

3. If you had been away from Confucius' school for some months. If you were in his place, would you have returned? Why or why not?
3. Confucius believed strongly in the Mandate of Heaven. What do you think of this idea? Could the mandate be applied to the United States government? Explain.
4. Confucius spoke of a perfect society. Describe his perfect society. Now describe your idea of a perfect society. Note the similarities and differences.

3. The Real Source of Athens' Greatness

The first important civilization outside Asia and Africa was centered not on the mainland of Europe but on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea. There, a civilization known as *Minoan* (after a legendary king named Minos) began around 2200 B.C. or earlier. The people of Crete were great seafarers who traded with the people of the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. They had a written language (Mycenaean Greek). The Cretans left richly decorated palaces, the largest and most important of which was at Knossos.

During the 1450s B.C., Crete came under the influence of the Mycenaean Greeks, who ruled from their capital city of Mycenae on the mainland. The Mycenaeans ruled Crete until the 1300s, when Knossos and other centers were destroyed by invaders.

Around the year 1200 B.C., people from the north called the Dorians invaded Greece. Mycenae collapsed in the 1100s, and Greece was then divided into a hard of over a hundred small, independent city-states. A city-state was a small territory that was controlled by a king, chieftain, or a small group, which ruled from an urban (city) area. Greece entered a dark age, in which many of the achievements of earlier times—long-distance trade and written language—were lost or forgotten.

Greece is a hilly country, divided by many mountains and the sea. This geographical fact may be one reason why no one city or ruler was able to dominate Greece until the fourth century B.C., and the time of Alexander the Great (see page 60).

By the eighth century B.C., prosperity had returned, and the city-states of Greece had developed a flourishing trade with the people of the Mediterranean and the Black sea. The Greeks traded wine and olive oil for grain, timber, and other goods. Greek colonists settled lands on the eastern coast of the Aegean Sea (present-day Turkey), as far north as the Black Sea, and west in southern Italy and Sicily. Perhaps most important, the Greeks adapted an alphabet from the Phoenician people in the 700s.

Over the centuries, one of the mainland city-states rose to become the most prosperous and powerful in all of Greece. This city-state was Athens. Athens was small by modern standards—it covered just 1,000 square miles. (By comparison, the smallest of the United States, Rhode Island, is slightly over 1,000 square miles in area.)

Athens was a direct democracy. All adult male citizens voted for or against suggested laws in the assembly. This was the first known democracy in government in history.

The Athenians had a high regard for learning, the arts, and literature. The Greeks stressed loyalty to their city-state, but the Athenians valued the individual above the group. The Athenians stressed individual thought and action. "Know thyself" was a Greek motto. Students spent much time in the study of music, arithmetic, literature, and writing. The Athenians also stressed physical fitness for men. Their goal was "a sound mind in a healthy body."

Girls did not attend school. Athenian women learned to keep house efficiently; the only training it was believed they required. Some women did learn to read and write at home, but even they were not permitted to hold government office, compete in sports, or take part in public events. In our story, Cimón, a former slave who recently bought his freedom, tells us about a conversation with Milos, his Athenian employer.

Athens 445 B.C.

Yesterday evening, as I was leaving the olive press where I work, I saw many men walking toward a large open area on the side of a hill. "What is happening?" I asked my employer, Milos.

Milos smiled at me. "Cimón, have you never seen them gather before? You have been in Athens for nearly two years!"

With a proud look he went on. "These men are about to perform the most important duty in Athens. They are gathering in an assembly to decide our laws."

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Periclean Athens—
5th century BCE

After the defeat of the Persians, the Athenians dominated the sea and became the richest city-state in Greece. During this period, Athens saw a flowering of art and drama—both comedy and tragedy—as well as the development of a democratic political system that is still admired today. This period is called Periclean because at this time Pericles was the leader of Athens; he created a democratic society and supported the arts. However, with one exception, everyone eventually residing in a town saw the first and second Pylagorastrian Wars (the Spartans that destroyed both city-states). What does Pericles say in the passage of the Athenian war? How do Athens and Sparta differ in their military systems?

Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if to social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way; if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace.

Further, we provide plenty of means for the mind to refresh itself from business. We celebrate games and sacrifices all the year round, and the elegance of our private establishments forms a daily source of pleasure and helps to banish the spleen; while the magnitude of our city draws the produce of the world into our harbour, so that to the Athenian the fruits of other countries are as familiar a luxury as those of his own.

If we turn to our military policy, there also we differ from our antagonists. We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning or observing, although the eyes of an enemy may occasionally profit by our liberality; trusting less in system and policy than to the native spirit of our citizens; while in education, where our rivals from their very cradles by a painful discipline seek after manliness, at Athens we lay exactly as we please, and yet are just as ready to encounter every legitimate danger. In proof of this it may be noticed that the Laedamonians do not invade our country alone, but bring with them all their confederates; while we Athenians advance unsupported into the territory of a neighbour, and fighting upon a foreign soil usually vanquish with ease men who are defending their homes. Our united force was never yet encountered by an enemy, because we have at once to attend to our marine and to despatch our citizens by land upon a hundred different services, so that, wherever they engage with some such fraction of our strength, a success against a detachment is magnified into a victory over the nation, and a defeat into a reverse suffered at the hands of our entire people. And yet if with habits not of labour but of ease, and courage not of art but of nature, we are still willing to encounter danger, we have the double advantage of escaping the experience of hardships in anticipation and of facing them in the hour of need as fearlessly as those who are never free from them.

Not are these the only points in which our city is worthy of admiration. We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it. Our public men have besides politics their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate and instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all. Again, in our enterprises we present the singular spectacle of daring and deliberation, each carried to its highest point, and both united in the same persons; although usually decision is the fruit of ignorance, hesitation of reflection. But the plain of courage will surely be adjudged most justly to those who best know the difference between hardship and pleasure and yet are never tempted to shrink from danger. In generosity we are equally singular, acquiring our friends by conferring not by receiving favours. Yet, of course, the doer of the favour is the truer friend of the two, in order by continued kindness to keep the recipient in his debt while the debtor feels less keenly from the very consciousness that the return he makes will be a payment, not a free gift. And it is only the Athenians who, fearless of consequences, confer their benefits not from calculations of expediency, but in the confidence of liberality.

In short, I say that as a city we are the school of Hellas; while I doubt if the world can produce a man, who, where he has only himself to depend upon, is