

River valley civilizations



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A long, long time ago, before Christ, there were many different RVC's. RVC is abbreviated for River Valley Civilizations. Some main River Valley Civilizations that we studied were Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India. These River Valleys offered many achievements to the people. For example, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India all settled on rivers this was an achievement because they were able to travel, trade, communicate, gather food, and practice religion. These rivers were very important to the River Valley Civilizations because they depended on them.

Without the help of these rivers they wouldn't have been able to successfully survive. The IVC started about 2500 BC, along the south-western part of the Indus River. IVC is Indus Valley Civilizations of ancient India. There were four civilizations counting the IVC. There was the Aryans, Maurya Empire, Gupta Empire and of course the Indus Valley Civilization. Each civilization had different impacts of geography, government, religion, job specializations, social classes and achievements. The IVC had large organized cities. Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro are considered the twin capitals.

They were settled on the Indus River which helped them trade, communicate, and travel. They were able to grow crops to provide food for themselves. The Indus Valley Civilization had a very well organized government. People in the IVC were Polytheistic and Animistic, they believed in mother goddess, sacred the buffalo and bulls. Social classes were merchants and farmers. This would help them trade with others. Polytheistic is worshipping or believing in one or more god. Animistic is believing animals in nature have spirits and are gods. The Indus Valley Civilization had many achievements.

There were standardized cubic weights, plumbing, writing, chart of constellations, trade and communication. Today we have made these achievements more advanced and this has helped us. Between 1000-500 BC period Aryans had no major cities. The cities were very small. Aryans invaded Ganges Basin and Northwestern India. In their government, they had a tribal rule, the leaders were the Rajahs. The powerful Rajahs gained control. They practiced Polytheistic and they believed in the caste system. Ranked groups were the Brahmins and priests.

At the top of the social classes were the warriors. Farmers and servants were considered in the middle and at the very bottom were the outcasts.

Brahmans increased in number, wealth and power and eventually challenged the warriors. They specialized in farming which was trade. Achievements were the vedas and epic literature. Vedas were oral nyms passed down for 1000 years. The Maurya empires capital was Pataliputra in the Ganges Valley. They had a very strong government, a well organized bureaucracy, they were ruled by a king. These created roads, courts, tax and industries.

A bureaucracy is a system of government in which most important decisions were made by state officials rather than be elected by representatives. The Maurya empire introduces a new religion, Buddhism, this spreads around the village. Buddhism is an outgrowth of Hinduism as a response to too much domination and control by Hindu priests. Siddhartha Gautama was Buddhism's founder, he who figured out the essence of the life and therefore become enlightened. Siddha is what Siddhartha became known as, this means the "enlightened one," a guy who has it all figured out. Enlightened is showing or having a well outlook on life.

Siddhartha has a very wonderful story. He was born into the higher class, married and never knew what suffering was. One day, he decided to ride outside of the palace where he grew up. He saw suffering, death, and poverty. Siddhartha was hurt with this that he left his family and became a searcher for the explanation of suffering. For years and years he wandered looking for answers from the holy men and scholars. He sat under a big tree meditating until he understood the meaning of life. After a total of 48 days of being tempted of evil spirits, he figured everything out.

Siddhartha became the enlightened one, Buddha. He came up with the four noble truths that explain the eightfold paths that people should follow to achieve happiness and nirvana. The four noble truths is the four central beliefs containing the essence of Buddhists teaching. They are life is full of suffering, the cause of this suffering is desire, the cure of this suffering is to overcome desire, and the way to desire less is to follow the eightfold Path. The eightfold path is the path to nirvana, comprising right aspects in which must become practiced.

The path is set of right views, aspiration, speech, conduct, lifestyle, effort, mindfulness and contemplations that will help a person achieve nirvana or union with the universal power. Job specialization was farmers which included trade, roads and running factories. The Mauryas had a stable social system, they believed in the caste system. A caste System is a social structure which classes were determined by your Karma and Dharma. Karma is your actions, these actions, good or bad, if you were good you would achieve good karma with your next life, if evil you take bad karma into next life.

Dharma is your duties. These duties differ depending on what class you were born into. At the top of the caste system was the Brahmins, which were the priests, Kshatriyas, which were the warriors and rulers, vaishyas, were the skilled traders, merchants, and minor officials, Sudras, the unskilled workers, and at the very bottom of the caste was the “untouchables,” once you were an untouchable you stay as one, you are not able to move up or down in the caste again. Achievements of the empire was the spread of Buddhism, this was an achievement because it was spread around and was being practiced more and more.

The Gupta Empire, the last civilization of ancient India. This empire was known as the “Golden Age.” The cities and geography was most powerful in Northern India. There was no political city. They had a very strong but loose central government which promoted peace and prosperity. Hinduism was introduced, also practiced Buddhism, art and education. Hinduism is a major religion without any founder or holy book, it evolved over 3500 years. This absorbed beliefs, traditions and even Gods of different religions brought into contact through conquest, migration and trade.

There were many different Gods and forms of worship existing side by side, making this a very complex religion but also making this a very accepting one altogether. Every Hindu share basic beliefs, they say “God is one, but wise people know it by many names.” This reflects basic beliefs that everything in the universe is part of the great, all powerful force they know as Brahman. This concept may be hard for people to understand so basically Hindus allow people to worship a good amount of Gods that represent this all-powerful force.

There are three most important gods. The Brahman, The creator, vishnu, the preserver, and shiva, the destroyer. All three of these Gods can take either human or animal forms. All Hindus believe in reincarnation. Reincarnation is a persons soul coming back after death in a new form that the soul of the person can continue to work towards perfecting that will unite with Brahman. Trading, farming, art and education all specialized in job. For social classes the Gupta believed in the caste system, old men over young men, men over women.

This empire had many achievements, this included learning, medicine, physics, language, mathematics, literature, and others. The decimal and concept of zero was also included. This is why the Gupta Empire was known as the “ Golden Age” because they achieved a lot of things and practiced two big religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Overall Ancient India had an impact on geography by the Himalayan mountains, the Indus Valley Civilizations and the Middle Kingdom. India had a very well formed bureaucracy and strong government and authority. Hinduism is Polytheistic which believes in one or more Gods.

Buddhism is Monotheistic, which believes in only one God, Buddha. These were being practiced throughout Ancient India. They believed in the caste system, they were reborn after death, this would be decided what afterlife they would have due to Karma and Dharma. Ancient India had many technology and innovations. This would be standardized cubic weights, plumbing, decimal system, calendars, own writing system and settling on rivers. These rivers would be the Indus and the Ganges River. These rivers

helped them travel, trade and communicate. Ancient India was very successful overall.

Mesopotamia known as the “land between rivers” is the name for the area of the Tigris and Euphrates River system. Today Mesopotamia is known as Iraq. The Fertile Crescent is also known as Mesopotamia. Overland routes are usually followed by the Euphrates River because the banks of the Tigris are steep and difficult. The Fertile Crescent has a very complex government, organized cities, and Babylonians. Babylonians was a king named Nabopolassar, they were Monarchy and believed in Animism. Babylonians were very nice people and believed and followed Hammurabi’s Code.

Code of Hammurabi was in 1750 BC. Hammurabi ruled the Babylonians Empire for 42 years, at the end of his long reign, Hammurabi’s legal decisions were inscribed on a stone tablet. The 282 laws represent the earliest known legal system. These laws governed such as lying, stealing, assault, debt, business partnership, marriage, and divorce. For all members of the Babylonians society, Hammurabi relied on philosophy of an eye for an eye. Mesopotamia worshipped many gods which was Polytheistic. Hebrews were different from others, they were the chosen people.

Covenant with God between Abraham and renewed by Moses on a mountain. In 2000 BC Mesopotamians migrated to Palestine. In 1800 BC they were enslaved in Egypt. Moses set his people free and wandered the desert for 40 years. They fought for the promise land and defeated the Canaanites. Both Christian and Islam grew out of this Hebrew tradition, their torah is the Christians bible’s old testament. Mesopotamians mainly specialized in

agriculture and trade. They crossed roads in the Middle East, Egypt and India, they had wars about resources like water and farmable land.

The women originally had rights and power for social classes. This ended up dying and not working. Achievements in Mesopotamia were cuneiform, this was the first writing system. They also achieved in the number system, code of Hammurabi, first alphabet, pictographs, astronomy, and sculpture helped them decorate the temples. They wrote epic poems and settled in between the Tigris and Euphrates River, this helped the Mesopotamians travel, trade and communicate. They also had a desert surrounding them so this helped them be protected from strangers.

This is how geography has affected the Fertile Crescent and how they were able to advance cultural achievements. Egypt is a country in North Africa, on the Mediterranean Sea, and is the oldest civilizations on Earth. The name Egypt comes from the Greek. In the early Old Kingdom, Egypt was simply known as “ Black Land. ” This was because of the rich, dark soil along the Nile River where the first settlements began. The Old Kingdom was a name given to Egypt for the first period of civilization, 2700-220 BCE. Pharaohs ruled Egypt. Egyptians thought they were gods.

Pharaohs were buried in the Pyramids. The Nile River is a river that runs through Egypt. People built around the Nile for numerous reason. Since the Egyptians settled along the Nile River and had good fertile soil, this gave them an advantage to growing crops and getting food from it. Not only were they able to gather food from this water source, they were able to travel, trade and communicate on the Nile River. This helped form the civilization in

Egypt. A disadvantage of living on the Nile River were the floods. This could be a positive and negative effect on them.

Positive by helping them get water to the crops and negative because this could cause damage to their houses, crops, soil and many other things. A pharaoh is a ruler in ancient Egypt. Egyptians thought of pharaohs like a “king” or God. They were Polytheistic, culture, political systems and worshipped cats. They had mummies and pyramids for a preservation. They thrived in agricultural civilization at the time. One of the main accomplishments that the Egyptians made was settlements on the Nile, having a main water source and being able to communicate, travel and trade is the key.

The Egyptians had these three things. They also majored in the calendar, mummification, art, irrigation, mathematics, tombs, Rosetta stone, hieroglyphics, and papyrus. Papyrus was a material prepared in ancient Egypt from a water plant, used for writing or painting. Also could be used for making rope, sandals and even boats. Hieroglyphics was a system of writing in which pictures called hieroglyphs represent objects, concepts or sounds. This is how geography has affected the ancient Egypt and how they were able to advance cultural achievements.