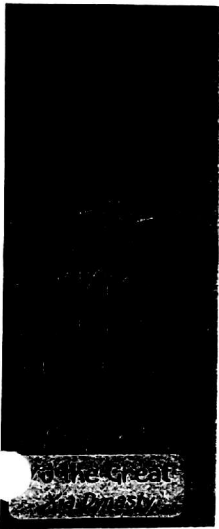


Ancient China

(2000BC – present)

Chinese civilization developed many thousands of years ago and it still endures to the present century. For hundreds of years, China had the most advanced civilization in the world. China's geographic location was one of the reasons why they were able to maintain their civilization. The area is surrounded by oceans, mountains and the Gobi Desert. This made it very difficult for invader to attack China. Since there was only little contact with the outside world, there was a strong sense of nationalism in Ancient China.



China's ancient history consists of a succession of dynasties. A dynasty is a period where rulers from the same family have the power. Each dynasty was given the family name of their rulers. When a dynasty became weak as a result of losing wars or natural disasters, another dynasty would take over.

The ancient Chinese invented many things that we still use today, such as: paper, silk, matches, wheelbarrows, gunpowder, astronomy, fireworks, medicines, paper money, ink, printing and many other things.

The Xia Dynasty was the first dynasty in Ancient China. Archaeologists, believe that the Xia Dynasty began around 2000BC and lasted for 500 years. Some dynasties, such as the Qin and Sui, only ruled the country for a few decades. Other dynasties, such as the Chou and Ming, lasted for centuries.

The Qin Dynasty is one of the most famous dynasties, because this dynasty was the first to centralize the power instead of a system with many powerful landowners. This is why Qin Shi Huang is considered to be the first emperor of China. The Qin Dynasty laid the foundation for government structures that lasted for many centuries.

The Han Dynasty replaced the Qin Dynasty in 206 BC and lasted for over 400 years. It was one of the most important dynasties in Chinese history since this dynasty was responsible for laying the foundations for the origins of Chinese culture. Other influential dynasties, such as the Sung and Tang, continued the developments that were started under the Han Dynasty. More developments followed, such as a permanent navy, printed money and a government that had control over 100 million people.

If we look back at the ancient history of China, the country has not always had a succession of dynasties. After the Han Dynasty, the country was under the control of six different kingdoms. This period lasted between 220 and 586 AD. The Sui Dynasty reunited China again after they took over control of all kingdoms.



The Ming Dynasty was the second last dynasty in China, which was overthrown by the Qing Dynasty in 1644. The Qing Dynasty is characterized by influences from the West. During this period, the dynasty had to fight European trade wars, as a consequence of which it started weakening in power. During the same period, Britain gained control of Hong Kong after the Opium Wars.

The power of the Qing Dynasty declined even further when its army couldn't keep up with the development of weapons. In 1912, the last dynasty was overthrown.

Ancient Greece

2000BC – 146BC

The first Greek civilization started around 4,000 years ago. They lived in Greece and the countries that we now know as Bulgaria and Turkey. They also dominated much of the Mediterranean coastal areas. The civilization was the strongest between 500 BC and 146 BC. When Alexander the Great ruled the country, they ruled much of Europe and Western Asia.



Historians divide Ancient Greece into three parts. The first period is called the Archaic Period, which lasted between 800 BC and 508 BC. During this period, the Greeks introduced democracy and the Olympic Games. The second part is known as the Classical Period. This is probably the most famous

time of the Greek civilization and is considered to be the "golden age" of the country. The city of Athens had a democratic government and was home to famous philosophers such as Socrates and Plato. Fierce battles between the cities of Athens and Sparta occurred during this time. The last period is called the Hellenistic Period, which started from the death of Alexander the Great when Rome defeated Athens. The word Hellenistic is derived from the Greek word "hellens", which is how the Greeks called themselves.

Ancient Greece is considered as 'the birthplace of Western civilization'. The influence of the empire is still felt today. They had a very advanced society. They developed many new ideas in terms of government, science, religion, sports, art and philosophy. There was not a single country that was called Ancient Greece, but there were many different states, with each state having its own rule and governance. There were different laws and governments in each state. The only thing they had in common was their religion and language.



Athens and Sparta were the two most important cities of Ancient Greece. The cultures of the two cities were very different. Athens was a city of art and science, while Sparta mainly

focused on war and fighting. They were often rivals and even fought each other on some occasions. However, when the empire had to be protected, Athens and Sparta united and fought alongside so as to protect their territory from invaders.

Ancient Greece only became an empire when a very powerful ruler could control all the city and states. The most famous and most powerful ruler was Alexander the Great from Macedonia. He not only conquered all of Greek territory but also created an empire that reached as far as India!

FUN FACTS

The Ancient Greeks invented the theater. They enjoyed watching plays. Some theaters were big enough to hold 15,000 people!

More than 30% of the Ancient Greek population of some city-states were slaves.

A Greek hero, called Pheidippides, ran 150 miles from Marathon to Sparta to get help against the Persians. After the Greeks defeated the Persians, he again ran 25 miles from Marathon to Athens to tell this great news about the victory. This is how the sport marathon got its name.

When there were law trials in Athens, the Greeks used large juries of around 500 citizens.

Ancient Rome

509BC – 476AD

Ancient Rome was a very large and powerful civilization that controlled much of Europe and northern Africa around 1,000 years ago. The Romans spread their culture all over their territory and it had an impact over the entire Western World. The culture of Ancient Rome formed the basis for the Western culture in areas such as language, architecture, law and government.



Ancient Rome started around 509 BC and was a republic. The leaders of the Roman Republic were elected and served for one year. Their system of governance was very modern. It was complete with a constitution, written laws and the power of government officials was also well balanced. All of these concepts laid the foundation of most democratic countries that we have today, such as the United States and many other European countries.

The city of Rome was the capital city of the Ancient Romans. As the Romans expanded their territory and became more powerful, Rome developed into a center of power with more than 1 million residents. In the center of Rome was the Forum. It was a large plaza with public buildings and temples. Many major events such as elections, trials and public speeches took place at the Forum.

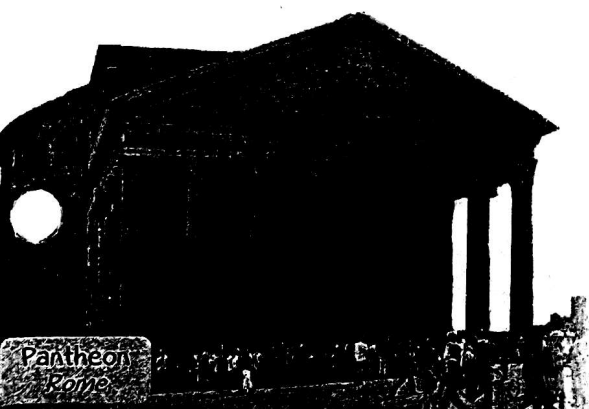
The Roman Republic lasted until 45 BC. At that time, Julius Caesar took control of the Republic and made himself a dictator. After the death of Julius Caesar, his adopted son, Caesar Augustus, took control in 27 BC. He became the first Roman Emperor and hence the Roman Empire was born during this period. The Roman emperors were very powerful. However, they left the lower level governments the same as it was in the Roman Republic.



The Roman army was one of the most successful armies in world history. The soldiers were well-trained and had good weapons. The army was well-organized. It was divided into smaller groups called Legions. Each Legion had 5400 soldiers that was usually led by a Senator or a Governor.

As the Roman Empire became larger and larger, it became more difficult to manage it from the city of Rome. It covered much of Europe, North Africa and parts of Asia. It would take several weeks to receive messages from the outer parts of the empire. In 285 AD, the Romans decided to split their empire into a western and an eastern part. The western part was ruled from Rome and the eastern part was ruled from Constantinople (today's Istanbul in Turkey). The idea was that emperors worked together against enemies from outside, but each emperor had complete power over their own half.

The Western Roman Empire fell in 476 AD. Since there was no more empire, many things changed in Europe. The Romans had always provided a well-structured government, culture and education. Due to the destruction of the empire, the foundation for all of these things was gone, there was no more civilization and life for most people became extremely difficult. The 500 years that followed are known as the Dark Ages of Europe. The Eastern Roman Empire, on the other hand, maintained its power for another 1000 years!



During the 500 years of the Roman Empire, there were 140 emperors. Most emperors inherited their title and were not chosen for their abilities. The main job of the emperor was to keep their armies satisfied. If the army would turn against an emperor, his days would be over. They had a great influence and their history not only marks a time of peace, prosperity but also that of terror and tyranny.

Caesar (100 BC – 45 BC)

Julius Caesar was not an emperor but a dictator. He was a very successful general and had greatly expanded the territory. In 45 BC, Caesar took control of the empire and declared himself as a dictator for life. He was given so much importance that the month of July was named after him. However, he ruled for a very short time. He was eventually killed by his own Senate in 45 BC.



Constantine (272AD – 337AD)

Constantine was the first Christian emperor during the Roman times. He was the leader of the Eastern Empire but eventually united the two parts and moved the capital of the empire to Constantinople.



Augustus (63 BC – 14 AD)



Augustus was the first emperor of the Roman Empire and was Julius Caesar's adopted son. His reign was a time of peace. Many roads were built and new laws were formed. He is considered to be one of the best emperors in the history of the Roman rule.

Nero (37AD – 68AD)

Nero was the craziest emperor of all. He became the emperor because his mother killed Emperor Claudius. During the Great Fire of Rome, he is supposed to have sung songs whilst the fire destroyed the city. To stop rumors that he started the fire himself, he blamed the Christians and fed thousands of them to the lions in the circus.



FUN FACTS

The Ancient Romans believed in many different Gods and Goddesses.

At certain occasions, the Romans would flood the Coliseum to hold sea battles.

Only emperors and senators could wear purple clothes as it was considered a status symbol.

Urine was used to clean clothes since it contains ammonia.

Christianity was illegal until Emperor Constantine converted.

40% of the Ancient Roman population were slaves.

