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**Ancient India: Highly Advanced**

The people who lived in the Indus Valley in ancient times had many of what we would call modern ideas:

* They planned their cities. Remains found at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro suggest that the cities were laid out in grids, with straight streets. This is important because other people living at the time in different parts of the world didn't do this.
* The houses they lived in were mostly the same in size and shape. Each one had walls surrounding a courtyard, with its own well and bathroom. Pipes led to sewers.
* Each city had its own storage area for food. The people grew all kinds of different crops, including wheat, peas, and dates; and they stored the food in the town granary, for everyone to eat.
* Mohenjo-Daro had its own central bath, with several surrounding buildings. This setup resembles the Roman bath, which came much later.
* Scientists have found bowls of bronze and silver among the remains of these two great cities. Neither of these metals was available nearby. This suggests that the ancient Indians traded with civilizations far away.
* Lastly, archaeologists have found absolutely no evidence of an empire in this area. Other civilizations at that time had kings (Egypt) and emperors (Mesopotamia). But in the Indus Valley, it appears, everyone lived together in harmony.

The more we look, the more we find out about these ancient people. We still don't know, however, [why they disappeared](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/worldhistory/harappandisappearance.htm).

**The Harappan Disappearance: A Mystery of Ancient India**

About 2500 B.C., one of the world's first great civilizations arose in the Indus River valley, in what is now Pakistan and western India.

As with the civilizations in Egypt, China, and the Fertile Crescent, the Indus River people depended on the river for their daily needs. They farmed in the rich soil that the river dumped on its banks. They traded along the river with other ancient neighbors. These people were unique, though. They had advanced farther on the civilization scale than any of their ancient counterparts.

Scholars do not know who the leaders of this first great civilization were, but they do believe that the leaders may have had twin capitals—at Harappa and at Mohenjo-daro, the former on the Indus itself and the latter 400 miles away on the Ravi River, a tributary of the great Indus. Archaeological remains uncovered at these two great city sites suggest that the Harrappan civilization, as it is commonly known, was a great one indeed.

At each site, a citadel atop a high mound dominates the city landscape and offers protection for the city proper below. The people stored grain in large warehouses in preparation for a famine. They developed a system of weights and measures to facilitate trade with other cultures, mainly Mesopotamia. They were the first people in the world to grow cotton and fashion it into dyed cotton cloth. They dug ditches and canals to irrigate their farms. They had their own system of writing that has yet to be deciphered. They used a common currency.

Most striking of all is their civil engineering. They planned the patterns of their cities, laying out streets in rectangular patterns and including drainage systems that led to brick-lined sewers. They lived in brick buildings, some two and three stories high. In almost every respect, they were an advanced people. Yet, by 1700 B.C., the Harappan Civilization had disappeared.