

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

The founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus, was given the title Great King by his contemporaries. He fully deserved it. When he started out on his career of conquest he was the ruler of a small Persian principality which was subject to the King of the Medes. He organized a strong army, the backbone of which were sturdy peasant soldiers trained and brought to a high pitch of efficiency and striking power as infantry, archers and cavalry. Cyrus took the Assyrian army as his model, and from the Assyrians too he learned the supreme importance of strategy and attack. Thus his campaigns were well-planned and directed to specific objectives, so that with superb generalship and calculated daring he was able to extend his empire steadily. By 529 B.C. when Cyrus was killed in battle his empire was made up of the following territories: Persia, Media, Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, Lydia and Asia Minor, i.e. the whole of the Fertile Crescent and more besides. It was the most extensive empire of the day.

What was also a valuable asset in the conquest of the empire over and above his masterful leadership was his policy of religious and cultural tolerance and magnanimity towards conquered populations. On conquering the city of Babylon Cyrus issued a proclamation to the people: "When I made my gracious entry into Babylon, with rejoicing and pleasure I took up my residence in the royal palace. Marduk, the great lord (and god of Babylonia) turned the whole noble race of the Babylonians towards me, and I gave daily care to his worship. My numerous troops marched peacefully into Babylon. In all Sumer and Akkad I permitted no unfriendly treatment. The dishonouring yoke was removed from them. Their fallen dwellings I restored; I cleared out the ruins. Marduk, the great lord, rejoiced in my pious deeds, and graciously blessed me, Cyrus, the king who worships him, and Cambyses, my own son, and all my soldiers, while we, in sincerity and with joy praised his exalted godhead." Here in this proclamation we see Cyrus's spirit of humaneness and tolerance, his readiness even to acknowledge the gods of conquered populations as his own gods and give them due honour and worship.

Cambyes (529-522 B.C.) was in some ways like his father Cyrus: he had ambition, ability and drive. But he was unlike his father in that he was exceedingly cruel, had an uncontrollable temper, was frightfully intolerant and scoffed at religions other than Zoroastrianism. He seems to have been somewhat mentally deranged. The most conspicuous event of his short reign was the conquest of Egypt, which rounded off the Persian Empire in the west. But he did not hold Egypt long. He is said to have died by his own hand. There was a struggle for the succession: one Gaumata who claimed to be a brother of Cambyes seized the throne and ruled for a very brief while. He was overthrown by a group, who called themselves "the Avengers," led by Darius. Darius did not belong to the direct Achaemenid line in which the succession ran; but seems to have been of a collateral line, and on that score he claimed the throne. Darius and his group seized the pretender Gaumata and had him executed. Darius lost no time in issuing a proclamation declaring that he Darius by the favour of Ahuramazda, God of Zoroastrianism, was King. But proclamation or no proclamation, he was not recognized as king immediately; for two years he had to do very much hard fighting to make good his claim. He displayed so much determination, ability and energy in doing this that he was eventually acknowledged King. Without a doubt he was the greatest Persian King and the real organizer of the Empire.

Darius had all the fine qualities of Cyrus as a leader, general and conqueror; but what was more important, he ruled for 35 years (521-486 B.C.) during which he organized the administration of the Empire. To this very difficult task he brought superb qualities of statesmanship — vision, intelligence, humanity, firmness tempered by friendliness, and a very high capacity for taking relevant pains. His vast Empire comprised two kingdoms — Egypt and Babylonia — and besides the following territories from west to east: Palestine, Syria, Phoenicia, Lydia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Armenia, Assyria, Media, Persia, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and India west of the River Indus. Never before had history recorded so extensive an area brought under one rule.

For the purposes of administration all these territories, excluding Egypt and Babylonia which were under his direct rule, were divided into 20 provinces or satrapies. The satraps were carefully selected from among the royal princes, nobility and high army officers for their ability and loyalty. These appointments were no doubt made by way of rewarding those who had served under his command in conquering the Empire. The satraps were administrators, military commanders and chief judges in their provinces. Indeed they were also ambassadors and plenipotentiaries of a sort, and performed *liaison* functions between the King and rulers of neutral kingdoms bordering on their provincial territories. Thus these governors were given much power and initiative; but there was a strict surveillance kept on them by the "Eyes and Ears of the King," i.e. by spies sent by the King to the provinces. This arrangement was of course known to the governors, and this knowledge made them eager to serve the King well and loyally. One of their most important duties in administration was to collect the annual tribute from the territories in their charge. It has been estimated that Darius at headquarters received a total annual tribute of 14,500 gold talents, about £3,500,000 or Rs. 50,000,000): the highest tribute was paid by the province of India — 4,680 talents, nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total tribute. The probable reason for this was that it was the remotest province in the east and therefore difficult of access at any time, more particularly in times of trouble. Administration was facilitated by the use of one official language, Aramaean, which was very widely used in the whole Empire, particularly for business purposes. It is interesting to know that Aramaean or Aramaic was the language spoken by the people of Palestine at the time of Christ and by Christ Himself — that is, several centuries after the extinction of the Persian Empire.

Darius set the greatest store by law for the good government of the Empire. It was his ambition to go down in history as a great law-giver, if not the greatest. He was determined that his name should be ranked with Hammurabi's. In his corpus of laws which went by the name of the Ordinance of Good Regulations Darius was at great pains to model his decrees on the laws of Hammurabi. The latter had placed his Code

under the protection of the god Shamash: Darius placed his laws under Ahuramazda's protection. Hammurabi had sung his own praises in his laws as a righteous king who wanted nothing more than the welfare of his people: Darius did the same thing in his Ordinance. Hammurabi in the name of Shamash had threatened very severe but condign punishment for infringement of the law: Darius followed the lead in this also, but claimed Ahuramazda as his supreme authority. Further, Hammurabi had promised favours, protection, prosperity and happiness to those who obeyed his laws: Darius said much the same thing in his Ordinance. Finally, Hammurabi had commended his law to kings who would come after him, his descendants: "May this law enlighten my successors as to the procedure and administration, the judgements of the land which I have pronounced, and the decisions of the land which I have rendered." Darius echoed Hammurabi thus: "This which I have done in the protection of Ahuramazda I have done in the same year. You kings, who shall hereafter come to rule, shall read what I have done, viz. the writing which on this *stele* is written. Believe me, what I have written is no lie: it is what is right and true." So close are these parallels between the laws of Hammurabi and those of Darius that it is not far-fetched to say that Darius and his legal "experts" and advisers had before them the text of Hammurabi's code in some form or other. It is not without significance in our brief discussion of the relation between the Hammurabi Code and Darius's Ordinance of Good Regulations to recall that the Hammurabi *stele* was unearthed at Susa, one of the three capitals of the Persian Empire, the other two being Ecbatana and Babylon.

Just as Ashoka attached very great importance to the peace-loving, tolerant Buddhist religion and to the principle of **Dharma** as a means of unifying his vast empire, so too did Darius think that Zoroastrianism had a definite part to play in the consolidation of his empire and in the peaceful coexistence of the heterogeneous populations living in it. He was a genuine and ardent believer in this religion, and his deep devotion to the cult of Ahuramazda was manifested in many inscriptions of Darius that have come down to us: again and again this god was invoked

as his protector; all his victories were attributed to Ahuramazda's intervention on his behalf; all the achievements of his reign were due to Ahuramazda's great favour in his regard: without Ahuramazda's constant help and guidance, he Darius would have been nothing and achieved nothing. Before we make a short study of Zoroastrianism, let us briefly advert to the history of the Persian Empire after Darius.

Xerxes who succeeded his father was an ambitious and energetic king. He decided to extend the Empire beyond Asia Minor into Greece. He attacked Greece by land and by sea; for the attack by sea he used the fleet which Darius had built with much foresight and which he Xerxes had reinforced. The Greek States under the leadership of Athens and with the superb strategy of Themistocles, statesman, general and admiral all in one, put up a heroic defence, and not only beat off the attacks but also won victories that have resounded down the corridors of time: Marathon, Thermopylae, Salamis, Plataea and Mycale have become famous names in the history of war. They have been fittingly commemorated in Aeschylus's great drama "The Persians" and Herodotus' history of the Persian Wars. Xerxes was murdered in 465 B.C. after he had ruled for 20 years. Unfortunately for the Persian Empire, the six kings, who came after Xerxes, had on their hands a disintegrating empire. This history of the 134 years from the death of Xerxes to the death of the last king Darius III and the extinction of the empire at Alexander the Great's hands is deeply stained with royal blood. The great and mighty edifice built by Cyrus and Darius was in ruins, but in its heyday of power the Persian Empire had served the then known world well in two significant ways: a pattern of imperial organization from which the Romans learned much, and a noble religion, at once practical and sublime — Zoroastrianism.

ZOROASTRIANISM

This religion is called after the Greek form of the name of its founder Zoroaster; its Persian form is Zarathustra. Very little of real historical value is known to us about him. He appears to have belonged to the priestly clan or magi of the Medes. Thus he was not a Persian by birth. The year of his birth

is uncertain. Evidence now favours the sixth century B.C., round about 570 B.C., but scholars suggest much earlier dates than this. But that he was an historical person and that he founded this religion are beyond doubt. There is no need for us to go into the many legends relating to his birth, upbringing and education. He seems to have been a very serious-minded person and gifted with a deep spiritual sense and a remarkable sensitivity to the nobler things of life. He lived in an environment of polytheism which revolted him and which appeared to him on the face of it unreasonable, false and unworthy of man. Pondering on life and its vicissitudes he came to the conclusion that life was a ceaseless struggle between the forces of good and evil. This struggle, he saw, was most momentous, universal, inevitable: every human being without exception was involved in it. While on the one hand this ceaseless struggle was cosmic in its dimensions, it also went on in the mind and heart of every person, and here too inevitably: so in every person too there was a clash between the forces of good and evil. The good powers were the forces of light and wisdom, the evil powers were the forces of darkness and malice: all the good powers emanated from a Supreme Good Being, the Lord of Light and Wisdom, who was Ahuramazda; all the evil powers from the Lord of Darkness, the Supreme Evil Spirit, who was Ahriman. But there was only one God — Ahuramazda. Zoroaster was a strict monotheist. He believed in a life after death, judgement and final reward and punishment. The Lord of Wisdom would be the Great Judge. The good would be rewarded with happiness in Heaven; the evil punished with torment in Hell. Fire with its light was the symbol of Ahuramazda. Prayer and worship were necessary duties.

Zoroaster preached his religion among his countrymen, the Medes, but with no success. On that account he left his country, went to Persia and preached there. There he was so successful that by about 500 B.C. all Persia embraced Zoroastrianism, the Kings of Persia giving the lead in this. Darius gave the conversion movement a very great impetus, and it acquired immense prestige from the circumstance that he was an ardent believer in and promoter of Zoroastrianism. He and Zoroaster were contemporaries, but we do not know whether they ever met.

The Prophet had many disciples, and these wrote down and gathered together their master's sayings and prayers in the book called *Avesta*, which may be regarded as the Bible of the Zoroastrians. The *Avesta* is believed to be inspired and to contain the revelation made by Ahuramazda to Zoroaster. But it is the opinion of scholars that wars and conquests have wrought havoc with the texts constituting the *Avesta*. The fragmentary texts that were put together as the *Avesta* in the 4th century A.D. suffered again and more in the 7th century as a result of the Muslim conquest of Persia. Persia then became a Muslim country, and Islam continues to the present day to be its official religion. Zoroastrianism survives as the religion of two very small communities — in Fars in Iran and among the Parsis in India. But in the heyday of the Persian Empire under the great Darius Zoroastrianism was a powerful religious force that helped to civilize a vast empire.

CONCLUSION

There was a fundamental weakness in the Persian Empire: its government was not based on institutions; it depended on persons. Cyrus and Darius were capable men and forceful personalities; they were able to hold the empire together.

The Persian Empire had the distinction of being the most extensive in ancient times till the Romans built theirs. Within its territories were enclosed as many as nine mature civilizations — Egyptian, Sumero-Babylonian, Assyrian, Syrian, Hebrew, Lydian, Phoenician, Median and Indian. It provided the framework for a fruitful exchange of cultural elements, trade and commerce. It also brought several language groups together and made it possible for Semitic and Indo-European languages to commingle and enrich one another. It is remarkable that conditions could be fostered in the Persian Empire in which Aramaean could be used so extensively as a *lingua franca* and could survive so long. Thus Persia served as a cultural and commercial bridge between West Asia and East Asia.

Finally, Zoroastrianism was Persia's gift to the world. It performed for the Persian Empire in unifying it the same service that Confucianism did for China and later on Christianity did for Europe and Islam for the Arab lands.

(vi) GREEK CIVILIZATION

The location of the cultures was shifted from Hither Asia and Egypt to the European continent, first to Greece and then to Rome some ten centuries before the birth of Christ. These cultures, though indebted to earlier cultures, surpassed them. Greek culture in particular was very brilliant, and it became the mother of modern European civilization. It supplied to the whole of Europe 'its concepts, art styles, bodies of knowledge, and ideologies'. This may be regarded as one of the most important facts of history. Hence the statement of Arnold Toynbee: "European civilization developed in the body of Greek society like a child in the womb".

Land and people: The early Greeks called their country *Hellas* and themselves Hellenes. Greece is a peninsula situated to the south of Europe on the Mediterranean sea. The Aegean Sea separates Greece from Asia Minor. A number of islands dot the Aegean Sea. The mountains also have divided Greece into different regions. In ancient times each of these regions maintained its identity and developed in a way which was most suited to it.

Like the people who had invaded Persia and India the Greeks were Indo-Europeans. By the eighth century B.C. they were divided into three groups, the Dorians, the Aeolians, and the Ionians. Among the flourishing cities and centres of Greek culture mention may be made of Sparta, Corinth, Aegos, Athens, Thebes, Ephesus and Miletus.

It is truism to say that geography influences the character and lives of the people which in turn dominates the history of a country. Situated as it is most of the land of Greece was unsuitable for agriculture. This was compensat-

ed by the natural facilities for navigation. There were tiny islands in the Aegean Sea and these islanders were induced to become good sailors and men of independent spirit. The natural harbours in the sea coast encouraged maritime trade and the latter contributed to the economic prosperity of the people. The indentations of the land by the sea and the mountain ridges divided the land and the people into small units. These people lived almost in isolation from one another. This background was most congenial for the origin of the *polis* or city-state, a typical form of government for which ancient Greece had become famous. The land of the Greeks supplied the people marble. The sea and the marble permitted the establishment of a high level of civilization by the Greeks.

History: Prior to the arrival of Aryans there flourished a civilization on the islands of Greece called the Aegean civilization. Since it first developed in Crete and the Crete was called Minos after the legendary king of that name, the civilization is known as Minoan civilization. In its last stage the Cretan culture spread into the mainland of Greece and came to be called the Mycenaean civilization. This civilization 'is best illustrated by splendid objects such as swords, daggers, jewels, carved ivories, and vases found in tombs'.

About 1100 B.C. the Greek peoples came from the north and overwhelmed the earlier civilization and destroyed Tiryns and Mycenae. By adopting the essential features of the Aegean civilization they developed a civilization which came to be known as Greek civilization. The destruction of the city of Troy formed the subject-matter of the two great epics of the Greek race, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by Homer.

The Aryans in Greece now led a settled life and adopted agriculture. Among their deities gods Zeus and Apollo and goddess Athena were famous. They became great mariners and spread across the Aegean to Asia Minor by about 1000 A.D. Between 750 and 550 B.C. they founded Greek cities on the more distant shores of the Black sea as also the southern and western Mediterranean.

City-States: The ideal of the ancient Greeks was a state in which all citizens met together and participated in civic and religious matters. This ideal was realised by the development

of city-states. As has been pointed out earlier the physical features of Greece divided the country into different political units. This gave rise to the idea of city-states or polis. It was literally a city-state because the state contained only one or two lands. By about seventh century B.C. such city-states as Sparta, Athens, Corinth, Thebes, Miletus, Samos sprang up.

The rise of the city states was not conducive to the development of one homogeneous state. The people of each state moved in their own orbit, owed allegiance to that state only and not to the country as a whole. Each city-state developed a distinct socio-religious life. At first monarchial form of government prevailed in the city-states. This yielded place to aristocracy or the rule of the nobles. Rivalry developed among the nobles and merchants which ended in the victory of the latter.

Tyrants: The constant struggle for supremacy gave an opportunity for an adventurous leader to organise a revolt and seize the reins of power. The Greeks called such a leader who came into power as 'Tyrant'. The 'Tyrant' in the Greek sense meant that he was unconstitutional, or usurper, not a cruel and oppressive ruler. In other words, the term did not indicate the nature of his rule. In fact some of the tyrants were efficient rulers and strove for the welfare of their subjects. Two such tyrants stand out prominently. Periander of Corinth (625-585 B.C.) was one of the most famous tyrants. He was not only a great conqueror, but also a patron of art. He caused the construction of splendid public buildings and public baths which provided employment to many workers. He patronised artists and poets. Pisistratus of Athens, another popular tyrant, adorned the city with beautiful monuments. On the whole the rule of the tyrants benefited the merchant and the artisan class. Tyranny was only an ephemeral phenomenon and was not destined to last long. By about 500 B.C. it was overthrown everywhere in Greece and the way was cleared for the establishment of democracy.

Sparta and Athens: Among the city-states the most prominent were Sparta and Athens. The two states differed greatly

in character. The rulers in Sparta were a small minority compared to the ruled. Consequently their state was organised like militaristic state. While they emphasised on physical development the approach of the Athenians was mental. Sparta glorified war while Athens gave impetus to the development of finer aspects of life. Thus the 'ideals of the Spartans were based upon militarism, and they lacked the imagination and initiative of the Athenians.'

As the Spartan state was militaristic, the state subjected its citizens from the age of seven to a rigorous training. This rigorous training lasted for a period of twelve years and after this they served in the army compulsorily upto the age of sixty. It was designed to develop the qualities of endurance, bravery, strict discipline and military efficiency. Women also had to undergo physical training. This sort of military communism enabled the Spartans to become best soldiers in Greece at the cost of the finer qualities of mind and spirit. Hence Sparta had nothing to contribute to Greek art or Greek civilization.

The Spartan government was Kingdom in form, though in fact an oligarchy. There were two kings ruling over Sparta, each checking the other to some extent. The *Gerusia* or Council of Elders consisting of twenty-eight members discussed all legislative proposals. Then it was referred to the *Apella* or Assembly of the people consisting of the members of the upper class who had full citizenship. The chief power was vested in the *Ephorate* or a Board of Supervisors. Five *ephors* or magistrates were elected annually by the citizens to superintend the administration of the government there by acting as a check on the exercise of powers by the King. The credit for this transformation in Sparta goes to legendary hero, Lycurgus.

"Of all the ancient Greek city-states the one that contributed most to the enrichment of human life was Athens". In the beginning the Athenian government consisted of Kingship and this yielded place to aristocracy or a government by nobles or *Archons*. There were nine *Archons* elected by the nobles for a period of one year. During their rule discontent prevailed among the poor class of peasants and they demanded reforms.

In 624 B.C. Draco was entrusted with the task of

very real way. Athens was the 'School of Hellas' as Pericles called it.

Social Organisation: The Greek society was tribal in character. As much of the land was not fertile, they took to trade and commerce. Though the society was patriarchal women were highly respected. Women played no part in public life and were mostly confined to the house. Slavery flourished in the society, and the Greeks did not feel that there was anything reprehensible about it.

Economic Condition: Agriculture, though pursued on a small scale, was the occupation of an average Greek. They grew wheat, barley, peas, lentils, olives, grapes and figs. Olive played an important role in their economy becomes evident from the fact when in the Peloponnesian war olive orchards were destroyed Athens' decline became inevitable.

Greece was noted for its natural resources like marble, iron, zinc, silver and the like which were exploited to the full. Slaves were made to work in these mines.

The production of wine, olive oil, and industrial goods in surplus necessitated the Greeks of Anatolia to look for markets to sell their finished goods and seek for things which they desired. They obtained fish and grain from Italy and Sicily, the Balkan peninsula, the Straits and the Black Sea. Their demand for silver, gold, copper and iron was met from other places. They imported from their neighbours in the interior of Asia Minor large quantities of leather and wool. They also took to piracy. But the Athenian fleet watched the sea and Pompey took special measures. By developing commercial fleets and regularising trade they established control over foreign trade and commerce. The Greeks also performed certain services like shipping and banking. Coins first appeared in Lydia about 700 B.C. and were issued by Greek city-states. The increased use of money led to the development of banking. For purposes of transferring monies, Greek bankers developed a letter of credit, the bills of exchange, and the book keeping clearing accounts among the individuals. Bankers also made bottomry loans, whereby a shipper would borrow on his cargo but would be relieved of his responsibility to pay his debt if the cargo did not arrive at its destination. This was one of the first attempts at a

dispensation of risks for a premium—an elementary form of insurance'. With these developments, the economic position of Greece resembled in many respects to that of Great Britain in the nineteenth century.

Religion and Philosophy: The Greek religion was not only varied but also complex. In fact, they did not follow the arbitrary absolutes that dominate the Eastern creeds. The Greeks did not believe in god and on the other hand they tended to glorify man. The three prominent deities of the Greeks were Zeus, Apollo and Athena. In connection with their religion the Greeks organised a great festival at Olympia as early as 776 B.C. During this festival a series of contests were held in honour of the gods in which athletes from all over Greece took part. Similarly all people went to Delphi to consult the oracle. The priests at Delphi were supposed to give the god's answers to questions.

The inquisitiveness of mind found expression in the speculation regarding the origin of the universe, the facts and laws of nature and the principles of human conduct. The most noteworthy group of early philosophers consisted of a class of teachers called the Sophists or men of wisdom. They taught men the techniques of effective speaking, writing, oratory, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. They were clever and subtle reasoners and preached that knowledge is not absolute but is relative to man. Good and evil, for example, are not absolutes but depend upon man's views. In the development of higher philosophy the contributions of Greeks can hardly be exaggerated.

Socrates (469-399 B.C.): The outstanding philosophers of Athens, Socrates, his disciple Plato and his pupil Aristotle, were primarily teachers. Socrates, an Athenian stonecutter, was one of the intimate friends of Pericles. He was a seeker after truth. He used to go about drawing people in the Athenian market place and questioning them so that they could think for themselves. He taught the rich and the poor alike.

Socrates was familiar with different ideas regarding natural sciences but he was not happy with them "because they informed him only *how* and not *why* things happened". Therefore he taught the people that they must use the power

And the Trojan
poet.

Art and Architecture: The greek art prior to its attaining an independent status from the sixth century onwards was influenced by the art styles of Egypt and Syria. The Greek art revolves round three main styles, viz., Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. In all these styles temples were built in Greece. The Doric style was somewhat simpler while the Ionic and Corinthian styles were ornate.

The Greek conception of a temple was different from oriental conception. For them the temple did not mean a mansion for God but an object of reverence for something divine and wonderful. Among the early temples the most famous is the Partheon, the temple of Athens, built in the Doric style. Built in Acropolis during the time of Pericles the temple, even in its ruin, is a masterpiece of Greek architecture. The Erechtheum built near the one just described is in Ionic style. To the Corinthian style belongs 'the choragic monument of Lysicrates at Athens'. The Hellenic architecture contains mostly secular buildings.

The Greeks were concerned with man and man's beauty and therefore the artists made every effort to render human form in a natural way. They were fully acquainted with human anatomy and possessed technical expertise to portray in a natural and life-like form. This explains their high aesthetic accomplishments in sculptural representations. The Hellenic sculptures are noted for their great excellence. The statue of the "Dying Gaul" at Pergamum "Laocoon" and the "Victory of Samothrace" at Rhodes, and "Venus of Milo" of the Alexandrian school are well-known masterpieces. "Laocoon", in particular, was admired by Michelangelo, who declared it a marvel of art.

We find early Greek paintings mostly on vases. It is important to note here that though 'important advances were

in poetry and drama and history, architecture and fine arts "they scaled the highest peaks of human achievement 2,400 years ago". This spectacular achievement was due largely to the free life enjoyed by the citizens in their small city-states. Hence we can justify the statement that ancient Greece is the mother of the modern European civilization.

(vii) **ROMAN CIVILIZATION**

Rome which began as a city-state absorbed the whole of Italy in course of time and ultimately established its supremacy over all portions of the Mediterranean littoral and northern Britain as well. They established the mightiest empire of antiquity. Viewed aright this achievement is a record of engrossing interest. It is worthy of note here that Rome affected a new synthesis of Greek culture. In many respects it is a continuation of Greek culture. To this Rome added certain modifications of its own. Rome supplied the concepts of culture, religious ideas, state system, concepts of law, basic intellectual concepts and above all the forms of art to 'the people from the eastern Balkans to Poland and from

selves from the Etruscans and the last of the Etruscan the Tarquins was expelled from Rome at the end of the century B.C. The monarchy was abolished and Republic was established. After strengthening internally Republic began the conquest of the Peninsula. By 270 Rome was in control of all the territory from the straits of Messina to somewhat north of Pisa. It should be noted that it was Rome which brought the whole of Italy under rule and not that Rome merged itself into the bigger Italian organisation. This explains why the republic which was established in Italy came to be called the Roman Republic and the empire which was established later came to be called the Roman Empire.

From 270 B.C. to 14 A.D. Rome fought with Carthage, Macedonia, Syria, Greece and Egypt. Rome defeated Carthage in the three Punic wars and brought Greek rule to an end. It is worth remembering here the part played by the great Carthaginian general Hannibal who is rightly regarded as one of the greatest warriors in the history of the world who is ranked with Alexander, Julius Caesar and Napoleon Bonaparte. Though defeated Hannibal displayed superb generalship. Finally he committed suicide in 183 B.C. The Republic of Rome continued its victorious march and conducted campaigns against native tribes in northern Italy, Spain and southern Gaul. By the beginning of the Christian era Rome had conquered most of the Mediterranean area and was undoubtedly the greatest power of the time.

The expansion of the territory through a series of conquests proved disastrous to the Roman republic. There were revolts from 133 B.C. In the meantime two brothers, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were elected as tribunes and tried to save the Republic from complete collapse. They attempted to improve the lot of the peasants. Unfortunately both of them fell into the machination of the Senate. Their death provided a much needed opportunity for the dictator Sulla to rise to power. Of the two generals who distinguished themselves in the Social War (91-88 B.C.), Marius and Sulla, Sulla defeated Marius and became the dictator. After Sulla's death another great general, Pompey, became the Consul. The rise of Julius Caesar, one of the most famous of all the generals of Rome, gave a severe jolt to the dying

Roman Republic. On its ashes, he established in Rome a military dictatorship.

Caesar was a great conqueror and statesman. He launched upon military conquests to add territories to the Republic. He conquered Gaul, Britain, West Asia and Asia Minor. The following message he gave to the Senate sums up his career: "I came, I saw, I conquered". The Republic, though dead, continued in name. Caesar got himself appointed as a dictator. He was assassinated in 44 B.C. As a soldier, a warrior, an efficient administrator, statesman, orator, reformer and a man of letters Caesar has left his impression on Roman history.

General confusion followed the fall of Caesar. Finally Octavian, the grand nephew and adopted son of Caesar, brought the Republic to an end. From 29 B.C. to 14 A.D., for a period of forty-two years he was the undisputed master of the Roman Empire. He assumed the titles like Augustus (dignity), a title by which he is better known, *Princeps civitatis* (the first citizen of the State), and *Tamperator* (victorious general). He set about the re-establishment of Roman authority and the machinery of government. The Republic was in essence abolished and the monarchy he established lasted for nearly two centuries. The period also witnessed the greatest flowering of Roman culture. For these reasons the Age of Augustus has been regarded as the Golden Age of Roman Culture.

The most brilliant period of Roman civilization came to an end with the death of Augustus. After 200 A.D. the emperors tended to become more autocratic. Added to this, religion began to play an important role. Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity and bore the title "equal to the Apostles". He transferred the capital to Constantinople (modern Istanbul). But the empire was showing signs of disintegration. Justinian (527-565) succeeded in revitalizing empire and introduced reforms. But this glory of the Roman Empire was only short-lived. After the death of Justinian the western part of the empire came under the control of the Barbarians, thus freeing itself from the control of Constantinople. This marks the end of the empire which was inaugurated by Augustus.

chal and the father was the head, *Pater familias*, and master of the family. A trait of the family was the showing of reverence to the ancestors. Above the families stood the *gentes*. The *gentes* composed of two classes, the *patricians* (aristocrats or nobles or upper class), and *plebians* (the common people or lower class). In the city-state of Rome the citizens were not equal. The patricians enjoyed greater privileges and more wealth. They owned the largest estates and were the wealthiest men in the society. They monopolised the senate and other higher offices in the government. Those who worked for them were called "clients" and from these "clients" the patricians received some payments. Since the status in the society was determined by the amount of wealth that one possessed, the patricians who occupied the upper strata of the society were naturally proud of their ancestry and their high social position.

The 'clients' were also called plebians or plebs, who occupied the lowest strata of the society. This class consisted of poor peasants, workingmen and hired men. They were foremen and citizens, but were generally poor, had no political rights and were oppressed by the patricians. With a view to secure political rights the plebs started a movement. As a result of this struggle the plebs got a greater voice in government. They could now aspire to the highest offices in the state, could take part in the most important political decisions and could make laws by the early third century B.C. through plebiscite. Further, the plebs possessed in Tribunes personal advocates of their own causes. The marriage between the plebs and patricians was legalised. Thus the plebs came to feel that the welfare of Rome depended largely on them.

Women were honoured and respected by the Roman society, but they enjoyed no political rights.

Slavery: The slaves played a significant part in the social and economic life of the Romans. All prisoners of war became slaves. There was a slave market at Delos where persons kidnapped by pirates were sold. Slaves were employed as labour on the large farms for cultivation of the olive and the vine. They were also employed to the raising of livestock, for turning out manufactured goods and many of them served as

(iii) CHINESE CIVILIZATION

By a general consent China is considered 'colossal China' in view of the extent of territory, the vastness of population and the antiquity and the durability of its culture. Chinese civilization is one of the oldest in the world. The Chinese call their country *Tien Hsia* 'Under Heaven', and *Chung Kuo*, 'The Middle Kingdom'. The name China has been probably derived from the Ch'un dynasty in the third century B.C. The Chinese belong to the Mongolian race.

Geographical Features: China can be divided into two parts viz., China proper and its outlying sections or dependencies. Its three important rivers are the Sinkiang, the Yangtze and the Hwang Ho. As in other parts of the world, the river valleys became the cradles of Chinese civilization. It was in the valley of the great river of north China, Hwang Ho, the Yellow river that Chinese civilization was born.

Political History: The history of China goes back to 5000 B.C. The first period is a shadowy period and mostly

...also in history, law, mathematics, ... The gradation was made on the ... of the thought and style of the ancients. ... for about 2000 years. ... first the candidate competed ... and finally ... success in these exami- ... and he could have no ... a mandarin in the ... of the emperor'.

Economic Development: Economic life in China revolved round agriculture. The Chinese knew the importance of irrigation to agriculture and nearly half the land under cultivation was irrigated. It was originally a hoe-culture and in course of time ox-drawn ploughs were introduced. Millet was their main produce, though rice, soya beans, barley, wheat, silk, cotton, sweet potatoes and *koaliang* were also produced.

Land was divided according to the *Ching tien* or 'well field' system. Each division of arable land was assigned to eight peasant families. The central plot was reserved for the lord. Peasant proprietorship of land began from the days of Shih Huang Ti.

There were no industries worth the name in ancient China. Wood and bamboo were used for making couches, armchairs and small tables. There were workers in gold, silver, bronze and ivory. They also made porcelain vessels and silk clothes. They produced paper in 105 A.D. and this can be reckoned as the greatest contribution of ancient China to human civilization. Chinese trade was profitable. The chief article of trade was undoubtedly silk. Among other articles mention may be made of skins, furs, rhubarb and cinnamon. These articles were exchanged for precious stones, jade, amber, coral, and glass. About the beginning of the first millennium B.C. coined money was introduced in China. Money economy developed about half a century later. The introduction of coined money profoundly influenced the social and economic organisation of the day.

grounded in the teachings of the great philosophers, the notable among whom being Confucius. Obligations rather than rights were the basis of the social organisation. The obligations were taught to the Chinese from their childhood. Thus runs a Chinese proverb: "He who knows not the rites has nothing to shape his character."

Stratification is noted by its absence in the Chinese society. Scholars and farmers were at the head of the social order. The second stratum was occupied by the artisans, the craftsmen, the traders or merchants, and the soldiers. At the end of the social scale stood actors, beggars and servants. The basic social unit consisted of the family with the male head and the clan. Importance was attached to the family and not the individual. Sons obtained wives from their mother's family. The children of a brother and sister married frequently. The boys and girls were segregated. The adolescence of the boy was marked by the performance of formal ceremonies in which he received a cap.

Women enjoyed no high status politically. But there are references in Chinese history to outstanding female characters. Her place in home depended on ability.

Art and Architecture: The Chinese hardly laid any emphasis on art and architecture. According to Professor Thorndike, "In art the Chinese have preferred the picturesque to the monumental, in social life the ceremonial to the material. They worship their ancestors with continued funeral rites rather than with enduring tombs. China is not a graveyard like Egypt, it is an ancestral home." The bronzes and sacrificial vessels reveal quality of workmanship. Undoubtedly the most important monument of ancient China was the Great Wall or *Wan-Li-Chang Cheng* (Ten Thousand Li Long Wall) built in order to prevent the Huna invasion. The Great Wall, of which ruins still exist, contains about 20,000 towers of forty feet high built at an interval of 100 yards. There are 1,000 small towers. There is a moat on its outer side. The material used for the construction varies. "On the eastern reaches . . . has an earth or rubble core faced with either brick or stone. . . . Many of the stones are huge hewn granite blocks, some of them fourteen feet long and three or four feet thick. In the western sections the Wall is often

carved out of the loess and faced with stone, or made of loess watered and tramped into wooden forms". There are at intervals, permanent camps for the garrisons behind the walls. The Great Wall 'is one of the monumental achievements of men's hands.' Shih Huang Ti built a magnificent palace on a land of thirty acres. With the spread of Buddhism in China pagodas came to be built.



Great Wall

Chinese sculptures, though not of high quality, are numerous, and they owe their inspiration to Buddhism. The sculptures of the Tang dynasty 'are characterised by a strength and a richness and exuberance of decoration'. Among the significant ones mention may be made of Bodhisatva Avalokitesvara.

Painting was ranked high by the Chinese as an art. In fact they regarded it as the greatest form of artistic expression. "Chinese painting is with a brush and by ink and water colours and by the Chinese is regarded as closely akin to calligraphy." The subjects of the Chinese paintings varied from period to period, the most popular subjects being landscape paintings, portraiture and historical subjects.

Religion and Philosophy: Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism were the three major religions of ancient China. Of

these the first two originated in China and brought about a profound impact on socio-religious and philosophical system of China. The third viz., Buddhism, was born in India, and played a significant part in the history of China.

Some regard that the nature of the earliest religion of China was monotheism. This tended to be polytheistic when the worship of ancestors, spirits said to reside in mountains and rivers and stars became common. Heaven and Earth were held in great veneration and sacrifices were offered to win their goodwill. It was the belief of the Chinese that if they failed to propitiate God, universe would be disarranged and the natural calamities like floods, drought and the like would occur. To avert this, the kings and nobles performed regular ceremonies. They also felt the need to evolve some philosophies as is borne out by Confucius and lao-tse.



Confucius

Confucius (551-479 B.C.): Confucius who helped the Chinese to build up a peaceful and lasting civilization was born in the feudal state of Lu in 551 B.C. He lost his father, an official in the state, at the age of three and was brought up by his mother in poverty. He, however, made a diligent study of learning of the past. He married at the age of nineteen and entered the services of the state as a storekeeper. From this humble position he rose to occupy the highest office in the state viz., the Prime Minister. When differences arose between himself and the ruler in respect of the principles of governance, he left service while only in middle age.

Thereafter, he travelled all over north-eastern China with a band of disciples trying to find a ruler who would adopt his principles of government or to employ him. Being disappointed he returned to his state and spent his remaining years in quiet study and teaching. He died in 479 B.C. at the age of 72.

Confucius was sorry at the sight of the rich and the powerful disobeying the laws. With the object of training the youth in self-discipline and the art of good leadership he started a school when he was only twenty-two years old. It soon became famous and attracted large number of students. The youth accepted him as their *Guru* or preceptor.

Teachings: Confucius was neither the founder of a religion nor a religious reformer. As he puts it, he was "not a maker but a transmitter, believing in and loving the ancients". His teachings were based on moral principles. The elaborate system of ethics he built up conceived that the whole duty of man lies in the right ordering of his relationship to others.

He favoured the building up of a society on old norms by observance of the ancient rituals and the cultivation of uprightness. He taught the people to cultivate duties assigned to different units in the society. The duties are grouped under five divisions *viz.*, those of ruler and subjects; husbands and wives; fathers and children; elder and younger brothers and those of friends. He never claimed he was divinely inspired nor discussed questions pertaining to God, life after death, and the world. He asked "While you cannot serve men, how can you serve spirits?" He disagreed with the view that saintly men must not take part in worldly affairs. He argued: "It is impossible to withdraw from the world and associate with birds and beasts that have no affinity with us. With whom should I associate but with suffering men? The disorder that prevails is what requires my efforts".

As mentioned earlier, 'the chief interests of Confucius were those of a statesman and the teacher of ethics.' The ethical principles he preached could find acceptance in any religion. He said, "What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others. You should love all but cultivate friendship only with your equals; spend the most of

your energy in improving your mind. If you employ a man, trust him". Thus, he laid emphasis on fundamental moral virtues like benevolence, love, goodness and rationality.

In estimating the contribution of Confucius, Hayes and Moon emphasise the following points: In the first place, though as a political reformer he failed, his theory of the supremacy of the Emperor as a mediator between the nation and the forces of nature had a great influence during the later years. Secondly, his emphasis on the observance of old norms gave impetus to the worship of ancestors and respect of old religion. Thirdly, his ethical principles helped to a great extent to shape Chinese character.

Mencius: After the death of Confucius his tradition was developed and propagated by his successors among whom Mencius stands out prominently. A native of the state of Lu, Mencius is said to have lived between 373 and 288 B.C. In his upbringing and the principles he followed Mencius resembles Confucius. He was brought up by his old and wise mother. A high minded man and a scholar, Mencius attracted pupils towards him. He evinced keen interest in the government and therefore he went round to induce the princes to adopt his norms. Like Confucius he believed that the rulers by their good examples, not by brute force, would create a good society.

Some scholars justifiably feel that Mencius differed from Confucius. He held the view that state responds to worthy influence and man is by nature good, but education would make him better. The people could rise in revolt if the ruler became cruel and corrupt. He criticised the princes and emphasised that it was the duty of the state to look after the material welfare of the subjects. His thoughts are preserved in *Meng Tzu Shu* or 'The Book of Mencius'.

After Mencius the Confucian tradition was continued by Hsun Kuang or Hsun Tzu who lived in the third century B.C. He expressed concern for good government and held that man is by nature bad. But he opined that man could be improved by education. He opposed war and favoured winning the affection and goodwill of the people of the

needs. Like Mencius, he subscribed to the view that the economic basis of society is important. As a rationalist, Hsun Tzu did not believe in spiritual beings, fortune-telling, ceremonies and divination. He insisted that good must be rewarded and the evil must be punished. "In the face of the confusion in existing society, he was an optimist, insisting that the universe is on the side of righteousness and that man's evil nature can be modified for good". He felt that knowledge could be acquired through reflection and meditation and not by reason. Thus these men of outstanding ability contributed in no small measure to the development of Confucian tradition.

Lao-tse: Lao-tse is said to be an older contemporary of Confucius. His life was mysterious and some scholars even doubt whether he existed. There is also no unanimity of opinion among scholars regarding his date of birth. He is believed to have been born in 600 B.C. and worked as the keeper of the archives in the court of the Chou. The authorship of the book *Tao Te Ching* (the Book of the World Law and its Power) is attributed to him.

The religion that was founded on his teachings came to be known as *Taoism*. The name Taoism comes from the term Tao which means way or path. "Knowledge of the *Tao*, they insisted, is not to be attained by reason and study, but by the mystic way of contemplation and inward illumination". Like the Buddha, Lao-tse taught that the key to happiness and contentment lies in the curbing of desires. He said: "He is content who has enough. There is no fault greater than greed of gain". He viewed that it is possible for one to keep the peace of his soul by curbing passions and desires. Therefore he said: "Horse-racing and hunting disorder the mind and the scramble for wealth mars the character of man"

Taoism was essentially a moral code. It opposed rituals and laid emphasis on right conduct. It believed that salvation of the society lies in the due observance of primitive manners. It hated urban civilization and disagreed with the view that education or learning awakens people. "The regimen has consisted in meditation on Taoist truths, the cultivation of such Taoist attitude as inaction and placidity, said to be characteristic of the Tao, carefully regulated breathing, diet, discipline, moral living, and partaking of

substances supposed to prolong life, such as seeds and resin of evergreens like the pine and fir, products of such other trees and plants as the plum, and certain minerals and jewels—gold, jade and the pearl". As one of the great religions of China Taoism with an essentially passivist philosophy moulded the life, thought and arts of China.

Among other schools of philosophy that emerged in China mention may be made of the school based on the teachings of Mo Tior Mo Tzu. He stood for the improvement of the society. This he thought was possible by conforming whole-heartedly to the will of God by reason and logic. He advised people to love their fellows as they would love their blood brothers. This advocacy of universal love prompted him to condemn 'war as unbrotherly and murderous' and ignore the structure of the society.

Yang Chung who lived in the fourth century B.C. was an individualist. He did not leave behind him a cult of his own. He advocated both pessimism and fatalism. Life, according to him was full of misery and sorrow. This cannot be improved because fate determines all. Hence 'each should take life as it comes, enduring and making the most of it for himself, and not bothering about others or the state'.

There were many other schools in China among whom the Legalists gained popularity in the court of Shih Hwang Ti. They suggested to the ruler that literature must start afresh from his reign. Acting on this, he ordered the destruction of many valuable books.

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Buddhism: Buddhist missionaries visited China under the Tsin dynasty. By the end of the first century A.D. many Buddhist monks had settled in the Lo Yang province in Central China. Among them Kasyapa Matunga and Dharmaraksa are noteworthy. These two Buddhist monks carried with them to China a white horse laden with sacred texts and relics. Emperor Ming Ti ordered the construction of a monastery which came to be called 'The White Horse Monastery'. These two monks stayed in this monastery and translated about 413 Sanskrit texts into the Chinese. Thus Buddhism became the popular religion of China.

Language and Literature: The Chinese were of the view that their language was divinely originated. Their script consists

Hebrew civilization

The Hebrews were born in Mesopotamia, specifically of Abraham and his clan, who settled themselves in Palestine. Originally, this place was called Canaan, with its respective inhabitants called Canaanites. Many years later, a tribe of Aryan origins called the Philistines arrive, naming the area Philistia (the origin of "Palestine"). Finally the Hebrews arrive, who did not have great relevance, but still remain current, above all their religion.

a) Abraham was the first of the patriarchs. He was born in the city of Ur, in Mesopotamia. The Bible relates that at 75 years old this patriarch heard the voice of God, which told him to leave the land of Ur. Historians The sons he had with his wife Sara, Isaac, and her slave Hagar, Ishmael, are the origin of many conflicts in the Middle East, as these sons would give rise to the Jews and the Arab.

b) Jacob was the son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, also known as Israel, which means, "He who wrestles with God ." He married in Chaldea and returned to Palestine. He had 12 sons, who were the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel.

c) Moses name means, "*Saved from the waters.*" He liberated his people from Egyptian oppression by means of the Exodus. He received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. His people were punished for 40 years for idolatry.

The Successor of Moses would be Joshua, who would just conclude the long journey towards Palestine. On arrival, they would see that the Promised Land was occupied by other peoples like the Canaanites and Philistines. It would be necessary to fight to conquer Canaan.

Cultural Customs in the Ancient Hebrew Civilization

They valued music and employed it in religious ceremonies. The shofar was a typical Hebrew instrument, the horn of a ram used to convene ritual ceremonies. They also used zithers, timbrels (tambourines) and flutes to mention only the most popular. There were no paintings nor sculptures for fear that they would fall into idolatry.

The Hebrews dedicated themselves to agriculture and raising livestock. The characteristic crops were olives and grapevines, and they also obtained legumes and lentils. The shepherding of sheep, oxen, goats, horses and camels accompanied their agricultural activity.

Achievements and Contributions to Humanity

The contribution to humanity which stands out most is their religion, as it dominated all aspects of the Hebrew culture.. The first great difference in the religion of the Hebrew people from the rest of the Near East is believing in only one God.

Patriarchy

The nucleus of the Hebrew society was the patriarchal family, in which the father was the highest authority. In the beginning, the Hebrews lived in family groups or clans directed by the oldest, the patriarch, who administered justice, directed war and religious rites.

The Monarchy

Saul, a good warrior to face their enemies, was the first Hebrew king. In the year 1000 B.C. David was chosen as Saul's successor. The new king faced their enemies, conquered Jerusalem and made it into the capital of the State.

Art in the Ancient Hebrew Civilization

The majority of literary works were compiled and organized during the period of the peak of the monarchy and by order of the king. The Psalms, Proverbs, nuptial songs of the Song of Songs, the Chronicles, Genesis, Exodus, Judges, the Kings and other books denominated the Books of Wisdom, like Ecclesiastes, deserve special mention. They valued music and employed it in their religious ceremonies. The shofar was a typical Hebrew instrument, the horn of a ram used to convene ritual ceremonies. They also used zithers, timbrels (tambourines) and flutes, to mention the most popular. Their architecture stood out, within it the palaces, the homes of the nobles and the temples.

Economy and activities

The Hebrews, established in Palestine, dedicated themselves to agriculture and raising livestock. The characteristic crops were olives and grapevines, and they also obtained legumes and lentils. The shepherding of sheep, oxen, goats, horses, and camels accompanied their agricultural activity. They also worked in ceramics and made numerous textiles of wool and linen; the most important of their economic activities was commerce. They exported oil and wine and imported metals, ivory, and spices.

Society

The Israelite society was intimately related to their religion. The nucleus of the Hebrew society is the family, which is patriarchal. The father is the highest authority. Slaves also existed; they were obtained by buying them or as prisoners of war. In their time as nomads, the Hebrews lived in tents with little furniture. This

way of life facilitated their movement in search of pastures for their flocks. After settling in Palestine, they lived in houses made of stone, surrounded by gardens, forming settlements.

Religion of the Hebrews:

Monotheistic religion (belief in only one God: Yahweh or Jehovah): The Hebrew people had the conviction of believing in only one universal God, Jehovah, creator of all things. This was the product of a long religious evolution, crystallized by Moses, who vigorously imposed monotheism during the 40 years of life wandering through the desert, after the exodus.

The Old Testament also includes historical and prophetic books, and books of wisdom. In total there are 21 books by sacred writers, of diverse value and of philosophical literary nature.

- **New Testament:** 27 books, deals with the life of Jesus, acts of the apostles, etc, consisting of:
 - **The Four Gospels** (Saint Mark, Saint Luke, Saint Matthew, and Saint John)
 - Acts of the Apostles
 - Epistles of Saint Paul and Saint Peter
 - The Revelation by Saint John
 - Dispersion of the Jewish people

In the present, the Jewish people, after having suffered domination at various times, finds itself established in part of the territory of Palestine. Israel has achieved appreciable political, social, and economic development.

The contribution to humanity which stands out most is their religion, as it dominated all aspects of the Hebrew culture. The prohibition of representing the divinity stimulated literature and the result was the Bible, also denominated the Holy Scriptures. The Old Testament is written for the Hebrews. It speaks of the customs and moral thoughts of the Israelites. Later the Christians added the New Testament with the arrival of Christ and the origins of Christianity. The first great difference in the religion of the Hebrew people from the rest of the Near East is believing in only one God. This God is just and good and demands from his people the fulfillment of a certain morality. He does not have a human form, which means that he cannot be represented. Man is inferior to Him, as God made him in his image, immortal, but as he has sinned he must be punished.