

**MALAYSIA**  
**and**  
**THE ANCIENT WORLD**



**MALAYSIA  
and  
THE ANCIENT WORLD**

**BOOK ONE  
for  
FORM ONE**

*by*

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## PREFACE

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This is the first of a series of three books which have been specially written to serve the needs of pupils in the first three forms of Malaysian Secondary Schools. Together, these three books provide a comprehensive history course leading to the examination for the Lower Certificate of Education. The present book covers the work for Form One, which includes a study of **Asia** (from the Ancient Kingdom of the Malay Peninsula to China), **Europe** (from Greece to the Roman Empire), and the **Beginning of the Great Religions** (Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam).

Although this series is suitable for general use in Malaysian schools, it has been written specially for children whose knowledge of English is weak. Every effort has been made to ensure that the facts have been presented as simply and as clearly as possible. Among the many devices which have been used to achieve this aim are the use of simple and precise English, a clear and logical presentation under numerous sub-headings, the repetition of the more important facts and dates and the inclusion of comprehensive exercises. In addition to the exercises at the end of each chapter, many short-answer questions have been gathered in three test papers, one at the end of each part of the book.

For the sake of clarity and convenience, the divisions of this book follow very closely the divisions of the official syllabus issued by the Ministry of Education of the Federation of Malaysia, January 1967. The first part of the book covers the history of Asia from the Ancient Kingdom of the Malay Peninsula up to China. The second part describes the rise of Sparta and Athens in Greece and also the Roman Empire. The final part deals with the beginnings of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

A list of reference books has been added for the convenience of those teachers who may wish to find additional facts and details for their lessons.

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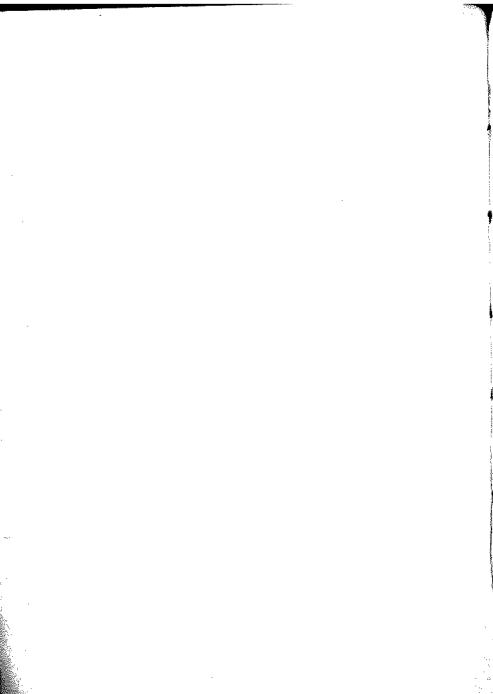
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**Part One**

**ASIA**



**Part One**  
**INTRODUCTION**  
**ASIA**

In this part of the book we will begin by taking a brief look at the history of South East Asia. Civilisation spread to the lands of South East Asia as a result of the visits of traders and missionaries from India during the first few centuries of the Christian era. These visits led to the rise of small kingdoms which were strongly influenced by the Indian way of life. The most important of these early **Indianised Kingdoms** was **Funan** in Indo-China which was founded during the first century A.D. The other kingdoms were **Tun Sun**, **Chih Tu**, **Langkasuka** and **Kedah** in the Malay peninsula. The kingdom of Langkasuka which can be said to be the most important was founded in the second century A.D. Kedah, also founded almost at the same period, became an important Indian settlement because of its many advantages. The ancient kingdoms of the Malay peninsula will be dealt with in Chapter One. Still on South East Asia we will deal with the new empires which were created after the fall of Funan. The most important ones were the Empire of **Srivijaya**, the **Majapahit** Empire and **Tumasek**. The beginning of the Empire of Srivijaya and the reasons for the decline and fall of the empire will be examined in Chapter Two. The most important Prime Minister of the Majapahit Empire, **Gajah Mada**, will also be dealt with under the same chapter.

In India we will trace the growth of the **Maurya Dynasty** (322-185 B.C.) and the reign of one of its greatest rulers, **Asoka the Great**. The achievements of Asoka and the part he played in the spread of Buddhism will be described in Chapter Three.

The history of China is usually divided into **dynasties**. A dynasty is simply a line of rulers who all belong to the same family. Thus, for example, all the rulers of the Han Dynasty belonged to the family of the founder of the dynasty, **Liu Pang**. The first civilisation of China arose during the period of the **Shang Dynasty** in about 1500 B.C. The Shang Emperors ruled over extensive territories near the great bend of the Hwang Ho. One of their capitals - Anyang - has been investigated by archaeologists and their work has provided much information about ancient China. (Archaeologists are really historical detectives. They dig in search of the bones and implements of early men and then interpret these remains in the same way that detectives interpret clues in a murder case. Careful interpretation gives the archaeologist some idea of the way in which prehistoric men lived).

Chinese civilisation reached the height during the time of three dynasties which occupied the throne of China between 206 B.C. and 1279 A.D. - the **Han**, the **T'ang** and the **Sung**. Historians cannot agree amongst themselves on the question of which of these three dynasties saw Chinese culture at its greatest. During the **Han Period** (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.), Confucianism became the official religion of China, while Buddhism also entered the country from India. China's most famous historian, **Ssu-ma Ch'ien**, lived at this time, during the reign of the able **Emperor Wu Ti**. The **T'ang Period** (618-906 A.D.) is remarkable for many cultural achievements, but especially for the writings of the poets **Po Chu-i** and **Tu Fu**, and for the invention of printing. The **Sung Period** (960-1279) is noted for its great painters, who included **Mi Fei** and **Ma Yuan**.

## PART ONE

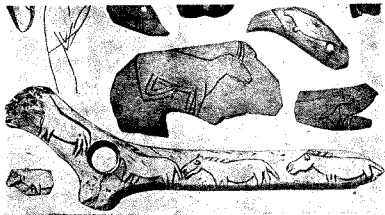
### Chapter One

# SOUTH EAST ASIA—THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF THE MALAY PENINSULA

In very ancient times Malaya formed part of a long bridge of land which stretched from the mainland of Asia to Australia. Over the course of the centuries many different races of people used this bridge on their way southwards from China. These migrants passed down the Malay peninsula and some of them made their homes in Malaya. The first inhabitants lived in Upper Perak more than 500,000 years ago. They were followed in about 8,000 B.C. by the **Bacsono-Hoabinhians** who lived in caves in Malaya's limestone hills. Finally, in about 2,500 B.C. the **Proto-Malays** arrived from Yunnan in southern China. The next stage in the history of Malaya was the



A neolithic skeleton with a pair of stone bracelets found at Gua Cha, Kelantan.



Drawings of the cave men on bones and walls of caves.

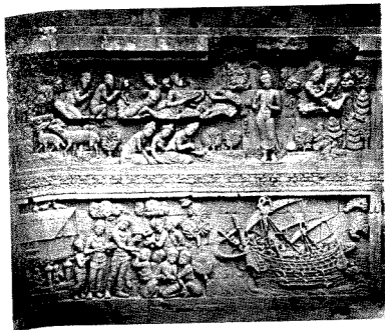
arrival of traders and adventurers from India during the last century before the birth of Christ. In this chapter we will consider the factors which led these Indians to visit Malaya and the influence which they had upon the way of life of South East Asia.

### **I. THE COMING OF THE INDIANS.**

The first Indian traders and adventurers to visit Malaya and other parts of South East Asia probably arrived around about the year 100 B.C. Some historians have suggested that they arrived very much earlier than this, but there is no clear evidence to prove the point. The Indians came to South East Asia for a variety of reasons, of which the most important were (a) the search for new supplies of gold, (b) the search for a new and shorter trade route to China and (c) missionary endeavour.

#### **(a) The Search for Gold.**

Gold plays an important part in Indian religion and customs. It is used in the manufacture of sacred objects, such as the statues



**Carving showing an early South East Asian ship.**

of gods, and also to make personal ornaments such as rings and bracelets. In early times Indian traders obtained their gold from Siberia, but during the Second Century B.C. this source of supply was blocked by barbarian nomads. Indian merchants then turned to the Roman Empire. This arrangement worked for a while, but the export of gold from Roman provinces was finally stopped by the Emperor Vespasian (69-75 A.D.). The Indians were then compelled to search for another source of gold. They found it in South East Asia. Gold was to be found in many parts of this region, including Pahang in Malaya.

So it was the need for gold which brought the first Indian traders to the lands of South East Asia. This explains why, in early Indian books, various countries of South East Asia are described as 'Lands of Gold'. Malaya itself was given the title *Suvarnabhumi* or *Suvarnadvipa*. In about 150 A.D. a Greek geographer described Malaya as the Golden Chersonese.

#### **(b) The Search for a New Trade Route.**

From very early times Indian merchants had traded with China along the sea route which ran south of Malaya. During the first century B.C. an alternative to this route was sought. Adventurous Indian traders visited the lands of South East Asia in search of a short overland route between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Many such routes were discovered. Some stretched through Burma and Indo-China. Others were situated further south across the 'neck' of the Malay peninsula and the Isthmus of Kra. One of these southern routes crossed from Kedah in the West to Singgora or Patani on the east coast of the peninsula. Small settlements of Indian traders grew up along the new trade routes.

#### **(c) Missionary Endeavour.**

Some historians have suggested that missionary activity played an important part in bringing the first Indians to South East Asia and that the first missionaries arrived during the reign of the Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C. There is no evidence to prove this. It is much more probable that missionaries followed the traders who brought their religion with them. Once a trading settlement had been established by Indian merchants, it was visited by Hindu and Buddhist missionaries. Religion followed trade.



In the earliest days of the Indian settlements there were probably more Buddhist missionaries than Hindus. To travel overseas means loss of caste to a Hindu, whereas the Buddhists have no caste system. Buddhist monks would have been much more ready than the Brahmins to visit the new settlements in South East Asia. But the Brahmins soon followed in their footsteps after overcoming their feelings against travel.

#### (d) The First Settlements.

You must not think that the Indians came to South East Asia in large numbers. They did not. Only a handful of traders and missionaries settled in Malaya and other lands. In the new trading centres which the Indians established the majority of the inhabitants would have been South East Asian people such as the Malays. But because of their wealth and prestige the few Indian traders obtained control of the new settlements. They were able to set themselves up as rulers of small kingdoms around the ports. Often they married the daughters of Malay chiefs in order to win local support.

There is another point that you should remember. The traffic between India and South East Asia was 'two-way'. Indian traders visited the ports of South East Asia and traders from Malaya, Burma and Indo-China visited ports along the eastern coast of India. This was another way in which South East Asia came under the influence of the Indian way of life.

## 2. THE MAP OF CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY.

Malaya made its first appearance on a map of the world in about 150 A.D. The map was drawn by **Claudius Ptolemy**, a Greek who was living in the famous city of Alexandria in Egypt. Ptolemy collected information about the world from the many sailors who visited the port and he used this information to draw a remarkably accurate map of the world. There are some inaccuracies, of course, but Ptolemy's map was correct in all the main details.

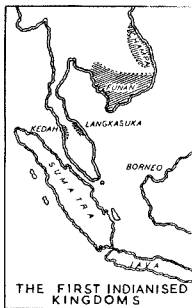


Ptolemy.

On Ptolemy's map Malaya is called the Aurea Chersonnesus or the "Golden Peninsula", which shows that our country was known to sailors as a source of gold. The Muar River is marked on the map, and this waterway may have been used by early traders as a route to the gold mines of Pahang. Several ports are marked on the map, but historians have not been able to identify them with certainty. One was situated near modern Singapore. Indian traders were visiting Malaya frequently at the time when Ptolemy drew his map, and they probably used the ports which he marks.

### 3. THE FIRST INDIANISED KINGDOMS.

You have read about the way in which the first Indian settlements grew up in South East Asia. A few Indian traders and missionaries imposed their rule on the peoples of South East Asian ports. They were able to do this on account of their wealth and prestige and by intermarrying with local families. Some of the new ports became the capitals of kingdoms. Some of these kingdoms



were so small that they have left no record of their existence, but others became large and prosperous. It is better to describe these kingdoms as 'Indianised' than as 'Indian.' Most of the people were not Indians, but they were ruled by Indians and they had adopted some aspects of the Indian way of life. The most important of the earliest Indianised kingdoms were **Funan** and **Champa** in Indo-China and **Tun Sun, Chih Tu, Langkasuka** and **Kedah** in the Malay peninsula.

Most of the information about Funan comes from the traditional stories of the Chinese. This empire formerly covered the area where the present Cambodia and South Vietnam are situated. According to Chinese stories the Kingdom of Funan was founded

by a Brahman called **Kaundinya** at some time in the first century A.D. Kaundinya was said to have won popular support by defeating the former inhabitants and marrying a local princess named **Willow Leaf**. The empire which he founded lasted for about five hundred years and it grew up to be very great. The rulers of this empire expanded their rule over the whole of Cambodia and Annam and also parts of north Malaya. The people of this empire slowly adapted themselves to the ways and customs of the Indians. Funan was probably the main centre of Indian trade in South-east Asia. The empire was finally brought to an end by an invasion of the Khmers, the inhabitants of Chenla, in about 539 A.D.

Champa, a smaller kingdom situated along the coast of what is now Vietnam, was founded in about 190 A.D. but it never became as large or as prosperous as Funan. The former name of Champa was **Lin-yi** and it was given the name Champa during the seventh century. This empire was thought to have come under the influence of the Indians as far back as the first century A.D.

#### 4. THE ANCIENT KINGDOMS OF THE MALAY PENINSULA.

We have already seen earlier that the early knowledge of the Malay Peninsula comes mainly from the map of Claudius Ptolemy. This however was not the only evidence, for the Chinese also gave some information on the Malay Peninsula, particularly after the Han Dynasty. A research was made by Professor Wheatley on the Malay Peninsula and his conclusion was that there were more than thirty states in the Malay Peninsula. The most important ancient kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula were **Tun Sun, Chih Tu, Langkasuka** and **Kedah**.

The kingdom of **Tun Sun** was situated in the northern part of the Malay peninsula, slightly near the Kra Isthmus. It was believed that Indian traders dominated this state. A ruler of the state of Funan, **Fan Shih-man** was said to have conquered this state.

Another kingdom in which Indian influence was very strong was **Chih Tu**. This kingdom was situated to the south of Tun Sun and it was likely that it had its capital somewhere along the Kelantan River. At the beginning Chih Tu was under the influence of Funan and later under the influence of Cambodia. This kingdom

was believed to have been used by Chinese traders on the way to India. Instead of using the long sea route around Singapore, goods were taken overland across the narrow part of the peninsula.

The most important kingdom in the Malay peninsula can be said to be **Langkasuka**. This kingdom was situated in the north-east of Malaya and was founded in the second century A.D. Langkasuka was mentioned in the records of the Chinese, Indians, Arabs and Malays. This kingdom is believed to have lasted for over a thousand years and its inhabitants were very rich. Gold was used very freely in this kingdom and it was common to find the rulers as well as the high officials to be seen wearing golden rings and using golden cups.

In the north-west portion of the Malay peninsula was the kingdom of **Kedah**, which may have been founded at about the same period as Langkasuka. The centre of this kingdom was the Merbok Estuary and the area around Kedah Peak. The Merbok Estuary was very much larger in those days than it is now, and it may have the main harbour for Indian ships which visited the west coast of Malaya. There was also enough flat land for settlement and well drained land for the cultivation of padi. Archaeologists have discovered the remains of several ancient Indian temples and inscriptions in various parts of Kedah and Perlis, especially in the area of Kedah Peak, which may have been looked upon as a sacred mountain. Kedah Peak also served as a landmark for Indian ships approaching the Malay peninsula. These advantages made Kedah an important Indian settlement for at least nine to ten centuries. Further north than Kedah, **Tukuapa** in southern Thailand was a port of call for early Indian traders.

As a result of the visits of Indian traders and the beginning of Indianised kingdoms, the Indian way of life began to influence the people of Malaya and other parts of South East Asia. Sanskrit words were adopted into the Malay language and many Indian customs became part of the Malay way of life. The 'wayang kulit,' or shadow play, of Kelantan is one example of Indian influence. Many Hindu legends found their way into Malay books such as the famous **Sejarah Melayu**, or Malay Annals. Some of the customs and ceremonies performed at the courts of Malay Sultans also date back to the days of the Indianised Kingdoms.

### **Questions to Answer.**

1. What brought Indian traders to Malaya in about 100 B.C.?
2. Who was Claudius Ptolemy and what is the importance of the map of the world which he drew?
3. Name the first Indianised kingdoms of South East Asia.
4. Write a brief account of the rise and fall of the kingdom of Funan.
5. What influence did the Indians have upon the way of life of Malaya and other parts of South East Asia?

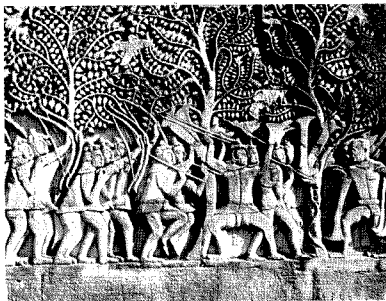
## Chapter Two

# SOUTH EAST ASIA — THE GREAT EMPIRES

In Chapter One we read about the arrival of Indian traders and the rise of the first Indianised kingdoms. The largest of these early kingdoms — Funan — was destroyed by Khmer invaders in about 539 A.D. This chapter carries the history of South East Asia from the fall of Funan into the fifteenth century. During this time new empires arose to take the place of Funan. The most important of these were the **Khmer Empire of Angkor** in Cambodia and the Empires of **Srivijaya** and **Majapahit** in Indonesia and Tumasek. The history of these great states is extremely complicated and uncertain, and here we can only give a brief and simplified outline.

### I. THE EMPIRE OF ANGKOR.

The Khmer people who destroyed the great kingdom of Funan soon built up a state of their own to replace it. This new state



Carving from Angkor Wat.

passed through an uncertain period of confusion and warfare at first, but it was reunited and strengthened in 802 by King Jayavarman II, who set up his capital at **Angkor** in Cambodia. It survived as a great empire until it was invaded by the Thais at the end of the thirteenth century. Even after that it continued to exist as a smaller and less important kingdom, and Angkor was not finally abandoned until 1431.

At **Angkor**, near Siemreap in Cambodia, the ruins of the capital of the Khmer Empire may still be seen; they are regarded now as one of the Wonders of Asia. The richly decorated stone palaces and temples of the Khmer rulers stand as a memorial to the greatness of their Empire. At the centre of the capital stands a great temple, built in the shape of a pyramid, which is known as **Angkor Wat**. It is full of statues and covered with ornate and beautiful carvings. The temple was built as a resting place for the ashes of dead rulers by King **Suryavaram II** in the early part of the twelfth century. It honours the Hindu god, Vishnu, for Hinduism was the religion of all the Khmer kings.

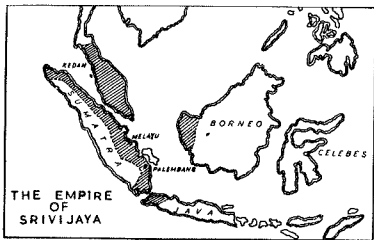
The Khmer rulers built up an extensive empire in Indo-China. King Suryavarman II, who founded Angkor Wat, was also a great warrior. He conquered the neighbouring state of Champa early in the twelfth century. Other conquests followed, and by 1250 the Khmer Empire stretched from Cambodia to the Burmese border and southwards as far as the Isthmus of Kra.

### **The End of the Empire of Angkor.**

The Empire of Angkor was finally brought to an end by the Thais, a people who originated in the southern provinces of China. When China and Burma were invaded by the Mongols in the second half of the thirteenth century, the Thais were forced to seek new homes further south. It was during their movement southwards that the Thais occupied a large part of the Khmer Empire around about the year 1300. A smaller Khmer kingdom around Angkor continued to exist for another hundred years, but this disappeared in 1431 when Angkor itself was abandoned.

## 2. THE EMPIRE OF SRIVIJAYA.

The kingdom of Srivijaya, with its capital at Palembang in South-east Sumatra, was founded at the beginning of the seventh century. In 670 A.D. a ruler of Srivijaya sent envoys to China, and it is clear that the kingdom had existed for some years before this. Nothing is known about the way in which the kingdom was founded. At first it was one of many small Indianised kingdoms in the islands of Indonesia, but it soon developed into the strongest sea empire of South East Asia. This empire was protected from its enemies not by walls but by its many ships.



(a) The Expansion of Srivijaya (670-800 A.D.).

During the latter part of the seventh century, between about 670 and 700, the expansion of Srivijaya began. In 683 one of the rulers of Srivijaya invaded and conquered Malaya and the island of Bangka. Soon afterwards Taruma in Western Java was added to the kingdom of Srivijaya. The expansion continued during the eighth century. Armies from Palembang entered the Malay peninsula and they had occupied Ligor in the north by 775. By 800 the Empire of Srivijaya stretched from Sumatra to the Isthmus of Kra.

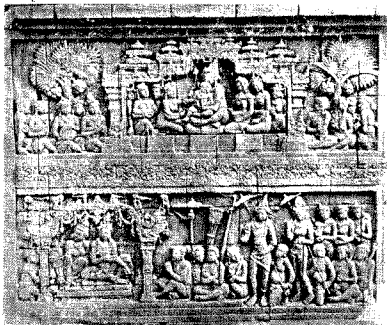


The prosperity of the new empire was based upon trade. The kingdom of Srivijaya was situated at the 'cross-roads of Asia' and it was thus in an ideal position to take advantage of the trade between India and the Middle East in the west and China in the East. Ships from these areas, as well as merchants from the countries of South East Asia, stopped at Palembang to exchange their goods. The conquests of Srivijaya gave her complete control of the Straits of Malacca. In this way she gained control of all trade between East and West.

Srivijaya was a Buddhist kingdom. When the Chinese pilgrim I-tsing visited Palembang in 671 he saw many Buddhist monks who were members of the Mahayana School. As Srivijaya expanded after 670 Mahayana Buddhism spread to the areas under his control. These areas included Kedah and Langkasuka which had become part of Srivijaya's Empire. There were close contacts between Srivijaya and China. Envoys carrying presents were sent to greet the Chinese emperors.

#### (b) Srivijaya and the Sailendras.

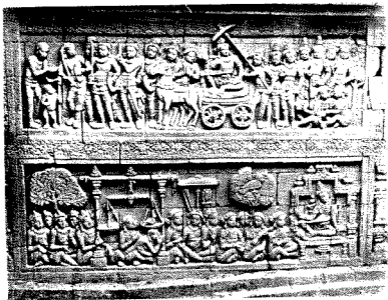
While the Empire of Srivijaya was expanding, another powerful kingdom had grown up in Mataram in Central Java early in the eighth century. In about 750 A.D. the throne of this kingdom was taken over by a line of rulers who are known as the **Sailendras**, or Kings of the Mountain. Little is known about the origins of the Sailendras. They may have been descendants of the rulers of Funan who fled to Java when Funan was destroyed by the Khmers in 539. After living quietly as exiles in Java they may have seized the throne in 750. Like the rulers of Srivijaya, the Sailendras were Mahayana Buddhists although at the beginning they were the worshippers of Siva. Among the great temples which they built in Java was **Chandi Borobudur** which, with Angkor Wat, is considered to be one of the most beautiful ruins in South East Asia. This temple was probably built in the eighth century.



Carving from Borobudur in Java.

In about 850 an exiled Sailendra prince named Balaputra left Java and took refuge in Palembang, where he married the daughter of the Srivijayan ruler. When this ruler died Balaputra succeeded him as king. In this way Srivijaya came to be ruled by the Sailendras. Under this new line of kings the power and prosperity of Srivijaya continued to grow. The Sumatran Empire reached the height of its greatness in about 1000 A.D.

In 1026 Srivijaya was invaded by the **Cholas** from Tanjore in India. The Cholas were a powerful sea-faring people who resented the control which Srivijaya exercised over trade between East and West. Their invasion was swift and effective. They captured many



Carving from Borobudur in Java.

of Srivijaya's possessions in Malaya, seized Palembang and carried off the ruler into captivity. But this was not the end of the Srivijaya Empire. A new ruler came to the throne of Srivijaya in 1028 and gradually he restored the strength and prosperity of the empire.

### (c) The Decline and Fall of Srivijaya.

During the twelfth century the Empire of Srivijaya showed clear signs that it was weakening. The possessions of Srivijaya in north Malaya were attacked by the Thais and the long war which followed was a drain on the treasury at Palembang. Several of Srivijaya's possessions showed signs of independence. At the same time pirates struck at Srivijaya's trade. This gradual decline of the Empire's strength continued in the following century. Finally, in 1292, the Empire of Srivijaya was brought to an end by the simultaneous attacks of the Thais in the north and **King Kertanagara** of East Java in the south.

In 1268 Kertanagara became ruler of the powerful state of Singhasari in East Java which had been growing in importance since 1222. His aim was to destroy the Empire of Srivijaya and gain control of Java, Sumatra and Malaya for himself. His conquests began in 1275 and by 1292 he had destroyed the Srivijayan Empire and gained complete control of the Straits of Malacca. While he was doing so the Thais once again pressed southwards and occupied Srivijaya's possessions in northern Malaya. In this way, in 1292, the proud and ancient Empire of Srivijaya came to an end.

### 3. THE EMPIRE OF MAJAPAHIT.

At the time when Kertanagara was winning these great victories, the Mongols were building an even greater Empire in China. When his conquest of China was complete, the Mongol Emperor, **Kublai Khan**, turned his attentions to South East Asia, which he hoped to bring under his control. Mongol armies invaded the Indo-Chinese peninsula. During the war which followed, the ruler of Champa wrote to Kertanagara for help, and he agreed to send it. The result was a clash between the Mongols and East Java.

#### (a) The Foundation of Majapahit.

In 1289 envoys from Kublai Khan visited Kertanagara in Java and ordered him to travel to China to explain why he had offered help to Champa. Kertanagara arrested the envoys and finally expelled them from Java. In 1292 Kublai Khan sent a fleet of 1000 ships to Java to avenge this insult. Before this fleet arrived, however, a rebellion took place in East Java. The throne was seized by a usurper, Kertanagara was killed and the rightful heir, **Vijaya**, took refuge in the village of **Majapahit** on the river Brantas.

When the Mongols arrived in Java they could not take their revenge on Kertanagara, for he was dead, and they prepared to return to China. However, they were approached by Vijaya, who promised that if he was restored to the throne then he would send tribute to China. The Mongols agreed to the plan and helped him to drive out the usurper. Instead of honouring his promise, Vijaya then turned on the Mongols and drove them from Java. In this way he established an independent state with its capital at Majapahit. This Empire was to be the last great Indian empire of South-East Asia.

### (b) The Majapahit Empire.

The Majapahit Empire was not very strong at the beginning. There were disorders and the empire had no control of any states outside Java. The empire which Kertanagara had built up had collapsed in the troubled period after his death. After the death of Vijaya he was succeeded by his son, **Jayanagara** (1309-28). When Jayanagara became the King he was faced with a revolution against him. However the peace in the empire was restored by one man and that man was **Gajah Mada**. After the revolution Gajah Mada put Jayanagara back on the throne.

#### **Gajah Mada.**

Gajah Mada was the Prime Minister or 'Patehor' of the Majapahit Empire from 1331 to 1364. His main ambition was to create a "Nusantara Empire" which consisted of all the islands of the Archipelago. Between 1331 and 1351 the armies of Gajah Mada invaded and conquered East Java, Madura and the island of Bali. These possessions increased the prosperity of Majapahit for foreign traders on their way to the Moluccas began to call at the ports of northern Java. When Hyam Wuruk became the King after the death of Jayanagara, Gajah Mada was allowed to continue his work.

### (c) The Decline of the Majapahit Empire.

The big empire of Majapahit which was established by Gajah Mada did not survive after his death. There were internal rebellions and disorders. A civil war broke out between 1401 and 1406 and disrupted the prosperity of the empire. It was during this troubled period that a Sumatran prince, **Parameswara**, escaped to Singapore. You will read more about Parameswara and the foundation of Malacca in Book Two. Majapahit lingered on until 1520 and by the beginning of the sixteen century the great empire which Gajah Mada had created consisted of only a few small states.

## **4. THE COMING OF ISLAM.**

One of the factors which weakened the Majapahit Empire and finally brought it to an end in 1520 was the spread of Islam in South East Asia. States which became Muslim refused to remain part of the Hindu Empire of Majapahit. Islam was first brought

to South East Asia by Indian traders at the end of the thirteenth century. The ports of north-western Sumatra were the first to be converted and from there Islam spread to Malacca in 1414 and then to other parts of South East Asia. As the states of Java became Muslim they broke away from the Majapahit Empire, which had ceased to exist by 1520.

The spread of Islam in South East Asia will not be described in detail in this book. You will read about it in Book Two.

### **5. TUMASEK.**

Tumasek was the old name of Singapore. This state was said to have been founded in the year 1299. Tumasek became well known as a base for pirates. The Siamese and the Majapahit Empire were very interested in Tumasek. However because of the decline of the Majapahit Empire the Siamese had the control over Tumasek towards the end of the fourteenth century.

In 1401 there was a civil war in Sumatra. During that war Parameswara, a Sumatran prince, was on the losing side. After being defeated in that war he fled to Tumasek for refuge. He arrived at Tumasek and was given a warm welcome by the local ruler. After staying in Tumasek for some time he planned to kill his host. A festival was held by the ruler in honour of Parameswara and it was here that Parameswara and his followers killed the ruler. Thus he made himself the new ruler of Tumasek.

Parameswara then turned Tumasek into a pirate base and waited to attack passing boats. At that time Tumasek was under the control of the Siamese, and soon a Siamese army arrived to drive Parameswara out. So once again, Parameswara was forced to leave. This time he fled to Muar first and then went to Malacca. You will read more about Parameswara and the founding of Malacca in Book Two.

### **Questions to Answer.**

1. Write a brief account of the rise and fall of the Empire of Angkor.
2. What do you know about Angkor Wat?
3. Write a short description of the expansion of Srivijaya between 670 and 800.
4. How was the Empire of Srivijaya brought to an end?
5. Write what you know about the life and achievements of Gaja Mada.

## Chapter Three

# ASOKA AND THE MAURYA EMPIRE

By the time when Buddha and Mahavira had begun their teaching — during the Sixth Century B.C. — a number of Aryan kingdoms had grown up in the north-east of India along the banks of the River Ganges. The most important of these kingdoms were Magadha, Videha, Kosala, Vaisali, Anga and Kasi. Gradually the **kingdom of Magadha**, which had its first capital at Rajagriha near the Ganges, expanded its frontiers and absorbed the other states. The rulers of Magadha eventually united the whole of northern and central India into one great Empire. In this chapter we will see how this came about and we will read about the life of the greatest ruler of this new empire, **Asoka Maurya**.

### I. THE GROWTH OF MAGADHA (642 - 322 B.C.).

#### (i) Magadha under the Saisunga Dynasty (642 - 413 B.C.).

The kingdom of Magadha first enters the pages of history in 642 B.C. when the throne at Rajagriha was occupied by the first ruler of the **Saisunga Dynasty** (642-413 B.C.). It was two of the rulers of this dynasty who began to build Magadha into a great empire by occupying the surrounding kingdoms. **King Bimbisara** (582-554 B.C.) led his troops into the neighbouring kingdom of Anga and brought that state under his control. His successor, **King Ajatasatru** (554-527 B.C.) conquered Kosala, Kasi and Vaisali. By the end of Ajatasatru's reign the kings of Magadha occupied the whole Ganges region, as far north as the Himalayas. Ajatasatru moved the capital from Rajagriha to **Pataliputra** where he built a strong fortress. It was during the reigns of these two conquering kings that Buddha and Mahavira were travelling through northern India spreading their new ideas.

#### (ii) Magadha under the Nanda Dynasty (413 - 322 B.C.).

In 413 B.C. the throne at Pataliputra was seized by a Dynasty named **Mahapadma Nanda**, who founded the **Nanda Dynasty** (413-322 B.C.). Little is known about the history of the Nanda rulers, but it seems that they were able to hold together the empire which had been built up by Bimbisara and Ajatasatru. According to Hindu sources Mahapadma was the ruler for eighty-eight years and his eight sons ruled for 12 years between them. Towards the

end of the Nanda Dynasty the army of Alexander the Great entered the north-west of India as you will read in Chapter Eight. Between 326 and 325 Alexander and his men occupied the lands of the Indus Valley. But Alexander's victories did not affect the empire of the Nandas. While Alexander occupied the north-west of India, the Nandas remained supreme in the north-east.

## 2. THE BEGINNING OF THE MAURYA DYNASTY (322 B.C.).

The next phase in the growth of Magadha was the work of **Chandragupta Maurya**, the illegitimate son of one of the Nanda rulers. Chandragupta rose to be commander-in-chief of the army under the Nandas, but he displeased one of the Nanda kings and was forced to flee into exile. He fled to the north-west of India where he is said to have met Alexander the Great. When Alexander died at Babylon in 323 B.C. his empire began to fall apart. Chandragupta took advantage of this situation. He collected an army and defeated the Macedonian garrisons which Alexander had left along the Indus. This victory gave Chandragupta control of north-western India. He then led his army to Pataliputra and defeated the last Nanda ruler in 322 B.C. The whole of northern India was then united under Chandragupta's control. He set himself up at Pataliputra as the first ruler of the **Maurya Dynasty (322-185 B.C.)**.

## 3. THE WORK OF CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA (322 - 298 B.C.).

Chandragupta was a man of great energy and ability. He laid the foundations of a great empire in northern and central India and also created a strong system of government which survived long after his death.

### (a) Empire-building.

By the time that Chandragupta had occupied Pataliputra in 322 B.C., he had built up a large and powerful army which was composed of 30,000 cavalry-men, 600,000 foot-soldiers and 9,000 elephants. With this great force Chandragupta made himself supreme throughout the north of India and then extended his control as far south as the Narmada River. His empire thus stretched from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea and included the states of the Indus Valley.



In 305 B.C., a Greek army, under **Seleucus Nikator**, who had been one of Alexander's generals, crossed the Indus and tried to recover the states which Chandragupta had occupied after Alexander's death. The Greek army was defeated by Chandragupta and a treaty was arranged in 303 B.C. By this agreement Seleucus promised never again to invade India. He also surrendered Afghanistan and Baluchistan to Chandragupta, in exchange for five hundred elephants!

### (b) A New System of Government.

Like Shih Huang Ti in China, Chandragupta knew that his empire would survive only if it had a strong and efficient central government. He spent the last years of his reign in creating this system of government.

Complete power remained in the hands of the ruler, who was advised by a Privy Council of sixteen members. Most of these were Brahmins who, as you have read, had become very powerful during the Vedic Age. One of the most famous of Chandragupta's advisers was a Brahmin named **Vishnugupta** who had helped to overthrow the Nandas in 322 B.C. Vishnugupta wrote a book called the **Arthashastra** (the Art of Government) in which he stated that the ruler of a kingdom should be all-powerful. As ruler Chandragupta did possess complete power. He was not forced to accept the advice of his Privy Councillors if he did not wish to do so. It seems that Chandragupta lived under constant fear of assassination. He surrounded himself with body-guards and spies and seldom left the palace except during religious festivals. It was said that he seldom sleep in the same room every night.

The five provinces of the Maurya Empire were placed under viceroys who were appointed by Chandragupta and who could be dismissed by him at any time. Like Shih Huang Ti, Chandragupta sent out secret agents who made certain that the viceroys were doing their work efficiently and that they were not plotting against the central government. The cities of the Empire, like Pataliputra, were governed by Municipal Committees of thirty-members. These committees were sub-divided into six smaller groups, each of which controlled one aspect of city life. One group supervised trade, another was responsible for the collection of taxes, a third controlled visitors and aliens, and so on. Chandragupta's system of government was very thorough and it worked well.

Like the government of the cities, the central government of the Maurya Empire was divided into many departments, each with its own special responsibilities. A War Office controlled Chandragupta's huge army, an Irrigation Department exercised a strict control over agriculture, and there were fourteen other government offices. In this way Chandragupta's system was not unlike the complicated governments of the present day. Like modern governments, that of Chandragupta depended for its existence on the collection of taxes.

### (c) The City of Pataliputra.

The Greek writer Megasthenes, who once visited India, has left a full description of the city of Pataliputra as it was at the time of Chandragupta's reign. The city covered an area of eighteen square miles and shaped like a parallelogram was divided into six wards. It was well-planned, with wide, straight roads, and was surrounded by a deep protective moat. The houses were all made of wood, but many precautions had been taken in case of fire. The wooden palace of Chandragupta, covered, with beautiful carvings, was situated in the heart of the city. Around it were bazaars, inns, gambling saloons and even a race course. Pataliputra was a great centre of trade and goods were sent to China, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor as well as throughout India.

### (d) Chandragupta's Abdication.

According to strong Indian traditions, Chandragupta abdicated in 298 B.C. and joined a group of Jainist monks who were living strict lives in the forests near Pataliputra. Some stories say that Chandragupta, like Mahavira, died of self-starvation.

### The Reign of Bindusara (298 - 272 B.C.).

Chandragupta was followed to the throne by his son, **Bindusara** (298-272 B.C.), who is often known as **Amitraghata**, the Slayer of Foes. Like his father, Bindusara was a great army commander. He led his armies into southern India and occupied sixteen states, including the whole of the Deccan. When he died in 272 B.C., he was succeeded by his son **Asoka**, who was one of the greatest Emperors, India has known.

#### **4 THE REIGN OF ASOKA (272-232 B.C.).**

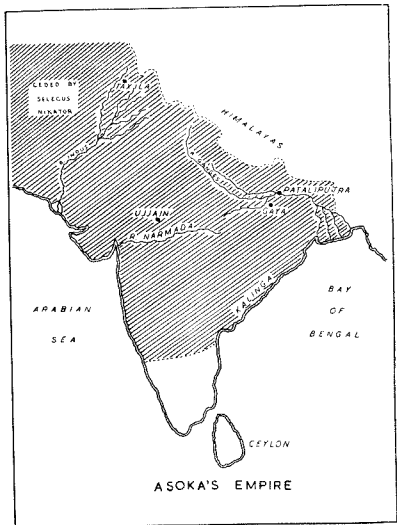
Asoka was one of the many sons of Bindusara, the great conqueror, and his wife, Sabhadrange. As a young man he served as viceroy of north-western India at Taxila and later as viceroy of the west at Ujjain. He served in these positions with great distinction and, although he was not the eldest son, Bindusara chose Asoka to be his successor. When Bindusara died in 272 B.C. Asoka claimed his rightful inheritance. His succession was challenged, however, by his elder brother, Susima. A short civil war followed and Susima's forces were not defeated until 269. Asoka was then crowned as ruler of the Maurya Empire. Some stories state that during the struggle for succession the young Asoka killed ninety-nine of his brothers.

Asoka began his reign, as Chandragupta and Bindusara had done, by leading his armies on more conquests. In 261 B.C. he invaded Kalinga, a state on the eastern coast of India, and brought it under his control. The war caused great devastation and loss of life. Over a hundred thousand people were killed and another hundred and fifty thousand were carried off into slavery. Many others died of famine and disease which were caused by the war.

The sight of so much devastation and slaughter brought a change of heart in Asoka. In his remorse he gave up the idea of war and became a convert to Buddhism. He stated that in future he would govern only for the benefit of his subjects and that there would be no further bloodshed or loss of life. For the rest of his reign Asoka became a great reformer. He introduced many changes to improve the welfare of his subjects and also took steps to spread the Buddhist faith.

##### **(a) The Reforms of Asoka.**

Asoka introduced many new laws which were intended to benefit the people of his large empire. Along the roads of the empire he planted banyan trees which would give shelter from the sun to pilgrims and travellers. Rest houses were built at regular intervals along the main roads and wells were dug to supply the traveller with water. Asoka was the first Indian ruler to have the distances along the roads marked on stone, so that travellers would know how far they had travelled and how far they had still to go.



Asoka was very concerned about suffering in men and animals, and he set up hospitals for both in various cities of the empire. The most famous animal hospital was set up in Surat soon after Asoka's conversion. Medical herbs were planted and imported for use in these hospitals.

Asoka was also concerned about the material welfare of his subjects. He set up a Royal Almoner's Department at Pataliputra, which gave money and goods to all those who were in great need. Asoka inherited the system of government which had been created by Chandragupta, but he used it for a different purpose. The secret agents were sent out to see that people were living in reasonable comfort and to ensure that the principles of Buddhism were being followed.

### (b) Asoka and Buddhism.

After his conversion it was Asoka's aim to spread the ideals of Buddhism throughout his empire and also to places overseas. In order that his subjects should become familiar with the teachings of Buddha, Asoka had these teachings inscribed on rocks, pillars and cave walls throughout the empire. The most famous one was at Sarnath, showing four magnificent lions supporting the Buddhist wheel of the law. This was one of the best carvings India has produced. The four-lioned carving is used today by the Indian Government as a symbol on its flag and crest. Over thirty of these **Asokan Inscriptions** have been discovered by archaeologists. The inscriptions are all written in Prakrit, which was the script commonly used by Buddhists. In the inscriptions Asoka set out the ideals of Buddhism which he wished his subjects to follow. These ideals are described in the inscriptions as the **Law of Piety**. Some of the inscriptions were written on huge sand-stone pillars. One of these was fifty feet high and weighed over fifty tons.

One of the most important Buddhist ideals which Asoka tried to spread through his inscriptions was the law of **Ahimsa**, or non-violence. Asoka introduced a law which laid down that animal as well as human life must be respected. Those who slaughtered animals were punished heavily by Asoka's officials. Animal sacrifices were prohibited. Another of Asoka's inscriptions requested that people should show respect for their parents, teachers and elders.

Asoka's greatest work was to encourage the spread of Buddhism. He sent missionaries to the hill tribes who lived on the northern borders of the empire and to the Tamil kingdoms of southern India. In 251 B.C. one of the most famous of Asoka's missionaries, Mahendra, crossed over to Ceylon with four followers. King Tissa of Ceylon was converted and the religion spread rapidly throughout the island. Mahendra died in Ceylon in 204 B.C. Other missionaries were sent to Pegu in Burma and to the western kingdoms of Syria, Egypt and Macedonia. According to some traditions missionaries also travelled to Thailand and Malaya. While Jainism remained a minor religion, confined to India, Asoka made Buddhism into one of the great faiths of the world.

Asoka himself lived the life of a good Buddhist. In 249 B.C. he went on a long pilgrimage to Buddhist shrines in Nepal. On this journey he was accompanied by his daughter, Charvati, and by the monk **Upagupta** who is said to have been responsible for Asoka's conversion after the Kalinga War. In about 240 B.C. Asoka called together a great council of Buddhist monks at Patna. At this conference many of the teachings of the Buddha were clarified and serious differences of opinion between rival groups of monks were settled peacefully. Asoka was tolerant of other religions as well as Buddhism. He allowed the Jains and Ajivikas to worship in peace. It was because of the good work he did for India that Asoka was called "the Great".

In the last years of his life Asoka is said to have become a monk himself and to have retired to a Buddhist Monastery in Nepal. There he died in 232 B.C.

## 5. THE END OF THE MAURYA DYNASTY (185 B.C.).

Asoka's successors did not share his greatness. They were weaklings who spent much of their time in family squabbles. The government at Pataliputra gradually became weaker and the empire began to fall apart. In 185 B.C. the last Maurya ruler, Brihadratha, was killed by the commander-in-chief of his army **Pushyamitra**. Pushyamitra founded a new line of kings, the Sunga Dynasty, but by this time the empire which Chandragupta had built up had ceased to exist. The rulers of the Sunga Dynasty ruled over a small area around their capital at Pataliputra. It was several hundred years before a great empire grew up once again in India.

### **Questions to Answer.**

1. Write a brief account of the growth of the kingdom of Magadha between 642 and 322 B.C.
2. Write a brief description of the life and achievements of Chandragupta Maurya.
3. Describe the most important reforms of the Emperor Asoka.
4. What part did Asoka play in the spread of Buddhism?
5. How was the Maurya Dynasty brought to an end?

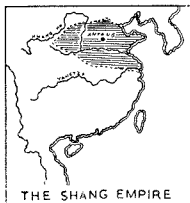
## Chapter Four

# FEUDAL CHINA

The first cities of China grew up along the banks of a great river, the **Hwang Ho**, in about 1600 B.C. The capital of this civilisation was the city of **Anyang**, which was situated in Honan Province near the present village of Hsiao-T'un. From Anyang rulers of the **Shang Dynasty** governed over a thousand towns and cities which were spread over a large area of north-eastern China. According to tradition the Shang Dynasty was founded by a nobleman called T'ang who established his rule by over-throwing a tyrant named Chien in 1600 B.C. The Shang Dynasty lasted until about 1100 B.C. when it was overthrown by Wu Wang, the ruler of the province of Chou in western China.

### I. SHANG CIVILISATION (1600-1100 B.C.).

The royal city of Anyang has been investigated by many archaeologists since 1928, and the remains which have been found there give us a fairly complete picture of life in Shang China. The city



itself was surrounded by a defensive wall of mud bricks. At the centre of the city was the royal palace, from which wide roads led to four gates in the city walls. The palace was surrounded by the houses of the merchants, craftsmen and other citizens. About three miles away from Anyang eight magnificent tombs have been discovered, full of pottery and bronze vessels, weapons, ornaments, stone figures and carvings in bone, ivory and jade. These are thought to have been the

tombs of the Shang kings. Inside each tomb skeletons of animals and human beings have been found. It is clear that when a king was buried sacrifices were made to accompany his body.



The craftsmen of Shang China made many beautiful objects out of bronze. These included bronze ceremonial vessels of many different shapes and sizes which were probably used during religious services. Weapons, coins and small statues and ornaments were also made out of bronze. Other craftsmen produced ornaments of jade, which was looked upon as a sacred stone, and a beautiful white pottery which was used by the people of Anyang. Silk was manufactured and exported from the Shang Empire to other parts of China. A calendar had been introduced and a script was used which included over two thousand picture-symbols, many of which still form part of Chinese writing. Scholars of Shang China wrote books on thin pieces of bamboo.

The priests of Anyang used tortoise shells and pieces of bone for foretelling the future. Questions for the gods would be scratched on the shells or bones, which were then heated over a fire. The priests found the answers to their questions by examining the cracks which appeared on the shell or bone after heating. The people of Shang China, like those of the Indus Civilisation, had many gods, which represented the different forces of nature. The chief god was Shang Ti, who was looked upon as the ancestor of the whole human race.

The Shang Empire was divided into a number of small states, each of which was governed by its own lord who paid tribute to the Emperor at Anyang. The Emperor and the lords were assisted by warriors, who held a high position in Shang society. Like the Aryans of India, the Shang warriors knew how to use a chariot driven by horses. Chariot-racing was a favourite sport. When a high-ranking warrior died his chariot was sometimes buried with him. But the warriors formed only a small section of the population of Shang China. Most of the people were simple peasants who grew crops such as rice, millet and wheat and kept domestic animals like cattle, sheep and pigs. The warriors, craftsmen and traders of the cities depended on the peasants for their supply of food.

The last ruler of the Shang Dynasty was a tyrant call **Chou Hsin**, who ruled his subjects with an iron hand. He committed many acts of great brutality and became generally hated by his people. In about 1100 B.C. a rebellion against Chou Hsin broke out under the leadership of **Wu Wang**, the lord of Chou, a state in western China. The forces of the Emperor were defeated and Chou Hsin died in the flames of his blazing palace. Wu Wang then became the first Emperor of the Chou Dynasty, which ruled over China from about 1100 B.C. until 221 B.C.

## 2. THE CHOU DYNASTY (1100 B.C. - 221 B.C.).

When Wu Wang attacked Chou Hsin and destroyed the Shang Empire, he had received the support of Turkish tribesmen who lived along the borders of China. When the Shang Empire was in his hands, Wu Wang divided the territory into a number of estates, or fiefs. These fiefs were given to members of Wu Wang's own family, to the generals of his army, to the chieftains of the Turkish tribes and to others who had helped him to victory. In this way the territory ruled by Wu Wang was divided into more than a thousand estates. The lords of these estates ruled them on behalf of the Emperor, to whom they paid tribute. This was the beginning of the **Feudal System** in China. In China, the Feudal System meant simply that the Emperor delegated some of his powers to the lords of the fiefs. In return the lords were expected to supply the Emperor with troops in time of war and to remain loyal to him at all times.

### (a) The Feudal Lords.

The rulers of fifteen larger estates had the title 'kung' (Duke), while the rest of the lords were known as 'chun'. The lords formed the upper class of China during the Chou period. They filled all the offices at the Imperial Court, they commanded the armies in time of war and they were the only people in China who received any sort of education.

During the early part of the Chou period the lords were prepared to pay tribute to the Emperor and to recognise his authority. Towards the end of the period, however, many lords began to think of themselves as independent kings. They began to ignore the authority of the Emperor and to rule their estates exactly as they pleased. The Emperor himself was not powerful enough to keep his lords in check. Then the lords began to fight among themselves for supremacy and China was plunged into anarchy. This time of chaos is known as the



**Chan Kuo**, or the Era of the Warring States, and it lasted from 481 until 221 B.C.

At first the Feudal System had helped the Emperor to rule over his large empire, for the lords of the estates had done much of the work of government. By 481 B.C., however, the situation was very different. The Feudal System then led to chaos as the lord fought against one another and the Emperor remained a powerless figurehead at his capital in Loyang.

### (b) The Peasants.

A great gulf separated the lords of the fiefs from the peasants who cultivated their land. The peasants had no political rights and could hold no official posts. They paid taxes to the lords and served as food-soldiers in the feudal armies. They had no education and could not even take part in official religious services, which were reserved for the lords. During the Chan Kuo period, the peasants suffered very greatly, for large areas of land were devastated during the fighting between the feudal lords.

## 3. THE HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY.

As you have read, the last part of the Chou period was a time of warfare and anarchy which is known as the Chan Kuo. Feudalism was declining, and many states were fighting with one another.



Confucius.

At the same time, this was a very important period in the history of civilisation in China. Although there was political chaos, Chinese scholars developed new ways of thought and laid the foundations of Chinese philosophy. Among these thinkers the most important were **Confucius**, the founder of Confucianism, and **Lao Tzu**, the founder of Taoism, but there were many other thinkers as well, and this has led Chinese historians to describe the last years of the Chou Dynasty as the time of the **Hundred Schools of Philosophy**. A

'School' did not mean a place of learning such as the one in which you are studying. It meant a philosopher and the group of followers who accepted his ideas.

## (a) Confucius (551 - 479 B.C.).

### Life of Confucius.

We know very little about the life of Confucius, or K'ung Fu-tzu, as he should properly be called. The name Confucius is the Latin form of K'ung Fu-tzu which was given to him by Jesuit priests living in China. According to tradition he was born in 551 B.C. in the small state of Lu, part of what is now the Shantung province. The members of his family were descendants from priests of the Shang Dynasty. His father died when he was three years old and he had to spend a hard early life with his mother. When he was older he worked by doing menial jobs. Confucius qualified as a teacher at the age of twenty. His intelligence brought him to the notice of the Lord of Lu and Confucius was given an official post in the state. He worked very hard and was later given a promotion. Eventually he became the Chief Minister of Lu.

When he was middle-aged, he suddenly resigned from his position and began to travel around China preaching his new ideas. Some say he resigned because the Lord of Lu would not govern according to his teachings. Others say that he resigned because of disappointment over the behaviour of the ruler, who had just ordered a group of dancing girls from a neighbouring prince.

During the last few years of his life he returned to Lu. There he died in 479 B.C. at the age of seventy-two.

### Teachings of Confucius.

Confucius was not really a religious teacher, he did not teach about God and the soul like Christ or Buddha. However Confucianism has now become a religion amongst the people. The main aim of Confucius was simply to restore order to China. He hoped that the feudal lords would accept his ideas and that the anarchy of China would thus be brought to an end. Unfortunately the lords were unwilling to live according to the teachings of Confucius and war continued even after the death of the sage.

Confucius taught that a ruler should live a moral and upright life which would serve as an example for his subjects. If the ruler lived according to the customs of the past, then he would earn the respect of the people and his state would become peaceful

and prosperous. The people, taught Confucius, would live law-abiding lives if the ruler lived according to a strict moral code. They were to have trust in their leaders and do as instructed but if the people thought that their leaders were not good, then they could go against them.

Confucius regarded **the family as the foundation of the state**. If the family was united and its members respected the father, then the state would be united and the citizens would respect the ruler. For this reason Confucius laid great emphasis on **filial piety**, the respect which children should feel for their parents. He also taught that people should respect all those who held authority, including teachers, officials and the ruler of the state.

Finally, Confucius taught that **ritual or ceremonial, was very important**. The ruler must perform the correct ceremonies to heaven: the subjects in a state must perform the correct ceremonies to their ruler: the members of a family must perform the correct ceremonies for their elders and ancestors. Confucius thought that ritual was a way of ensuring harmony in the state and in the family. Ancestor worship was one of the most important rituals that Confucius taught because he felt that this was the way in which members of a family would remain loyal and faithful to one another. Many of the ceremonies which Confucius described are still performed in Chinese families, during weddings and funerals and at times of religious celebration such as Chinese New Year.



Mencius.

The teachings of Confucius were spread throughout China by his followers. Among these the most important were **Mencius** (373-288 B.C.) and **Hsun K'uang** (298-238 B.C.) who were also natives of the state of Lu. The ideas of Confucius also lived on in the books which he had written. The most important of these books was the **Analects**, which is a collection of the sayings of Confucius.

## (b) Lao Tzu.

Even less is known about Lao Tzu than about Confucius. According to traditional legends he was born about 600 B.C. and became librarian at the court of the Chou Emperors at Loyang. Modern historians, on the other hand, suggest that he was born in the fourth century B.C. Some historians think that Lao Tzu never existed. But although the details of his life are uncertain, we know something about the ideas of Lao Tzu from the book which he left behind. This was the **Tao Te Ching**, the Book of the World Law and its Power.

### Teachings of Lao Tzu.

The teachings of Lao Tzu and those of Confucius were opposite to one another.



Lao Tzu.

Lao Tzu taught that people would find real happiness by living a life close to nature, away from the artificial pleasures and restrictions of the city. He taught that people should be left to live free lives in the countryside and that the government should not interfere with them. He opposed education and ritual because he thought that these were artificial and that they restricted the free growth of the individual. Lao Tzu also taught that people should spend a large part of their time in meditation. Through meditation people would obtain knowledge of the Tao — the reality which lay behind

the material world. These ideas were spread throughout China by one of Lao Tzu's followers, **Chuang Tzu**, who lived during the third century B.C.

Lao Tzu taught a rather difficult philosophy by which people would find contentment by living lives of meditation close to nature. In the centuries which followed Lao Tzu's death, his philosophy, which is known as **Taoism**, became mixed with many superstitions, so that today it is a popular religion which includes many rituals and ceremonies. Confucianism and Taoism became very popular

after the deaths of their founders and they have remained so until the present day. The Taoists believed in magic and spells. Their scholars were more interested in the field of Science while the Confucian scholars were interested in Arts subject like History and Literature.

**(c) Mohism.**

Mohism was founded by another philosopher, **Mo Tzu** (500-420 B.C.), who like Confucius and Mencius was born in the state of Lu. Mo Tzu's philosophy was similar in some ways to the teachings of Christianity and Islam. He taught that all men should love one another, and he hoped that this universal love would restore peace to China. Mo Tzu also urged people to believe in God. He was attacked by Confucian scholars because he praised universal love instead of family loyalty and filial piety.

**(d) Legalism.**

The founder of Legalism was **K'ung-sun Yang**, a minister of the state of Chin who died in about 338 B.C. K'ung-sun Yang, who is also known as the Lord of Shang, taught that all power in a state should be held by the ruler and his Chancellor. The first task of the Chancellor was to draw up a set of laws. These laws would then be enforced firmly and impartially and the people of the state were bound to obey them. Penalties for breaking the law must be very strict. Legalism is sometimes called the School of Law. One of the most famous of the Legalists was Shih Huang Ti, a lord of Chin who later reunified China and restored order after the Chau Kuo.

**4. THE END OF THE CHOU PERIOD (221 B.C.).**

We have seen that the last period of the Chou Dynasty was a time of political anarchy but that it also produced some great philosophers. These philosophers all tried to solve the problem of how peace and order could be restored to China. Confucius taught that order could be restored by a moral ruler who lived according to ancient customs and who respected the unity of the family. Lao Tzu believed that personal happiness could be achieved by a life of quiet meditation. Mo Tzu believed that universal love was the answer to China's problems, while K'ung-Sun Yang saw a solution in a strictly-enforced code of law. In fact, none of these solutions worked.

Order was restored in China not by philosophy, but by force. This force was wielded by **Shih Huang Ti**, the powerful and able ruler of the state of Chin. After many wars against the other states Shih Huang Ti finally restored order and overthrew the Chou Dynasty in 221 B.C. The steps by which he did this will be described in the next chapter.

### Questions to Answer.

1. Write a brief description of the civilisation of Shang China.
2. Write a brief description of the Feudal System in China. How did this system begin?
3. Write briefly about the importance of each of the following persons: (a) Confucius, (b) Lao Tzu, (c) Mencius, (d) Mo Tzu, (e) K'ung-sun Yang.
4. What were the main features of the teachings of Confucius?
5. What was the **Tao Te Ching** and what are the teachings which it contains?



## Chapter Five

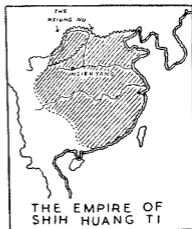
# SHIH HUANG TI AND THE UNIFICATION OF CHINA

We have seen in the last chapter that when the Shang Dynasty fell to his hands, Wu Wang divided his territory into nearly one thousand small feudal states. Slowly the Ruler became weaker and the stronger states took advantage of the chaotic conditions by attacking their weaker neighbours. Finally the weaker states were absorbed and only fourteen states remained. When the Chou Dynasty grew weaker these states started to fight one another because they wanted to take over the leadership of China.

The restoration of order in China after the chaos of the Chou Dynasty was the work of the lords of **CHIN**, a small state which was situated in north-west China in what are now the provinces of Shensi and Kansu. During the fourth century B.C. a number of strong rulers made Chin into a strong and well-governed state with a large and efficient army. The prosperity of the state was increased as a result of trade with East Turkestan. The other six states of China became jealous of the growing power of Chin and in 333 B.C. they tried to destroy its power. The six states combined to attack Chin but their invasions failed. After that Chin continued to grow in importance.

### I. THE UNIFICATION OF CHINA.

In 246 B.C. **Shih Huang Ti** became ruler of the state of Chin. With the help of his able minister, **Li Ssu**, Shih Huang Ti planned a series of attacks on the other Chinese states. His aim was to restore unity and then to make himself ruler over the whole of China. Shih Huang Ti's armies won a number of great victories, and one by one the other states fell under his control. The conquest of the state of Han took place in 230 B.C. and by 221 B.C. all the other states had been invaded and conquered. The last Chou



ruler was deposed and Shih Huang Ti became Emperor in his place. This was the beginning of the **Chin Dynasty** which lasted from 221 B.C. until 206 B.C. The title, Shih Huang Ti, means "the First Emperor"

Shih Huang Ti had restored unity to China by force. His next task was to ensure that this unity was permanent and that China did not once more fall back on a period of chaos. This meant that Shih Huang Ti had to destroy the Feudal System which had led to anarchy during the Chou period. He abolished all the old feudal estates and divided the Empire into provinces under governors. These governors were not lords who ruled as they pleased. They were officials appointed by the Emperor and they held office for only so long as the Emperor wished. If one of the governors attempted to rule independently he was instantly dismissed. Shih Huang Ti organised an efficient system of spies who made sure that his officials and governors were not plotting against him.

The old feudal armies were also destroyed, and their metal weapons were melted down and made into ornaments for Shih Huang Ti's palace. In place of the old armies, which had been controlled by the feudal lords, Shih Huang Ti set up a new army which was commanded by himself and his trusted officials. The feudal lords were forced to leave their estates and to live in Shensi, near the royal capital, where Shih Huang Ti could keep an eye on them.

## **2. THE REFORMS OF SHIH HUANG TI (221-210 B.C.).**

Shih Huang Ti introduced many important reforms to keep China strong and united. The most important of these were (a) the End of Feudal System, (b) the setting up of a strong and central government, (c) the standardisation of weights and measures, wheel axles and Chinese characters, (d) the building of the Great Wall of China, (e) the peasant reforms and (f) the Burning of the Books.

### **(a) The End of Feudal System.**

Shih Huang Ti destroyed all the feudal states which had grown up during the Chou Dynasty and divided the empire into provinces and prefectures under the control of his own officials. To make sure that the feudal lords would not take over again he made them lived at the capital where he could control all their activities.

### (b) A Strong Central Government.

With the help of Li Ssu, Shih Huang Ti gave China a strong central government. A new code of laws was drawn up by Li Ssu and these laws were enforced very strictly by the Emperor's officials. Torture was used to obtain confessions of guilt and executions were frequent. All officials were appointed by the Emperor and could be dismissed by him at any time. A new system of taxation was introduced and all taxes were collected by the Emperor's officials.

### (c) Measures of Standardisation.

Shih Huang Ti realised that if China was to remain united then the customs of different parts of the country had to be standardised. First he passed a law which laid down that similar weights and measures must be used in every part of the empire. This facilitated trade and helped in the collection of taxes, which were paid in the form of grain. Another law laid down that the wheel axles of all carts in the empire must be of the same length. When a cart travelled on the muddy roads of China, its wheels left deep ruts in the road. Transport would be much easier, therefore, if the wheels of every cart fitted into the same ruts. This law again helped trade and facilitated the collection of taxes in the form of grain. A third law laid down that the same form of Chinese writing must be used in every part of China. This made it easier for the Emperor to pass on his decrees to every province of the Empire.

### (d) The Great Wall of China.



Part of Great Wall of China.

Shih Huang Ti knew that if China was to remain peaceful, then the Empire must be protected against barbarian invaders. He was especially afraid of the Hsiung Nu, or Huns, who lived to the north of the Chin Empire. As a defence against invaders Shih Huang Ti joined together a number of walls which had been built by the feudal lords of the Chou period. He then increased the length and strength of the wall. The result was the famous **Great Wall of China** which was one thousand, four hundred miles long.

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one hundred and twenty-two feet high and twenty-feet broad. Soldiers were stationed in watch-towers at regular intervals along the Wall. A roadway ran along the top of the wall which was wide enough to take a chariot. Throughout Chinese history, the Great Wall has given China some protection against barbarian invaders.

### (e) Peasant Reforms.

During the Chou Dynasty the peasants of China had suffered a great deal as a result of the warfare between the feudal lords. Shih Huang Ti tried to win their friendship by giving them ownership of the land on which they worked. During the **Chou** period the peasants had been the slaves of the feudal lords. Now they became free men.

### (f) The Burning of the Books.

Shih Huang Ti had destroyed the feudal system and he had no wish to see feudalism restored. He knew that the return of a feudal system would mean the end of the strong, united China which he had created. In 213 B.C. he passed a decree which **forbade** any books which supported feudalism. Such books were to be destroyed and anyone found in possession of them was to be executed or imprisoned. Shih Huang Ti particularly banned all books by Confucius and his followers. All Confucian books were collected together and burnt on a public bonfire in the capital, Hsien Yang. Four hundred and sixty Confucian scholars were executed and many others were tortured, imprisoned or made to do forced labour on the Great Wall.

### (g) The Growth of Discontent.

You can see that the achievements of Shih Huang Ti were considerable. He had restored order in China by destroying the estates and power of the feudal lords. His many reforms gave China a strong defence against invaders and helped to give the country a unity which survived long after Shih Huang Ti's death. But the reforms did not add to the Emperor's popularity. The old feudal lords resented the way in which their armies and estates had been taken away from them. The peasants resented the heavy taxes which Shih Huang Ti imposed upon them. The scholars were angered at the way in which Shih Huang Ti had burnt their books and banned

their philosophies. Many others felt that Shih Huang Ti's methods of government were harsh and tyrannical. When the Emperor died in 210 B.C. the Empire was seething with discontent. The reign of Shih Huang Ti could be compared to that of Asoka in India and Alexander the Great of Macedonia. The results of his reign were far better than those of Alexander.

### 3. THE END OF THE CHIN DYNASTY (210 - 260B.C.).

Shih Huang Ti's son and successor, **Er Huang Ti**, was not as able a ruler as his father. He was weak and incompetent and quite unable to check the discontent which was growing within the Empire. This discontent resulted in a rebellion against the Emperor which began in 209 B.C. with a mutiny of troops in the province of Ch'u. The first rebellion was suppressed by the Imperial army, but a second broke out almost at once. It was led by **Liu Pang**, a peasant, and **Hsiang Yu**, who had been a feudal lord before Shih Huang Ti became Emperor. At first the two leaders combined their forces, and in 206 B.C. the capital at Hsien Yang fell into their hands. The Chin Emperor and members of his family were executed.

Liu Pang and Hsiang Yu were men of very different type; one was a peasant, the other an aristocrat. Once the Emperor had been defeated the two rebel leaders fell out and warfare began between them. After five years of fierce fighting Liu Pang, the peasant, emerged victorious and Hsiang Yu committed suicide. Liu Pang then restored order in China once more and became the first ruler of the **Han Dynasty**, about which you will read in the next Chapter.

#### Questions to Answer.

1. Write a brief account of the life and achievements of the Emperor Shih Huang Ti.
2. How did Shih Huang Ti bring the Feudal System to an end?
3. What is meant by 'the Burning of the Books'?
4. How did Shih Huang Ti attempt to keep China strong and united?
5. How was the Chin Dynasty brought to an end?

## Chapter Six

# IMPERIAL EXPANSION DURING THE HAN AND TANG DYNASTIES

In Chapter Five you read about the great revolt which brought the Chin Dynasty to an end in 206 B.C. The revolt was led by Hsiang Yu, a member of the old feudal aristocracy, and Liu Pang, a peasant. After the defeat and death of the last Chin Emperor, Hsiang Yu and Liu Pang fell out and civil war began between them. Hsiang Yu was successful at first, but Liu Pang rallied his forces and defeated his rival in 202 B.C. Hsiang Yu fled into hiding and later committed suicide. Liu Pang then became Emperor of China with the title, **Kao Tsu**. He founded the **Han Dynasty**, which survived for over four hundred years, until 220 A.D. It was a period of great

importance in the history of China. The Chinese Empire was increased in size and Chinese civilisation rose to new heights of perfection.



The history of the Han Dynasty is usually divided into two periods: (a) **The Early Han Period** (206 B.C. - 8 A.D.), during which time the Imperial capital was situated at Ch'angan, near the old capital of Shih Huang Ti, and (b) the **Later Han Period** (23 A.D. - 220 A.D.), when the capital was situated further eastwards at Loyang. Between these two periods, between 8 A.D. and 23 A.D., the throne was seized by a usurper who tried unsuccessfully to set up a new dynasty.

### I. THE EARLY HAN PERIOD (206 B.C. - 8 A.D.).

The two rulers of the Early Han Period who stand out in importance are Kao Tsu (202-195 B.C.) the first Han Emperor, and Wu Ti (140-87 B.C.). Kao Tsu strengthened the government and defences of China and ensured the unity of his empire. Wu Ti planned a number of successful military campaigns which extended the boundaries of the empire in all directions.

### **(a) The Rule of Kao Tsu (202 - 195 B.C.).**

Kao Tsu established a strong and efficient system of government which was based partly on the system adopted by Shih Huang Ti. The empire remained divided into provinces and prefectures under officials who were appointed by the Emperor. In addition, Kao Tsu divided the provinces into principalities under members of his own family and military commanders who had assisted him to obtain the throne. Like Shih Huang Ti, Kao Tsu employed special agents who kept all the officials under constant supervision. He took strong measures against the Hsiung Nu (Hun) barbarians who attacked North China, and extended his rule over the Yueh tribes south of the Yangtze-kiang.

Kao Tsu adopted Confucianism as the official religion of the Empire and he employed many Confucian scholars as officials. In this way Confucianism, which had been suppressed by Shih Huang Ti, came back into prominence and grew in popularity.

Kao Tsu was faced with several revolts during his reign, but he suppressed all of them. He built up the strength of the army so that it provided an effective defence against internal rebellion and outside invasion. Thus by the time of his death in 195 B.C. Kao Tsu had placed the Han Empire on a firm foundation: (a) he had restored the strong central government of Shih Huang Ti, (b) he had secured the support of Confucian scholars, and (c) he had built up a strong military force. These three achievements help to explain why the Han Dynasty survived for so long.

### **(b) The Rule of Wu Ti (140 - 87 B.C.).**

Wu Ti became the Emperor of China when he was only sixteen years old and his reign was the longest, and one of the most famous, in the whole history of China. He extended the boundaries of the empire, strengthened its unity and encouraged the development of Chinese civilisation.

#### **Work of Han Wu Ti.**

##### **(i) Expansion of China.**

Wu Ti's campaigns were fought against the **Hsiung Nu**, a large group of barbarian nomads who threatened the north-west frontier of China. As a result of his victories against the Hsiung Nu the boundaries of the empire were extended to include what is now the province of Kansu. In the north-east, Wu Ti's forces

occupied parts of southern Manchuria and northern Korea. The Emperor set up military garrisons in the newly-conquered areas to safeguard them against attack. Wu Ti then turned his attentions to the south. As a result of more victorious campaigns, the provinces of Chekiang, Fukien, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Hainan and Yunnan were brought into the Han Empire. Chinese culture followed Wu Ti's armies into these new areas.

### (ii) A New System of Government.

Wu Ti also strengthened the government of the Han Empire. He destroyed the power of the few feudal lords who still remained and appointed his own officials to replace them. These officials were chosen for their ability alone, and no account was taken of the wealth or influence of their families. Wu Ti established a special school for the training of officials, and he is also said to have created the famous **Civil Service Examination**. This was a difficult test that all candidates had to pass before they could become officials of the Empire. To pass the test the candidates needed to have a good knowledge of Confucian philosophy and literature. The Civil Service Examination survived from the time of Wu Ti until the early days of the nineteenth century.

### (iii) Culture.

Wu Ti was a generous patron of religion, literature and art. He encouraged the spread of Confucianism and gave his personal support to two famous Confucian scholars, Kung-sun Hung and Tung Chung-shu. A descendant of Confucius was appointed to be supervisor of the schools in the empire. In the field of literature, Wu Ti gave his support to the historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien, whose works will be described later in this chapter, and to a number of poets and religious writers.

### (iv) Economic Changes.

Wu Ti also promoted the economic development of the empire. Internal trade improved because of the strong and efficient system of government which Wu Ti had established. Trade with foreign countries increased after the Emperor's conquests, for new trade routes were established through the newly conquered territories. In addition, Wu Ti appointed a special minister to supervise trade and constructed a number of canals to facilitate communications.



In the south large areas of land were reclaimed and cultivated. Prices of goods were controlled by the government. No one could charge more than the price set by the government. In addition the government had the monopoly on salt and iron. The money collected was used to improve the administration of the country.

At the same time, the cost of Wu Ti's wars brought serious financial problems. Heavy taxes had to be collected and these caused some discontent amongst the peasants. However, Wu Ti was powerful enough to prevent this discontent from leading to rebellion.

### (c) The Rule of Wang Mang (8 - 23 A.D.)

When Wu Ti died in 87 B.C. there were no heirs to succeed him and a line of puppet rulers took over.

In 8 A.D. the throne at Ch'angan was seized by a usurper named **Wang Mang**, who tried to found a new dynasty. Wang Mang was an ambitious official whose family was related to the Emperor by marriage. He was an intelligent and scholarly man who won popular support by proposing sweeping reforms such as the abolition of slavery and the granting of state loans to needy peasants. However, his reign was short-lived. Although the peasants gave him their support, he was opposed by members of the rich landowning class. Moreover, many people took advantage of the situation to form robber-bands which plagued the countryside. A widespread rebellion against Wang Mang was organised by members of the Liu family and he was killed by the rebels in Ch'angan in 23 A.D.

## 2. THE LATER HAN PERIOD (23 A.D. - 220 A.D.)

With the defeat and death of Wang Mang the Han Dynasty was restored, but the capital was moved from Ch'angan to Loyang. The first ruler of the restored dynasty, Kuang Wu Ti, who belonged to the Liu family brought back peace and order to China, but his successors did not share his abilities. The story of the Later Han Period is one of intrigue, rebellion and growing disorder. No Emperors arose to match the greatness of Kao Tsu and Wu Ti. A long struggle for supremacy developed between successful generals and ambitious officials. In 220 A.D. the throne was seized by a military commander named Ts'ao P'ei who established a new dynasty which he called the Wei. In this way the rule of the Han Dynasty was brought to an unhappy end.

Ts'ao P'ei was not able to extend his rule over the whole empire, and China became divided into a number of kingdoms each with a dynasty of its own. The country remained disunited in this way until 580 A.D. Unity was then restored by another military commander, whose story will be told in the next chapter.

### 3. THE CIVILISATION OF HAN CHINA

In earlier chapters we studied the beginning of Chinese civilisation during the period of the Shang Dynasty and the rise of Chinese philosophy during the last part of the Chou period, which is known as the Chan Kuo. The Han period saw another flowering of Chinese culture. There were important developments in literature, science and the arts, all of which were encouraged by the Han Emperors. Chinese civilisation continued to flourish even during the troubled years of the Later Han Period.

#### (a) Literature.

Among the many writers of the Han period, the most famous are **Ssu-ma Tan** and his son, **Ssu-ma Ch'ien**, who both served as official astrologers at the court of the Han Emperors. Ssu-ma Ch'ien was born in about 145 B.C. and wrote his most famous works during the reign of the Emperor Wu Ti. He completed a great history of China which his father had begun. This work was based on original documents and it covers the period from the beginning of Chinese history until the reign of Wu Ti. It is remarkable for its detail and for its great accuracy in recording events. Ssu-ma Tan and Ssu-ma Ch'ien have been compared to the great Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydides. After their death the **Dynastic Histories**, as they were called, were continued by other historians.

Other writers of the Han period helped to preserve Confucian books which might otherwise have been lost. These books were copied, edited and preserved in libraries throughout the Empire. The writing of books was made simpler by the discovery of paper in about 100 A.D. The first paper was made from the bark of the mulberry tree, hemp or rags, and a brush pen was used for writing on it. The Chinese were the first people in the world to manufacture paper.

### **(b) Art and Science.**

Artists and craftsmen of the Han period produced many works of great merit. These included life-like carvings of living objects made from bronze, stone or jade. Jade, which had always been popular in China, was regarded as a sacred stone. The art of pottery was developed in Han China and beautiful white pots were produced. Han scientists invented the sun dial and water clock for measuring time and made some important discoveries in the field of astronomy, such as the observation of sun spots. **Chang Heng**, a famous painter, lived during this time. He was also an astronomer, a mathematician and a poet.

### **(c) The Spread of Buddhism.**

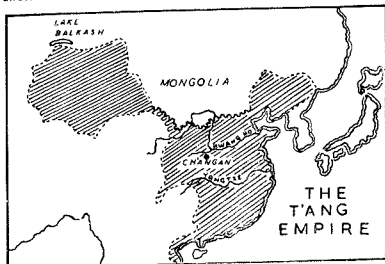
Confucianism was the official religion of China during the Han period, but Buddhism also made its appearance at this time. It was carried to China by traders and missionaries from India, where Buddhism was already strong. A few Buddhist monks are said to have reached China during the Chin period, but they were imprisoned by Shih Huang Ti and so had little influence on the Chinese people. Under Wu Ti, General Ho Chu brought back images of the Buddha from Turkestan and presented them to the Emperor, but they had no influence upon him.

Teachers from India began to arrive in larger numbers during the reign of the Han Emperor, Ming Ti (58-76 A.D.). Ming Ti is said to have had a dream in which he saw a golden being surrounded by a white light in the courtyard of the palace. The wise men of the court told him that he had seen an image of the Buddha. Ming Ti then sent eighteen envoys to India to learn more about Buddhism. The envoys returned in 67 A.D. with statues of the Buddha, copies of Buddhist books and two Indian monks. From this time Buddhism began to spread in China. Small communities of Buddhist monks were established in many parts of the Empire.

During the Han period the spread of Buddhism was slow because the new religion was opposed by many Confucian scholars at the Imperial Court. When the Han Dynasty collapsed in 220 A.D. China became divided and the Confucian scholars lost some of their former influence. During this period of division (220 - 580 A.D.) Buddhism spread more swiftly and by the time that China was reunited the new faith had taken its place with Confucianism and Taoism as one of the major religions of the Chinese.

#### 4. THE T'ANG DYNASTY

You have read about the way in which the Han Dynasty came to an end in 220 A.D. This event was followed by a long period of disorder and disunity in China. A number of separate kingdoms grew up, each one ruled by its own dynasty. Unity was restored by a military commander named **Yang Chien**. Yang Chien first won supremacy in the north and then brought the whole of China under his control in 589. He founded the **Sui Dynasty** which ruled



over China from 589 until 618. In 616 a revolt broke out against Yang Chien's son, Yang Ti. After two years of Civil War, Yang Ti was killed in 618. The revolt had been led by **Li Shih-min**, a military commander, who then laid the foundations of another dynasty — the T'ang.

##### The T'ang Dynasty (618 - 906).

The revolt which began in 616 was caused by growing discontent under the second ruler of the Sui Dynasty, Yang Ti (604-618). The peasants disliked the heavy taxation and forced labour which Yang Ti imposed upon them. The landowners and officials were alarmed at the weakness of the Sui Emperor. During Yang Ti's rule Chinese armies were defeated by the Koreans and the Turks. When this discontent led to a rebellion, its leadership was

assumed by a young general named Li Shih-min. Yang Ti was killed by the rebels in his palace in 618. **Li Shih-min** then placed his own father, Li Yuan, on the throne as the first Emperor of the **T'ang Dynasty**. Li Yuan abdicated in 627 and Li Shih-min became ruler in his place. As Emperor, Li Shih-min adopted the title **T'ai Tsung**. He was one of China's most famous rulers.

### **The Rule of T'ai Tsung (627 - 649).**

As an Emperor, T'ai Tsung may be compared with the Han ruler Wu Ti. He was a great conqueror, and at the same time he restored a stable system of government to China and encouraged the development of Chinese civilisation.

Between 627 and 648 the armies of T'ai Tsung fought many campaigns against the Turks, who threatened the northern frontiers of China. As a result of these the whole of Turkestan was brought under Chinese rule. T'ai Tsung also attacked Korea, but the conquest of that country was not completed until after the Emperor's death. The newly-conquered territories were ruled by their own princes under the supervision of Chinese officials. In some cases T'ai Tsung did not use force to defeat his enemies. In Tibet, for example, he sent a Chinese princess, Wen-cheng, to be the wife of the ruler of Tibet so as to win over the people. Then again he would allow the sons of the barbarians he conquered to stay peacefully at the capital.

T'ai Tsung gave China a stable system of government after a long period of disunity and civil war. Imperial commissioners were appointed with the task of helping the provincial governors in times of emergency. The Examination System of Wu Ti was retained for the selection of officials. China was redivided into ten provinces and 358 prefectures, all under officials appointed by the Emperor. The army was reorganised and its weapons improved.

T'ai Tsung was also a scholar. He kept a library of 200,000 books in his palace and took steps to encourage art and literature.

## **5. THE CIVILISATION OF T'ANG CHINA.**

Many aspects of Chinese civilisation flourished during the T'ang period. In particular this was the Golden Age of Chinese poetry. Among the great poets of the time were **Li Po** (701 - 762), **Tu Fu** (712 - 770) and **Po Chu-i** (772 - 847). Li Po was born in the

far west of China. He lived a gay life and was especially fond of wine. With a group of followers he retired to the mountains, where the friends became known as the Six Idlers of the Bamboo Brook. Li Po later worked at the court of the Emperor Hsuan Tsung, where he became one of the "Eight Immortals of the Wine-cup". According to one story Li Po died when he tried to grasp the reflection of the moon in a lake. He wrote lyric poems in a vigorous and original style.

Tu Fu was also one of the Eight Immortals of the Wine-cup. Like Li Po he worked at the court of Hsuan Tsung, who showed favour to many literary men. Some of the most famous of the poems of Li Po and Tu Fu are dedicated to Hsuan Tsung's beautiful concubine Yang Kui-fei.

Apart from the poets, many other writers worked during the T'ang period. **Han Yu** (768 - 824) wrote many essays in which he defended Confucianism against the attacks of Chinese Buddhists. The Buddhist pilgrims Hsien Tsang and I-Tsing, about whom you read in Chapter Nine, translated many Sanskrit books from India into Chinese. Chang Tsu (660 - 740) wrote many fine short-stories about the everyday lives of the Chinese under the T'ang Emperors. This period also saw the writing of the first Chinese operas.

Art flourished as well as literature. Among the great painters of the period were **Wu Tao-tzu**, a Buddhist who painted murals for many temples, and **Wang Wei**, who was a landscape painter. The first Chinese porcelain was produced and soon it was an important article for export overseas. Statues in bronze and stone, lacquer work, pottery and the manufacture of silk cloth all formed part of the art of T'ang China. The architecture of the period, although showing little originality, was lavish and magnificent.

One of the most important inventions of the T'ang period was the discovery of a method of printing by using wooden blocks. The invention was made in about 600, almost nine hundred years before printing was discovered in Europe by Gutenberg of Mainz. Another new development in T'ang China was the use of the first paper money, which was more convenient for traders than the large and heavy bronze coins.

Confucianism remained the official religion of China, but Buddhism continued to spread and won widespread support. T'ai Tsung was a tolerant ruler. Other religions, including Islam, Judaism and Christianity, were introduced into China by foreign traders, but they found little support among the Chinese.

## 6. END OF THE T'ANG DYNASTY.

As far as culture is concerned, the later part of the T'ang Dynasty was described as China's 'Golden Age', but from the point of view of the Chinese empire, it was declining. As so often happened in the history of China, a strong and vigorous Emperor was followed by weak successors. The rulers who followed T'ai Tsung were unable to keep the empire united and free from rebellion. The Tang Emperors faced many peasant revolts and slowly lost control of the government.

The Emperor **Hsuan Tsung** (712-756) was famous as a patron of culture, but his reign was darkened by more than one revolution. The last T'ang ruler was captured and killed by a military commander named **Chu Ch'uan-chung** in 906. In the following year Chu founded a new dynasty in 907.

## 7. THE SUNG DYNASTY (960 - 1279).

The fall of the T'ang Dynasty in 906 was followed by another period of disorder and disunity. China was once again broken up into numerous kingdoms, each under a dynasty of its own. Between 906 and 960 five dynasties followed one another in rapid succession in north China. This was known as **the Period of the Five Dynasties**. Then again nomadic barbarians created empires to the north of China. Unity was restored by a young military commander called **Chao Kuang-yin** in 960. Chao joined the small kingdoms of China together into a new Chinese Empire of which he became ruler. The dynasty which he founded is known as the **Sung**.

### **The Early Sung Emperors.**

The first three emperors of the Sung Dynasty were Chao Kuang-yin (who adopted the title T'ai Tsu), T'ai Tsung and Shent-sung. The three of them had some trouble dealing with the barbarians who had established empires to the north of China. Because of their failures the Sung emperors had to share their control of north China with the Khitans (in the north-east) and the Tangut (in the north-west).

The wars fought by the emperors resulted in a serious crisis in China during the 11th. century. There was inflation; the government was nearly bankrupt; and the peasants suffered from widespread poverty. The Confucian officials of the emperor were unable to solve these problems and the Emperor Shen-tsung turned to Wang An-shih.

### **The Reforms of Wang An-shih (1019 - 1086).**

The greatest figure of the Sung period was not an Emperor but a scholarly official named **Wang An-shih**. He was born in Kiang-si in 1021, the son of a poor official. In the middle of the eleventh century China was facing a serious crisis. The poverty of the peasants was increasing, prices were rising and the revenue of the Emperor was declining. At the same time the northern borders of China were threatened by barbarian invaders known as the Ju-chen. The Emperor Shen Tsung (1068—1085) became alarmed at these serious developments and he appointed Wang An-shih to put an end to them by introducing far-reaching reforms. Between 1068 and 1086 Wang An-shih acted as the Emperor's Chief Minister and made a brave attempt to solve China's difficulties.

#### **(i) Peasant Reforms.**

Wang An-shih took steps to alleviate the poverty and misery of the peasants. He set up state agricultural banks which gave loans to the peasants at a low rate of interest. This meant that the peasants had no longer to rely upon private moneylenders, whose rates of interest were very high. State granaries were set up which gave free supplies of rice to the peasants in times of famine. The peasants were freed from their obligation to work on government roads and canals; instead they were to pay a small tax, which varied according to their income. Wang An-shih also made it easier for the peasants to sell their goods at a reasonable price.

#### **(ii) Military Reforms.**

Wang An-shih also took steps to strengthen the defences of China. Every family was obliged to give one horse to the government; these horses were used to strengthen the cavalry section of the army. Wang An-shih also organised groups of families which were compelled to supply soldiers to the Imperial army. These groups were also responsible for the suppression of bandit gangs and rebels against the state.



### (iii) New System of Taxation

To keep the treasury in a strong position, Wang An-shih cut the expenditure of the court by 40% and reorganised the system of taxation. Strict measures were taken against landowners and merchants who tried to evade taxation.

Although Wang An-shih's reforms were effective, he was opposed by many officials who were jealous of his supreme position. The leader of his opponents was a Confucian scholar named **Soo Ma-kuang**. When the Emperor Shen Tsung died in 1086 he was succeeded by his son, Che Tsung, who was only a child. **Ssu-ma Kuang** took advantage of this situation to have Wang An-shih dismissed and his reforms revoked. Perhaps if Wang An-shih's reforms had been allowed to remain China would not have suffered the fate which was to follow.

### Foreign Invasion and the End of the Sung Dynasty.

After the death of Wang An-shih, China was again threatened by the barbarians in the north. The Sung Dynasty was brought to an end by the barbarians in the north from whose attacks Wang An-shih had tried to defend China. The collapse of the Sung Empire came in two stages. In the first stage the chief invaders were the **Ju-chen**, who occupied northern China in 1126. In the second stage the invaders were the **Mongols**. By 1279 Mongol armies under **Kublai Khan** had occupied the whole of China and killed the last Sung Emperor.

The Ju-chen were the ancestors of the Manchus who occupied China in the seventeenth century. As a result of successful warfare against neighbouring barbarians, the Ju-chen had established an Empire in Manchuria by 1114. In 1122 they turned southwards against the Sung Empire which was then ruled by the weak Emperor Hui-tsung. Hui-tsung tried to bribe the Ju-chen into stopping their attacks but all his efforts failed. In 1126 the Ju-chen attacked in force. Hui-tsung and his own were carried off into captivity in Manchuria and the northern Sung Empire fell under the control of the Ju-chen. In the south the Sung Emperors continued to rule from a new capital at Hang-chow. They paid tribute to the Ju-chen to keep them away.

A full history of the Mongols and their victories will be given in Book Two. Here we will give a brief outline to show how the Mongols brought the Sung Empire to an end. From about 1206 the Mongols turned against the other barbarians to the north of China, defeating them one by one under the able leadership of **Genghiz Khan** (1206 - 1227). In 1234 Mongol armies under **Ogotai**, a grandson of Genghiz, destroyed the power of the Ju-chen and brought northern China under their control. After a long period of preparation the Mongols turned south against what remained of the Sung Empire. Their attack began in 1273 and six years later the last Sung Emperor had been captured. In 1279 Kublai Khan, the new leader of the Mongols, became Emperor of the whole of China.

## 8. THE CIVILISATION OF SUNG CHINA.

The T'ang period is best remembered for its great poets; the Sung period is more famous for its great painters. The Sung painters, like the T'ang poets, were encouraged by the Emperors, and many of them lived and worked at the Imperial Court. The most famous painters of the period were **Mi Fei** (1051 - 1107), **Kuo-Hsi** (born in 1020) **Ma Yuan** (born in 1090) and **Hsia Kuei** (born in 1090). They were chiefly landscape painters and they introduced the style which is still followed by Chinese artists. An Academy of Painting was set up at the Imperial capital. Annual painting competitions were organised, the winners of which were awarded Golden Belts.

The Sung period is also famous for its pottery and porcelain. During this time the first pure white porcelain was produced. Another great achievement was the production of the first Celadon Ware. This was made by covering a solid paste with green glaze and then adding incised decorations.

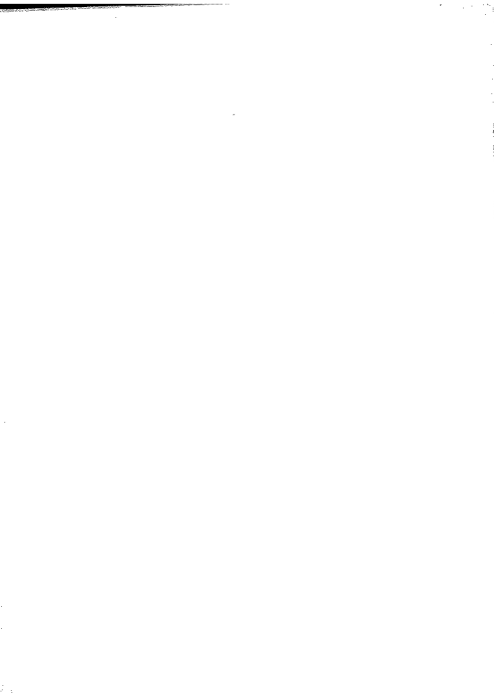
Among the great writers of the Sung period was **Ssu-ma Kuang** (1019-1089) whom we have already mentioned as one of the opponents of Wang An-shih. Ssu-ma Kuang wrote a history of China which he called the **Tzu Chih T'ung Chien**. The Sung poets included **Ou-yang Hsiu** (1007 - 1072) and **Su Tung-p'o** (1036 - 1101) who wrote lyric poems chiefly about the beauty of the countryside. Confucianism was still the official religion of China and many Confucian scholars wrote books on philosophy, religion and history. Of these the most famous was Chu Hsi, who defeated Confucianism against Buddhist attacks and also compiled a general history of China.

### Questions to Answer.

1. Write a brief account of the foundation of the Han Dynasty
2. Write a brief account of the reign and achievements of the Emperor Wu Ti.
3. How was the Han Dynasty brought to an end?
4. Write a brief description of Chinese civilisation during the Han period.
5. Write a brief account of the spread of Buddhism in China.
6. How was unity restored to China in 589?
7. Write a brief account of the reign and achievements of the Emperor T'ai Tsung.
8. What were the main features of Chinese civilisation during the T'ang period?
9. What were the most important reforms of Wang An-shih?
10. Write a brief account of the civilisation of China during the Sung period.

## TEST PAPER I

1. State briefly why each of the following persons is famous:  
(a) Chou Hsin, (b) Wu Wang, (c) Confucius, (d) Lao Tzu, (e) Mencius, (f) Mo Tzu, (g) Kung-sun Yang, (h) Chuang Tzu, (i) Shih Huang Ti, (j) Chandragupta Maurya, (k) Asoka, (l) Li Ssu, (m) Pushyamitra, (n) Claudius Ptolemy, (o) Seleucus Nikator, (p) Gajah Mada, (q) Kao Tsu, (r) Wu Ti, (s) Wang Mang, (t) Ssu Shih-min and (u) Kublai Khan.
2. State briefly what is meant by each of the following terms:  
(a) the Chan Kuo, (b) the Feudal System in China, (c) filia piety, (d) Taoism, (e) Mohism, (f) Legalism, (g) the Burning of the Books, (h) the Hundred Schools of Philosophy, (i) the Unification of China, (j) the Inscriptions of Asoka, (k) the Indianised kingdoms of South East Asia, (l) the Civil Service Examination, (m) the Eight Immortals of the Wine Cup and (n) the Sailendra Dynasty.
3. Give the date of each of the following events:  
(a) the end of the Chou Dynasty in China, (b) the birth of Confucius, (c) the beginning of the Chin Dynasty, (d) the foundation of the Maurya Dynasty, (e) Ptolemy's map of the world, (f) the foundation of the Kingdom of Funan, (g) the end of the Han Dynasty, (h) the death of Wu Ti, (i) the end of the T'ang Dynasty, (j) the end of the Empire of Srivijaya, and (k) the arrival of Islam in Malacca.
4. Why are the following places famous:  
(a) Hwang-ho, (b) Anyang, (c) Pataliputra, (d) the Merbok Estuary, (e) Borobudur, (f) Majapahit, (g) Changan, (h) Hangchow, (i) Palembang and (j) Lu.
5. Write what you know about each of the following:  
(a) the Tao Te Ching, (b) the Analects, (c) the Sejarah Melayu, (d) the Puranas and (e) the Dynastic Histories of China.



Part Two

**EUROPE**



## Part Two

### INTRODUCTION

## EUROPE

This part of the book deals with the history of Europe from the coming of the Greeks to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. In Chapter Seven you will read about the Greek city-states of **Sparta** and **Athens**. The famous Athenian, **Solon**, and his reforms will also be described in this chapter. Greece reached its height in the city of Athens during the fifth century B.C., a time which is sometimes known as the **Periclean Age** after the great general and politician, **Pericles**.

You will also read about the creation of the Roman Empire which included most of the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. This time of Rome's greatest is sometimes called the **Augustan Age** after Augustus, the first Roman Emperor. Chapter Nine will describe the decline and fall of the Empire as a result of several internal weaknesses.

In the fourth century A.D. the Empire was attacked by several groups of barbarian tribesmen from the north and east. The Emperors of Rome were not strong enough to resist these attacks and the last Emperor was overthrown in 476 A.D. This was the end of the Roman Empire in the west, although the eastern half of the Empire survived under Emperors who had their capital at Constantinople. When Roman rule disappeared in western Europe, the barbarians set up their own kingdoms under their tribal chiefs. The most important of these kingdoms was that of the **Franks** which was founded by **Clovis** at the end of the fifth century. Although much of the civilisation of Rome has survived down to the present day, the people of modern Europe are descended from the barbarian tribesmen who destroyed the Roman Empire. The English, for example, are descended from the barbarian Angles who occupied Roman Britain, and the French are descended from the Franks.



## PART TWO

### EUROPE

#### Chapter Seven

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF GREECE

The people of the modern world are deeply indebted to the Greeks and Romans of ancient times. Many of the ideas and artistic achievements of the present day owe their origins to the ancient civilisation of Greece and Rome. The study of philosophy and the idea of democracy are two of the most important legacies of Greece. To the Romans we are indebted for much of our knowledge of law and the art of government.

### I. THE MINOAN CIVILISATION (3400-1200 B.C.).

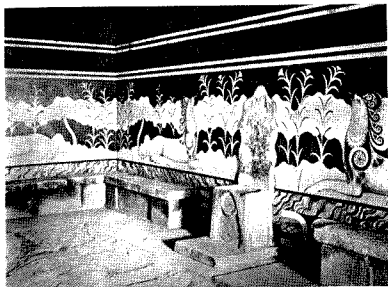
The first civilisation in the area of Greece arose on the island of Crete in about 3400 B.C. and flourished until about 1200 B.C., when it was destroyed by barbarian invaders. It is often called the **Minoan Civilisation** because the ruler of Crete was known as Minos. Sometimes it is also known as the Aegean Civilisation because it spread to the lands and islands around the Aegean Sea.



King Minos.

Archaeologists have investigated many of the remains of the Minoan Civilisation, particularly those of Knossos, which was the royal capital. The great palace at Knossos was one of the wonders of the ancient world. It was a large and magnificent building, filled with beautiful works of art. The inhabitants of ancient Crete were a prosperous and artistic people. They made fine weapons and ornaments out of bronze, produced richly-decorated pottery jars and painted realistic pictures on the walls of their palaces and temples. Like the people of the Indus cities, they were also great traders. Their ships sailed to every part of the Mediterranean coast.

Cretan traders and adventurers established settlements in other parts of the Aegean. These included the cities of **Mycenae** and **Tiryus** in southern Greece and **Troy** in Asia Minor, all of which became centres of the Minoan Civilisation. These colonies were protected by the strong navy of Crete.



**The Palace at Knossos Crete.**

The Minoan Civilisation was destroyed between 1400 and 1200 B.C. by invaders who may have come from Greece. The palace of Knossos was destroyed and the other cities of Crete fell into ruin. Mycenae, Tiryus and Troy were occupied by the invaders in about 1200 B.C.

## **2. THE COMING OF THE GREEKS (1500 - 800 B.C.).**

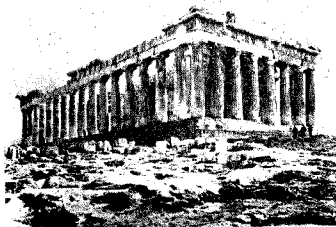
Like the Aryans who attacked India in about 1500 B.C., the Greeks were Indo-Europeans who were originally from Central Asia. From about 2000 B.C. onwards the Greeks started to move southwards from their homeland into the north of Greece. The first tribe of the Indo-European stock to reach Greece were the **Achaens**. The Achaens attacked the Minoan Civilisation between 1400 and 1200 B.C. and after their success they decided to stop wandering and instead adapt themselves with the local population.

After the Achaens came another tribe of the Indo-European stock and they were the **Dorians**. The Dorians defeated the Achaens and then went on to occupy Greece. The Achaens then retreated towards Asia Minor. They were able to adapt themselves with the customs of the local people as they stayed longer. The story of the Greek occupation of Troy is told in the **Iliad**, one of the great poems of **Homer**, who was known as the blind poet of Greece. It was believed that he lived in the ninth century B.C. The **Iliad** tells the dramatic story of the Trojan War, in which the Trojans were eventually defeated when the Greeks entered Troy in a famous wooden horse. The other great poem of Homer is the **Odyssey**. This poem tells the story of Odysseus, a Greek hero, on his way home to Greece after the Trojan War. Odysseus and his men went through many startling adventures as their ship made its way through the islands of the Aegean.



### The Greek City-States.

Between 1200 B.C. and 800 B.C., after they had destroyed the ancient Minoan cities, the Greeks settled down in Greece, Asia Minor and the islands of the Aegean Sea. The Greek peninsula is broken up by mountains and rivers into many valleys and it was in these valleys that the Greeks settled. The structure of the land made communication difficult and each settlement of Greeks became an isolated community, with its own laws and government. These communities are known as City-States or "polis" because each one was a separate and independent state. There was no great kingdom of empire in ancient Greece, as there was in India and China. Each City-State developed in its own way, with its own



The Parthenon on the Acropolis of Athens.

customs and traditions. At the centre of each city there was usually a raised citadel or **acropolis**, on which the main public buildings were situated. Warfare between the cities was frequent and in times of the invasion the people of a city would take refuge on the acropolis and would die fighting for their city.

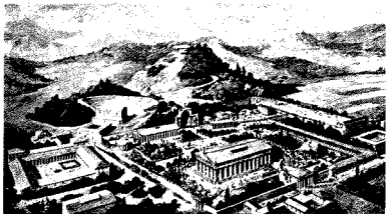
The most important of the early City-States were **Sparta**, **Athens** and **Corinth** in Greece and Miletus in Asia Minor. Sparta was a strong and warlike state with a strong army, but in this chapter we must concentrate on the story of Athens. It was in the city of Athens that Greek Civilisation reached its height.

### 3. SPARTA.

The Greek city-state of Sparta was situated near southern Greece and it was different from all the other city-states. When the Dorians invaded and captured Sparta, the people were made slaves and were ruled by force. Thus this turned Sparta into a military state.

The people of Sparta especially the men had to undergo from the time of their birth some form of military training. All weak children were not allowed to live and they were killed instead. The woman on the other hand must produce soldiers for the state and they also received some form of physical training to make them strong mothers. All those boys over the age of seven had to live in barracks where they came under the control of the older people. Thus with all this training a Spartan was expected to be strong as well as good fighters. So Sparta became the main warlike state in Greece.

### 4. THE STORY OF ATHENS (700 - 404 B.C.).



The buildings at Olympia as they appeared in the great days of Greece.

The city of Athens was founded by the people of Attica in southern Greece in about 700 B.C. It was in an ideal position for trade, and the merchants of Athens sailed to Egypt, Cyprus, Asia Minor and the lands around the Black Sea. They exported pottery,

wine and olive oil in return for grain. Athens was also in the centre of a fertile plain which provided rich farming land. For these reasons the new city state rapidly became powerful and prosperous.

### **(a) The Reforms of Solon.**

In about 600 B.C. Athens faced its first crisis. Athens was a very important trading centre and controlled most of the trade of the Aegean and Greek mainland. Because of the trade a few people became rich and so this created a wide gap between the rich and the poor. By the beginning of the 6th, century B. C. there were signs that a civil war was about to take place between the rich and the poor. However this was avoided because of the reforms of one Athenian by the name of **Solon**.

In 594 B.C. Solon was elected as 'Archon' or Chief Minister of Athens to deal with the situation. He introduced a number of reforms which prevented the civil war and also laid the foundations of Athenian democracy. He freed all those who had become enslaved because of debt-slavery. The size of the estates of the rich people was reduced and distributed to the peasants. To encourage trade, he introduced a new system of coinage in Athens and changed the old system of weights and measures. He also started the Athenian Assembly and allowed all the citizens to take part in it, thus giving everyone a right to voice his own opinion in the government. The Assembly was given the power to pass all the laws. He also set up a Popular Court, which was made up of all the citizens of Athens. This court could not only try offenders but could also check the work of all government officers. If an official was found guilty of oppression or corruption the Court could punish or dismiss him. In this way the reforms of Solon helped the poorer people of Athens to play a real part in their government.

### **The Persian Wars.**

Soon after 500 B.C. Athens was faced with a much greater threat than economic crisis. This was the threat of an invasion from the Empire of Persia which at that time was the most extensive and powerful nation in the Middle East. It stretched from Asia Minor to the Indus, and included the Greek cities along the coast of the Aegean. In 499 B.C. these cities organised an unsuccessful revolt, during which they received help from Athens and Eretria

in Greece. When the revolt had been suppressed the Persian Emperor **Darius** decided to bring Greece under his control. In 490 B.C. a Persian navy invaded Greece. An army of Persians landed and met with some success at first, but they were defeated by the Athenians under the command of Miltiades at the **Battle of Marathon** (490 B.C.) and Darius was forced to return to Persia.



**Emperor Xerxes leading his army.**

Ten years later after the defeat of Darius, his son, **Xerxes**, collected a big army and invaded Greece again. The Greek army was then under the command of **Themistocles**. When the Persians attacked, one of the Greeks betrayed his state and revealed a secret way to the Persians who then forced the Greeks to retreat. The city of Athens fell to the Persians and many buildings were burnt down. So it seemed as if the Persians were going to succeed but Themistocles came to the scene and defeated the Persian fleet at the **Battle of Salamis** in 480 B.C. This was the turning point of the war. The final defeat of the Persians was at the **Battle of Plataea** in 479 B.C. when they were defeated by the Spartans. Thus the Persian threat was brought to an end.

The Athenians had played the most important part in the defeat of the Persians, and after the war many cities began to look upon Athens as the leader of the Greek world. In 478 B.C. a **Con-**

**federacy** of coastal cities was formed with Athens as its head. But many cities were opposed to the supremacy of Athens. They joined Sparta in a **Peloponnesian League**.

### The Peloponnesian War (431 - 404 B.C.)

The rivalry between the **Athenian Confederacy** and the Peloponnesian League led eventually to war in 431 B.C. Both Athens and Sparta fought for complete supremacy in Greece. The war was long and bitter with first Athens supreme, and then Sparta. Finally, in 404 B.C. the Athenians were defeated and their city was occupied by a Spartan army.

## 5. THE CIVILISATION OF ATHENS.

Athenian civilisation reached its height between the defeat of the Persians and the end of the Peloponnesian War. This was the Classical Age of ancient Greece. For part of this time, from 461 until 429 B.C. Athens was ruled by an able military commander called **Pericles**. The period of his life is sometimes known as the Periclean Age. It was a time when every branch of art, thought and literature flourished.

### (a) Athenian Democracy.



Socrates.

Athens was the first state in the world to develop a democratic form of government. All the citizens of Athens were members of the **Assembly**, which discussed all important business, passed laws and could remove any official from office. The daily work of government was the responsibility of a **Council of Five Hundred**, the members of which were chosen by lot from among all the citizens. In this way every citizen had the chance of becoming an official. The chief officials were ten Generals who were elected annually by the Assembly.

After a law had been passed by the Assembly, it was usually put before a Popular Jury, which was chosen by lot, for their approval.



### (b) Athenian Literature.

Some of the world's greatest writers lived in fifth century Athens. Among the famous dramatists were **Aeschylus**, **Sophocles** and **Euripides**, who wrote tragedies, and **Aristophanes**, who wrote comedies. Plays were performed in the courtyards of temples and great houses during festival times. The Athenian historians **Herodotus** and **Thucydides** wrote long, stirring and accurate histories of the Greek world. In the field of poetry **Pindar** excelled. Among the many philosophers of ancient Athens were **Socrates** (469-399 B.C.) and his pupil, **Plato** (427-347 B.C.) Socrates died a **martyr's** death in 399 B.C. for refusing to give up his teaching. Plato's most famous book, the **Republic**, was the first defence of the democratic system of government.



Plato and his pupils.

### (c) Athenian Art.

The greatest artistic achievement of Athens was the **Parthenon**, a temple on the acropolis dedicated to the goddess Athena. It is still considered the most beautiful building of the ancient

world. Inside the temple were made pieces of sculpture created by **Phidias**, a friend of Pericles. Other fine houses and temples were constructed when Pericles rebuilt Athens after the Persian Wars. Rich murals were painted on the walls of these buildings.

## 6. ALEXANDER THE GREAT.



Alexander speaking in one of his campaigns.

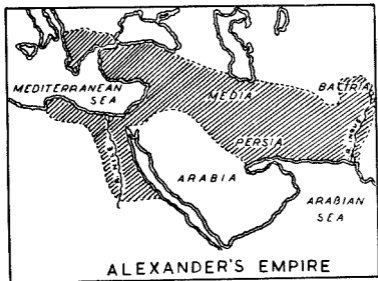
After the Peloponnesian War, Greece went through a long period of Chaos, Sparta was unable to maintain her supremacy and the city-states were engaged in constant warfare with one another. This situation presented an ideal opportunity to the rulers of **Macedonia**. The Macedonians were a people akin to the Greeks and they lived in the coastal plains and mountain ranges between the Aegean Sea and the River Danube. They lived very far away from the Greek cities and to the Greeks the Macedonians were barbarians. The various Macedonian tribes were finally united by their King, **Philip**. King Philip invaded Greece and defeated a large Greek army at

the **Battle of Chaeronea** in 338 B.C. In this way the Greek cities came under Macedonian rule. It was the plan of Philip to invade Persia but his plan was cut short because he was murdered. He was then succeeded by his twenty-year old son, **Alexander**. Alexander also dreamed of defeating the Persians and creating a great world empire.

### (a) Alexander's Campaigns.

In 336 B.C. Alexander led an army of 40,000 men across the Aegean into Asia Minor. With this force he won a series of resounding victories. In 333 B.C. he inflicted his first defeat on Darius III, the Persian Emperor, at the **Battle of Issus**. From there

he went on to conquer Syria, Phoenicia and Egypt. The Egyptians surrendered and Alexander proclaimed himself as Pharaoh. The city Alexandria was named after him. He then turned northwards again and defeated Darius for a second time at the **Battle of Arbela** in 331 B.C. Darius was murdered soon afterwards by one of



his own officials and the whole Persian Empire passed into Alexander's hands. Alexander then marched eastwards towards India. His armies crossed the Indus and defeated an Indian ruler called **Porus**. By this time, Alexander's men were tired of travelling and fighting. They refused to go on, and Alexander was forced to lead them back to Babylon.

### (b) Alexander as Emperor.

When he returned to Babylon, Alexander ruled as Emperor for the remaining part of his life. His empire was divided into provinces and each province came under the control of an official chosen by him. He himself ruled the Empire with the help of a council of ten body-guards. Alexander tried to bring permanent unity to the people of the empire by encouraging intermarriage between peoples of different races. For this purpose he sent his soldiers to places far away from their homes hoping that they would

marry there. He also set up numerous cities which he hoped would help to spread Greek culture among the non-Greeks. Each city was a model of a Greek city-state. However his plans were not fulfilled because he died of fever in 323 B.C. at the age of thirty-two. Seldom has anyone accomplished so much in such a short time.

### **(c) The Collapse of Alexander's Empire.**

After the death of the young conqueror, Alexander's Empire collapsed. The generals of his army fought for control and divided the empire between them. The eastern territories, as far as the Indus, passed into the hands of **Seleucus Nikator**, whom we have already met in Chapter Five. You will remember that Chandragupta Maurya took advantage of Alexander's death to seize the lands around the Indus and that he later defeated Seleucus and signed a treaty with him in 303 B.C.

Although Alexander's Empire collapsed after his death, its influence on world history was considerable. Alexander had built cities in many of his territories, and these cities became centres from which Greek civilisation spread. Among these cities was Alexandria in Egypt, where Claudius Ptolemy later drew his famous map of the world.

### **Questions to Answer.**

1. Write a brief description of the Minoan Civilisation.
2. What is a City-State? Name four of the earliest Greek cities.
3. Give a brief account of (a) the Reforms of Solon, and (b) the Persian Wars.
4. Write a brief description of Athenian Civilisation during the Periclean Age.
5. Write a brief account of the life and achievements of Alexander the Great.

## THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND ITS LEGACY

At some time about 1500 B.C. several groups of nomadic tribesmen migrated southwards across the Alps into Italy. One of these groups, known as the **Latins**, settled on the plain of Latium to the south of the River Tiber. There they founded the city of **Rome** during the eighth century B.C. Soon after its foundation Rome was invaded and occupied by the **Etruscans**, a people who had built up a kingdom in Tuscany to the north of the Tiber. The Etruscans ruled Rome for over three hundred years, but in 509 B.C. the Latins rebelled and expelled the last Etruscan king. This was the beginning of the **Roman Republic**. In place of the king, the Latins set up two **Consuls** who were elected annually by the people of Rome.

### I. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC.

After the Latins had driven the last Etruscan king out of Rome in 509 B.C., they set up a republican form of government. Most of the power was in the hands of two **Consuls**, who were elected every year by an Assembly of the people. The Consuls had to follow the advice of elder statesmen known as the **Senate**. The Senate was the most respectable body in Rome and the members of the Senate held their position for life. Later on, other officials were appointed to help the Consuls and the Senate.

The Romans were divided into two main classes - the upper classes and the lower classes. The upper classes were known as the **Patricians** and the lower classes were known as the **Plebeians**. The upper classes were the nobles and they could become members of the Senate, all high positions in Rome were given to them. The lower classes worked as labourers in the empire. At the beginning all power was in the hands of the upper classes, but after 500 B.C. the lower classes began to ask that they be given some part in the government. By 350 B.C., the Plebeians were taken into all the offices of the government and had their own officials who were called **Tribunes**.

### 2. THE EXPANSION OF THE REPUBLIC (509-31 B.C.)

During the five hundred years which followed the setting up of a Republic, the Romans created an extensive empire around the Mediterranean Sea. As a result of wars against neighbouring tribes, the Roman armies had won control of almost the whole

of Italy by 290 B.C. A little later they occupied the Greek trading colonies in the southern tip of the peninsula. In 264 Rome went to war with **Carthage**, in north Africa, when the Carthaginians threatened to cut the communications between Italy and Sicily. Three great wars between Rome and Carthage, known as the **Punic Wars**, were fought between 264 and 146.

### (i) The First Punic War (264 - 241 B.C.).

The main reason for this war was over Sicily. Both Carthage and Rome wanted Sicily for their own reasons. To the Carthaginians Sicily was important because it gave them food and oil. The Romans, on the other hand, wanted it because it was near Rome. This war which started in 264 and lasted for nearly twenty years resulted in a Roman victory. Sicily came under Roman control and the Sicilians were treated like conquered people. They had to send tribute or present to Rome in the form of free corn.

### (ii) The Second Punic War (218 - 204 B.C.).

There was an interval of nearly twenty years between the First and the Second Punic War. During this peaceful period both sides began to prepare themselves for war. Although Sicily was given to the Romans there was still a possibility for a war to take place elsewhere. The Romans went on to capture Sardinia and Corsica and Carthage was too weak to take any action. In the meanwhile Carthage began to interfere in Spain under their leader **Hannibal**. It was now a matter of time before another war would take place.

When the time was ready Hannibal attacked the city of **Saguntum** in Spain, which was under Roman control. He then began his march across the Alps and went straight for Italy where he was



Hannibal watches his army crossing the Alps on the way to Rome.

joined by the Gauls in the north. In the first two years of the war the Carthaginians were successful. The only way for Hannibal to defeat the Romans was to capture Rome but Rome was well guarded and had a very good commander in **Scipio**.

After nearly 15 years of fighting the Romans under their leader Scipio met Hannibal at the **Battle of Zama** in 204 B.C. Again the Carthaginians were defeated and this time the colonies of Carthage in Spain were occupied by Rome.

### (iii) **The Third Punic War (149 - 146 B.C.).**

The Third Punic War put an end to the over hundred years' war between Carthage and Rome. The city of Carthage was destroyed by the Romans and the people were treated as slaves. Thus Rome became the master of the Mediterranean region.

## **3. THE END OF THE REPUBLIC.**

The Roman Republic was brought to an end by the activities of ambitious and successful generals who sought to control the government of Rome. In 59 B.C. three of these general, **Licinius Crassus, Gnaeus Pompey** and **Julius Caesar**, made an agreement by which they divided the Roman World between them. Caesar was made Governor of Gaul, Crassus set out for Persia and Pompey was left in control of Rome itself. In the following ten years Caesar met with great success in the West. By 49 B.C. he had conquered the whole of Gaul and visited Britain. In that year he decided to challenge Pompey's position in Rome. He led his army into Italy and civil war began. Meanwhile, Crassus had been killed while fighting in the East. Pompey was forced to leave Italy, and fled first to Greece where he was defeated by Caesar at the Battle of Pharsala in 48 B.C. and then to Egypt, where he was murdered. Caesar was thus master of the Roman World.

### **Rise of Julius Caesar.**

Julius Caesar returned to Rome as dictator. He allowed the Senate, or Council of Elders, to continue its meetings, but he gathered all real power into his own hands. He introduced many useful reforms. He reorganised the system of government and taxation, and set up colonies in Greece and North Africa in which

the poorer citizens of Rome and army veterans could settle. Although he was supreme ruler in fact, he did not call himself an Emperor and he allowed the old institutions of the Republic to continue. Nevertheless, some members of the Senate resented his dictatorship. In 44 B.C. Caesar's leading opponent, Brutus and Cassius, had him assassinated as he was leaving the Senate House.



Julius Caesar.

Caesar's death was followed by another troubled period during which **Mark Antony**, one of Caesar's generals, and **Octavian**, Caesar's nephew, struggled for supremacy. Finally, in 32 B.C., Antony was defeated at the **Battle of Actium** in Egypt. This date taken as the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Roman Empire. Octavian took the title 'Imperator', which is usually translated as 'Emperor'. He ruled as the **Emperor Augustus** from 31 B.C. - 14 A.D.

### (c) The Roman Empire (31 B.C. - 475 A.D.).

The Roman Empire continued to flourish for almost exactly five hundred years after the accession of Augustus in 31 B.C. During this time, the extent of the empire continued to grow as a result of successful military campaigns. The map on page 71 shows the empire as it was at its height in the fourth century A.D. Throughout



these territories the armies of Rome ensured a long period of comparative peace, which was accompanied by a prosperous trade. The different towns and provinces of the Empire were linked together by the best road system that had ever been built. The abilities of the Emperors varied, but the system of administration was usually efficient and Roman Law was dispensed without favour to all Roman citizens. The end of the Roman Empire, which was brought about by internal weakening and the attacks of barbarians during the fifth century, will be described in Book Two.



#### 4. THE CIVILISATION OF ROME.

The civilisation of Rome never achieved the greatness and originality of that of Greece, but its achievements were considerable nevertheless. Art and literature flourished, especially during the first two centuries of the Christian era which are sometimes described as the **Augustan Age**, after the first Emperor, Augustus.

##### (a) Literature.

The Roman equivalent of the Greek writer, Homer, was **Virgil**. During the reign of Augustus, Virgil wrote a long epic poem called

the **Aeneid**, in which he described the travels of Aeneas after the Trojan War. Aeneas, who had been a prince of Troy, is said to have fled to Italy after his city fell to the Greeks. There, according to Virgil, he founded the city of Rome. Two other famous poets of the Augustan Age were **Ovid** and **Horace**. At the same time, **Livy** wrote a long history of Rome from the time of its foundation until the accession of Augustus. Under the Emperor Hadrian, **Plutarch** (46-120 A.D.) wrote the biographies of some of the most famous generals and statesmen of Rome. The speeches of a famous lawyer called **Marcus Cicero** were published during the reign of Augustus. They are perhaps the finest example of the Roman art of oratory. Among the religious writings of Rome perhaps the most famous are the **Meditations** of the **Emperor Marcus Aurelius**.

### (b) Art.

In the field of art the Romans invented little. They were content to follow the example of Classical Greece. Although the Augustan Age produced many sculptors, architects and painters, their works showed little originality. In architecture the main achievements of the Romans were the perfection of the arch and the dome. They also excelled in the construction of useful buildings such as bridges, aqueducts and roads.

### (c) Government and Law.

The Romans excelled as administrators. They built up one of the strongest and most efficient systems of imperial government that the world had ever seen. The Empire was divided into provinces, each under a governor and a staff of trained officials who were appointed by the Emperor. The towns and cities of the Empire all had their own municipal committees. Roman Law, which had first been put into writing in 449 B.C., was extended to all the territories which fell under the control of Rome. In some provinces Roman Law was adjusted to fit in with local customs. After the fall of the western Roman Empire, a **Code of Roman Law** was drawn up by the **Emperor Justinian** (527-565 B.C.) at Constantinople. Justinian's Code has had a great influence on the legal systems of the modern world.

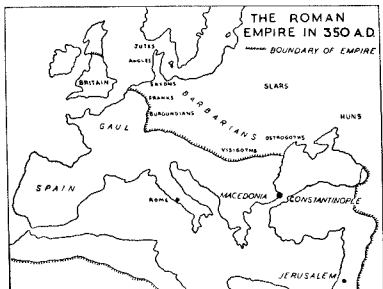
### **Questions to Answer.**

1. Write an account of the Punic Wars.
2. Describe the expansion of Rome during the period of the Republic.
3. Write what you know about the lives of (a) Julius Caesar, and (b) the Emperor Augustus (Octavian).
4. Write a brief description of Roman Civilisation during the Augustan Age.

## Chapter Nine

# THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

In the last Chapter you read about the way in which a great Empire was created by the successful generals and statesmen of Rome. By the end of the first century A.D. Rome controlled all the lands which bordered on the Mediterranean Sea. The map below shows the extent of Rome's dominions. Throughout this area peace was preserved by Roman legions and government was organised and run by Roman officials. The administration of the Empire was on the whole efficient and just and the people of the provinces were satisfied with Roman rule. The new roads which the Romans had built brought prosperity to traders. The long period of Roman Peace enabled the peasants to earn a comfortable living. In 200 A.D. all seemed well with the Roman Empire and it looked almost as if Caesar's claim that it would last forever might come true.



And then, suddenly, the decline began. During the third century it became clear even in Rome that the Empire was weakening. By the end of the fifth century, it had disappeared. The collapse of the Roman Empire was brought about by (a) internal decline, and (b) the attacks of the barbarians.

## **I. THE DECLINE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.**

Among the many factors which brought about the internal decline of the Roman Empire, the most important were (a) the drain of coinage to the Far East, (b) the growth of large estates in the hands of a few wealthy men, (c) a decline in trade, (d) the rule of weak Emperors, (e) social weaknesses, and (f) the influence of Christianity.

### **(a) The Drain of Coinage to the Far East.**

The long period of Roman peace and prosperity had created a wealthy upper class in almost every part of the Empire. The members of this class acquired expensive tastes, among which was a desire for luxury articles which came from the Far East. An increasing amount of Roman silver and gold found its way to the East to pay for these goods, which included spices from South East Asia, silk and porcelain from China and lacquer ware from Japan. This drain of coinage had become so heavy by the beginning of the third century that it had caused a serious shortage of currency in the Empire. This shortage hampered trade and this in turn affected the prosperity of the Empire.

### **(b) The Growth of Large Estates.**

During the second and third centuries A.D., more and more land passed into the hands of a few wealthy men who had made their money as officials, traders or money-lenders. These new land-owners had no real interest in their estates, which they looked upon simply as a means of increasing their wealth. They often left the land in the charge of an overseer whose one task was to increase the owner's income. As a result, the peasants on these estates were often treated very badly and were looked upon as slaves. They resented this treatment, and food production declined as a result. This decline was a serious threat to the Empire, for the cities depended upon the land for their food supply.

### **(c) Decline in Trade.**

From the third century onwards there was a notable decline in trade within the Empire. The reasons for this are not clear. It may be that too much money was being accumulated by too few people, so that the market for goods was becoming limited. The decline in the efficiency of the administration under a number of weak Emperors also hindered trade. Increasingly heavy taxes crippled many of the smaller traders.

#### (d) Weak Emperors.

Until the death of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in 180 A.D., most of the rulers of the Roman Empire had been men of ability who had governed their possessions efficiently. After 180 A.D., this ceased to be the case. Able Emperors became exceptional, and most of the rulers in Rome were men of little worth. The army grew more powerful and many Emperors owed their position entirely to its support. Between 192 and 284 A.D., there were thirty-three Emperors, most of whom died by violence. When there was no strong control from Rome, the officials in the provinces began to neglect their duties and the whole system of administration gradually broke down. Rebellion and civil war became frequent.



Diocletian.

The **Emperor Diocletian** (284-305) made one last attempt to prevent the collapse of Roman government. He divided the Empire into two halves in the hope that this would make it easier for officials to be brought under control. While one Emperor was to rule from Rome, a second Emperor was appointed to rule the Eastern half of the Empire. He himself ruled over the Eastern Roman Empire. Diocletian divided each half of the Empire into two prefectures, each prefecture into dioceses and each diocese into provinces. The officials who governed these various districts were all appointed by the Emperor, who supervised their activities closely. These reforms were continued and strengthened by the **Emperor Constantine** (313-337).

The reforms did not work in the long run. The new structure of government depended on the control of strong and able Emperors, and there were few of these after the death of Constantine. Diocletian had introduced new taxes on land and trade to help him pay for the new system of government. These new taxes caused widespread hardship and discontent. Further taxes became necessary to help pay for the defence of the Empire against the attacks of barbarians from Germany.

### (e) Social Weakness.

For several reasons, the society of the Empire was weakening from the third century onwards. A long period of luxurious living had sapped the vitality of the Roman upper class which supplied the leading officials in the army and the civil government. The new system of taxation introduced by Diocletian ruined another class of people upon whom the strength of the Empire depended. This was the class of small property-owners and merchants which had supplied the officials for the government of the cities.

### (f) Christianity in the Roman Empire.

In Chapter 12 you will read about the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. After a long period of persecution, Christianity was made an official religion of the Empire by the Emperor **Constantine** in 313 A.D. by the **Edict of Milan**. The number of Christians in the Empire grew very rapidly after this decree.

Some historians claim that the spread of Christianity hastened the decline of the Roman Empire. They claim that Christians tended to concentrate on obtaining salvation after death rather than living useful lives as Roman citizens. It is also said that the Christians gave their loyalty to God rather than to the Emperor. These claims, are open to doubt. It is more likely that the Empire was already weakened by economic and social causes before Christianity had any



Constantine.

### BARBARIAN INVASIONS 376-476 A.D.

The internal strength of the Empire was declining, and the threat of invasion from the north. This was the threat of invasion by the barbarians who lived beyond the Rhine and Danube rivers. 'Barbarian' did not mean quite the same thing to them as it does to us. We think of barbarians as un-civilized, but a barbarian was simply a person who did not enjoy the benefits of Roman civilization, who did not speak Latin. Many of these barbarians were of their own and had developed their own government.

During the fourth century A.D. the threat of barbarian invasion became a reality. In 376 the **Visigoths**, or Western Goths, crossed the River Danube into Roman territory. They were followed by wave upon wave of other barbarian tribes. The weak defences of the Empire were quite unable to stem the tide of invasions.

(a) **The Invasion of the Visigoths.**



**The fierce barbarian horsemen called the Huns.**

The Visigoths were driven into the Roman Empire by the ferocious **Huns**, a people of Mongolian race who originated in central Asia. The Huns attacked the Visigoths in 376 A.D. and drove them across the Danube into Roman territory. The Visigoths asked permission to settle in the Empire and the Emperor **Valens** agreed on condition that they surrendered their weapons and sent hostages to Rome. The Visigoths were annoyed at these conditions and they were still more enraged by the brutal treatment they received from Roman officials. Instead of settling peacefully, they began to attack the neighbouring Roman provinces. The Emperor Valens led an army against them, but he was defeated and killed at the **Battle of Hadrianople** in 378. The Romans were defeated because they were not prepared. The next Emperor, Theodosius, allowed the Visigoths to settle in the province of Thrace.

Again the Visigoths settled peacefully for a time and then they turned to violence once more under a new leader called **Alaric**, who had once served as an officer in the Roman army. Alaric plundered Thrace, Macedonia and Greece and then, in 401, turned towards Italy. His army attacked and captured Rome and pillaged



the city for three days. Alaric then moved into southern Italy, but any further plans which he may have had were cut short by his death in 410. The Visigoths then left Italy and settled in Spain and southern Gaul.

#### **(b) The Invasion of the Vandals.**

Meanwhile, other barbarians had been at work. In 406 the **Vandals** crossed the River Oder, swept across Gaul and invaded Spain. They settled for a time in southern Spain and then crossed into the Roman provinces in north Africa under an able leader called **Gaiseric** (428-477). Gaiseric led the Vandals across the Straits of Gibraltar in 429 and devastated the Roman towns along the north African coast. In 439 he occupied the city of Carthage, which he used as a base for piracy against Roman ships in the Mediterranean. This was yet another blow to the declining trade of the Roman Empire. In 455 a Vandal army under Gaiseric crossed the Mediterranean into Italy and plundered Rome.

#### **(c) Attila and the Huns.**

After they had driven the Visigoths into the Empire in 376, the Huns had settled in the region to the north of the Black Sea and the River Danube. The Emperors of Rome sent annual tribute to the Huns to keep them away from Roman territory. Then, in 450, the Emperor Marcian decided to stop sending the tribute. The Huns retaliated at once. Under an able leader called **Attila** they invaded Gaul in 451. When he was halted in Gaul by a combined army of Romans and barbarians, he turned into Italy. After plundering the Roman towns of Italy, Attila returned to the Danube, where he died in 453. After his death, the Huns became divided amongst themselves and they were never again a serious threat to the Empire. Nevertheless, their attacks had demoralised the citizens of the Empire.

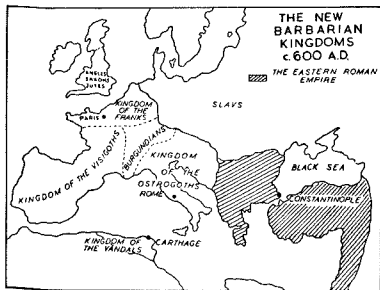
#### **(d) The End of the Roman Empire, 476 A.D.**

By the time of Attila's death, the Roman Empire was on its last legs. The constant attacks of the barbarians had smashed a structure which had already been crumbling. The administration was chaotic and trade was almost at a standstill. In Rome itself control of the government passed from the Emperors to barbarians who had been recruited into the Roman army. In 476 one of these

barbarian officers, whose name was **Odoacar**, deposed Romulus Augustulus, the last Emperor, and the Roman Empire in the West came to an abrupt end. An Emperor continued to rule in Constantinople, but he had no control over Western Europe. There the barbarians established their own independent kingdoms.

### 3. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BARBARIANS, 476 - 800 A.D.

After the last Roman Emperor was deposed in 476 A.D., the barbarians settled down in the territories which had once been governed by Rome. In these areas the barbarian tribes formed new kingdoms under their tribal leaders. We have already seen that

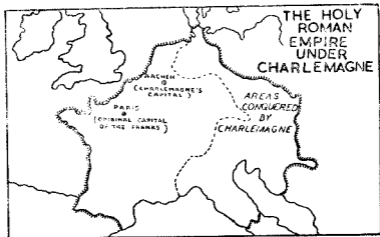


the Visigoths had settled in Spain and southern Gaul and the Vandals in North Africa around the city of Carthage. The **Ostrogoths**, or Eastern Goths, settled in Italy under an able ruler named Theodoric (493-526). The Ostrogoths were related to the Visigoths. Theodoric was a tolerant and intelligent king. He allowed the Romans to live undisturbed alongside his barbarian followers and continued to use the old Roman system of government. He had a great respect for the past greatness of the Roman Empire and even dreamt of restoring the Western Roman Empire.

During the fifth century, the Roman legions in Britain had been withdrawn to help in the defence of the Empire. In the two centuries which followed a large part of southern Britain was invaded and settled in by three groups of barbarians from northern Germany — the **Jutes**, the **Angles** and the **Saxons**. Towards the end of the fifth century, northern and central Gaul was occupied by the **Franks** and the **Burgundians**. The map on page 82 shows the most important barbarian kingdoms which had grown up by about 600 A.D.

The Franks who were mainly Catholics established the most important kingdom of all. A leader named **Clovis** (481-511) united all the Frankish tribes and established himself as their first king. He married a Christian princess and in 496 he himself was converted to Christianity. The rulers who followed Clovis did not share his ability. Gradually they fell under the influence of their chief official, who was called the Mayor of the Palace. Charles Martel, who defeated the Muslims at the Battle of Tours in 732, was one of these Frankish Mayors. Thus he saved the Western World from falling under the Muslims.

**Pepin the Short**, the son of Charles Martel, deposed the rightful ruler and became King in his place. In this way he founded what is called the Carolingian Dynasty of Frankish rulers. Pepin himself ruled from 751 until 768 and the throne then passed to



his son Charles, who is better known as **Charlemagne**, or Charles the Great (768-814). By conquest and clever diplomacy Charlemagne extended his rule over a large part of Western Europe and in 800 Pope Leo III crowned him as Holy Roman Emperor, the successor of the Emperors of ancient Rome. By this time his empire stretched from the Elbe to the Pyrenees and from the North Sea to Italy. This Holy Roman Empire continued to exist until the end of the nineteenth century.

In the new barbarian kingdoms many aspects of Roman civilisation survived. Most of the barbarians were converted to Christianity, which had been made the official religion of the Roman Empire by Constantine. The Roman system of law and government was adopted by several of the rulers of the new barbarian kingdoms, such as Charlemagne. Roman art, literature and ideas continued to influence European life. All these things were part of the **legacy of Rome** to the western world. But although Europe owes a lot to the Roman Empire, most Europeans are descended from the barbarian invaders and not from the Romans. The English, the French and the Germans of modern Europe are all descended from the tribesmen who destroyed the Roman Empire in the fifth century. A.D.

### Questions to Answer.

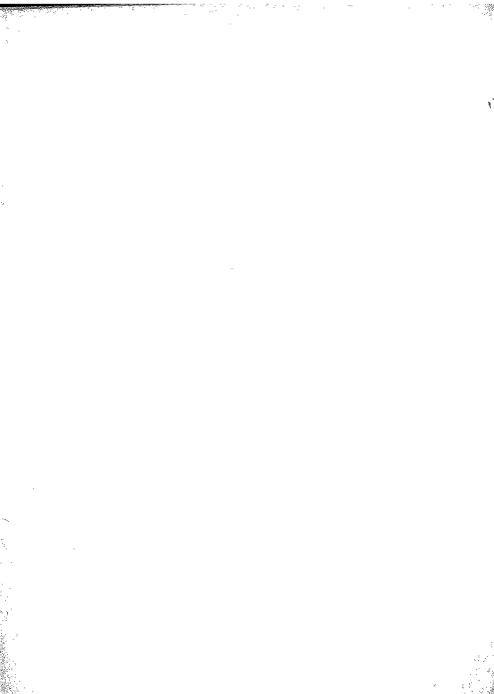
1. What were the most important reasons for the internal decline of the Roman Empire?
2. How did the Emperor Diocletian try to prevent the collapse of the Roman Empire?
3. What was meant by the word 'barbarian' in Roman times?
4. What part was played in the fall of the Roman Empire by (a) the Visigoths, (b) the Vandals, and (c) the Huns?
5. What were the important barbarian kingdoms which were set up in Europe between 476 and 800 A.D.?

## TEST PAPER II

1. State briefly why each of the following persons is famous:  
(a) Solon, (b) Pericles, (c) Socrates, (d) Herodotus, (e) Phidias, (f) Hannibal, (g) Julius Caesar, (h) Diocletian, (i) Attila, (j) Alaric, (k) Homer, (l) Darius, (m) Xerxes, (n) Plato, (o) Porus, (p) King Philip, (q) Pompey, (r) Mark Anthony (s) Octavian, (t) Virgil, (u) Constantine, (v) Clovis (w) Gaiseric, (x) Odovacar, (y) Charlemagne and (z) Charles Martel.
2. State briefly what is meant by each of the following terms:  
(a) the Periclean Age, (b) the Augustan Age, (b) the Greek City States, (d) the Athenian Confederacy, (e) the Council of Five Hundred, (f) Justinian Law Code and (g) the Punic Wars.
3. Give the date of each of the following events:  
(a) the end of the Minoan Civilisation, (b) the beginning of the Roman Republic, (c) the death of Alexander the Great, (d) the end of the Roman Empire, (e) the foundation of Athens, (f) the Battle of Marathon, (g) the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, (h) the Battle of Chaeronea, (i) the Battle of Issue, (j) the Battle of Actium, (k) the Battle of Tours, (l) the crowning of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor and (m) the Battle of Arbela.
4. Why are the following places famous:  
(a) Knossus, (b) Issue, (c) Arbela, (d) Troy, (e) Alexandria, (f) Marathon, (g) Salamis, (h) Chaeronea, (i) Zama, (j) Actium and (k) Plataea.
5. Write what you know about each of the following:  
(a) the Iliad, (b) the Odyssey, (c) the Aeneid, (d) the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius and (e) the Edict of Milan.

Part Three

**THE BEGINNINGS OF  
THE GREAT RELIGIONS**



## Part Three

### INTRODUCTION

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GREAT RELIGIONS

Religion has frequently played an extremely important part in shaping the history of the world. The ways of life of peoples in many different parts of the globe owe much to the influence of religion. The whole civilisation and social structure of India was deeply and permanently affected by the growth of Hinduism during the Vedic Age. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism had a very similar effect in China. Religion has led to the rise of some great empires, such as those of South East Asia, and to the fall of others, such as the Empire of Rome. Religion has produced great works of art, such as the paintings in the Ajanta Caves or the temple of Angkor Wat, and great works of literature, such as the Vedas, the Analects or the Tao Te Ching.

In this part of the book you will be reading about four of the most widespread of the world's religions - **Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam**. It was believed by historians that Hinduism was the result of the mixing of the religious and social customs of the Aryans and it came into being during the Vedic Age. In Chapter Ten you will read about the beginning of Hinduism and the main features that are found in this religion. Buddhism was founded by **Gautama Buddha**, son of **Suddhodhana**, king of the Sakyas. This religion has many followers in countries like Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Tibet, Cambodia, Japan and Malaysia. Buddhism is divided into two main schools - **Mahayana Buddhism** and **Hinayana Buddhism**.

Christianity was founded by **Jesus Christ**, who was born at **Bethlehem**. In about 29 A.D. Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. Islam was founded by **the Prophet Muhammad**, who was born in Mecca in 571 and died at Medina in 632. As you will read in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen, both these religions had humble beginnings and both spread very rapidly after the deaths of their founders. Christianity spread within the Roman Empire, where it was finally recognised as the official religion in 313. Islam spread within the great Arab Empire which by 750 stretched from the Arabian Sea to the Pyrennes. Both Christianity and Islam gave rise to new cultural developments. Islam helped to produce a great new civilisation in the Middle East, North Africa and Spain during the period of the **Abassid Caliphate** (750-1258). You will read about this Golden Age of Islam in Chapter Fourteen.



## PART THREE

### Chapter Ten

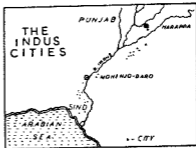
## THE BEGINNING OF HINDUISM

Rivers such as the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris, were the "cradles" of ancient civilisation. It was only on the fertile plains that the land could be made use of to support the population.

The first cities of India were built along the banks of the Indus River in about 2500 B.C. The first traces of this **Indus Civilisation**, as it is called, were discovered in 1921 by a team of British archaeologists under the leadership of Sir John Marshall. Since that time many other archaeologists and historians have studied the remains of the cities and we now have a fairly complete picture of the life which the first civilised Indians lived.

### I. THE INDUS CIVILISATION (2500 - 1500 B.C.).

The Indus Civilisation included more than sixty cities which were spread out over an area which measured one thousand miles from end to end. Most of the cities were small trading centres and market towns, but two of them were far larger than the rest. These were **Harappa** in the Punjab and **Mohenjo-daro** in Sind, each of which covered an area of over one square mile. Harappa and Mohenjo-daro were very probably the two capitals of a great Indus Empire. At the centre of each there was a raised platform



or citadel upon which the main public buildings, such as the Assembly Hall and the temples, were situated. The citadel was a rectangular platform which stood about thirty feet above the main city and which was surrounded by high walls of burnt bricks. Between the citadel and the rest of the city there were a number of terraces upon which the priests performed important religious services.

Below the citadel were the shops of the craftsmen and the houses of the merchants and the rest of the city people. Most of the houses were small, square buildings with flat roofs, and they were all made out of baked mud bricks. Harappa and Mohenjo-

Harappa and Mohenjo-daro were both extremely well planned. The main roads were straight and wide, and the system of drainage was excellent. The rulers of the cities had taken measures to keep the cities clean and the people healthy. Every house had its own rubbish shoot, square brick bin and a bathroom. Wells with drinking water were situated in several parts of the cities and there were large public baths on the citadel. The kilns which were used for baking pottery and the granaries for storing grain were built outside the city centres so that they would not interfere with the daily lives of the city folk.

Harappa and Mohenjo-daro were great centres of trade and numerous merchants lived in them. Cotton cloth was exported to the cities of Mesopotamia and copper, silver, precious stones and rare woods were imported from Baluchistan, Kashmir and other parts of India. Some goods were carried overland by pack mules or in ox carts with solid wooden wheels. Others were transported by sea in graceful sailing ships made from reeds. In addition to trade, the Indus people grew crops such as wheat and barley and kept domestic animals like bulls, goats and sheep. It was the farmers of the Indus Valley who provided the cities with a regular supply of food.

The inhabitants of the Indus cities were a very artistic people. They made life-like statues out of limestone, bronze and clay and produced thousands of tiny **seals** with very beautiful designs engraved upon them. These seals were only about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches long, but each one was decorated with pictures of animals, gods, trees and other natural objects. The seals were made out of a hard stone called steatite which was obtained from Baluchistan or Rajputana. They were probably used as trade marks for stamping articles which were exported overseas. One Indus seal was discovered in Mesopotamia, attached to a bale of cotton cloth. The Indus people also made a large number of beautiful and ingenious toys for their children, including pottery whistles and dolls made out of baked clay.

The Indus people had their own form of writing, which is found upon the small steatite seals. Unfortunately historians are not able to read it, for it is quite unlike the writing used by the peoples of other ancient civilisations. When the Indus script is deciphered our knowledge of this ancient civilisation will be vastly increased. We may then know what language the Indus people spoke.

Because historians cannot read the Indus script, the religious beliefs of the Indus people remain uncertain. Pictures of gods appear on the seals, but the names of these gods are not known. Sometimes the gods are accompanied by animals such as the elephant and the humped bull, and it may be that the Indus people regarded these animals as sacred. Priests played an important part in the life of the cities. Besides conducting all the religious services, they also controlled the government of the Indus Civilisation. Most historians are agreed upon one thing at least: the Indus people were not Hindus.

The Indus people were great lovers of peace. They possessed few weapons and their cities were not well fortified. The walls of the citadel were built to keep back the flood waters of the Indus, not to protect the cities from invaders. Perhaps the Indus people felt that they had nothing to fear. If so, they were wrong. In about 1500 B.C. barbarian invaders from the north swooped down on the Indus Valley. These invaders were the **Aryans**.

## **2. THE COMING OF THE ARYANS (1500 B.C.).**

According to an old Indian legend, Harappa and Mohenjodaro were destroyed by barbarians who came from the North Pole! Modern historians know different. The Aryans, or Indo-Europeans, who invaded the Indus Valley probably came from the steppes of Southern Russia in the area of the Caspian Sea. Before the Indus Civilisation was discovered there was a belief that civilisation in India began with the Aryan invasions.

Overpopulation and shortage of land drove the Aryans from their homeland and on about 2000 B.C. they entered Baluchistan, where they burnt down hundreds of peasant villages. Land was scarce even in Baluchistan and in about 1500 B.C. the Aryans moved on into the fertile Indus Valley. The unprotected cities fell quickly into their hands and most of the Indus people were massacred. Those few who survived either fled into central India or were kept by the Aryans as slaves. The Aryans possessed one great weapon which had assured them of victory over the Indus people. This was the horse-drawn chariot. It had never been seen in India before.

The Aryans were an agricultural people who knew nothing of city life. They grew barley, vegetables and fruit and kept animals such as cattle, sheep and goats near small villages of wooden houses with thatched roofs. They used the ox-drawn plough for cultivating their land. Cattle were the main feature of every Aryan farm, and a man's wealth was measured by the number of cows he possessed.

The Aryans were a simple, vigorous, fun-loving people. They had fair hair and very light skin. They wore primitive clothes made from woollen cloth and animal skins. Their favourite sports were chariot-racing and bear hunting and they also loved to dance to the music of cymbals, flutes and harps. On religious festivals they organised great feasts at which they ate beef and drank a sacred wine called soma. These festivals were common.

After their victory the Aryans did not live in the Indus cities. They allowed the cities to fall into ruins while they set up their villages and farms nearby. For several hundred years the Aryans lived as peaceful farmers in and around the Indus valley.

The Aryans were not as united as the Indus people had been. They were divided into numerous tribes, each composed of a group of related families. Each tribe had its own name, its own customs and its own leader, or Raja, who ruled the tribe with the help of a Council of Elders. The position of the Raja was handed down from father to son, but sometimes a Raja was elected. The Raja received tribute for protecting his people and was usually the leader in case of war. Warfare between different tribes was frequent, but all the tribes were ready to unite against a common enemy. All the Aryans lived a very similar way of life, they all worshipped the same gods and they all spoke the same language — **Sanskrit**.

### **Religion of the Aryans.**

The Aryans were very religious. They believed in the worship of many gods, who represented the different forces of nature such as the sky, the moon, rain and fire. The greatest of their gods was **Indra**, the god of the Storm, who is supposed to have helped the Aryans to overcome the Indus people. Indra was regarded as a hard-fighting, muscular god who travelled through the heavens in a chariot with a thunderbolt as his weapon. The lesser gods included **Rudra**, a young warrior, **Agni**, the god of fire, **Surya**, the sun god and **Usas**, the goddess of the dawn. When a Aryan died his body was usually burnt and the ashes thrown into a river. The Aryans believed that they must do good if they were to be rewarded after death. If anything bad was done then a person would be punished after his death. The Aryans had so much trust in their gods that they often offered sacrifices and gifts to their gods so as to be blessed.

### 3. THE VEDIC AGE (1500-562 B.C.).

The **Vedic Age** is the name given to the long period of Indian history between the coming of the Aryans (1500 B.C.) and the birth of Gautama Buddha (562 B.C.) It is one of the most important periods of early Indian history, for it was during this time that the foundations of Hindu society were laid. It is also a period about which historians know very little, for the Aryans left behind them little apart from their great religious books, the **Vedas**. It is from these books that the Vedic Age takes its name. It was also from the Vedas that most of the information about the Aryans was made known to the world.

During the Vedic Age the Aryans moved very slowly eastwards from the Indus Valley across the north of India towards the Ganges basin. By 900 B.C. they had established several tribal kingdoms along the banks of the Ganges. The most important of these were Magadha, Videha, Kosala and Kashi. The Aryans ceased to be a purely agricultural people and began to build towns and cities of their own which became the capitals of their kingdoms.

The Vedic Age saw the beginning of Indian literature. During this period the priests of the Aryan tribes composed (a) the **Vedas**, which were the sacred books of the tribes, and (b) the great **Sanskrit Epics**, which were long poems about tribal life and warfare.

#### (a) The Vedas.

The Vedas, or Books of Knowledge, are four long religious poems which were composed by the priests of the Aryan tribes during the Vedic Age. They were not written down but were passed on orally from one generation of priests to the next. The priests would recite the poems from memory at religious services and festivals. The four great poems were the **Rig Veda**, the **Samaveda**, the **Yajurveda**, and the **Atharvaveda**.

#### (i) The Rig Veda.

The Rig Veda was the first to be composed, soon after the Aryans arrived in the Indus Valley. It includes over a thousand hymns or prayers to the Aryan gods and is divided into ten chapters. Over a quarter of these hymns are addressed to Indra.

#### (ii) The Samaveda.

It was composed some five hundred years after the Rig Veda. The Samaveda is little more than a rearrangement of parts of the Rig Veda for use in ceremonies.

### (iii) The Atharvaveda.

It was composed about the same time as the Samaveda and is a collection of magical spells and charms which were used for driving away evil spirits.

### (iv) The Yajurveda.

It was also composed some five hundred years after the Rig Veda and includes many short verses which were used at sacrifices to the gods. The sacrifice of animals was a regular part of Aryan religion.

### (b) The Sanskrit Epics.

The Sanskrit Epics are two long poems which were written during the Vedic Age. They deal with the life of the Aryan tribes in northern India during a troubled period of migration and warfare.

#### The Ramayana.

The **Ramayana**, the first of the great epics, is a very long poem which is said to have been written by the sage Valmiki. It



Rama with his bow.

tells the story of Prince Rama, the King of Kosala, and his wife, Sita. Most of the story is about Rama's search for his beautiful wife after she had been carried away to Ceylon by Ravana, the demon king. After many adventures Rama succeeded in winning back Sita, with the help of Lakshman, his brother, and Hanuman, the king of the monkeys.

#### The Mahabharata

The other great epic is the **Mahabharata**, which is even longer than the Ramayana and is, in fact, the longest

poem in the world. It has over 100,000 verses. It tells the story of a long tribal war between the Kurus and the Pandus, who lived near the modern city of Delhi. After a very bitter struggle the Pandus were victorious and the leaders of the Kursus were killed. At one point in the story, Krishna, the charioteer of the Pandu leader, Arjuna, recites a long poem which is known as the **Bhagavadgita**, the Song of the Adorable One. The Bhagavadgita is regarded by the Hindus as one of the most sacred of their writings.

#### 4. THE BEGINNING OF HINDUISM.

From the Vedas and the two Sanskrit Epics historians learn that the Hindu religion came into being during the Vedic Age. Hinduism is one of the main religions of the world. This religion is different from most of the other religions in the sense that it is not a religion given to the world by one man. According to many writers, Hinduism resulted from the mixing of the religious and social customs of the Aryans with those of the Indus people whom they had defeated. The most important features of the Hindu religion are (a) a belief in many gods, (b) the caste system, (c) a belief in rebirth, and (d) other religious customs such as the practice of suttee, or widow-burning.

##### (a) A Belief in Many Gods.



The God Siva.

Hindus may be described as **polytheists**, a word which means, very simply, that they worship many gods. Muslims and Christians, on the other hand, believe in only one god: they are monotheists. Among the hundreds of gods which are worshipped by the Hindus, three gradually became more popular than all the rest. These three were Brahma, Siva and Vishnu. Brahma is worshipped as the creator of the universe. Siva is looked upon as the great destroyer and Vishnu as the protector. In

the course of history Siva and Vishnu are said to have come down to earth occasionally in human form. Rama, the King of Kosala, and Krishna, the Pandu charioteer, are both worshipped as gods in human form. The stories concerning these Gods are found in books called the **Puranas** (for old Stories)

### (b) A Belief in Rebirth.

Hindus believe that when a person dies then his spirit will be reborn in some other form. This other form depends upon the sort of life a person has lived. A man who has lived a good life will be reborn as a human being of high rank. On the other hand, a man who has lived an evil life may be reborn into a lower caste or even in the form of an animal. It is only when a person has undergone several rebirths and attained perfection that his spirit may enter the Hindu paradise and live at rest. This belief in rebirth is sometimes called the transmigration of souls. Hindus describe it as the **Law of Karma**.

### (c) The Caste System.

During the Vedic Age, Indian society became divided into four classes, or **castes**. At the top of the social scale came the **Brahmins**, or priests, who performed all the important religious services and acted as advisers to the Aryan Rajas. Below the Brahmins came the **Kshatriyas**, or nobles, who acted as leaders of the Aryan tribes in times of war. During the early part of the Vedic Age, when warfare was frequent, the Kshatriyas had been the top caste, but when times became more settled and peaceful they dropped into second place. Next came the **Vaisyas**, the farmers and craftsmen, and at the bottom of the social scale were the **Sudras**, the slaves.

The Caste System was extremely rigid. It was impossible for a person to leave the caste into which he was born or to marry a person belonging to a different caste. Each caste had its own set of laws, which governed the way in which its members must dress and behave. If a person broke these laws he could be expelled from his caste and there would be no one to help him. He would become an outcaste.



#### (d) Other Hindu Customs.

The Hindu religion includes customs which are too numerous to be described here. One of the best known is the practice of **suttee**, or widow-burning. According to this custom, a widow shows her great love for her husband by allowing herself to be burnt on his funeral pyre. The practice of suttee continued until it was prohibited by the British at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Another well-known Hindu custom is the practice of **ceremonial bathing** in river, especially in the Ganges, which is regarded as a sacred river. Until quite recently, women have occupied a lowly place in Hindu society. They were kept in seclusion and seldom allowed to take part in public life.

### 5. THE END OF THE VEDIC AGE.

By the time of the Buddha's birth (562 B.C.) the main features of Hinduism, which are described above, had come into being. The birth of the Buddha was the beginning of a new age in Indian history. A new religion, Buddhism, was born and had a great influence on life in India and the rest of Asia. The beginnings of Buddhism and the spread of the new faith will be described in Chapter 11.

#### Questions to Answer.

1. Write a brief description of the Indus Civilisation.
2. Write briefly about the way of life of the Aryans who invaded India in about 1500 B.C.
3. Why is the period of Indian history between 1500 B.C. and 562 B.C. known as the Vedic Age? Name the Aryan kingdoms which had come into existence by the end of this period.
4. Give the names of the four Vedas and two great Sanskrit epics. State briefly what they contain.
5. Describe the most important features of the Hindu religion.

## Chapter Eleven

# THE BEGINNING OF BUDDHISM

The Sixth Century B.C. was a time of religious revival in many parts of the world. In China, as you have read, it was the period when Confucius and Lao Tzu were spreading their ideas throughout the Chou Empire. In Persia a religious teacher named Zoroaster tried to bring about religious changes. In Palestine the Jewish Prophets were attempting to awaken the religious enthusiasm of the Hebrew people. In India there arose a number of religious reformers who were not satisfied with the Hinduism of their day. The most famous of these reformers were **Gosala Maskariputra**, the founder of the Ajivika Sect, **Mahavira**, the founder of Jainism, and **Gautama Buddha**, the founder of Buddhism.

### I. THE REFORMERS OF THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C.

Although the three great Indian religious reformers of the Sixth Century differed in many of their opinions, they also shared certain views. They were all dissatisfied with Hinduism as it was practised at the time when they lived. They opposed the rigid caste system which had grown up during the Vedic Age and they resented the growing power of the Brahmins. They also felt that Hindus were paying too much attention to ceremonial and sacrifices and were not giving enough thought to leading good lives. Finally, all three reformers were opposed to polytheism, the Hindu belief in gods.



The Buddha.

None of the reformers belonged to the Brahmin caste, which was the most important social group in Hindu society. Mahavira and Buddha were nobles of the Kshatriya or noble caste. Gosala was a peasant and a slave. This may explain why all three were so strongly opposed to the excessive influence of the Brahmins.

### (a) Gosala Maskariputra.

Little is known of the life and teachings of Gosala. According to Indian tradition he was born into slavery and worked for his master as a cowherd. He became dissatisfied with this kind of life and went off into the jungle, where he was joined by a group of followers who later became known as the Ajivikas. Gosala and the Ajivikas practised a very strict way of life. They gave up all material comforts and luxuries and spent all their time at prayer and meditation.

The Ajivikas believed that all events were decided by Niyati, which they regarded as a spiritual force which lay beyond the material world. Everything that happened was determined by Niyati and people could do nothing to decide their own fate. This kind of idea is usually known as a belief in predestination. The Ajivikas abandoned the caste system and all the gods and ceremonial of Hinduism. They lived hard and simple lives of constant prayers.

We know practically nothing about Gosala's later life. It seems that he worked for a while as a potter in the city of Sravast. He is said to have died in about 484 B.C.

### (b) Mahavira (540-467 B.C.).

Mahavira is a title which means 'the Great Hero'. The real name of the founder of Jainism was **Vardhamana**. He was born in about 540 B.C., the son of a noble of the kingdom of Vaisali near the Ganges. As a young man he led a life of leisure like that of his fellow nobles and spent some time at the court of the ruler of Vaisali. His parents died when Vardhamana was thirty years old, and soon afterwards he became dissatisfied with the wasteful life of pleasure which he was leading. He went off into the jungle where he joined a group of holy men called the Nigranthas. After twelve years of hardship and meditation, Vardhamana felt that he had discovered the truth about life and for the rest of his days he travelled around northern India preaching his new ideas. He died of self-starvation at Patna in about 467 B.C. at the age of seventy. By that time he had attracted more than fourteen thousand followers, who became known as the **Jains**. His followers included many rajahs, men and women, who went about trying to spread his teachings in the north and also to the south. The ideas which Vardhamana taught became known as **Jainism**.

## Teachings of Mahavira.

Like Gosala, Vardhamana taught a very strict way of life. His followers were expected to give up all material comforts and to spend their time in meditation and prayer. Mahavira laid great emphasis on the principle of **ahimsa**, or nonviolence to any living thing. Jainist monks carried feather dusters to brush the ground in front of them as they walked along, so that they would not tread on small insects. They also had veils over their mouths so that they would not accidentally swallow some small creature. Jainist monks lived a very severe way of life, similar to that of the Ajivikas. When they first became monks their hair was pulled out by the roots. As monks they spent much of their time meditating in full sunlight. They also engaged in frequent fasts and it was the ambition of many monks to starve themselves to death as **Mahavira** himself had done.

The Ajivikas and the Jains lived very strict and severe lives. The new religion preached by Gautama Buddha was very different. It was a much more gentle religion and it soon became very popular with the people of India.

### (c) Gautama Buddha (562-483 B.C.).

The most important of all the 6th century B.C. reformers was **Siddhartha Buddha** the founder of the Buddhist faith.

**Gautama** was born in the city of **Kapilvastu**, the capital of the kingdom of the Sakyas, in about 562 B.C. His father, **Suddhodhana**, was king of the Sakyas, who lived in the north-east of India, just to the south of Nepal. Shortly before **Gautama's** birth, his mother, **Mahamaya**, is said to have had a strange dream. In this dream she was carried away to a sacred lake in the Himalayas, where she was bathed by the guardians of the four quarters of the universe. A great white elephant with a lotus flower in its trunk entered her side. When the wise men of **Kapilvastu** heard about the dream they foretold that **Maya** would give birth to a son who would be either a great ruler or a great teacher. Nine months later **Gautama** was born in the grove of **Lumbini**, near **Kapilvastu**, while **Mahamaya** was on her way to her parents' home. According to Buddhist stories, when **Gautama** was born he stood up straight, took seven steps in four directions and uttered, "This is my last birth". He was given the name **Siddhartha**, which means 'he who accomplishes', and the word **Gautama** was his family name.

As a young man Gautama spent most of his time in his father's palace. King Suddhodana wanted his son to be a great ruler as the wise men had foretold and he was afraid that if Gautama left the palace he might become a teacher instead. So Gautama lived a life of luxury among the other courtiers. When he was nineteen he married Gopa Yasodhara, a beautiful noble girl whom he won in a contest with his cousin. The couple had a son whom they called Rahula.

Despite his father's wishes, Gautama used to go out of the palace with Channa, his charioteer. It was while he was on one of these expeditions that he saw four signs of human suffering in the city of Kapilavastu. The first was an old man of eighty, the second a man suffering from plague, the third a corpse on its way to the funeral pyre, the fourth a beggar. In this way Gautama learnt of age, sickness, death and poverty. The sight of these things made Gautama decide to give up his life of luxury and to seek the cause of human misery. At night he left his wife and son, dressed as a beggar and left the capital. He was then twenty-nine years of age.

For the next six years Gautama travelled about India seeking the answer to his problem. For a time he lived with a group of hermits on Vulture Peak, near Rajagriha. Later he learnt the art of meditation from a monk named Alara Kalama. Still his problem remained unanswered. He met some Brahmin priests but they could give him no help.

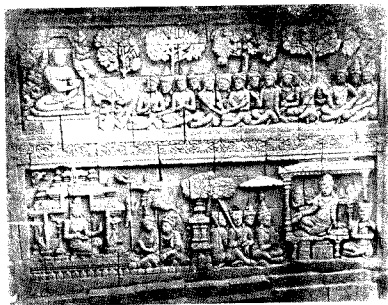
At the age of thirty-five Gautama halted at the side of a river near the city of Gaya. There he spent forty-nine days in meditation. He was tempted by Mara, the Evil One, but he did not give up, and at the end of the forty-nine days he received his enlightenment. This day is still celebrated in the Buddhist calendar as **Wesak Day**. Gautama saw the truth about human suffering and learned how it could be overcome. At once Gautama proceeded to the Deer Park at Benares, where he made his first sermon to five followers. His followers gave him the title 'Buddha' which means the Enlightened One. Together with his five followers Gautama lived in simple huts and continued their teachings in the Park.

For the remaining forty-five years of his life, Gautama Buddha travelled throughout northern India, teaching and preaching. The Brahmins opposed him, but his teachings were welcomed by the common people. Gautama also founded an order of yellow-robed monks which still exists and which is known as the **Sangha**

At the age of eighty Gautama fell ill after eating some poisoned meat which had been given him by Cunda, a blacksmith. Gautama knew that the meat was poisoned but he ate it because he did not want to offend his host. He died in Nepal, in 483 B.C. in the arms of Ananda, one of his closest followers.

## 2. THE TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM.

Gautama Buddha summarised his teachings in a sermon which he delivered at the Deer Park in Benares soon after his enlightenment. The sermon is often known as the Sermon on the Turning of the Wheel of the Law. In it Buddha described the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eight-fold Noble Path** which would lead people away from suffering and misery.



Carving showing two scenes from the life of the Buddha.

The first Noble Truth stated simply that life is full of pain and sorrow. As Buddha once said to his friend, Ananda: "Life is a long agony, it is only pain; and the child is right to cry as soon as he is born". The second Truth stated that the pain and sorrow of life

is the result of selfish desires and the third Truth stated that the pain could only be ended if selfish desires were checked. The fourth Truth contained the Eight-fold Noble Path. This is the path which will bring selfishness to an end and which will therefore overcome sorrow and misery. It is the Path of Salvation. The Eight-fold Noble Path is described simply as: Right View, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Recollection, Right Meditation. The real Buddhist believes in a pure life, he must not kill, must not lie and must not steal.

The Buddha believed in the Law of Karma which, as you have read, states that a person's spirit is reborn after death. According to the Buddha this process of rebirth can only be brought to an end by a life of perfection. If a person lives a perfect life according to the Eight-fold Path then his spirit will enter the spiritual world, or **Nirvana**, and live at rest. In this way human suffering will be brought to an end.

Buddha, like Mahavira, laid great stress on the principle of ahimsa. He taught that his followers should do no harm to any living thing, however small or ugly.

The Buddha's teachings became much more popular than those of Gosala and Mahavira, because they were easier to understand and easier to follow. Gosala and Mahavira had taught that people should live very severe lives of self-discipline. Buddha taught a **Middle Way**, a way of moderation. He did not ask his followers to give up all material things. He asked them simply to do everything in careful moderation. The Buddha's teachings also appealed to members of the lower castes of Hinduism, who resented their low position in society. They saw in Buddhism a way to achieve dignity and self-respect.

### 3. THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM.

In the course of time after the Buddha's death Buddhism split into two great Schools. One of these is described as **Mahayana Buddhism**; the other is called **Hinayana Buddhism**. The Mahayana Buddhists give more importance to ceremonies. Their temples are very ornate and full of richly-decorated statues and pictures of the Buddha. Hinayana Buddhists place more emphasis on prayer and meditation, and their places of worship are more simple. Buddhists throughout the world are still divided between these two

Schools. By the beginning of the third century B.C., Buddhism spread to southern India and Ceylon. However Buddhism became popular outside India where the people like Gautama's teaching of a pure and good life. So while Buddhism lost its following in India, it gains a great number of followers in countries like Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Tibet, Cambodia, Japan and Malaysia. To-day there are many followers of this teaching. Most Thai and Malayan Buddhists, as well as the Chinese and Japanese, follow a form of Mahayana Buddhism. Hinayana Buddhism is strongest in Cambodia and Ceylon.

#### 4. SUMMARY.

You read in the last chapter that Hinduism had become the dominant religion in India by the end of the Vedic Age. During the Sixth Century B.C. there arose a group of reformers who opposed some of the beliefs and customs of the Hindus. The most important of these reformers were Gosala Maskariputra, the founder of the Ajivikas, Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, and Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. Of the three new religions, Buddhism became the most popular both in India and throughout the rest of Asia. The spread of Buddhism was very largely the work of the Emperor Asoka, whose achievements are described in chapter 3.

#### Questions to Answer.

1. What views were shared by the three great religious reformers of sixth century India?
2. Who was Gosala Maskariputra and what religious group did he found?
3. Write a brief account of the life and teachings of Mahavira.
4. Write a brief description of the life of Gautama Buddha.
5. What are the most important teachings of Buddhism?



## Chapter Twelve

# THE BIRTH AND SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is now the most important religion in the continents of Europe, America and Australia. There are also many Christians in the lands of Africa and Asia. In South East Asia, the Philippines became a Christian country in the sixteenth century as a result of the work of Spanish missionaries who first visited the islands. In this chapter we will study the beginnings of Christianity in Palestine and the spread of the new religion throughout the Roman Empire. Like other great world religions, Christianity had very humble beginnings.

### I. THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY.

#### (a) Early Life of Jesus.



Bethlehem in Judea where Jesus Christ was born.

The founder of Christianity was a young man named **Jesus**, who was born at Bethlehem in **Judea** during the reign of the first Roman Emperor Augustus. Judea, like other parts of the Middle East, was at that time a province of the Roman Empire and a Roman governor had his headquarters in Jerusalem. Judea also had its own king, whose name was Herod, but this ruler was completely under the control of the Romans. The people of Judea were Jewish by religion and their language was Hebrew.

The parents of Jesus were humble folk who lived in the village of **Nazareth** a place in Palestine. His father, Joseph, was a carpenter, and Mary, his mother, was a simple housewife. When Jesus was born his parents were on their way to Jerusalem, where the Romans were taking a census of the population. When they arrived in Bethlehem during their journey they could not find anywhere to stay for the night and they took refuge in a stable. It was there that Jesus was born. According to the Bible story, the infant Jesus was visited by three princes from the East who had been guided to Bethlehem by a star. They presented Jesus with gifts and foretold that he would become a great leader. Since he was brought up in Nazareth, he was known as Jesus of Nazareth.

For the first thirty years of his life Jesus lived quietly with his parents in Nazareth helping his father in the carpenter's shop. It was only when he was thirty years old that Jesus left his home and began to travel around Judea and the neighbouring lands. The story of these travels is described in the **Four Gospels** which form part of the **New Testament of the Bible**. These Gospels are descriptions of the life of Jesus which were written by four of his followers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. On his travels Jesus was accompanied by a small group of friends who are known now as the Twelve Apostles. Like Jesus himself they were simple men who had given up their work to help spread the new religion. Their leader was Peter who had once been a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee.

### (b) Jesus as Messiah.

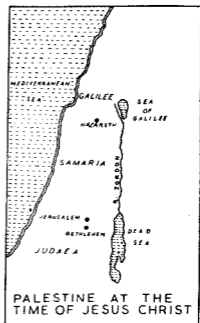
During his travels, Jesus taught the people of Palestine about a new way of life. He claimed that he was the Messiah, or Saviour, that the Prophets of the Jews had predicted. The Jews had expected this Messiah to be a military leader who would bring an end to Roman rule. Jesus was no military leader. He claimed that he was showing the people a new way of life which would bring happiness in this world and in the next. He wanted to save the people not from the Romans but from the sinful and wasteful lives they had been leading.



Jesus Christ.

Jesus soon attracted a large body of followers. Many were attracted by his teachings, which told people that they should love one another and live in peace and justice. Others were attracted by Jesus's gift of healing. During his journeys he cured the sick by a touch of his hand. He also performed many miracles. On one occasion he walked across the water to the boats of Peter and his friends. At another time he fed a crowd of five thousand people with five small loaves and five fishes. At a wedding feast he turned some jars of water into wine. He even brought his friend Lazarus back from the dead.

The Jewish priests became alarmed at the growing popularity of Jesus. They felt that his teachings were a threat to their own position as religious leaders. They accused him of blasphemy for describing himself as the Son of God and had him arrested by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Pilate tried Jesus for calling himself the King of the Jews. A trial was held and although the Roman Governor pronounced him innocent Jesus was condemned at the instigation of the Jewish leaders. In about 29 A.D. he was crucified on the Hill of Calvary above Jerusalem. It seems that a few nights before he was crucified he called his twelve followers and told them of what would happen to him. He said to them that among them one would betray him and strange to say his prediction came true. He was betrayed by one of his followers.



### (c) The Teachings of Jesus.

The teachings of Jesus, like the stories of his life, are found in the Four Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These Gospels were all written soon after the death of Jesus and

they are now part of the Bible, the sacred book of Christianity. The word Christianity itself is taken from the title Christ, or King, which Jesus used. Christianity is the religion of Jesus Christ.

**The main teachings of Jesus were:**

- (i) Jesus taught people how they must live if they were to be happy during their lives on earth and if their souls or spirits were to be united with God after death. The most important duty of every person was to love God and his fellow-men.
- (ii) He also taught that people must be humble and that they must think of other people before themselves. His famous saying is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". These two virtues - charity and humility - are the basis of the Christian religion.
- (iii) Jesus taught that there was a life after death which is more important than life on this earth. Whether a person goes to heaven or hell depends upon the sort of life he has lived.

**2. THE APOSTLES AND ST. PAUL.**



**Paul preaching to the Men of Athens.**

After the death of Jesus, his teachings were spread first of all by the Twelve Apostles, who won many converts in Palestine, Asia Minor, Egypt and other parts of the Middle East. Peter, the leader of the Apostles, travelled as far as Rome, where he was executed by officials of the Roman Empire.

Soon the disciples were joined by other men who wished to spread the teachings of Christ. One of the most important of these was **Paul**, a Jew but a Roman citizen who was born at Tarsus in Asia Minor. When he was converted to Christianity, he decided to call himself Paul instead of his old name, Saul. During his early life Paul had helped the Jewish rulers to persecute Christianity and he led parties which hunted down Christians and threw them into prison. On one of these expeditions Paul was riding along the road to Damascus when suddenly he was called upon by God to stop persecuting Christians and to become a Christian himself. Paul became a convert and for the rest of his life went on many missions to spread Christianity. His headquarters were in the city of Antioch. For more than twenty years Paul continued with his missionary work. Finally he was caught by Roman officials and he was executed at Rome in 62 A.D.

Besides preaching the gospel in many parts of the Middle East, Paul wrote a number of letters to the small groups of Christians which had come into being in many towns and cities. These letters were later collected together and now they form part of the New Testament of the Bible. The letters of other Apostles have also been collected in the New Testament and all these letters are together known as the **Epistles**. We can say that what Paul did to Christianity was what Asoka did to Buddhism or Mencius to Confucianism.

### 3. CHRISTIANITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

We have seen that both Peter, the leader of the Apostles, and Paul of Tarsus had been executed by the government of the Roman Empire. The Emperors of Rome looked upon Christianity as a serious threat to their power. They wanted the citizens of the Empire to give all their loyalty to the Roman Government. Christianity, on the other hand, taught that people should give their first loyalty to God. The Emperors wanted all Romans to submit to them in everything for the good of the Empire. Christian missionaries taught that people should give their first thought to God and should live according to the teachings of Jesus.

When Christianity began to spread, the Emperor took stern measures against converts to the new religion. When a Great Fire broke out in Rome in 64 A.D. the Emperor Nero blamed the Christians for starting it. Later another Emperor, Diocletian disallowed anyone to become a Christian. In ten bloody persecutions

many were executed by crucifixion, beheading or burning. Others were thrown to lions or made to fight against well-armed gladiators in Roman arenas. This persecution did not help the Romans to check the growth of Christianity. The Christians who were executed were looked upon as martyrs and their example served to strengthen the faith of other converts. In Rome many Christians hid in underground tunnels which are known as the Catacombs. Christianity continued to spread very rapidly in the Empire.

The Christians began to set up their churches in the cities of the Empire. Each church was organised and supervised by a priest, and groups of churches were controlled by bishops who resided in the major cities. The most important bishops were those who lived in Rome, Jerusalem and Antioch. So, while the Romans attempted to suppress the Christian faith, Christianity grew stronger and Christians were building up an efficient organisation.

The last Roman persecution of Christians was organised by the Emperor Diocletian during the fourth century. He even ordered the burning of all Christian books (like what Shih Huang Ti did with the Confucians). Many Christians were executed or imprisoned and thousands of churches were destroyed. But once again the persecution failed and the Emperors who followed Diocletian realised that they could not destroy Christianity. In 311 the Emperor Galerius ended the Roman persecution and granted toleration to all Christians in the Empire.

Two years later this toleration was extended by the **Emperor Constantine**. When Constantine became the Emperor the persecution of Christians was still going on. He had to fight many wars to keep his position as Emperor. So one night before he fought an important battle he dreamt that he saw Jesus Christ; the next day he won that battle. After this Constantine ordered the persecution of Christians to be stopped. In 313 Constantine issued an Edict at Milan which allowed Christians to practice their religion freely. Just before he died, in 337, Constantine himself became a convert to Christianity.

In 325 Constantine had allowed three hundred bishops to meet together at **Nicaea** in Asia Minor. The Council of Nicaea issued an authoritative statement of the Christian faith which is known as the Nicæan Creed. Those who would not believe in

this statement were declared to be heretics. The Nicæan Creed was confirmed by a second council of the church, which was held at Constantinople in 380. Such councils as these are still held by the Christian Church. One was called in 1961 by Pope John XXII.

#### 4. CHRISTIANITY AND THE BARBARIANS.

In Chapter 9 you read of the way in which the Western Roman Empire was destroyed by barbarian invaders during the fifth century A.D. These barbarians set up their kingdom in the territories which had once been ruled by the Emperor of Rome. The barbarians were pagans at the time of their invasion, but soon afterwards they too were converted to Christianity by missionaries. Many of these missionaries were monks from monasteries which had been set up in many parts of Europe.

The conversion of the Visigoths was the work of **Ulfila** (311—383), a Christian from Asia Minor who had been taken captive by the barbarians as a young boy. Ulfila later became a bishop and he sent missionaries back to the Visigoths who were gradually converted to Christianity. The Franks became Christians after the conversion of their ruler, Clovis, in 496. The conversion of the barbarians in Britain, the Angles and the Saxons, was the result of the plans of **Pope Gregory the Great**, who reigned in Rome from 590 to 604. Pope Gregory sent **St. Augustine** to Britain in 597 with thirty followers. Augustine became Archbishop of Canterbury and King Ethelbert of Kent accepted Christianity. Other English rulers were converted soon afterwards. By the beginning of the eighth century most of the barbarians had adopted Christianity as their faith.

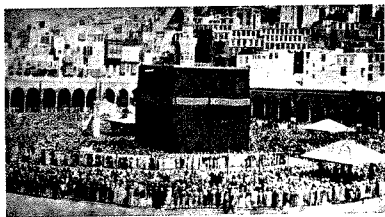
#### Questions to Answer.

1. Write a brief account of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
2. What part was played by St. Paul in the early spread of Christianity?
3. How did the Roman Emperors treat the first Christians? What were the reasons for this treatment?
4. How did the Emperor Constantine assist the spread of Christianity?
5. How did Christianity spread amongst the barbarians who destroyed the Roman Empire?

## Chapter Thirteen

### THE BIRTH OF ISLAM

Both Christianity and Islam were born in the Middle East. Christianity began in the towns and villages of Palestine. The religion of **Islam** was founded in **Arabia**. In the sixth century A.D., when the **Prophet Muhammad** was born, the greater part of Arabia was covered by desert. Fertile land was scarce, and most of the Arabs lived a nomadic life, moving constantly from place to place in search of pastures for their sheep and camels. These nomadic Arabs were known as the Bedouins. They were divided into tribes, each of which was ruled by a Sheikh and a Council of Elders. Warfare between these tribes was frequent and the Bedouins were experienced fighters and expert horsemen.



Mohammedan pilgrims praying round the Kaaba, the sacred shrine at Mecca.

Although most of the Arabs were nomads, a few had settled down in towns as traders or farmers. These towns lay on the caravan routes which linked the Arabian Sea with the Mediterranean. Traders from India and other eastern countries would ship their goods to the Middle East. These goods would then be carried overland by camel across Arabia to ports of the Mediterranean. Towns like Sana, Yathrib and Mecca grew up along the caravan routes. Of these towns, Mecca was the most important. It lay on the most



important caravan route, which stretched from Yemen to Damascus. It was also a religious centre. Pilgrims from many parts of Arabia visited the **Ka'ba**, the temple in Mecca which housed the sacred black stone. Mecca was a prosperous town, ruled by a committee of rich merchants.

The religion of the Arabs in the sixth century was very primitive. They worshipped many gods and also believed that there were spirits in natural objects such as rocks, caves, springs, wells and fountains. Sacrifices of animals and human beings were made to the gods and spirits. It is no wonder that the time before the teachings of the Prophet is known to Muslims as **al-Jahiliyah**, the Age of Ignorance. The Prophet Muhammad led the Arabs out of this Age of Ignorance, and gave them a new religion which taught a belief in one God.

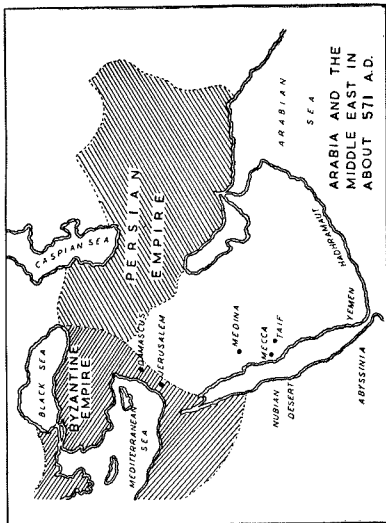
## **I. THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (571—632 A.D.).**

### **(i) Early Life of Muhammad**

The Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca in about 571. His father was a merchant named Abdullah and his mother a woman of noble blood named Aminah. Muhammad never saw his father. When he was born, Abdullah was away on a trading mission to Syria from which he never returned. He fell ill on the way back to Mecca and died in the house of some friends in Yathrib. The young Muhammad was first of all brought up by his mother and when she died, in about 577, he passed under the care of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, who was the keeper of the Ka'ba in Mecca. Muhammad was only six years old when his mother died. Abdul Muttalib died two years later and Muhammad was then adopted by his uncle, Abu Talib, a trader of the Banu Hashim clan.

As a young man Muhammad worked for his uncle as a shepherd boy and later accompanied Abu Talib on trading expeditions to Syria. He was honest and hard-working, and he became known to his companions as al-Amin, the trusted one.

When he was older he worked for a rich widow named Khadijah. He led the caravans of this widow to important trading centres like Damascus. From his travels he met many Christians and Jews. It was from them that he learnt about their religions.



When Muhammad was twenty-five years old he married the widow in Mecca. During the first years of his married life he helped to organise the trading caravans which were owned by his wife and he made several journeys northwards into Syria. It was also at this time that Muhammad's thoughts turned towards religion. Often he went alone to a cave in Mount Hira, near Mecca, to pray and meditate. He was disappointed with the Arabs because of their idol-worship and their war-like ways. He wanted to search for the truth and to teach it to his countrymen. It was while Muhammad was alone on Mount Hira that he received his call from God. The voice of the Angel Gabriel told Muhammad that he was chosen to be the Prophet of God, to teach the Arab people the true religion. The call came in 610 when Muhammad was forty years old.

### **(ii) Period of Persecution**

For the first three years after his call Muhammad passed on the message of God to a group of his close friends and relatives. He started to teach "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of God". Among the first to accept the new teachings were the Prophet's wife, Khadijah, his friend Abu Bakar and his cousin Ali. At the end of three years Muhammad began to preach publicly in Mecca. Many poor people became his followers but the rich men were against him. His teaching met with great hostility from the leaders of the most powerful tribe in Mecca, the Quraish. These leaders looked upon Muhammad as an upstart, and they could not accept his belief in one God and in the brotherhood of all men. Muhammad's teachings were opposed to all the traditional beliefs and customs of the Arabs and it was natural that he faced great opposition.

The leaders of the Quraish did what they could to prevent Muhammad from spreading his teachings. They tried to persuade Abu Talib to stop Muhammad from teaching and to banish him from the Banu Hashim clan. When Abu Talib refused, the Quraish cut off the Banu Hashim from all contact with the rest of the tribe. They hoped that Abu Talib and other members of the Banu Hashim would then take action against Muhammad. Once again the Quraish failed and Muhammad was supported by his clansmen. In 619 the members of the Banu Hashim were allowed once more to have contact with the other members of the tribe.

A year later Muhammad's wife, Khadijah, and his uncle, Abu Talib, both died. Abu Talib had been the Prophet's chief protector in Mecca, and now that he was dead Muhammad decided to find some other headquarters for his religion. First he went to the nearby town of Taif, but he met with a hostile reception and returned quickly to Mecca. Soon afterwards a party of pilgrims from Yathrib, a trading centre over two hundred miles from Mecca, invited Muhammad to become their leader and lawgiver. Muhammad met the pilgrims several times and he finally decided to accept their invitation. The leaders of the Quraish tried to stop him from leaving Mecca, but Muhammad evaded them and arrived in Yathrib in 622 with his friend Abu Bakar. The journey of Muhammad from Mecca to Yathrib is known as the **Hijrah**. This event marked the beginning of the Muslim calendar. The name Yathrib was later changed to **Medina**, a short form of *Medinat Rasul-Allah* — the City of the Prophet.

### (iii) Success of Muhammad.

For the remaining ten years of his life, the Prophet met with amazing success. He was able to continue his preaching in public without fear. The people of Medina accepted him as their leader and religious teacher and Muhammad also won a number of great military successes against the armies of the Quraish. He defeated the Quraish at the **Battle of Badr** in 623 and again at the **Battle of the Trench** in 627. After this last victory the Quraish agreed to a truce with Muhammad by which he was allowed to make pilgrimages with his followers to the Ka'ba in Mecca. The Quraish broke the truce and Muhammad conquered Mecca in 630. After this many of the nomadic tribes from the desert visited the Prophet and promised to accept his teachings.

### (iv) Death of Muhammad.

In 631 Muhammad made his last pilgrimage to the Ka'ba. He fell ill on the way back to Medina and died there in 632 at the age of sixty-three. After his death Islam spread rapidly throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

## 2. THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD.

The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad were taken down by his followers as they listened to him. After the Prophet's death the many written fragments which contained these teachings were collected together by the first Caliph, Abu Bakar. The collection

made by Abu Bakar was made into a book which is called the **Koran**. The Koran is the sacred book of the Muslims, for it contains the teachings which God passed on to the Prophet Muhammad. It is divided into one hundred and fourteen surahs, or chapters.

### **The Five Pillars of Islam.**

Islam means literally 'surrender'; Muslims are those who surrender themselves to the will of God. The will of God is to be found in the Koran. The most important of these teachings have been summarised as the **Five Pillars of Islam**: Faith, Prayers, Almsgiving, Fasting and Pilgrimage. The Five Pillars are a summary of the chief beliefs of all Muslims and the duties of every follower of Islam.

#### **(a) Faith.**

The first pillar of Islam is summed up in a short phrase which is repeated many times in the Koran: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of God". Muslims reject the idea of many gods and put all their faith in one, true God who is just, compassionate and merciful. Muhammad was the Prophet of the one, true God. In other words, God passed on his message to the world through Muhammad. There had been other lesser Prophets before Muhammad, but Muhammad was the last and the greatest of God's messengers.

#### **(b) Prayer.**

All Muslims are called upon to pray to God at least five times a day either alone or as part of the congregation in a mosque. The noon prayer on Friday is a public celebration in the Mosque, when the prayers of the faithful are led by the Imam. There are strict regulations about the way in which Muslims must pray. They must face the Holy City of Mecca, they must cleanse themselves before prayer and the place of prayer must also be clean. The movements of the person in prayer are strictly regulated by Muslim custom. Prayer is looked upon as extremely important in the religion of Islam for it forms a close link between Muslims and the one, true God.

#### **(c) Almsgiving.**

Every Muslim must contribute towards the upkeep of the mosque and the relief of the poor. A regular tax is collected and Muslims are also encouraged to make voluntary contributions.

#### (d) Fasting.

All Muslims must refrain from food and drink between sunrise and sunset during the month of Ramadhan. The fasting month, or Puasa as it is called in Malaya, gives all Muslims an opportunity of renewing their faith and reforming their ways.

#### (e) Pilgrimage.

All Muslims must attempt to make a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba in Mecca at least once during his lifetime. In Malaya a person who has fulfilled the pilgrimage is given the honorific title, Haji. The Pilgrimage to Mecca is a symbol of the unity of Islam.

### The Hadith and the Shariah

The Koran is the sacred book of Islam just as the Bible is to Christianity. The teachings of Prophet Muhammad are contained in the Koran. Two other important documents in Islam are the Hadith and the Shariah.

#### (i) The Hadith

These contain the traditions about the life of Muhammad. They include sayings and experiences which are not recorded.

#### (ii) The Shariah

This is the sacred law of Islam and is enforced by religious courts in Malaya and other parts of the Muslim world. These courts punish Muslims who fail to respect the teachings in the Koran and the Five Pillars of Islam.

### 3. THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN THE WEST AND EAST

After the Prophet's death in 632 the Muslims of Medina met together to elect a successor who would act as their leader. Muhammad's friend and father-in-law **Abu Bakar** was chosen for the task and he adopted the title Khalifah Rasul Allah, the Successor of the Prophet of God. This title is usually shortened to **Caliph**, or Successor. The Caliphs were not Prophets like in the case of Muhammad but they just took over as leaders of the Muslims in times of war and peace.

### (a) The Orthodox Caliphs (632—760).

The first four Caliphs, **Abu Bakar** (632-634), **Omar** (634-644), **Othman** (644-656) and **Ali** (656-661) are known as the Orthodox Caliphs because they followed the religion very strictly. They were all related to Muhammad and were sometimes referred to as the Elected Caliphs because they were elected to their positions by the Muslims of Medina. The period between 632 and 661 is known as the time of the **Orthodox Caliphate**. The capital of this Caliphate was at Medina.

It was during this period that Islam expanded. After the death of Muhammad, Abu Bakar started a short war to bring unity to Arabia. He sent his armies and fought against the neighbouring empire of Byzantine and Persia. The armies of Abu Bakar and his successors were very successful. By 661, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Persia and Egypt came under the control of the Muslims.

The Caliph who was responsible for the expansion of Islam was Omar, and for this reason he is sometimes called Omar the Great. He was the one who brought Persia, Egypt and Syria under Muslim control.

The Orthodox Caliphate came to an end in 661. It started because of a quarrel between the last Caliph, Ali, and Muawiyah, the Governor of Syria. Ali was murdered in 661 and Muawiyah became the first Caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate.

### (b) The Umayyad Caliphs (661—750).

Caliph Ali was murdered in 661 and his position was taken by his rival **Muawiyah**, the leader of the Umayyad clan. Between 661 and 750 the Caliphate became hereditary in Muawiyah's family, and for this reason the period between 661 and 750 is known as the time of the Umayyad Caliphate. The Caliphs, now moved their capital to Damascus in Syria. They were no longer elected and many of them were not religious enthusiasts. In 750 the last Umayyad Caliph was overthrown by a rebellion and his position was taken by Abu'l Abbas, the leader of a powerful Persian family. Abu'l Abbas was the founder of the Abbasid Caliphate, which is described in the next chapter.

The period of the Orthodox Caliphate and the Umayyad Caliphate is an extremely important one in the history of Islam. It was during this period that the religion of Islam spread from Arabia throughout the Middle East, along the north coast of Africa and to parts of western Europe.

### (c) The Spread of Islam (632—750).

The spread of Islam after the death of the Prophet is one of the most remarkable events in the history of the world. In a little over a century Islam had become one of the major religions of the world. In 632 Islam was confined to the Arabian peninsula. By 750 there was a great Islamic Empire which stretched from the Pyrenees to the Arabian Sea.

Soon after the death of the Prophet, Muslim expeditions were sent into the neighbouring lands of Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Persia and Egypt. These expeditions did not begin as wars of conquest and the Muslims had no desire to spread their religion by force. The Muslims took up arms to defend their faith against the threat of external attack. Once the wars had begun, however, the Muslims were quickly victorious. In 636 a force of Heraclius, the ruler of the Eastern Roman Empire, was defeated at the **Battle of the Yarmuk River** and soon afterwards Syria and Palestine fell into the hands of the Muslims. In 637 the army of Persia was defeated and, Muslim armies occupied Iraq and Persia. The conquest of Egypt which began in 639, was completed by the Muslim occupation of Alexandria in 640. Although Islam was not spread by force, the people of the new Islamic Empire were attracted to the religion and most of them became converts. These first campaigns were fought during the time of the Orthodox Caliphate. Caliph Omar directed many of the expeditions.

Under the Umayyad Caliphs, the expansion of Islam continued. The whole of the North African coast, including Tunisia and Morocco, were brought under Muslim control. In 711 a Muslim force under **Tarig**, an African Barber, entered Spain and by 720 the Muslims had reached the Pyrenees. A Muslim army crossed into France but it was defeated in 732 by Charles Martel, the ruler of the kingdom of the Franks at the Battle of Tours. In the East Muslim armies attempted to take Constantinople the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, but all their attempts failed. By 750 the Islamic Empire had reached its greatest extent and its size and importance may be judged from the map on page 121.

Many factors help to explain the success of the Muslim armies. One was the weakness of the Persian and Eastern Roman Empires which controlled most of the Middle East. These two Empires had fought a long war between themselves and both were in an exhausted state. The rulers of both Empires were also faced with



internal discontent which was caused by heavy taxes and religious persecution. Many people were ready to welcome the Muslims as saviours. Another factor was the enthusiasm of the Muslim army under able leaders like **Khalid ibn al-Walid**, who had led his forces to victory in Syria, Palestine and Persia, and **Amir ibn al-As**, who had commanded the victorious Muslim troops in Egypt. The Muslims were also better equipped for desert warfare than their opponents. In the tribal wars which had been frequent before the Prophet's birth the Arabs had learnt how to use camels and horses to the best advantage in desert battles.

#### 4. SUMMARY.

This chapter has described the dramatic rise and spread of a new world religion, Islam. The founder of this new religion was the Prophet Muhammad, who was born in Mecca in Arabia in 571. Despite the opposition of many Arabs, Muhammad continued to teach his new faith, and by the time of his death, in 632, the whole of Arabia had been converted. After the Prophet's death the leadership of Islam passed to his successors, the Caliphs. During the time of the Orthodox Caliphate (632—661) and the Umayyad Caliphate (661—750) Islam spread rapidly and a great Islamic Empire came into being. Within this Empire a great civilisation developed after 750. This civilisation is described in the next chapter.

#### Questions to Answer.

1. Write a brief account of the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.
2. What are the Five Pillars of Islam?
3. Give the names of the four Orthodox Caliphs. Why are they sometimes known as the Elected Caliphs?
4. Write a brief account of the spread of Islam between 632 and 750.
5. What event prevented Islam from spreading into Western Europe?

## Chapter Fourteen

### THE GOLDEN AGE OF ISLAM

By 750 the Islamic Empire had reached its greatest extent. It stretched from the Pyrenees in the west to the Arabian Sea in the east and included the lands of North Africa and the Middle East as well as Spain in western Europe. In 750 Abu'l Abbas, a descendant of an uncle of the prophet seized control of this vast Empire by defeating and killing the last Umayyad Caliph, Marwan II, whose capital was situated at Damascus. Abu'l Abbas became the first of the **Abbasid Caliphs**, who ruled over the Islamic Empire between 750 and 1258.

The period of the Abbasid Caliphate is important for two reasons, (a) During this time the Caliphs slowly lost their power of control over the empire. The result was that the Islamic Empire broke up into fragments, so that by 1258 it had been replaced by a number of independent states, and (b) the Muslims developed a civilisation which is one of the most famous in world history and which has led historians to describe the Abbasid period as the Golden Age of Islam. In this chapter we will study each of these developments.

#### 1. THE ABBASID CALIPHS (750—1258).

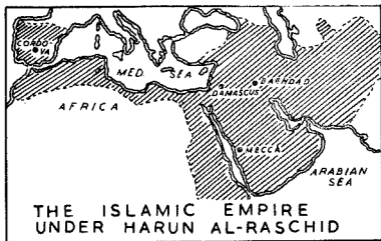
The first six Abbasid Caliphs were men of energy and ability who kept their Empire united and ruled it with a strong and efficient hand. The most famous of these rulers were **Harun al-Raschid**, who ruled from 786 until 809, and one of his sons, **Ma'mun**, who was Caliph between 813 and 833.

The twenty-three years of Harun's reign are among the most glorious in the history of Islam. His capital at Baghdad was a centre of culture and trade. Harun took many measures to develop the civilisation of the Islamic world. Many writers and scholars such as the poets, Abu'l Atahiyah, and the historian, Wagidi, were allowed to live at the Caliph's court and were encouraged in their work by Harun himself. At Baghdad Harun built a great observatory which became a great centre for the study of astronomy. He also built several hospitals and encouraged the study of medicine. The roads of the Empire were rebuilt to improve trade and many beautiful buildings, especially mosques and official palaces, were constructed. But although Harun admired culture, he ruled like a tyrant.

allowing no-one to share his power. When the Barmakid family became too powerful in Baghdad, Harun had all its members executed or imprisoned. Among those who met their deaths was Ja'afar, who was Grand Vizier, or Prime Minister, of the Empire, and who had once been Harun's close friend. Harun himself died in 809 during an expedition which he had led against the Eastern Roman Emperor.

Caliph Ma'mun was less of a tyrant than his father, but he was equally interested in the growth of Islamic civilisation. In Baghdad he built a great library called the **Bayt-al-Hikmah**, the House of Wisdom. In this library books were collected from every part of the Muslim world. Muslim scholars were encouraged to translate, them from their original languages — Persian, Greek, Hebrew Syrian, Sanskrit—into Arabic, so that they could be read by people in every part of the Islamic world. In this way the works of famous Greek doctors and philosophers were translated by Hunayn ibn Ishaq (809—873). By this time Arabic had become the official language of the whole Empire.

The Caliphs who followed Mamun were men of less ability and efficiency. Slowly they fell under the control of powerful groups at the court in Baghdad and became no more than powerless figureheads. The bodyguard of Turkish slaves, which had once protected the Caliphs, seized control of the government soon after



Ma'mun's death and maintained it until 945. The government then fell under the influence of the Buwayhids, a powerful Persian family. In 1055 the Buwayhids were replaced in turn by the Setjug Turks. The Caliphs continued to live in great splendour at their court, but real power passed out of their hands.

As the power of the Caliphs at Baghdad declined, so the Islamic Empire broke up. A strong leadership had gone and the different parts of the Empire began to assert their independence. The first to do so was Spain, which was taken over by Abdul Rahman, a member of the Umayyad family in 756. Morocco had become independent by 788, Tunisia by 800 and other parts of the Empire followed suit. By the middle of the eleventh century, a united Empire had been replaced by a group of independent states. The rulers of these states continued to look upon the Caliph as their ruler, but they would not allow him to interfere with their governments. The Caliph's real power extended only to the area around his capital.

## 2. ISLAMIC CIVILISATION.

Although the Abbasid Caliphate was a time of political disorder, when the Islamic Empire collapsed and the Caliphs lost their power, it was a great period for the civilisation of Islam. The Arabs learnt a great deal from the peoples whom they had conquered and they welded many elements into a great new way of life. It would take a complete book to describe this way of life in detail. Here we can only describe some of the most important aspects of it.

### (a) Language and Literature.

Arabic became the official language of the whole Muslim Empire. It was spoken by people as far afield as Ormuz, on the Persian Gulf, and Cordova in Spain. All the great books of the Abbasid period were written in Arabic. At the same time the language was enriched by new words which were borrowed from Greek, Latin, Coptic and Aramaic. The sound of spoken Arabic is very beautiful and this made the language ideal for the writing of poetry. Many poets flourished during the Abbasid period. Among the most famous was **Omar Khayyam** (1040—1124) who wrote a famous love poem called the **Rubaiyat**. Omar Khayyam was also a famous astronomer and mathematician. The Arabs of the Abbasid period were also great story-tellers. A famous collection of stories known as the **Arabian Nights** included many legends which a slave-girl is supposed to have related to Harun al-Raschid.

### (b) Arab Philosophy.

Many great Muslim philosophers lived during the Abbasid period. The most famous of these worked in the Universities of Spain at Cordova and Seville during the twelfth century. They were Ibn Bajja, Ibn Tufail and Ibn Rushol. These philosophers had learnt a great deal from the writings of the Greeks, whose works were translated at the House of Wisdom in Baghdad. Another famous philosopher and historian was Ibn Khaldun who was born in Tunis. His most important work was "History of the Berbers".

### (c) Arab Medicine.

The Arabs became interested in the study of medicine after they had read Greek and Indian medical works which had been translated into Arabic at Baghdad. Arab doctors then conducted new experiments of their own and added to the world's knowledge of medicine. **Hunayn ibn Ishaq**, who was born in Mesopotamia in 809, made a close study of the eye and developed new ways of treating eye diseases. He was the personal doctor of Caliph Ma'mun. He also wrote important books on hygiene and diet. Other Muslim doctors wrote about the use of drugs for curing diseases. One of the greatest Arab doctors, **Avicenna** (980—1037), wrote a complete encyclopedia of medical science, which was used in Europe until the seventeenth century. **Ibn al-Nafi**, who lived during the thirteenth century, was the first doctor in the world to understand the importance of the heart in the circulation of the blood.

### (d) Science and Mathematics.

Muslim scholars of the Abbasid period made some very important discoveries in the fields of science and mathematics. **Al-Khwarizmi**, who died in 850, made a thorough study of astronomy at the observatory in Baghdad and produced the first map of the heavens. He also invented the system of calculation which we call Algebra. 'Algebra' is itself an Arabic word. The Muslims also introduced Arabic numerals to the world, thus making mathematical calculations much easier.

### (e) Geography.

Muslim geographers and travellers added to man's knowledge of the world in which he lived. One of the most famous of the geographers was **Yaqut ibn Abdullah** (1179—1229), who wrote a dictionary of geography called the **Mujam-al-Buldan**. **Al-Idrisi**,

who died in 1164, drew a map of the world which is remarkably accurate for its time. Al-Idrisi was also one of the first scholars to realise that the earth was a sphere. One of the greatest Muslim travellers was **Ibn Battutah** (1304—1377) whose life you will study next year.

#### (f) Muslim Art.

Muslim architects produced some of the world's most beautiful buildings. In particular, they excelled in the building of mosques, palaces and fortresses. They invented some new forms of building, such as the minaret, the pointed arch and ornamental battlements, which are still used by architects all over the world.

### 3. THE END OF THE ABBASID CALIPHATE (1258).

You have already read that the Muslim Empire was slowly breaking up during the Abbasid period and that the Caliphs were losing their power of control. The final blow came in 1258.

Throughout the twelfth century the **Mongols** from Central Asia had been extending their power towards the west. In 1253 the Mongol leader **Hulagu**, a grandson of Genghiz Khan, entered Persia. In 1257 his armies stood before the gates of Baghdad. The Caliph was too weak to resist and the city fell in 1258. Caliph Nutasim was executed and the line of Abbasid Caliphs was brought to an end.

#### Questions to Answer.

1. How was the Abbasid Caliphate founded?
2. Write a brief description of the reign of Harun al-Raschid.
3. What were the main features of Islamic civilisation during the Abbasid period?
4. State briefly the importance of each of the following persons: (a) Omar Khayyam, (b) Hunayn ibn Ishaq, (c) Avicenna, (d) al-Khwarizmi, (e) Yaqut ibn Abdullah.
5. How was the Abbasid Caliphate brought to an end?

### TEST PAPER III.

1. State briefly why each of the following persons is famous:  
(a) Jesus Christ, (b) the Apostle Peter, (c) Pontius Pilate, (d) the Emperor Constantine, (e) Paul of Tarsus, (f) Pope Gregory the Great, (g) St. Augustine of Canterbury, (h) the Prophet Muhammad, (i) Abu Bakar, (j) Abu'l Abbas, (k) Khalid ibn al-Walid, (l) Amir ibn al-As, (m) Tariq, (n) Harun al-Raschid, (o) Mamun, (p) Omar Khayyam, (q) Ibn Bajja, (r) Hunayn ibn Ishaq, (s) Avicenna, (t) Ibn al-Nafi, (u) al-Khwarizmi, (v) Yaqut ibn Abdullah, (w) al-Idrisi, (x) Ibn Battutah, and (y) Gautama Buddha.
2. State briefly what is meant by each of the following terms:  
(a) the Twelve Apostles, (b) the Messiah, (c) the catacombs, (d) the Nicaean Crede, (e) the Epistles, (f) al-Jahiliyah, (g) the Quraish Tribe, (h) the Five Pillars of Islam, (i) the Shariah, (j) the Orthodox Caliphate, (k) the Umayyad Caliphate, (l) the Bayt-al-Hikmah. (m) the Caste System, (n) Polytheism, (o) the Law of Karma, (p) the Vedas, (q) the practice of suttee, (r) Mahayana Buddhism, (s) Hinayana Buddhism, (t) Nirvana and (u) the Eight-Fold Noble Paths.
3. Give the date of each of the following events:  
(a) the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, (b) the Council of Nicaea, (c) the beginning of the Orthodox Caliphate, (d) the end of the Umayyad Caliphate, (e) the Mongol occupation of Baghdad, (f) the Hijrah, (g) the defeat of a Muslim army by Charles Martel, (h) the Muslim occupation of Alexandria, (i) Tariq's arrival in Spain, (j) the arrival of St. Augustine in Britain and (k) the birth of Buddha.
4. Why are the following places famous:  
(a) Mecca, (b) Medina, (c) Bethlehem, (d) Jerusalem, (e) Tarsus, (f) Antioch, (g) Constantinople, (h) the Yarmuk River, (i) Alexandria, (j) Baghdad, (k) Mohenjo-daro, (l) Gaya, (m) Benares and (n) Kapilavastu.
5. Write what you know about the following:  
(a) the Koran, (b) the New Testament of the Bible, (c) the Rig Veda, (d) the Ramayana, (e) Mahabharata and (f) the Ather-veda.

## **BOOK LIST FOR TEACHERS.**

This short list has been compiled for the convenience of teachers who may wish to find additional details for their lessons. The books must be regarded as too advanced for use by the pupils themselves.

### **1. General Reference Books.**

LANGER, W. L. An Encyclopedia of World History.  
HAYES, MOON, and WAYLAND. World History.  
WELLS, H. G. A short History of the World.  
COTTRELL, L. The Concise Encyclopedia of Archaeology.  
BOWLE, J. The Concise Encyclopedia of World History.

### **2. The History of Greece and Rome.**

ROBINSON, C. A History of Greece.  
BURY, J. B. A History of Rome.  
TARN, W. W. Alexander the Great.

### **3. The History of China.**

LATOURETTE, K. S. The Chinese, their History and Culture.  
GOODRICH, L. C. A Short History of the Chinese People.  
FITZGERALD, C. P. China.  
WATSON, W. China.

### **4. The History of India.**

RAWLINSON, H. G. India.  
SMITH, V. The Early History of India.  
SMITH, V. The Oxford History of India.  
MORELAND and CHATERJEE. A short History of India

### **5. The History of Islam and Christianity.**

HITTI, P. The Arabs, a Short History.  
WATT, W. M. Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman.  
BROCKELMANN, C. A History of the Islamic Peoples.  
ZIZZAMIA, R. The Life of Christ.  
ROPS, DANIEL Jesus and His Times.

### **6. The History of Malaya and South East Asia.**

HALL, D. G. E. A History of South East Asia.  
HARRISON, B. South East Asia, a Short History.  
MOORHEAD, F. J. A History of Malaya and her Neighbours.  
WINSTEDT, R. O. Sir, A History of Malaya.