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River Valleys –Indus River Valley Mrs. Valdes

The Indus River Valley was another location of an early river valley civilization. As in Mesopotamia and Egypt, when the Indus River flooded, it deposited rich soil along its banks. Food surpluses from successful agriculture allowed people to build large cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The people of this civilization, sometimes called the Harappans, made the first cotton cloth and developed their own form of writing. They also made pottery and built sewage systems in their cities.

Of course, the Indus River Valley was located in the Indian subcontinent. **India is often called a subcontinent because it is so large**. The Indian subcontinent is a peninsula surrounded on three sides by water. The world’s highest mountains – the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush – are located in the north of the peninsula. These two mountain ranges separate India from the rest of Asia but not completely. Passes or flat lands exist in these mountain ranges that allow access to other parts of Asia from India. The best known pass or opening is the Khyber Pass. The land of northern India is fertile. The Indus River and the Ganges River provide water for farming. Indian civilization began in the Indus River Valley and the Ganges is so important to Indians that they call it “Mother Ganges.” The Ganges is a sacred river to Hindus, the dominant religious group of India. Indians also depend on the monsoon. The monsoons are winds that bring rains. The rains provide water for farming.

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| **Geographic Features:** | **Effects:** |
| **Peninsula** |  |
| **Himalayas** |  |
| **Indus River** |  |
| **Ganges River** |  |
| **Monsoons** |  |

1- Why is India often called a subcontinent?

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River Valleys –Indus River Valley Ms. Carey

India’s first civilization developed in the Indus River Valley. This river begins in the Himalayas. The river floods when the snows melt. Later, the water retreats and leaves silt or fertile soil behind. The first Indian civilization began with two cities – Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Both Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro looked like modern, planned cities. Their streets were wide and straight. The people built with clay bricks. Each brick was exactly the same size. This kind of careful planning of cities is referred to as urban planning. The cities of the Indus River Valley exhibit or show evidence of urban planning.

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| India’s First Civilization |
| Location: |
| Two Cities: |
| Design of the Cities: |
| Urban Planning: |

Harappan civilization had many accomplishments. Some homes even had indoor bathrooms and toilets. Dirty water drained away through clay pipes. A great wall surrounded each city and protected it. In addition, archaeologists have discovered many clay tablets with writing on them. Archaeologists are still trying to decipher the writing of the Indus River Valley civilization. Around 1500 B.C., this civilization ended. Perhaps the monsoon failed or disease or a flood struck. Maybe invaders attacked.

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| Accomplishments of Harappan Civilization |
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1- How do we know that the people of the Indus River Valley must have had a strong government? (Think of the design of the cities.)

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2- Did the people of the Indus River Valley have writing?

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3- Describe the writing system:

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| List four possible causes of the collapse of Harappan Civilization: |
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By 2500 B.C. cities that rivaled the great urban centers of Mesopotamia were developing along the Indus River and its tributaries. The most important of these cities were Mohenjo-Daro, on the lower Indus River, and Harappa, on the Ravi River near the upper end of the Indus Valley.

Both cities were built on a similar plan, with a grid work of streets, housing for the common people and larger homes for the elite, as well as a sanitation system that included bathrooms linked to sewers—an important contribution to public health in cities that contained as many as 40,000 people.

Bricks used for construction were all of the same mold, and the public buildings included granaries filled with surpluses. Trade was the glue of the Harappa civilization, binding one city to another and the region as a whole to Mesopotamia and other distant lands. Among the goods exported were cotton, spices, ivory, and handcrafts such as jewelry.

Like other river valleys that fostered ancient civilizations, the Indus region was subject to seasonal flooding that helped nourish the fields but was sometimes catastrophic. The city of Mohenjo-Daro had to be rebuilt at least nine times. Ruinous floods may have contributed to the decline of Harappan civilization after 2000 B.C.

Reflections:

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