Patriarchy in China

- Women considered subordinate to men
- Hierarchy within the family:
  - Fathers
  - Sons (oldest to youngest)
  - Mothers
  - Daughters (oldest to youngest)
Patriarchy in China

- “Men go out, women stay in.”
  - Men = public and political roles
  - Women = domestic roles at home

- 3 Obediences: women obedient to first their fathers, then their husbands, then their sons
Influence of Daoism

- **Yang** = superior principle = masculine and related to rulers, heaven, strength, rationality, and light
- **Yin** = inferior principle = feminine and related to subjects, earth, weakness, emotion, and darkness
- The yin and yang are permanent and embedded within the universe
- Gave justification to the natural superiority of men over women
Loosening of Strict Patriarchy

- Collapse of Han Dynasty (400s CE)
- Nomadic people invaded northern China
  - Their women = far less restricted
  - This influenced native Chinese women
- Elite women started to handle legal and business affairs
- More women rode horses, played polo, wore men’s clothing, etc.
Chinese Social Structure

- Emperor
- Elite Government Officials
- Landlord Class (Scholar-Gentry Class)
- Peasants (90% of population)
- Merchants

(90% of population)
China’s Landlord Class

- Threatened state authority
- Avoided paying taxes
  - Decreased state revenues
  - Increased tax burden on the peasants
- Raised their own militaries
- Benefited from:
  - Wealth they gained from their land
  - Power and prestige that went with the education they paid for
China’s Peasant Class

- 90% of the population
- Suffered from: famines, floods, droughts, hails, pests, etc.
- State authorities demanded that they:
  - Pay high taxes
  - Provide one month’s labor every year on public works projects
  - Serve for 2 years in the military (men only)
Yellow Turban Rebellion

- Peasant uprising around 184 CE
- In response to floods along Yellow River, resulting epidemics, and general misery & poverty
- Wanted a “Great Peace” with social harmony, equality, and common ownership of property
- Suppressed --> but weakened the Han dynasty
Though oppressed, peasants were still honored in a way because they provided for their country
- Backbone of China
- Hard-working
- Provided food = survival for all
China’s Merchant Class

- At the bottom of society
- Seen as unproductive and as profiting off of the hard work of others
- Seen as greedy and materialistic
  - This went against Confucian values
Caste System in India

- Similarities with China’s Social System:
  - Social status determined at birth
  - Little (if any) social mobility
  - Sharp class distinctions and great inequalities
  - Inequalities justified by religious/cultural traditions as natural and inevitable
Caste System in India

- “Caste” = comes from Portuguese word *casta*, which means “race” or “purity of blood”

- 4 *varnas* = ranked classes in the Indian caste system
  - Each varna had its own duties
  - Born into and remained in your varna for life
Caste System in India

Brahmins = Priests
Study & teach the Vedas; perform religious ceremonies to please the gods & ensure welfare of people

Kshatriyas = Warriors; Rulers
Study the Vedas; lead government; head army

Vaisyas = Common people: merchants, artisans, farmers
Tend herds, care for land; make & sell useful products

Sudras = Native, non-Aryan people
= Unskilled laborers, servants
Serve other varnas

These 3 classes = regarded as pure Aryans

Untouchables = Outside of Caste System
Perform tasks considered unclean
Caste System in India: Formed from the Body of Purusha

- Brahmins = from the head
- Kshatriya = from the shoulders
- Vaisya = from the thighs
- Sudras = from the feet
The Untouchables

- Outside of the varna system
- It was believed that if people in higher castes came into contact with the untouchables, then their ritual purity would be “polluted”
- Untouchables used separate wells, separate bathrooms, separate temples for worship, etc.
- Many untouchables had to wear wooden clappers to alert others when they were approaching
The Untouchables

- Common jobs of the untouchables:
  - Clean bathrooms
  - Handle and cremate corpses
  - Clean and skin dead animals
  - Butcher animals
  - Executioners
Caste System in India

- Each varna was further divided into sub-castes called **jatis**
- Jatis were typically formed according to occupation -> ex: shoemakers, weavers, etc.
- Each jati had its own rules for daily life -- including diet, marriage, and social customs
Caste System in India

- People were not allowed to mix with others outside of their jati
  - Could only eat with others in your jati
  - Could only marry someone in your jati
Caste System in India

- **Dharma** = the faithful and selfless performance of one’s present caste duties

- **Karma** = determined which caste you would enter at birth
  - Adhering to dharma and subduing your ego ensured spiritual progress, good karma, and possible birth into a higher caste when reincarnated