

Iran in pictures

圖解伊朗



Content

- Geography
- History
- Religion
- Persia & China
- Iran Today

Geography

Map of Iran



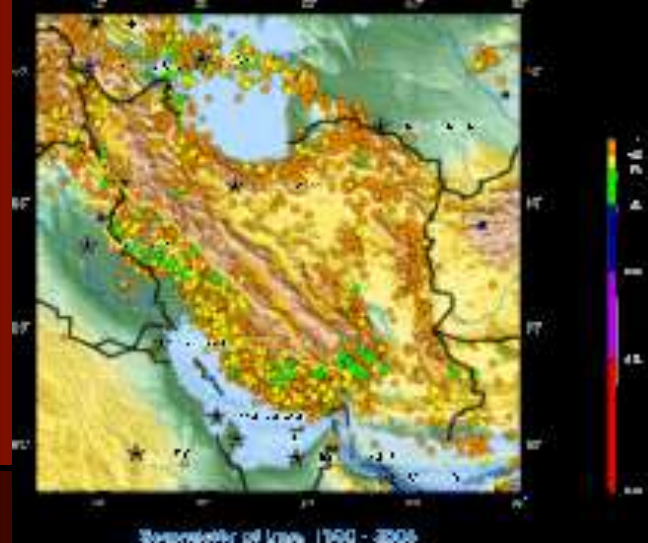
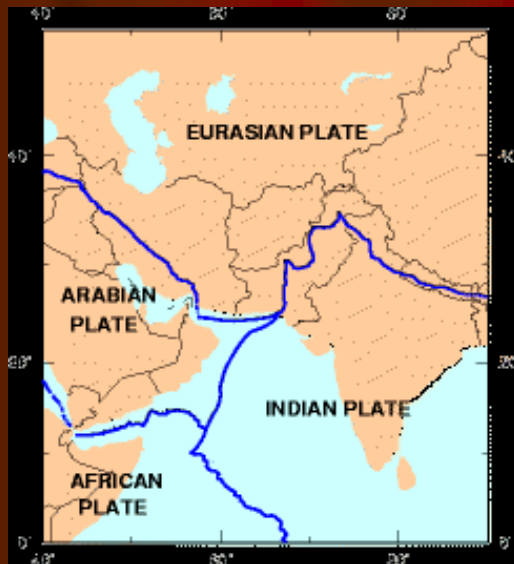
Topography

- Almost continuous rugged mountain rims
- High central basin with deserts
- Small discontinuous plains on both coast



Geology

Right on the continental collision zone, the country is frequently hit by strong earthquake – the ancient city of Bam was completely destroyed in 2003 killing 26,000 & injured 30,000



Climate

Mild subtropical along the Caspian coast; mountain climate in the Western & Northern rims, rest of the country arid or semi arid with average temperature Feb -10C/ July 36C



Oil & Gas

Iran holds 10% of the world's oil & 15% of its gas. It is the 2nd largest producer of oil in OPEC & world's 4th. Oil & gas revenue represents up to 45% of the government's budget but International sanctions have reduced the export by half



Other valuable non oil products

- Caviar (“Black Gold” 鱈魚子) : 130 tons per annum from three species of sturgeon living in the Caspian Sea



- Zaafaran 番/藏紅花 is the dried stigma of *Crocus sativus* – 95% of world production totaling 350 tons per year



- Pistachio nuts 開心果 – no. 1 in the world producing 450,000 tons per year. Centre at Rafsanjan



- Persian rugs 波斯地毯 are of nomadic origin, 1.2 million weavers in the country



- Persian rugs 波斯地毯



History

- Known for thousands of year as Persia 波斯 after an Indo European nomadic tribe called Parsua, the country was renamed Iran only in 1935. The name Iran means the “Land of the Aryans” & Aryans 亞里安人 refer to people who speak the Iranian languages which are of Indo European origin



- Many archaeological sites stretching from Neolithic (10,000 BC) through the Bronze Age to the Iron Age. Studies indicate people were living in the Caspian coast engaging in agriculture & animal husbandry



- The first dynasty of the Elamite Kingdom was formed in 2800 BC making Iran one of the oldest continuous civilization in the world. The Elamite Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrian 亞述人 in 646 BC



Elamite relics



- 625 BC : The Median tribes gained their independence from Assyria & established the **Median Empire** at the time when Assyria was being crushed by the Babylonian King Nabopolassar 尼布格尼撒王



- 559 - 530 BC : Cyrus the Great 居魯士大帝 founded the First Persian Empire akin the **Achaemenid Empire** 亞契美尼德王朝 by conquering the Median Empire, the Lydian Empire & the Neo Babylonian Empire. He is well recognized for his achievement in arts, politics, military strategy & human rights – having conquered Babylon and allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem



The Tomb of Ceres the Great at Pasargadae



The Tomb of Ceres the Great at Pasargadae



























- 550 – 486 BC : Darius the Great 大流士大帝 expanded the empire to N.E. Africa , Egypt , Pakistan & Greece & ruled the empire at its peak

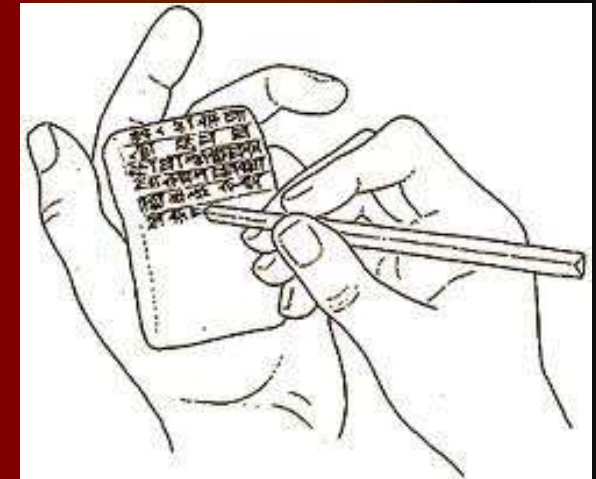
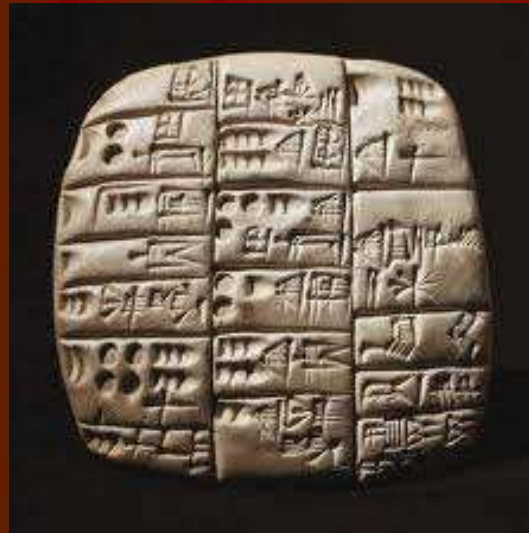


Darius the Great

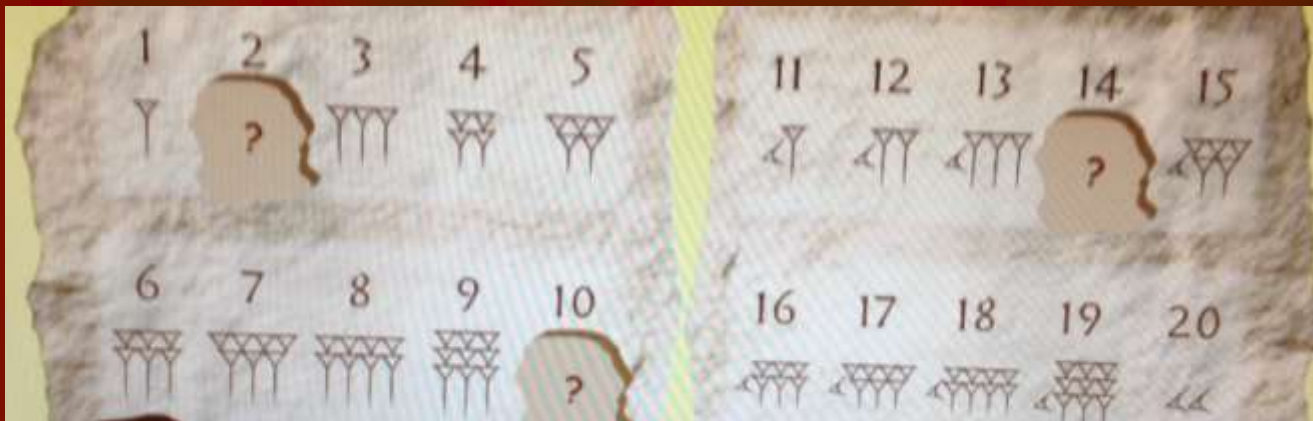


Darius the Great invented the Old Persian cuneiform 楔型文字 writing in 520 BC

	MEANING	OUTLINE CHARACTER, B. C. 3500	ARCHAIC CUNEIFORM, B. C. 2500	ASSYRIAN, B. C. 700	LATE BABYLONIAN, B. C. 500
1.	The sun.				
2.	God, heaven				
3.	Mountain				
4.	Man				
5.	Ox				
6.	Fish				



Cuneiform writing 楔型文字



Darius the Great also introduced a uniform monetary system, made Aramaic the official language as well as started many major architectural projects including the magnificent Persepolis Palace 波斯波利斯王宮 covering a total area of 135,000 m² it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site



Persepolis Palace 波斯波利斯王宮



Persepolis Palace 波斯波利斯王宮



Persepolis Palace 波斯波利斯王宮



Persepolis Palace 波斯波利斯王宮



Persepolis Palace 波斯波利斯王宮



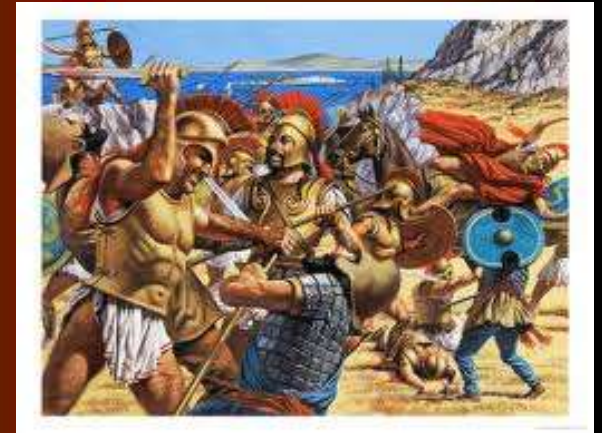
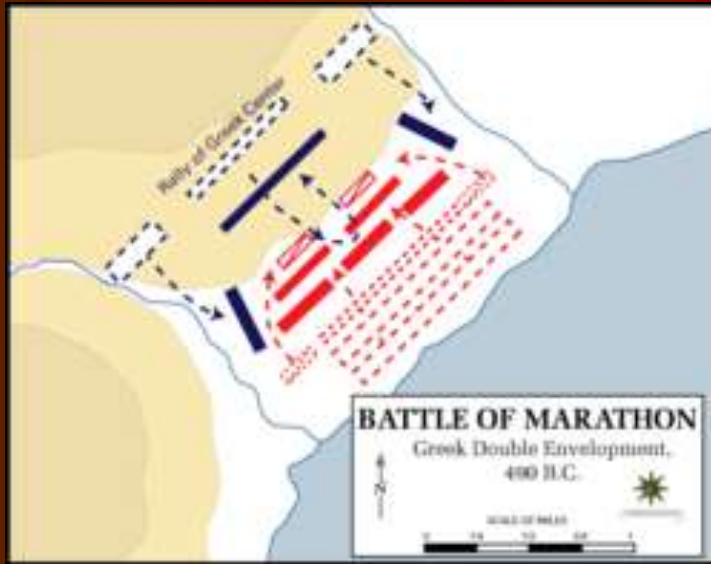
Persepolis Palace 波斯波利斯王宮



Persepolis Palace 波斯波利斯王宮



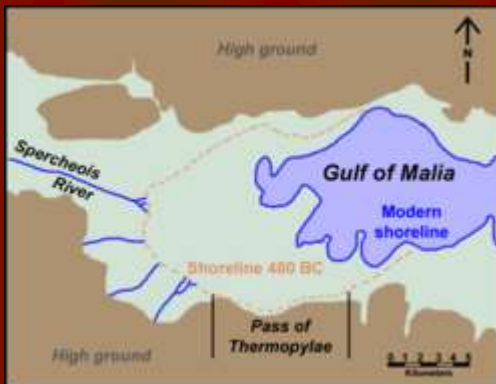
Darius was defeated at Marathon when attacking the Greek at 490 BC. Some historians considered this to be the watershed for the empire's decline. This battle also left the legacy of the 26 miles "Marathon Run" 馬拉松 done by a Greek soldier Phidippides from Marathon to Athens in order to warn them about the Persian attack to the city



Naqsh-e-Rostam (Royal Tomb) at Persepolis, another UNESCO Heritage Site



- 519 - 465 BC : Xerxes the Great invaded the Greek for the 2nd time & defeated the 300 Spartans 斯巴達壯士 under King Leonidas I at Thermopylae.



Xerxes the Great In all fairness Hollywood !



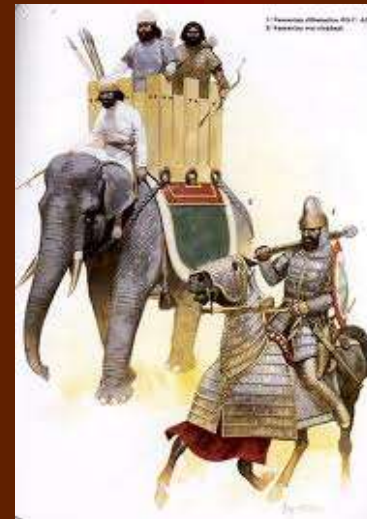
- 330 - 247 BC : Hellenic Conquest established the **Seleucid Empire** 塞琉亞王朝 - Alexander the Great invaded Persia, defeated Darius III and formed this Greek Macedonia State



- 247BC – 224 AD : Arsaces I founded the **Parthian Empire** 帕提亞王朝 which is also called the Arsacid Empire by defeating the Greek & recaptured much of the country under the Seleucid Empire. The Parthian Empire existed for five centuries



- 224 – 651 AD : Ardashir I defeated the Parthian & founded the **Sassanid Persian Empire** 薩珊王朝 which witnessed the highest achievement of Persian civilization before the adoption of Islam. Their influence reached as far as Western Europe, Africa , China & India & were in constant hostilities with the Roman Empire



Sassanid rock sculptures at the Royal Tomb



Sassanid gold & silver coins



- 224 – 651 AD : Sassanid Persian Empire 薩珊王朝
The Mud brick City of Ryan Citadel built 3-7th Century



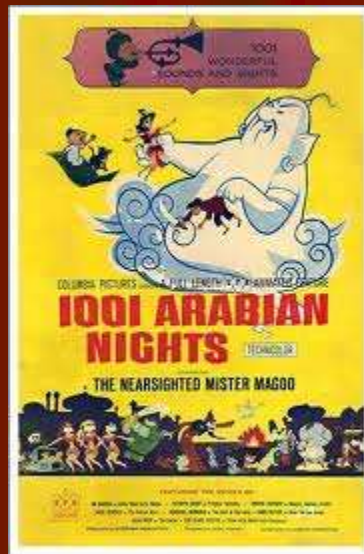
The Mud brick City of Ryan Citadel



The Mud brick City of Ryan Citadel & subterranean water supply system 坎兒井



- The Sassanid Empire had very active relations with China frequently sending ambassadors & jointly protect/develop the Land & Maritime Silk Road
- Music , literature & poetry exceled. In the Book of One Thousand & One Nights Scheherazade was telling all the stories to a fictional Sassanid King

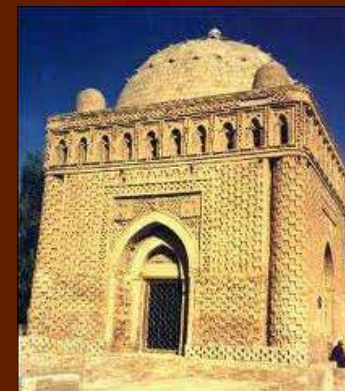
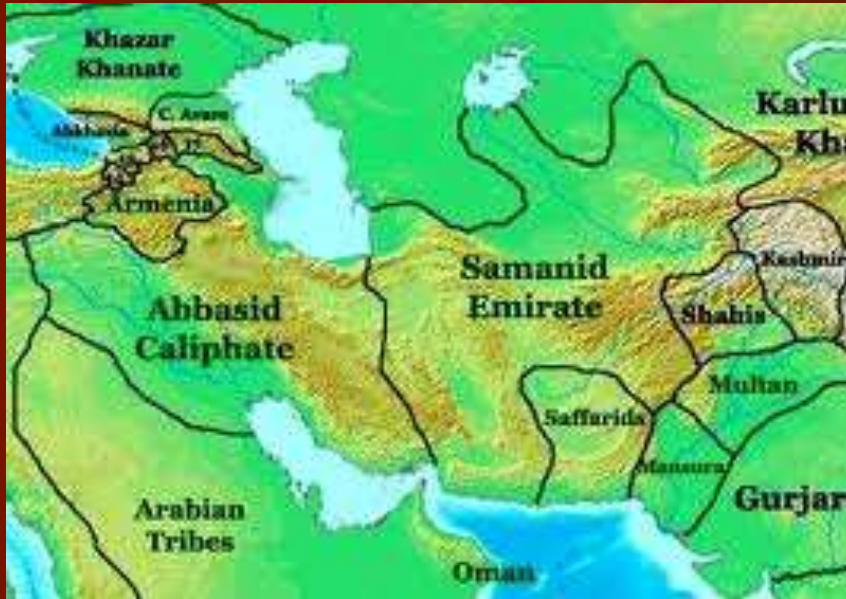


- 651 - 1040 AD : Islamic Conquest by the Arabs. The ancient Persian religion of Zoroastrianism 拜火教 (see religion section) was replaced by Islam.

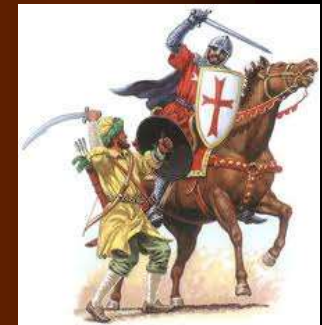


- 744 – 749 AD : Shiite Revolt led by Abu Muslim and established the Abbasid Caliphate Dynasty

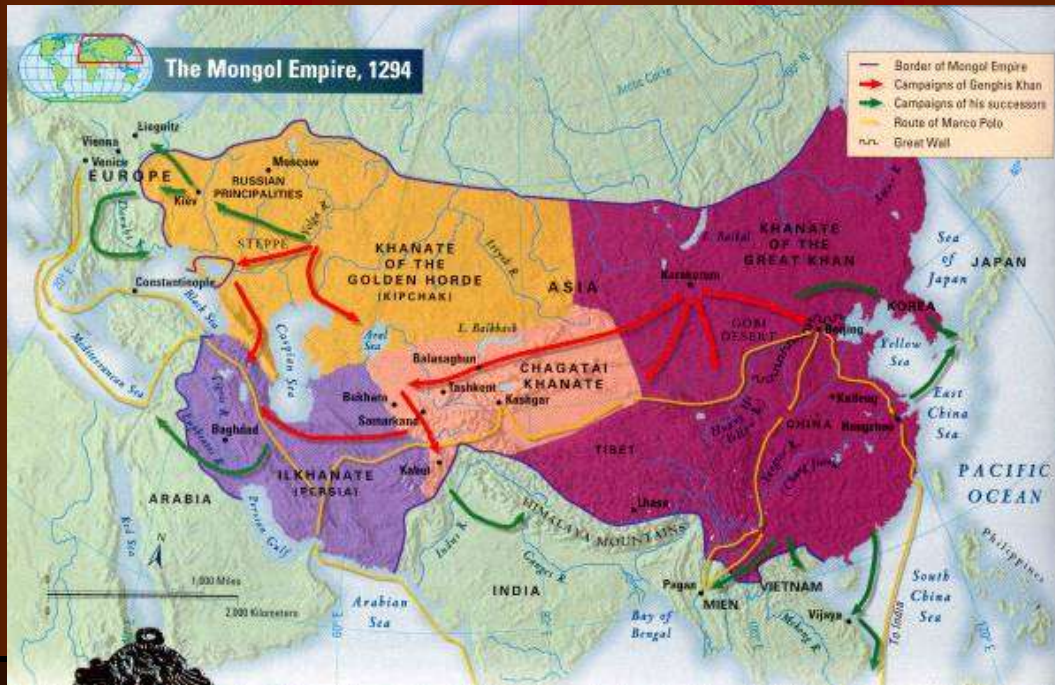
- 819 -999 AD : Samanid Dynasty was the first native Persian dynasty after the Muslim Arab conquest.



- 1040 – 1256 AD : Seljuk Turk invaded Iran & established the **Great Seljuk Empire** 突厥王朝 which was a Turkish Muslim Sunni Dynasty that adopted the Persian culture & used the Persian language. The Great Seljuk Empire was the target of the First Crusade



- 1219 – 1265 AD : **Mongols conquest** 蒙古王朝 under Genghis Khan (鐵木真). His grand son Hulagu Khan (旭烈兀) greatly expanded the south western portion of the Mongol Empire & was responsible for the sack of Baghdad in 1258 with death toll between 200,000 to 1 million !

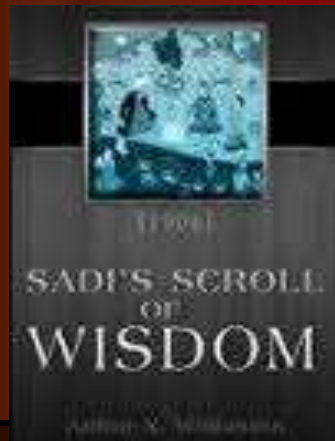


- 1383 – 1501 AD : Rule of the Tamerlane 帖木兒王朝 by Timur (帖木兀), the “Sword of Islam”. His military campaign killed 17 million people which is about 5% of the world’s population at that time !



Aramgah of Sadi, Shiraz 1184 - 1283

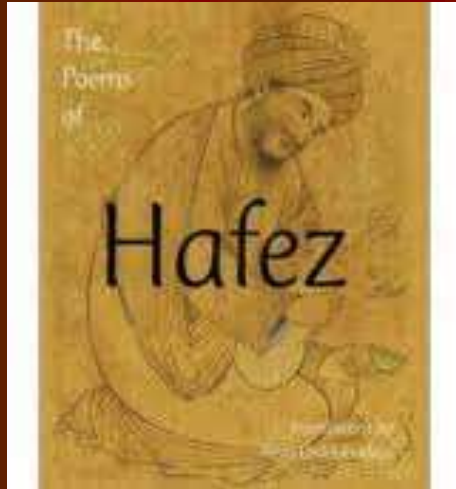
詩人薩迪紀念陵園



*All human beings are in truth akin,
All in creation share one origin.
When fate allots a member pangs and pains,
No ease for other members then remains.
If unperturbed, another's grief canst scan,
Thou are not worthy of the name of man.*

Aramgah of Hafez, Shiraz 1325 - 1390

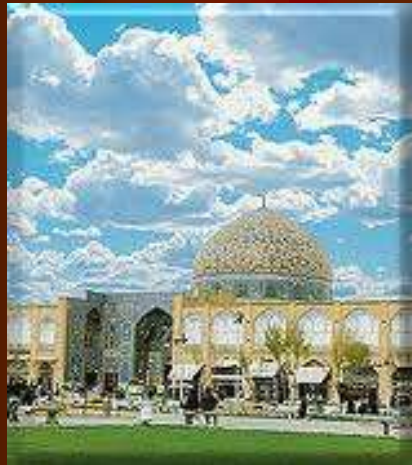
詩人哈菲茲紀念陵園



- 1502 – 1736 AD : Another Turkish dynasty the **Safavid** 薩法維王朝 took over. Shite Islam was made the official religion & the empire reached its height during the rule of Shah Abbas Ist. Art and culture prospered & Persia was once again recognized as a super power in Europe



- 1502 – 1736 AD : Safavid Dynasty – Capital Esfahan
Imam Square, Ali Qapu Palace, Imam Mosque, Lotfollah Mosque & the Grand Bazaar



Imam Square built 1598 – 1629, second largest public square after Tian An Mum



Ali Qapu Palace built 1603-1610
for watching polo in the square



Ali Qapu Palace



Ali Qapu Palace



Ali Qapu Palace



Lotfollah Mosque built 1603-1618 for Court Ladies
note no minarets



Ali Imam Mosque



Ali Imam Mosque



Ali Imam Mosque



The Chehel Sotoun Palace or 40 pillar palace built 1647



The Chehel Sotoun Palace or 40 pillar palace Built 1647





Si-o-Seh or Bridge with 33 arches built 1599 - 1602



The Khaju Bridge built 1650



Fin Garden at Kashan

built 16C Safavid Dynasty, one of the 4 most famous Persian Gardens in Iran



Hamam- e-Ganj Ali Khan, Kerman :Public Persian Bath house 17C



Persian Bath house, Kerman



Arg-e-Karim Khan, Shiraz built 18C



Arg-e-Karim Khan, Shiraz built 18C



Arg-e-Karim Khan, Shiraz built 18C



Badgir : Wind Trappers, Yazd 抽風塔



Pigeon Towers



- 1795 – 1925 : The Safavid was ousted by yet another Turkish tribe called the Qajar & established the Qajar Dynasty 卡加爾王朝 . Increased diplomatic contact with Europe resulted to strong Western flavor in art & architecture



Golestan Palace of The Qajar Dynasty in Tehran



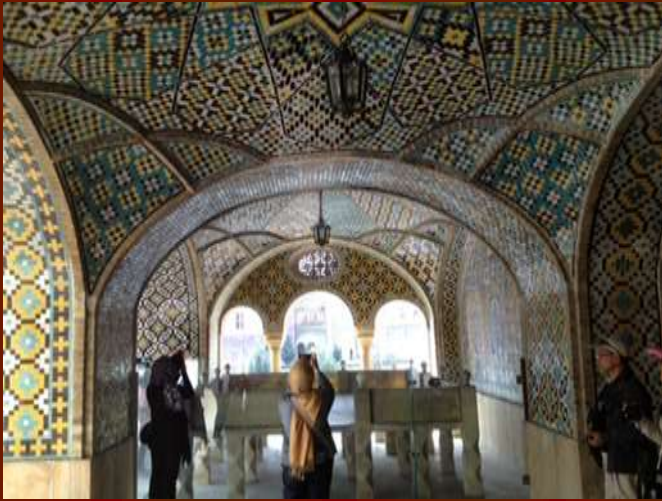
Golestan Palace of the Qajar Dynasty built 1865



Golestan Palace of The Qajar Dynasty



Golestan Palace of The Qajar Dynasty



Boroujerdi Mansion (1857) at Kashan



Borujerdi Mansion, Kashan built 1795



Borujerdi Mansion, Kashan built 1795



Tabatabaei Mansions (1880), at Kashan





Tabatabaei Mansions (1880), at Kashan



Tabatabaei Mansions (1880), at Kashan



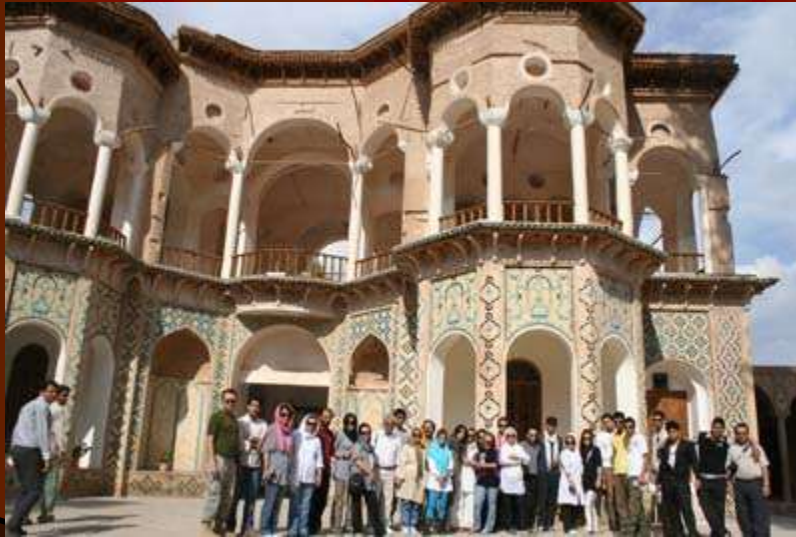
Qaja Dynasty court orders & marriage certificates



Bagh of Shanzde – a Persian Garden in Mahan,
Kerman built 1873
“A Corner in Heaven” UNESCO’s World Heritage Site



Shahzadeh Persian Garden



The Qajar Dynasty lost many provinces to the **Colonial Powers** including Great Britain, Imperial Russia & France

Facing unrest, the Shah established the first parliament in 1906 with constitutional monarchy and managed to remain in power

In the 1900s, oil was discovered & the Anglo Iranian Oil Company was formed (Later renamed British Petroleum)



- 1921 : The Qajar Dynasty was overthrown by an army officer Reza Khan & he established a dictatorship. Reza Khan was later proclaimed Reza Shah, founder of the Pahlavi Dynasty 巴烈維王朝 in 1925



- WW I : although declared neutral the country was effectively occupied by British, Ottoman & Imperial Russia army

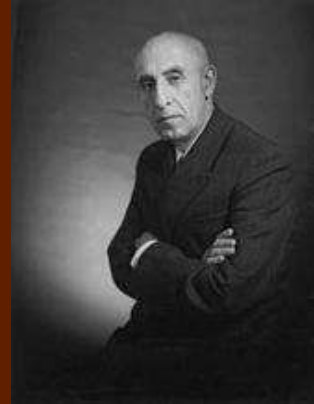


- WW II : the country was invaded by the Soviet, British & Commonwealth troops in order to secure the oil supply & protect allied supply lines to Russia for fighting the Axis in the Eastern Front. In 1941 Reza shah was forced to abdicate & succeeded by his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi

The Tehran Conference 1943 guaranteed Iran's post-war independence but the Soviet did not withdraw & instead backed revolts in the northern regions including Azerbaijan & Kurdistan. They only left in 1946



- 1951 : Nationalist prime minister Mohammed Mossadeq nationalized the British controlled oil industry & the Shah was forced to leave the country



- 1953 : with the help of the CIA the Shah returned & overthrown Mossadeq. The Iran intelligent agency SAVAK was established with thousands of political prisoners being tortured & executed
- 1963 : The Shah introduced the "White Revolution" westernizing the country which included land reform , industrialization & voting right for women which upset the big landlords and the religious leaders

- 1964 : Ayatollah Khomeini started nation wide uprising in protest to the “White Revolution” & was jailed & later spent 14 years in exile
- 1967 : Coronation of Mohamed Reza as Shah. His govt was pro US & with their aids became militarily strongest in the region



- 1971 : 2500 anniversary of the Iranian Monarchy celebrated



Pahlavi Dynasty - Sadahbad Palace, Tehran 1925



Pahlavi Dynasty – Niyavaran Palace, Tehran 1958-68



Pahlavi Dynasty – Niyavaran Palace, Tehran 1958-68



Persia National Treasures in the Jewelry Museum, Tehran built 1937



Persia National Treasures, Tehran



- 1979 : Revolution disposed the Shah. Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran & became Imam & Supreme leader



- 1979 – 1980 : Interim government
- 1979 1st April : Islamic Republic of Iran was established

The Iraq - Iran War 1980 -1988

- The Iraq – Iran war was fought between the two countries for oil interest as well as for Muslim leadership. Known as the first Persian Gulf War, it is the longest conventional war in the 20th Century with 450-950,000 soldiers & civilians casualties caused by conventional as well as chemical weapons & incurred a financial cost of US\$180 billion



Martyrs of The Iraq - Iran War 1980 -1988



- 1997 – 2005 Mohammed Khatami , a iranian scholar & reformist president



- Current President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad & Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei



The Strait of Hormuz – Persian Gulf's "Hot Spot"



Iran's Nuclear Program



Religion

Zoroastrianism 拜火教 (祆教)

- Formed over 3,500 years ago, Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest religion founded by the Priest Zoroaster & served as the state religion of Persia for several centuries before the country converted to Islam
- They were known as "worshippers" as fire is considered the provider of heat & light

Ferohar – guardian spirit



Zoroastrianism

- Their god is called Ahura Mazda which means the creator of wisdom
- Believes in end of the world, last judgment, incarnation, good & evil, heaven & hell & sky burial



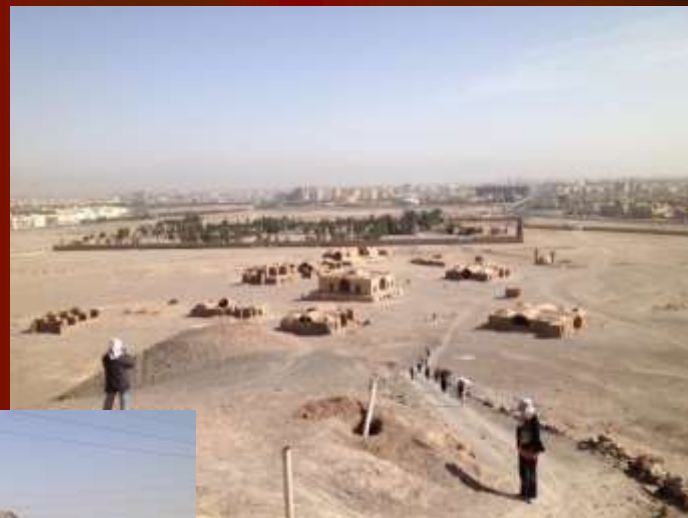
Zoroastrian festivals in Iran



Zoroastrian festivals in Iran



Tower of Silence 完寂塔, Yazd : 天葬場



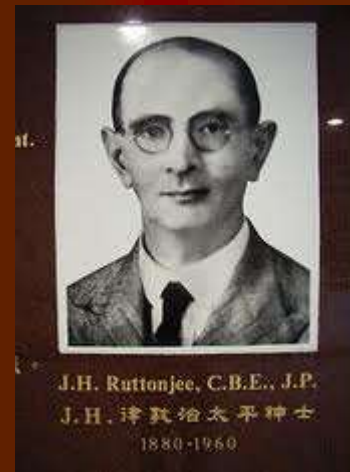
Zoroastrian Fire Temple, Yazd built 1934

The Fire has been burning for 470 years. The religion still have around 200,000 followers



Zoroastrianism in HK

- In 640 BC when Islam conquered Persia, some of the followers went to India & became known as Parsees. Some Parsees then followed the British to HK and became very prominent names including Charter (渣打), Mody (摩地), Ruttonjee (律敦治) & Kotewall (旭和).



Zoroastrianism in HK

Note the Parsee cemetery in Happy Valley & Parsee Building in Causeway Bay



Islam

- Islam is the religion founded by Prophet Mohammad in 600 AD. The followers are known as Muslims. Abraham, Moses & Jesus are all considered prophets

The 5 Pillars of Islam

- Believe in Allah as the one and only God (Shahada 證信)
- Pray 5 times a day (Salat 禮拜)
- Fasting (Ramadan 齋戒)
- Help the needed up to 2.5% of one's asset (Zakat)
- Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj 朝覲)

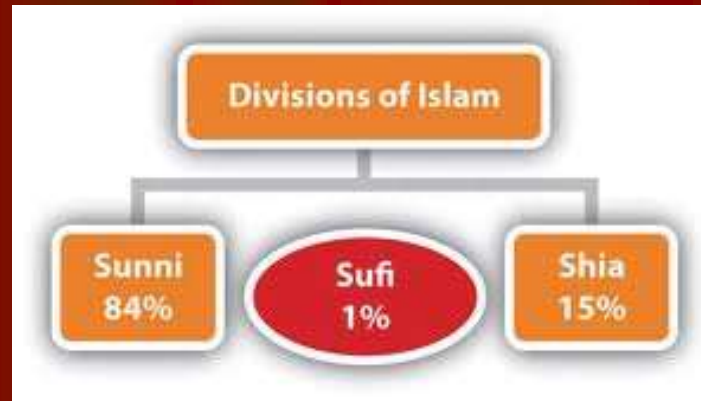


Donation boxes are found everywhere



Islam

- The major split in Islam is between the majority Sunni (遜尼派) & the minority Shiites (什葉派)

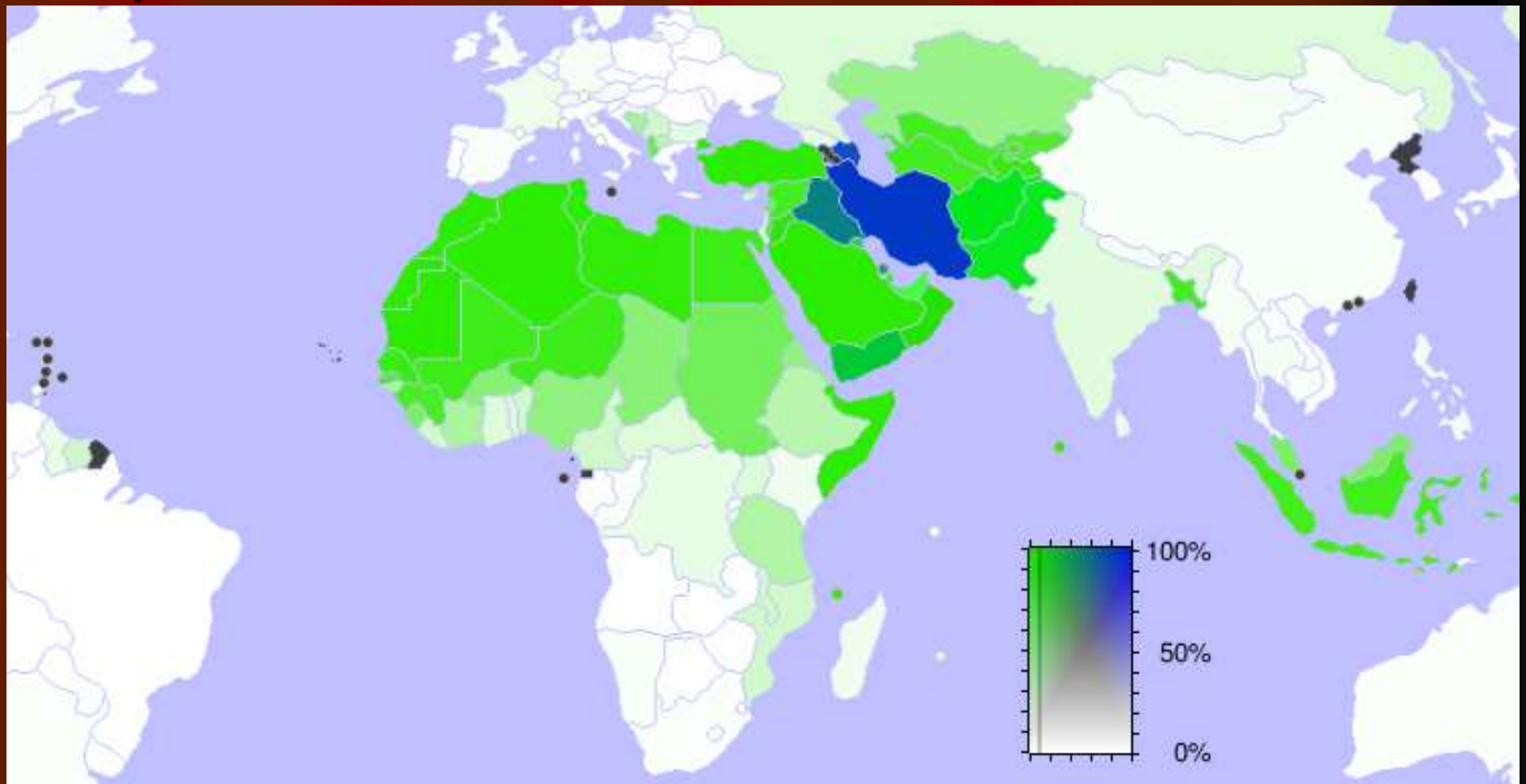


- After Muhammad's death in 632 AD, Islam leadership was passed to his close companion Abu Bakr. Some did not like it & supported Ali ibn Abi Talib who is Muhammad's cousin & son in law to be the leader. Supporters of Abu became Sunnis & supporter of Ali became Shiites

Sunnis & Shiites

Blue : Shiites / Green : Sunni

Note Iran is almost 100% Shiite but Iraq is 60% Shiites but ruled by the Sunni



Sunnis Islam 遜尼派

- Being the majority in most Muslim States, Sunni refers to oral tradition & interpretation of the Koran
- Sunni believe their head should be elected by religious leaders rather than by lineage with Muhammad
- Sunnis are more radical. Saddam Hussein of Iraq is a Sunni. Osama bin Laden is possibly a member of the Sunni extremist faction



Shiite Islam 什葉派

- Followers of Shia Islam are called Shiites
- Shiites believe Prophet Muhammad's cousin & son in law Ali is his legitimate successor & therefore also their spiritual & political leader who is called the Imam & all future Imams are to be from Ali's family. The 12th Imam passed away in 868 AD. The 13th has yet to arrive
- Has a tradition of valuing martyrdom



Shiite Islam Mullah 什葉派教士



Friday Mosque built 1324, Yazd



Holy Shrine of Massoumeh – the mausoleum of the 8th Imam's brother at Qom, Shiite's religious center built 1519



Holy Shrine of Massoumeh – the mausoleum of the 8th Imam's brother at Qom, Shiite's religious center built 1519



Shiite Islam – the Holy Shrine of Imam Khomeini



Sufi Muslim

Aramgah of Nematollah (15C), Mahan 蘇非派托鉢僧陵園



Sufi Muslim

Aramgah of Nematollah (15C), Mahan 蘇非派托鉢僧陵園



Sufi Muslim

Aramgah of Nematollah (15C), Mahan 蘇非派托鉢僧陵園



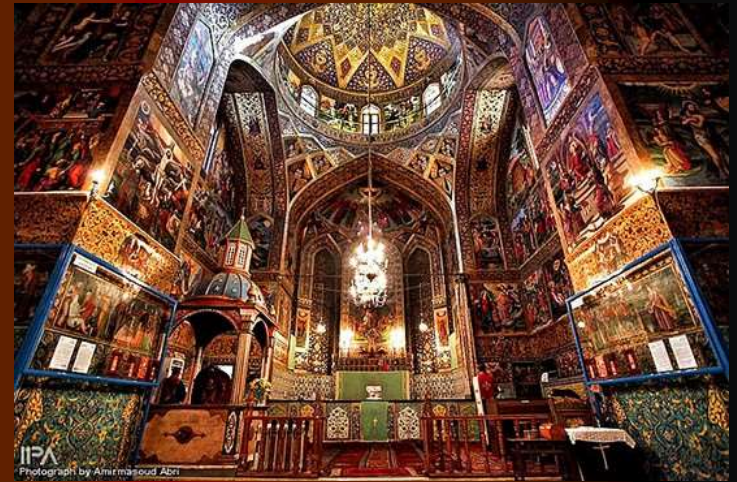
Mausoleum of Aramgah of Nematollah, Mahan

蘇非派托鉢僧陵園

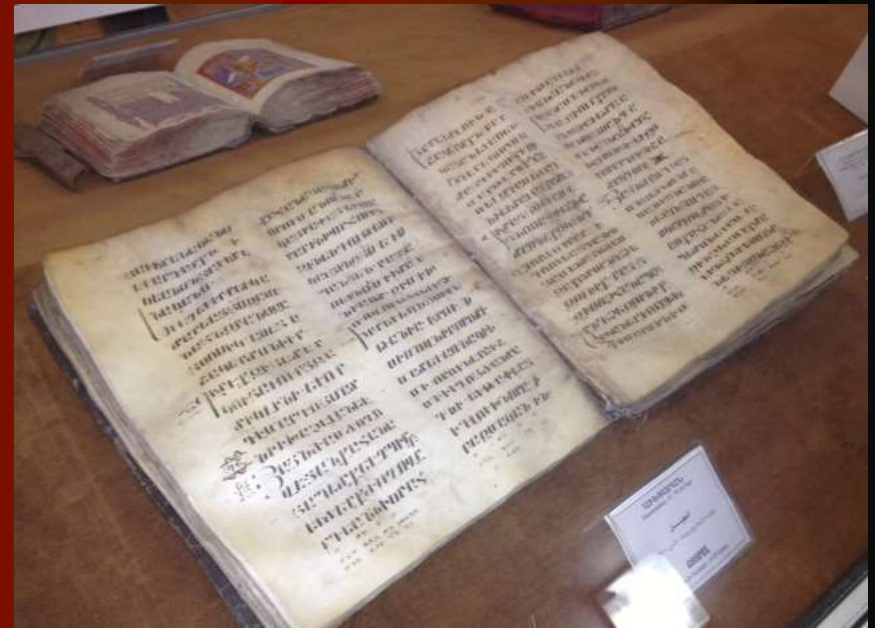


The Armenian Orthodox

Vank Cathedral , Isfahan built 1606 - 1664



The Armenian Orthodox World's smallest & world's oldest book



Turkish Massacre Memorial

1.5 million Armenians murdered between 1915-23



Persia & China

波斯与中國

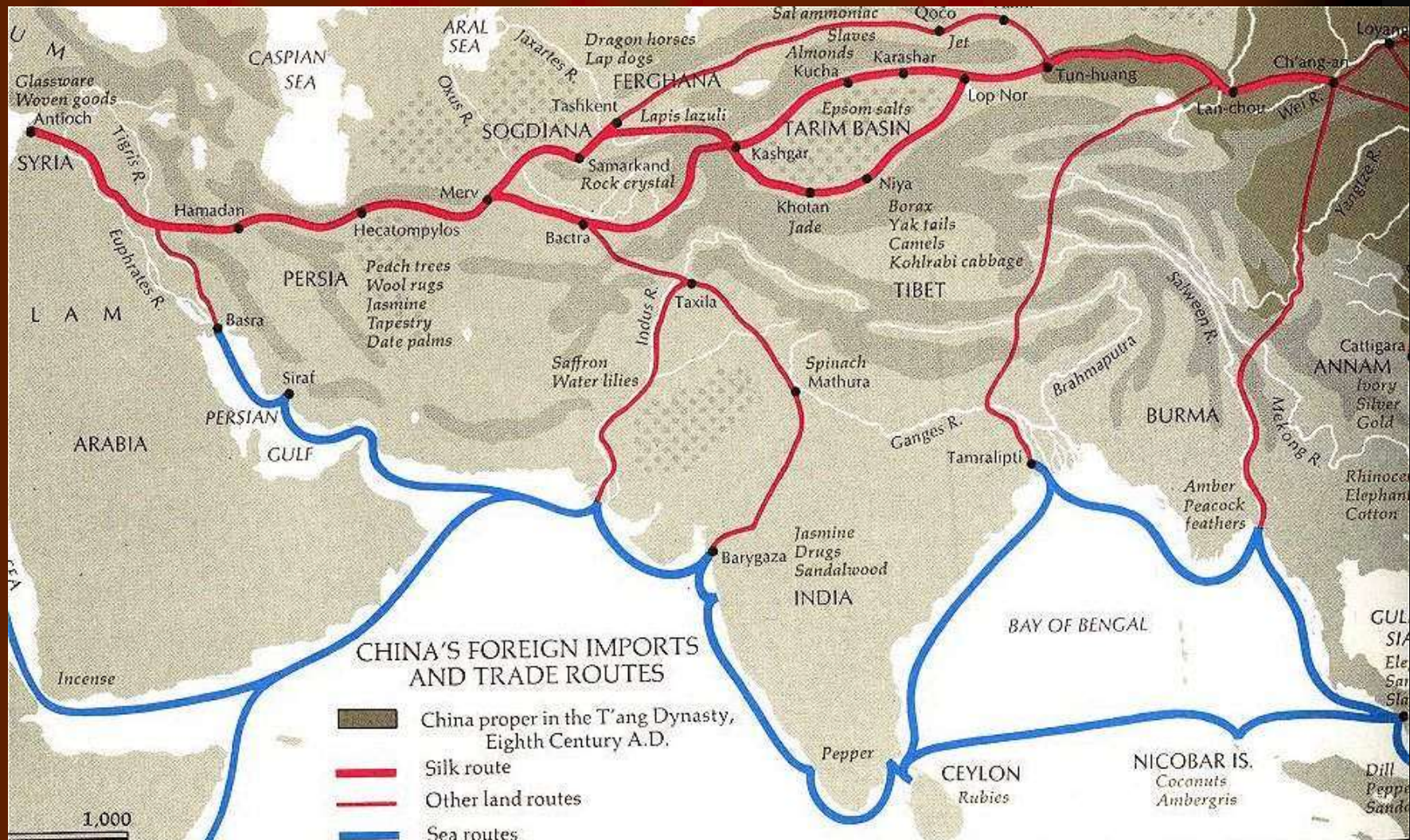
Persia & China

- Known as 安息 Persia's trade with China started in the Han Dynasty after Zhang Qian's 張騫 diplomatic visits to the Western Region 西域 & reached its peak in the Tang Dynasty essentially through the Land & Maritime "Silk Road"



張騫

The Land & Maritime Silk Roads with China



- Many new agricultural products were introduced into China eg. alfalfa, melon (西瓜), grapes, carrot , pepper, onion, pomegranate, spinach & walnut . Note the Chinese word

胡 used in front of the names for carrot (胡蘿白), pepper (胡椒) & walnut (胡桃) & spinach is called 菠菜



- New religions from Zoroastrianism (拜火教) to Ming Religion (明教), Nestorian Christianity (景教) & Islam (回教)



- New music, dances & musical instruments for China
(二胡, 胡樂, 胡舞, 噴呐)



- China export include silk, porcelain & tea



- Chines word 獅 for lion is derived from the Persian word Shea

- Many Persians actually served in the Chinese courts from Tang to Sung, Yuen & Ming Dynasty as soldiers, artisans ,experts & even mid level administrators. Some Persians also settled down particularly in the South China coastal ports of Yang Zhou & Guangzhou. An Lu Shan (安祿山), the Upright Judge Hai Rui (海瑞) as well as Admiral Zhang He (鄭和-馬哈子) are of Persian decent & so are some of the 10 million 回民 Muslims living in China



We are friends !



Iran Today

今日伊朗

The Khomeini International Airport locally known as KIA



Tehran



Tehran Metro built by China



75 million people, 82% literate, 2/3 under the age of 30,
extremely friendly to visitors





The People



Inflation is very severe !

Inflation rate last year hit 29.8% Forecast this year 32%
10,000 riyal equals US\$0.3 ,dropped 25% in March 2013
Our museum ticket is 1 cm thick, price of nut now at US\$7
per lb compared to US\$3 a month ago



There are differences between Male & female



Food – no pork, lots of herb, mostly barbecue & deep fried, only Muslim can enter the kitchen



Food – the desserts are good



Food – Camel meat for a change ?



Restaurants – many are converted from old bath houses



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Hotels – many are converted from old caravan hostels (Caravansary)



Bazaar



Bazaar



The End