

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research



Amar Telidji University of Laghouat

Faculty of Humanities

Department of History



Far Eastern civilization

China, India, Japan

A printed document intended for first-year Master's students in the History of Ancient Civilizations, according to the official curriculum.

Specialization in ancient history

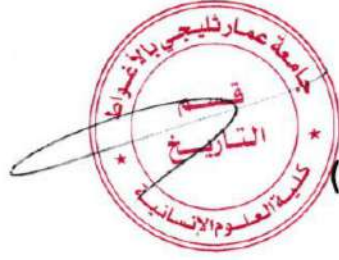
Prepared by Dr. Merigui Tarek

Academic year: 2025/2026

1 - السداسي الأول:

نوع التقييم	امتحان	مراجعة مستمرة	الأرصدة	المعامل	الحجم الساعي الأسبوعي			مناقشة	18-14 اسبوع	وحدة التعليم
					أعمال أخرى ¹	أعمال تطبيقية	أعمال موجهة			
			18	09	180 سا		06 سا	06 سا	180	وحدات التعليم الأساسية وت 1 (ج)
*	*		05	03	45		01.30	01.30	45	حضارات ما قبل التاريخ و بداية استقرار الإنسان
*	*		05	02	45		01.30	01.30	45	تاريخ بلاد المغرب منذ القرن التاسع إلى القرن الأول قبل الميلاد
										وت 2 (ج)
*	*		04	02	45		01.30	01.30	45	حضارة بلاد الرافدين
*	*		04	02	45		01.30	01.30	45	حضارة بلاد فارس
			09	04	90 سا		03 سا	03 سا	90	وحدات التعليم المنهجية وت م (ج)
*	*		05	02	45		01.30	01.30	45	منهجية البحث التاريخي
*	*		04	02	45		01.30	01.30	45	أنثروبولوجيا ثقافية
			02	02	45 سا			03 سا	45	وحدات التعليم الاستكشافية وت 1 (ج/خ)
*			01	01	22.30			01.30	22.30	المادة 1: إجبارية حضارة الشرق الأقصى (الصين، الهند، اليابان)
*			01	01	22.30			01.30	22.30	المادة 2: اختيارية. (اختيار مادة واحدة) - الجغرافية التاريخية. - النظم السياسية في العالم القديم
			01	01	22.30 سا		01.30 سا		22.30	وحدة التعليم الأفقية وت أ ف (ج)
	*		01	01	22.30		01.30		22.30	المادة 1: لغة التخصص ²
			30	16	450 سا		10.30	12	337.30	مجموع السداسي 1

¹ عمل إضافي سداسي عن طريق المشاور
² يحدد فريق التكوين اللغة المناسبة حسب التأطير



عنوان الماستر: تاريخ الحضارات القديمة

السداسي: الأول

اسم الوحدة: وحدة التعليم الاستكشافية

اسم المادة: حضارة الشرق الأقصى (الصين، الهند، اليابان)

الرصيد: 1

المعامل: 1

أهداف التعليم: (تذكر ما يفترض على الطالب اكتسابه من مؤهلات بعد نجاحه في هذه المادة، في ثلاثة أسطر على الأكثر)

- التعرف على الحضارات المشعة في منطقة الشرق الأقصى التي لعبت دور كبير في المنطقة خاصة في الألف الولى قبل الميلاد. كما ساهمت بشكل كبير في ظهور الحضارات القديمة.
- المعارف المسبقة المطلوبة: (وصف تفصيلي للمعارف المطلوبة والتي تمكن الطالب من مواصلة هذا التعليم، سطرين على الأكثر).
- معرفة شاملة عن حضارات شرق آسيا.

محتوى المادة: (إجبارية تحديد المحتوى المفصل لكل مادة مع الإشارة إلى العمل الشخصي للطالب)

- الحضارة الصينية القديمة: 1 الإطار التاريخي و 2 الإطار الجغرافي 3 عوامل قيام الحضارة الصينية القديمة 4 مظاهر الحضارة الصينية القديمة أ المظاهر الإجتماعية ب و المظاهر السياسية ج المظاهر الإقتصادية د المظاهر الدينية ه المظاهر العلمية والفكرية و المظاهر العمرانية و الفنية 5 علاقة الصين القيمة الحضارية بالعالم الخارجي.
- الحضارة البيانية القديمة: 1 الإطار التاريخ الإطار الجغرافي 2 عوامل قيام الحضارة البيانية القديمة 3 مظاهر ازدهار الحضارة البيانية القديمة أ المظاهر الدينية ب المظاهر السياسية ج المظاهر الإقتصادية د المظاهر السياسية ه المظاهر العسكرية و المظاهر الفكرية والعلمية ز حضارة اليابان و علاقتها بالعالم الخارجي.
- الحضارة الهندية القديمة: 1 الإطار التاريخي 2 الإطار الجغرافي 3 عوامل قيام الحضارة الهندية 4 مظاهر الحضارة الهندية القديمة أ المظاهر الدينية ب المظاهر الإجتماعية ج المظاهر السياسية د المظاهر الإقتصادية ه المظاهر العلمية و الفكرية 5 علاقة الهند الحضارية مع العالم الخارجي

طريقة التقييم: مراقبة مستمرة، امتحان.... إلخ (يُترك الترتيب للسلطة التقديرية لفريق التكوين)

المراجع: (كتب، ومطبوعات ، مواقع انترنت، إلخ)

1. نخبة من العلماء تحت إشراف ليونارد كوتريل، الموسوعة الأثرية العالمية، ترجمة محمد عبد القادر محمد، زكي أسكندر، ط2، الهيئة العامة المصرية للكتاب، مصر، 1997م.

2. Starr Chester. G. The History of Ancient World, Oxford University Press, USA, 1965.



The Introduction

Introduction: The ancient civilizations of the Far East—particularly those of China, India, and Japan—are among the oldest, most enduring, and most influential civilizations in human history. These civilizations emerged in diverse geographical environments: China flourished along its great rivers, India arose in its fertile valleys, while Japan developed within its isolated mountainous archipelago.

Despite the unique local characteristics of each, the features of these civilizations were shaped through profound cultural interactions. Japan, in particular, was greatly influenced by its continental neighbors, especially China, yet it reformulated these influences in ways that suited its own identity. Ancient China is distinguished by its civilizational continuity and its deep-rooted philosophical traditions, such as Confucianism, while India became renowned for its spiritual depth and religious diversity, giving rise to Hinduism and Buddhism. Japan, for its part, was remarkable for its exceptional ability to absorb external cultures and blend them with its indigenous Shinto heritage to produce a distinctive cultural model.

Together, these three civilizations form essential pillars of the human heritage, and their study remains key to understanding contemporary East Asia in all its complexity and richness.

In this publication aimed at history students, we will attempt to provide a comprehensive overview and complete definition of each civilization, addressing each civilization separately across three main themes, in order to answer the following question: To what extent did the ancient civilizations of China, India, and Japan contribute?

I-Ancient Chinese civilization

For over two thousand years, China has existed as an established political and civilizational entity. Its history bears witness to a long trajectory filled with political and military events. During periods of strength, its rulers managed to expand their influence and extend their state's borders across vast areas of Asia, founding major empires that would sometimes expand and sometimes contract depending on internal circumstances such as conflicts or weakness, as well as as a result of foreign invasions. Upon this vast land arose a civilization considered one of the oldest in the world; indeed, it is among the few civilizations whose cultural contributions continued uninterrupted, alongside the civilizations of the Nile Valley, Mesopotamia, and ancient India.

Firstly: Geography and Topography:

Ancient China is located in the far east of Asia, specifically in the northeastern part of modern-day China. It is bordered by the sea to the north and east, and its territory is traversed by an extensive network of valleys and rivers, most of which originate from the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas in the west, then flow eastward to empty into the Pacific Ocean.

Today, China is one of the largest countries in the world by area, covering approximately 9,596,960 square kilometers, which ranks it third globally after Russia and Canada. Astronomically, it extends between latitudes 18^o and 53^o degrees north of the Equator, and between longitudes 74^o and 135^o degrees east. Its expanse from east to west is about 5,200 km, and from north to south approximately 5,500 km.¹

This vast expanse has contributed to the diversity of its natural features and the variation of its ecological regions, which in turn has been reflected in the

¹ Chiwa Guang, *Geography of China*, translated by Muhammad Abu Jarad, General Authority for the Library of Alexandria, Egypt, 1987, pp. 5-10

diversity of its population and the multiplicity of their human, cultural, and civilizational characteristics.

This country has a continental character and a geographical location of significant strategic importance within the East Asia region. It is bordered by fourteen countries, most notably Russia, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, and North Korea, which grants it extensive strategic depth. It also overlooks several of the world's most prominent transportation and trade routes, both overland, such as the Silk Road, and maritime, via its coastlines on the Pacific Ocean, the South China Sea, the East China Sea, the Yellow Sea, as well as the Formosa Strait.¹



Physical map of China

¹ The Arabic World Encyclopedia, Second Edition, Volume 15, Encyclopedia Works for Publishing and Distribution, Riyadh, 1999, pp. 265–266.

China's vast geographical expanse contributes to explaining its climatic diversity, the multiplicity of its regions, and the variety of its natural resources, which in turn positively reflects on the Chinese economy.

A-Factors Contributing to the Rise of Ancient Chinese Civilization

Numerous geographical and natural factors contributed to the establishment of ancient Chinese civilization. They can be summarized as follows:

- **Major Rivers:** The great rivers formed the lifeline of ancient Chinese civilization, foremost among them the Yangtze River (the Blue River) in the south, stretching approximately 6,000 km, and the Huang He (Yellow River) in the north, with a length of 5,500 km, in addition to the Xi Jiang (West River). Chinese civilization arose in the fertile plains irrigated by these rivers.
- **Area and Topography:** The vast area, diverse topography and climate, particularly in the regions surrounding the cradle of this civilization, contributed to its establishment, along with the abundance of forests, pastures, and mineral wealth.
- **Extended Coastlines:** The extensive coastlines provided opportunities for marine fishing and commercial navigation.
- **Temperate Climate:** The region of ancient Chinese civilization was characterized by a four-season climate, which created a suitable environment for settlement and agriculture.
- **Human Power:** Human settlements increased around the plains of the aforementioned rivers, leading to the emergence of villages and civilizational centers.¹

Sources for Studying the History and Civilization of Ancient China

The documented sources for ancient Chinese history are divided into two main categories:

¹ Anonymous author. History of China, Vol. 1, Great Wall of China Book Series, China Building House, Beijing 1986, pp. 5-6

- **Early Documents:** These date back to the second millennium BC and consist of short texts inscribed on animal bones. These texts primarily contain divinatory content, but they offer a glimpse into the social conditions and features of state-building in China during the Shang Dynasty (18th–12th century BC).
- **Later Documents:** These date back to the period of the Zhou Dynasty's rule (between the 12th and 8th centuries BC) and are characterized by being more developed in terms of form and content.¹

A-1- Material and Documentary Sources of Chinese Civilization:

In addition to the writings on bones, inscriptions and records have been found on household utensils, stone pieces, and bronze vessels, as well as writings on bamboo slips and silk. This reflects the diversity of documentation media in ancient Chinese civilization.

A-1-2 The Documented Historical Record and the Oldest Sources:

The oldest documented records of Chinese history date back to around 1600 BC. The timeline of these documents covers manuscripts, books, and maps produced in China, the majority of which were written in the Chinese language, spanning chronologically from approximately 1199 BC to 1931 AD. These materials highlight the historical depth and cultural richness of China over more than three thousand years.

Original copies of these documents are preserved in the collections of the National Library of China, the Library of Congress, and the National Central Library. These institutions contributed them to the World Digital Library. The collection includes diverse works covering the fields of religion, history, geography, government administration, literature, medicine, technology, in addition to the first translations of European books into the Chinese language.

¹ Joseph Needham, *A Short History of Science and Civilization in China*, translated by Muhammad Gharib Jawda, Egyptian General Book Organization, Egypt, 1995, pp. 45-48

A-1-3 Prominent Historical Documents in the Collection:

The collection includes a number of prominent documents, the most notable of which are:

- Oracle Bone of the Four Directions (1200–1180 BC)
- The Classic Stone Tablets of Zeng Peng (175–183 AD)
- The "Fall of States" Scroll (280–289 AD)
- The Diamond Sutra Manuscript (676 AD)
- The Buddhist Sutra Manuscript "Ju-issai-fukukonoku-zanmai-kyo" (740 AD)
- Nestorian Stele: A Monument Commemorating the Propagation of the Luminous Religion in China (781 AD)
- A Memorial Stone Inscription concerning the Army of the Appropriate Strategy (843 AD)¹

B-Origin of the name and origin of the population:

It appears you have re-sent a portion of the text that was already translated in the previous response.

To confirm, the text you provided, is a duplicate of the first part of the previous message.

Here is the translation for that specific section again, for your convenience:

b-1 Origin of the Name:

The origin of the name "China" dates back to the Qin province (Chin), which played a pivotal role in the process of unifying the country and incorporating the provinces under a single entity. Accordingly, the name of the province was given to the entire country, which became known as "Chin" (i.e., China).

¹ Joseph Needham. *op. cit.*, pp. 65-68

b-2 Ethnic Composition:

China currently comprises approximately 56 ethnic groups. The Han ethnic group constitutes the vast majority of the population, accounting for about 93% of the total population. The remaining percentage (7%) is distributed among a number of ethnic minorities, the most prominent of which are: the Manchu, Mongols, Tatars, Miao, Paka, Tibetans, Uyghurs, and the Zhuang ethnic group. This ethnic diversity has contributed to the emergence of regional tendencies and cultural variations within the country.¹

Economic Activity Historically, the majority of the population relied on agriculture in its various branches, including livestock breeding and herding, while another segment engaged in industrial activities.

The Han Ethnic Group: Status and Geographical Distribution
The Han ethnic group is considered the most important ethnic group in China, for the following reasons:

- **Historical Connection:** The history of the Han ethnic group is closely linked to the history of China, as its members have inhabited regions of northern China for over four thousand years.
- **Cultural Unity:** The group is characterized by a shared culture and civilization that contributed to shaping Chinese identity.
- **Geographical Distribution:** Han people constitute the demographic majority in 28 out of 30 Chinese provinces, with the exception of the Xinjiang and Tibet regions.

Most Prominent Ethnic Minorities by Population Density ,The populations of ethnic minorities in China vary significantly. The most prominent include:

¹ Daniel Burstein and Arne de Keijzer, *The Big Dragon: China in the 21st Century*, translated by Shawqi Jalal, 'Alam Al-Ma'rifah Series, Issue 271, The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Kuwait, First Edition, 2001, p. 264

- Zhuang ethnic group: Numbering approximately 15.8 million people.
- Uyghur ethnic group: Numbering around 7.2 million people.
- Tibetans: Numbering close to 6 million people.

In light of this ethnic diversity, China is officially described as the "unified, multi-ethnic socialist republic."

Civilizational Cohesion and Ethnic Diversity in China, The Chinese Specificity in Managing Ethnic Diversity, The intensity of ethnic conflicts and disparities in China has not reached the level recorded in the experiences of other countries, such as India, or the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, which disintegrated primarily as a result of ethnic differences. This contrast is attributed to the factor of historical cohesion that characterizes Chinese society, rooted in its unified national identity.

This cohesion does not negate the existence of separatist demands in limited regions, most notably Tibet and the Xinjiang region located in the west of the country, which has a Muslim majority. In the religious context, Confucianism constitutes the belief framework for the majority of Chinese, alongside Muslim, Christian, and Hindu minorities.

Civilizational Fusion Throughout History , Throughout its long history, China has witnessed a fusion among the different ethnic groups that make up the country, ultimately forming a single civilizational entity, embodied in the great Middle Kingdom, which exercised its influence over the Asian continent for several centuries. This was accompanied by a Chinese perception of Chinese civilization as the "center of the world," and a deep awareness of it being the owner of the most ancient civilization in history¹.

¹ Labib Abdel Sater, *Civilizations*, Dar Al-Mashreq, Beirut 2008, pp. 314-315

Civilizational Contributions and Their Contemporary Implications
China has made major contributions to the progression of human civilization, through inventions and discoveries whose effects are still tangible today. It can be said that this civilizational momentum constitutes one of the fundamental factors influencing the formation of contemporary Chinese attitudes and the country's aspirations to assume a global role commensurate with its ancient cultural and civilizational heritage.

This historical statement should be documented if possible, or rephrased more neutrally, such as: "In traditional Chinese thought, a view prevailed of Chinese civilization as the center of the world, and an awareness that it possessed the most ancient civilization in history."¹

C- Human Origins and Early Historical Stages in China:

The Oldest Discovered Human Remains ,Archaeological evidence indicates the appearance of humans in the region of China from very ancient times, as fossils of primitive man were discovered in the Yuanmou area of Yunnan Province, known as "Yuanmou Man." Estimates suggest that this man lived approximately 1.7 million years ago, making him among the oldest human remains discovered in East Asia.

Peking Man: Evolution in Traits and Abilities ,In a later stage, what is known as "Peking Man" appeared, who inhabited the Zhoukoudian area near Beijing about 600,000 years ago. This man is characterized by the fundamental features distinguishing the human race, which were manifested in his ability to:

- Stand and Walk: He was able to walk fully upright.
- Tool Making: He developed the ability to make simple stone tools and use them in daily life activities.

¹ Joseph Needham. op. cit, pp. 66-68

- Control of Fire: He knew how to kindle and control fire, a significant technological achievement in that era.

Peking Man represents an advanced stage in human evolution, and his use of tools is his most prominent characteristic, indicating the development of his cognitive and skill abilities.¹

E- Stages of Chinese Civilization

First: Neolithic Civilizations

The Neolithic Age in China witnessed the emergence of early civilizational centers distributed around the basins of the major rivers. This stage constitutes the foundation upon which the continuous Chinese civilization was built over thousands of years.

Early Civilizational Sites ,Ancient Chinese civilizations arose in a number of cultural centers distributed around three main rivers:

- The Yellow River (Huang He)
- The Yangtze River (Blue River)
- The Pearl River (Zhu Jiang)

All these rivers are characterized by flowing from west to east, which provided homogeneous environmental conditions for the emergence of early agricultural societies. The cultures of the Yellow River and Yangtze basins developed thousands of years before the establishment of the Shang Dynasty, the oldest documented ruling dynasty.

Civilizational Significance,By virtue of possessing a continuous history spanning thousands of years, China is considered one of the oldest civilizations

¹ Kazem Hashem Neama, The Policy of Blocs in Asia, Academy of Graduate Studies and Economic Research, Tripoli, First Edition, 1997, p. 47.

in the world, and it is also classified among the great cradles of human civilization. The heritage of the Neolithic Age is spread throughout various parts of China, reflecting the multiplicity of centers of early civilizational activity.

Major Archaeological Discoveries, Archaeological discoveries indicate the presence of advanced civilizational manifestations in the Neolithic Age. The most prominent include:

The Hemudu Site, This site is located in Zhejiang Province, near the Yangtze River. Remains of rice and millet grains were found there, in addition to agricultural tools, dating back to the seventh millennium BC. This site represents evidence of plant domestication and the beginnings of organized agriculture in southern China.¹

The Jiahu Culture, This culture flourished between 7000 and 5800 BC, and is considered one of the early cultures that arose as a result of agricultural development. The Neolithic Age in China extends to about 10,000 BC, when human communities began transitioning to a settled lifestyle based on agriculture.²

The Peiligang Site, Fossils of this culture were discovered in the Xinzheng area of Henan Province. The Peiligang culture flourished between 5500 and 4900 BC, and the discoveries include evidence of:

- Practicing organized agriculture
- Existence of constructed buildings
- Pottery making
- Burial rituals for the dead, indicating the development of beliefs and social systems

¹ Anonymous author, op. cit, pp. 20-23

² Will Durant, The Story of Civilization, Far East: China, translated by Muhammad Badran, Vol. 4, Dar Al-Jeel Publishing and Printing, Beirut 1975, pp. 218-228

These three sites demonstrate diversity and development in civilizational manifestations during the Neolithic Age in China, and confirm China's pioneering role in the transition to an agricultural economy and the emergence of organized societies.

E-1 Stages of Chinese Civilization:

Late Neolithic Age: The Yangshao and Longshan Cultures

In the late Neolithic Age, the Yellow River valley began to crystallize as a major civilizational center, where two important cultures succeeded one another:

- **Yangshao Culture:** Flourished between 5000 and 3000 BC. It is considered one of the most prominent intermediate cultures of the Neolithic Age and was distinguished by its production of painted pottery and organized agricultural settlements.
- **Longshan Culture:** Succeeded the Yangshao Culture and was also centered in the Yellow River basin. It flourished between 3000 and 2000 BC and was characterized by the development of thin black pottery, the emergence of evidence for social differentiation, and the development of defensive fortifications.¹

Second: The Xia Dynasty (c. 2070–1600 BC) :The Xia Dynasty is considered the first ruling dynasty in Chinese history according to ancient historical records, most notably Sima Qian's "Records of the Grand Historian" and the "Bamboo Annals." This dynasty was long viewed with skepticism by historians and considered legendary, until archaeological excavations in 1959 led to the discovery of the Erlitou site in Henan, dating back to the early Bronze Age,

¹ Labib Abdel Sater, op. cit, pp. 315-316

which provided material evidence of an advanced civilization during that period.¹

Early inscribed signs on pottery and shells dating from that era were found. Based on historical sources, the Xia Dynasty ended around 1600 BC following the Battle of Mingtiao, which led to the transfer of rule to the Shang Dynasty.

Third: The Shang Dynasty (c. 1766–1122 BC), The Shang Dynasty arose in northeastern China and constituted a major turning point in Chinese history, as the kingdom transitioned from the Bronze Age to the age of writing and documentation. Among its most prominent features were:

- **Religious Beliefs:** It was characterized by the worship of nature spirits, but the core belief centered on the king, as the bearer of the ancestral legacy, being the sole link to the supreme deity. This established ancestor worship as a pivotal element in ancient Chinese religion.
- **Writing:** The dynasty witnessed the development of writing on animal bones and turtle shells (oracle bone script), which represents the earliest documented form of Chinese writing.

Fourth: The Zhou Dynasty (c. 1122–771 BC) The Zhou Kingdom was marked by significant development in the fields of crafts, construction, and architecture, along with the flourishing of bronze industries. This period witnessed relative stability, an expansion of the kingdom's geographical scope, and the development of political and administrative systems.

Fifth: The Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (771–221 BC) The 8th century BC witnessed a major transformation in the structure of power, as authority became increasingly decentralized during what was known

¹ Joseph Needham. op. cit, pp. 69-70

as the Spring and Autumn Period (name derived from the influential "Spring and Autumn Annals"). During this period:

- **Local Independence:** Local military leaders began to assert their authority and compete for hegemony, exploiting the declining influence of the Zhou Dynasty.
- **External Pressures:** The situation was exacerbated by invasions from peoples coming from the northwest, most notably the Qin tribes, which forced the Zhou Dynasty to move its capital eastward to Luoyang.
- **Historical Transition:** This move marked the beginning of a new phase of conflict and competition among the kingdoms, which later evolved into what is known as the Warring States Period, ending with the unification of China by the Qin Dynasty in 221 BC.¹

Eastern Zhou: A New Phase of Decentralization: The transfer of the Zhou capital to Luoyang marks the beginning of a second phase of the dynasty's rule, known as the Eastern Zhou. This phase, particularly the Spring and Autumn Period, is characterized by the collapse of the central authority of the Zhou Dynasty and its effective disintegration, as follows:

- **Proliferation of States:** Hundreds of small states emerged, some no larger than a fortified village, as powerful local leaders seized political power in their regions.
- **Nominal Allegiance:** These states continued to show submission to the Zhou kings only formally and symbolically, while actual governance was local. Indeed, some local leaders began to assume royal titles for themselves, thereby challenging Zhou's authority.
- **Effective Independence:** China became a mosaic of hundreds of effectively independent political entities, with real power shifting into the hands of local princes.

¹ Will Durant, op. cit, pp. 230-233

The Process of Unification and Annexation ,As this era continued, a natural process of unifying the states began through:

Hegemony of the Large: The larger, more powerful states imposed their control over the smaller ones, either by directly annexing them or by declaring suzerainty over them.

Disappearance of the Small: By the 6th century BC, most of the small states had disappeared through the process of annexation and absorption, leaving only a few large and powerful principalities that dominated the political landscape of China.

Southern Independence: Some southern states, such as Chu, Wu, and Yue, declared their independence from Zhou's influence, and even waged wars among themselves to compete for regional influence.

Civilizational and Urban Transformations ,This period witnessed important civilizational developments, manifested in the establishment of many new cities and the gradual formation of Chinese culture with its distinct features. The Chinese cultural identity began to take shape through the interaction and competition among these states.¹

The Seven Warring States,Despite powerful rulers consolidating their positions in their areas of control, political fragmentation continued through seven major states that competed and fought among themselves. These states were ruled by kings and emperors who theoretically belonged to the Zhou Dynasty but were effectively independent. This situation continued until 221 BC, where the political geography of ancient China was dominated by the Seven Warring States, which were:

¹ Joseph Needham. op. cit, pp.70-73

➤ **The Ancient Kingdoms of China:**

Han Kingdom: Located in the southern region of ancient China, its territory stretched along the Yellow River basin. This kingdom held strategic control over the eastern routes leading to the Qin Kingdom.

Wei Kingdom: Centered in the central part of ancient China.

Zhao Kingdom: Situated in the far north of ancient China, it was the most northerly extended among the three kingdoms that split from the Jin Kingdom.

Qi Kingdom: Located in the eastern part of ancient China, with its core territories concentrated in the Shandong Peninsula area.

Chu Kingdom: Extended across southern ancient China, with most of its areas concentrated along the river courses of the Han River and the Yangtze River.

Yan Kingdom: Located in the northeastern part of ancient China, its geography centered around the site where the modern-day city of Beijing stands.¹

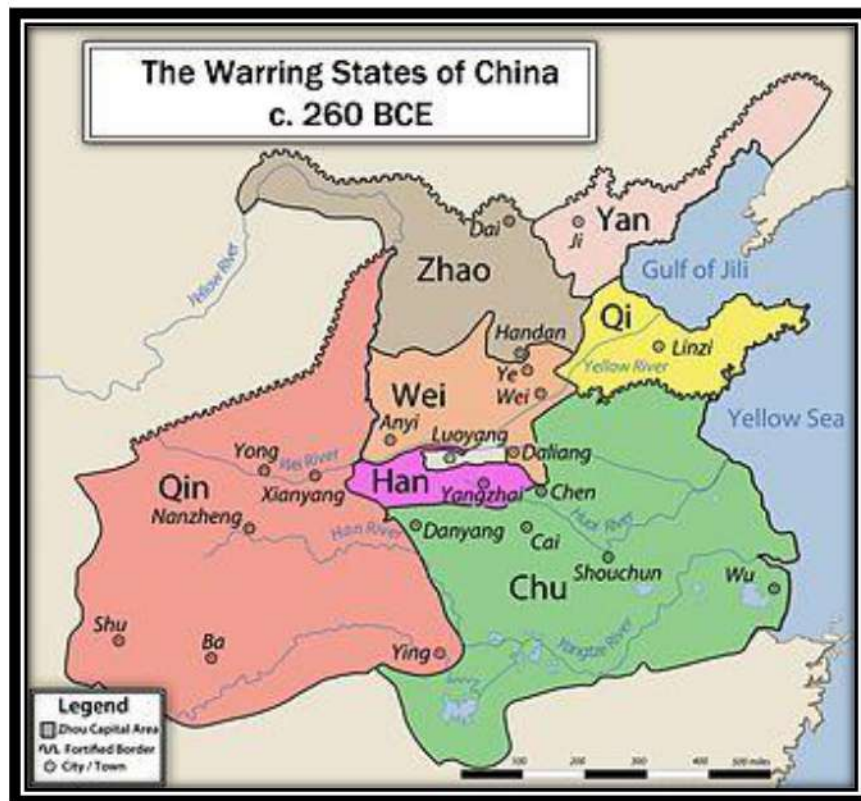
➤ **The Unification Wars:**

The Qin Kingdom embarked on its major military campaigns aimed at unifying the other six kingdoms under a single, centralized authority, in a series of military operations known as the Unification Wars. These wars lasted from 230 BC until 221 BC.

These wars resulted in the unification of all the kingdoms under the banner of the Qin Kingdom, where its ruler, King Ying Zheng, proclaimed himself

¹ Will Durant, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-291

Emperor, adopting the name "Qin Shi Huang," a title meaning "The Founding Emperor of the Qin Dynasty."¹



Political map of the seven states during the mid-3rd century BC

➤ **The Unified Qin Kingdom (221 BC - 202 BC):**

The Qin Kingdom achieved the political unification of the country under King "Qin Shi Huang," the ruler of Western Qin, who reunified the parts of China under his imperial authority. With this unification, the conflicts among the princes and rulers of the Warring States, which had lasted for over two and a half centuries, came to an end, and all of China became subject to a strong, centralized rule.²

¹ Anonymous author, op. cit, pp. 32-33

² Will Durant, op. cit, pp. 290-293

The Qin Dynasty's rule lasted until 206 BC (while some researchers believe its end was in 202 BC). Despite its short duration, this dynasty brought about fundamental transformations that affected the entire imperial era.

Its most prominent achievements include:

- The establishment of the first unified, centralized, multi-ethnic feudal state in Chinese history.
- The abolition of the system of independent states and its replacement with a system of prefectures and administrative counties.
- The creation of a strong, centralized system of government.
- The standardization of weights, measures, and writing systems throughout China.
- The emperor conscripted hundreds of thousands of workers (the text indicates the use of over 300,000 workers) over many years to execute massive projects, most notably the construction of the Great Wall of China and his palace¹

➤ The Han Dynasty (202 BC - 220 AD):

- The Han Dynasty seized power in 202 BC and managed to expand the empire's borders as far as Central Asia. The Han Dynasty restored stability to Chinese rule, and its reign witnessed a significant flourishing of science and culture, with dictionaries and historical books being compiled during this period.
- In 105 AD, paper was invented for writing, and towards the end of the Han Dynasty's rule, Buddhism entered China from India.
- This dynasty was distinguished by its ability to create a lasting cultural identity among its people. The empire's territory also expanded through extensive military campaigns that incorporated Korea, Vietnam,

¹ Joseph Needham. *op. cit.*, pp.73-75

Mongolia, and Central Asia, making it a major economic power. It also completed the construction of the Great Wall of China.

- After the collapse of the Han Dynasty, a division similar to the Three Kingdoms period followed. Conflict spread among powerful administrative regions that ignored the central authority, causing the empire to disintegrate and split into three warring kingdoms.¹



Map of the Han kingdom, 260 BC

➤ **The Jin Dynasty (265-420 AD):**

The Jin Dynasty ruled during the period between 265 and 420 AD and is divided into two main phases:

¹ H.G. Creel, *Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao Zedong*, translated by Abdel Hamid Selim, reviewed by Ali Adham, Egyptian General Book Organization, Egypt, 1971, pp. 233-234

- **Western Jin (265-316 AD):** Founded by Emperor "Sima Yan," it established its capital at Luoyang.
- **Eastern Jin (317-420 AD):** Founded by "Sima Rui" after the center of power shifted to the southeastern region of the country.

The Sixteen Kingdoms Period (304-439 AD):

This period is sometimes known as the "Sixteen States." It was a historical phase in which the political system in northern China fragmented, dividing into a series of short-lived states. Most of these states were founded by ethnic minorities who had settled in northern China during the preceding centuries and contributed to the overthrow of the Western Jin Dynasty in the early 4th century. This period ended with the unification of northern China by the Northern Wei Dynasty in the early 5th century.

➤ The Northern and Southern Dynasties Period (420-589 AD):

This period arose as a result of the turmoil witnessed during the Sixteen Kingdoms phase and is sometimes considered an extension of a longer historical era known as the Six Dynasties (220-589 AD). Although it was an age characterized by civil war and political instability, it witnessed a remarkable flourishing of arts and culture, technological advancement, and the widespread dissemination of Buddhism, which coincided with religious migrations, in addition to the flourishing of Taoism. This period was also marked by significant mass migrations of Han Chinese towards the lands south of the Yangtze River. This phase ended with the complete unification of inner China by Emperor Wen of the Sui Dynasty.

During this period, the process of "Sinicization" (i.e., cultural integration into Chinese civilization) accelerated, both among the non-Chinese arrivals in the north and among the indigenous peoples in the south. This process was

accompanied by a notable increase in the popularity of Buddhism, which had entered China in the 1st century AD and became established and spread during this era , In 618 AD, the emperor was assassinated, and with his death, his dynasty's rule came to an end, with the Tang Dynasty emerging in the same year.

The First Century: In both northern and southern China, Taoism gained widespread influence, with its two fundamental texts being compiled during that period.

The Era of Unity under the Sui and Tang Dynasties (589 AD - 906 AD)

China regained its unity after a period of chaos that had prevailed during the era of fragmented kingdoms, during the Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD) and the Tang Dynasty (618-906 AD). These periods were characterized by a policy of royal tolerance towards different beliefs and doctrines.

A/ The Sui Dynasty Era (581-618 AD)

The Sui Dynasty is considered one of the dynasties that successively ruled China from 581 to 618 AD. Emperor "Sui Yangdi" sought to develop and expand the Chinese empire, initiating the construction of the Grand Canal, a waterway designed to transport grain, agricultural products, and other goods.

During his reign, China's borders extended for 320 km, but his attempts to conquer Korea and Manchuria ended in failure. After his army was defeated by the Koreans in 612 AD, discontent spread among the Chinese people against Emperor Sui Yangdi, leading to rebellions against him. In 615 AD, his army suffered another defeat at the hands of the Eastern Turks, forcing him to retreat southward.

In 618 AD, the emperor was assassinated, and with his death, his dynasty's rule ended, and in the same year, the Tang Dynasty emerged on the political stage of China.

Third :Cultural Aspects:

1- System of Government:

The system of government in ancient China was characterized by its hereditary monarchical nature, based on the succession of rule among members of the ruling family from generation to generation, a system known as dynastic rule. The Shang Dynasty (1766-1122 BC) is considered one of the oldest of these dynasties that ruled China.

Following the Warring States period, after their overthrow and the unification of the country by King "Ying Zheng" of Qin, the latter changed his title to "Qin Shi Huang," meaning "The Founding Emperor of the Qin Dynasty." With this transformation, the title of China's rulers shifted from "King" to "Emperor," representing a fundamental change in the political system from traditional monarchy to the imperial system.¹

The Emperor administratively divided the empire into 36 commanderies, a number that later expanded to 43, all of which were administered from the capital, Xianyang. This period witnessed the standardization of currency, weights, and measures, alongside the imposition of high taxes followed by strict laws.²

Note:The imposition of high taxes was primarily to fund massive projects such as the construction of the Great Wall of China, in addition to implementing administrative laws that were considered arbitrary, which led to the deterioration

¹ Anonymous author. op. cit, Vol. 2, pp. 47-48

² Chiwa Guan. op. cit, pp. 100-110.

of security conditions in the six former kingdoms. After the death of Emperor Qin Shi Huang in 210 BC, his son "Qin Er Shi" succeeded him with weak authority, causing the empire to lose its unity and fragment into 18 kingdoms nominally subordinate to Western Chu.

China then entered a phase of decline during the Qin Dynasty era, and a major conflict emerged between the Chu and Han states, leading the country to be reunified again under Emperor Gaozu, who proclaimed the establishment of the Han Dynasty.¹

2- **economic conditions :**

A- Agriculture:

The fertile plains along the banks of the numerous rivers and valleys in ancient China witnessed a wide spread of commercial and large-scale agriculture. Agricultural crops were diverse, the most prominent of which included: rice, soybeans, millet, wheat, and cotton. The Chinese also paid special attention to tea cultivation, which developed into a thriving industry both locally and globally.

B- Industry:

Transportation and Vehicles: The invention of wheeled vehicles in China dates back to around 2800 BC, marking an early beginning for the development of land transport.

Pottery and Porcelain: The Chinese excelled remarkably in the manufacture of pottery and porcelain wares, for which Chinese civilization has been renowned throughout the ages.

¹ Labib Abdel Sater. op. cit, p. 314.

Writing and Tools: The Chinese invented basic writing tools such as paper, ink, and the brush. They also recorded pioneering inventions in various fields including printing, the seismograph, the compass, gunpowder, fireworks, and lacquer.

Mining and Energy: The Chinese extracted coal from the earth and used it extensively as an energy source.

Metals and Bronze: The Chinese used metals and their alloys, particularly bronze, from around 1150 BC in the manufacture of bells, polished mirrors, and various everyday utensils. They also emerged with exceptional skill in the manufacture of various weapons, especially iron blades used in plows and agricultural tools.

Shipbuilding: The shipbuilding industry in China did not witness significant development compared to the civilizations of the Near East (such as Phoenicia, Iraq, and Egypt) or the West (such as the Greeks) until the end of the 6th century BC. During that period, one of the southern Chinese kingdoms possessed a naval fleet comprising dozens of ships and thousands of sailors, with the largest of these ships reaching eighty meters in length and a carrying capacity of up to 65 tons.

Small Boats: The manufacture of small boats in China dates back to the third millennium BC, as Chinese sailors introduced the anchor on these boats around 3000 BC, coinciding with the Egyptians' use of the anchor during the same period. The manufacture of these boats later evolved to include boats powered by foot pedals, or pedals operated by hand on the sides or the stern of the boat.

C- Silk Industry:

The Chinese civilization was unique in its silk industry, which was particularly associated with sericulture (rearing of silkworms of the *Bombyx* type) around 2700 BC in the southern province of Changsha. The technique for raising this type relied on feeding the larvae (caterpillars) with leaves of the white mulberry tree. After the insect transformed into a pupa, it was killed by exposure to heat, then the silk filaments were unwound and woven to form silk threads. Subsequently, silk garments were made, and the fabric was woven using a loom's spindle; a rod onto which the silk threads were wound while the spindle drew and twisted them.

By around 1035 AD, artisans developed the spinning process by inventing the spinning wheel, which marked a qualitative leap in the production of silk fabrics.

D- Trade:

The silk trade flourished in ancient times, as it was exported to civilizations contemporary with China, such as Egypt in the first millennium BC, as well as Iraq and Persia. Its trade then extended to include the civilizations of the Mediterranean basin, starting with the Greeks and then the Romans. This trade continued through the Middle Ages and into the modern era, and became famously known as the "Silk Road," which began in China and passed through Central Asia, reaching Europe.

Silk was characterized by its high price in China, making its purchase exclusive to wealthy families, while the poor wore clothes made from hemp fibers.

E- Currency and Money:

The Chinese initially, during the Shang Dynasty, relied on cowrie shells as a medium of exchange. The monetary unit consisted of five to ten shells strung together.

Around 900 BC, the use of metal coins spread, taking various shapes such as the spade or knife. Over time, these pieces evolved into round metal coins, similar to what is familiar in the modern era.

3- religious situation :

The ancient Chinese sanctified and worshipped cosmic phenomena such as the sun and the moon, and considered heaven the greatest deity. They gave their kings the title "Son of Heaven" and offered him ritual sacrifices. They also worshipped some natural phenomena like the wind, practiced ancestor worship, and believed in an afterlife, so they buried their dead with their daily necessities for use in the next world.

As for the beliefs that appeared, developed, and spread widely in ancient Chinese societies, they can be summarized into three major doctrines:

Taoism: A philosophy and religion that originated in ancient China.

Confucianism: A philosophical and ethical system based on the teachings of Confucius.

Buddhism: Entered China from India around the beginning of the 1st century AD.

Alongside these, Christianity and Islam spread in China in later historical periods.

The Intellectual Debate between Taoism and Confucianism:

Intense intellectual discussions and debates took place between the followers of the Confucian and Taoist schools, despite the esteem that both Lao Tzu (the founder of Taoism) and Confucius later held among the Chinese.¹

Taoism criticized Confucianism because – from its followers' perspective – it neglected the world and nature and focused excessively on man and his social affairs. However, despite this criticism, Confucianism assumed the position of the state's official religion since the reign of Emperor Wu Di (140-87 BC).

The Confucian vision is based on the idea that the moral foundation is inherent within man and cannot be separated from his self. According to this perspective, man does not commit evil consciously and deliberately, but out of ignorance. If he were to recognize the good, he would naturally turn towards it. Evil, therefore, is ignorance.

Taoism: A philosophical, ethical, and religious tradition emphasizing living in harmony with the Tao, the source and order of everything.

Confucianism²: A system of thought focusing on ethics, family loyalty, social harmony, and ancestor veneration, based on the teachings of Confucius.

¹ **The Taoist Doctrine:** Founded by Lao Tzu, who was a contemporary of Confucius. Taoism is based on practicing the behavior known as the "Tao" (the Way), whose principle rests on "Zila" (humility and modesty). The three treasures in Taoism are: compassion, simplicity with frugality, and humility. Joseph Needham. op. cit, pp. 148-149

² **Confucianism:** This doctrine is attributed to a figure named Confucius, who lived during the period (551-478 BC). His original name was "Kong Fu Zi," meaning "Kong the Philosopher" or "the Master." He began his life as a governor of the province of "Lu," then was promoted to the position of minister, becoming a model of justice and order. Afterward, he dedicated his life to being an itinerant teacher, devoting himself fully to education. Confucius was not the founder of a religion in the traditional sense; rather, he established strict rules for conduct and propriety and worked to promote ethics. He is considered the first Chinese philosopher to

4-Social Aspect and Education:

China is considered one of the societies most firmly adhering to values and traditions, which has led to the stability of most of its social concepts throughout the ages. Heritage holds a sacred place in the Chinese collective consciousness, making it immune to change or alteration. The Chinese people have been distinguished by their complete reverence for traditions in all their details and entirety, and their absolute sanctification of them. This people, according to their traditional view, has continued to be subservient to the past and to draw inspiration from its contents in shaping their consciousness and identities.¹

Education, with all its components – systems, content, methods, and goals – was entirely subject to ancient traditions and, as a result, was characterized by a conservative spirit and strong resistance to any innovation. This situation continued until the emergence of Confucius, who developed a new concept of education focused on the study of virtue, filial piety and service to relatives, manners of conduct and dress, and many issues of spiritual philosophy. This was accomplished through schools that paid special attention to the examination system to which students were subjected.²

successfully establish a comprehensive doctrine encompassing all Chinese traditions related to social and ethical behavior.

After Confucius, prominent philosophers emerged who spread his teachings, including:

Mo Tzu: Who propagated the principles of simplicity and universal love as a path to human happiness.

Mencius: Who contributed to spreading Confucian teachings and conduct throughout China. H.J. Creel. op. cit, pp. 44-46

¹ Will Durant, Op cit, pp. 266-269

² He Zhao Wu et al., A History of the Development of Chinese Thought, translated by Abdel Aziz Hamdi, Supreme Council of Culture, Cairo 2004, pp. 609-6111

➤ **Characteristics of Chinese Education:**

Chinese education can be viewed as a model of traditional Eastern education, distinguished by the following characteristics:

- Raising individuals with intellectual and scientific habits linked to the past and the heritage of ancestors.
- Chinese life being characterized by being "earth-bound" (i.e., closely tied to the land), stillness, and rigidity, as a result of its reliance on the past as the main source of values and knowledge.
- Lack of interest in forming an integrated individual personality, as its primary goal was to transmit everyday and traditional information and knowledge, not to develop critical thinking or encourage innovation.¹

5- Military Aspect:

Military life witnessed unprecedented prosperity during the Warring States period, due to the continuous competition and conflict among those kingdoms. During this period, the science of war planning and the strategies of martial arts emerged, and many specialized writings on warfare and the analysis of battle conduct were composed, reflecting the growing interest in this field during that historical phase.

Military Innovations in the Warring States Period:

This period was distinguished by the introduction of many innovations in the arts of war and combat, the most prominent of which were, The widespread use of iron in the manufacture of weapons, increasing their effectiveness and power. The increasing reliance on cavalry and infantry, alongside the chariots that had been prevalent before this period.

¹ Will Durant, op. cit, pp. 320-324

With focus on infantry (foot soldiers) in the wars of later periods, the use of chariots declined, and battles of direct engagement became more bloody and deadly.

Conscription and Army Sizes:

Conscription operations reached their peak in the Warring States era. Historical estimates – although possibly containing some exaggeration – indicate the following figures, The army of the Qin state numbered around 600,000 soldiers, The armies of the other six states reached approximately 500,000 soldiers.

➤ **Human Casualties:**

Some historians mention huge figures for human losses in major battles, including, The Battle of Maling: Left about 100,000 dead, The Battle of Yique: Left about 240,000 dead, Some sources indicate that the great military commander "Bai Qi" was alone responsible for killing nearly 890,000 enemy soldiers during his battles and campaigns.

➤ **Weapons Manufacturing:**

The weapons industry spread significantly during this period, and the materials used shifted from bronze to hard iron, particularly during the Warring States era.

Military Thought and Literature: Military fields and sciences held a prestigious place in the movement of authorship and writing. In the fifth and fourth centuries BC, Chinese strategic thought began to crystallize and take shape concerning the management of wars. However, many ancient military writings have perished. Some bibliographic studies indicate the existence of a Chinese military index compiled in the modern era, listing more than four hundred titles dating from various periods up until the 1911 Revolution.

Among the most prominent figures of Chinese strategic military thought are, Master Sun Tzu (author of the famous book "The Art of War"), Master Wu Qi, Master Lao Tzu (Laozi), Master Mo Tzu (Mozi).

These thinkers and strategists all lived in the Shandong region, and their works and ideas formed the solid foundation of Chinese military thought for centuries.

6-The Field of Writing and Authorship:

Writing began in China as a pictographic (ideographic) system during the early Shang Dynasty. The Chinese believed that their writing (the symbols) was of divine origin. It is a writing system that does not rely on a phonetic alphabet; instead, each word or idea has its own symbol, meaning it is a logographic writing system based on symbols expressing meanings.¹

➤ Examples of the Pictographic Nature of Chinese Writing:

- The word for "roof": It expresses the roof of a house. If the word for "sons" is added to it, it comes to mean descendants or progeny.
- One word for "to follow": It depicts a man walking in front and another man following behind him.
- Another word for "to compare": It shows men standing side-by-side as if comparing who is taller.
- The word for "to look" or "to watch": It was often inscribed on bronze vessels, depicting a small man with a large eye above him to convey the act of looking.

The Chinese understood vowels (or their equivalent in their writing system) from around 1041 AD.²

The Evolution of Chinese Writing:

¹ Kh. Jao. Wu and others, op. cit, pp. 37-40

² Will Durant. op. cit., pp. 154-155

Chinese writing consists of unique, square-shaped symbols with multiple functions, simultaneously expressing sound, form, and meaning. It is one of the oldest languages in the world still in use today.

- **Legend:** The Chinese passed down stories about "Cang Jie," a historian during the era of the Huangdi tribe (around 3000 BC). It is said that he created the Chinese symbols, inspired by natural landscapes (the sun, moon, stars) and the footprints of birds and animals. However, modern research suggests he may have been the first to collect and organize the symbols, not their original inventor.
- **Shang Dynasty (16th-11th century BC):** Symbols were carved on animal bones, turtle shells, and bronze vessels. These inscriptions are known as oracle bones.
- **Spring and Autumn Period & Warring States Period (770-221 BC):** The content of writing became more abundant, and its vocabulary expanded as the number of Chinese characters increased.
- **221 BC:** Emperor Qin Shi Huang standardized Chinese characters after politically unifying the country, laying a solid foundation for the cultural unity of the Chinese nation and stimulating economic and cultural exchanges between different regions.
- **Small Seal Script (Xiaozhuan):** Writing systems were unified during the Qin Dynasty by adopting this script, making Chinese writing more consistent and stable in form and establishing the foundation for its distinctive square shape.
- **Clerical Script (Lishu):** This script was first developed in prisons (hence the name "script of slaves" or "clerical script") and became popular among common people for its ease. It underwent significant development during the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), simplifying writing forms and transforming irregular lines into regular ones, laying the foundation for the final shape and structure of writing.

- **Regular Script (Kaishu):** Emerged in the late Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD), pioneered by the calligrapher Zhong Yao. This script is characterized by its straight strokes, regular square shape, and relative ease of writing. It remains the standard script used today.
- **Cursive Scripts:** The scripts "Caoshu" (Grass Script or Cursive) and "Xingshu" (Semi-Cursive or Running Script) emerged for faster writing. "Caoshu" is divided into three main types:
Zhangcao: The early type of cursive script.
Jincao: The modern type, pioneered by the calligrapher Zhang Di in the Eastern Han Dynasty.
Kuangcao: Wild or Crazy Cursive, pioneered by the calligrapher Zhang Xu in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD).

Examples of the Heritage of Ancient Chinese Writing:

- **The Cultured Pottery Vessel:** Inscribed with Chinese symbols, dating back over 4,500 years.
- **The Shi Qiang Plate:** A bronze vessel from the Western Zhou Dynasty (11th century-771 BC).
- **Inscriptions on Oracle Bones:** From the Shang Dynasty (16th-11th century BC), inscribed on ox bones and turtle shells.
- **Dongba Manuscripts:** Written in the Naxi pictographic language, a pictographic language still in use today.
- **Seals with Small Seal Script (Xiaozhuan) Inscriptions:** From the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC).
- **Wooden and Bamboo Slips:** From the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), used for writing before the widespread use of paper.
- **Impression of Seals:** Seal inscriptions from the Han Dynasty.
- **Book on Silk Fabric:** From the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-25 AD).
- **Covenant of Alliance (Houma):** Treaty and alliance documents from the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC).

8-The Scientific Aspect:

Ancient China witnessed development and prosperity in many scientific fields, most notably:

A- Astronomy:

The Chinese were interested in observing planets and celestial bodies with the naked eye. Although astronomy did not hold the utmost priority for them as it did in the civilizations of Iraq, Egypt, or the West (like the Greeks), they excelled in observing the sky and recording observations accurately. They recorded many important astronomical observations, including: Recording the passage of a comet in the sky in 2296 BC, which was considered an omen of bad luck in their ancient beliefs, Documenting a solar eclipse in 1361 BC, Preserving many other astronomical events in the royal archives.¹

Since the appearance of the earliest astronomical texts in the 14th century BC, the length of their year was 365.25 days, the same number as the degrees in a circle in their geometric system. However, the year remained aligned with the movements of the moon, so it consisted of 12 or 13 lunar months. The Chinese did not give specific names to the planets of the solar system, but they knew the duration of their cycles with great precision. They considered the North Star a symbol of the center of power, calling it names such as "Great Emperor" and "Great Grandfather."²

B- The Calendar:

The Chinese calendar was based on the lunar system, similar to the Sumerian calendar, consisting of 12 months with days ranging from 29 to 30 days. They would add a full month every two to three years to synchronize the lunar

¹ Will Durant. op. cit., pp. 154-155

² Anonymous author. op. cit, Vol. 1, p. 59

calendar with the solar year. They were also interested in drawing accurate astronomical maps of planets and stars.

C- Arithmetic:

The Chinese developed a sophisticated arithmetic system from around 1360 BC, based on the use of counting rods made of bamboo or ivory. They also used a counting board consisting of a numbered ruler or a board divided into squares in both horizontal and vertical directions to avoid calculation errors.

Method of Numerical Representation:

- Rods were placed vertically in columns with an odd order (ones, hundreds...).
- Rods were placed horizontally in columns with an even order (tens, thousands...).
- Thus, two types of numbers were formed: numbers for units and hundreds (odd columns), and numbers for tens and thousands (even columns).

Arithmetic Operations:

- **Addition and Subtraction:** They were performed directly by writing the numbers on the board and adding or subtracting them.
- **Multiplication:** The multiplicand was placed at the bottom of the square, the multiplier at the top, and the partial results were automatically summed.
- **Division:** The divisor was placed at the bottom, the dividend in the middle line, and the quotient at the top.¹

The Chinese were also aware of the properties of triangles and were able to solve first-degree equations. Among the most famous mathematicians of ancient China are Liu Hui and Zu Chongzhi.

D- Medicine:

¹ Will Durant. op. cit., pp. 156

In ancient China, three famous doctors emerged, Chunyu Yi, Hua Tuo (the famous surgeon), Zhang Zhongjing

Among the most prominent ancient Chinese medical books is "The Jiayi Canon" (Zhenjiu Jiayi Jing) by its author Huangfu Mi, which was distinguished by acupuncture (needling) as an advanced therapeutic method.

E- Recording Various Scientific Observations:

The Chinese recorded numerous and precise observations of eclipses and star clusters. They also accurately recorded observations on the properties of light and mirrors of various types (concave, convex, and flat). They also realized the correct proportions of copper and tin alloys used in bronze manufacturing, demonstrating their advancement in metallurgy.¹

¹ Labib Abdul Sattar. Op cit, p. 320.

II: Ancient Indian Civilization

Introduction :The Indian civilization is considered one of the most ancient civilizations in human history, matching both the Sumerian and Pharaonic civilizations in its antiquity and greatness. Its history includes a rich cultural heritage, abundant in cultures, arts, and human literature, in all its religious, social, political, economic, literary, artistic, scientific, material, technical, psychological, and ethical diversity.

The Indian civilization represents a unique model among ancient human civilizations, as its history has been characterized by continuity and cohesion throughout the ages. Unlike many civilizations that were contemporary with it but then vanished or were replaced by others, the Indian civilization continued to endure despite major historical transformations. Looking at the fate of civilizations contemporary with it, we note that:

- The Sumerian civilization ended in 2006 BC.
- The Babylonian civilization ended in 539 BC.
- The Ancient Egyptian civilization ended in 322 BC.
- The Persian civilization ended in 638 AD.

As for the Indian civilization, when reviewing its eventful history, we find that it continued through the ages, retaining its characteristics and identity, despite some shocks and disturbances that marked its historical trajectory. This exceptional continuity grants the Indian civilization a distinct specificity among the civilizations of the ancient world, making its study and understanding extremely important for comprehending the patterns of cultural continuity and transformation in human history.

First: The natural and geographical framework:

The topography of India is characterized by complexity and diversity. It is a vast peninsula, equivalent in size to a continent in its own right, stretching between two oceans, the Pacific and the Indian, and contains the highest mountain peak in the world.¹

➤ Current Location:

India is located in South Asia. It is the seventh-largest country in the world by geographical area, the second-most populous, and the first in terms of population density. It is bordered to the south by the Indian Ocean, to the west by the Arabian Sea and Pakistan, to the east by the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, and to the north by the People's Republic of China, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Area and Population:

The current area of India is approximately 3,287,590 square kilometers, and its population, according to a 2018 World Bank statistic, is estimated at around 1.34 billion people. The Indian territory is located north of the equator, between latitudes 6.44 and 97.25 degrees.²

The oldest geographical division of ancient India is located in the central region and is known as the "Deccan." The average elevation of this region's terrain is about 2,500 meters, and it comprises a diverse mix of geographical areas including mountain ranges, pastoral valleys, forests, plains, and swamps.

¹ Muhammad Ismail al-Nadawi, *Ancient India, its Civilization and Religion*, Dar al-Sha'b, Egypt, 1970, p. 11

² Alain Danielou., *Histoire de l'Inde*, Fayard, 1971.P16-19

Preferred Settlement Areas:

The best residential areas in ancient India were those located in the northwestern part, in addition to the lands stretching along the banks of the Indus and Ganges rivers. These areas provided suitable conditions for human settlement due to their fertile soil and availability of water resources.¹

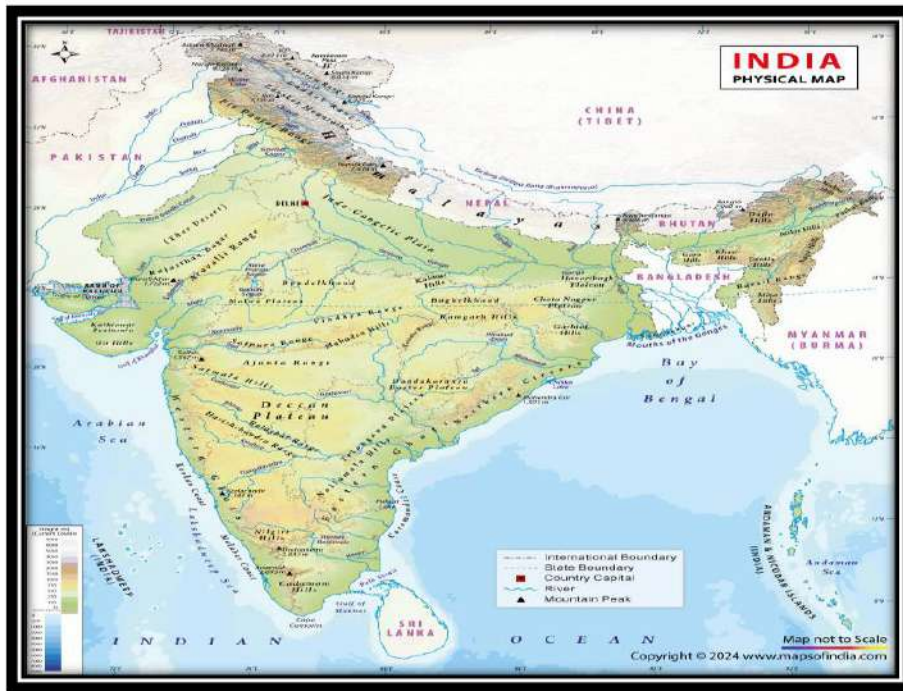
Characteristics of the Coasts:

The coasts of India are characterized by a lack of homogeneity and continuity, varying between high and low. The deltas of the Indus and Ganges rivers form marshy and swampy areas, making them unsuitable for establishing stable human settlements.

Best Settlement Area:

The southwestern tip of the Malabar Coast is considered the best section suitable for human settlement and the establishment of cultural sites in ancient India. This is due to the availability of dense vegetation and a moderate climate, which provided a suitable environment for life and human stability.

¹ Muhammad Ismail al-Nadawi, op cit, p. 13



Secondly, the factors that led to the rise of ancient Indian civilization:

The abundance of water resources in India, the moderate climatic conditions, and the fertility of the lands along the banks of the Ganges, Indus, Narmada, and Tapti rivers contributed to the establishment of major states and civilizations in the early stages of ancient Indian history. Alongside natural factors, the human factor, represented by a large population, as well as the great diversity of natural resources, played a pivotal role in driving economic development, construction, and urbanization in the Indian subcontinent.¹

Sources for Studying the History and Civilization of Ancient India:

The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of distinguished research and books by scholars and orientalists who were fascinated by Indian civilization and found in it the Aryan root that represented the common ethnic foundation

¹ Gustave Le Bon, *The Civilizations of India*, translated by Adel Zouair, Hindawi Foundation, Cairo, 2014, pp. 34-38.

for European civilization (the Indo-European civilization with Aryan roots)¹. Gradually, a specialized field of study known as "Indology" arose, with its scholars and research schools spread throughout the world.

First: Written Sources:

The sacred books known as the **Vedas** are considered among the oldest written sources of ancient India, dating back to the late second millennium BC. These books contain various religious hymns, including chants and texts related to offerings and sacrifices, as well as texts recording ancient Indian myths and legends.

These texts provide us with valuable information about the beliefs of ancient India, along with geographical and ethnic data, and the customs and traditions of early Indian societies. For example, the sacred Vedas contain clear references to the geographical boundaries of the settlement of invading tribes. The books also mention the names of rivers in Afghanistan, the Indus and Ganges rivers, the Himalayan mountain ranges, and other important geographical features.

Second: Material Archaeological Sources:

¹Indology is the academic discipline that studies the history and heritage of India from the earliest times to the present day, in all its diversity, stages of formation, manifestations, and various environments. This field of research encompasses every element and aspect of Indian civilization and heritage.

The term "Indomania" also emerged, referring to a fascination with Indology and everything related to India's history and heritage, whether by Orientalists or foreigners in general, and even by Indians themselves. It parallels the term Indophilia, which denotes an excessive love for everything Indian, particularly as manifested in the West since the 19th century, especially in Germany, where common historical roots were cultivated within the contemporary history of German culture and education

In addition to written sources, India abounds with numerous and diverse material archaeological sources that benefit researchers specializing in the study of its ancient civilization. The most prominent of these sources include:

- **Archaeological Finds:** These include pottery, stone weapons, arrows and bows, ceramic vessels, terracotta figurines representing humans or animals, glass rings, bones, and game boards (similar to chess). These finds all date back to periods ranging from the Stone Age to the Metal Age, and also include statues and metal coins.
- **Seals:** Ancient Indian seals were made from various materials such as steatite, ivory, and terracotta. These seals feature images of sacred animals, such as the bull, along with ritual inscriptions written in a pictographic style (proto-hieroglyphic).¹
- **Statues:** Numerous statues spread throughout India depicting various gods or embodying sacred powers in ancient Indian beliefs.
- **Buildings and Structures:** These include the remains of religious and civil buildings scattered across many regions of the Indian subcontinent, including tombs and shrines, in addition to rock-cut temples, which represent a unique architectural style in the history of ancient India.

Written sources specifically concerning the ancient periods of India are relatively few and do not meet the requirements of in-depth historical studies on ancient India. However, the most important of these sources can be summarized as follows:

Inscriptions on Pillars, including the Edicts of Ashoka, who inscribed his decrees in 250 BC, as well as inscriptions on great buildings such as those at Bharhut and Sanchi dating back to the 1st century AD.

¹ Gustave Le Bon. Op cit, p. 165.

The Collections compiled by the Puranas were composed in different stages, their date not exceeding the 8th century AD; however, they are filled with strange myths and legends.

Islamic books on military campaigns (Maghazi) appeared in the 11th century AD, authored by Muslim historians.¹

B- Origin of the name and origin of the population:

Researchers' opinions have varied regarding the origin of the name "India." Some believe it is derived from the word "Ind," which refers to the Indus River (or Sindhu) located in the Sindh region in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent, which lies today in Pakistan. This designation was originally Persian, and was later used by Greek historians in their writings in the form "Indo." The word "Hindustan" is a Persian term meaning "land of the river," while the word "Sindhu" is of Sanskrit origin meaning the land of the Indus, and the word "Bharati" refers to the good land.

The Indigenous Peoples of India:

The earliest known inhabitants of India are called the "Dravidians" (or Indo-Melanids), who are short in stature and dark-skinned, and settled in the regions of central and southern India. The "Munda" tribes are considered among the oldest ethnic groups to have inhabited the region, using a primitive language known as the Munda language, which is closely related to the languages of the Indo-Chinese tribes, indicating ancient ethnic and linguistic links between these groups and the peoples of Southeast Asia.²

¹ Basham A., *The Civilization of Ancient India*, Paris, Arthaud, 1988. P23-25

² Casal, J. M., *The Civilization of the Indus and its Enigmas*, Paris, Fayard, 1969. P14-16

The original Indian tribes settled in the central regions of the Indian subcontinent, in addition to the area of "Khotta Nagpur" in the Himalayan mountains. However, these indigenous groups were subjected to an invasion by tribes with fair skin who arrived in the second millennium BC from the regions of the "Hindu Kush" and "Pamir" mountains, settling in the fertile valleys of the Punjab and part of the Ganges River valley.

These invading tribes were known as the "Aryan tribes," a name these conquerors gave to themselves. They came from the north to the northwest of India, managed to subjugate the indigenous population, and called these defeated tribes "Dasas" or "Dasyus."

Ethnic Theories:

Both the Dravidians and the Aryans are considered the two most important ancient ethnic groups in India, forming the demographic and civilizational foundation of India throughout its long history.

Linguistic and Cultural Diversity:

India is considered the largest in terms of cultural, linguistic, and historical diversity, as well as its vast geographical expanse, which comes after the African continent in terms of area and multiplicity. It is home to two main language families:**Indo-Aryan:** An extension of the ancient Sanskrit language, spoken by about 74% of India's population today, making it the most widespread language group in the Indian subcontinent.¹

➤ Its origins and historical development:

¹ Casal J. M., The Indus Civilization and its Enigmas, Paris, Fayard, 1969.p30-35

The history of Indian civilization dates back to extremely ancient times, as archaeological excavations in the Indian subcontinent have uncovered sites dating to the Bronze Age, placing it among the ranks of the known ancient civilizations of the Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, and the Levant.¹

➤ **Economic Foundations of the Early Civilization:**

The inhabitants of that early period based their economy on a mix of agriculture and animal husbandry, cultivating various crops and herding domestic flocks of sheep, goats, and cattle, which formed a solid economic foundation for the subsequent growth of urban centers.²

➤ **The Harappan Civilization: The Oldest Civilization of India:**

The archaeological sites discovered in the Indus Valley are undoubtedly the oldest and most venerable of Indian civilizations. These sites were discovered in 1922 and are known as the "Harappan Civilization," named after its most famous site located in the Punjab region. This civilization was closely linked to agriculture, the emergence of cities, and the development of the Bronze Age, making it a complete model of an early civilization.³

➤ **Geographical Development and Dating:**

Archaeological evidence indicates that cultural development began in the Indus River delta region, then gradually moved towards the northeast. Researchers suggest that the history of Indian civilization dates back to around

¹ Basham A., op cit, Arthaud, 1988. P23-25

² Renou L., The Civilization of Ancient India According to Sanskrit Texts, Paris, Flammarion, 1981.p50-51

³ Casal J. M., op cit, Fayard, 1969.p31-34

3500 BC, confirming its antiquity and precedence among the major human civilizations.

First - The Kingdom of Magadha, This kingdom encompassed the area known today as "Bihar," and its capital was the city of "Rajagriha," which is currently known as "Rajgir."

Second - The Kingdom of Kosala, This kingdom was established to the west of the kingdom of Magadha, in the area known today as "Awadh." It took the city of "Shravasti" as its capital, a city currently known as "Sahet-Mahet."

➤ **The Indus Valley Civilization (2300-1750 BC):**

The Indus Valley Civilization represents one of the fundamental stages in the history of ancient India. This civilization flourished for five to six centuries, then faded after a short period of decline. The Indus region was initially under the control of Dravidian elements and continued its cultural development, then the entire region was subjected to an invasion by the Aryan tribes. Much information about this people and their life remains unknown, although the discovered seals – especially the terracotta ones – showed that this people knew and practiced writing, and also knew arithmetic and systems of measurement.

➤ **Major Urban Centers:**

The cities of "Mohenjo-Daro" in Sindh and "Harappa" in Punjab are the most famous cities of the Indus Valley Civilization. Remains of many small villages were also found, stretching from the "Gujarat" region in the south to the Himalayan mountains in the north, indicating the wide geographical spread of this civilization.

Cultural Achievements: The most prominent achievements of the Indus Valley Civilization lie in the art of construction and urban planning, particularly in the

major cities such as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Archaeological excavations have revealed a high level of architectural art and the existence of an advanced drainage system. Craftsmen during that period also enjoyed high efficiency, excelling in pottery making in various styles using the potter's wheel, along with producing a large number of figurines made of terracotta.

Thousands of seals were also found containing short inscriptions in a pictographic script that researchers have not yet been able to decipher. Land and river transport routes were well-organized, and the cities of the Indus Valley established extensive trade relations with neighboring regions, demonstrating the prosperity of economic life in this ancient civilization.¹

The cities of the Indus Valley Civilization had strong trade relations with Mesopotamia. Mesopotamian trade documents from the Akkadian period list names of goods arriving from "Meluhha," the ancient Akkadian name given to the Indus Valley region, confirming the depth of commercial ties between the two civilizations.

➤ **The Center of Harappa and the Decline of the Civilization:**

"Harappa" was a major center of the Indus Valley Civilization, beginning to flourish around 2500 BC in what is now Pakistan and western India. The reason for this civilization's collapse in the 18th century BC remains definitively unknown. Some researchers suggest that its end came at the hands of migrating Aryan tribes arriving from Central Asia, leading to the looting and burning of the cities of Harappa, and the subjugation and expulsion of the local population southward. This transformation resulted in the division of Indian civilization into two parallel paths: the north was characterized by the dominance of Aryan

¹Renou L., *The Civilization of Ancient India According to Sanskrit Texts*, Paris, Flammarion, 1981.p33-38

influence, while elements of traditional Indian civilization persisted in the south.¹

➤ **The Vedic Period (1500 BC):**

The history of India, in light of the cultural features of the Vedas, is divided into two main phases: **A/ The Early Vedic Era (1500–1000 BC):** During this period, the Aryans knew horse-drawn chariots, which gave them military superiority over the indigenous Dravidian population. Their economic life initially depended on cattle rearing, then they gradually turned to practicing agriculture. **B/ The Later Vedic Era (1000–550 BC):** This era witnessed the use of effective iron weapons, which facilitated the spread of Aryan tribes eastward to the Ganges River valley. During this period, the Aryans transitioned from a semi-nomadic lifestyle to agricultural settlement. Traditional tribal units disintegrated, replaced by organized kingdoms controlled by a warrior class led by a king, and conflicts among them intensified. The most prominent source for understanding their circumstances in that era is the ancient poetic epics written in the Sanskrit language, which provide a rich picture of their social, political, and religious life.

The "**Rigveda**" (meaning "Knowledge of Hymns" or "Knowledge of Praise") is the oldest of the four sacred Vedas. It is a collection of religious hymns that appeared at the beginning of the first millennium BC. From these hymns arose profound philosophical commentaries and explanations, the most famous of which are the "**Upanishads**," which represent the core of ancient Indian philosophical and religious thought.²

¹ Basham A., op cit, Arthaud, 1988. P23-25

² Muhammad Mujeeb. History of Indian Civilization, translated by Muhammad Noman Khan, reviewed by Zubair Ahmed Al-Faruqi, Arab Thought Foundation, Beirut 2016. pp. 395-396.

The Period of the Persian Invasion (530 BC):

The wealth of India, its beautiful cities, and its rich villages attracted foreign invaders. In 530 BC, the famous Persian Emperor "Cyrus" invaded the western parts of India, and it became the twentieth province within the Achaemenid Empire. Later, King "Darius" the Great managed to seize the Sindh region in 518 BC and annexed it to the Persian Empire. The era of Persian control over western India lasted for about two centuries, until the arrival of Alexander the Macedonian, who destroyed the Achaemenid Empire.

The Period of the Greek Invasion (326 BC – 321 BC):

Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, invaded India in 326 BC and fought a major battle with one of its most powerful kings, King "Porus." Alexander admired Porus's courage and valor in battle, so he decided to keep him as the ruler of his kingdom. Alexander intended to continue advancing to occupy the Indus Valley and pursue his conquests, but his exhausted forces, tired from long years of fighting, forced him to retreat and return to Mesopotamia. Consequently, the period of direct Greek control over India was limited to only a few years.

➤ The Mauryan Empire (320–185 BC):

One of the important results of Alexander the Great's invasion of India and the conflicts that broke out after his death was that these events paved the way for the emergence of a great state, the Maurya Empire, which is considered the greatest state of ancient India ever. Its founder, **Chandragupta**, was able to achieve major political and military accomplishments, namely defeating the last king of the Nanda dynasty ruling in the Magadha kingdom, and successfully repelling the attack of King Seleucus (one of Alexander's generals and successors). Chandragupta managed, for the first time in Indian history, to unify

the Ganges and Indus regions, extending his control over all of northern India and part of the Deccan Plateau, over a quarter of a century (321–297 BC).

Chandragupta is considered the first historically and reliably documented Indian king, and he is the founder of the Maurya dynasty, which ruled India for nearly a century and a half. He was succeeded to the empire's throne by his son **Bindusara** (297–273 BC), who continued his father's expansionist policy and worked to strengthen the foundations of the Mauryan state.¹



Third: Cultural Aspects of Ancient India:

System of Government: The system of government in ancient India included multiple systems that encompassed most of the known political forms of government in the world, the most important of which emerged as follows:

a- City-States: These states were first formed in the Indus Valley Civilization, establishing developed cities in all cultural fields.

¹ Muhammad Mujeeb. Op cit. pp. 395-396.

b- Monarchical System: Kingdoms appeared since the Aryan settlement period and were characterized by a tribal nature, as each major tribe had its own kingdom.

c- Imperial System: Kingdoms expanded and merged with each other to form great empires, such as the Mauryan Empire, the Gupta Empire, and others.

d- Republican System: This system appeared early in Indian history. It was a simple system where states were independent of each other, with influential rulers. Some early republics appeared in ancient Nepal, such as the Licchavi Republic in Vaishali, the Shakya Republic in Kapilavastu, and the Videha Republic in Mithila.

Administrative System: Administrative systems have been found existing in different periods of Indian history, with the earliest reference to them dating back to the Indus Valley Civilization. Through archaeological excavations, it is evident that the government in the cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa was methodical and practical, as it developed advanced systems for administration and sanitation, indicating the existence of a municipal government in these cities that took care of daily needs and supervised the regular arrangements of the cities.¹

➤ **The Economic Aspect:**

In the field of **agriculture**, India's land, climate, great plains, and multiple rivers, including the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Indus, were rich in organic elements that helped its inhabitants engage in agricultural activity. The importance of agriculture in the Indian economy increased, covering the basic living needs of the population. Many types of crops were cultivated, including:

¹ Will Durant. *The Story of Civilization, India and Her Neighbors*, translated by Zaki Najib Mahmoud, Dar Al-Jeel Publishing and Distribution, Beirut 1988, pp. 58-60.

jujube, grapes, millet, wild rice, rice, sweet and sour oranges, mahua (Indian grape), chickpeas, and sesame, as well as wheat, barley, and lentils.

The economy of the Indus Valley Civilization was primarily characterized by its **commercial** nature, due to the advancement of its inhabitants in irrigation engineering and transportation. Archaeological finds support the idea of the expansion of Indus Valley trade with neighboring countries, such as Persia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. Agriculture came second in terms of economic importance, focusing on the cultivation of wheat, peas, barley, sesame, dates, and melons. The inhabitants of the Indus Valley managed, for the first time in history, to turn cotton into clothing around 2000 BC, as they spun its fibers and turned it into fabric, which significantly stimulated their internal and external trade.

The early Vedic or Aryan civilization in the Ganges River valley was characterized by its nomadic and pastoral nature, based primarily on cattle rearing. By around 1000 BC, the Aryans used iron tools and learned agriculture and farming. With the emergence of trade, society stabilized and advanced economically; cities flourished again, writing was reinvented around 700–600 BC, and the Vedas, which had been preserved orally for nearly a thousand years, were codified. The countryside first, and later trade, became the solid foundation of economic life in India.¹

Foreign influence in India was not limited to the results of the waves of invaders like the Greeks, Persians, and Central Asian peoples, but extended to include profound influences through overland and maritime trade between the Indian peninsula, the Arabian Peninsula, and Egypt. Various Indian products were exported, such as various types of perfumes, textiles, spices, and jewelry. Trade was also sometimes strong with major states and kingdoms such as

¹ Romesh Chandra Dat. *The Civilization of India*, translated by Iqraa Group, Riyadh 1995, pp. 12-14

Mesopotamia (Babylon) and Persia. There is much archaeological evidence for this, including the presence of Indian seals and gifts inscribed in Indian languages in the graves of Persians and others, along with ornaments, supporting the existence of close artistic and commercial relations.

India's trade also flourished with the Roman Empire and was of great economic value. This maritime trade was described in a book known as the "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea" (Red Sea), written by a merchant from the city of Alexandria in Egypt, in which he mentioned all the seaports in the Red Sea and western India, and the main trading commodities exchanged.

➤ **The Religious Aspect:**

Indian civilization was distinguished by combining scientific and religious aspects simultaneously, and by its immense richness in artistic and cultural fields. Indian scholars excelled remarkably in mathematics and medicine, while their religious knowledge was an object of boundless admiration, particularly in the field of religious doctrines, in whose codification and organization they had great merit. It can be said that religious doctrines and ideas were not formulated and organized in any scientific civilization as they were in India, making it a unique model of the interaction between science and religion in the history of human civilizations.

Hinduism does not represent a religion in the familiar sense of the word, but rather a comprehensive "way of life." This is because, throughout its long history, it has absorbed all the changes, transformations, and influences it encountered, reformulating and integrating them within its own doctrines and composition. It is known that the early roots of Hinduism go back to the Dravidian religion that preceded it in the Indus Valley Civilization. In its early stages, Hinduism reconfigured the religion of the Dravidians and their gods in accordance with the nature of the people who emerged in India, gradually

transforming this people into a Hindu population that responded to the givens of their new environment.¹

➤ **Main Components of Hinduism:**

Divinity in Hinduism manifests itself between polytheism, differentiation, and monotheism, as Hindu monotheism can only be understood through the concept of pantheism (the unity of existence). Yoga, for example, represents a method for man's voluntary salvation as he attempts to reach the truth or unite with the divine. It means placing restraints on the self and represents a strict spiritual discipline aimed at achieving inner discipline and liberation.

➤ **Hindu Texts and Books:**

Hindu texts and books are divided into two main categories:

a/ Shruti: These are the revealed religious texts and books considered divinely inspired and sacred. They include the four Vedas.

b/ Smriti: These are the remembered or traditional religious texts and books, handed down from sages and teachers. They include the epics, law books, and philosophical texts.

➤ **Core Beliefs:**

The Indians sanctified almost everything in their religious life, from the Vedas and the ordinary life of liberation, to Brahmanism, veneration, and the establishment of the divine in minds. Hinduism is based on the idea of the transmigration of souls (reincarnation), believing that the human soul wanders in the cosmos, never resting or settling, and that the soul follows a single, constant path: if the soul is good in its present life, it remains good in its next life, and

¹Labib Abdul-Sattar. Op cit, pp. 311-312

vice versa. This confirms the principle of **Karma** and moral retribution, which represents the foundation of cosmic justice in Hindu thought.¹

Hinduism did not differ from other revealed or established religions in containing various rituals, including daily rituals, occasional rituals, periodic rituals, festivals, myths, and other religious practices. The religions of India and Southeast Asia carried sublime concepts and values in the foundations of social solidarity, welfare, and equality among humans, which made them form integrated value systems that profoundly influenced Asian societies.²

➤ **Buddhism: Emergence and Spread:**

In India, "Buddha" was born around 500 BC, and **Buddhism** emerged, which celebrated the spirit and idealism, was based on democratic principles in organizing monastic communities, and strongly opposed the system of dividing society into classes (the caste system). Yoga represents a system of spiritual and physical exercises that nourish the body, mind, and soul, and it is one of the ancient traditions of Indian religion and philosophy.

Buddhism did not last in India as a major religion for more than a hundred years, but it spread widely throughout East Asia. This is because Buddhism is more of a philosophy than a religion in the traditional sense; Buddha teaches his followers: "Do not worship us, but worship the gods." Nevertheless, the Indians venerated Buddha and considered him a great spiritual figure. However, Buddha was seen as a mediator between man and the spiritual world, a concept contrary to traditional Hindu doctrine, because the idea of a mediator is important to them. They believe that God entrusts a specific person with His message to travel the earth with it and present it to the people for guidance.³

¹ Alain Danielou, *Myths and Gods of India*, Editions du Rocher, 1992.p62-69

² Biardeau M., *Hinduism. Anthropology of a civilization*, Paris, Flammarion, 2009.p34-40

³ Alain Danielou, *op cit*, 1992.p670-73

➤ **Jainism: The Philosophy of Atheism:**

Jainism also appeared in India. It is a religion that denies the idea of God, supports a materialistic view of existence, and reinforces it with atheistic ideas. Jainism believes that the universe has existed since eternity and that no sacrifices should be offered or religious rituals practiced in the traditional sense. However, this religion did not gain wide acceptance among Indians, who were more interested in spirituality and the feeling of the existence of a God to whom everyone ultimately turns and journeys towards.¹

➤ **The Social Aspect: The Caste System:**

Vedic and Hindu religious thought forms the primary reference for the social stratification (caste system) in India, serving as the deep internal organizer of Indian society. This system is based on dividing society into classes (Varnas) that extend into thousands of sub-groups (Jatis), determining an individual's social, economic, and religious status from birth. This has made it one of the most prominent distinguishing features of Indian society throughout its long history.²

Fourth: The Military Aspect:

The need for maintaining security and protection in India led to the existence of a strong and clearly organized military system since the era of the Indus Valley Civilization. However, this military system flourished remarkably with the arrival of the Aryans and the emergence of the Vedic civilization. It then developed further in the Brahmanical era, which was the incubator of the Indian epics, replete with wars, battles, and organized armies. Indian military systems reached their peak with the establishment of the great empires, such as the

¹ Romesh Chandra Dat. Op cit, pp. 13-15

² Biardeau M., Hinduism. Op cit.p44-46

Mauryan Empire and the Gupta Empire, where the army achieved advanced levels of organization, weaponry, and military strategies.¹

➤ **The Intellectual and Philosophical Aspect:**

Indian wisdom transcended the traditional level of Eastern thought and transformed into a profound philosophy with multiple dimensions. Among the most prominent distinguishing characteristics of Indian philosophy are:

- **The Early Character:** Indian philosophy is considered one of the early philosophies in human intellectual history. It originated from within Hinduism and never separated from it; rather, it remained accompanying it as another face of the mental salvation that accompanies spiritual salvation. This intertwining of religion and philosophy formed an essential characteristic of Indian thought.
- **Applied Philosophy:** Indian philosophy is distinguished by being an applied philosophy in the field of metaphysics and its problems, as much as it closely adheres to the realistic details of daily life. It can be described as a realistic spiritual philosophy, combining deep contemplation of the metaphysical with attention to the practical affairs of humans. In its nature, Indian philosophy approaches Hellenistic philosophy and its various currents, which blended religion and philosophy and produced diverse philosophical approaches to address the practical problems facing humans in their daily lives.²

The fundamental character of Indian philosophy is marked by spiritual thought concerned with existential communication with the universe, granting it a profound spiritual dimension that transcends material concerns and surface phenomena.

¹ Michel Angot, Classical India, Les belles lettres, 2001.p80-83

² Louis Frédéric, Dictionary of Indian Civilization, Robert Laffont, 1987.p50-55

The Ethical Aspect: The worldly focus in Indian philosophy centers on ethics as a primary subject, as ethics form the basis of India's social constitution and the regulation of relationships between individuals and society.

The Esoteric Tendency: The esoteric tendency of Indian philosophy directed Indian thought towards the inner life of man more than the material world, leading Indian philosophy to concentrate on exploring the self and the inner world.¹

Asceticism and Liberation: Asceticism constitutes a common ground among the various currents of Indian philosophy. It encourages non-attachment to worldly things, producing a state of inner contentment, then leading to emancipation or "Moksha," and finally to "Nirvana" as the ultimate liberation from the cycle of reincarnation or "Samsara."

Philosophical Distinctiveness: Indian philosophy represents the oldest, longest, and most venerable philosophical heritage produced by humanity throughout history. It should not be compared to Western philosophical heritage, as each has its own unique way of understanding man, the world, and the spirit, and each has its distinct questions, methods, and answers.²

The Literary Aspect:

The two great epics, the "**Mahabharata**" and the "**Ramayana**," are the origin and foundation of Indian Sanskrit literature. Many historians have mentioned them as the first and greatest global literary works, as they surpass the famous Greek epics, the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," in the number of their verses and poetic imagery.

¹ Renou L., Filliozat J., Classical India, a handbook for Indian studies, Paris, EFEO, 2001.p90-93

² Michel Angot, Op cit.p111-114

The importance of these two epics in Indian society was not limited to entertainment and amusement; they were also role models for learning virtue, ethics, and devotion to one's spouse, as embodied in the character of the goddess Sita in the Ramayana. The epics are also a primary reference for naming children, as boys and girls are named after the gods and heroes of the epics. Indians believe this imbues the child with the good qualities and morals of those deities and ensures them greater protection, care, and tranquility than others.¹

Fifth: The Scientific Aspect of Indian Civilization:

➤ Origins and Development:

Scientific activity in India has been known since the middle of the second millennium BC. However, the scientific texts discovered from that period were not founded on a completely coherent and consistent scientific vision. Nevertheless, these texts hinted at the existence of a nucleus for theoretical and practical science and were distinguished by a profound vision in the fields of nature, the human self, and existing things, indicating an early intellectual rooting of scientific thinking.²

➤ Diversity of Sciences:

Many Indian sciences developed and flourished throughout the ages, including the natural sciences in their various fields, and the human sciences which encompassed education, law, geographical thought, and political science. The establishment of the first university in history, **Takshashila University** (Taxila), around 700 BC, located in the northwest of India, is evidence of the early institutional organization of higher education and the transmission of knowledge.

¹ Rapson E. J., *The Cambridge History of India*, S. Chando & Co., 1968, 5 vols., 3rd ed. p314-315

² Will Durant. *India*, Op cit, p. 335.

➤ **Magical Sciences:**

Throughout their history, Indians have been famous for magical sciences in their various forms, especially in the context of Hinduism and Buddhism. Indian magic was divided into two main types: **white magic** intended for beneficial acts, and harmful **black magic**. Common folk magic mostly relies on sleight of hand, optical illusions, and the taming and training of animals, especially snakes, which formed a continuous folk tradition in Indian culture.

➤ **Astronomy, Mathematics, and Medicine:**

Modern Hindu astrology has become an integral part of popular beliefs in contemporary India, as many still believe that stars and planets have a direct influence on people's lives and destinies.¹

The continuous interest in sequentially tracking the movements of the sun and moon led scholars of the Brahmanical era to confirm the existence of an intercalary month (Adhik Maas) of thirty days, added every five years to harmonize the lunar calendar with the solar year. This stage is known among ancient Indian astronomers as an important contribution to the science of calendrics and timekeeping, reflecting the accuracy of astronomical observation and the ability for mathematical modeling of cosmic phenomena.

➤ **Temporal and Astronomical Concepts in Ancient India:**

1- The Temporal Concept of "Yuga":

The attainment of a time phase in which both the sun and moon complete a whole number of cycles is called a "Yuga." Five ordinary years comprised 1800 days, which was a very short period astronomically. Therefore, it was necessary to add a month of thirty days, making the duration of a Yuga 1830 days. This

¹ Ismail al-Nadawi. Op cit, pp. 258-259

completed period is, in turn, considered of great importance in Indian astronomical calculations.¹

1-1- Astronomical Eras and Cosmic Periodicity:

The division of the duration of astronomical eras (Yugas) among Indians was of great importance in Brahmanical circles that adhered to Vedic thought. These eras represent successive divisions in cosmic life and are considered cyclical and in a state of endless, eternal rotation. The divisions of time form the constituent elements of the magnitude of these cosmic cycles, so that their extent corresponds to the creative and moving power of the universe. This power is linked to the "word" or "act" uttered by the creative being of the world in the beginning, known as "Brahman," which is uttered by the supreme knowledge represented in the Vedas.²

1-2- The Siddhanta Astronomy:

When Indian astronomy stabilized and thought turned to its development, one of the most important features of this movement was the emergence of advanced astronomy after Indians came into contact with the Greeks, in what became known as the "Siddhanta" or the "Five Solutions." These astronomical solutions included:

- **Paitamaha Siddhanta:** The text of the Grandfather (the great god Brahma), to which scientific and astronomical teaching is attributed.
- **Vasishtha Siddhanta:** The scholar Al-Biruni presented this text in his book "History of India" in the 11th century AD. It is considered one of the most

¹ Jeannine Auboyer, *Daily Life in Ancient India*, Hachette, 1961.P32-39

² Ismail al-Nadawi. *Op cit*, pp. 258-259

important and prominent astronomical books. In it, Al-Biruni provides useful observations on the system of Vasishtha Siddhanta, through the technique of determining the positions of moving stars relative to fixed reference points, by accurately estimating degrees and minutes, the angular distances between planets and these reference points, and by mastering the use of zodiac signs in astronomical calculations.¹

- **Surya Siddhanta:** The Solution of the Sun, an integrated astronomical system.
- **Saura Siddhanta:** Concerned with the system of the world and the universe.

1-3- Mathematical Contributions:

The explicit and abstract use of zero is considered one of the most prominent major contributions of Indian mathematics to the history of human sciences, revolutionizing calculation and numbering systems worldwide.²

1-4- Mathematical Thought in the Vedic and Brahmanical Eras:

Regarding Indian mathematical thought, there was no specific and independent book on mathematics in the Vedic and Brahmanical eras. However, the Vedic language testifies to dealing with very high numbers, as it had specific names for all powers of 10 up to eight zeros (10^8). This raises important questions about whether there was an integrated system of numeration with digits and numbers in that early period, or what other calculation method was prevalent before being replaced by the later developed numerical system.

¹ Louis Frédéric, Op cit.p50-55

² Renou L., Filliozat J., Op cit.p90-93

India gave humanity some of the greatest mathematicians in history, most notably: Aryabhata, Brahmagupta, and Mahavira. These scholars made foundational contributions to the development of mathematical thought worldwide.¹

➤ **Calculus and Numerals:**

The science of calculus (differentiation and integration) was invented in India two centuries before its appearance in the West, confirming the precedence of Indian civilization in this field. Indian numerals (including the concept of zero) appeared in a simple and clear form, following the decimal system. These numerals traveled to Iran, and the Arabs became acquainted with them when they conquered Iran. They then spread throughout the Ottoman Empire and from there to the West, where they became known as "Arabic numerals," gradually replacing Roman numerals in global use.²

➤ **Chess: The Indian Invention:**

Chess is an original Indian invention, embodying a profound mathematical dimension evident in probability calculation and strategic planning. This game became one of the most prestigious intellectual games in the world and is believed to have originated in India between 550 and 280 BC.

Fifth: The Urban and Artistic Aspect of Indian Civilization:

➤ **Plastic Arts:**

Plastic arts in India evolved and diversified in form throughout the ages, encompassing Dravidian art, ancient Hindu art, Buddhist art, as well as painting and minor arts. Indian painting is an ancient art, beginning with rock carvings in prehistoric times. Engravings and paintings appear on caves and rock shelters in

¹ Jeannine Auboyer, Op cit.P32-39

² Ismail al-Nadawi. Op cit, pp. 258-259

the Bhimbetka region dating back nearly 30,000 years, making them among the oldest evidence of human artistic activity. The **Ajanta Caves** represent the most important and famous caves and murals that have withstood the test of time, and are rightly considered timeless artistic masterpieces reflecting the genius of the ancient Indian artist.¹

➤ **Music:**

Hinduism attached great importance to music. In Indian mythology, each god is associated with a specific type of musical instrument, bestowing a sacred quality upon the musical art. Music was considered an essential source of ancient Indian culture and a primary tool for spiritual and religious expression.²

➤ **Theatre and Dance:**

The emergence of theatre and dance in India was closely linked to Hindu doctrine. According to Indian mythology, the great god **Brahma** was the first to produce a theatrical work, transmitting all his expertise to the sage **Bharata Muni** (comparable to Aristotle in Greek culture). These theatrical secrets are known as the "**Natyashastra**" (Bharata's Laws on Dance and Drama), which is the oldest and most comprehensive theory of drama and dance in human history.

The dance movements in Indian theatre were derived from the movements of the gods. Therefore, each god had their own personality, attributes, costumes, makeup, and specific "**mudras**" (symbolic gestures). Indian theatre is based on what is known as concepts that are specific and completely understood; everything presented on stage is known and pre-understood by the audience and stored in the collective consciousness of all Indians. Gestures in Indian theatre,

¹ Will Durant. India, Op cit, pp. 361-363

² Ismail al-Nadawi, Opcit, pp. 272-273

despite their abundance and variety, are meaningful and expressive of the character, from head to toe, carrying clear and agreed-upon connotations.¹

Indian theatre was characterized by a notable ritualistic organization. The performance begins with the beating of drums to announce the start, then the curtain is raised by two extraordinarily beautiful women, after which music and dance begin in tight harmony. Drumming is not permitted during the dance, nor vice versa, reflecting a precise artistic system. Indian dance and song are seen as the shortest paths to appease the gods, granting the performing arts a spiritual dimension and special sanctity in Indian culture.²

➤ **Ancient Indian Medicine:**

In its early stages, the practice of medicine in Indian civilization was linked to magic; it was magical in its general content, though coupled with precise practical knowledge that developed over time. Among the most important medical sources known in the Indian tradition and famous in the early centuries of the Christian era are the sources called "**Ayurveda**" (the knowledge of how to prolong life). Within this tradition, two main formal schools were established:

The School of Atreya: Focused on theoretical and physiological aspects.

The School of Sushruta: Distinguished by its focus on surgery and practical therapeutic techniques.

Medical Theory in Ayurveda: The ideas attributed to the School of Atreya are considered an extension of the physiological concepts found in the ancient Vedic texts. The Ayurvedic texts contain an integrated rational theory to explain organic functions and their imbalances, based on the conception of the five

¹ Labib Abdul-Sattar. Op cit, pp. 309-310

² Will Durant. India, Op cit, pp. 361-363

primary elements that constitute the universe, from which the human body is also formed. These elements are:

Earth: Corresponds to the solid tissues in the body. Water: Corresponds to the humors and fluids of the body, Air: Corresponds to breath and vital movements, Fire: Corresponds to bile and metabolism, Space (Ether): Corresponds to bodily cavities and internal spaces.¹

It is observed that the two extreme elements — Earth and Space — are relatively inert and static, while the remaining three elements — Water, Air, and Fire — are active and dynamic in the vital processes of the body. This cosmic conception of the human body reflects the holistic vision of ancient Indian medicine, which links man and the universe in one integrated system.

¹ Ismail al-Nadawi, *Opcit*, pp. 275

III: Ancient Japanese Civilization

Introduction :

Japanese civilization is one of the most culturally rich civilizations in terms of heritage and traditional arts, having left a vast legacy of archaeological and historical sites that have reflected upon Japanese society in the past and present. Japan is characterized by its diversity of traditional cultural activities, such as the tea ceremony, the art of flower arranging "Ikebana," and the traditional dress "Kimono," along with highly popular traditional performing arts, including the classical "Kabuki" and "Noh" theaters, the musical theater "Kyogen," and the comedic puppet theater "Bunraku." Some of these arts have been inscribed on UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage list.

This lecture discusses the most prominent features of ancient Japanese civilization, which contributed to enriching human heritage, supported the advancement of science and cognitive development, and renewed its contents and accumulations through the ages.

First - The natural and geographical framework:

Japan is located in the northern temperate climate zone and is characterized by a humid monsoon climate. The country is exposed to southeastern winds coming from the Pacific Ocean during the summer and northwestern winds originating from the Eurasian landmass in the winter, which gives it a clear monsoon system and four distinct seasons. The northernmost and southernmost extremes of the archipelago experience significant climatic variation in terms of temperature and cold levels.¹

Topographically, mountainous areas constitute more than 70% of Japan's total land area, equivalent to approximately three-quarters of the country, while plains and valleys account for less than 30% of the remaining area. About 73% of Japanese land consists of mountainous forests unsuitable for agricultural, industrial, or residential use. In contrast, Japan is surrounded by sea basins rich in cold and warm ocean currents, which contributes to the availability of abundant fish stocks, making it a fertile area for marine resources.²

The total area of Japan currently amounts to approximately 378,000 square kilometers. It extends as a long archipelago comprising a chain of islands, stretching about 3,000 kilometers between its northernmost and southernmost points. The four main islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Japan is subject to multiple and frequent natural disasters, most notably typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes.³

¹ Danielle E. and Vadime E., *The Art of Ancient Japan*, Mazenod, Paris, 1980.p15-19

² Earhart, H. Byron. *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity*, 1974.p20-25

³ Muhammad Sayyil Taqush: *Simplified Encyclopedia of Ancient Civilizations*, Dar al-Nafais, Beirut, 2010, p. 4.



Natural map of Japan

2- Geographic location: Japan is located in East Asia, specifically to the northeast of the continent, stretching between the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, near the Korean Peninsula. During previous geological ages, particularly around 2.5 million years ago and during glacial periods, the sea level was lower than it is today, which led to the emergence of land bridges connecting the Japanese archipelago to the Asian continent via Sakhalin Island to the north and the Ryukyu region with Taiwan to the south. Astronomically, Japan lies between latitudes 24° and 46° north and longitudes 122° and 146° east.¹

The topography and geology of Japan are relatively recent, as its landmass rose above sea level during the Tertiary geological period due to seismic activity and volcanoes that remain active today. Mountainous terrain dominates the

¹ Ali Musa and Muhammad Al-Hammadi, Geography of the Continents, Dar Al-Fikr, 5th edition, Damascus, 1982, pp. 356-357.

country's topography, with plains and flat areas concentrated in narrow mountain valleys, hilly regions, and coastal enclaves. The Japanese archipelago consists of a dense chain of islands separated from the Asian continent, prominently featuring four main islands: Hokkaido in the far north, and Honshu, which alone constitutes about half of the archipelago's total area, and Shikoku, separated from Honshu by an inland sea, and Kyushu in the south.¹

In addition to these main islands, Japan includes hundreds of smaller islands, with data indicating the presence of nearly seven thousand islands extending along the Pacific coast. These islands are located within what is known as the Pacific Ring of Fire, as Japanese territory contains 108 active volcanoes and frequently experiences destructive earthquakes and the resulting tsunami waves that strike the coasts. Japan's climate is generally temperate but varies significantly between northern and southern regions, distributed across six main regional climatic zones.

The climatic zones in Japan can be classified as follows:

- **Hokkaido Region (in the north):** This region has a humid climate characterized by long, extremely cold winters and relatively short, hot summers, with average rainfall levels.
- **Seto Inland Sea Region:** This region is characterized by a temperate climate throughout the seasons of the year.²

The description of the main climatic zones in Japan can be completed as follows:

¹ Ralph Lintoff: *The Tree of Civilization*, translated by Ahmed Fakhry, vol. 3, Anglo-Egyptian Library, Cairo, 1961, p. 30.

² Edwin Oldfather Reichauer: *A History of Japan from the Roots to Hiroshima*, translated by Youssef Shamb Al-Shami, Dar Al-Alaa Al-Din, 1st edition, Damascus, 2000, p. 8

- **Sea of Japan Region:** This region experiences heavy snowfall during the winter, while the summer is relatively cool, though it can be subject to extreme heat waves due to the influence of foehn winds.¹
- **Central Highlands Region (Central Inland Area):** This region has a humid climate, characterized by significant temperature variations between summer and winter, as well as between day and night, along with light rainfall.
- **Pacific Ocean Region:** This region is characterized by a humid subtropical climate, with mild winters and little snow, while the summers are humid.
- **Ryukyu Islands Region (southwest):** This region has a subtropical climate, characterized by warm winters and hot summers, with heavy seasonal rainfall.²

3- Origin of the name and origin of the population:

First: The Name in Ancient Chinese Sources:The Chinese, based on their historical sources, referred to the Japanese archipelago by the term "**Wa**" (倭), a designation that appeared in their ancient chronicles.

Second: The Indigenous Japanese Name:The autonyms used by the Japanese people for their country are "**Nippon**" (日本) and "**Nihon**" (日本). The origin of these two terms in the Japanese language conveys the meaning "source of the sun" or "origin of the sun," composed of two morphemes: "Ni" (日), meaning sun, and "Hon" (本), meaning origin, source, or root. Thus, the name carries the denotation of "Land of the Rising Sun." It is plausible that this designation arose from Japan's geographical location as the easternmost point relative to the known inhabited world in the ancient historical era.³

¹ Karm Helmi Farhat: Arab and Islamic Culture in Japan, Cultural House, n.d., n.d., n.s., p.6

² Ali Musa and Muhammad al-Hammadi: Geography of the Continents, Dar al-Fikr, 5th edition, Damascus, 1982, p. 352.

³ Muhammad Suhail Taqush: Simplified Encyclopedia of Ancient Civilizations, Dar al-Nafais, n.d., Beirut, 2010, p. 496.

Researchers suggest that the Japanese choice of this autonym (Nihon) was intended to assert their civilizational and political independence from their western neighbors, China and Korea. The term "Nihon" continues to be widely used in official Japanese contexts today, appearing on currency coins and banknotes, postage stamps, and as an emblem in official sporting events.

Third: The Name in the Arabic Language and Global Derivatives

The Arabic name (al-Yābān) is derived from the Chinese form of the word, which was recorded in their writings in forms approximating "**Rìběn**" (日本). This represents the Chinese pronunciation of the Japanese "Nippon" written with Chinese characters (kanji). This designation then transmitted through Asian languages; it was adopted by Malay as "**Jepun**" , and also in Javanese. From there, it passed into European languages, appearing as "**Japon**" in French and "**Japan**" in English, before being Arabized into "al-Yābān" in the Arabic language.¹

Fourth: The Etymological Evolution of the Name in European Languages and Arabic

The European name "Japan" in English and "Japan" in German were borrowed from the same sources. In modern Arabic, the name entered in the form (al-Yābān), itself borrowed from European languages.

➤ The Origins of the Early Inhabitants of the Japanese Archipelago

The earliest evidence of human presence in the Japanese archipelago dates back to the Upper Paleolithic period, specifically to the era of Paleolithic

¹ Edwin Oldfather Reichauer: A History of Japan from its Roots to Hiroshima, translated by Youssef Shalab Al-Sha, Dar Alaa El-Din, 1st edition, Damascus, 2000, p. 8

hunters, extending to approximately 40,000 years ago. During that era, the Japanese archipelago was already separated from the Asian continent.¹

Scientific studies and anthropological research have not, to date, arrived at a precise and definitive determination of the origins of the early inhabitants who settled the Japanese archipelago. However, theoretical conceptions and laboratory research indicate that the contemporary Japanese people emerged as a result of the mixing and interaction of several human races distinguished by distinctive characteristics, according to the following sequence:

- **A first primitive race:** Its existence is hypothesized during the early glacial periods, specifically in the period between approximately 30,000 and 20,000 BCE.
- **At least two additional races:** They settled in the territories of Japan in later stages. It is believed that their arrival occurred during a period when the Japanese islands were still connected to both the Asian continent and North America via land bridges (continuous landmass). Their origins are likely traced back to:
 - The region of South Asia.
 - The plains of Siberia and the region of China, most probably.

4-Factors contributing to the rise of ancient Japanese civilization:

First: The Geographical and Climatic Factor

This factor is represented by Japan's geographical location, which places it in an area with diverse sea currents and bodies of water, providing it with immense marine resources. Furthermore, the variety of climatic zones extending from north to south contributed to the enrichment of vegetation cover, the diversity of

¹ Kamel Saafan: Asian Beliefs (Iraq-Persia-India-China-Japan), Dar Al-Nada, 1st ed., 1999, p. 321.

food resources, the multiplicity of animal species, and the spread of mountain farming patterns. In addition, the possibility of rapid communication between the islands by boats facilitated commercial and human exchanges among them.¹

Second: The Human and Cultural Factor

The most prominent features of this factor were the nature of social coexistence among the components of Japanese society, the predominance of a spirit of tolerance among its people, and their collective sense of cultural distinction compared to neighboring peoples. These internal factors stimulated their spirit of innovation, development, and learning, and also strengthened their patriotism, national belonging, and spirit of sacrifice for it.²

Third: The Factor of Civilizational Proximity

Japan's geographical proximity to major human civilizations, such as China and India, contributed to stimulating the movement of ideas, beliefs, and sciences within it. The Chinese civilizational influence stands out as the most profound, especially in the fields of Eastern thought, writing, and authorship, as contact with Chinese achievements formed an important tributary in shaping Japanese cultural and civilizational structure.³

Second - Sources of Ancient Japanese Civilization:

Historical studies of Japan rely on a variety of primary and secondary sources, which can be classified as follows:

First: External Sources (Non-Japanese)

¹ Afaf Mosaad Al-Abd: Studies in the History of the Far East, University Knowledge House, n.d., Alexandria, n.d., p. 104.

² Karam Helmy Farhat: Op cit, p. 10.

³ Afaf Mosaad Al-Abd: Op cit, p. 105.

- **Ancient Chinese Sources:** Ancient Chinese writings are among the oldest sources that refer to the Japanese archipelago, addressing it as a region of neighborhood and exchange, and sometimes conflict. The Chinese Book of Han, dating back to the first century CE, is considered the first known written reference to mention Japan.
- **Korean Sources:** Some Korean historical chronicles contain important information and references related to the history of Japan and its relations with the Korean Peninsula.

Second: Archaeological and Material Sources

These consist of reports on modern archaeological discoveries, organized excavations, and various types of material remains scattered throughout the Japanese archipelago, which form a physical archive of life in ancient times.

Third: Internal Sources (Japanese)

The book "Kojiki" stands out as the oldest extant written Japanese source. It is a sacred text that serves as a fundamental reference in Japanese history and world heritage. The book combines several levels:

- **Mythological Texts:** Includes mythical stories about the gods (such as the sun goddess Amaterasu-Ōmikami), the descendants of the gods, and the creation of the cosmos.
- **Historical Narratives:** A recording of historical events dating back to later periods, along with information on imperial genealogies.
- **Literary and Poetic Texts:** Contains ancient literary and poetic materials, as well as funerary rites.

One of the myths in the Kojiki indicates that the goddess Amaterasu sent her grandson Ninigi to rule the earth after he received the reins of government from the god Ōkuninushi (a descendant of the god Susano-no-Mikoto). According to

legend, the Emperors of Japan are descended from Ninigi, with Emperor Jimmu being the first human (earthly) emperor to rule Japan. The book also names the first nine emperors with legendary names.¹

As for the tenth emperor, Suijin, whom the Kojiki describes as "the first emperor to rule the earthly world," his historical existence has actually been confirmed, although it is noted that his reign period recorded in the mythical sources does not align with precise historical facts. Accordingly, internal sources can be relied upon as trustworthy sources for recording imperial genealogy starting from the reign of Emperor Ōjin (traditionally estimated as 270-310 CE) and Emperor Nintoku (traditionally estimated as 313-399 CE).²

Nihon Shoki :The "Nihon Shoki" (日本書紀), which means "The Japanese Chronicles," is considered the second oldest known written source in Japan after the "Kojiki." However, it is distinguished by being more detailed and of greater significance in terms of its value for studying Japanese history and antiquities.

This book was written entirely in ancient Chinese characters and contains complete works that form part of Japanese classical literature. The authorship of the "Nihon Shoki" was completed in 720 AD, under the supervision of Prince Toneri , with the assistance of Ono Yasumaro.

The book chronicles historical events that occurred during the eighth century AD, focusing particularly on the reigns of Emperors Tenji n Temmu , The book's style is characterized by its focus on highlighting the virtues of good rulers and shedding light on the mistakes of less competent ones, reflecting a moral and didactic tendency in the recording of history.

¹ Henshall, K., A history of Japan: from stone age to superpower, P. Macmillan, 2012.p25-28

² Francine Hérail, History of Japan. Origins at the end of Meiji, POF, Paris, 1996.p50-52

Despite its great historical value, it should be noted that the "Nihon Shoki," like the "Kojiki," includes some stories and legends that cannot be considered purely historical accounts.

5- Origins and Historical Development:

First: Ancient Geographical Background and the Emergence of Humans

During the ice ages, specifically around 2.5 million years ago, the sea level was lower than it is today, which led to the emergence of land bridges connecting the Japanese archipelago to the Asian continent. This connection was represented by two main bridges: the first in the north via Sakhalin Island, and the second in the south via the Ryukyu Islands and Taiwan. However, the oldest archaeological evidence of human presence in Japan dates back to a later period, specifically to the stage of Upper Paleolithic hunters, approximately 40,000 to 30,000 years ago.¹

Second: Civilizational Phases in Ancient Japanese History

The civilizational history of ancient Japan witnessed multiple chronological divisions. Although there are some differences and overlaps between these divisions, a general classification can be presented as follows:

1. **Early Neolithic Civilizations:** This stage represents the earliest beginnings of the transition towards human settlement, where the first stable residential communities appeared, and primitive agricultural practices began.
2. **Jōmon Period (approx. 8000 BCE - 300 BCE):** This period derived its name from the distinctive characteristics of the pottery industry that spread during it, known for cord-patterned decorations. It is worth noting that some traditional Japanese myths trace the founding of the country to Emperor Jimmu in the 7th

¹Hassan Sayed Ahmed Abu Al-Ainin and others: Regional Geography of the World, Vol. 1, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, n.d., Beirut, 1967, p. 384.

century BCE; however, these narratives belong to the realm of mythology and not to documented history.

3. **Yayoi Period (approx. 300 BCE - 300 CE):** This period represents an important transitional phase that witnessed development in agricultural techniques, especially wet-rice cultivation, metalworking, and the emergence of clearer social distinctions.
4. **Kofun Period (approx. 300 CE - 710 CE):** The name "Kofun" is derived from the Japanese word meaning "ancient tomb" or "burial mound," referring to the massive tombs constructed specifically for the ruling class during this era. These tombs are characterized by their unique keyhole shape, with some reaching over 200 meters in length. These burial mounds were surrounded and adorned with clay cylinders known as "Haniwa," which were arranged around the tomb, with some topped with dishes for offerings. These cylinders and walls were also decorated with drawings and images representing warriors and other figures, providing an important insight into the beliefs and aspects of life in that society.

5. Asuka Period (approx. 593 CE – 710 CE)

This period derived its name from the region where the imperial court was then settled, known as "Asuka." This stage is considered one of the most significant formative periods in Japanese history, as it witnessed radical transformations on political, religious, and administrative levels.¹

a. Political and Social Context: Towards the end of the 6th century CE, the dominance of the **Soga clan (蘇我氏)** over the Yamato court intensified, after it managed to oust the rival Nakatomi and Mononobe clans and gain control over the levers of imperial governance. It is believed that the Soga clan were among the families that migrated from the Korean Peninsula due to political unrest

¹ Francine Hérial, Op cit.p50-52

there, which contributed to the transfer of Korean cultural elements and Buddhism to Japan.¹

The Asuka period traditionally begins with the enthronement of Empress **Suiko** (推古天皇), who reigned between (592 CE – 628 CE), following the assassination of Emperor Sushun by the Soga clan. Her ascension to the throne marked an important turning point, especially given her alliance with Prince **Shōtoku Taishi** (聖徳太子), who played a pivotal role in the reforms.

b. Administrative and Legal Reforms:The first organized attempts at administrative reform in Japan are represented by the promulgation of the "**Seventeen-Article Constitution**" (十七条憲法) in 604 CE. The texts of this charter drew their principles from the teachings of Buddhism and Confucianism, in addition to Chinese administrative models. This charter laid new foundations for administrative management, including:

- Organizing the ranks and classes of officials.
- Defining ethical and political principles for governance.
- Promoting the concept of a centralized state along the lines of the Chinese model.

c. Cultural and Religious Openness:The Asuka period was characterized by extensive openness to Chinese and Korean cultures, the most prominent manifestations of which were:

- The official introduction of Buddhism to Japan, where the Soga clan played a major role in its propagation and support.
- The introduction of Chinese writing, along with administrative and intellectual systems.
- The establishment of diplomatic and cultural relations with the Korean kingdoms and China, which contributed to the transfer of knowledge and technologies.²

¹ Amy S.K. and Shin Kimura, *Traditional Houses of Japan*, Flammarion, Paris, 2004.p34

² Collective, *Tales and legends of Japan*, Flies France Editions, coll. Paris, 2001, 2nd ed.p40

Thirdly - Cultural manifestations:

The System of Government in Japan: The Imperial Framework and Transformations of Power

First: The Nature of the Imperial System:The Japanese imperial system is considered one of the oldest hereditary monarchies in the world. Between the 4th and 9th centuries CE, this system witnessed significant expansion, gradually unifying most of the kingdoms and tribes of the archipelago under the authority of a central government headed by the Emperor (or occasionally the Empress). The imperial dynasty imposed its control over the reins of power during those formative centuries.

In 794 CE, the imperial court established a new capital in "**Heian-kyō**" (平安京), known today as Kyoto, thus beginning the **Heian period** (794 CE – 1185 CE), which is regarded as a golden age of classical Japanese culture. Religious life during this period was characterized by a blend of indigenous Shinto practices and Buddhist teachings.

Second: Transformations of Power and the Weakening of Imperial Influence

Although the hereditary imperial system theoretically continued, actual power did not remain concentrated in the emperor's hands. For long historical periods, emperors became symbolic rulers, while real power lay with powerful elites. These transformations can be traced through the following stages:

1. Domination by the Civil Aristocracy (Fujiwara Clan)

As the influence of major aristocratic clans increased, the **Fujiwara clan** (藤原氏) emerged as the most prominent power controlling the imperial court, monopolizing the regency over the throne and key positions for several centuries.

2. Domination by Military Clans (Samurai):In the late Heian period, influence shifted to military clans and their forces of **Samurai** warriors. The conflict escalated between the two military clans, the **Taira** (平氏) and the **Minamoto** (源氏), culminating in the **Genpei War** (1180 CE – 1185 CE), which ended with the victory of the Minamoto clan.

3. Establishment of the Shogunate Government (Kamakura)
After their victory, the Minamoto clan established a new military system of government, taking the city of **Kamakura** as their capital. Their leader was granted the title of **Shōgun** (将軍), becoming the de facto ruler of Japan, while the emperor remained a religious and ceremonial symbol in the ancient capital.

4. The Muromachi Period and the Return of Unrest
In 1333 CE, the Kamakura shogunate fell, and the **Muromachi period** (室町時代) (1336 CE – 1573 CE) began. However, this period witnessed the growing influence of local warlords (Daimyō), increasing political chaos, which led the country into devastating civil wars by the late 16th century.

Japan was reunified in the late 16th century by the military commander Oda Nobunaga. His work was continued by his successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, until Hideyoshi's death in 1598. These efforts were completed by Tokugawa Ieyasu, who consolidated his political and military influence until he was appointed Shogun by the Emperor. Ieyasu established a ruling dynasty that lasted throughout the Edo period (1600-1868), an era characterized by relative stability and prosperity, which saw the imposition of a rigid class structure on Japanese society, alongside the adoption of a strict isolationist policy that severed Japan's ties with the outside world.

Reflection on Japanese political history reveals a complex interplay of social and cultural structures that have contributed to the formation of the national

identity. Among the most prominent of these factors is the Japanese people's pride in their ethnic characteristics and their firm belief in their ethnic purity—ideas reinforced through centuries of geographical isolation and the perception of Japan as the center of the world. This isolation helped entrench the concept of a "closed tribe," making it difficult for foreigners to integrate into the Japanese social fabric; they were almost completely excluded from state institutions and public interest. These ideas persist in contemporary Japanese political discourse, with some leaders suggesting that ethnic purity was a contributing factor to Japan's economic superiority.

Furthermore, the traditional Japanese political system was based on a tightly organized feudal structure, built upon a clear hierarchical class and functional order. At the apex of this hierarchy was the Emperor (Tenno), regarded as a descendant of the Sun Goddess and possessing a symbolic sanctity. However, over time, the Emperor had transformed into a symbolic figure devoid of actual power, having delegated it to the Shogun (the supreme military commander), who administered the country's affairs in the Emperor's name. The Shogun's authority had a direct and powerful influence primarily in the central region of Japan, while the remaining territories were distributed among approximately 250 local warlords (Daimyo). These Daimyo ruled their semi-independent domains (fiefs) and were required to pledge their loyalty and obedience to the Shogun.

In feudal Japan, a military aristocracy known as the "Samurai" emerged, crystallizing as a direct consequence of the ongoing conflicts for control over land among three major clans: Minamoto, Fujiwara, and Taira. The social origins of this class varied; while some were connected to the ruling class, others were land tenants, yet they were all united by absolute loyalty to their feudal lords, in exchange for land or financial stipends. By the period spanning from the 9th to the 12th century AD, the Samurai evolved into a hereditary military aristocracy, constituting about 6% of Japan's total population. This class

included, alongside the warrior elite, other elements such as irregular soldiers, officials, and subordinates of lower ranks within the feudal hierarchy.

Although the Samurai class retained its character as an active military force in the early stages of the Tokugawa shogunate, it underwent a fundamental transformation over time, gradually shifting from performing a purely military role to undertaking administrative and bureaucratic tasks, becoming more of a hereditary, educated civilian class than a permanent military force. Despite this functional shift, the Samurai clung to the symbols of their traditional identity, most notably the custom of carrying two swords, which represented a symbol of their high social status. They also endeavored to preserve their military heritage as an essential feature of their distinct character. However, this symbolic attachment to the military past did not negate the reality of their gradual transformation from "men of the sword" to "men of the pen," as their administrative and intellectual functions became the defining characteristic of their daily practice.

Fourth - The military aspect:

The governing political norms and traditions in feudal Japan dictated that upon the conclusion of military conflicts, the victorious leader must proceed to the imperial capital of Heian (meaning "Capital of Peace," and known today as Kyoto) to receive legitimacy and the Emperor's blessing for his rule. This established tradition continued until 1185 AD, when the general Minamoto no Yoritomo broke with this prevailing custom, refusing to move to the imperial capital and instead choosing to settle in the town of Kamakura, located south of

present-day Yokohama, thereby establishing the first shogunate system in Japanese history.¹

This shift in the center of political gravity led to a period of relative stability, but it was not to last, as armed conflicts soon erupted once again among the warring Japanese clans, in what is historically known as the "Warring Provinces" or "Sengoku" period. This era was characterized by violent struggles for influence and power, which continued until one of the clans managed to assert its control and end the state of fragmentation, establishing the Tokugawa Shogunate in the 16th century. As this new system extended its influence, the Shogun established a new capital for himself which he named "Edo," a city that would later evolve into what is known today as "Tokyo," thus becoming an alternative political and administrative center to Kyoto.²

Fifth - The economic aspect:

Rice constitutes a staple agricultural crop in the Japanese diet and economy, and its cultivation has witnessed remarkable development through the introduction of productive techniques aimed at increasing yield and meeting the population's needs. In traditional Japanese society, rice cultivation was

¹ **The Samurai:** They were disciplined guards, courageous and well-trained, known for bearing swords. They emerged as a fundamental base in Japanese feudal society, where every member of this corps was from the warrior aristocracy, bound to obey and show loyalty only to their superiors. This loyalty formed an essential part of the laws of the Samurai class. They had their own ethical code called "Bushido," as well as distinctive clothing and customs. Look..Refer to: Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization, The Far East: Japan*, Trans. Zaki Naguib Mahmoud, n.d., Beirut, n.p., pp. 129-131

² **The Shogun:** A military rank in Japanese military history, granted by the Japanese Imperial Court in the city of Kyoto as a title to high-ranking military commanders during their military campaigns. This title was also given to the heads of the military governments that ruled Japan during certain periods of Japanese history. The term became permanently used to refer to the leader of the central government. Look...See: William Ashgaila Owaidoshu, *The Political System and Contemporary Japanese Foreign Policy*, Cairo, 2015, pp. 45-46.

associated with a set of seasonal rituals that accompanied the stages of the agricultural calendar. These rituals were conducted under the supervision of shamans (shamanesses) who performed the role of mediation between the human world and the other world, alongside practicing divination of future events. Alongside rice, tea cultivation held a prominent place in daily agricultural practices, due to its wide-ranging uses in Japanese social and cultural life.

Fishery resources, in turn, represent an essential pillar of the Japanese household diet, which stimulated the activity of the fishing industry as a traditional craft practiced on a daily and widespread scale among the common people. The prosperity of this craft is attributed to the large and diverse marine wealth that Japan, due to its geographical location, has abounded with throughout its history. It can be said that the Japanese people are, par excellence, a maritime people, with many families owning fishing boats that formed part of their daily lives and their primary source of livelihood, making maritime activities a structuring element of Japanese economic and social identity.

Archaeological evidence shows that fish constituted the main dietary component for the majority of Japanese households since the early Jomon period. The increasing demand for this marine resource prompted wealthier fishermen and merchants to build larger and longer-range ships, aiming to expand fishing grounds and increase catches, reflecting the sustained economic and nutritional importance of fishery resources in Japanese society throughout its various eras.

Japan witnessed remarkable development in certain military and traditional industries, most notably the craft of Japanese sword-making, which achieved a high degree of mastery, alongside the manufacture of bronze mirrors. The production of massive bells also emerged, with one of the most prominent

examples being the "Nara" bell, cast in 732 AD, weighing 49 tons, indicating an advanced level of technical and organizational capabilities. Woodworking industries also flourished, particularly the art of wood carving and decoration, which was extensively applied in architecture and house building. This was due to the scarcity of suitable building stones like granite and alabaster in the Japanese environment, making wood the primary material and natural alternative in construction and architectural design.¹

On the religious level, Japan recognized two official religions: Shinto and Buddhism. Archaeological excavations indicate the historical precedence of Shinto over Buddhism², as ritual objects related to spiritualist and magical practices dating from a period prior to the introduction of Buddhism to Japan have been found, confirming the deep local roots of Shinto beliefs. These ancient Shinto rituals became entrenched over time, remaining present in Japanese religious and cultural practice even after the spread and establishment of Buddhism in the country.³

With the introduction of rice cultivation techniques to Japan, economic and social structures developed remarkably. On the religious front, Buddhism was declared an official religion in Japan in 594 AD during the reign of Prince Shotoku Taishi, who exerted great efforts in spreading Buddhist teachings widely. Among Prince Shotoku's most notable contributions to establishing Buddhism were his creation of an administrative ranking system consisting of

¹ Max Shapiro and Rhoda Hendrix: *A Dictionary of Myths*, trans. Hanna Abboud, Dar Al-Alaa Al-Din, n.d., Damascus, 2018, p. 137.

² **Buddhism**: in its early days in Japan represented a progressive cultural movement, and the Buddhist texts known as the sutras were the foundation of its thought. Buddhist principles and philosophy influenced Shintoism and merged with it through a system that incorporated Shinto deities as incarnations of Buddha. One of the Buddhist schools that emerged in Japan was Mahayana, which arose between 100 BCE and 100 CE. look...Damian Keown, *Buddhism*, translated by Safia Mokhtar, Dar Al-Muharrir Al-Adabi, Cairo, 2016, p. 72)

³ Al-Mabrouk Al-Shaibani Al-Mansouri: *Religion, Modernity, Identity, and Values: A Study in Japanese Religious Thought and Eastern Philosophy*, Al-Dar Al-Mutawassitiya, 1st ed., 2017, p. 36.

twelve grades, as well as his well-known writings and instructions on Buddhist sutras. This period witnessed the construction of the first Buddhist temples in the Chinese architectural style, most notably Horyu-ji (Temple of the Flourishing Law) in the Nara region, Hoko-ji in the Asuka region, and Shitenno-ji in the Naniwa region (present-day Osaka), reflecting the cultural and religious influence arriving from the Asian continent.

Ancient Japanese beliefs are rich with mythical conceptions about the beginning of creation, based on the idea of connection between heaven and earth. According to this mythology, the Japanese islands arose as a result of the actions of the gods following a state of cosmic chaos, where earth separated from heaven after the successive appearance and disappearance of several gods in the mist. Among these sacred beings emerged two gods representing the duality of creation: Izanagi (the god of heaven) and Izanami (the goddess of earth and darkness), who was sister and wife to Izanagi. According to Shinto mythology, they were entrusted with the task of creating Japan and its islands, and from their eyes was born the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, who holds a central place in Japanese mythology.¹

The Japanese adopted Amaterasu, a female deity, as the supreme ancestral object of worship, and she continues to be venerated and held sacred to this day. Amaterasu represents the core of Japanese mythological sanctuaries and is considered the principal goddess in the sacred pantheon of gods (Kami). These deities, which include multiple beings representing forces of good and evil, can be approached - within a rough analytical framework - by comparison with concepts of angels, jinn, demons, and spirits in Near Eastern beliefs, while taking into account the specificity of the Japanese religious and cultural context.

¹ Arthur Courtell: A Dictionary of World Myths, translated by Suha Al-Tarihi, Dar Ninawa, n.d., Damascus, 2010, p. 105.

Alongside the worship of Amaterasu, the Japanese consecrated their veneration of the "Mikado" (Emperor) as the grandson and direct descendant of the gods¹.

They also worshipped other gods in Shinto mythology, such as Tsukuyomi, the god of the moon and ruler of the night, who is the younger brother of Amaterasu, and Susano, the god of storms and seas, associated in myths with serpents, reflecting the polytheistic nature and its interconnection with natural phenomena in traditional Shinto belief.

Sixth - The social and cultural aspect:

Ancient Japanese society was characterized by a clear class plurality, where each class was subject to strict restrictions and controls that determined its social standing, and each had its distinctive customs, values, and behaviors. The social pyramid consisted of the ruling imperial family at its apex, followed by the Samurai class (warriors), then the commoner class which included peasants, merchants, and artisans, and finally the class of outcasts "Eta" at the lowest rung of the social ladder, composed mainly of prisoners of war and other marginalized groups, although not widespread. This sharp class differentiation is largely attributed to the Shinto doctrine, whose teachings and laws did not encompass the principle of equality among the different segments of society. Added to this was the peasant (agricultural) and rural character that prevailed among the majority of society's members, which reinforced stable traditional structures.²

Japan's geographical isolation reinforced the concept of a "separate tribe personality" as a distinguishing feature of Japanese identity, which resulted in depriving foreigners of the possibility of integrating into the tribal fabric, and

¹ Amin Makotomezutani, *The Religions of Japan Between the Past and the Future*, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiya, Beirut, 2006, pp. 119-121.

² Abdul Ghaffar Rashad: *Traditionalism and Modernity in the Japanese Experience*, Arab Research Foundation, Beirut, 1984, p. 89.

consequently, the low level of interest in them within society and state institutions. However, despite this notable internal cultural harmony, Japan had not, until the seventeenth century, been completed as a state in the modern sense. Culture played a pivotal role in directing public and private life, forming the primary reference for justifying and explaining all individual and collective practices in various circumstances. It can be said that culture in Japan was considered a fundamental determinant of behaviors, within the framework of a prior connection to a specific cultural system imbued with distinct national characteristics.¹

The influence of this culture is evident in explaining behaviors such as the Japanese individual's sacrifice of themselves for the sake of the institution they work for, based on a culture that elevates the value of sacrifice for the public good of the group at the expense of individual interest. The Japanese individual in their society was also known for their tendency towards reconciliation in conflicts and disputes, and their rare resort to the judiciary to resolve them—a behavior entirely consistent with the deep-rooted cultural values that enshrine the principles of consensus and social cohesion as supreme priorities in preserving the unity and stability of society.²

It is worth noting that this statement requires further scrutiny, as Shinto, as a set of practices and beliefs, did not develop a codified legal system in the strict sense; rather, social laws and systems were influenced by a mixture of Shinto, Confucianism, and later Buddhism.³

The primary tasks of Japanese women revolved around family care and child-rearing. However, their role was not limited to the domestic sphere but extended

¹ Samar Hammoud Al-Shishakli: *Japan: Features of a Nation*, 1st ed., Syrian General Authority for Libraries, Damascus, 2011, pp. 524-526.

² Abdel Fattah Muhammad Shabana: *Japan, Customs, Traditions and the Addiction to Excellence*, n.d., Madiula Library, Cairo, 1996, p. 117.

³ Will and Wirrel Durant: *Japan*, Op cit, p. 51

to reaching the highest centers of power, with women assuming the position of Empress in various historical periods. Among the most prominent manifestations of Japanese material culture is the "Kimono" garment, which was widely used by both men and women, alongside another traditional dress known as the "long-horned" dress worn by women. In the realm of Japanese cuisine, the preparation of "Sushi" emerged as one of the most famous dietary customs. Each geographical region in Japan is characterized by its own dialect, unique customs and traditional heritage, including a diversity of food tastes and types, and the prevalent forms of traditional performing arts.¹

Japanese society celebrates a variety of seasonal festivals, particularly harvest festivals, where specific rituals and customs are practiced, including the consumption of "Miki" and "Sake" (rice wine), holding horse races, "Sumo" wrestling matches, archery competitions, as well as parade processions. These annual celebrations are closely linked to the agricultural seasons and their cycles. For example, the "Gion" festival has been held since the 9th century AD with the aim of averting natural disasters, manifesting in a ceremonial procession known as "Dashi." Similarly, the "Aoi" festival has been held since the 6th century AD following poor harvest seasons, expressing the desire to bring reassurance and hope for a bountiful crop in the coming seasons.²

In the artistic field, Japanese music was influenced by and interacted with Chinese and Korean musical traditions, especially in its early stages. However, its path towards independence and distinction began to take shape at the beginning of the 8th century AD, culminating in the establishment of the first official school of music in Japan in 702 AD, known as the "Imperial Music

¹ Abdullah al-Maraghi: *Marriage and Divorce in All Religions*, Al-Muhtadeen Islamic Library for Comparative Religion, United Arab Republic, 1966. pp 570,571.

² Muhammad Ahmad Al-Khatib: *Comparative Religion*, 1st ed., Dar Al-Masirah, Amman, 2008, pp. 488-489.

School." This institution was concerned with the study and development of musical arts, paving the way for the emergence of distinct local Japanese musical traditions.¹

➤ **Japanese Musical Instruments**

The roots of traditional Japanese musical instruments trace back to ancient Chinese origins, dating to the 7th century BC. The musical instruments used in Japan from the 5th century BC until the 16th century AD remained dependent on these Chinese origins, both in terms of design and playing techniques. Many of these instruments were crafted by Chinese people who settled in Japan and transferred their craftsmanship and musical expertise. Among the most prominent of these instruments are:

- **Taiko:** A percussion instrument similar to a drum, used in various musical and ceremonial contexts.
- **Koto:** A stringed instrument with a resonant sound, considered one of the fundamental instruments in traditional music.
- **Shamisen:** A three-stringed instrument, played with a plectrum, widely used in theater and folk music.²

➤ **Types of Traditional Japanese Music**

Traditional Japanese music is classified into three main types:

- **Instrumental Music:** Relies solely on musical instruments without singing.
- **Theater Music:** Associated with traditional theatrical performances.
- **Imperial Court Music (Gagaku):** The formal music that was performed in the imperial court.

¹ Edwin Reichauer: *The Japanese*, trans. Lema Al-Jabali, Al-Maarefa Al-Wataniyya for Culture, Arts and Literature, Kuwait, 1978, pp. 276-277

² Raouf Abbas Hamed: *The Modern Japanese Renaissance*, Egyptian Historical Journal, Al-Jalabi Press, Cairo, 1975, p. 11.

➤ **Japanese Musical Styles**

Japanese musical styles vary according to historical and functional context. Among the most prominent are:

- **Kabuki Style:** A musical style associated with Kabuki theater, which combines spoken word, physical acting, and music to form an integrated performance reflecting Japanese dramatic heritage.
- **Noh Style:** A type of theater music associated with Noh theater, also including puppet theater. Its music relies on specific instruments including the Taiko, Otsuzumi (a type of hand drum), and Fue (wooden flute).
- **Gagaku Style:** Represents imperial court music, including songs and dances blending musical elements from various Asian traditions. It utilized the "Kangen" style of Chinese origin.
- **Shomyo Style:** A type of Buddhist chant, originally originating from India. This style entered Japan during the Nara period (710-794 AD) and represents a form of religious singing performed by Buddhist monks in an "a cappella" style (singing without instrumental accompaniment).
- **Joruri Style:** Music accompanying storytelling and tales, comprising four derivative styles, commonly used in puppet theater and narrated stories.¹

➤ **The Field of Writing and Composition**

The Japanese language is the dominant language in Japanese civilization. It is an agglutinative language characterized by a complex honorific expression system that accurately reflects the hierarchical nature of Japanese culture and its social values. The Japanese writing system relies on:

¹ Ghanem Alwan Jawad Al-Jumaimi: The Roots of the Yabaf Renaissance, 1st Edition, Al-Ubaikaf Library, Riyadh, 2014, p. 87.

- **Kanji:** Characters of Chinese origin, used to express basic meanings, nouns, and verbs.
- **Kana:** Two sets of syllabic scripts (Hiragana and Katakana), both derived from simplified Chinese characters, used to express syllables and grammatical functions.

Alongside standard Japanese, local dialects and languages have persisted throughout Japanese history, most notably: the languages of the Ryukyu Islands (including Okinawan, Yonaguni, and Amami), the Maiko language, the Kunigami language, and various ethnic languages. These linguistic variations reflect the cultural richness and geographical diversity of the Japanese archipelago.

Historically, the Chinese writing system and Buddhist teachings were introduced to Japan during the 5th and 6th centuries AD via the Korean Peninsula. This cultural transmission marked a crucial turning point in the development of Japanese civilization. With writing, Japan also imported Chinese religious, philosophical, and literary texts, which formed the foundation for the development of thought, culture, and writing in Japan for subsequent centuries.¹

➤ **Ancient Japanese Literature and Written History**

1- Japanese Poetry: The First Beginnings

Poetry is considered the oldest literary form in the Japanese heritage that has reached us. Among the most prominent and famous poetic anthologies is the "Manyoshu" , whose title means "Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves." This work comprises twenty volumes, in which two compilers gathered approximately four thousand five hundred poems, representing the output of

¹ Edwyf Old Fader Ritchauer. Op cut, pp. 52-53.

Japanese poets from various social classes and regions. Among these poets, Hitomaro and Akahito stand out; they are two great poets whose creativity flourished in the Nara period (710-794 AD), and their poems are considered exemplary of early Japanese poetry.

In the context of efforts to preserve the poetic heritage, Emperor Daigo (897-930 AD) undertook an important initiative to collect Japanese poetry and protect it from extinction. This initiative resulted in the collection of about 1100 poems composed over the two centuries preceding his era, gathered into a unified poetry anthology titled "Kokinshu" or "Kokin Wakashu," which means "Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems." This anthology is considered one of the foundational works in the history of Japanese poetry and the first imperial anthology in Japanese heritage.¹

2- Story Literature (Monogatari)

Ancient Japanese story literature (known as Monogatari) reached a high degree of development, with literary works sometimes extending to twenty or even thirty parts. The tale "Genji Monogatari" , meaning "The Tale of Genji," is considered the most famous and greatest of these literary works and the most influential in Japanese cultural history. The story spans 4234 pages, was composed around the year 1001 AD by the noble writer and novelist Murasaki Shikibu, a court lady from the Fujiwara clan. The novel consists of 54 parts and is widely regarded as the first psychological novel in the history of world literature, depicting the life of Prince Genji and his complex relationships within the Heian court.²

¹ Will Durant, Japan, Op cit, pp. 99-100

² Jean Guillaud, History of Japanese Literature, Ellipses, coll. Paris, 2002.p32-35

3- Historical Writing: Between Myth and Codification

The field of history in Japan witnessed remarkable development thanks to the major political and administrative reforms the country experienced, particularly the Taika Reform in 645 AD. These reforms required people to document past events and narrate them in a style inclined towards objectivity, moving away from myth and legend, paving the way for the emergence of more systematic historical writing.

The book "Kojiki" or "Records of Ancient Matters," is the oldest known Japanese historical book. This book was composed in 712 AD by Yasumaro and written in Chinese characters used to transcribe the Japanese language. However, the book contains a considerable amount of myths and mythological narratives rather than being a record of historical facts in the strict sense, as it tells the story of the creation of the Japanese islands and the lineage of the gods down to the first Emperor, Jimmu.¹

Eight years later, specifically in 720 AD, another historical book appeared titled "Nihon Shoki" or "The Chronicles of Japan." This work was written in classical Chinese, and its authors relied heavily on Chinese models of historiography; indeed, many passages were quoted directly from Chinese historical literature. Despite these quotations, the book is an important source for ancient Japanese history and its early relations with neighboring countries.²

In a later period, the historian Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354 AD) wrote an important historical book titled "Jinno Shotoki" or "Chronicle of the Direct Descent of the Divine Sovereigns." This book expressed the author's view of the

¹ Francine Hérail, *History of Japan. From its origins to the end of Meiji*, POF, Paris, 1996.p66-69

² Francine Hérail, Guillaume Carré, Jean Esmein, Francine Hérail, François Macé and Pierre Souyri, *The History of Japan. From its origins to the present day*, Hermann Publishers, Paris, 2010.p78-79

Japanese imperial lineage, emphasizing the legitimacy and sanctity of the ruling dynasty, presenting a historical narrative intersecting with both mythology and politics.¹

These historical works, despite the myth or quotation that colored some of them, collectively represent the first building blocks of historical writing in Japan and reveal the early awareness among Japanese people of the importance of documenting the past and understanding the course of their nation's development.

Seventh - The intellectual aspect:

➤ Conclusions on Japanese Philosophical Thought: Between Tradition and Renewal

Drawing conclusions regarding philosophical thought as an important element in the system of social and spiritual consciousness requires, above all, familiarity with the changes occurring in the spheres of material and spiritual life in Japanese society, and with the nature of the relations that prevailed in its infrastructure and superstructure during its stages of historical development. Historians and researchers, despite their differing interests, orientations, and political and ideological projects, agree on the necessity of distinguishing between ancient Japan and modern contemporary Japan as two distinct phases in the path of Japanese civilizational development.

➤ The Historical Development of Philosophical Thought: Two Fundamental Stages

Based on this distinction in Japanese history, two main stages can be identified in the development of Japanese philosophical thought:

¹ Danielle E. and Vadime E., *The Art of Ancient Japan*, Mazenod, Paris, 1980.p47-49

- **First Stage:** Philosophical thought within its traditional context, where cosmic and philosophical visions were formed within a purely Japanese cultural framework, influenced by and interacting with ancient Eastern civilizations without losing its specificity.
- **Second Stage:** Philosophical thought in the context of modernity and openness to the West, where Japanese thought faced the challenges of modernization and Western intellectual and cultural encroachment, interacting with Western philosophies and assimilating them without abandoning its cultural roots.¹

➤ **Japanese Cultural Specificity and its Interaction with Eastern Civilizations:**

Before its contact with Western thought, Japan possessed its own distinct national culture, completely different from Western cultures. This national culture sprouted and flourished over many centuries, embodied in material and spiritual values shaped by the peoples of India, China, and other ancient Eastern peoples, which Japan then absorbed and transformed into its own cultural fabric. Thus, original Japanese culture grew within the fold of deeply rooted national values and customs. These traditional pillars did not clash with the evolutionary and renewalist tendency that sought to adapt those values to suit the needs of Japanese social progress. This adaptation was carried out with full consideration of the national characteristics of the Japanese people at each stage of their historical, economic, and scientific development.

➤ **The Japanese Cultural Structure: An Integrated System of Concepts and Perceptions**

The Japanese cultural structure was characterized by independent and unique epics, encompassing a special system of concepts and perceptions about the world, humanity, and the surrounding nature. This cultural structure, with its

¹ Will Durant, Japan, previous reference, p. 106

distinct Eastern character, included a set of religious and philosophical beliefs emerging from the Japanese environment or deeply interacting with it, foremost among which were:

- **Buddhism in its Japanese Form:** That is, Buddhism interpreted and adapted to local life, customs, and values. Buddhism in Japan was not merely a literal transmission of Indian or Chinese teachings; rather, it was reformulated to suit the Japanese mentality and the needs of Japanese society, giving rise to purely Japanese Buddhist schools such as Zen Buddhism, Jodo Shinshu, and others.
- **Japanese Confucianism:** A specifically Japanese reading of Chinese Confucian thought, focusing on values of loyalty, obedience, and social hierarchy, while imbuing them with a Japanese spirit distinct from the original Confucian spirit in China or Korea.
- **Shinto:** The indigenous Japanese creed that formed the spiritual foundation of Japanese culture, dealing with nature, the gods (Kami), and ancestors from a unique cosmic perspective.

All these religious and philosophical elements intertwined with the values of creativity characteristic of the Japanese, producing a unique synthesis that has distinguished Japanese thought throughout its history.¹

➤ **Synthesis and Adaptation: A Hallmark of Japanese Thought**

Throughout its history, Japanese thought has been distinguished by a superior ability to absorb and assimilate external influences, then reproduce them in a purely Japanese format. Buddhist and Confucian values did not remain as they were; instead, they blended with local customs and traditions, producing a unique cosmic and human vision. This synthesis between authenticity and renewal, and between the indigenous and the imported, formed the most prominent feature of Japanese philosophical thought, enabling it to withstand

¹ Christine Shimizu, Japanese Art, Flammarion, coll. "All Art", Paris, 2008.p53-55

major intellectual challenges, whether those coming from the East in earlier periods or those emanating from the West in the modern era.

Thus, Japanese philosophical thought managed to maintain both its continuity and renewal simultaneously, adapting to the demands of each age without losing its connection to its deep cultural roots.¹

Eighth - The urban aspect:

Traditional Japanese residential architecture was characterized by simplicity and reliance on locally available natural materials, primarily wood. The Japanese built their homes using simple wooden construction, and houses rarely exceeded one or two stories, reflecting a simple lifestyle and harmony with nature. Due to the frequent fires that broke out in these wooden dwellings, traditional house roofs were gradually replaced with tiles, providing greater fire protection and longer building longevity.

➤ Tomb Architecture (Kofun): Early Korean Influence:

Beginning in the early 3rd century AD, the Japanese began imitating their Korean neighbors in the construction of burial mounds known as "Kofun." These are conical stone structures built over the graves of chieftains and the ruling elite. These tombs developed significantly during the 5th century AD, increasing greatly in size, with some reaching up to 300 meters in length. These tombs are among the most prominent archaeological evidence from the early period of Japanese history, with the largest and most famous concentrated near the cities of Nara and Osaka, indicating the importance of these two regions as political and cultural centers in that era.

¹ Edgerton, R. B. *Warriors of the Rising Sun: A History of the Japanese Military*, 1997. p70-73

➤ **Buddhist Architectural Renaissance: A Decisive Turning Point**

Japanese architecture experienced a qualitative development with the issuance of Empress Suiko's edict in 594 AD, which mandated the construction of Buddhist temples throughout Japan. This decision was a decisive turning point in the history of Japanese architecture, prompting Prince Shotoku Taishi to summon from neighboring Korea a group of specialized craftsmen and artists, including:

Architects ,Wood carvers,Bronze casters,Clay and terracotta (ceramic) modelers,Gilders,Tile makers ,Weavers

This summons is considered the beginning of the great cultural campaign of art in Japan, as advanced artistic techniques and styles transferred from the Asian continent to the Japanese archipelago. Following this campaign, the country became filled with Buddhist shrines and statues that imitated Chinese temples in design, yet were distinguished by a special character, being more ornate and more finely carved than their counterparts in China, reflecting Japanese taste and the ability to add their own aesthetic touches to imported models.¹

Among the most prominent Buddhist temples constructed during this period are:

- **Pagoda Temple:** Referring to the multi-storied Buddhist towers that spread throughout Japan.
- **Horyuji Temple :** Located in the Nara region, it is considered one of the oldest surviving wooden temples in the world, dating back to the early 7th century AD.
- **Todaiji Temple :** Located in Nara, famous for its giant Buddha statue (Daibutsu), which is one of the largest bronze statues in the world.

¹ Will Durant, Japan, Op cit, pp. 122-123

- **Nishi Honganji Temple** : Located in Kyoto, it is one of the main temples of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist sect.
- **Asuka Temple** : Located in the Asuka region, it is considered one of the oldest Buddhist temples in Japan.

➤ **Architecture under the Ashikaga Government: The Peak of Architectural Creativity**

During the rule of the Ashikaga military government (Ashikaga Shogunate, 1336-1573 AD), Japanese architecture reached an advanced stage of creativity and sophistication. The most beautiful capital in the ancient Far East was designed during this period, with the new capital containing magnificent palaces reflecting the refined taste and cultural richness of that era. Among the most prominent of these palaces were:

- The Takakura Palace - The Flower Palace

Distinctive architectural structures were also found in various places in the capital, including the Palace of Bliss in the Muromachi district, from which the name of the Muromachi period (during which the Ashikaga Shogunate ruled) is derived.¹

The architecture of this period was characterized by elegance and profound simplicity, with an emphasis on proportion and harmony with nature, paving the way for the development of purely Japanese architectural styles such as those seen in palaces, villas, and temples, which would continue to influence Japanese architecture into modern times.²

¹ Amefta Makotomizutani: Religions in Japan between the past and the future, Scientific Book House, Beirut, 2006, p. 120.

² Will Durant, Japan, Op cit, pp. 123-124

Conclusion:

Based on the foregoing, it can be asserted that the ancient civilizations of the Far East (China, India, and Japan) represent one of the most significant, enduring, and influential human experiments in history. These were not merely cultural centers that rose and fell; rather, they were fountains of wisdom and thought, schools of philosophy and contemplation, and cradles of arts and literature. Through this, we can deduce the following key points:

- **From a Civilizational Perspective:** Focusing on the trajectory of the ancient Far Eastern civilizations—China, India, and Japan—leads us to discover a truly unique fabric in human history. These civilizations did not develop in isolation from one another; instead, they formed an interconnected cultural triangle, exchanging ideas, goods, and artistic styles, yet each corner maintained its essential distinctiveness. China, with its antiquity and successive empires, presented the model of a centralized, bureaucratic state founded upon deep ethical and philosophical principles like Confucianism. India, with its vastness and ethnic and linguistic diversity, offered the model of a society open to spiritual tolerance and intellectual pluralism, birthing major religions previously unknown to humanity. Japan, the island nation that shone on the margins of the continent, represents the most skillful model of cultural assimilation and hybridization, transforming everything it borrowed from its neighbors into purely Japanese icons.
- **Philosophical, Intellectual, and Artistic Legacy:** These civilizations enriched humanity's intellectual reservoir with contributions that are still studied and applied today. We find Chinese thought, with its two main poles: Confucianism, which organized social relationships and established a philosophy of governance and practical ethics, and Taoism, which liberated the human imagination and invited contemplation of nature and harmony with its laws. On the other side, we encounter Indian thought, which transcended the boundaries of philosophy into metaphysics and spirituality, through the texts of the Upanishads and the

Vedas, and through the teachings of Buddhism, which spread throughout Asia carrying its message of peace, non-violence, and universal compassion. Japan, for its part, excelled in blending these philosophies to create its own unique aesthetics, manifested in the tea ceremony, which encapsulates an entire philosophy in a few steps; in Haiku poetry, which paints a picture with few words; and in the arts of architecture and gardens, which embody the harmony between humanity and nature.

- **Material and Scientific Achievements as a Foundation for Global Progress:** The material and scientific aspects of these civilizations, which formed the basis for many subsequent global developments, cannot be overlooked. The Chinese not only invented paper, moving the world from oral knowledge to its documentation, but they also invented the compass, which opened up navigation; gunpowder, which changed the concept of warfare; and printing, which paved the way for the Renaissance and popular knowledge. In India, mathematics developed astonishingly, laying the foundations of the decimal system and discovering the concept of zero, a cornerstone of modern mathematics, alongside significant advancements in medicine (Ayurveda) and astronomy. Even Japan, though it came later in some of these fields, excelled in handicrafts and artistic industries, such as swordsmithing, considered an engineering masterpiece, and the production of ceramics and pottery, which surpassed its Korean and Chinese counterparts in precision and beauty.
- **Mutual Influence and Continuity of Identity:** Perhaps the most prominent feature of these civilizations is their remarkable ability to interact with one another without losing their identity. Trade along the Silk Road did not just carry silk and spices; it also carried Buddhism from India to China, and then from China (influenced by Confucian thought) to Japan and Korea. This intellectual flow did not erase distinctiveness but rather enriched it, adding new layers of depth and complexity. Japan, which adopted the Chinese writing system and Buddhist thought, retained its original indigenous religion (Shinto),

which venerates natural spirits and ancestors, creating a unique religious synthesis (religious duality) that persists to this day. Similarly, China, despite its deep influence by Indian thought, reformulated Buddhism to align with its Confucian rationality, giving rise to "Chan Buddhism" (Zen), which represents a purely Chinese model.

- **Conclusion and Lessons for the Future:** In the end, the ancient civilizations of the Far East remain more than just historical memories or pages in textbooks. They are a living part of contemporary humanity's consciousness. The growing global interest in meditative philosophies and yoga from India, the increasing appreciation for Chinese calligraphy and Japanese painting, and the contemporary inspiration drawn from philosophies of balance and harmony with nature are all evidence that these civilizations still have much to offer to today's people, who live in a fast-paced world filled with conflict, pollution, and alienation.

The study of these civilizations teaches us that true progress lies not only in technology and power but also in the ability to create an ethical system governing relationships, an existential philosophy bestowing meaning upon life, and arts expressing the beauty inherent in simplicity and nature. It is a perpetual call for humility and wisdom, a reminder that the Far East was, and still is, a wellspring of authentic human thought that contributed to shaping our ancient world and will continue to influence the crafting of our shared future.

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