South & Southeast Asia in the Post Classical Era

India & the Indian Ocean Basin
India: Political Overview

- Divided into numerous regional kingdoms
- Lots of dynastic changes & military struggles
- No region or dynasty was ever able to control all of the Indian subcontinent
Northern India

- **North India**
  - Tension among regional kingdoms
  - Invasion of Huns & fall of Gupta brought political instability to northern India
  - Nomadic Turks became absorbed into Indian society
  - Harsha (reigned 606-648 C.E.) temporarily restored unified rule

- **Introduction of Islam to northern India**
  - The Sind were conquered by Arab Muslims in 711 (Umayyad period)
  - Muslim merchants formed communities in major cities of coastal India

- **Turkish migrants and Islam**
  - Most Turks convert to Islam in 10th c.
  - Some moved to Afghanistan; others pushed into Anatolia
  - Mahmud of Ghazn
    - Turkish leader in Afghanistan, established a Muslim state there
    - Made expeditions to northern India

- **The Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526 C.E.)**
  - Mahmud's successors conquered north India, 1206
  - Established an Islamic state known as the sultanate of Delhi
  - Sultans' authority did not extend far beyond the capital at Delhi
  - Islam began to have a place in India
Islam in north -- Success

Islamic conquerors controlled regions of Afghanistan & Pakistan. Why successful?

1. Adopted steppe military tactics of mounted archeries, so successfully defeat Hindu armies
2. Jihad provided religious justification for conquest of polytheistic Hindus
3. Relatively egalitarian appeal
Delhi Sultanate: Muslims in India
Southern India

The Hindu South

- Politically divided but relatively peaceful

The Chola kingdom (850-1267 C.E.)

- Was a larger kingdom; ruled Coromandel coast
- At high point, conquered Ceylon, parts of southeast Asia
- Dominated waters from South China Sea to Arabian Sea
- Not a tightly centralized state
- Local autonomy was strong
- Began to decline by the 12th c.
Chola Empire
Indian Economy: Merchant Guilds

- **Merchant Guilds** and great merchant families controlled international & local trade ... and they in turn had much power in Indian social life, politics, & culture.

- The guilds were allies to royal families of India by providing wealth through taxation, important products from foreign lands, lending money to kings, & financing cultural activities (temples & monasteries).

- Some guilds were so powerful that they had own armies to defend guilds’ interests or be mercenaries!
Indian Economy: International Trade

- Indians, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Jews, Africans, Malays, Sumatrans, Javanese, Chinese, & even a few Europeans intermingled & exchanged products and ideas in thriving market towns of coastal India!  *[Oh, how cosmopolitan!]*

- A ruler who gained the support of Indian merchant castes & controlled major trade routes, thereby gained a BIG economic advantage in his struggles with rival dynasties.
The Monsoon World

- The monsoons (rains in spring and summer)
- Irrigation systems were needed for dry months
  - No big river in southern India
  - Waterworks included dams, reservoirs, canals, wells
    - Stored rain in large reservoirs connected to canals
    - One reservoir of the 11th c. covered 250 sq. mi.
- Population growth
  - 53 million in 600 C.E.
  - 105 million in 1500 C.E.
- Urbanization
  - New capital: Delhi
  - Large port cities
Trade in the Indian Ocean

- **Dhows and junk**
  - Large ships involved in maritime trade in Indian Ocean

- **Indian port cities --called emporias**
  - Were clearinghouses of trade, cosmopolitan centers

- **Indians, Arabs, Chinese divided region into zones**
  - One ethnic group controlled trade in each region
  - Exchanged goods at emporia, entrepot cities for other regional goods

- **Trade goods**
  - Silk and porcelain *from China*
  - Spices *from southeast Asia*
  - Pepper, gems, pearls, and cotton *from India*
  - Incense and horses *from Arabia and southwest Asia*
  - Gold, ivory, and slaves *from east Africa*
  - Rice, wood were only staple goods traded

- **Specialized production**
  - Production of high-quality cotton textiles thrived
  - Sugar, leather, stone, carpets, iron and steel
INDIAN OCEAN TRADE

- Coffee
- Slaves
- Ivory
- Horses
- Silks
- Gold
- Steel
- Cloth
- Yarn
- Silks
- Indigo
- Pepper
- Gems
- Animals
- Drugs
- Cinnamon
- Spices
- Timber
- Rice
- Medicines
- Silver
- Lacquer
- Silk
- Porcelain
- Sugar
- Luxuries
- Tea
- A Dhow!
- A Junk!
Indian Economy: it’s still about AGRICULTURE!

- Despite importance of international trade & guilds, most of the people (like 90%!) still peasant farmers living in small villages.
- Despite wealth thru trade, each state required a strong agricultural base.
- Plus, the vast wealth acquired thru trade did little to improve the status of common farmers 😞.
India & Religion

- Go Hinduism!
- **Decline of Buddhism:**
  - only in fringes of the subcontinent (Sri Lanka & Nepal) did royal patronage of Buddhism survive.
  - Muslim invaders in north often plundered wealth of temples & monasteries.
  - Some ideas absorbed into Hinduism
- **Islam slowly grows:**
  - Some convert for improving their lower social statuses
  - Often an entire caste or subcaste adopted Islam en masse
  - By 1500, about 25% of population is Muslim
  - Sufis effective missionaries who emphasized piety & devotion and observed old rituals
  - **Bhakti movement** made no distinction between Hinduism & Islam; taught universal love & devotion
Indian Culture

- **Royal Patronage:** rulers supported Brahman cast with grants of land, money, villages, trading advantages.

- **Pilgrimages:** special festival seasons drew 1000s of Hindu worshipers to temples …which then served as centers of economic exchange, scholarship, & exchange of ideas.

- Lots of religious-oriented **sculpture**

- **Sanskrit** remained unifying cultural & religious language of India (like Latin W. Europe), but literature now translated into regional languages
Southeast Asia: Quick Overview

- Numerous political kingdoms
- Blended influence of Hinduism & Buddhism
- TRADE epicenter!
- “Indianization” of Southeast Asia: trade contacts with India brought much Indian influence to the region in late classical era
- Chinese influence: tributary relationship
Where is Southeast Asia? What’s it like there?
ETHNIC MAP
SOUTHEAST ASIA
—look how heterogeneous!
Southeast Asia: Political

- **Khmer Empire** (802-1369)
  - Capital was Angkor
  - highest cultural achievement in the region
  - Temple at Angkor Wat celebrated king as incarnation of Hindu god Vishnu.

- **Srivijaya** (700-1250)
  - Center of trade (CHOKE point!); established monopoly over trade from China to India
  - which gave kings GREAT wealth
Khmer Empire
Angkor Wat
‘Indianization’ & Its Limits

- **Indian influence in Southeast Asia**
  - Indian merchants brought their faiths to southeast Asia
  - Hinduism and Buddhism established first
  - Islam began to arrive with merchants, Sufis after 1000 CE

- **Ruling elites of Southeast Asia**
  - Adopted some Indian political traditions
    - Ruling patterns
    - Uses Indians as bureaucrats
  - The states sponsored Hinduism and later Buddhism
  - Showed *no interest* in Indian caste system
But then there’s Vietnam: no Indianization here!

- Much more CHINESE influence than Indian
- But even so, Vietnam had a resilient, distinct pre-conquest culture and identity. The Vietnamese people didn’t want to become just another part of the massive Chinese civilization.
- Though earlier a Chinese tribute state and part of the outright rule by China, Vietnam became fully independent in 952 until the 19th c. The Mongols & the Ming rulers of China tried to reassert rule over Vietnam but they failed.
- Elites often become sinified and adopted superior Chinese agricultural, government systems, and military techniques which allowed Vietnamese forces to defeat Indianized neighbors in SE Asia (like the Khmer) in the late post-classical era.

Even so, Vietnamese women were MUCH more independent than their Chinese counterparts; the spoken language wasn’t related to Chinese; and, the villages had a stronger sense of autonomy than in China.

Trung Sisters rebellion agst. Han in 39 C.E.
SE Asia & Expansion of Vietnam

[Map of Southeast Asia showing the expansion of Vietnam from 900 CE to 1760 CE, with color coding for different regions and timelines.]
SE Asia Crisis in the 14th c.

- **Economic overextension**: In much of SE Asia, constructing lots of huge, monumental temple complexes was seen as an act of piety & worship for the god-kings …which produced severe internal economic & social stress on societies.

- **Mongols**: when Mongols finally defeated Song, Mongol armies attempted to conquer northern Vietnam & part of Burma. Ultimately the Mongols were repulsed, but lots of the SE Asian kingdoms crumbled in the aftermath. Further, the Mongol conquest (or attempted conquest in some parts) **diverted sea trade** to the land routes …which brought an economic recession to SE Asia.
Map of the Mongol World & Its Limits
Agriculture in Southeast Asia
Agricultural Technology

- Tropical vegetation provided key natural resources like spices & woods. Ample rainfall meant flooding & erosion -- irrigation here was necessary to drain swamps & provide proper balance of water for rice horticulture (not to provide water for desert areas!)

- Local techniques & inventions & the introduction of Indian hydraulic technology led to creation of sophisticated irrigation systems like including complex & enormous systems including canals, dikes, basins, & artificial lakes.

- The Khmer agricultural system became so big & efficient that the population reached over 1 mil!
Islam in Southeast Asia

- Islam first came in late 13\textsuperscript{th} c. via Muslim traders to Indonesia and then to southern Philippines.
- Muslim leader founded Malacca which became powerful center for international trade. --the 1\textsuperscript{st} powerful Islamic state in SE Asia. Ultimately destroyed by the Portuguese in 16\textsuperscript{th} c.
- Sumatra & Java were too led by Islamic kings.
Religion in Southeast Asia

- Local religious traditions:
  - before other faiths came, local traditions characterized by animism, ancestor worship, & strong ritual magic element.
  - New religions gained a *unique SE Asian flavor* as they incorporated some of these elements.

- Early on, Hinduism & Mahayana Buddhism:
  - Patronized by elites but common people continued traditional religions under a veneer of Indian ideas & practices.
Religions, cont’d

- Then, Theravada Buddhism
  - Penetrated daily lives, beliefs & practices of commoners
  - Became state religion under Thai & Burmese leaders in 11th c.

- And, Islam
  - Merchants & sufis introduced in 13th c.
  - In general, conversion to Islam was slow & quiet
    - Ruling elites converted in cities
    - Rural residents retained traditions
  - Islam was NOT an exclusive faith in Southeast Asia

- Last, Christianity
  - Introduced by Portuguese in 1511 with their capture of Malacca. Christian missionaries made little headway though.
Southeast Asia Culture

- Art best seen in numerous, large temple complexes.
- Buddhist stupas with various stories from Buddhist scriptures
- Srivijaya center for Buddhist & Sanskrit culture with large university & library; attracted pilgrims & students from East Asia.
- Angkor Wat’s urban/ritual complex
Srivijaya: Hindu and Buddhist Blends