

Indus River Valley Civilizations



Chapter Two Section Three



The Indian Subcontinent

- A wall of mountains -Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalayas separate South Asia from the rest of the continent...so geographers refer to the area as the Indian subcontinent
- The Indus-Ganges Plains is an enormous flat and fertile plain that stretches 1500 miles across northern India.
- Below the Indus-Ganges Plain the southern part of the subcontinent is a peninsula that sticks out into the Indian Ocean.
- At the center of the peninsula is the Deccan Plateau
- On either of the coasts is a narrow border of lush tropical land.




The Monsoons

- The monsoons are seasonal winds that dominate India's climate.
- From October to May winter monsoons from the northeast blow dry air across the country
- In the middle of June the wind shifts and spring monsoons from the southwest bring moisture and much rain from the ocean.



The Indus River

- The Indus River flows southwest from the Himalayas to the Arabian Sea.
- The Indus river provided an outlet to the sea for the Indus Valley people.
- The flooding of the Indus was very unpredictable and the river sometimes changed its course.
- The world's tallest mountains to the north and a large desert to the west protected the Indus Valley from invasion

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- Historians know less about the Indus valley people than they do the ancient Egyptians or the peoples from Mesopotamia
 - Historians have not yet deciphered the Indus system of writing
 - Evidence comes largely from archaeological digs. Some remain unexplored while others were washed away by floods
 - No one is sure how human settlement began in India
 - Archaeologists have found evidence in the highlands of agriculture and domesticated sheep and goats as far back as 7000 B.C.
 - By 3200 B.C. people were farming in villages along the Indus river.



Early Indus Settlements

- Around 2500 B.C. while Egyptians were building pyramids people in the Indus Valley were laying the bricks for India's first cities.
- Archaeologists have found the ruins of more than 100 settlements along the banks of the Indus River
- The largest cities were Mohenjo-Daro, Kalibangan, and Harappa.



Planned Cities in the Indus Valley

- City Planning was one of the greatest achievements of the Indus Valley Peoples
- The people of the Indus laid out their cities on a precise grid system
- Each city had a fortified area called a citadel which contained the major buildings of the city
- There were separate residential districts
- Buildings were constructed of oven-baked bricks that were a standard size
- Their engineers created sophisticated plumbing and sewage systems.
- This uniformity in city planning indicates that the Indus people developed a strong central government.

What the artifacts tell us

- Archeological evidence tells us that the Indus Valley Civilization was stable.
- Artifacts like toys indicate that the society was prosperous could afford to buy nonessential goods and had leisure time.
- Few weapons of war have been found indicating that conflict with other peoples was limited.
- Religious artifacts reveal links to modern Hindu culture.
- Figurines have been found that may be early representations of Shiva a major Hindu God.
- Other artifacts point to a mother goddess, fertility images, and the worship of cattle all which became part of Indian Civilization later.



Contact and Trade with other Peoples

- The Indus Valley people probably conducted long distance trade.
- Stamps and seals were probably used by Indus merchants to identify their goods.
- Indus seals found in Sumer and Sumerian objects found in Indus Valley ruins reveal that the two civilizations traded a great deal beginning in about 2350 B.C. until 2000 B.C.

The Mysterious End to the

Indus civilization

- Around 1750 B.C. the quality of building in the Indus valley cities declined.
- Gradually the great cities fell into decay
- Perhaps the Indus River changed course so the floods no longer fertilized nearby fields
- Possibly the Indus people wore out the land by overgrazing, over-farming, over-cutting trees and brush.
- Around 1500 a sudden catastrophe may have occurred. Archaeologists have found the remains of 38 bodies in the ruins of Hohenjo-Daro that were never buried.
- Perhaps the citizens of the city abandoned the city after a natural disaster or maybe it was after an attack from human enemies..