

UNIT 4: Ancient India

The Indus and Ganges River Valleys

India's Geographic Setting:

- Subcontinent: A large land mass that juts out from a continent.
- India was an isolated country.
- The Himalayan Mountains and the Hindu Kush separated India from Asia.

A climate of Monsoons:

- India's climate is dominated by the Monsoon. Monsoon is strong winds.
- October to May the winter Monsoon blows from the northeast separating dry air across the country. And in the middle of June the wind blows from the Indian Ocean.
- The summer Monsoon picks up moisture from the ocean.
- People depend on summer monsoons to provide life giving rain. If a monsoon is late or weak crops die causing famine, and if the monsoon brings too much moisture the river will overflow causing deadly floods

Barriers and Pathways

- Passes through the Hindu Kush mountain range have served as highway for invading people.
- The earliest people of northern India probably entered the Valley of the Indus River through these path ways.
- The great river rises in the mountains, because snow is melting and there is rain while the Indus Ganges Rivers cut through the mountains collecting the water.
- The river flow across the plains of northern India and makes farming possible in the river valleys.

Life in the Indus River Valley

- The rich soil of the Indus river valley provides early farmer's harvest with a surplus of wheat and other grains
- With all the surplus of food the population grew more and more, and some other villages became cities.
- From 2500 BC to 1500 BC, well planned cities flourish in the valley, one of the valleys was Mohenjo-Daro

The World's Earliest City Planners

- Mohenjo-Daro was a large city and needed careful planning because the Indus River often flooded,
- The cities rulers built Mohenjo-Daro on a high mountain
- To make travel easy in the city street were laid out in squares.
- People built their homes and shops around this squares
- At the center of the city there was a Citadel. A Citadel is a fortress

Conquest by the Aryans

- The invaders called themselves the Aryans, which in their language meant noble or highborn.
- The Aryans migrated. Migrated means move from the homelands in central Asia.
- Aryans cross the plains of northern India, the people of the Indus River Valleys huddled behind the crumbling walls of the cities.
- The Aryans conquer the people of the Indus River Valley; many became slaves of the invaders.

The Beginnings of Hinduism Sec-2

Roots of Hindu Belief

- World's oldest and major religion-Hinduism
- Aryan culture mixed with conquered people and taken beliefs from the Vedas, formed the Hindu religion
- 3,500 years the religion developed
- All parts of religions and beliefs are blended together
- Hindus worship gods and goddesses
- They believe in 1 spirit

Gods and Goddesses

- Most important gods are Brahma the creator Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer.
- These gods take human and animal form
- Shiva is the most important and powerful
 - he doesn't get into human matter
 - he creates and destroys the world
 - his wife Shakti is also worshipped but she takes part in human life
- Vishnu is a kind god that is concerned about humans
 - Visits Earth from time to time in different forms
 - He guides and protects humans
- Brahma was the creator of everything
 - Hindus believe that he was born in a golden egg
 - Created Earth and everything on it

Basic Beliefs

- Are all in religious text and writings
- Hindu books are written in a language called "Sanskrit"
- One text name is the "Upanishads"
- Upanishad means sitting near a teacher
- It is filled with questions from students
- And answers from teachers
- It has a section about reincarnation

Reincarnation

- Is after you die your soul goes into another body
- Good people with strong beliefs would be reborn in a higher class
- People who were bad would come back in a lower class or even an animal
- If you were perfect your spirit would go straight to Brahman

Hindu's Duties

- If you are perfect your spirit goes to Brahman and you get off of the cycle of die and come back
- The soul becomes one with Brahman
- Hindu's must obey their "dharma"
 - Dharma is the religious moral duties of people
 - Duties depend on a persons, age, class and occupation
 - If you obey your dharma you get closer to Brahman

 - Hindu believe "ahimsa"; which means being nonviolent
 - They don't eat meat because they won't harm animals
 - Another belief is that there is more than one path to truth.
 - Hindu people worship in many different ways

SECTION 3

Buddhism is a religion created by a young prince named Siddhartha Gautama. When he was 30 he dropped his wealth and his family to go find the solution of human suffering. Gautama believed that you look inwardly and meditate to find answers. After 49 days of meditating and fasting he found the answer to suffering.

His followers call him "Buddha" or enlighten one. Buddha taught that suffering was caused by people that have selfish desires for money, power, and pleasure. If you give these things up you can be free of suffering. To give up these desires you can do it by following the "Middle Way." To get to Middle way Gautama taught that you can't have too much pleasure or too much worry about life. Also you have to treat people fairly, and unselfishly. You must tell the truth, and never kill a living thing.

By following Buddha's path you will find nirvana. Nirvana is lasting peace. You also are an equal. There are no social class boundaries in Buddhism. There is an eightfold path to guide people. Right Understanding, Intention, Speech, Action, Livelihood, Effort, Mindfulness, and Concentration

SECTION 4 Notes

Who was Chandragupta?

- Had absolute power
- King
- Had many servants, gold, jewels and a palace.
- Ruled for 35 years

What did the Maurya Empire have and do?

- Servants
- Fountains
- Palace
- Gold and jewels
- Chandragupta took over most of India
- He established irrigation for farmers and roads to trade

Who was Asoka?

- Chandragupta grandson
- Converted to Buddhism
- He had a love for animals and people
- Called "father" to the people because he cared about people
- Built hospitals and wells so nobody would starve or be hurt
- The spread of Buddhism from this time period reached China and influenced many civilizations