

### THEMATIC REVIEW SHEET #3: The Economics of Power (Trade & Transport)

- In considering conditions such as economic systems, physical environments or technology, we make use of the concept of political economy - the relationship between material wealth or resources and power that shapes economic and political systems.
- In Southeast Asia, political leaders gradually adopted key features of Hinduism and Buddhism to sanction their rule and provide a unifying ideology for their states.
- Later - especially in the 14th and 15th centuries - Islam was adopted by regional political leaders with much the same unifying results.
- In each case, foreign belief systems were grafted onto indigenous ones. Foreign religions initially penetrated along trade lines into parts of Southeast Asian society, and thus the demands of commerce and economic motives brought ideas that were then used to support the concentration of power.
- Technology was important in the concentration of power in Southeast Asia and West African states: maritime technology in Southeast Asia and the horse and the associated technologies of metalworking and leatherworking in West Africa and Central Asia.
- Technology is closely related to trade, and empires as well as port city-states in both Southeast Asia and Africa were dependent on trade not only for the resources but also for providing ties that connected distant peoples and places to political centers.
- In the Americas, the Aztecs and Incas constructed empires on trade and tribute networks -- the empires relied on the supply of tribute goods from territories they conquered to support their ruling elites.
- Religious ideologies that supported military expansion and economic exploitation in these empires were based on shared traditions, rather than from the integration of indigenous beliefs and practices with new ones imported from other cultures, such as Hinduism and Buddhism in Southeast Asia and Islam in West Africa.
- The Mongol Empire was constructed on the basis of military conquest that enabled the expropriation of resources from a vast range of ecological and cultural zones. Military strength was a vital skill, was necessary for conquest; but military strength alone was insufficient to enable the Mongols to consolidate their hold over conquered territories.
- Sophisticated administrative ability was needed to govern and manage the human and material resources of peoples and lands in Central, East, and West Asia, Russia, and eastern Europe, which included among their populations nomadic tribesmen, urban dwellers, and farmers.
- Territories conquered by the Mongols were the home of followers of virtually every major religion of the time, including Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism.

ORDER: IDEAS --> POLITICAL STRUCTURE + ECONOMIC SYSTEM + SOCIAL ORGANIZATION