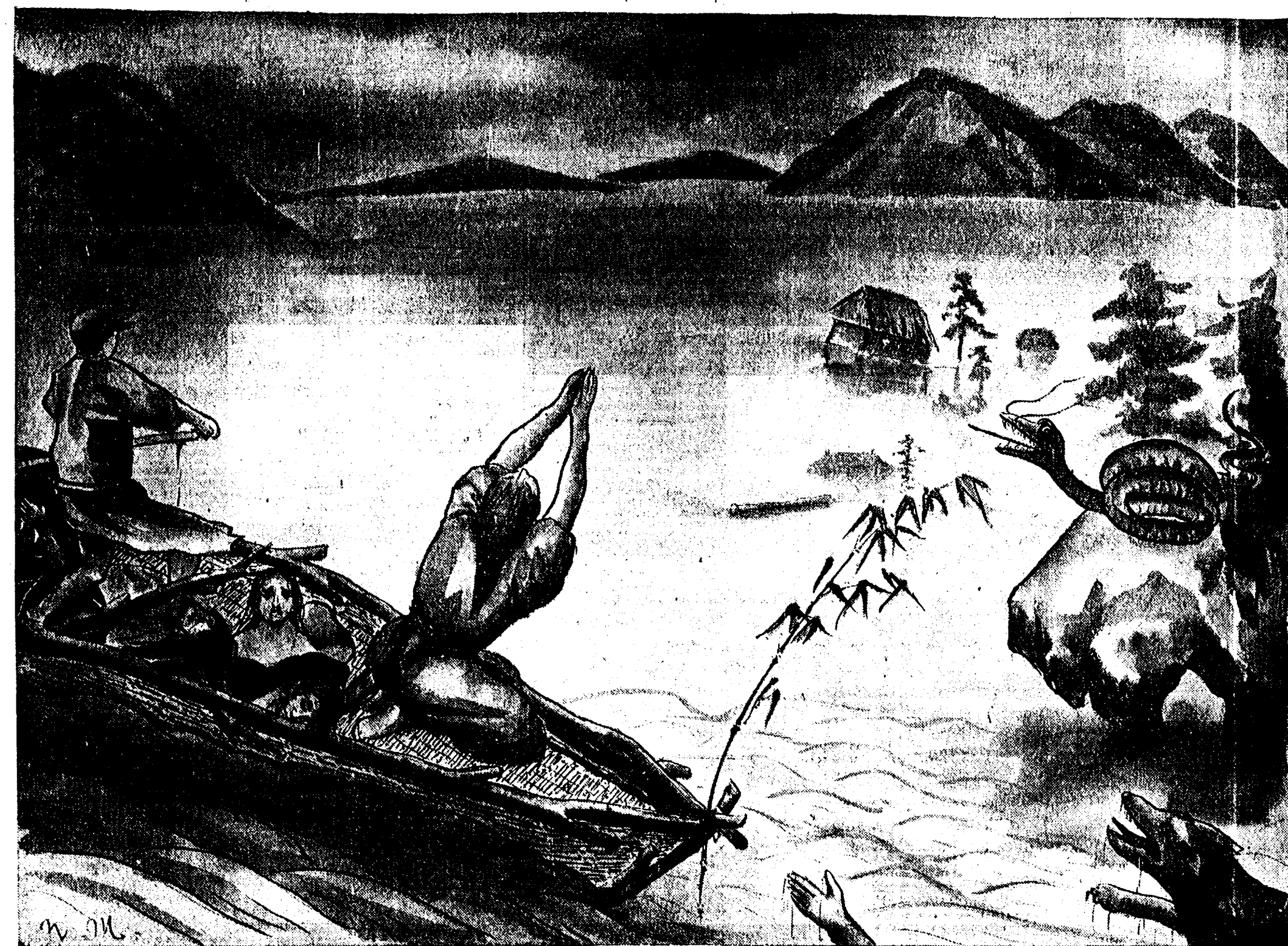


EVIDENCE THAT NOAH WAS A CHINESE.

Theory Supported by Strong Reasoning Explains Many Obscurities in Biblical Account of Deluge.



CHINESE PICTURE OF NUH'S ESCAPE FROM THE MIGHTY FLOOD.

BIBLICAL scholars are discussing the theory that Noah was a Chinese. China, in common with almost all nations, has its story of the deluge, when nearly all life perished from the earth. Its literature tells the story of Nuh, of the mighty floods, the escape in an ark, and of the resting upon Mount Ay-Ahr-At, in eastern Thibet. Conceding that the Chinese notion perhaps is the oldest of men, that vessels of the type of the ark still float on its rivers; and that certain texts of scripture are cleared when read in the light of a Chinese origin of the deluge story, the conclusion has been reached that the Noah of the Bible was a Chinese.

From the Bible the beginning of the sixth chapter of Genesis, which has been puzzling to the orthodox, may be taken in a new light. It reads: "And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

Chinese scholars are struck by this passage, more than by any other in the deluge story in Genesis. To the Christian the phrase "sons of God" has been unintelligible, but in the books of the Chinese all Chinese claim to be descended from heaven. Their Emperor is the son of heaven. Their empire is the celestial kingdom, and everywhere they are called celestial. As pointing to the Chinese origin of the story, the significance of the wording will not be lost.

Giants in Those Days.

In the same sixth chapter is the paragraph: "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Biblical students have spent much study upon these paragraphs, indicating that two races inhabited the earth, one of them of divine origin. The Chinese source of the story of the deluge would clear away the seeming conflict. In the last paragraph, too, the reference to giants is the only reference of the kind in the Bible, which is

significant for the reason that the Chinese believe that man is descended from giants, not ascended from monkeys.

Again, in the tenth chapter of Genesis, as children of the sons of Noah, are named "the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite." Sinas, or Sinim, was the ancient name of China, coming from the Sanskrit. Isaiah mentions it as Sinim.

Now, as accounting for all these phenomena in the scriptures, it is believed that Moses, or whoever wrote Genesis, had seen the Chinese "Book of Historical Records," with its account of the flood, and so based his story upon it.

In the beginning of the argument that Noah was a Chinese, the new theorists advance the fact that China is the home of the oldest civilization. Chinese chronologies have advanced the statement that the world existed 2,267,000 years before Confucius, who lived 550 years before Christ. In this, too, geologists are more satisfied than in the estimate of the Jews, which dates the creation only 3,760 years before the coming of Christ.

Chinese Records Destroyed.

Eighteen hundred years before the present chronology the Chinese nation had a literature and of this the "Book of the Changes" and the "Book of Historical Records" survived the intolerance of Emperor Che Hwang-ti. This ruler of the Tsin dynasty issued an edict 221 B. C., ordering that all books not treating of divination, medicine, or astrology be destroyed. Under this decree thousands of invaluable books were destroyed, including even those of Confucius. Many volumes were hidden away by students, scholars, and friends of literature, however, and among these are fifty-nine books of the original 100 volumes of the Historical Records. These books contain the earliest authentic accounts of human events, beginning with the story of the deluge.

According to the story in the Records, Nuh was warned in a vision of the destruction of the world by water. As a reason for it the wickedness of mankind was assigned.

Nuh at once began work on a great junk, which he completed and covered with pitch, inside and outside. Into this he retreated with his wife and three sons just as the

Noah of the Bible is said to have done. As to the birds and beasts which followed Noah, however, the Chinese records say nothing. Nuh took with him only rice, millet, silkworms, and a tortoise—the last being the Chinese emblem of time.

As to the duration of the flood the difficulty in deciphering these primitive writings leaves the idea of time in doubt. Signs for days and years in the manuscripts are alike and have been used indiscriminately and in addition the 3,500 years that have elapsed since writing was invented have made many of the root signs obsolete or have changed their meanings altogether.

Stork Instead of Dove.

It is certain, however, that notice was given to Nuh in time to prepare the great junk and that the deluge held off until he and his family were safely housed. After a long period of drifting on the wide waters a bird described as a stork came to the window of the junk, with the sprig of a willow in its beak, and Nuh, knew that the waters were receding.

At last the junk grounded on the peak of a high mountain and Nuh, with his family, came out and built an altar, or temple, on the spot.

Nearly all of this is so closely related to the account in Genesis as to appear phenomenal, without the further mention of the mountain's name. This name, Ay-ahr-at, is regarded as the most significant coincidence in the whole comparison of the story in Genesis with the story of the Book of Records. Between the Chinese name and that of the mountain in Genesis is only a difference in pronunciation and a change of spelling, and to this day this peak in eastern Thibet is regarded as the home of the parents of Asia. It is asserted even that Nuh's temple still stands there, but the place never has been visited by Europeans.

As to the Ararat in Armenia, not even the natives call it by that name. To the Armenians it is Masis, and to the Turks it is Ak-Dagh. In south Armenia it has a rival claimant in Mount Judi, on which peak was a monastery in 1000 A. D. Masis, as a claimant for the honor of receiving the ark, has only its notable altitude to recommend it to notice, while Ay-ahr-at has no Asiatic rival

and to this day it retains the name given to it in the Records.

China's "Book of Changes."

Added to all of these circumstances and situations, it is emphasized that other books of the early Chinese civilization have spread their influences abroad, leaving impress upon the literature of other nations. Fifteen hundred years before Christ the "Yih King," or "Book of Changes" was issued. Confucius was so taken with it that he regretted not having fifty years in which to study it. As the book was supposed to deal with magic it escaped destruction and has come down to the present. It is difficult reading, but its admirers have found it the story of the physical universe. Wan Wang was its author, and scholars have decided that the book served as a model for the mystical numbers of Pythagoras. Now, they ask if Pythagoras knew of the "Book of Changes," why might not the author of Genesis have seen the Book of Historical Records and its account of the deluge?

It has been remarked that the Chinese of all other nations seemed to have been most deeply impressed by the legend of the flood. To this day the gates of all temples are surmounted by ark-shaped ornamentations called "Ships of Heaven," while on the rivers of the empire are vessels of the same general lines as those of the ark. They are "pitched within and without with pitch," having a door "set in the side thereof" and a window high up—just such a window as that from which, according to Genesis, Noah released the dove.

Many Legends of Flood.

One of the most striking facts in the study of races and their legends, folklore and religions, has been the unanimity with which the account of the flood has held place. These stories are thought to have come from primitive man as accounting for the creation. He was given a world of matter and he could not account for its being, save as he represented creation as having taken place repeatedly, following repeated demotions. Travelers have observed even that in some races the deluge and the creation have been mixed and confounded.

It has been conceded that the story of the

deluge, among the Semitic races, had its origin with the Babylonians. With them the God Kronos appeared to Xisuthrus, tenth King of Babylon, and warned him of the flood. The details are akin to those of the Bible, even to the freeing of the three birds in succession. But in addition to the King's family, were his near friends and a steersman. His ark, too, finally rested on a mountain; where he built an altar and rendered sacrifices.

Manu was the hero of the Indian legend and was warned by a fish to prepare for the coming of the waters. Seven days were allowed, as in the Bible story, for the animals to go into the ark, and, as in Genesis, the ark finally rested on a high mountain. To accomplish this, however, the fish which warned him finally towed the ark to the mountain.

The Jewish story ascribes the cause of the flood to the depravity of mankind and coincides in many respects with that of the Babylonians. As to the relation of the two, the Babylonian legend is considered to show the greater originality.

Similar Egyptian Tale.

In Egypt the deluge was not a part of the folklore, but scholars say that the germs of it were there. As in the case where Ra, the creator, incensed at the insolence of mankind, resolves to exterminate them. Blood from the massacre flows to Heliopolis, upon which Ra repents and swears never again to destroy mankind.

In Greece all but a few persons are said to have been destroyed, and the most famous of these was Deucalion, who with Pyrrha, landed on the summit of Parnassus, where sacrifices were offered.

Among the American Indians it is said that not one of 120 tribes has been found without its story of the deluge. But in view of the early missionary work on the continent and the fact that the story of liberating the birds is part of the tradition, scholars are inclined to suspect the influence of Christian teachings.

That China may have been the birthplace of the story, however, lends new interest to the tradition and new light may come out of it upon the relationship of nations in ages long gone.