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The History of Indian Culture and Stages of Development

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This article aims to explore the historical development of Indian culture, focusing on key technological and intellectual advancements of the Harappan civilization, including their systems of measurement, script, and timekeeping methods. **Method**: A comprehensive review of archaeological findings, ancient texts, and historical records is employed to analyze the impact of these innovations on Indian culture and their broader implications. **Results**: The study reveals that the Harappans possessed a sophisticated system of measurement for length and weight, developed an original script, and made significant strides in astronomy, mathematics, and timekeeping with the use of sundials, water clocks, and a unique calendar. These developments highlight the advanced nature of early Indian civilization. **Novelty**: The article contributes to the understanding of the technological and intellectual contributions of ancient Indian cultures, emphasizing their role in shaping later scientific and cultural practices. It also offers insights into how these innovations influenced both contemporary and future cultures in the Indian subcontinent and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

India is one of the highly civilized countries of the East. The Indian peninsula has long been endowed with natural diversity, rich flora, fauna, and valuable underground resources. It is crossed by such rivers as the Indus and Ganges. Of the favorable aspects, it should be noted that the valley is located in a large river basin, and annual floods renew alluvium (rocks that flow into the water and accumulate in a certain place, increasing the fertility of the land), which is used as fertilizer in the coastal soil. The coastal forests were full of wild animals such as elephants, tigers, buffaloes, rhinoceroses, and crocodiles, and the rivers were full of fish. From the end of the 5th millennium BC to the 4th millennium BC, agriculture based on artificial irrigation developed in the Indus Valley, and a unique culture was formed. The most developed centers of the Indian subcontinent culture were the large cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, located in the Indus River valley. Harappa is a highly developed urban culture of the Bronze Age (2500-1800 BC) [1]; [2]. The economic basis of the Harappa culture was irrigated agriculture, as well as livestock breeding and handicrafts. Excavations in the two main cities of this culture - Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa - indicate a highly developed urban art. Each city was four and a half kilometers in circumference and was surrounded by a high defensive wall. The cities were built according to a plan, consisting of a citadel (fortress) and a lower city, with

streets paved with baked bricks and canals. The streets, up to ten meters wide, intersected each other in strict quadrangles. On both sides of the streets stood two- and even three-story buildings made of baked bricks; their water supply and sewage systems were well-developed.

The Harappans were familiar with the system of units of measurement of length and weight. Their discovery of the original script is one of the brightest achievements of this culture. More than a thousand seals inscribed with this script have been found, as well as ceramic and metal objects, but they have not yet been deciphered. As a result of the application of mathematical methods by scientists led by Professor Yu. Knorozov, it was determined that the script was written from right to left.

Archaeologists have found about 500 monuments in the city of Harappa. The form of urban construction is almost identical to Mohenjo-Daro, and architecture, weaving, pottery, stonemasonry, jewelry, and weaponry were quite developed there. Large granaries have been found in both cities, indicating the degree of centralization of the state. The Indians were the first in the world to weave cotton cloth and make clothes (remains of a sewing and armory workshop have been found in the city). Harappa was the first slave state to trade with the Sumerians by water and land [3].

Mohenjo-Daro (in Sindhi - "hill of the dead") - the ruins of one of the main centers of the Harappan culture. Mohenjo-Daro is located in modern Pakistan, the area of the city was 270 hectares. BC. confirms that Indian art was unique, bright and attractive, rich in fantasy, and gives an opportunity to understand that valuable works of art were created on the basis of mythology.

Here, mathematics, linguistics, philosophy, medicine, where writing appeared, flourished, and crafts developed. Architecture, sculpture and painting were carried out in harmony with each other.

The remains of the ancient city of Mohenjo-Daro have been well preserved to us. It was one of the largest cities, the streets and buildings of which were made of baked bricks. The walls of the buildings were well decorated. This indicates that the art of urban planning emerged in India from very ancient times, and that attention was paid to building cities on a planned basis. The city had large public buildings, baths, and sewage works were well established. The surface of the pottery found was decorated with geometric patterns [4].

RESEARCH METHOD

The research presented above primarily utilizes an archaeological and historical analysis method, examining the material culture and written records of ancient India, particularly focusing on the Harappan and Vedic periods. Archaeological excavations at key sites like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa provide evidence of urban planning, advanced craftsmanship, and agricultural practices, which are critically analyzed to understand the socio-economic and technological advancements of the time. Additionally, the study incorporates a textual analysis of ancient Indian religious and philosophical works such as the Vedas, Mahabharata, and Ramayana, to explore the development of spiritual,

scientific, and social systems. The approach combines interdisciplinary methods, including the use of comparative studies with other ancient civilizations (e.g., Mesopotamia and Egypt), to contextualize India's contributions to global history. Furthermore, the study relies on both primary archaeological findings and secondary literature, including interpretations by scholars in the fields of history, anthropology, and linguistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Various types of statues and figurines made of clay and stone, various household utensils, decorations, and jewelry decorated with carvings also indicate the development of art of this period. The head sculpture of a priest found in Mohenjo-Daro (3000 BC) and the male torso found in Harappa (3000 BC) attract attention with their plastic solution. In particular, while the image of the hair and beard and the nature of the clothes on the head sculpture of a priest are conventional, on the contrary, when made of red stone, the male torso is depicted with great skill and lifelikeness.

It was discovered in 1922 by the Indian archaeologist R. Banerjee. Mohenjo-Daro was a major crafts and trade center, where metal and stone processing, pottery were developed. Excavations confirm that Mohenjo-Daro was the oldest center of culture, along with ancient India, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. India is one of the cradles of ancient civilizations in the history of mankind, BC. III millennium BC. Here, artificial irrigation of the land was developed, rivers were dug, pottery, woodworking, weaving, jewelry were developed, chariots were made of wood and metal, multi-story buildings were built of baked bricks, fabrics were made of wool and flax fibers. Weapons and armor were made of copper, iron, and brass. India is considered the homeland of the game of chess.

The Indians had their own ancient writings, in which astronomy and mathematics were quite developed. The Indians used sundials and water clocks, and created their own calendar. Also, ancient Indian science made many achievements during this period. With the creation of the decimal number system using zero in India, mathematics began to develop (terms such as number, "base number", "sine" appeared). As early as the 3rd-2nd millennium BC, the decimal number system was formed in India. Also, the sign denoting zero was first used in India. The scientist who popularized this innovation to the world is our great compatriot Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi. In the world of medicine, Indian priests achieved great achievements in diagnosing and treating diseases. There were about 1,000 medicines used in treatment, and they widely used methods of stroking, massage, bathing, and surgery. The experiments of anatomical study of the corpse in order to determine the cause of death led to the development of anatomy and physiology, and great achievements were made in medicine. One of the medical works mentions that in India there were 300 types of surgery and 120 surgical instruments. Doctors prepared medicines from plants, minerals and animal organs. Indian chemists discovered dyes, acids and various chemical substances. According to Abu Rayhan Beruni's work "India", medicine, mathematics, astronomy, religion, chemistry, music, poetry, literature, art and philosophy were developed in India in the first centuries of the era. Examples of this are

the works "Ramayana", "Mahabharata", "Rigveda", "Bhagavadgita", "Shakuntala", "Ayurveda", "Mudrarakshasa", "Kalila and Dimna", "Megatuta", "Reghuvensha", "Dasakumacharita".

In studying the early philosophy of India in the 2nd millennium BC, the religious collections of the ancient Indians called "Vedas" and two great epics - "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata", as well as al-Biruni's work "Hindustan" are of great importance.

Starting from the middle of the 2nd millennium BC, nomadic, pastoralist Aryan tribes invaded India through Iran and Turan. They settled in the fertile lands of the oases of the Ganges and Punjab rivers and later mixed with the local population. The bloody battles between the Aryans and the local people are reflected in the epics "Mahabharata" and "Ramayana", which are examples of the oral folk art of the Indians.

The religion known to the world as "Hinduism" is one of the oldest beliefs of mankind. However, officially in science, only the last stage of Hinduism, which began in the Vedic period, is known by the term Hinduism. Therefore, in order to avoid some misunderstandings, we have decided to refer to the Vedas and all religions that have spread from them by their international terms accepted in religious studies, such as Brahmanism, Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and to refer to people of these beliefs as Jains, Buddhists, and Hindus. In fact, the first name of Hinduism was “varnashrama,” which in essence means the spiritual and social division of Indian society into four classes. This is also the reason why religious and social relations that arose in ancient India due to the caste system took deep roots in society.

The primary source of Indian religious beliefs is the Vedas, which are essentially religious dictionaries consisting of hymns that tell every Indian to submit to the will of the incomprehensible and powerful forces of nature, to respect them and achieve their blessings, and to make sacrifices on this path [5].

The secrecy of this “divine word” from the lower castes was enshrined in special instructions, and their unquestioning fulfillment was strictly required. The primacy of the conditions for studying and teaching the Vedas in society did not go unnoticed by Abu Rayhan Beruni:

“The Vedas are previously unknown knowledge. The Hindus believe that they are the words of the Supreme God spoken in the language of “Brahma”. The Vedas, divided into four parts by Vyasadeva, are taught by “brahmins” to “kshatris”, and the kshatris study them without the right to teach them to anyone else.

A "Vaishya" or a "Shudra" is forbidden to speak of the Vedas, let alone to hear them. If any of them is found to be engaged in this business, the Brahmins cut out his tongue and take him to the judge who will punish him.

The Vedas contain (in their composition) commands and prohibitions, limited or full-fledged encouragement and threats, rewards and punishments. A large part of them consists of praises and (instructions about) difficult and innumerable offerings to be thrown into the fire.

The Hindus think that it is forbidden to write down the Vedas because they are only required to sing them to certain tunes. For they fear that the text written on the pen

(original) is incapable of expressing the meaning - that something may be added or omitted. For this reason they have lost the Vedas many times.

The legends indicate that the main reason for the memorization of the Vedas was that in ancient times people were so intelligent, calm and strong that they did not need to read and study the texts due to their ability to remember what they heard once. There is some truth in this statement, of course. The habit of memorizing religious sources was also observed in later religions, including Islam.

Religion and cultural and educational concepts in the broadest sense have always been closely intertwined among the Indians since ancient times. Because Vedic literature is of great importance not only in the religious direction, but also in the scientific study of ancient Indian philosophy, jurisprudence, psychology, ethics and aesthetics, nature, language, customs and forms of social life. For this reason, according to the conditions for studying the Vedas, it was obligatory to master the following "six Vedic sciences":

1. Shiksha - the science of syllables.
2. Kalpa - the science of performing rituals.
3. Vyakaran - the science of language grammar.
4. Nirukta - the science of the origin of words.
5. Chhandas - the science of rhyme and meter in poetry.
6. Jyotish - the science of astronomy and astrology.

The oldest of the Vedas is the "Rigveda". In it, objects and phenomena in nature (the change of the sky, the sun, stars, thunder, wind, rain, mountains, rivers) were personified as divine forces, and songs and hymns were composed in their honor, and sacrifices were made to them. Human life and its happiness are imagined to depend on these forces. According to the Rigveda, Indra is the god of thunder, Mithra is the god of the sun, Varuna is the god of heaven, Agni is the god of fire, Yama is the bringer of death, Sama is the god of the moon, and Rita represents the order of the universe [6].

"Mahabharata" - ("The Battle of the Generations of Bharata") - an ancient Indian heroic epic. The original example is a poetic song consisting of twenty-five thousand verses, which appeared in the 10th-8th centuries BC. Initially, it was passed down orally, and later it entered written literature in Sanskrit. The work consists of eighteen books of various lengths and is created in the style of a plot within a traditional plot in Indian literature. The plots are mainly legends and tales, which over time were updated and changed, and the volume of the work increased. In particular, such tales as "The Story of Shakuntala", "The Story of Rama", "The Story of Shiva", "The Story of Nala", "The Story of King Shiva", "The Story of Savitri" came from folk oral literature. The epic tells the story of the great battles for the throne of the seventh generation of the king of the ancient state of Hastinapur (present-day Delhi) in India (between the Kauravas and the Pandavas). The events in it took place in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC. Another reason why the epic is so important in the life of the Indian people is that the sacred book of Hinduism, "Bhagavad Gita" ("Divine Songs"), has also survived to this day precisely through the events of the "Mahabharata".

The content of the Ramayana is one of the rarest works that is taken from real life and expressed in fantastic forms. It has been revised several times over the centuries, but nevertheless it is the oldest and first example of literary literature in the history of Indian culture in the true sense of the word. It glorifies love for the Motherland, loyalty to love, bravery in the cause of goodness, courage in war, truthfulness, keeping one's promise, and justice. It condemns oppression and violence, betrayal and hypocrisy, selfishness and useless bloodshed, disastrous conflicts and destructive wars, and proves the idea that good triumphs over evil, justice and peace triumph. It also contains a large number of stories about the separation of lovers, the torments of death, and the suffering of infidelity, and is expressed with extremely high artistic skill.

The teachings of the Buddha are both difficult and profound at the same time. Here we will only cite his main principles, known as the "four truths":

1. The world is full of suffering. Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, illness and death are suffering. Meeting someone you hate is suffering, separation from someone you love is suffering, and the futile struggle to satisfy what you want is suffering. In fact, a life that is not free from desires and needs always brings suffering. This is called the truth about suffering;
2. The cause of human suffering is undoubtedly the desire for physical existence and the delusion of worldly passions. If we trace the origin of such passions and fantasies, we will find that they are based on desires that are all-consuming and arise intuitively (a separate feature of the mind, unrelated to social practice and thought). For example, the strong desire to live seeks what it wants, even if the thing it seeks sometimes turns out to be death. This is called the truth about the cause of suffering;
3. If the desire underlying all human passions can be eliminated, then passion dies and human suffering ends. This is called the truth of the cessation of suffering;
4. In order to reach the state of the absence of desires and suffering - nirvana - one must follow a certain path. The stages of this noble old path are: right understanding, right speech, right thought, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration and right mindfulness. This is the truth of the noble path of becoming free from the cause of suffering.

The spread of Buddhism led to the construction of temples associated with it, the emergence of examples of fine art. The architectural compositions dedicated to Buddha reflected the traditions existing in ancient Indian architecture, folk mythologies, and legends associated with the life and work of the Buddha. Stone began to be widely used as a building material. One of the main architectural compositions of Buddhism is the Stupa (according to legends, the stupa kept the sacred ashes of the Buddha and objects related to his work), and many such structures were built during the reign of Ashoka. The large stupa in Sanchi (250 BC) highlights the peculiarity of this architectural composition and helps to understand its essence. This stupa has the shape of a hemisphere, which is installed on a circular pedestal. The inside of both is filled with

brick and stone. Its hemispherical shape resembles an inverted cauldron and is a symbol of the dome of heaven. At the top of the dome is a sacred mountain, which is conditionally surrounded on all four sides. There are gates on the sides of the stupa. These gates are decorated with very rich relief images [7].

The final development of ancient Indian art falls on the Gupta dynasty (320–450 AD). This is the period of India's transition from slavery to feudal relations, and is a period of further development of art and culture. The temple in the Ajanta cave and its artistic decorations and wall paintings embody the best aspects of ancient Indian art. The cave temple complex in Ajanta was built between the 2nd and 7th centuries BC. The chaitya is rectangular in shape, and the semicircular space around its entrance is intended for a Buddha statue. There is a window called the "sun window" at the entrance. The walls and pillars of the temple are decorated with sculptures and murals. The front of the Ajanta temple is also elegantly and brilliantly decorated with examples of sculptural art.

No matter how diverse the thematic features of the temple's murals are, they express the love of life, the philosophical world and thought, feelings, dreams and aspirations of a single person, and a high aesthetic ideal. The Ajanta complex is a rare monument of ancient Indian art. Its high artistic skill, humanism and nationalism became an important basis for the development of Indian art. Ancient Indian medicine and mathematics gained fame all over the world, linguistics, logic, and psychology reached a high level, and loyalty to tradition and the pursuit of innovation in culture are characteristic features of Indian culture in all eras [8].

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: This study highlights the profound contributions of ancient Indian civilization to various fields, including urban planning, agriculture, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and art. The Harappan culture, with its advanced cities like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, laid the foundation for urban development, while the Vedic period introduced significant religious, philosophical, and scientific advancements. Additionally, the influence of Indian culture extended to the creation of systems in mathematics, such as the decimal system and zero, and medical practices that advanced anatomical understanding. **Implication**: The findings underscore the integral role that Indian civilization played in the development of early scientific and cultural achievements that influenced not only Asia but also the wider world. This historical context enriches our understanding of how ancient societies contributed to the evolution of modern knowledge systems. **Limitation**: Despite the extensive archaeological and textual evidence, much of the ancient Indian script remains undeciphered, limiting our full understanding of the societal structure and philosophies of the time. **Future Research**: Future studies should focus on further deciphering the Harappan script and exploring the interconnections between ancient Indian philosophy, medicine, and its influence on other ancient civilizations. Additionally, a more in-depth examination of the cultural and scientific exchanges between India and other ancient cultures, such as

Mesopotamia and Egypt, could provide a broader understanding of their shared innovations.

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