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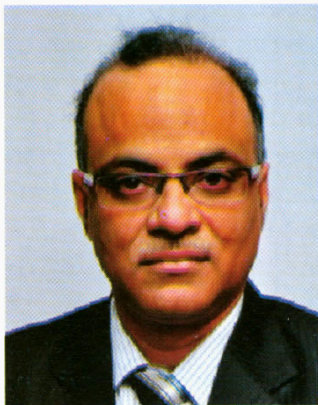
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Wonders of the World, Ethiopia and India



By Dr. Sanjoy Kumar Pal

Since time immemorial, man has attempted to give expression to the artistic aspect of his mind through the creation of awe-inspiring architectures that is still a source of amaze-

ment and wonder for the modern generation. The world's most spectacular natural wonders and man-made structures from antiquity to the present day are catalogued.

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World is the first known list of the most remarkable creations of classical antiquity, and was based on guide-books popular among Hellenic sight-seers and only includes works located around the Mediterranean rim. The number seven was chosen as the Greeks believed it to be the representation of perfection because it represented all the five planets along with the sun and moon.

The historian Herodotus (484 – ca. 425 BCE), and the scholar Callimachus of Cyrene (ca. 305 – 240 BCE) at the Museum of Alexandria, had made early lists of seven wonders. Their writings have not survived, except as references. The seven wonders that are most widely agreed upon as being in the original list are the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, which was compiled by ancient Greek historians and is thus confined to the most magnificent structures known to the ancient Greek world. Of all the Ancient Wonders, the pyramids alone survive. The seven wonders of the Ancient World were:

- The Pyramids of Egypt are three pyramids at Giza, outside modern Cairo. The largest pyramid, built by Khufu (Cheops), a king of the fourth dynasty, had an original estimated height of 482 ft

(now approximately 450 ft). The base has sides 755 ft long. It contains 2,300,000 blocks; the average weight of each is 2.5 tons. Estimated date of completion is 2680 B.C.

- The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were supposedly built by Nebuchadnezzar around 600 B.C. to please his queen, Amuhia. They are also associated with the mythical Assyrian queen Semiramis. Archeologists surmise that the gardens were laid out atop a vaulted building, with provisions for raising water. The terraces were said to rise from 75 to 300 ft.

- The Statue of Zeus (Jupiter) at Olympia was made of gold and ivory by the Greek sculptor Phidias (5th century B.C.). Reputed to be 40 ft high, the statue has been lost without a trace, except for reproductions on coins.

- The Temple of Artemis (Diana) at Ephesus was begun about 350 B.C., in honor of a non-Hellenic goddess who later became identified with the Greek goddess of the same name. The temple, with Ionic columns 60 ft high, was destroyed by invading Goths in A.D. 262.

- The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus was erected by Queen Artemisia in memory of her husband, King Mausolus of Caria in Asia Minor, who died in 353 B.C. Some remains of the structure are in the British Museum. This shrine is the source of the modern word mausoleum.

- The Colossus at Rhodes was a bronze statue of Helios (Apollo), about 105 ft high. The work of the sculptor Chares, who reputedly labored for 12 years before completing it in 280 B.C., it was destroyed during an earthquake in 224 B.C.

- The Pharos (Lighthouse) of Alexandria was built by Sostratus of Cnidus during the 3rd century B.C. on the island of Pharos off the coast of Egypt. It was destroyed by an earthquake in the 13th century.

In 2001 an initiative was started by the Swiss corporation New7 Wonders Foundation to choose the

New 7 Wonders of the World from a selection of 200 existing monuments. Twenty-one finalists were announced on January 1, 2006. Egyptians were not happy that the only surviving original wonder, the Great Pyramid of Giza, would have to compete with the likes of the Statue of Liberty, the Sydney Opera House, and other landmarks, calling the project absurd. In response, Giza was named an honorary Candidate. The results were announced on July 7, 2007, in Lisbon, Portugal. The list is as follows:

Wonder	Date of construction	Location
Great Wall of China	Since 7th century BC	China
Petra	c. 100 BC	Jordan
Christ the Redeemer	Opened October 12, 1931	Brazil
Machu Picchu	c. AD 1450	Peru
Chichen Itza	c. AD 600	Mexico
Colosseum	Completed AD 80	Italy
Taj Mahal	Completed c. AD 1648	India
Great Pyramid of Giza (Honorary Candidate)	Completed c. 2560 BC	Egypt

Ethiopian Wonders

Ethiopia is an amazing country with a rich heritage and culture. It is one of the oldest locations of human existence known to scientists. The world famous Australopithecine fossil 'Lucy' was found here in the Afar Depression. Ethiopia is a place of fascinating natural beauty and many natural wonders. Few of them are as follows: The Rock-hewn Churches at Lalibela; Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Aksum; Lake Tana; Erta Ale Volcano; Monasteries of Tana Lake; Blue Nile Falls [Tissat]; Royal Enclosure ruins and Debre Berhan Selassie Church in Gondar; Harar Jugol; Sof Omar Caves; Gambella National Park; Danakil Depression; Semien Mountains; Hot spring at Wondo Genet and Sodere.

The Great Rift Valley lies between the Ethiopian Plateau to the north and the Somalian Plateau to the south. The Ethiopian rift valley is about 80 kilometers (50 miles) wide. There are many lakes that occupy the floor of the rift valley; however, as there is no outlet most of the lakes are alkaline. Some of the important lakes are: Lake Abaya, Lake Chamo, Lake Zway, Lake Shala, Lake Koka, Lake Langano, Lake Abijatta and Lake Awasa.

Wonders of India

Since the ancient ages, India has been known all over the world for its numerous wonders and its rich heritage. The Indian sub continent has been the cradle for some of the oldest civilizations of the world. Over a period of thousands of years, India has developed into one of the most fascinating countries of the world. The wonders of India include breathtaking natural beauty, and the numerous historic buildings that have been built by the erstwhile rulers of this vast land. Out of many important places like: Golden Temple, Tawang Monastery, Gomateshwara statue, Ruins of Hampi, Lotus Temple, Qutub Minar, Victoria Terminus, Howrah Bridge, Jagannath Temple, Jama Masjid, Charminar, Mt. Kanchanjanga, Victoria Memorial, Agra fort, Jantar Mantar etc., a poll that was conducted by NDTV adjudged the following to be the seven wonders of India:

- Jaisalmer Fort in Rajasthan
- Nalanda in Bihar
- Red Fort in Delhi
- Sun Temple in Odisha
- Meenakshi Temple in Tamilnadu
- Dholavira in Gujrat
- Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh

The amazing works of art and architecture known as the Wonders of the World serve as a testament to the ingenuity, imagination and sheer hard work of which human beings are capable.

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