

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS:

Mesopotamia, India, China

A Legacy of
Sampaguita 2011

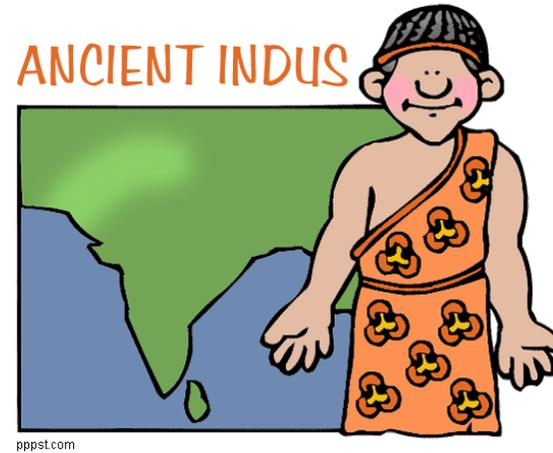
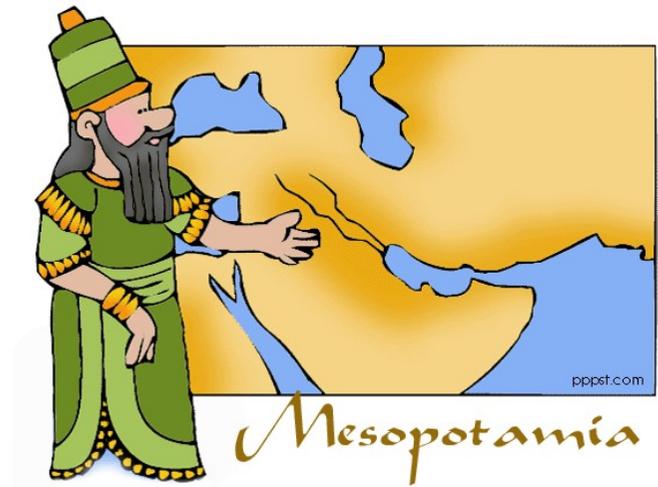


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Mesopotamia

GEOGRAPHY

Mesopotamia, now known as Iraq, is the “land between the two rivers”, also known as the **Fertile Crescent**. Located in the eastern Mediterranean region of southwestern Asia, it extends northwestward from the head of the Persian Gulf. The two rivers, **Tigris** and **Euphrates**, pour into the gulf. The Iranian plateau and the Zagros Mountains are at the northeast of Mesopotamia, while the Arabian Desert and the Syrian steppe on the south and west. The area slants into the marshy coast of the Persian Gulf from the highlands across the grassy steppes and the river valleys.

During the summer, the land is hot and dry, while during the winter, it is cold and humid. During springtime, the melting snow from the mountains make the rivers gush into the gorges, gathering silt, which is spread throughout the plains during floods. This causes the soil to be very fertile, making the area the foundations of a rich civilization.



SUMERIANS

POLITICS

Between 3200 and 2000 BCE, non-Semitic people from the southern part of Mesopotamia, Sumer, developed a civilization. **The Sumerians did not have a unified government.** Mesopotamia was then composed of city-states, each ruled by a priest-king. This priest-king managed the religion, government, and economy with the help of other priests and city officials. The most important city-states were Uruk, Ur, and Lagash.

In 2320 BCE, a warrior from Akkad, named **Sargon the Great** (meaning “true king”), conquered Sumer. He ruled over Sumer and Akkad until 2130 BCE, when Sumer regained independence. Sumer was then ruled by kings in Ur, having the three ranks of society: (1) specialists in the temple complexes, (2) free farmers and (3) the slaves.

ECONOMICS

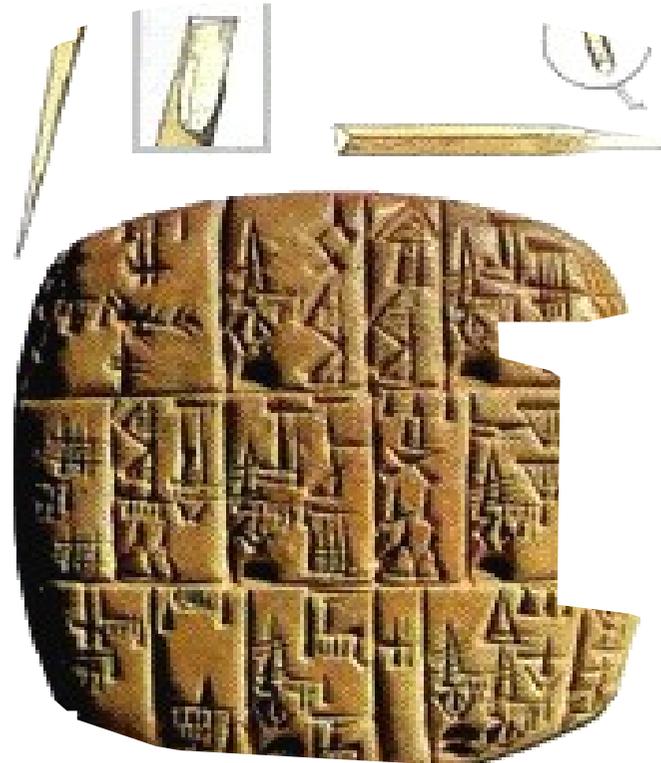
Sumerians were known for the **development of wheeled transport** (with the use of solid wooden wheels), two-wheeled chariots and three-wheeled carts, both drawn by oxen. The chariots were useful in phalanx warfare and the carts were used for hauling freight.

Mesopotamia, lacking in many natural resources, such as stone, minerals, and trees, **had to rely heavily on trade.** Also, rainfall was absent for eight months, and so **irrigation was highly needed.** Knowing the proper time for harvesting and planting was also needed, hence, the **invention of the lunar calendar.** By using the cycles of the moon, the Sumerians were able to devise a way to predict the repetition of seasons. However, it was quite inaccurate, a month or so had to be added every few years. Though imprecise, the lunar calendar is still used up to this day.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

Not only were they known for their advancement with the economic systems and the sciences, but also because of their culture. They developed their own form of writing, the **Cuneiform**, by using stamps with pictures. It was based on 500 wedge-shaped characters impressed on wet clay by a reed stylus with a triangular point. Many of the characters had multiply meanings, which complicates the system even more. It was the only writing system, which the Sumerians used for 2000 years.

Their greatness with literature survives on the Sumerian clay tablets that show assumptions concerning the existence and evolution of the Gods during the Sumerian period.



Cuneiform

AMORITES

POLITICS

Estimate around 2000 to 1600 BCE, the period of the Old Babylonians followed the Sumerians. The only differences between the two were geography and language. The Amorites, nomadic Semitic people, were able to take over Mesopotamia. Babylon, in Akkad, became the capital. This Empire was founded by **Hammurabi** (ruling from 1792-1750 BCE).

King Hammurabi is most famous for his set of laws. A stone document containing 282 laws, the **Hammurabi Code** salient points were “**an eye for an eye**”, or exact retaliation, and “**let the buyer beware**”. The goals of their jurisprudence were just to **maintain peace and order**. It does seem that the laws were barbaric, but justice and fairness was a developing concept. Fair was seen in such a way that, if you do something to someone, the same will be done to you. Conceptual moral beliefs were also set in the code, such as respect for parents. Aside from judgment and punishment, the Code also dictates that social well being is practiced.

ECONOMICS

The most remarkable aspect of their culture lies in the area of mathematics. These **arithmetic and algebraic concepts** are so advanced that they must have been based on earlier foundations. Old Babylonian temples had scribes with tables of **multiplication and division, calculations of square roots, cube roots, reciprocals, and exponential functions**. Related to mathematics as well, our **division of the day** in two sets of twelve hours, the hour into sixty minutes, and the minute into sixty seconds were all developed and influenced by them.

They were also famous for their method of balancing crops in demand (e.g.: barley, during their time) to avoid excessive depletion from soil-nutrients. The Amorites also contributed the **sailboats** and the **water clocks**, to name a few.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

Just as famous as the Hammurabi Code, the Amorites’ monument of the civilization, in terms of culture, is the poem of the **epic of Gilgamesh**. The hero Gilgamesh was a Sumerian king whom was made stories about. The poem’s sheer poetic forcefulness and for talking about the adventures and aspirations of a human hero governed by death kept the poem strong.

KASSITES AND HITTITES

POLITICS

The Kassites were non-Semitic people from western Asia who were able to harness the power of light chariot warfare. By using horses and spoked wheels, these chariots were more effective, leading them to war with the Old Babylonians. The Hittites joined the Kassites in their conquest and was able to destroy Babylon by 1600 BCE. The Hittites left Mesopotamia for the Kassites. However, due to lack of active control and sense of social and political distinctiveness, the Kassites were **unable to create a unified rule**. This was called the **“Dark age” of Mesopotamia**. **There were hardly any cultural developments**.

ECONOMICS

The **light chariot warfare**, which was developed, by the Kassites and the Hittites were as useful as in peace as in war. It was actually very useful for making agricultural implements. It was also useful for iron production, for anything that was made out of iron had great prestige value. The Hittites grew rich from trade.

SOCIO -CULTURAL

Unlike the other empires, the Kassites and Hittites didn't have much cultural developments, for **lack of control and sense** to the social and political aspects (as stated earlier). They **adopted the cuneiform**, and still didn't seem to have their own independent literature. But despite the fact that their art is conventional, they had **sculptures**.

ASSYRIANS

POLITICS

By 1300 BCE, the Assyrians, Semitic people residing in the northern part of Mesopotamia, were able to master chariot warfare. They were able to take Akkad and Sumer from the Kassites by 1250 BCE, and by 1225 BCE, Tukulti-Ninurta took over Babylon. The Assyrians were also able to take over Syria, and Anatolia.

The height of the kingdom was during the reign of **Sennacherib** (705 – 681 BCE). He created a new capital, **Nineveh**. However, Sennacherib's son rebuilt **Babylon**, and by 605 BCE, the city once again revolted against the Assyrians. **Assurbanipal**, Sennacherib's grandson, was able to reclaim Babylon in 648 BCE. Between 614 – 612 BCE, an Indo-European tribe, the **Medes**, joined force with the Babylonians, and was able to defeat Nineveh.

ECONOMICS

The Assyrians did not have a mark on history, not until they **acquired skills in chariot warfare** and when they began to conquer neighboring cities. They expanded in directions, seeking control over and access to the natural resources for trade.

During the magnificent Sennacherib's reign, there were **extraordinary engineering projects**.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

Believed in practical knowledge and religious lore, the Assyrians' culture was known as an **unrelenting emphasis on the virtues of masculinity** – frightfulness. It is meant to strike terror into the hearts of the nation's enemies. On the other hand, they also show brutality through artwork and their actual policies. They celebrate war, hunting and slaughter too through **artwork**.

NEW BABYLONIANS

POLITICS

Those that fought with the Medes against the Assyrians, were called the **Chaldeans**, or the New Babylonians. They were prominently engaged in domination. **Nebuchadnezzar** (604 – 562 BCE) was known for his grandeur, such as the building of the **Ishtar Gate** and the **Hanging Gardens**. In 539 BCE, during **Belshazzar's** reign, the Persians took over Babylon.

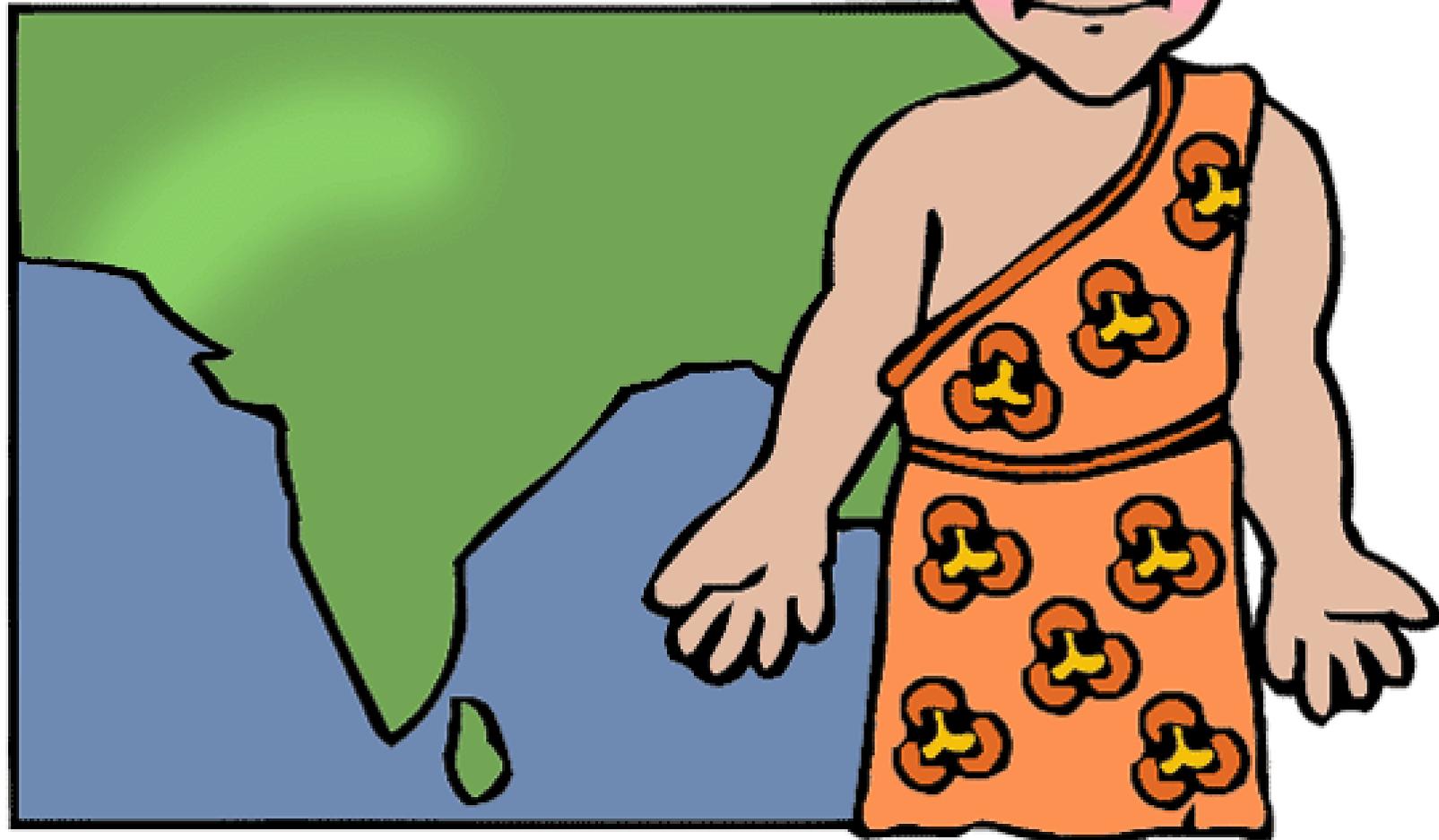
ECONOMICS

Being able to learn to **build monuments in brightly colored glazed bricks**, the New Babylonians were able to build a lot, such as the **Ishtar Gate** and the **Hanging Gardens**, which made it to the world's seven ancient wonders.

SOCIO CULTURAL

The Babylonians were famous for their accomplished cultural realms in **Astronomy**. They carefully study the **night skies**, the **movement of the planets and the stars** because they had come to believe that some of their Gods resided in the heavens, and by plotting and predicting the motions of the planets and stars, they could predict which divinity can affect the course of human affairs.

ANCIENT INDUS



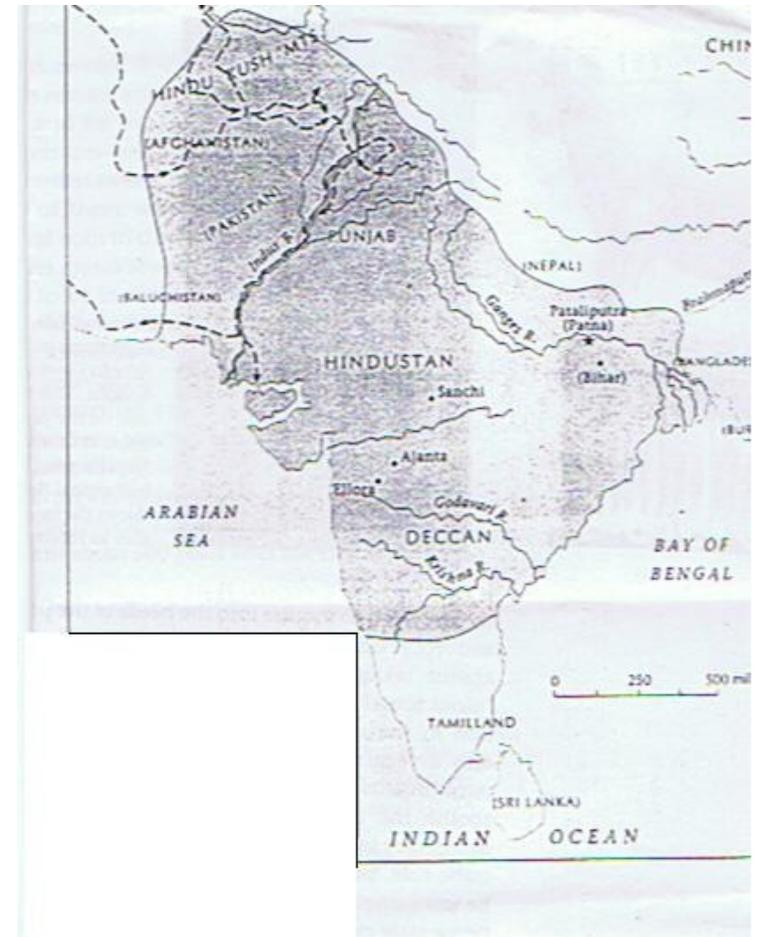
GEOGRAPHY

India is divided into two main regions. The northern part is known as the **Hindustan**. The Hindustan, or the **Indo-Gangetic Plain**, is located below the Himalayan Mountains. The three major rivers of India are located here. The **Ganges** is the most prominent one, flowing from south and east across the plains of India. It is referred to as the “Mother Ganges” and is considered sacred. The **Brahmaputra River**, coming from Tibet, flows westward in eastern India, forming a delta with the Ganges in Bangladesh. The **Indus River** comes from Tibet as well, but flows in the opposite direction of the Brahmaputra. Also found in the northern plains is the Thar Desert, a barren landscape of sand dunes, sandy plains, and low hills.

The lower half is known as the **Deccan Plateau**. It is separated from the Hindustan by the Vindhya Mountains. The tableland is bordered by the Western Ghats, low-lying mountains ranges facing the Arabian Sea, and the Eastern Ghats, disconnected range of hills facing the Bay of Bengal.

The **Himalayan Mountains** in the north boundary of India separates it from the rest of main continent Asia. The mountains also give India a climate barrier, giving it a distinct climate from interior Asia. India may be divided into five different climatic areas. The central and eastern parts of the northern plains have hot, wet summers and cool winters. Rainy and hot climates are seen in the southwestern coast. The **Thar Desert** is very arid, while the Himalayan region may have varied climates depending on the altitude.

Though the climates are varied, most of India is affected by the monsoons, seasonal winds that dominate the climate of South Asia. The wet monsoons of summer occur during June- October. They come from the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, carrying water with them. The dry monsoons of winter occur from October- January. The winds come from the northeast. During April and May, it is hot and dry.



INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

From 3200 – 1600 BCE, the **Indus Valley Civilization** flourished during **India's Bronze Age**. It extended from the coasts of the Arabian Sea, passing through the Indus River system, to northern Afghanistan. There were two main cities, **Mohenjo-Daro**, and **Harappa**. Intelligently planned, both cities were made of brick. Houses, as tall as three stories high, were connected to sewage systems. Mohenjo-Daro had a public bath, while Harappa had a huge granary.

Priests are believed to have ruled alongside a bureaucracy. They had an efficient political system, as seen in their systematic town planning.

The people were great craftsmen, seen in their copper and bronze vessels and gold and silver ornaments. Figurines were very elegant and graceful, all of excellent quality. Some carvings and figurines are seen to be a part of a fertility cult. Rectangular stone seals were found to have writing on them, though the Indus Valley script has yet to be deciphered.

By 1600 BCE, probably to a **series of natural disasters** and due to **invading tribes**, the Indus Valley finally collapsed.

<i>Date range</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Era</i>
7000 -5500 BC	Mehrgarh I (aceramic Neolithic)	Early Food Producing Era
5500-3300 BC	Mehrgarh II-VI (ceramic Neolithic)	Regionalisation Era 5500-2600 BC
3300-2600 BC	Early Harappan (Early Bronze Age)	
3300-2800 BC	Harappan 1 (Ravi Phase)	
2800-2600 BC	Harappan 2 (Kot Diji Phase, Nausharo I, Mehrgarh VII)	
2600-1900 BC	Mature Harappan (Indus Valley)	Integration Era
2600-2450 BC	Harappan 3A (Nausharo II)	Localisation Era
2450-2200 BC	Harappan 3B	
2200-1900 BC	Harappan 3C	
1900-1300 BC	Late Harappan (Cemetery H); Ochre Colored Pottery	
1900-1700 BC	Harappan 4	Localisation Era
1700-1300 BC	Harappan 5	

VEDIC CIVILIZATION

POLITICS

The arrival of the **Indo-Aryans** marked the beginning of the **Vedic Civilization** in India. At around 1400 BCE, nomadic people from Turkestan moved towards Iran and India. By 1000 BCE, they were able to conquer and settle in Delhi, Bengal, and Central India.

The Indo-Aryans were a tribal community, each tribe having a **chieftain** or a *raja*. The *raja* had the duty of leading the tribe into war. His duties were limited however, and people could manage their own affairs. In some tribes, *raj*as were selected by an assembly of warriors. The justice system was held in such a way that the victim's party was expected to take the initiative of prosecution, often leading to compensation. To find out who was guilty or not, **trials by ordeal**, such as fire or water, were held.

By 800 BCE, **developments in iron weapons** led to the conquest of eastern Ganges region and into the Deccan. Tribes evolved into kingdoms with hierarchical administrative officials.

ECONOMICS

The Indo-Aryans were largely **pastoral**, domesticating sheep, goats, horses, and cattle. The horses were used to pull chariots, while the **cattle served as currency**. Farming of **barley** and other grains was done with the help of a wooden plow.

Entertainment was often thought **music**, with instruments such as flutes, drums, cymbals, and harps. **Dice-gambling** was very popular.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

The religion of the Early Aryans played a major role in their civilization's culture. The Aryan gods, *Deva* ("the shining ones"), were personifications of forces of nature. **Sacrificial worship to the gods** was practiced, with the mountain plant juice *soma* being the best offering, for his was believed to give the gods immortality. The most prominent god was **Indra**, believed to have released the waters to the earth, and discovered light and created lightning. Being the god of war as well, he killed the Aryan enemies.

This religion changed gradually: deities declined in importance, others entered the **pantheon**. The sophistication of the religion grew with the complexity of the society.

The Aryan society became stratified and complex, and was divided into four classes, called the *Varna*, or the social structure. From top to bottom, the rankings were the *brahman* (priest), *kshatriya* (warrior), *vaishya* (herdsman, artisan, merchant), and *shudra* (servant, menial laborer). The *shudra* was so inferior that they were looked upon as unfit for full membership in society. However, this was just a theoretical classification and it was the caste system that really defined the Indian society.

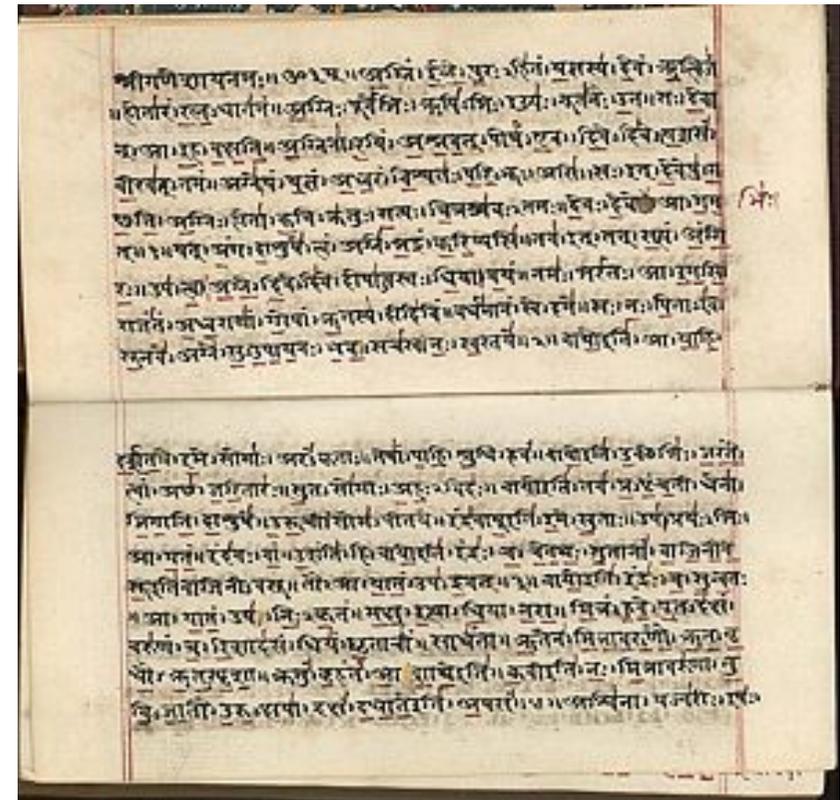
The *caste* is a kinship group strictly implementing rules on controlling individual behaviour and group responsibilities. Protection of its members was important. The Indo-Aryan society was not under this implementation, but its roots are seen in the *Varna*. With the evolution of the caste system, came economic specializations and division of labor.

The caste system was very tight. As an individual, moving into higher ranks was impossible, but by breaking the rules, one could go lower. Marriage was within caste, but sometimes men, and only men, were allowed to marry into a lower caste. The caste also determined the occupation, dress codes and the barriers of social interaction. The caste also had its advantages. Protection of individual members, division of labor as to avoid confusion in work, and interacting religious activities were part of this system. The caste system was so strong that enemies found it hard to demolish the culture, because the roots were very solid, which is family.

The *four Vedas* were the sacred books of the Indo-Aryan religion, containing hymns, prayers, and incantations.

The *Yajurveda*, was a manual sacrifice for the officiating priest. It contained archaic prose mantras and it applied to all sacrificial rites.

The *Atharveda*, was a catalogue of charms, spells, and incantations using speculative and philosophical hymns. It was used for curing illnesses, destroying the enemy, and protecting against demons and disaster. It also contained mantras used in marriage and death.

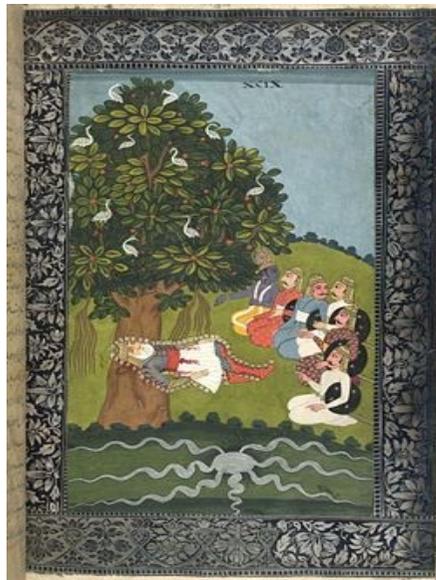


The **Samaveda** contained hymns, portions of hymns, and detached verses sung by Udgatar priests. Here, the role of the Soma plant is played, as offerings to the various deities.

Finally, the **Rigveda** is the oldest and most important book. It consist have more than a thousand poems compiled between 1500 to 900 BCE. They were addressed to the Aryan deties, portraying their great deeds.

The Rigveda

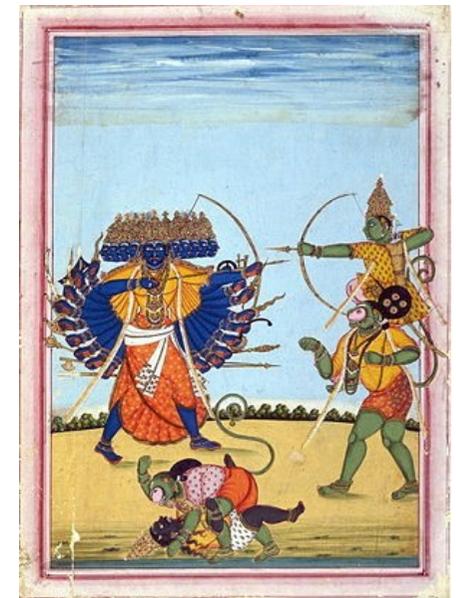
The Indian epics are known to tell of the “heroic age” of “individual prowess and bloody combat.” Two main epics arose, the **Mahabharata** and the **Ramayana**. The Mahabharata tells of rivalries, polyandry, war, and gods. It is vivid and realistic, compared to the Ramayana, which is artful and descriptive. The Ramayana became a standard for the ideal man and woman, portraying the sophistication of the developing society. The Mahabharata could be considered as an encyclopedia of Early Indian mythology and history. The epics obtained religious significance, and eventually replaced the Vedas as the bible for the commoners. This was partly because the Vedas were strictly for higher castes, while the epics were for everyone.



<- Bhishma on death bed

Rama seated on the shoulders of Hanuman, battles the demon-king Ravana. ->

Sanskrit was considered as the language of the epics. It was believed to be the dignified manner of conversation, and was preserved as the standard for scholars. The alphabet is understandably organized and has a big enough capacity to hold a wide range of sounds, with symbols for fourteen separate vowels and thirty-five



consonants. Panini, in the fourth century BCE, was able to make a grammar with more than 4000 rules, which was the only scientific grammar before the 19th century.



Sanskrit writing

Increased levels in philosophical speculation turned the Aryan religion from simple to complex. The deities were believed to exist only because of the offerings that were given to them. Therefore, the officiating priests gained importance, since they were needed to make the sacrifices, because the offerings were now more important than the gods themselves. This is seen in the **Brahmanas**, a series of prose manuals that gave the Brahmins the ultimate religious authority, and special privileges.



The Brahmins

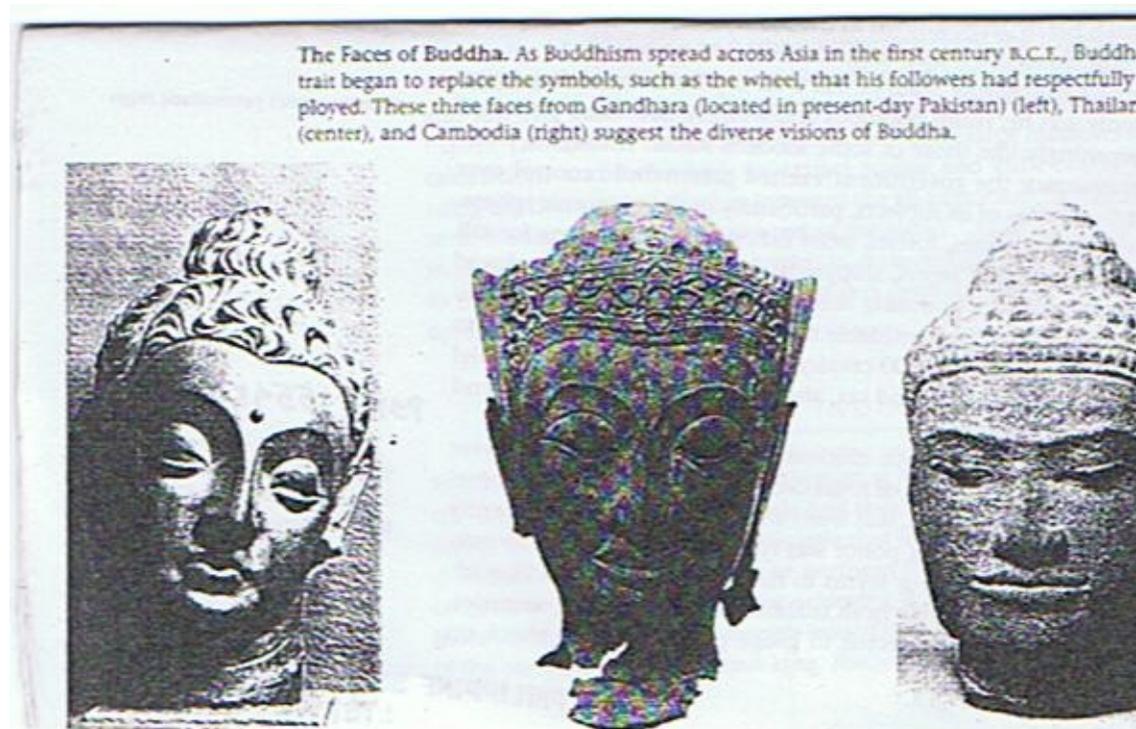
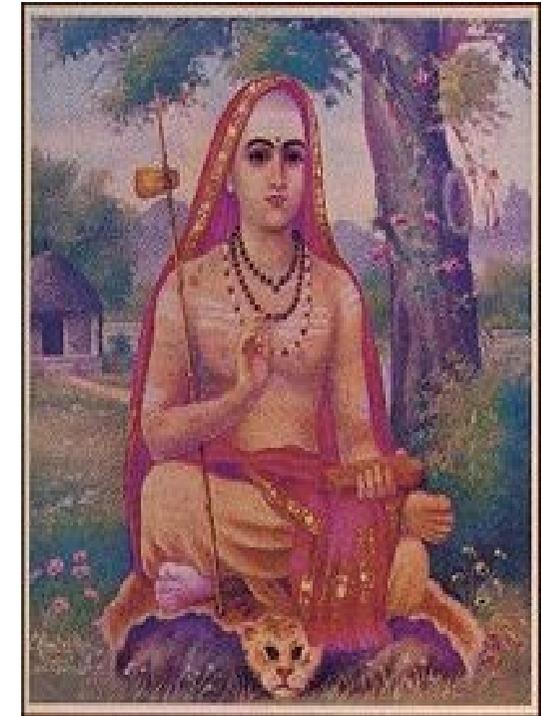
Philosophical speculation came about due to the evolution of religions. The “Hymn of Creation” discusses that self-sacrifice is the greatest sacrifice of all. It probes to a time when “nothingness was not.” The “Creation Myth” speculates that the creation of the universe was because of a sacrifice of the Great Being.

The Upanishads (“sitting down near”) is the noblest expression of the quest for knowledge.

The last part of the Vedas asks about the nature of reality and the problem of man’s place in the universe. It has four tenets:

- 1) supreme reality of Absolute Being
- 2) impermanence and illusory character of the material world
- 3) cycle of rebirth between individual souls
- 4) possibility of attaining serenity through union with Almighty Being

Shan Kara, commentator on the Upanishads ->



Two

major religions emerged during the 6th century BC. This was the period of religious reform. It started with the upper classes, and it was different from Brahmanical traditions.

Buddhism was founded by **Gautama**, known as **Buddha**. It emphasizes on faith over ritual. The followers split into two different groups. The Hinaya School, or “lesser vehicle”, emphasizes on the goal of individual salvation. It retains most of Gautama’s original teachings. The

Mahayana School, or “greater vehicle”, emphasizes on the goal of redemption for the entire human race.

Jainism, whose founder was **Mahavira**, taught that individuals are held in bondage perpetuated by a **karma**. Karma merits or demerits and is earned as a result of an action. It teaches the Doctrine of Ahimsa, which teaches non-injury to living beings.

Hinduism, the third religion that also emerged, was based on Indo-Aryan pantheon with vestiges of Indus valley rites. The Vedic deities lost importance due to impersonality. Two main deities emerged: Vishnu-“ The Preserver”, and Shiva- “The Destroyer”. Hinduism was more of an act of adoration, it believed in **Bhakti**, or devotional movement. It emphasizes that one must fulfill his dharma, or the faithful performance of an assigned role without seeking any benefit in return. The literary piece, *Bhagavad Gita* (“Lord’s Song”), speculates why try to understand an impersonal god when one could turn to the Supreme God Head. This Gita religion is ethical, spiritual and compassionate. It teaches that Krishna is a loving god who takes upon himself the sins of humanity. He offers salvation to all.



<- VISHNU

SHIVA ->



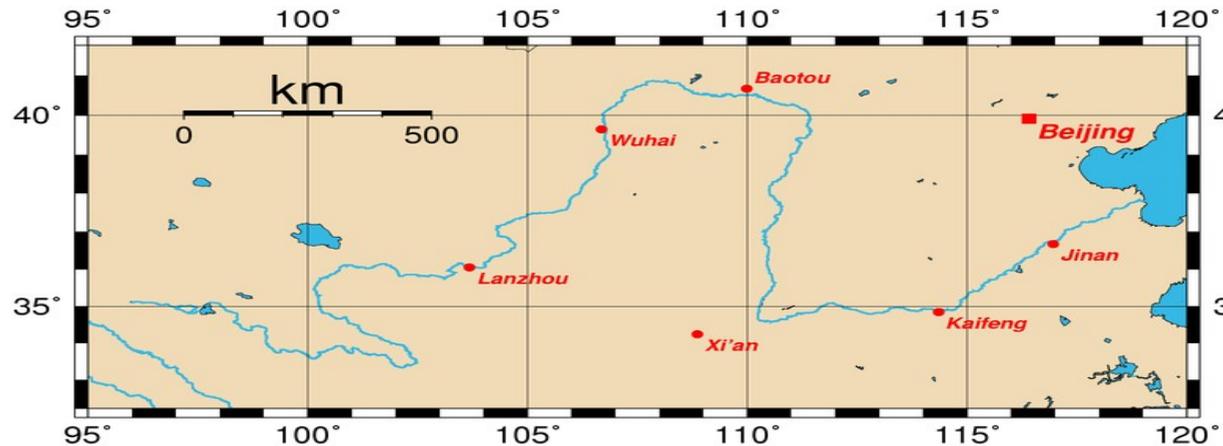


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GEOGRAPHY

China's topography is varying in different forms and sizes within its own landlocked area. Its central area is heavily concentrated with river deltas, while the other parts are distributed with different land forms such as plateaus, mountain ranges and plains.

China abounds in many different rivers. More or less 1,500 rivers each drain and cover 1,000 sq. km or even larger areas. These rivers carry around 2,700 billion cubic meters of water flowing along them contributing 5.8 percent of the world's total. These **river systems serve as China's baseline in sustaining their agricultural and communal economy**. Their irrigation and water systems were taken from these large rivers flowing through central China. Later on, they were able to build canals to link these water forms in order to give them an advantage in local trade and communication.



The **Yellow river (Huang He)** serves as one of the **birthplaces of the ancient Chinese civilization**. Its surrounding area, the northern parts of China, stretching from east to west, has lush pastureland and large amounts of mineral deposits.

China's climate has a continental climate, controlled by monsoon winds, highly characterized by

The **Yangtze river (Chiang Jiang)**, also known as the **"Golden Gateway"**, is the largest river in Asia, as well as the 3rd longest in the world. It spreads over a 6300 km long area, the southern portion of China and has a catchments area of 1.809 million sq km. It serves as an agricultural region since its middle and lower areas give plentiful rain and fertile soil due to its warm and humid climate.



the sharp variations in climate within the area covered by China. All four seasons are present and the hot and rainy seasons may coincide with each other.

East – extensive and densely populated alluvial plains

North – inner Mongolian plateau and grasslands

South – hill country and low mountain ranges

Central-east – Yellow and Yangtze river deltas

West – major mountain ranges, notably the Himalayas, high plateaus and more arid landscapes like the Gobi desert and Taklamak



SHANG DYNASTY

POLITICS

Founded by **Tang**, this dynasty flourished from 1600 – 1100 BCE. The Kingdom relied much on **divinity**, using **oracle bones** that were used for prophesizing. The dynasty was centered on the **King**. He performed the divinations, and was believed to be the link between the spirit world and the human world. He was regarded in a God-like manner. There was no private property, **everything was owned by the King**. There was **no strict social structure**, but the King's slaves, often prisoners of war, were believed to have no souls.

The last king of Shang, **Chou Hsin**, was tyrannical and dictatorial. Slaves revolted, resulting into the downfall of the Shang Dynasty.

ECONOMICS

Lacquer is a clear or colored varnish producing a hard and really durable finish. The usage of lacquer in China started in the Shang Dynasty and was proven by the seen evidences, actual lacquerware, that date back to 1600-1400 B.C.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

It has been believed that the human and natural orders were the results of the laws of the Shang dynasty that has been with their culture for so long. These orders have become their rituals. There



are two statements that empower their strong philosophy: (1) truth and goodness is part of a single whole – moral, (2) seeking the truth about nature is ethics, not science.

The dynasty, providing all of its historical records, represents the earliest genuine civilization in East Asia. The foundation of its cultural patterns has been influenced by this dynasty.

ZHOU DYNASTY

POLITICS

Founded by Ji Chiang (Zhou Wenwang), this dynasty flourished from 1100 - 256 BCE. It instituted the Mandate of Heaven to justify its rule. The Mandate is a Chinese political belief that the rulers received the right to govern from Heaven. People owed the emperor their



entire devotion and commitment. However, war,

flood, or famines were considered as signs that the ruler had lost the Mandate of Heaven.

Three philosophical thoughts emerged during this period. Confucianism, which was founded by Confucius states that human nature is entirely cooperative, and that society is like a family. Daoism, which was founded by Lao Zi, states that human nature is the only nature, and that happiness is the concern of the government. Legalism, which was founded by Hao Fei Zi, believes that people respond in fear of punishment and to promise of reward.



In this period, China was called “**Zhongguo**” or Middle Kingdom because Zhou people believed that Zhou dynasty is the center of civilization although they are unaware of the civilizations in the West.

In exchange for protection, **agrarian taxes** were required to be paid. This was part of the **Fengjian**, or the patrimonial feudalist structure. By the 8th century, **feudal lords** were ruling, with the emperor as the figurehead. However, the rise of the feudal lords led to war against each other.

Zhou was divided into the **Western Zhou**, from 1027 – 771 BCE with **Xian** as the capital, and **Eastern Zhou**, from 770 – 221 BCE with **Luoyang** as the capital.

ECONOMICS

Chinese fortune tellers used to construct their boards with **lodestones**, a mineral composed of an iron oxide which aligns itself in a North-South polarity direction. Eventually, someone noticed that the lodestones could be an efficient tool in marking directions and then there the compass was first made. They first used it with constellation marks on a slab with the tiny lodestone rod attached to it and a handle pointing south.

Kites in ancient China were known as “**Zhiyuan**”, or paper glider. Its original purpose back then when it was invented was not for aesthetic or leisure purposes, but rather for communication and sometimes even for warfare tactics.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

As the Chinese civilization’s classical age, its contributions came in the fields of religion and philosophy, art and literature, and science and technology. The Chinese tried to discover the basis of human society. The **three philosophical schools** are: (1) **Confucianism**: knowledge is the key to happiness, (2) **Daoism**: happiness is the government’s concern and (3) **Legalism**: rule by law.

There became the five classes of society too: scholars, farmers, artisans, merchants and soldiers – ranked with the highest authority to the lowest.

Brush painting with animal designs on silk is the “thing” during the Zhou dynasty, as well as the usage of **Jade**.

Men were permitted to **wear gowns and black caps** at age 16, while girls **wore hairpin** at age 15.

QIN DYNASTY

POLITICS

Founded by **Shi Huang Ti**, this was the first empire of China, ruling from 220 BCE - 206 AD. This was the period of political unification and control in China. Shi Huang Ti was able to subdue the feudal lords and end feudalism. A highly centralized bureaucracy was created, with the country being divided into 36 provinces. **Legalism** was adapted as the primary philosophical concept governing the Empire.

Shi Huang Ti is known for the construction of the **Great Wall of China**. However, there was more to the first emperor of China. He was known as a tyrant, a book-burner, and a mass-murderer. He died leaving the country in chaos, with the treasury empty and the people weakened.

ECONOMICS

The **magic canal** is the first transport contour canal created under the Chinese empire, 3rd century BC. Its length is not quite exceptional but its purpose as a link between the rivers has given China an easier way to transport barges around the area.

During the Qin dynasty, emperor Shi Huang Ti centralized the **system of monetary coins**. The two legal currencies were the bronze and the gold coin. The bronze coin was name **Ban Liang Quian**, meaning half liang coin. "Liang" then was a unit for weight and the bronze coin weight half of that.



SOCIO-CULTURAL

The Qin Dynasty, as the China's first empire, was the **first to unify China**. Every aspect of the First Emperor's reign shows a strong personality and determination. It is said that even the Chinese system of writing was unified under his governance, abolishing about the half the old character and reconstructed many others. The measurements that were in use were standardized too.

Also, the rise of the **Terracotta army** was during this period.

HAN DYNASTY

POLITICS

Founded by **Liu Bang**, the period of 206 – 220 AD was considered as the **Golden Age of China**. The most known emperor during this time is **Wu Ti**, (141 – 87) who expanded the empire, and is known as the martial emperor.

The political system of the Han dynasty had aspects of the **Qin centralized government**, and **Zhou patrimonialism**. State ideology was based on **Confucianism** or "**Imperial Confucianism**" by Emperor Wu Ti.

However, the increasing power of the land lords led to a peasant revolt that eventually caused the downfall of the Han Dynasty.

After the dynasty disintegrates, China experiences a 300-year period of political fragmentation.



ECONOMICS

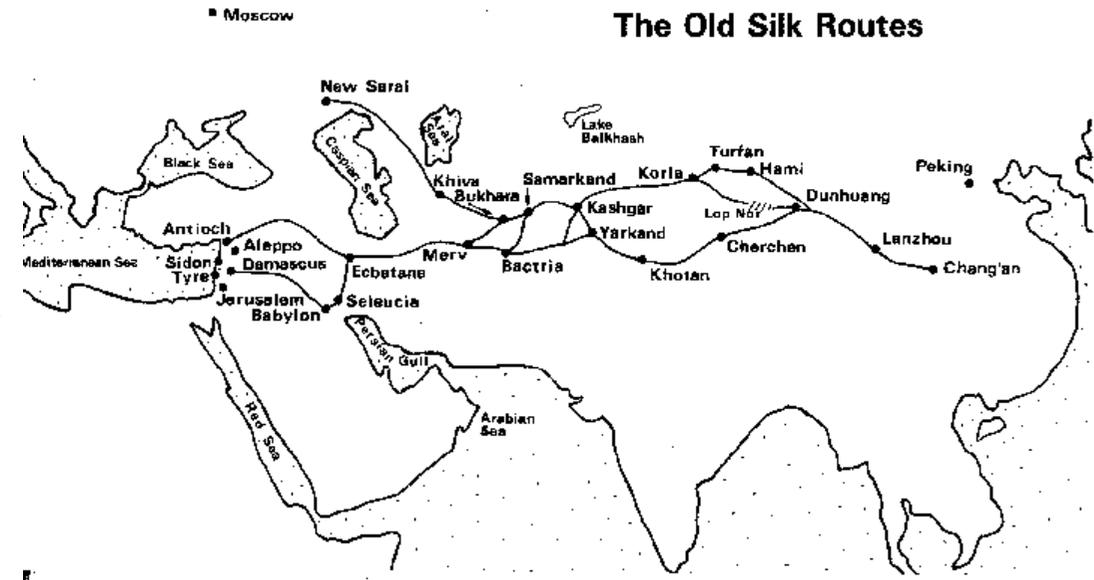
Paper was invented by **Cai Lun** in 105 A.D., it was first made with a variety of materials like tree bark, hemp and rags.

The **Silk Road** is a series of interconnected routes where trade and communications through a large part of Asia and other regions are conducted. It was mainly established in the Han Dynasty during the explorations of **Zhang Qian**. Apart from its name, the Silk Road does not only market the **traditional silk from China**, but also other products.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

Because Buddhism has been “mixed: with the two of the laws of nature, **Confucianism** and **Daoism**, family has become an **immortal entity**. This is also the beginning of **women’s beautification**, and when China received **literary achievements** (in forms of poetry).

The dynasty has left a mark for the contributions of the Han: **palace lamps**, **tomb figurines**, and **chemical warfare**.



SUI DYNASTY

POLITICS

The Sui Dynasty, founded by **Yang Jian**, reunited China, from 586 – 618 AD. Like the past dynasties, it was a **centralized bureaucracy** and a **unified state**. The second emperor of the Sui dynasty, **Yang Ti**, was like Shi Huang Ti, who tried to glorify China by rebuilding the Great Wall of China, but in a tyrannical manner. Another rebellion caused the downfall of the Sui Dynasty.

ECONOMICS

The **Grand Canal**, or the **Beijing Hangzhou Grand Canal**, is the longest ancient canal or artificial river in the world. The construction of the canal resulted from the migration of China's economic core from the Yellow River to other provinces

SOCIOCULTURAL

Even though nomads settled along the borders of China, there still have been a number of cultural contributions and developments as the **Confucian rituals and institutions** were revived.

The **women's status had risen**, as well as the **game of polo and hunting**.



TANG DYNASTY

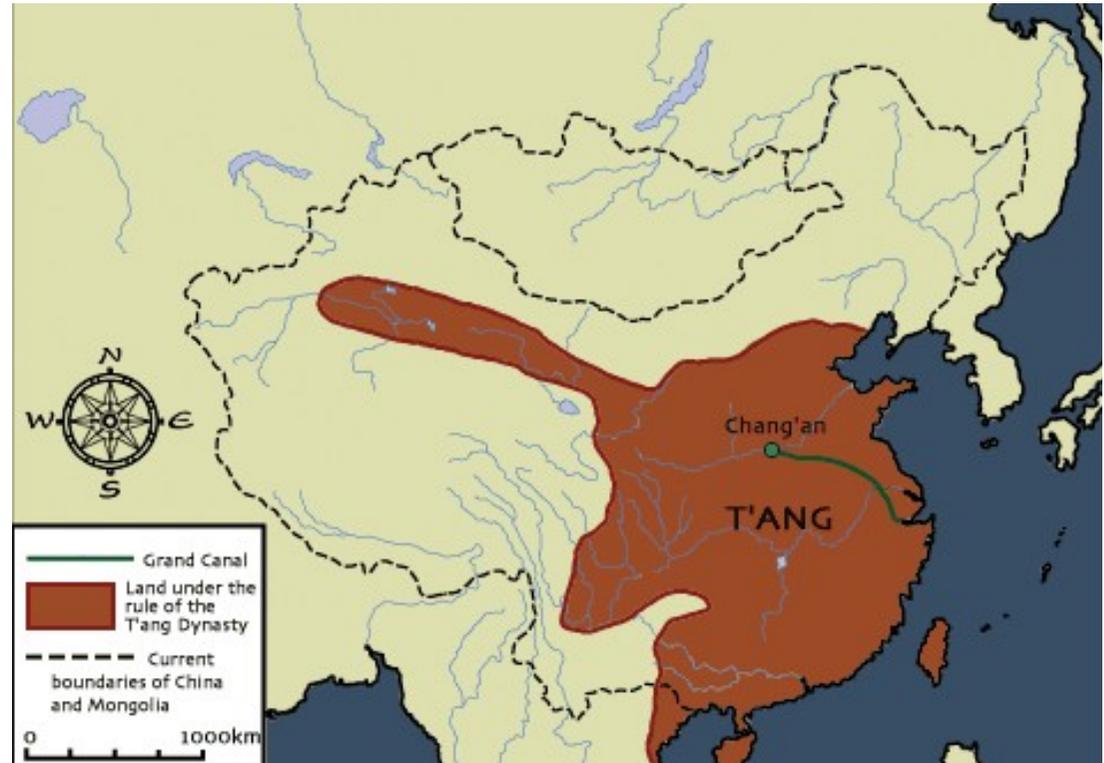
POLITICS

Founded by **Xuanzong**, this dynasty ruled from 618 – 907 AD. An achievement noted is the **creation of the civil service system**. The government sponsored written examinations that recruited students to be part of the bureaucracy. The system valued equality, which was based on merit instead of birth. It also incorporated political and cultural by standardizing the curriculum studied by students. It also destabilized the power of the elite class by letting the emperor himself decide, instead of the usual families.

Eunuchs or castrated servants, were employed in the palace. They were castrated in order to ensure that the children of the emperor's wives were really his, to make sure that the children were part of his bloodline.

There was a period when **puppet emperors**, such as **Empress Wu** and **Empress Ming Huang**, brought cultural changes in China.

The dynasty lost power when military commander **An Lushan** brought about a civil war. China was again divided during the **Five Dynasties Period**.



ECONOMICS

Woodblock printing in China is strongly associated with Buddhism. Woodblock was said to be used to write Buddhist scriptures. Gunpowder was discovered by Chinese alchemists by accidents, while they were seeking the elixir of immortality. Its first use in military weapons was recorded in 900 A.D.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

Tang's cultural contributions are still being used today (most of them). They developed their art of literature and painting, learned a new skill of wood block printing, invented tea, gunpowder, and the printing press. The literature in this period was rich because of Li Po, a Tang literary poet.

During this time, written exams were only used to recruit officials. The eunuchs have become servants at the palace.

ASIAN TIMELINE

Mesopotamia, India & China

CIVILIZATION	EVENT	DATE
Mesopotamia	Irrigation System began	6000 BCE
Mesopotamia	Invention of Wheels	5000 BCE
China	Yangshao Dynasty	5000 – 3000 BCE
China	Lang Shan Dynasty	3500 – 2500 BCE
India	Mohenjo Daro Dynasty	3300 – 1300 BCE
Mesopotamia	Sumerians Dynasty	3200 – 2000 BCE
Mesopotamia	Invention of the Calculators (Abacus)	2700 BCE
China	Invention of Silk	2650 BCE
Mesopotamia	Mesopotamia was conquered by <i>Gilgamesh</i>	2600 BCE
Mesopotamia	Cuneiform	2500 BCE
Mesopotamia	Invention of Glass	2500 BCE
Mesopotamia	Sumer was conquered by <i>Sargon</i>	2320 BCE
Mesopotamia	Akkadians Dynasty	2320 – 2130 BCE
Mesopotamia	Independence of the Sumerians from <i>Sargon</i>	2130 BCE
China	Xia Dynasty	2200 – 1750 BCE
China	Oracle Bones	2000 BCE
Mesopotamia	Amorites Dynasty	2000 – 1600 BCE
Mesopotamia	Epic of Gilgamesh	1900 BCE

Mesopotamia	Discovery of Mathematics	1800 BCE
Mesopotamia	Enuma Elis	1800 BCE
Mesopotamia	Establishment of the Hammurabi Code	1700 BCE
China	Shang Dynasty	1750 – 1100 BCE
China	Shang Dynasty exhibited forced labor	1500 BCE
Mesopotamia	Kassites and Hittites Dynasty	1600 – 1300 BCE
China	Lacquer Work	1570 BCE
India	Indo-Aryans	1500 BCE – 7 th C. CE
Mesopotamia	Assyrians Dynasty	1300 – 612 BCE
Mesopotamia	<i>Tukulti Ninurta</i> took over Babylon	1225 BCE
China	Zhou Dynasty	1100 – 256 BCE
China	Belief of the Mandate of Heaven	1100 – 256 BCE
China	<i>King Wu's</i> son defeated the Shang in the Battle of Muye	1045 BCE
India	Aryan invasion to India	Before 1000 BCE
India	Aryan's settlement in India	1000 – 600 BCE
India	Indo-Aryans acquired iron weapons for warfare	800 BCE
Mesopotamia	Archimedes's Screw	750 BCE
Mesopotamia	Reign of Sennacherib	705 – 681 BCE
Mesopotamia	Mesopotamia rebelled from the Assyrian rule	627 BCE
Mesopotamia	New Babylonians Dynasty	612 – 539 BCE
Mesopotamia	Construction of the Hanging Gardens	600 BCE
India	Influence of Jainism and Buddhism in politics and philosophy	599 - 539 BCE
India	New Babylonia conquered Jerusalem	597 BCE
India	New Babylonia conquered Phoenicia	585 BCE

India	New Babylonia conquered Tyre	575 BCE
India	New Babylonia planned to conquer Egypt	567 BCE
India	Cyrus and Persia conquered Babylon	539 BCE
China	Confucianism	500 BCE
China	Legalism	400 BCE
China	Daoism	400 BCE
India	Mahabharata	400 BCE
India	Invasion of Alexander the Great	327 BCE
India	Nanda Empire	327 – 322 BCE
India	Mauryan Empire	320 – 184 BCE
India	Caste System's establishment	300 BCE
India	Ramayana	300 BCE
India	Arthashastra	300 BCE
India	Ashoka the Great conquered Mauryan Empire	273 BCE
China	Qin Dynasty	221 – 207 BCE
China	Han Dynasty	206 BCE – 220 CE
China	Invention of Paper	105
India	Gupta Empire	240 – 550
India	Vedism's influence in politics and philosophy	321 – 535
China	Sui Dynasty	589 – 618
China	China having a unified state	589 - 618
China	Tang Dynasty	618 – 907
India	Mughal Empire	1526 - 1858
India	Taj Mahal was completed	1648

Series of Periods in Ancient Asian Civilizations

MESOPOTOMIA	INDIA	CHINA
<p>Sumerians (3200-2000 BCE)</p> <p>Amorites (2000-1600 BCE)</p> <p>Kassites and Hittites (1600-1300 BCE)</p> <p>Assyrians (1300-612 BCE)</p> <p>New Babylonians (612-539 BCE)</p>	<p>Mohenjo Daro (3300-1300 BCE)</p> <p>Maurya (320-184 BCE)</p> <p>Gupta (240-550 AD)</p> <p>Mughal (1526-1858)</p>	<p>Shang (1750-1100 BCE)</p> <p>Zhou (1100-256 BCE)</p> <p>Qin (221-207 BCE)</p> <p>Han (206 BCE - 220 CE)</p> <p>Sui (589-618 AD)</p> <p>Tang (618-907 AD)</p>

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