

Classical Period: Directions, Diversities, & Declines
by 500 C.E.

CHAPTER 6

DECLINE OF CLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS

- ✘ Between 200-600 C.E. all 3 major civilizations declined.
 - + First in China, then in Mediterranean, & finally in India.
- ✘ Reasons for decline: outside invasions
 - + Increasing nomadic groups from central Asia (Huns) and Europe (Germanic tribes)

DECLINE IN CHINA

- ✘ Nomadic tribes from Asia invaded and destroyed the Han dynasty
- ✘ Internal problems within China added to the issue of invasion
- ✘ By 100 C.E. China had begun to decline
 - + Confucian ideals became less creative to appeal to growing population
 - + Bureaucrats became corrupt
 - + Peasants became heavily taxed
 - ✘ Some had to sell their children to landlords for service

DECLINE IN CHINA

- ✘ Revival came near end of 6th century
 - + Strong native rulers drove out the nomadic invaders and established the Sui Dynasty
 - + Briefly ruled and was replaced by the Tang Dynasty in 618 C.E.
- ✘ Tang dynasty leads China to one of the most prosperous time periods in Chinese history
 - + Confucian ideals and bureaucrats revived
 - + New styles of art, architecture, & literature

DECLINE IN INDIA

- ✘ Less drastic than China
- ✘ Gupta emperors were losing ability to control local princes by 5th century
- ✘ Hun tribes began invading northern India as early as 500 C.E.
 - + Eventually destroyed the Gupta empire throughout the century
- ✘ No local or native Indian leader attempted to build a new empire for several centuries
- ✘ Regional princes (**Rajput**) controlled small states with emphasis on the military

DECLINE IN INDIA

- ✘ Buddhism continued to decline in India
 - + Hindu beliefs gained popularity
 - ✘ Even converted the invading Hun princes
- ✘ Threats from the Middle East with the rise of Islam
 - + Arab armies reached India's northwest border during 7th century
 - + Islam will win some converts in the NW part of India
- ✘ Caste system still very strong

DECLINE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (ROME)

- ✘ Showed signs of decline around 180 C.E.
 - + Declining population
 - ✘ Some flee the empire in search of new start; others died
 - + Difficulty in recruiting members for an effective army
 - + Tax collection became difficult
 - + Series of weak emperors and disputes over succession to the throne
- ✘ Plagues
 - + Brought by international trade
 - + Population decimated from over 1 million to 250,000

DECLINE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (ROME)

- ✘ Upper class citizens turned away from being active in politics
 - + Instead focused on living a luxurious lifestyle
 - ✘ Produced fewer children → cost \$ → less \$ for ^
- ✘ Cultural decline
 - + Little new spark in art or architecture
- ✘ Farmers became dependent on landlords for protection
 - + Surrendered land to landlords in exchange for military protection

DECLINE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (ROME)

- ✘ Trade and production declined
 - + Cities & population shrank
- ✘ **Diocletian** – emperor from 284-305 CE
 - + Tried to improve tax collection
 - + Attempted to get people to worship the emperor as a god.
- ✘ **Constantine** – emperor from 312-337 CE
 - + Set up 2nd capital city of Roman Empire @ **Constantinople (present day Istanbul, Turkey)**.
 - ✘ This was to help regulate the eastern half of the empire

DECLINE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (ROME)

✘ Constantine (cont.)

- + Tried to use the religion Christianity to unify the empire. Even adopted it as his own faith

- + Christianity spread under his rule and provided some unity & stability, but was too late to save the empire.

✘ Germanic tribes began invading Roman empire in the early 400's

- + Many people welcomed the invaders

- + Last Roman emperor was removed in 476 CE

EAST & WEST ROMAN EMPIRES – CA. 500 CE



BYZANTINE EMPIRE

- ✘ Eastern portion of the Roman empire
 - + Controlled Greece, Southeast Europe, & northern part of Middle East
 - + Capital @ Constantinople
- ✘ **Justinian** – ruled from 527-565 CE
 - + Tried to recapture all of Roman empire...not successful
 - + Does establish “Justinian Code of Laws” – one of most famous law codes in Roman empire

THE NEW RELIGIOUS MAP

- ✘ **Zoroastrianism** – main religion of Persian empire; animistic religion; stressed moral choice
- ✘ **Christianity** – became widespread throughout Mediterranean region as political strength weakened
- ✘ **Buddhism** – gained popularity in east Asia after the increased problems in classical China
- ✘ **Islam** – surfaced shortly after 600 CE; became most dynamic religious force for several centuries; Christianity’s “rival”
- ✘ Never before had single religions spread so widely across many cultural & political boundaries

NEW RELIGIOUS MAP

✘ Similarities

- + Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, & later Islam ALL emphasized intense devotion, stressing importance of spiritual concerns over everyday life
- + All offered the hope of a better existence after this life ended

✘ Conversions

- + Thousands of people across Europe, Africa, & Asia converted to new religions

WORLD RELIGIOUS MAP (PRESENT DAY)

