**Hinduism and Hindu politics**

The ancient Hindu belief systems and politics were very much connected. In ancient India the caste system (a very strict class system) was developed where one is born into a class and cannot change the class he or she belongs throughout his/her life. One is not allowed to marry into another class either. The four classes consist of the Brahmans who were the clergy, the nobles and the warriors, the merchants and lastly the peasants. The slaves were not considered to be from any of these classes, as they were not considered to be humans.

Hinduism was based on the concepts of dharma and kharma. Dharma was one’s duty in each of one’s relationships and kharma was one’s good or bad deeds. The Hindus believed both in reincarnation and transmigration of the soul. So they believed if one acted according to his dharma, his kharma would be good and he would be born into a higher class in his next life.

**Ancient Greece**

**Transition from aristocracy to democracy:**

The main problem of the ruling classes in all ancient civilizations was to get the saves under control. But as time went on and as private property triumphed over the communal property, as the surplus was gathered in the hands of the wealthy few, the poor got poorer and the plebians had to face the threat of becoming debt slaves. So the risk of plebian revolts was added to the risk of slave revolts. In the Eastern empires, where the central governments were strong, new conquests brought new lands and slaves. The plebians were given a share of these and that was what kept them with the ruling classes against the slaves. And they usually did not revolt unless the empire weakened and was unable to conquer new lands or slaves.

Ancient Greece did not form a strong empire. It had many city-states instead. And when the population increased, the number of the slaves increased geometrically, which made the control of the slaves harder. The Greeks first founded colonies. When the population reached to the point that the number of the slaves were becoming more than that could be controlled, they divided themselves into different city-states in order to keep the scale of the population under control. This worked for some time but in time the population rose in the colonies, too. Finally, with the laws of Solon, the Greek city-states, except Sparta, adopted democracy. Solon pardoned the debts of the plebians and gave them voting rights. The plebians were given a share in the government and this prevented them revolting with the slaves against the ruling classes.

The principle of descent was replaced by the principle of wealth with the transition from aristocracy to democracy. The more property you had the more say you had in governmental matters.

**Transition from polis to cosmopolis:**

Polis was the heart of the Greek way of life. The Greeks took pride in being citizens of their city-states. For years the polis determined their life, politics and beliefs. But when the armies of Alexander the Great came and included all these city-states into the Hellenistic Empire, their lives changed drastically. The citizens of the city-states did not interact with many foreigners. For them, they were barbarians. The empire made these “barbarians” their fellow citizens, this time, of the empire. The Greek people who thought theirs were the only proper way of life, met new people, new customs, new religions, in some cases new ethics. The multi-cultured empire was cosmopolitan and the polis lost its power both politically and culturally. In the cosmopolitan Hellenistic Empire, the West met the East; mystery cults (Cult of Isis, Cult of Kybele, Cult of Demeter) and superstition spread. As new gods (e.g. Zeus-Ammon) and religions emerged that had influences of more than one culture, the multitude and diversity of beliefs and rights/wrongs also gave rise to atheism and agnosticism.

The loss of belief in absolute truths and the prospect of war both within and between parts of the empire are believed to have made this age an age of anxiety. That is on of the reasons why Hellenistic philosophy focused on ataraxia (freedom from distress or worry).

**Politics in the Roman Republic and Empire**

The main conflict that determined the Roman political life had always been the power struggle between the party of nobles and the dictators (who were to empires later). During the Roman Republic, the party of the nobles ruled through the Senate. People had voting rights according to their wealth and property. Two consuls were chosen in addition to the Senate. The reason why two consuls were elected was that they did not want any one person to have all the power. During this time, the nobles had the patronage system according to which the plebians gathered in the gardens of the nobles and asked them favors in return for their votes. When the empires took power, they brought their own patronage system. They began to give money away to plebians in order not to lose their support. They could afford this as the conquests continued.

**Caesar and Augustus**

Caesar was killed by the party of the nobles. Brutus and Cicero were of this party. Their reason for killing him was their belief that Caesar was going to be the death of the republic as he was going to be the dictator and refuse to give up his power. They believed if Caesar was to live, the republic wouldn’t. Either Caesar or the republic would live. Not both. They succeeded in killing Caesar but they could not get the power as they soon realized that the people still supported Caesar so the power belonged to the Caesarian party, Marc Antony and Octavius. The party of the nobles was defeated against their fight against the Caesarian party. And Marc Antony and Octavius ruled together for some time. Marc Antony was given the rule of Egypt and when it became evident that he was going to be in conflict with Octavius, he began to live in Egypt with Cleopatra. In the inevitable war against Octavius, he was defeated. Octavian declared himself to be the emperor and took the name Augustus and the age of the republic was closed.