

Grade: 5

Lesson Number: 1

Unit Name: Pre-Gurū Nānak

Course: Virṣā

Title: Pre-Gurū Nānak

Standards

Standard 2: Before the Gurū-Prophets

- Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the time preceding Gurū Nānak.
 - *Students will identify the role of the rivers in agrarian Pañjāb and its role in shaping the inhabitants. Discussion of the history of Pañjāb from the Indus Valley civilization to the Lodhī and Mughal dynasty should be involved. Lessons will progress in having students understand the affect of these religions and civilizations on the South Asian context and particularly in Pañjāb.*

Objectives

1. Students learn about the Indus Valley Civilization and the Lodhī dynasty highlighting geographical, political, social, economical and religious time preceding Gurū Nānak.

Prerequisites

- None.

Materials

- Attached reading on Indus Valley civilization and Lodhī Dynasty
- Dry Erase Board /Markers
- Writing paper/Pen/Pencils

Advanced Preparation

- Plan to spread this lesson plan over two class periods as there is a lot of information.
- Teacher must be familiar with all the reading that will be needed for this class. There are some reading that are attached below and others that you can research on your own as well.
- Depending on the area in which you are, the fifth graders may have been through the Indus Valley civilization in their schools. Ask them to bring in any reading they may have had.

Engagement (15-20 minutes)

- To begin with ask children what year Gurū Nānak was born (1469). Write that in the middle of the board.
- Then ask, “What was it like where Gurū Nānak was born?” - Write the question on the board— Give them an idea if they are on the right track or not as they respond to that question.

- Then ask them to take a few minutes to brainstorm and write down anything that they can think of about how things were before Gurū Nānak... What was the land like? How did people live? What did they practice? What were their faiths?
- Have them hold on to their brainstorming sheets.

Exploration (35 minutes)

- Give children a 10-15 minute overview of the Indus valley civilization, the Aryan civilization and the Lodhī dynasty.
- Break into groups of three to four.
- Give all groups a package of the articles (attached below) and assign an article to each group (Indus Valley, and Lodhī Dynasty). As they are reading, have them develop notes on what life was like during that time frame.

Explanation/Extension (5-10 minutes)

- Prepare children to do a presentation of their learnings at the start of their next class. They should focus on what life was like during the period that they read about.

Evaluation (On-going)

- The assignment will work as an evaluation if children understand Pre-Nānak circumstances and will further their understanding in the next class.

Teacher Resources

Important Note: Informatin on Wikipedia is edited very often and therefore the attached information is not detailed in this lesson. It is recommended that the teacher make copies for students just prior to conducting the lesson.

Lodhi Dynasty

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lodhī_dynasty

http://www.amritworld.com/Lodhī_dynasty.html

Indus Valley Civilization

Pañjāb has played a prominent role throughout South Asian history. Not only being the “passageway” into the subcontinent, this area gave rise to one of the ancient world’s great civilizations.

While Aryan civilization is traditionally believed to be the basis of today’s Indic society, excavations and archaeological evidence has shown that the non-Aryan Indus Valley Civilization is the oldest civilization of the subcontinent. The excavations at Harappā (ਹੜੱਪਾ), Mohanjodāro (ਮੋਹਨਜੋਦਾਰੋ), and many other sites have allowed anthropologists and historians insight into this great civilization.

Lying along the eastern bank of the Rāvī (ਰਾਵੀ) River, Harappā (situated in the Montgomery District in Pañjāb – now in Pakistan) was the northern capital. Mohenjo-daro, the southern capital, was located along the Indus River in Sindh (ਸਿੰਧ). These two cities were the seats of power of the Bronze Age’s largest civilization (Wheeler 4). Historians date the civilization from 2500-1700 BCE with its zenith under the reign of Sargon of Akkad at about 2350 BCE (Wheeler 5).

Extending from Ropar (ਰੋਪੜ) at the foot of the Sivālik (ਸ਼ਿਵਾਲਿਕ) hills to the coast of the Arabian Sea, the Indus Valley Civilization was an extensive river culture including cities, townships, and villages. Planned cities, a syllabic pictographic script, elaborate terracotta pottery, agricultural surplus, and uniform measurement weights were only some of the features of this developed civilization.

Agriculture and trade seemed to be the basis of the wealth of the civilization (Wheeler 72). Wheat and barley, in strains still found today, were the common crops. Evidence of extensive inter-civilizational trade exists due to the discovery of the seals of the Indus civilization in the Mesopotamia (in modern day Iraq). Ivory, cotton, perhaps slaves, timber, and other perishable commodities seem to be the most prevalent articles of trade. Despite the contact, it seems very little knowledge was exchanged between the two civilizations (Wheeler 135).

The society of this civilization is less understood. Although some have argued that no caste existed among the non-Aryan races (Latif 22), the layout of the cities with an area on the higher mound and another end on a lower mound seems to give evidence of some type of social stratification (Wheeler 29).

While generally marking the invasion of the Aryans as the beginning of Indic civilization, many overlook the contributions of Harappā and Mohanjodāro, especially to the religious practices of the people. The numerous terracotta figurines of nude females, believed to represent the Mother Goddess, fertility worship through figurines of pregnant women, the seated proto-‘Shivā,’ animal worship, phallus worship, and also the special prominence of the bull (the vehicle of Shivā) are all non-Aryan in origin and can be seen even today in people’s religious practices (Wheeler 109-110).

There seems to be some evidence that the modern-day Dravidians (ਦ੍ਰਵਿੜ) are the descendents of the Indus Valley Civilization. Along with references from the Rig Veda, the fact that populations of Dravidian-speaking people still exist in Sindh and Balucistān (ਬਲੂਚਿਸਤਾਨ) credence to this claim.

The cause of the “fall” of the Indus Valley Civilization is a contentious issue. Some scholars point to cataclysmic floods; others to a decrease in civic standards from the arrival of squatter cultures; and others to the traditional theory of the “Aryan invasion.” As Wheeler states, “the fall, like the rise, of a civilization is a highly complex operation which can only be distorted and obscured by easy simplification” (Wheeler, 126). Evidence of prolonged flooding gives credence to the role of natural calamities amongst other factors (Wheeler 128). The arrival of squatter-cultures such as the Jhangar (ਝੰਗਰ) and their raids seems to be substantiated by the decline in civic standards in construction (Wheeler 127). The Aryan invasion theory draws upon the coincidental evidence of the simultaneous arrival of the waves of Aryans (2000-1000 BCE) and the decline of the civilization and the passages found in the Rig-Veda describing the subjugation of the native groups by the invading Aryans. It seems that the combination of these three among other factors may have lead to the final “fall” of the Indus Valley Civilization.

References:

Latif, Syad Muhammad. History of the Pañjāb. Kalyani Publishers: Ludhiana, India: reprinted 1994.

Wheeler, Sir Mortimer. The Indus Civilization: Third Edition. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, Great Britain: 1976.

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