Chapter 5
The Classical Period: Directions, Diversities, and Declines by 500 C.E.

I. Expansion and Integration
   A. Key point – how did classical civilizations adjust to expansion
      1. Between 550>400 BCE Confucius, Laozi, Buddha, Socrates
         a. Need to articulate central values
   B. How did they all unite?
      1. China – more centralized
      2. Mediterranean – more localized/diverse
      3. India – key religious values – not as vulnerable to collapse – like Rome
   C. What are the two challenges of integration?
      1. Territorial – how to command
         a. China – language for elite, resettlement
         b. Rome – local autonomy, tolerance
         c. India – spread caste system
      2. Social – inequality between men/women – upper/lower class
         b. India – caste system
         c. Rome – slavery
   D. How to maintain cohesion?
      1. Rome – promise of upward mobility
      2. China – mutual respect between upper and lower
      3. India – future reincarnation into higher form if good life

II. Beyond the Classical Civilizations
   A. Some as border civilizations, some entirely independent
      1. Wider trade patterns
   B. Africa – Kush – hieroglyphics, iron, monarchy
      1. Defeated by Axum, then Ethiopia
         a. Ethiopian Christian church cut off from Greeks – isolated
         b. Ethiopia – by 20th century – oldest uninterrupted monarchy
      2. Farming on southern border of Sahara – regional kingdoms
         a. Agriculture spread slowly – dense vegetation, diseases on domesticated
         b. Eventually farmed new crops, traded w/ Asia
   C. Japan – 200 CE extensive agriculture – migrations from Korea over 200,000 year period
      1. tribal chiefs – each tribe had own god
      2. Chinese visitor – law-abiding, fond of drink, experts agriculture
         a. Tattoos to separate social classes
      3. Shintoism – worship political rulers and spirits of nature – eventually nationalized
      4. 400 CE – one regional ruler took over surrounding territories
         a. By 600 CE began trading/interacting with Chinese civilization
   D. Northern Europe – lagged behind Japan – most backward areas in the world
      1. Regional kingdoms – no written language – except Latin imports
         a. Primitive agriculture and hunting
      2. Gods and rituals to deal with nature
         a. Not until 1000 CE did Christianity truly unite
   E. Central America – Olmec civilization – more advanced than Europe/Africa
      1. Corn staple food crop, but few domesticated animals
      2. Olmec culture
         a. Artistic forms – jade
b. religious images – animals and humans
c. science – accurate calendars
3. Successors made Teotihuacan – great city, later taken over by Maya – 400 CE on
4. Olmecs similar to Sumerians – foundation
5. Incas in Peru/Bolivia – isolation from world – couldn’t copy and react
   a. No wheel, iron
   b. Advanced civilization – agriculture to city
F. Polynesian peoples – Fiji by 1000 BCE, Hawaii 400 CE
   1. Great travelers/explorers
   2. Adapted local plants, brought in new animals, imported caste system under kings
G. Central Asia – played central role in trade
   1. Invention of stirrup
   2. Important contacts between civilizations
   3. Herding groups invaded civilizations

III. Decline in China and India
A. 200-600 CE all three start to decline
   1. Outside invasion – nomadic growth – Huns
      a. Huns realized weakness of regime
   2. Internal problems
B. Han Dynasty – population growth/prosperity spiral down
   1. Confucian intellectual activity less active
   2. Bureaucrats corrupt
   3. Local landlords took up power
   4. New peasant taxes – social unrest
      a. Peasants become day laborers/sell children
   5. Daoism attractive – healing practices + magic
      a. Yellow Turbans – golden age w/ magic
         1. Attacked weak emperor/corrupt bureaucracy
   6. Similarities to Rome
      a. Political ineffectiveness
      b. Epidemics – killed half of China
      c. Three centuries of chaos
   7. Cultural unity threatened by Buddhism
   8. Eventually invaders kicked out by Sui and Tang – started one of most glorious periods
   9. Why survived?
      a. Structures too strong – bureaucracy
         1. Invaders couldn’t offer anything better
C. India decline – not as drastic
   1. Gupta emperors losing control of local princes
   2. Hun invaders penetrate deeper into India
   3. Regional princes, Rajput, gain more power
   4. But…Indian culture evolved – Hinduism wins out over Buddhism
      a. Huns have no patience for Buddhist principles of calm/contemplation
      b. Mother Goddess Devi spread
   5. Threat from Islam, Arabs fighting for Allah
      a. Hinduism supported more by government
      b. Not as much focus on intellectual pursuits, focus put on uniting Hinduism
      c. Arab traders took control of trade
   6. Regionalism prevailed, but Hinduism saved the day
IV. Decline and Fall of Rome – most severe
   A. Symptoms of decay
      1. Declining population
      2. Brutal/arbitrary emperors
      3. tax collection difficult – blood from turnip
      4. humans saw futility of life
   B. Causes
      1. weak emperors, succession, army helps selects emperors
      2. plagues from international trade
      3. population decrease > can’t recruit troops > have to hire Germanic soldiers
      4. Upper class more pleasure seeking – loss of morals
         a. Stopped having kids
      5. Aside from writing textbooks, no new artistic creativity
         a. Textbooks summarized info already known, plus threw in superstition
   C. Course of decline
      1. quality of imperial rule declined
      2. life became more dangerous
      3. economic survival more difficult> farmers work for landlords > feudalism/manorialism
      4. estates became self-sufficient – trade declined
      5. Some emperors try to stop
         a. Diocletian reforms – improve administration, tax coll, economic regulation,
            worship emperor as god > Persecute Christians
         b. Constantine – Constantinople – use Christianity to unify – eastern emp. Effective
      6. Western proven as even weaker – when barbarians come – no one cares
         a. 5% of empire able to take over
      7. Why it didn’t survive?
         a. No shared political/bureaucratic traditions
         b. No common religion
      8. Created three regions
         a. Eastern – Byzantine Empire – Greek – Justinian codes – famous Roman laws
         b. Sassanid Empire – Persian – bridge to the east – continued under Persian rule
         b. North Africa – Augustine – Christian theologizns
            a. Coptic Church in Egypt – soon Islam would take over
         c. Western empire – shattered
            1. Regional unities
            2. Reduced level of civilization – crude, cities shrank, Dark Ages
               a. Literacy falls – sense of inferiority to classical Rome – forgotten

V. The New Religious Map
   A. End of classical period led to rise of major religions – unprecedented growth
      1. Devastating plagues – provided solace for death
      2. Growing political instability – Christianity > Mediterranean, Buddhism > Asia
         a. Islam arose in 600 CE and became most dominant force
      3. Common focus
         a. Spiritual concerns beyond daily life
         b. Hope of better existence after death
      4. Hundreds of thousands underwent conversion process
         a. Syncretism – religions changed to incorporate features of civilization
      5. Yet, remained different
   B. Buddhism
1. Buddhism altered more than Hinduism as it expanded across Asia
   a. Monks pushed conversion
   b. Two groups – minority who abandoned earthly life & others doing best they could
2. bodhisattvas – attain nirvana through meditation
   a. Could lead in prayer and advise on spiritual matters
3. Changed from religion based on ethics to emotional cult offering salvation
4. In China, issue of celestial afterlife
   a. Mahayana – Greater Vehicle – east Asian form
      1. Buddha as divine savior – statues, against earlier belief against images
      2. Bodhisattvas – souls could receive prayers and aid people after death
   b. Southeast Asia – closer to original – meditation and ethics
5. Pushed forward new artistic interests – pagodas in Japan
6. Impact on women
   a. women and men both had souls
   b. syncretism – Buddhist – husband “supports” wife > “controls”
   c. valued pious Buddhist wives – could help family reach salvation
      1. keep wives busy, calm, out of mischief
7. Conflict
   a. Focus on afterlife takes away focus on political interests
   b. holy life incompatible w/ family needs
   c. threat to distract loyalty to emperor
   d. Daoism reaction – practical benefits through magic
8. Never dominated culture, coexisted
   a. response to changing conditions of troubled area

VI. Christianity
A. Similarities to Buddhism
   1. Spreading at same time – Buddhism east, Christianity west
   2. Christianity initially less successful
   3. Emphasis on salvation
   4. Guidance of saints
B. Differences
   1. Placed more emphasis on organization, structure < borrowed from Roman Empire
   2. Premium on conversion
   3. Exclusive nature of truth, intolerant of competing beliefs < reason for success
C. Beginnings
   1. Reaction to rigidities of Jewish priesthood
   2. Cult/reaction movements started – promised afterlife for virtuous
      a. Jesus of Nazareth – gentleness + charisma
      b. initially no desire to spread
      c. message
         1. one God, virtuous life dedicated to God, fellowship among believers, life of poverty better for holiness
         2. Sacrifice for sins
         3. Afterlife > belief, good works, discipline, perform rituals
      d. why did it spread?
         1. Solace in negative world
         2. Missionaries travel easily around Roman Empire
         3. early leaders made adjustments to match needs
            a. Bishop system matched provincial governments
         4. attractive to rich/poor – promise of salvation – like Hinduism
5. women – souls equal, men and women worship together
3. Gradual growth
   a. Competed w/ eastern cults, persecuted
   b. Constantine converted only 10%
      1. Theocracy in East – emperor strong
      2. Provincial leaders more power in West – papa – Pope in Rome
4. Beliefs
   a. Trinity – Father, Son, Holy Spirit
   b. formal theology – writers – Augustine – mixed w/ classical philosophy
   c. Notion of free will
   d. state not first
   e. worked against slavery – brotherhood more important – across class lines
   f. respect for disciplined work
   g. Church building maintained Roman architecture
5. Syncretism – polytheistic traditions
   a. Moved birth to winter solstice – December 22ish
6. Monasticism – Benedict
   a. Benedictine Rule – disciplined life, prayer, study, piety
   b. Monasteries centers of learning – preserved classics

VII. The World around 500 CE
   A. World religion – durability, different kinds of people
      1. cuts across cultures, wins converts, wide geographic area, diversity
      2. animism decreases
   B. Islam – initially surpasses Christianity, rival ever since
      1. No new religion after Islam
      2. Religious map doesn’t alter much after Islam
   C. Changes to world
      1. Showed importance of trade routes
      2. Tendency toward single divinity – away from polytheism – but still existed
   D. Set up themes for future
      1. Response to collapse of former civilizations
      2. Need to react to new religious map
      3. Agricultural skill, and new contacts meant other civilizations would be catching up
   E. Global connections
      1. dangerous land travel
      2. new premium on shipping
      3. borders became more porous – new exchanges – new connections for future