



Roman/Greece



Mauryan/Gupta



Zhou/Qin/Han



Persians

Chapter 6

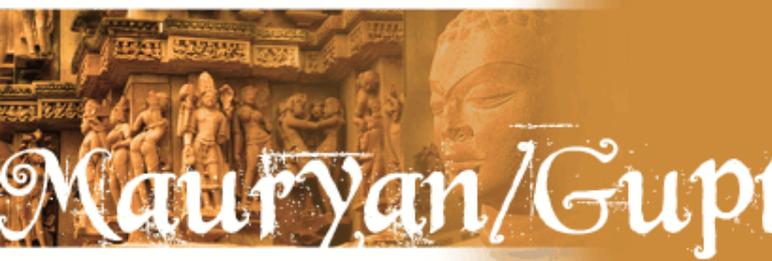
Eurasian Social Hierarchies

500 B.C.E.—500 C.E.

Chapter Learning Objectives

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and a statue of a man in a white robe. The text "Roman/Greece" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Roman/Greece

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and a statue of a man in a white robe. The text "Mauryan/Gupta" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Mauryan/Gupta

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and a statue of a man in a white robe. The text "Zhou/Qin/Han" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and a statue of a man in a white robe. The text "Persians" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Persians

- I can explore social structures in classical Eurasia
- I can consider what made social structures different in different civilizations
- I can explore the nature of classical patriarchy and its variations

I. Opening Vignette

A horizontal banner with a background image of a Roman temple and two men in togas. The text "Roman/Greece" is written in a white, stylized, gothic font across the center.

Roman/Greece

A horizontal banner with a background image of a Mauryan/Gupta temple and a Buddha statue. The text "Mauryan/Gupta" is written in a white, stylized, gothic font across the center.

Mauryan/Gupta

A horizontal banner with a background image of a large stone wall and a landscape. The text "Zhou/Qin/Han" is written in a white, stylized, gothic font across the center.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A horizontal banner with a background image of a Persian king and a city. The text "Persians" is written in a white, stylized, gothic font across the center.

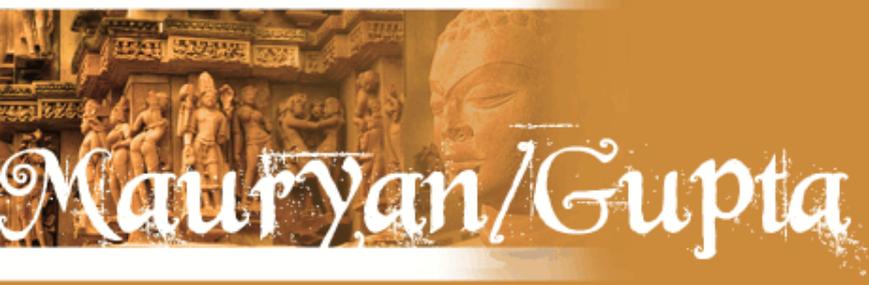
Persians

- A. Caste continues to be central to present-day India.
- B. The period 1750–present has challenged many social structures once thought to be immutable.
 1. series of revolutions destroyed monarchies and class hierarchies
 2. abolition of slavery
 3. women’s movement
 4. Gandhi’s effort to raise status of “untouchables”
- C. Patterns of inequality generated social tensions during the “second wave” civilizations, too.
- D. Classical civilizations were hierarchical and patriarchal, but they varied in how they organized their societies.

II. Society and the State in Classical China

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and statues. The text "Roman/Greece" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Roman/Greece

A banner featuring a stone relief sculpture of figures and a large stone head. The text "Mauryan/Gupta" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Mauryan/Gupta

A banner featuring a large number of terracotta soldiers and a landscape with a wall. The text "Zhou/Qin/Han" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A banner featuring a profile of a man with a beard and a turban, and a cityscape with tall structures. The text "Persians" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

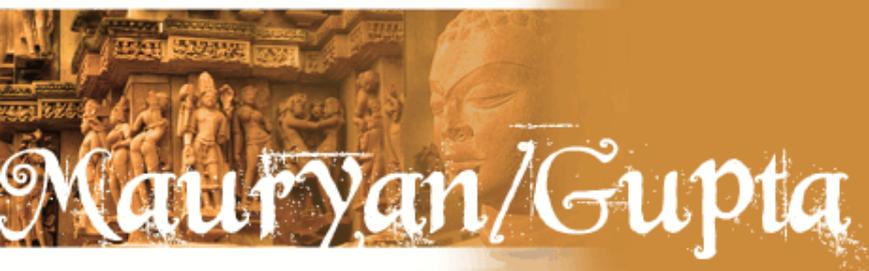
Persians

- A. Chinese society was more shaped by state actions than were other societies.
 - 1. immense social prestige and political power of state officials
 - 2. officials as cultural and social elite
- B. An Elite of Officials
 - 1. world's first professional civil service
 - 2. 124 B.C.E.: Wudi established an imperial academy for officials
 - a. around 30,000 students by end of Han dynasty
 - b. written examinations used to select officials
 - c. system lasted until early twentieth century

II. Society and the State in Classical China

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and a statue in the foreground. The text "Roman/Greece" is written in a white, stylized font across the bottom.

Roman/Greece

A banner featuring a stone relief sculpture of figures and a large stone head sculpture. The text "Mauryan/Gupta" is written in a white, stylized font across the bottom.

Mauryan/Gupta

A banner featuring a large number of stone statues of soldiers and a landscape with a wall. The text "Zhou/Qin/Han" is written in a white, stylized font across the bottom.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A banner featuring a profile of a man with a beard and a turban, and a cityscape with tall columns. The text "Persians" is written in a white, stylized font across the bottom.

Persians

3. favored the wealthy, who could educate sons

a. closeness to the capital, family connections important

b. it was possible for commoners to rise via education

4. system developed further in later dynasties

5. bureaucrats had great prestige and privileges

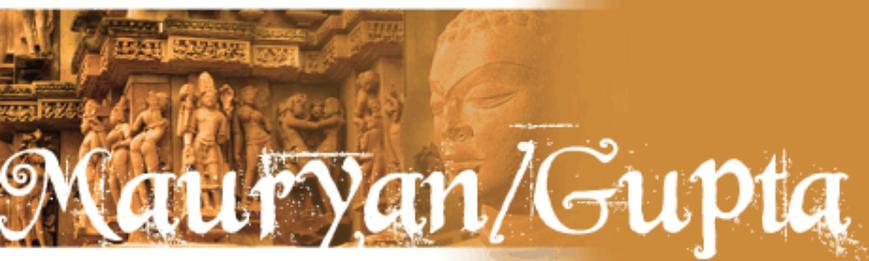
C. The Landlord Class

1. by first century B.C.E., small-scale peasant farmers had been displaced by large landowners and tenant farmers

II. Society and the State in Classical China

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Roman/Greece

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Mauryan/Gupta

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and a statue in the foreground. The text "Zhou/Qin/Han" is written in a white, stylized font across the bottom.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and a statue in the foreground. The text "Persians" is written in a white, stylized font across the bottom.

Persians

2. state opposed creation of large estates throughout Chinese history, without much success

- a. large landowners could often evade taxes
- b. large landowners sometimes kept independent military forces that could challenge imperial authority
- c. reforms by usurper Wang Mang (r. 8–23 C.E.)

3. landowner prestige was based on both wealth and prestige of membership in the bureaucracy (“scholar-gentry”)

II. Society and the State in Classical China

A banner featuring a classical building with columns and statues in the background. The text "Roman/Greece" is written in a white, stylized, gothic-style font across the center.

Roman/Greece

A banner featuring a stone relief sculpture of figures and a large stone head sculpture in the background. The text "Mauryan/Gupta" is written in a white, stylized, gothic-style font across the center.

Mauryan/Gupta

A banner featuring a large number of terracotta warrior figurines in the background. The text "Zhou/Qin/Han" is written in a white, stylized, gothic-style font across the center.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A banner featuring a profile of a man with a beard and a turban on the left, and a cityscape with tall spires in the background. The text "Persians" is written in a white, stylized, gothic-style font across the center.

Persians

D. Peasants

1. in Chinese history, most of population have been peasants

- a. some relatively prosperous, some barely surviving
- b. tenant farmers in Han dynasty owed as much as two-thirds of crop to landowners

2. periodic peasant rebellions

- a. Yellow Turban Rebellion in 184 C.E. provoked by flooding and epidemics
- b. peasant revolts devastated the economy and contributed to overthrow of Han dynasty
- c. Chinese peasant movements were often expressed in religious terms

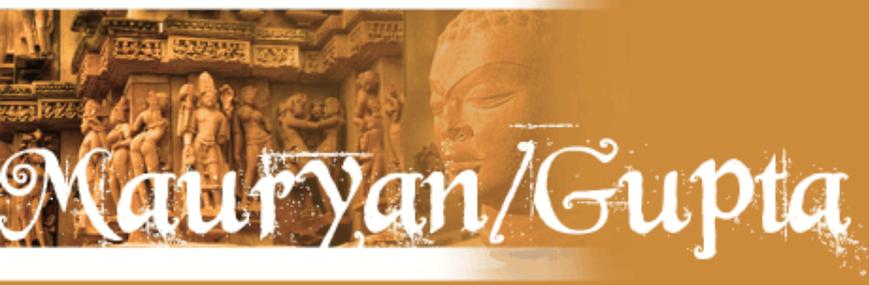
China



II. Society and the State in Classical China

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Roman/Greece

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Mauryan/Gupta

A banner featuring a large number of stone statues of soldiers and a landscape with a wall. The text "Zhou/Qin/Han" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Zhou/Qin/Han

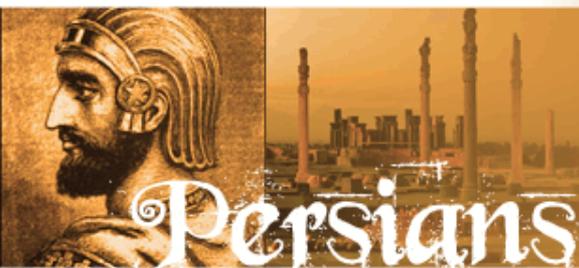
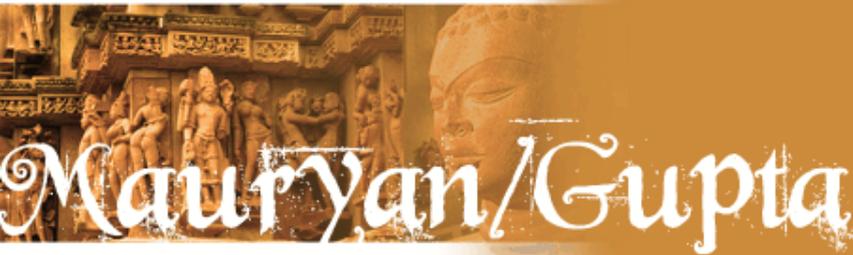
A banner featuring a profile of a man's head with a beard and a turban, and a cityscape with tall structures. The text "Persians" is written in a white, stylized font over the image.

Persians

E. Merchants

1. Chinese cultural elite disliked merchants
 - a. stereotyped as greedy and profiting from work of others
 - b. seen as a social threat that impoverished others
2. periodic efforts to control merchants
 - a. sumptuary laws
 - b. forbidden to hold public office
 - c. state monopolies on important industries (salt, iron, alcohol)
 - d. forced to make loans to the state
3. merchants often prospered anyway
 - a. won their way to respectability by purchasing estates or educating their sons
 - b. many officials and landlords were willing to work with them

III. Class and Caste in India



A. Caste as Varna

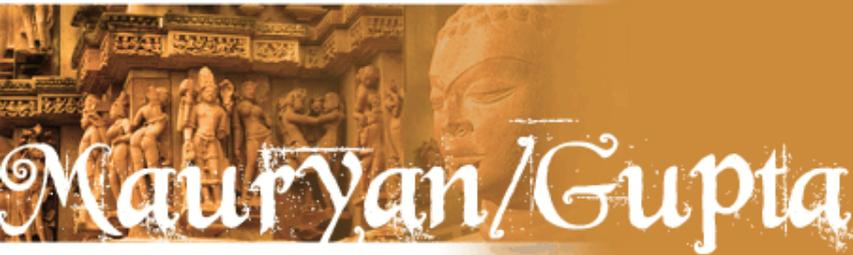
1. the word “caste” comes from the Portuguese word meaning “race” or “purity of blood”
2. caste may have evolved from encounter between Aryans (light-skinned) and natives (dark-skinned)
 - a. certainly grew from interaction of culturally diverse peoples
 - b. development of economic and social differences between them
 - c. economic specialization and culture apparently more important than notions of race

III. Class and Caste in India



3. ca. 500 B.C.E., there was clear belief that society was divided into four great classes (varna), with position determined by birth

- a. three segments of pure Aryans (the “twice-born”)
- b. Sudras: native peoples, in very subordinate positions

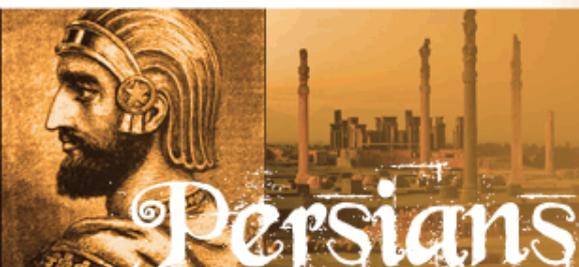


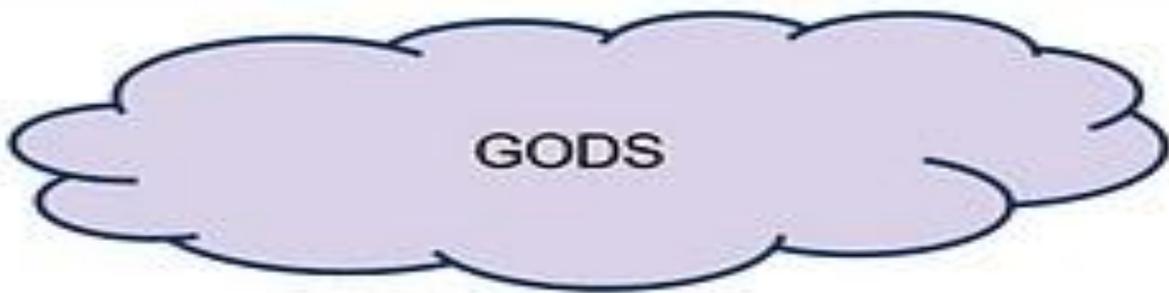
4. varna theory: the four groups were formed from the body of the god Purusha; immutable

- a. reality: considerable social change in ancient India
- b. frequent conflict between Brahmin and Ksatriya groups
- c. absorption of “tribal peoples” within Aryan groups
- d. Vaisya varna evolved into business class



- e. Sudra varna became peasant farmers
- f. creation of untouchables below Sudras





GODS



BHRAMIN

Priests, Academics

KSHATRYIA

Warriors, Kings

VAISHYA

Merchants, Landowners

SUDRA

Commoners, Peasants, Servants



UNTOUCHABLES

Outcast-Out of Caste. Street sweepers, latrine cleaners

The Aryan Caste System

According to Indian tradition, the four major castes emerged from the mouth, arms, legs, and feet of Perusha (the first human being). Perusha is identified with the creator god Brahma. The body part indicated the dignity and role of the caste that emerged from it.



MOUTH
Brahmins
(priests)

ARMS
Kshatriyas
(rulers and warriors)

LEGS
Vaishyas
(peasants and traders)

FEET
Shudras
(laborers)

III. Class and Caste in India



B. Caste as Jati

1. social distinctions based on specific occupations, organized as guilds (jatis)

a. blended with varna system to create full caste system

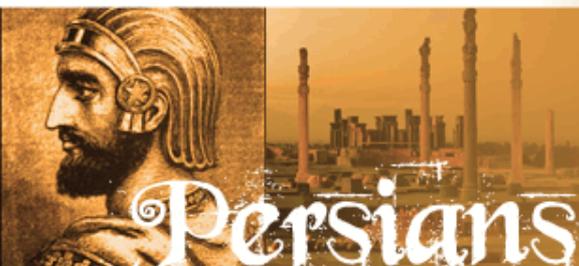
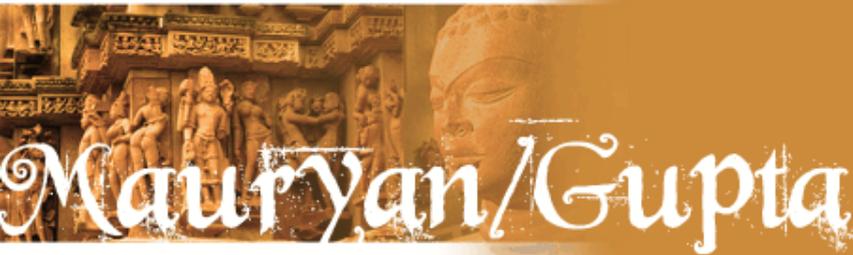
b. thousands of jatis became primary cell of social life

c. each of four great classes divided into many jatis (sub-castes)

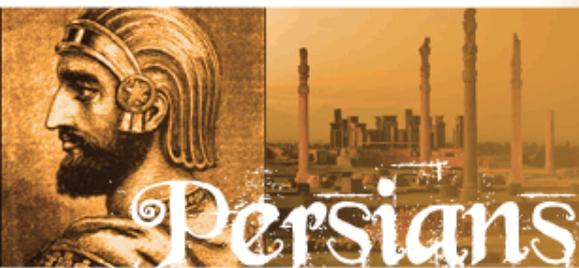
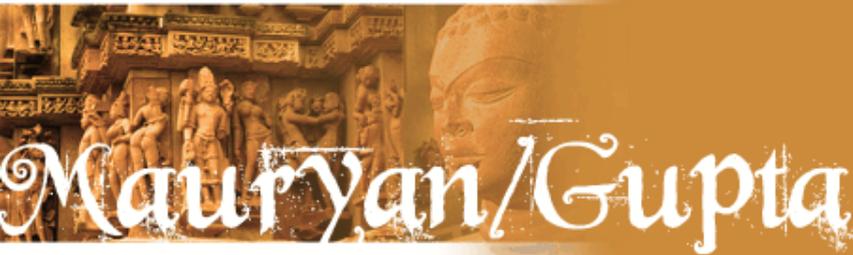
2. clearly defined social position

a. marriage and eating together only permitted within individual's jati

b. each jati had particular duties, rules, obligations



III. Class and Caste in India



3. ideas of ritual purity and pollution applied to caste groups
4. inherent inequality supported by idea of karma, dharma, and rebirth
 - a. birth into a caste determined by good or bad deeds (karma) of a previous life
 - b. rebirth in a higher caste determined by performance of present caste duties (dharma)
5. threat of social ostracism for violating rules of the jati
6. individuals couldn't raise social status, but whole jatis could improve social standing

III. Class and Caste in India

C. The Functions of Caste

1. caste was very local, so it focused loyalties on a restricted territory

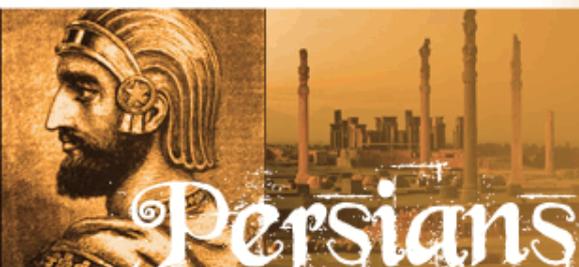
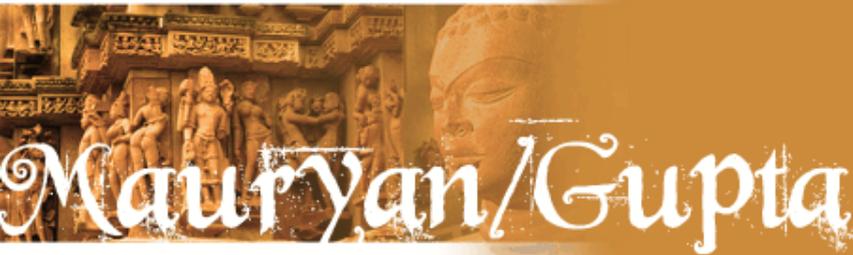
a. made empire building very difficult

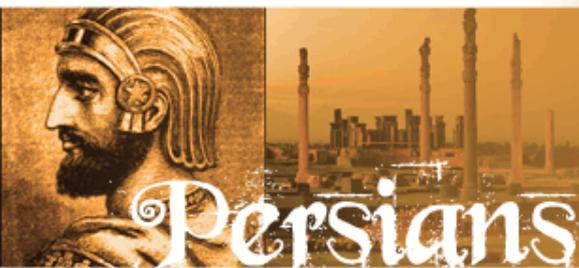
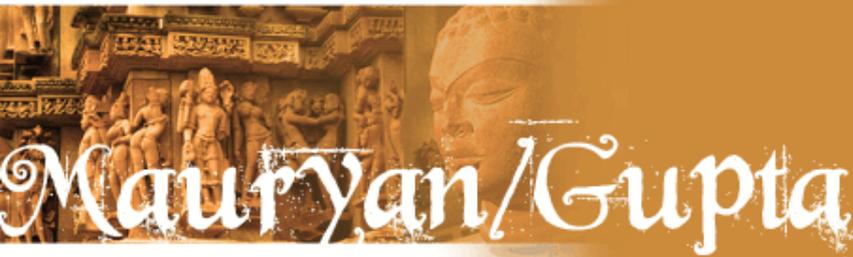
b. caste as a substitute for the state

2. caste provided some social security and support (care for widows, orphans, the destitute)

3. caste was a means to accommodate migrants and invaders

4. made it easier for the wealthy and powerful to exploit the poor





IV. Slavery in the Classical Era: The Case of the Roman Empire

A. Why did slavery emerge in the First Civilizations? There are various theories:

1. domestication of animals provided a model for human slavery
2. war, patriarchy, and private property ideas encouraged slavery
3. women captured in war were probably the first slaves
4. patriarchal "ownership" of women may have encouraged slavery

B. Slavery and Civilization

1. slavery as "social death": lack of rights or independent personal identity
2. slavery was a long-established tradition by the time of Hammurabi (around 1750 B.C.E.)

A L P S

Po R.

← Route of slave armies
- - - Appian Way

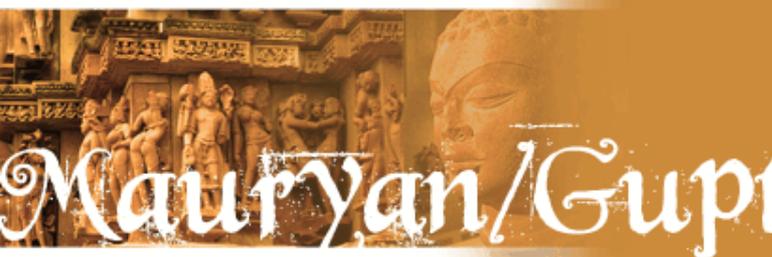


Roman Slavery

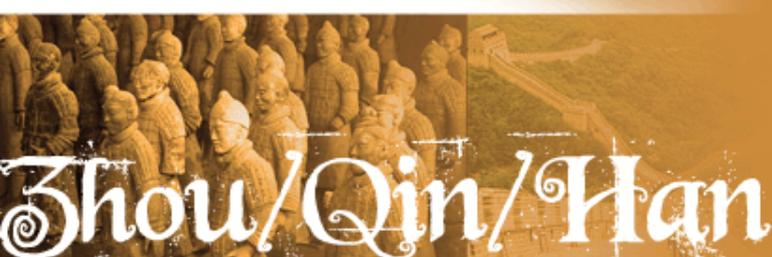
IV. Slavery in the Classical Era: The Case of the Roman Empire

A collage of images related to Roman and Greek history, including a man in a white toga, a classical building facade, and a man in a white tunic.

Roman/Greece

A collage of images related to the Mauryan and Gupta empires, including a stone relief sculpture of figures and a large stone head sculpture.

Mauryan/Gupta

A collage of images related to the Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties, including a large stone relief sculpture of figures and a landscape with a wall.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A collage of images related to the Persians, including a profile of a man with a beard and a crown, and a cityscape with tall columns.

Persians

3. almost all civilizations had some form of slavery
 - a. varied considerably over place and time
 - b. classical Greece and Rome: slave emancipation was common
 - c. Aztec Empire: children of slaves were considered to be free
 - d. labor of slaves varied widely
4. less common in China (maybe 1 percent of population)
 - a. convicts and their families were earliest slaves
 - b. poor peasants sometimes sold their children into slavery
5. India: criminals, debtors, war captives were slaves
 - a. largely domestic
 - b. religion and law gave some protections
 - c. society wasn't economically dependent on slavery



IV. Slavery in the Classical Era: The Case of the Roman Empire

C. The Making of a Slave Society: The Case of Rome

1. Mediterranean/Western civilization: slavery played immense role

a. Greco-Roman world was a slave
society

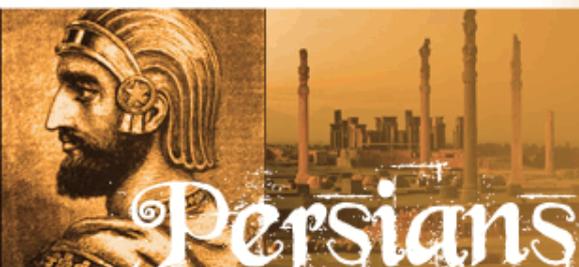
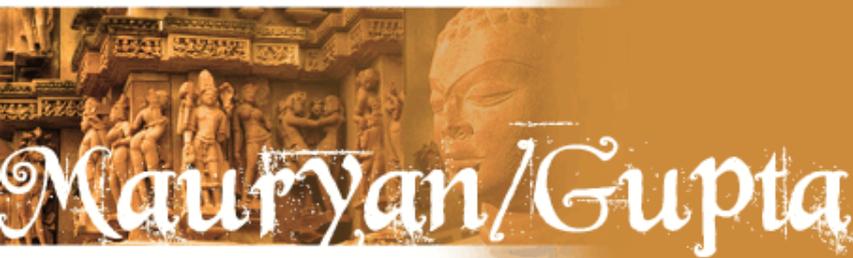
b. one-third of population of
classical Athens was enslaved

c. Aristotle: some people are
"slaves by nature"

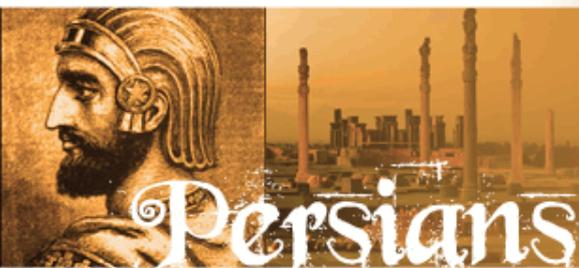
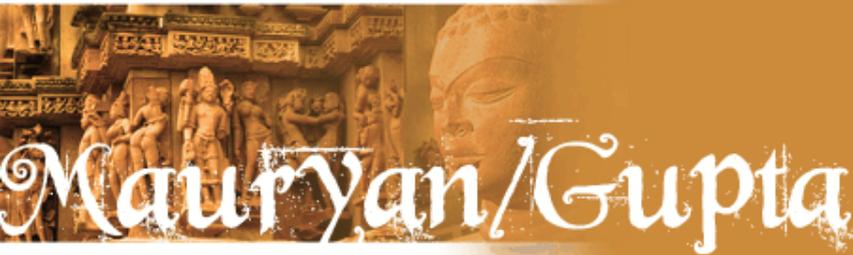
2. at beginning of Common Era, Italy's population was 33 to 40 percent slaves

a. wealthy Romans owned
hundreds or thousands of slaves

b. people of modest means often
owned two or three slaves



IV. Slavery in the Classical Era: The Case of the Roman Empire



3. how people became slaves:

- a. massive enslavement of war prisoners
- b. piracy
- c. long-distance trade for Black Sea, East African, and northwest European slaves
- d. natural reproduction
- e. abandoned/exposed children

4. not associated with a particular ethnic group

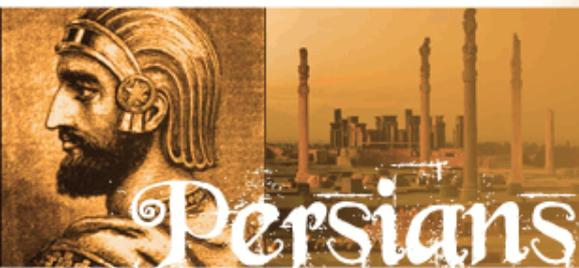
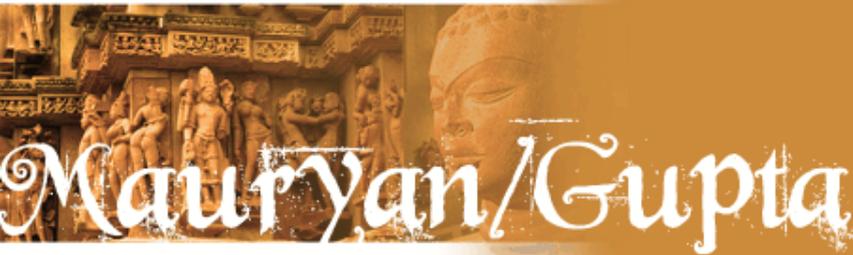
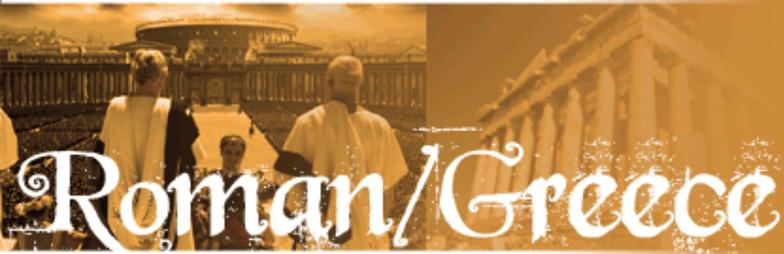
5. little serious social critique of slavery, even within Christianity

6. slavery was deeply entrenched in Roman society

- a. slaves did all sorts of work except military service
- b. performed both highly prestigious and degraded tasks

7. slaves had no legal rights

- a. could not marry legally
- b. if a slave murdered his master, all of the victim's slaves were killed
- c. manumission was common; Roman freedmen became citizens

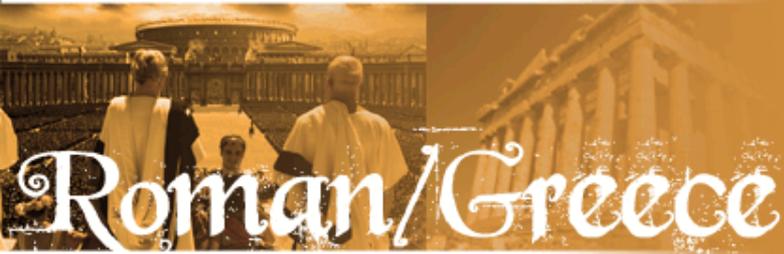


IV. Slavery in the Classical Era: The Case of the Roman Empire

D. Resistance and Rebellion

1. cases of mass suicide of war prisoners to avoid slavery
2. “weapons of the weak”: theft, sabotage, poor work, curses
3. flight
4. occasional murder of owners
5. rebellion
 - a. most famous was led by Spartacus in 73 B.C.E.
 - b. nothing on similar scale occurred in the West until Haiti in the 1790s
 - c. Roman slave rebellions did not attempt to end slavery; participants just wanted freedom for themselves

V. Comparing Patriarchies of the Classical Era



A. Every human community has created a gender system.

1. at least since the First Civilizations, the result has been patriarchy

2. men regarded as superior to women

3. men had greater legal and property rights

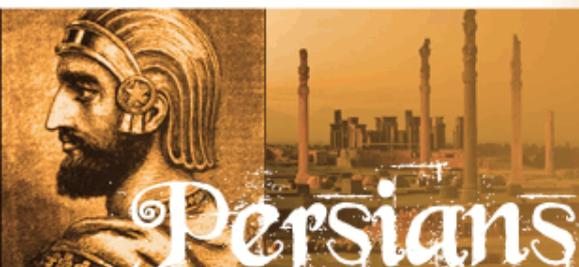
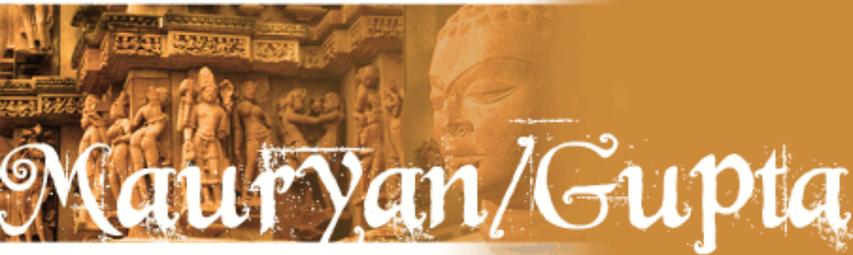
4. public life was the male domain

5. polygamy was common, with sexual control of females of family

6. notion that women need male protection and control

7. patriarchy varied in different civilizations

8. interaction of patriarchy and class: greatest restrictions on upper-class women



V. Comparing Patriarchies of the Classical Era

A photograph of a Roman-style building with a dome and columns, with several figures in classical attire in the foreground.

Roman/Greece

B. A Changing Patriarchy: The Case of China

1. in the Han dynasty, elite ideas became more patriarchal and linked to Confucianism

a. thinking about pairs of opposites applied in unequal terms

b. men's sphere is public; women's sphere is domestic

c. "three obediences": woman is subordinated to father, then husband, then son

2. woman writer Ban Zhao (45–116 c.e.): female inferiority reinforced by birth rituals

3. there were exceptions to the widespread subordination

a. a few women had considerable political authority

b. some writers praised virtuous women as wise counselors

c. honor given to the mothers of sons

d. dowry was regarded as woman's own property

e. women valued as textile producers

f. a wife had much higher status than a concubine

A photograph of a Mauryan-style temple with a large seated Buddha figure in the foreground.

Mauryan/Gupta

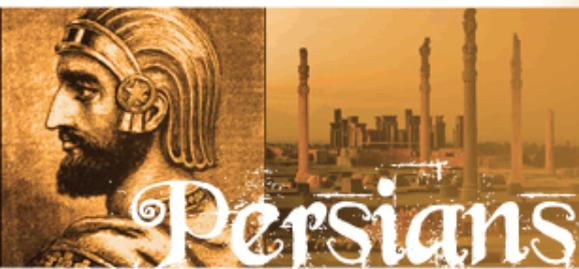
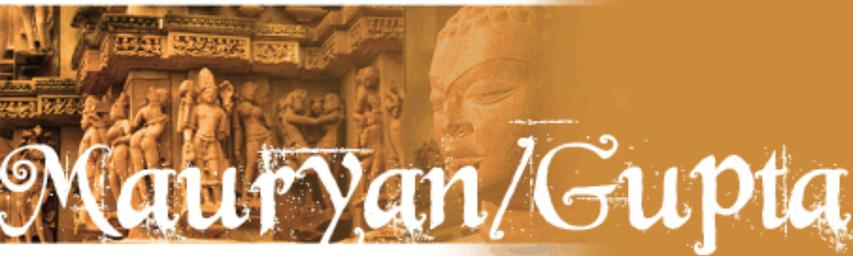
A photograph of a large number of terracotta soldiers from the Qin dynasty.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A profile photograph of a Persian man wearing a crown and a beard.

Persians

V. Comparing Patriarchies of the Classical Era



4. changes following the collapse of the Han dynasty

- a. cultural influence of nomadic peoples (who had less restriction)
- b. by Tang dynasty (618–907), elite women regarded as capable of handling legal and business affairs, even of riding horses
- c. major sign of weakening patriarchy: reign of Empress Wu (r. 690–705 C.E.)
- d. growing popularity of Daoism opened new women's roles

C. Contrasting Patriarchies in Athens and Sparta

1. Athens and Sparta held substantially different views about women

V. Comparing Patriarchies of the Classical Era

A banner featuring a classical building facade with columns and statues. The text "Roman/Greece" is written in a white, stylized, gothic-style font across the center.

Roman/Greece

2. Athens: increasing limitations on women from 700 to 400 B.C.E.

a. completely excluded from public life

b. represented by a guardian in law; not even named in court proceedings

c. Aristotle: cited women's natural "inadequacy" compared to males

d. restricted to the home

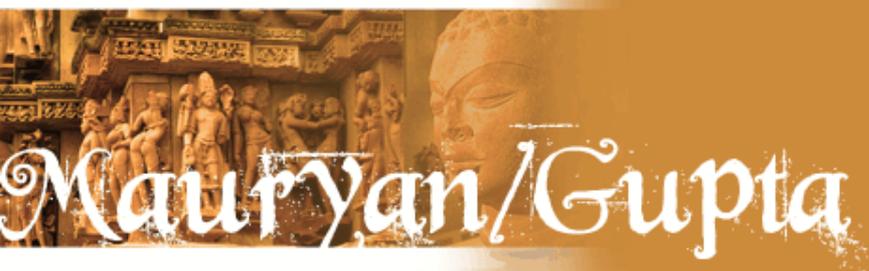
e. married in mid-teens to men 10–15 years older

f. role in life: domestic management and bearing sons

g. land normally passed through male heirs

h. women could only negotiate small contracts

i. most notable exception: Aspasia (ca. 470–400 B.C.E.)

A banner featuring a classical building facade with columns and statues. The text "Mauryan/Gupta" is written in a white, stylized, gothic-style font across the center.

Mauryan/Gupta

A banner featuring a classical building facade with columns and statues. The text "Zhou/Qin/Han" is written in a white, stylized, gothic-style font across the center.

Zhou/Qin/Han

A banner featuring a classical building facade with columns and statues. The text "Persians" is written in a white, stylized, gothic-style font across the center.

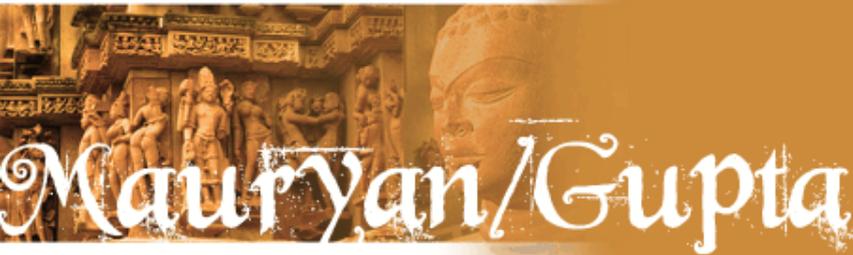
Persians

V. Comparing Patriarchies of the Classical Era



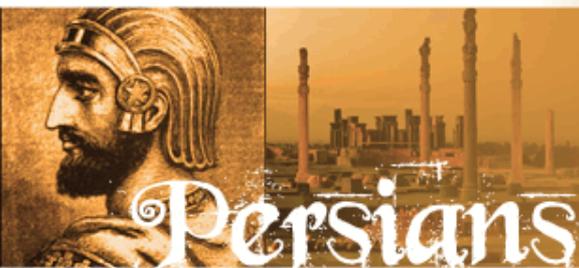
3. Sparta: militaristic regime very different from Athens

- a. need to counter permanent threat of helot rebellion
- b. Spartan male seen as warrior above all
- c. situation gave women greater freedom
- d. central female task was reproduction
- e. men were often preparing for or waging war, so women had larger role in household

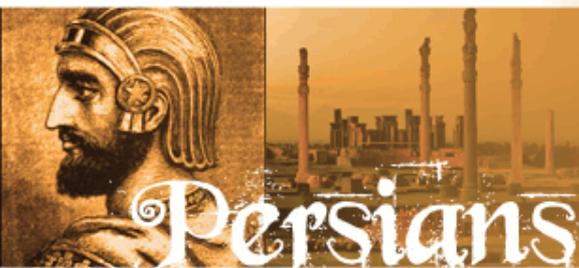
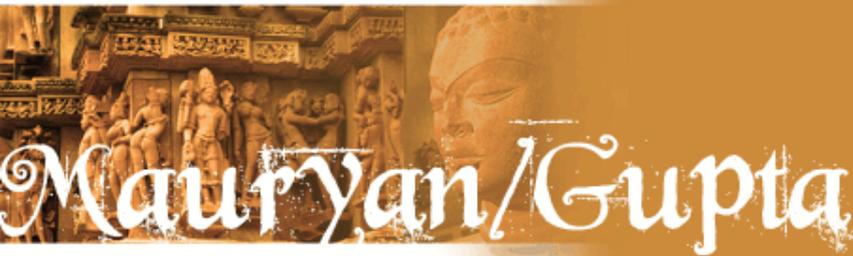
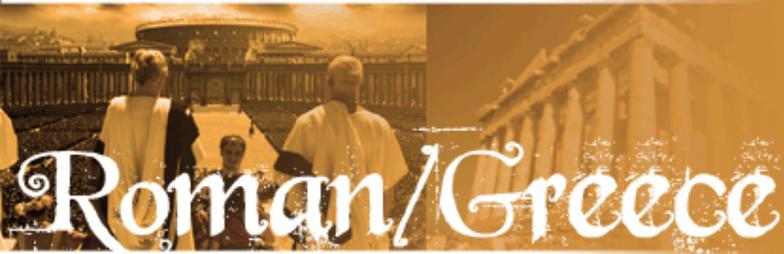


4. Sparta, unlike Athens, discouraged homosexuality

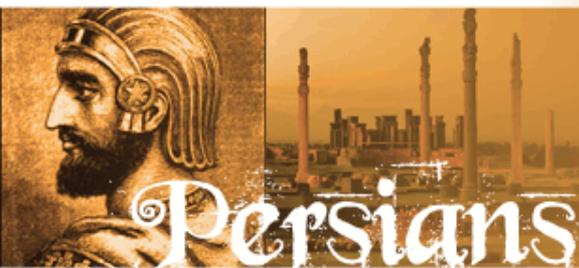
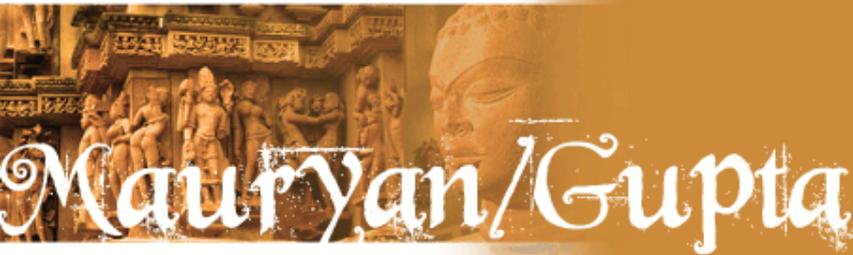
- a. other Greek states approved homoerotic relationships
- b. Greek attitude toward sexual choice was quite casual



VI. Reflections: Arguing with Solomon and the Buddha



- A. What is more impressive about classical Eurasian civilizations: change or enduring patterns?
1. Ecclesiastes—basic changelessness and futility OF HUMAN LIFE
 2. Buddhism—basic impermanence of human life
- B. Clearly, some things changed.
1. Greek conquest of the Persian Empire
 2. unification of the Mediterranean world by the Roman Empire
 3. emergence of Buddhism and Christianity as universal religions
 4. collapse of dynasties, empires, and civilizations



VI. Reflections: Arguing with Solomon and the Buddha

- C. But the creations of the classical era have been highly durable.
1. China's scholar-gentry class
 2. India's caste system
 3. slavery largely unquestioned until nineteenth century
 4. patriarchy has been most fundamental, durable, and assumed feature of all civilizations
 - a. not effectively challenged until twentieth century
 - b. still shapes lives and thinking of vast majority of people
 5. religious and cultural traditions started in the classical age still practiced or honored by hundreds of millions of people