**Thinking About Decline**

Between 200 and 600 CE all three classical civilizations collapsed entirely or in part. During the four century span, all suffered from outside invasions, the result of growing incursions from Central Asia. This renewed wave of nomadic expansion was not as sweeping as the earlier Indo-European expansion, but it definitely challenged these civilizations. Internal factors also played a role in the decline of these civilizations. The decline of Byzantium, Kiev and Islam were also a result of mixed factors, internal and external.

**What were the main factors in Rome's decline?**

After about 180 CE (end of Pax Romana) political confusion arose because no succession laws.

Intervention by the army in the selection of emperors complicated political life and contributed to-decline in power at the top.

Series of plagues that swept the empire.

* Population declined from one million to 250,000. (75% died!)
* Economy plummeted.
* Not enough soldiers to recruit

Decadence of Roman elites—food, feasts, baths.

Invasions by Germanic Tribes: Ostrogoths, Visogoths, Franks, Vandals, Huns

**Consequences of decline in Rome**

Division of the Roman Empire into two sections: east and west

Western Empire fragmented and split into different kingdoms and then fiefdoms that merged Roman laws and customs with Germanic tribal ones. Eventually this fragmentation led to a decline in all centralized politics.

Christian Church helped Western Europe maintain an identity even though politics were fragmented.

Medieval manors became self-sufficient economic and political units. Large scale trade was limited until after 1000 CE.

The eastern section of the Roman Empire did not exactly fall.

Fewer invaders

Greek Language, not Latin as in Rome

**What factors were involved in the decline of the Gupta Empire?**

Tradition of central rule in India was more tentative in the first place. Indus River eliminated by Aryans Maurya Empire was very successful briefly, then 150 years of fragmented local rule.

Hun invasions destroyed the Gupta Empire.

7th century, Arab invasions threatened India. This led eventually to partial Muslim conquest.

**Consequences of decline of the Guptas in India**

Hun invaders integrated into the warrior caste, Kashatriyas, in India-this formed a new group of regional princes who ruled their territories. They were called Rajput.

No Native ruler attempted to build a centralized state.

Culture remained intact

Caste system prevailed.

Hinduism remained strong even under Islamic rule.

**What were the main factors in Han China's decline?**

Confucian intellectual activity became less creative Central government's control diminished Bureaucrats became more corrupt

Local landlords took up the slack which meant they were fragmented/not unified. Invasions of nomads

Epidemics killed up to half the population

Yellow Turbans (184 CE) Daoists who attacked the weakness of the emperor and self-indulgence of the bureaucracy. They gained popular support.

**Consequences of decline in Han China**

Three centuries of chaos-mostly a result of epidemics destabilizing the social and political order.

Confucian values helped hold Chinese institutions together.

Daoism was also an important religious tradition that encouraged living in harmony with nature and with circumstances.

Buddhism took off in the period of destabilization, probably because it was a comfort in a time of political and social upheaval. The discipline involved in the practice of Buddhism did not challenge, but rather supported Confucian and Daoist principles and practices.