developed with the codification of the Hebrew Scriptures, which also reflected the influence of Mesopotamian cultural and legal traditions. The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Roman empires conquered various Jewish states at different points in time. These conquests contributed to the growth of Jewish diasporic communities around the Mediterranean and Middle East.

B. The core beliefs outlined in the Sanskrit scriptures formed the basis of the Vedic religions—developing later into what was known as **Hinduism**, a monistic belief system. These beliefs included the importance of multiple manifestations of brahman and teachings about dharma and reincarnation, and they contributed to the development of the social and political roles of a caste system.

II. New belief systems and cultural traditions emerged and spread, often asserting universal truths.

A. The core beliefs preached by the historic Buddha and collected by his followers in sutras and other scriptures were, in part, a reaction to the Vedic beliefs and rituals dominant in South Asia. **Buddhism** branched into many schools and changed over time as it spread throughout Asia— first through the support of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka, and then through the efforts of missionaries and merchants and the establishment of educational institutions to promote Buddhism’s core teachings.

B. **Confucianism’s** core beliefs and writings originated in the writings and lessons of Confucius. They were elaborated by key disciples, including rulers such as Wudi, who sought to promote social harmony by outlining proper rituals and social relationships for all people in China.

C. In major Daoist writings, the core belief of balance between humans and nature assumed that the Chinese political system would be altered indirectly. **Daoism** also influenced the development of Chinese culture.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, INFLUENCE OF DAOISM ON CHINESE CULTURE:

- Medical theories and practices
- Poetry
- Metallurgy
- Architecture

D. Core beliefs of **Christianity** were based on the teachings, divinity, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded by his disciples and drew on Judaism as well as Roman and Hellenistic influences. Despite initial Roman imperial hostility, Christianity spread through the efforts of missionaries, merchants, and early saints through many parts of Afro–Eurasia and eventually gained Roman imperial support by the time of Emperor Constantine.

E. Greco–Roman religious and **philosophical traditions** offered diverse perspectives on the study of the natural world, the connection to the divine, and the nature of political power and hierarchy. Some of these perspectives emphasized logic, empirical observation, and scientific investigation.

F. Art and architecture reflected the values of religions and belief systems.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, ART AND ARCHITECTURE:

- Hindu art and architecture
- Buddhist art and architecture
- Christian art and architecture
- Greco-Roman art and architecture

III. Belief systems generally reinforced existing social structures while also offering new roles and status to some men and women.

A. Confucianism emphasized filial piety.

B. Some Buddhists and Christians practiced a monastic life.

IV. Other religious and cultural traditions continued and in some places, were incorporated into major religious traditions.

A. Shamanism, animism, and ancestor veneration continued in their traditional forms in some instances, and in others were incorporated into other religious traditions

• **Key Concept 2.2. The Development of States and Empires**

As the early states and empires grew in number, size, and population, they frequently competed for resources and came into conflict with one another. In quest of land, wealth, and security, some empires expanded dramatically. In doing so, they built powerful military machines and administrative institutions that were capable of organizing human activities over long distances, and they created new groups of military and political elites to manage their affairs. As these empires expanded their boundaries, they also faced the need to develop policies and procedures to govern their relationships with ethnically and culturally diverse populations, sometimes to integrate them within an imperial society and sometimes to exclude them. In some cases, the successes of these empires created further problems. By expanding their boundaries too far, they created political, cultural, and administrative difficulties that they could not manage. They also experienced environmental, social, and economic problems when they over-utilized their lands and subjects and when disproportionate wealth became concentrated in the hands of privileged classes. **As the early states and empires grew in number, size, and population, they frequently competed for resources and came into conflict with one another.**

I. The number and size of key states and **empires** grew dramatically as rulers imposed political unity on areas where previously there had been competing states.

A. Required examples of key states and empires (*NOTE: Students should know the location and names of the key empires and states*):

- Southwest Asia: Persian Empires (Illustrative ex.: Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanian)
- East Asia: Qin and Han Empire
- South Asia: Mauryan and Gupta Empires
- Mediterranean region: Phoenicia and its colonies, Greek city-states and colonies, and Hellenistic and Roman Empires
- Mesoamerica: Teotihuacan, Maya city-states
- Andean South America: Moche
- North America: from Chaco and Cahokia

II. Empires and states developed new techniques of imperial administration based, in part, on the success of earlier political forms.

A. In order to organize their subjects, in many regions the rulers created administrative institutions, including centralized governments as well as elaborate legal systems and bureaucracies.

B. Imperial governments promoted trade and projected military power over larger areas using a variety of techniques, including issuing currencies; diplomacy; developing supply lines; building fortifications, defensive walls, and roads; and drawing new groups of military officers and soldiers from the local populations or conquered populations.

III. Unique social and economic dimensions developed in imperial societies in Afro-Eurasia and the Americas.

A. Imperial **cities** served as centers of trade, public performance of religious rituals, and political administration for states and empires.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, IMPERIAL CITIES:

- Persepolis
- Chang'an
- Pataliputra
- Athens
- Carthage
- Rome
- Alexandria
- Constantinople
- Teotihuacan

B. The social structures of empires displayed hierarchies that included cultivators, laborers, slaves, artisans, merchants, elites, or caste groups.

C. Imperial societies relied on a range of methods to maintain the production of food and provide rewards for the loyalty of the elites.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, METHODS OF ENSURING PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL HIERARCHY:

- *Corvée* labor
- Slavery
- Rents and tributes

D. Patriarchy continued to shape gender and family relations in all imperial societies of this period.

IV. The Roman, Han, Persian, Mauryan, and Gupta empires encountered political, cultural, and administrative difficulties that they could not manage, which eventually led to their decline, collapse, and transformation into successor empires or states.

A. Through excessive mobilization of resources, imperial governments generated social tensions and created economic difficulties by concentrating too much wealth in the hands of elites.

B. Security issues along their frontiers, including the threat of invasions, challenged imperial authority.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, PROBLEMS ALONG FRONTIERS:

- Between Han China and the Xiongnu
- Between the Gupta and the White Huns
- Between the Romans and their northern and eastern neighbors

• **Key Concept 2.3. Emergence of Interregional Networks of Communication and Exchange**

With the organization of large-scale empires, the volume of long-distance trade increased dramatically. Much of this trade resulted from the demand for raw materials and luxury goods. Land and water routes linked many regions of the Eastern Hemisphere. The exchange of people, technology, religious and cultural beliefs, food crops, domesticated animals, and disease pathogens developed alongside the trade in goods across extensive networks of communication and exchange. In the Americas and Oceania, localized networks developed. **With the organization of large-scale empires, transregional trade intensified, leading to the creation of extensive networks of commercial and cultural exchange.**

I. Land and water routes became the basis for **interregional trade**, communication, and exchange networks in the Eastern Hemisphere.

A. Many factors, including the climate and location of the routes, the typical trade goods, and the ethnicity of people involved, shaped the distinctive features of a variety of trade routes, including Eurasian **Silk Roads**, **Trans-Saharan** caravan routes, **Indian Ocean** sea lanes, and **Mediterranean** Sea lanes.

II. New technologies facilitated long-distance communication and exchange.

A. New technologies permitted the use of domesticated pack animals to transport goods across longer routes.

B. Innovations in maritime technologies, as well as advanced knowledge of the monsoon winds, stimulated exchanges along maritime routes from East Africa to East Asia.

III. Alongside the trade in goods, the exchange of people, technology, religious and cultural beliefs, food crops, domesticated animals, and disease pathogens developed across extensive networks of communication and exchange.

A. The spread of crops, including rice and cotton from South Asia to the Middle East, encouraged changes in farming and irrigation techniques.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, CHANGES IN FARMING AND IRRIGATION TECHNIQUES:

- The qanāt system
- A variety of water wheels (*noria*, *sakia*)
- Improved wells and pumps (*shaduf*)

B. The spread of disease pathogens diminished urban populations and contributed to the decline of some empires, including the Roman and Han.

C. Religious and cultural traditions—including Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism—were transformed as they spread partly as a result of syncretism.