



Ancient Asia: China, India, and the Steppes

Civilizations of the Ancient World | Meeting #13

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Upcoming Dates

- Monday, April 27
- Clouds Essay Due

- April 1-9
- Spring Break

- No responses due this week

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Four things today

- Asia
- The Disease Gradient
- Harappans and Vedics
- Hinduism and Buddhism

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Tragedy

- Emerges from epic poetry, older rituals
- Two actors with masks
- Chorus
- Tragedy reinforces cultural values
 - Top down, objective, moralistic
 - Like epic poetry
 - Choices that cause suffering
 - Characters with a "tragic flaw"
 - Deus ex machina

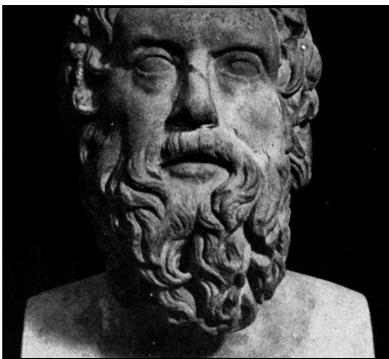
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Comedy

- Uses humor to call out an objectionable part of society
- Makes target literally ridiculous
- Clever plots and vulgar jokes
 - Everyone can relate
 - Sticks in the mind
- Call to action

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Aristophanes

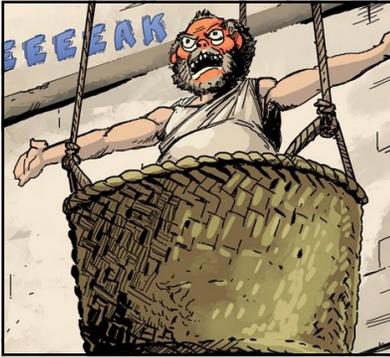
- "The Father of Comedy"
 - Clever plots
 - Wordplay
 - Explicit language
 - Political satire
- Targeted real-life figures

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Surviving comedies by Aristophanes

• <i>Archanians</i>	425 BCE	• <i>Thesomophoria</i>	411
• <i>Knights</i>	424	• <i>Lysistrata</i>	411
• <i>Clouds</i>	423	• <i>Frogs</i>	405
• <i>Wasps</i>	422	• <i>Assemblywomen</i>	392
• <i>Peace</i>	421	• <i>Wealth</i>	388
• <i>Birds</i>	414		

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Clouds

- A man goes to the Thinkery to learn false speech
- Two targets
 - Sophists
 - Teachers of arguing falsely
 - Socrates
- Plato cited damage to Socrates's reputation as a factor in his trial and execution

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Clouds – Characters

- Strepsiades A farmer who married an aristocratic lady
- Pheidippides His son, a playboy
- "Socrates"
- Students of Socrates
- Creditors
- "Just Argument" and "Unjust Argument"

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Ancient Asia

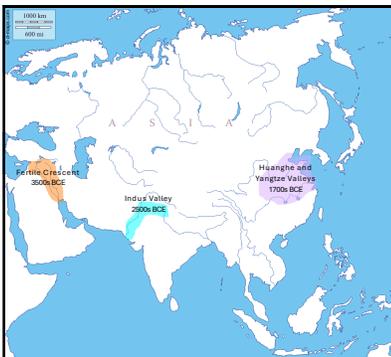
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South and east Asia

- Geographic barriers
- Different disease immunities in different regions
- Invasion made more difficult because of disease

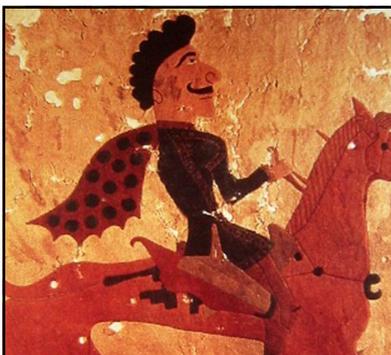
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Asian Civilizations

- Centered on great rivers
- Contemporary with Bronze age in the Mediterranean

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Scythians

- Barbarians living north of the Danube
 - Indo-European homeland
 - Pastoral, decentralized, nonurban, tribal
- Known to the Greeks
 - Seen as exotic, the "other"
 - The allure of living lawlessly

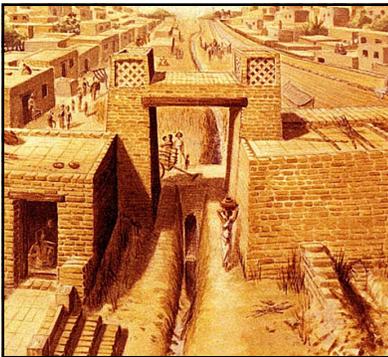
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Bactrians and Parthians

- Bactria = modern Afghanistan
- Meeting place of cultures
 - Mesopotamia, India, central Asia, China
 - Diverse, learned, advanced
- Parthians arrive later
 - Promote cross-Asia trade

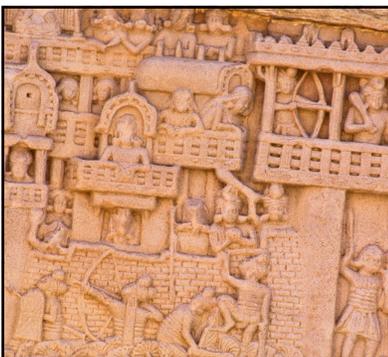
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India: Indus Valley

- Harappan civilization
- Vast and successful city-state culture
 - Hundreds of cities along the Indus
- Advanced engineering, architecture, irrigation

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India: Vedic Civilization

- Another Indo-European nation arrives from north
- Encounters Harappans
- Admires, emulates, surpasses, absorbs
- Social status defined by rigid social classes

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Hinduism

- Less about creator gods than social structure
 - Dharma: cosmic order maintained through rituals and righteous living
 - Emphasizes duty to family and community
- Cycle of life
- Action and consequence
- Very ancient roots
 - Later fusion
 - Many branches

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Buddhism

- Associated with Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha
 - a wandering ascetic and religious teacher
 - ca. 6th century BCE
- Path of development toward full liberation from suffering

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<h4>Hinduism</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • karma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions as consequences - Intent and actions of an individual influence the future of that individual • samsara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All life and matter is cyclical - Karma affects rebirth 	<h4>Buddhism</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • karma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions as consequences - Intent and actions of an individual influence the future of that individual • samsara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All life and matter is cyclical - Karma affects rebirth • nirvana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Escape from the cycle of rebirth through enlightenment
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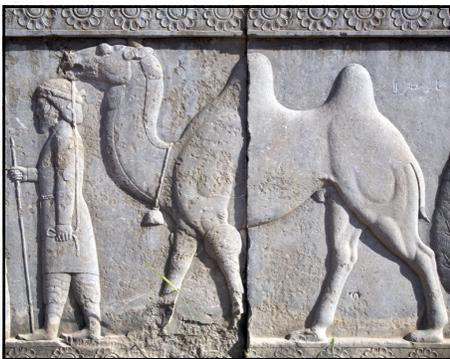
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Confucianism

- Associated with Confucius, ca. 500 BCE
- Focus on virtue, social harmony, and familial responsibility

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Silk Road

- Trade in Asian luxury goods desirable in the Mediterranean world
 - Silk
 - Porcelain
 - Tea
 - Dyes
 - Spices

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East and West

- Imbalance of precious metals flowing east
- More trade routes in Indian Ocean connecting India, Arabia, and East Africa

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