**APWH Unit 2 Key Concepts: Classical Civilizations**

**600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E. - Organization and Reorganization of Human Societies**

*Focus Question: What was “classic” about the classical era?*

**SNAPSHOT (what was taking place at beginning of period)**

* early stages of new wave of urban, centralized civilizations in Persia, China, India, eastern Mediterranean & Mesoamerica that created enduring religious, cultural, artistic, & political legacies
* nomadic cultures interactions with sedentary, agriculture-based urban civilizations included: trade, diffusion/spread of ideas and technologies, and conflict
* established regional grasslands, desert, and sea trade routes in the Eastern Hemisphere

***Overview***

**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.

**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.

**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.

***Outline***

**Key Concept ­2.1 As states and empires increased in size and contacts between regions intensified, human communities transformed their religious and ideological beliefs and practices.**

1. **Codifications** and further developments of existing religious traditions provided a **bond** among people and an **ethical code** to live by.
   1. 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.
   2. The **core beliefs** outlined in the **Sanskrit scriptures** formed the basis of the **Vedic religions** – developing 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**.
2. **New belief systems** and **cultural traditions** emerged and spread, often asserting **universal truths**.
   1. 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.
   2. **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.
   3. 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.

-*examples: medical theories and practices, architecture*

* 1. Core beliefs of **Christianity** were based on the teachings of **Jesus** of Nazareth as recorded by his **disciples** and their belief in his **divinity**. Christianity 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 **martyrs** through many parts of Afro-Eurasia, and eventually gained **Roman imperial support** by the time of **Emperor Constantine**.
  2. **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**.
  3. **Art** and **architecture** reflected the **values** of **religions** and **belief systems**.

-*example: Greco-Roman art and architecture*

1. **Belief systems** generally **reinforced** existing **social structures** while also offering **new roles** and status to some men and women.
   1. **Confucianism** emphasized **filial piety**.
   2. Some **Buddhists** and **Christians** practiced a **monastic** life.
2. Other religious and cultural traditions continued and in some places were incorporated into major religious traditions.
   1. **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 As the early states and empires grew in number, size, and population, they frequently competed for resources and came into conflict with one another.**

1. 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. Key states and empires include:

(*know the location and names of all of the following*):

* + - Southwest Asia: Persian empires
    - East Asia: Qin and Han empires
    - 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 to Cahokia

1. Empires and states developed **new techniques** of **imperial administration** based, in part, on the success of earlier political forms.
   1. In order to organize their subjects, in many regions imperial rulers created **administrative institutions**, including **centralized governments** as well as elaborate **legal systems** and **bureaucracies**.
   2. Imperial governments promoted **trade** and projected **military power** over large 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 location populations or conquered populations.
2. Unique social and economic dimensions developed in imperial societies in Afro-Eurasia and the Americas.
   1. **Imperial cities** served as **centers of trade**, public **performance** of **religious rituals** and **political** **administration** for states and empires.

*-examples: Athens, Rome*

* 1. The social structures of empires displayed **hierarchies** that included cultivators, laborers, slaves, artisans, merchants, elites or caste groups.
  2. Imperial societies relied on a range of **methods** to maintain the **production of food** and provide **rewards** for the loyalty of the **elites**.

-*example: slavery*

* 1. **Patriarchy** continued to shape gender and family relations in imperial societies of this period.

1. 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.
   1. Through excessive mobilization of resources, erosion of established political institutions, and economic changes, imperial governments generated **social tensions** and created **economic difficulties** by concentrating too much wealth in the hands of elites.
   2. **Security issues** along their frontiers, including the threat of invasions, challenged imperial authority.

**Key Concept ­2.3 With the organization of large-scale empires, transregional trade intensified, leading to the creation of extensive networks of commercial and cultural exchange.**

1. **Land** and **water routes** became the basis for **interregional trade**, **communication** and **exchange networks** in the **Eastern Hemisphere**.
   1. 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**.
2. New **technologies** facilitated long-distance **communication** and **exchange**.
   1. New technologies permitted the use of **domesticated pack animals** to transport goods across longer routes.
   2. Innovations in **maritime technologies**, as well as advanced **knowledge of the monsoon winds**, stimulated exchanges along maritime routes from East Africa to East Asia.
3. **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.
   1. The spread of **crops**, including rice and cotton from South Asia to the Middle East, encouraged changes in farming and irrigation techniques.

-*examples: qanat, noria*

* 1. The spread of **disease pathogens** diminished urban populations and contributed to the **decline** of some empires, including the Roman and the Han.
  2. **Religious** and **cultural traditions** – including Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism – were **transformed** as they spread, partly as a result of **syncretism**.