

thrown in the Tuichang River. The ever-caring Tuichang saved the boy and raised him and his six brothers who were also cast into the river by the jealous chief wife.

When the seven boys grew up, Tuichang sent them to meet their father. After hearing their story, he had his wicked chief wife executed and put Nuengi in her place.

CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE

Legends such as this one show the importance of rivers and their life-giving waters to India. India is the largest nation in the giant peninsula known as South Asia. More than a billion people live in South Asia. The region has an immense variety of landscapes and cultures. Geography has contributed to the differing ways of life there.

As you read, look for these chapter themes:

- ▶ South Asia is a well-defined region with geographic features that set it apart from the rest of Asia.
- ▶ Geographic features have contributed to cultural diversity in the region.
- ▶ The earliest civilization in South Asia developed in the Indus Valley.

Literature Connections

In this chapter, you will encounter passages from the following works.

“Hail Motherland” (“Vande Matarum”),
Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

Poems From the Sanskrit, Amaru

“Hymn of the Primeval Man,” *Rig Veda*

For other suggestions, see Connections With Literature, pages 804–808.

1

THE SHAPE OF THE LAND

FIND OUT

How did geography help South Asia develop separately from the rest of Asia?

What are the three major physical regions of South Asia?

What river systems are important to South Asia?

Vocabulary subcontinent

Millions of years ago, a huge landmass in the Southern Hemisphere known as Gondwanaland began to break up and its parts drifted away from each other. One part drifted slowly northward until it eventually collided with another vast landmass—the mainland of Asia. The force of the collision was enormous. The earth buckled and broke, pushing up the Himalaya and Hindu Kush mountains.

The Himalayas and Hindu Kush formed barriers separating South Asia from the rest of Asia. Although people kept moving through the passes in the mountains, South Asia developed its own identity.

The Indian Subcontinent

South Asia is a large triangular peninsula that juts southward from the continent of Asia. (See the map on page 164.) South Asia is bounded on the north by the Hindu Kush and Himalaya mountains. The rest of South Asia is surrounded by water. The Arabian Sea lies to the west, the Indian Ocean to the south, and the Bay of Bengal to the east. These bodies of water set the region apart from other regions but have not isolated it. For thousands of years, these seas have served as highways. They have linked the peoples of South Asia with other parts of the world.

Another name for South Asia is the Indian subcontinent. A **subcontinent** is a large landmass that is smaller than a continent. Today, eight independent nations occupy this region. Although India is by far the largest, South Asia also includes Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan and the island nations of Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Afghanistan, in the northwest, is also often considered part of South Asia.

At its widest, the subcontinent stretches about 2,500 miles (4,023 km) from east to west and nearly the same distance from north to south. This vast region contains a variety of landforms. Three of these landforms shape the major geographic regions of South Asia: the northern mountains, the northern plains, and the Deccan Plateau.

Northern Mountains

As you have read, mountains separate South Asia from the rest of the continent. Stretching 1,500 miles (2,414 km) from east to west, the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas rise above the clouds. They create a massive wall that separates the Indian subcontinent from the interior of Asia. Many of the world's tallest mountains are found in the Himalayas. At least 50 of the mountains are more than 5 miles (8 km) high, including Mount Everest, on the border of Nepal and Tibet.

To the northwest lie the Hindu Kush. While smaller in area than the Himalayas, the Hindu Kush are nearly as high and certainly as rugged. Indeed, the word *kush* means "death," and the mountains were probably given this name because of the danger they posed to people crossing them.

Mountain passes. Although the mountains form a barrier, they can be crossed. In the west, several passes cut through the mountains, making movement possible between the Indian subcontinent and other parts of Asia. Among the best known is the Khyber (kī ber) Pass through the Hindu Kush. For thousands of years, traders and invaders have made their way through mountain passes and descended into India.

Mountain valleys. The northern mountains are important for other reasons. The

great river systems of the subcontinent have their sources in streams fed by melting snows from the mountains. Also, among the mountains lie high valleys, where farmers grow crops such as wheat and rice and herders raise goats. People living in these isolated valleys have developed their own ways of life. In one of these valleys, the Kashmir Valley, the goats produce a fine wool, known to the western world as cashmere.

Northern Plains

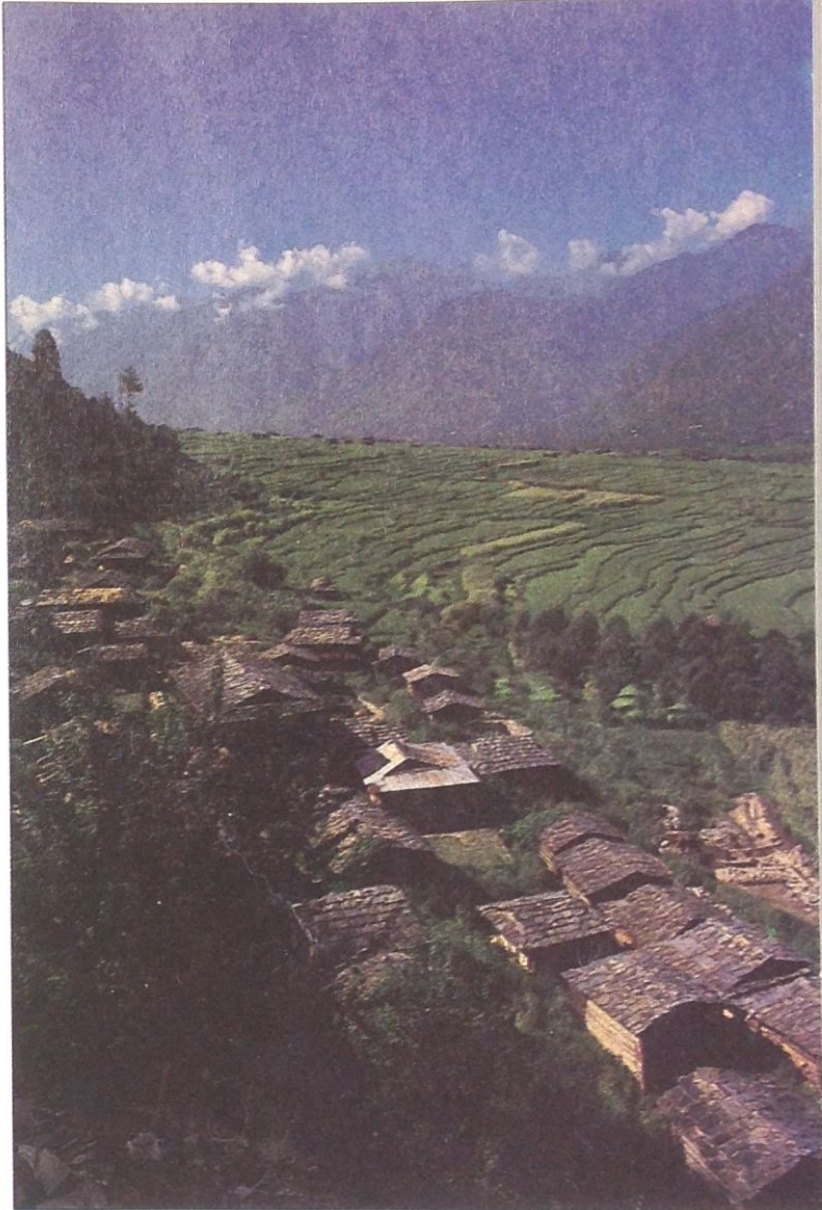
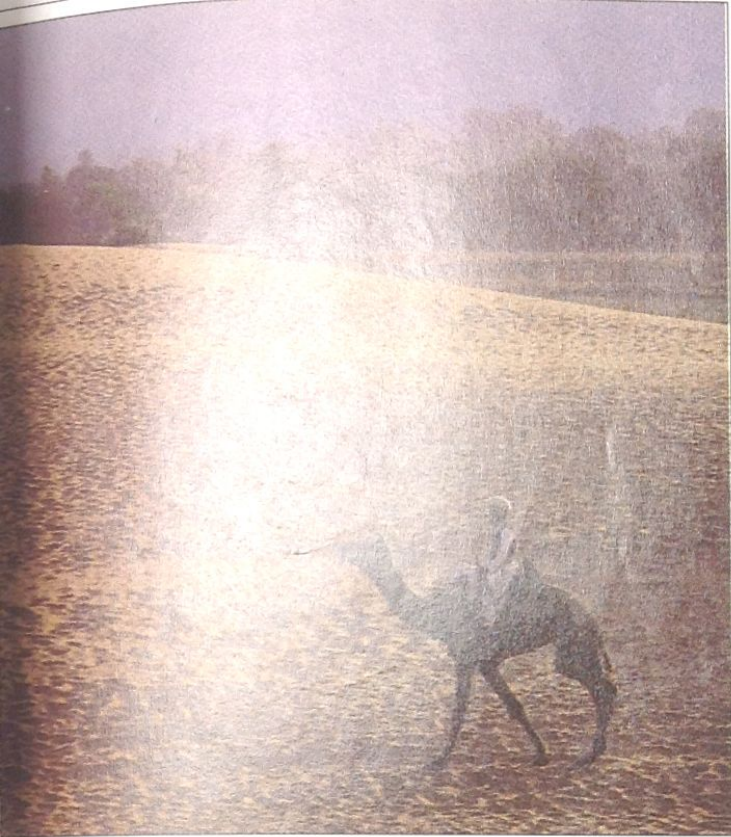
Just south of the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush is the northern, or Indo-Gangetic, plain. It stretches in a great curve from Pakistan across India into Bangladesh. Much of the area benefits from the three large rivers of the subcontinent that have their source in the Himalayas: the Indus, the Ganges (GAN jeez), and the Brahmaputra (brahm uh POO truh). These rivers and their many tributaries carry silt from the mountains that fertilizes the farmland on the plains. They also provide a reliable source of water for irrigation.

A steady source of water, fertile soil, and a long growing season combine to make the Indo-Gangetic Plain densely populated. Hundreds of millions of people live in the cities and on the farms on the northern plains. Throughout the region, farmers raise rice, wheat, and jute (a plant used to make twine and burlap).

A popular national hymn, "Hail Motherland," celebrates the riches of the Indian land.

“ I bow to thee, Mother,
richly watered, richly fruited, cool
with the winds of the south, dark
with the crop of the harvests, the
Mother! ”

Rivers. The Indus River empties into the Arabian Sea. The Indus is the principal river of Pakistan, and a majority of Pakistanis live in the Indus River basin. The Indus is also important in South Asia's history. The region's earliest civilization developed in the Indus Valley. The word *indus*, which means "river," is the source of the name India.



A Varied Landscape The people of India must adapt to many different kinds of environments. In the Thar Desert of Rajasthan, above, people adapt to desert conditions by using camels for transportation. In the fertile Kulu Valley, known as the “Valley of the Gods,” at right, they use the rich soil for raising many crops. **Environment** How do people in your area adapt their lives to the environment?

The Ganges River has its beginnings in an ice cave high in the Himalayas. The river flows eastward across India and then, near its mouth, joins the Brahmaputra, in Bangladesh. Together, the two rivers create an enormous delta on the Bay of Bengal. The delta region, located in Bangladesh, has very fertile soil but is subject to terrible flooding. (See Up Close on pages 167–168.)

Rivers are sacred to most of the people of South Asia. The most holy river is the Ganges, and shrines and temples line its banks. Each year, thousands of pilgrims come to purify

themselves in the river and to take home some of its waters for ceremonies. Even though rivers may cause great flood damage, their waters are essential to life.

Thar Desert. At the western end of the northern plains lies the Thar Desert. This vast desert covers 100,000 square miles (259,000 sq km) of India and Pakistan, an area about the size of Colorado. The Thar features a barren landscape of sand dunes, sandy plains, and low hills. While rainfall is scarce, some grasses do grow here. Nomadic herders graze flocks of sheep and goats in the Thar Desert.



MAP STUDY

South Asia is a huge, triangular region that juts southward from the continent of Asia. It includes varied landforms, from the towering Himalaya Mountains to low-lying delta land along the Bay of Bengal.

- 1. Location** Name and describe the location of two major mountain ranges in India.
- 2. Place** (a) Which rivers flow through the plains of northern India? (b) Which of these rivers meet? (c) Where do they form a delta?
- 3. Applying Information** How has India's geography protected the people living in the Deccan Plateau?

Deccan Plateau

South of the great plains lies the triangular Deccan Plateau. It is a region of high, flat land crossed by many rivers and broken by low, rolling hills. The Deccan occupies nearly half of South Asia. Millions of tiny farms dot the countryside. Farmers there raise millet, cotton, wheat, and rice.

Vindhya Mountains. Mountains border the Deccan Plateau on three sides. In the north, the Vindhya (VIHND yuh) Mountains separate the plateau from the Indo-Gangetic Plain. The

Vindhyas are rugged but low compared to South Asia's other mountain ranges. Their highest point is about 3,600 feet (1,097 m).

According to an Indian myth, the Vindhya Mountains were once much higher. But Vindhya, the spirit of the mountains, became puffed up with pride. At last, he became so big that he kept the sun from reaching the Himalayas, the home of the gods. Angered, the gods sent Agastya, a well-known wise man, to warn Vindhya of their displeasure. Seeing Agastya, Vindhya bowed as a sign of respect.

“Stay that way until I return,” advised Agastya. The wise man never returned, which is why the Vindhya Mountains are much lower than the Himalayas.

The Vindhya Mountains mark the boundary between northern and southern India. For centuries, they made travel and communication difficult and contributed to the development of regional cultures. People did migrate south, however. From time to time, invaders from the north conquered the Deccan as well. The arrival of newcomers added to the diversity of the region.

The Ghats. In the east and west, two other low-lying mountain ranges fringe the Deccan Plateau. The Ghats (gahts) are named for the many ghats, or passes, that cut through them. The Western Ghats border on the Arabian Sea. When Europeans reached South Asia in the 1500s, these mountains helped prevent their movement into the interior. The Eastern Ghats are a disconnected range of hills that face the Bay of Bengal. Near the city of Madras are broad valleys through which Europeans entered southern India and acquired territory in the 1700s.

SECTION 1 REVIEW

- 1. Locate:** (a) Himalayas, (b) Hindu Kush, (c) Arabian Sea, (d) Indian Ocean, (e) Bay of Bengal, (f) Khyber Pass, (g) Vindhya Mountains, (h) Eastern and Western Ghats.
- 2. Define:** subcontinent.
- 3.** Describe the three main regions of South Asia.
- 4.** (a) What rivers flow across the northern plains? (b) How do these rivers affect the people?
- 5. Understanding Causes and Effects** How did geography help South Asia develop a distinct identity?
- 6. Writing Across Cultures** Write a paragraph comparing the effects of the Himalayas on the history of India with the effects of the Rocky Mountains on the development of the United States.

2

CLIMATE AND RESOURCES

FIND OUT

How do the monsoons affect South Asia?

Why is water supply a problem in many parts of the subcontinent?

How does South Asia reflect the influences of many cultures?

Vocabulary monsoon, dialect

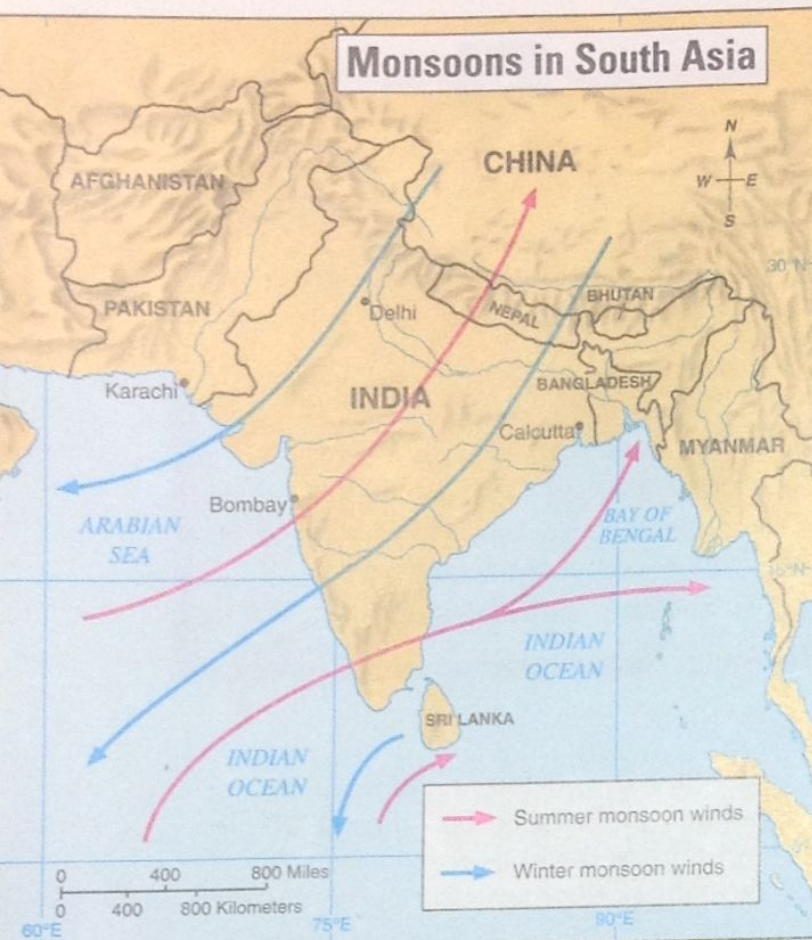
“A line of spectators had formed behind the Kovalam beach road. They were dressed with surprising formality, many of the men wearing ties and the women fine saris which streamed and snapped in the wind. . . . Thunder boomed. Lightning went zapping into the sea. . . . ‘The rains!’ everybody sang. The wind struck us with a force that made our line bend and waver. Everyone shrieked and grabbed at each other. . . . The deluge began.”

A reporter described a familiar scene in Trivandrum, a town at the southwestern tip of India. Each year, huge crowds gather to look for the first signs of the summer rains. Millions of other people of South Asia listen closely to the reports from Trivandrum’s weather center. This widespread interest shows the importance of rain to the people of South Asia.

The Monsoons

Some people consider monsoon forecasts the most important weather predictions on Earth. The **monsoon** is a seasonal wind that dominates the climate of South Asia. The word *monsoon* means “season” in Arabic. Two monsoons define the seasons of South Asia:

Monsoons in South Asia



MAP STUDY

The monsoons profoundly affect the climate in South Asia. They determine the duration of this huge region's two seasons—summer and winter.

1. **Movement** (a) Where does the summer monsoon originate? (b) In which directions does it move?
2. **Movement** (a) Where does the winter monsoon originate? (b) In which directions does it move?
3. **Forecasting** (a) Which parts of South Asia do you think receive the largest amount of rainfall? (b) In which season does this rainfall occur?

the wet monsoon of summer and the dry monsoon of winter.

The monsoon cycle. The wet monsoon arrives in late May or early June. At this time, temperatures may reach as high as 120°F (45°C) in places like Trivandrum or Delhi. Little or no rain has fallen for eight or nine months, and the ground is parched and cracked. The land heats the air, causing it to

rise. Cool, moist air from the sea flows in across the land, bringing the hoped-for rains.

By October, cool air masses from the northern mountains sink, creating winds that blow back toward the sea. These monsoon winds carry dry air across the subcontinent. They bring a season of clear skies, mild temperatures, and low humidity.

In March, however, temperatures rise. The cycle that leads to the wet monsoon begins again.

Importance of the monsoon. The monsoons are key to the life of farmers in South Asia. In the months before the wet monsoon, farmers plant seeds in the dry, sunbaked earth. The seeds must take root before the summer downpours begin. If the monsoon is late, the tiny plants wither and die, and famine results.

On the other hand, the monsoon can bring too much rain. Some years, heavy rainfall causes rivers to overflow and wash away crops. Still, the people of South Asia welcome the arrival of the wet monsoon. Within hours after the rains begin, the parched earth springs to life with green plants.

Monsoons have influenced the art and literature of South Asia. More than 1,000 years ago, an Indian poet sang the praises of the monsoon:

“The summer sun, who robbed the pleasant nights,
And plundered all the water of the rivers,
And burned the earth, and scorched the forest-trees,
Is now in hiding; and the rain-clouds,
Spread thick across the sky to track him down,
Hunt for the criminal with lightning flashes.”

Flooding and Storms in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated nations in the world. Most of its population is crowded into the delta formed by the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. The delta soil is extremely fertile, and Bangladeshi

farmers can plant and harvest three crops of rice a year. Still, the land can barely support such vast numbers of people, and Bangladesh is among the world's poorest countries.

The concentration of people in the delta creates problems. Because much of the land is barely above sea level, flooding during the wet monsoons is common. In addition, every five to seven years, fierce tropical cyclones sweep in from the Bay of Bengal. The storms whip up waves that submerge the low-lying land and take a huge toll in lives and property.

More than 50 cyclones have struck the coast of Bangladesh since 1900. One of the worst was on April 29, 1991.

Up Close

Waves As High As Mountains

“ The waves were so high and intense, the five of us on board could not remain on deck. So we climbed up the crane to a protected area. We could not see anything, not even the person next to us. Completely shattered, we really did not know whether we were alive or dead. ”

When the cyclone struck, Zaheer Ahmed was on board the ship *Comfort Marie*. For seven hours, he and his shipmates clung to the ship as the storm raged. Finally, at six o'clock the next morning, the winds died down and the crew climbed ashore. Only then did they discover that the waves had carried the *Comfort Marie* onto shore and left it by the side of a road.

Zaheer Ahmed was lucky. He survived the terrible cyclone of 1991. About 140,000 other people of Bangladesh died in the storm.

During the cyclone, the last thing Mufizur Rahman remembered before he was knocked unconscious was seeing waves “as high as mountains.” When he opened his eyes several hours later, his wife, son, and three daughters

had disappeared. Rahman's family and his home had been swept away by the giant waves that crashed over his village. In his grief, Rahman cried out, “I have lost everything. God, why has it happened to me?”

Winds of 150 miles (241 km) an hour pushed waves 20 feet (6 m) high over the land. The storm released other dangers. One man, caught in the swirling flood, tried to find a safe place for his infant son. He grabbed at an uprooted banana tree as it floated by. Quickly, he pulled back his hand in horror. He had been bitten by a poisonous snake nestled in the branches. Both father and son lost their lives.

Whenever possible, the government of Bangladesh sends its citizens advance warning of cyclones. However, people often ignore the warnings. Many have no safe place to go. The government has built some dikes and cyclone shelters, but Bangladesh is poor and lacks the funds to protect all parts of the country.

Cyclone in Bangladesh Cyclones often bring death and destruction to South Asia. This boy is probably the only member of his family who survived the 1991 cyclone. Since the 1700s, more than 1 million people have been killed by storms in the area of Bangladesh. **Technology** How can technology help people survive cyclones?



After the 1991 disaster, a newspaper reporter in Dacca, the capital of Bangladesh, wrote in despair, "No country has got a worse natural and environmental deal than Bangladesh." Still, in the words of another observer, "There is a lot more going on here than just disasters." With courage and determination, the people of Bangladesh rebuilt their homes and lives, as they have so many times in the past. ■

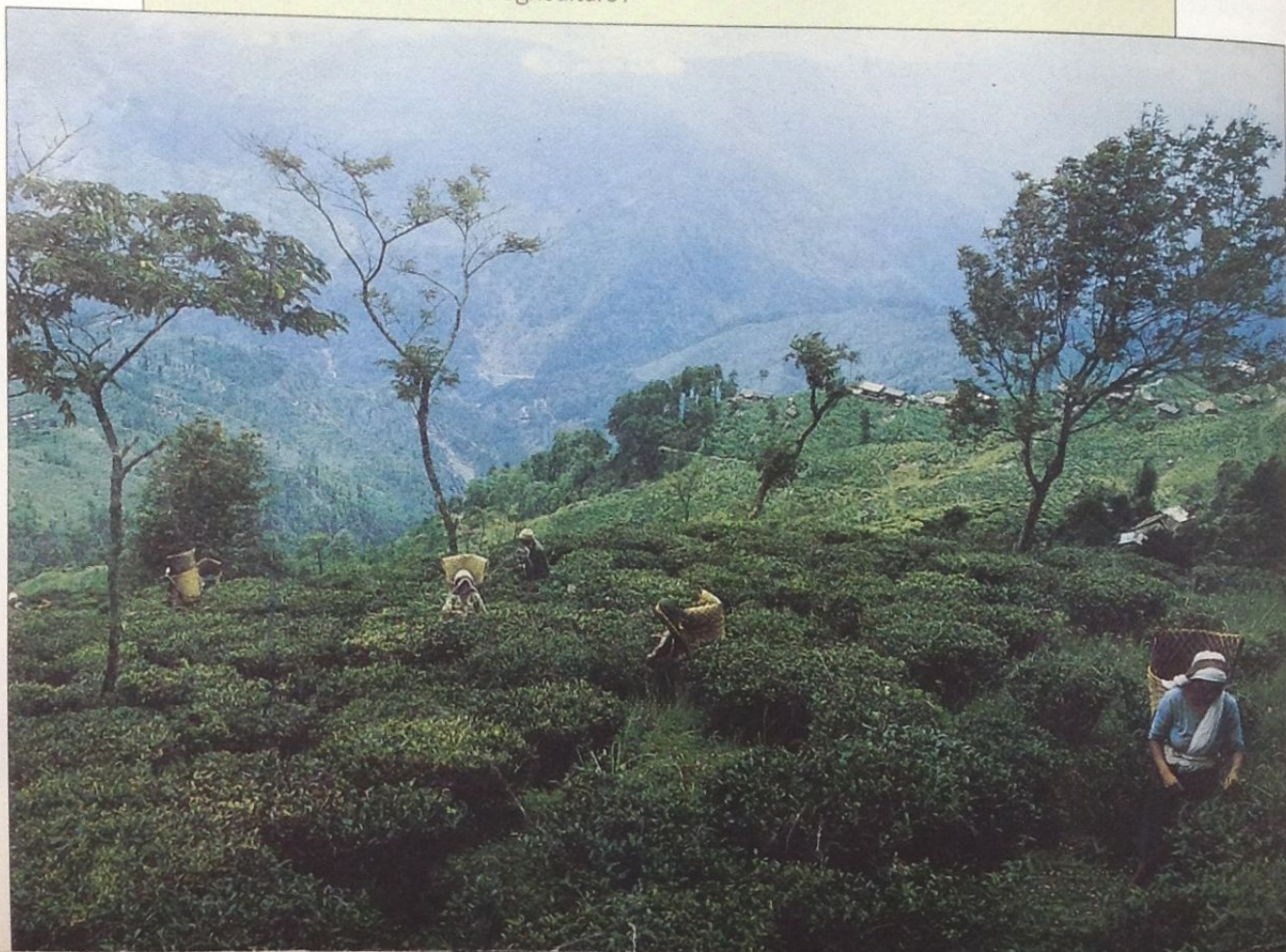
Rainfall and Vegetation

The monsoons affect South Asia unevenly, so that climates and vegetation vary greatly. The west coast of India has heavy rainfall. Trivandrum, for example, gets 160 inches (406 cm) of rain a year. In some areas of heavy rainfall, tropical rain forests flourish. Other areas, where the monsoons bring little moisture, are desert.

Mountains and rainfall. Mountains affect rainfall. As winds from the Bay of Bengal reach the Himalayas, the warm, moist air rises and cools. The cooling air releases its moisture as rain. As a result, areas directly south of the Himalayas—such as Bhutan, Bangladesh, and northeastern India—have heavy rainfall. Cherrapunji, India, gets as much as 425 inches (1,080 cm) of rain a year, making it perhaps the wettest place on Earth. By comparison, the annual rainfall in New York City is about 45 inches (114 cm).

Some mountains create a "rain shadow." One side of the mountain receives plenty of moisture, while the other side gets almost none. Winds blowing from the Arabian Sea drop their moisture on the coastal plains as they run up against the Western Ghats. However, the mountains block the winds from reaching the Deccan Plateau. As a result, the Deccan is drier than the coastal plains. The

Harvesting Tea Many factors determine which crops grow best in a region. Tea, one of India's major export crops, grows best in a warm climate with plentiful rainfall. Also, the quality of tea improves at higher elevations. Darjeeling in West Bengal is one of India's largest tea-growing areas. **Geography** How do the climate and the geography of a nation affect agriculture?



dry climate of the Deccan supports only low trees and scattered grasses.

Temperature. Like rainfall, temperatures vary greatly across the subcontinent. In the northern mountains and on the upper slopes of the Western Ghats, temperatures can be cold. Much of South Asia, however, has a tropical climate with warm temperatures year-round.

From November through January, the average temperature in the Indian city of Madras is 84°F (29°C). In February, the temperature begins to climb. By May, the average temperature has reached 100°F (38°C). The weather of Madras has been described as “three months hot and nine months hotter.”

Natural Resources

Parts of South Asia have fertile soil, especially the Indo-Gangetic Plain. Farmers have raised crops on these lands for thousands of years. In some places, constant cultivation has worn out the soil. In the northern plains, as you have read, rivers deposit silt that renews the soil. Yet there, as elsewhere, farmers use fertilizers to restore nutrients to the soil.

Irrigation. Water is scarce in many parts of the subcontinent. Although rain is plentiful, most of it falls during the wet monsoon. During the dry season, farmers use water from rivers to irrigate crops. They also dig wells to tap underground water.

On the Deccan Plateau, finding water is made more difficult because the water lies in rock deep below the ground. To reach water for irrigation, farmers must dig wells at least 200 feet (61 m) deep. As you will read, building dams to increase the supply of water for irrigation is a major issue in India. (See pages 228–229.)

Mineral resources. South Asia has a variety of mineral resources. Many parts of India have large reserves of high-quality iron ore. India is also rich in manganese, bauxite, and copper.

In the northern plains, coal is plentiful. The region has other resources such as mica, limestone, and gypsum. South Asia, however, has few sources of oil, a basic need for

industry today. For this reason, the Indian government has supported the use of nuclear power. (See the feature on page 228.)

The Peoples of South Asia

The population of South Asia numbers more than 1.1 billion people. In other words, one out of five people in the world lives there. India alone has a population of more than 988 million people—the largest of any nation except China. Bangladesh and Pakistan also rank among the 10 most populous countries in the world.

About three quarters of the people of South Asia depend on farming to earn a living. Most people live in villages, although cities are growing rapidly.

Cultural diversity. South Asia is a region of great cultural diversity. Over thousands of years, many peoples have settled in the subcontinent. They have migrated from Europe, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia.

Geographic features have tended to separate people into regional and local groups, each with its own way of life. Throughout South Asia, the people have a wide variety of customs and practices. They eat different foods, dress in different styles, and respect different values. Even a simple activity such as making bread varies widely from place to place. In northern India, women roll dough flat and cook it on a griddle. In the south, they eat boiled rice and make pastes of rice and drop them into boiling oil.

Religious beliefs also vary. The people worship in different ways and have different ideas about what is sacred. As you will learn, India has many religious groups, including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Buddhists.

Languages. A clear sign of the cultural diversity of South Asia is language. Nepal, a country about the size of Illinois, has 13 languages. India has more than 700 languages and dialects. A **dialect** is a regional version of a language with its own words, expressions, and pronunciations.

The most widely spoken language in India is Hindi. Yet, fewer than 30 percent of Indians

SECTION 2 REVIEW

1. **Define:** (a) monsoon, (b) dialect.
2. (a) How do the wet and dry monsoons differ? (b) Why are monsoons so important to the people of South Asia?
3. Give two reasons why water supply is a serious problem in South Asia.
4. How does language show the cultural diversity of South Asia?
5. **Comparing** How do the seasons in South Asia differ from those in your area?
6. **Writing Across Cultures** Write an editorial for an American newspaper appealing for help for monsoon flood victims.



Indian Money India is a land with hundreds of languages. Many of these languages have their own scripts, or forms of writing. These scripts include Bengali, Devanagari, Gujarati, and Telugu, among others. India's paper money, the rupee, shown here, uses many different scripts.

Diversity Why do you think the rupee is printed with different scripts?

speak Hindi. To meet the needs of its varied population, India recognizes 15 official languages. In addition, it recognizes 35 other major regional languages. Often, these languages are written in different scripts. A rupee note, the Indian money, has the same words written in several different scripts.

English is not an official language, but it is used by many Indians. The English language is a holdover from a period of British colonization, as you will read in Chapter 8.

Cultural diversity has enriched the region, but it also poses a challenge to the governments of India and its neighbors.

3

EARLY CIVILIZATIONS OF INDIA

FIND OUT

What have archaeologists learned about the Indus Valley civilization?

What impact did the Aryans have on India?

How was Aryan society organized?

Vocabulary decipher, rajah, varna, caste

The railroad workers needed stones to anchor the track they were laying. The line ran along the Indus Valley, linking towns and cities in the north and south. Near the town of Harappa, workers used old bricks from a local ruin in place of stones. Among the bricks, they found hundreds of tiny stone carvings. The workers threw most of the carvings away. They kept a few as curious objects.

An observer thought that the stone carvings were very old, but few people listened to

him. More than 70 years later, in the 1920s, archaeologists turned their attention to the ruins at Harappa. They soon discovered that the town had once been the center of an ancient civilization. Today, this ancient culture is known as the Indus Valley, or Harappan, civilization.

Indus Valley Civilization

Like many early civilizations, India's first civilization grew up in a fertile river valley. It was the largest of the world's early civilizations, extending almost 1,000 miles (1,609 km) inland from the Arabian Sea. It lasted for about 1,000 years, from 2500 B.C. to 1500 B.C.

Planned cities. Archaeologists are still learning about this ancient civilization. They have excavated several large cities as well as many smaller towns along the Indus River and the Arabian coast. The cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, in present-day Pakistan, were the most important.

Each city was carefully laid out, with straight streets that formed a checkerboard pattern. A walled fortress protected the city, and special warehouses held food supplies. The cities had separate districts for homes and for public buildings. Some buildings had elaborate bathing facilities and drains that linked them to a city sewer system.

This level of urban planning suggests that the government was well organized. It was able to set and enforce building codes. Throughout the Indus Valley, for example, the bricks used for building were all the same size.

Archaeologists think that the cities were built as capitals of a strong empire. Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro lie about 350 miles (563 km) apart. Other towns dotted the region in between.

Farming. To support such cities, rulers of the Indus Valley civilization must have collected taxes in the form of food. Although officials, craftworkers, and merchants lived in the cities, most people were farmers. They grew barley, wheat, peas, and sesame. Many kept cattle, sheep, goats, and water buffaloes.

Indus Valley farmers were probably the first people to grow cotton and to domesticate, or tame, chickens.

Trade. Merchants of the Indus Valley civilization traded with the peoples of the Middle East. Either overland or by sea, traders carried goods from Harappa to Sumer, an early civilization of the Middle East. (See page 29.) Perhaps Harappan merchants exported cotton to the Middle East. Through trade, ideas, too, passed back and forth.

Unsolved Puzzles

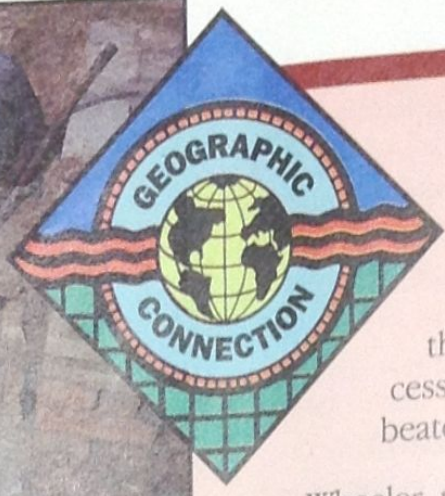
Archaeologists working in the Middle East have found hundreds of small clay seals that came from the Indus Valley. Indus Valley craftworkers made these seals, carving pictographic writing and figures of animals on them. Merchants probably used the seals to identify their goods. Unfortunately, scholars have been unable to **decipher**, or determine the meaning of, the writing.

Deciphering this ancient script might help us learn about the religion of Indus Valley people. Archaeologists have found small statues of women that suggest the people worshipped a mother goddess. Other statues suggest that animals, especially cattle, also had religious importance. That idea apparently influenced later Indian civilization.

Decline of the Indus Valley Civilization

Why did the Indus Valley civilization decline? No one knows for sure. By about 2000 B.C., the cities showed signs of decay. The bricks were no longer uniform in size. Broken streets were not repaired. Fine homes were divided into small tenement-like apartments. Some towns were abandoned.

Until recently, scholars thought that invaders had conquered the Indus Valley. New evidence, however, suggests that the decline was originally due to natural causes. Possibly the climate became too dry to support extensive farming. Without surplus crops, farmers



... a thousand jets of water burst from the sides of our cutting, and with a sullen roar it tumbled in. We had reached farther than any of our predecessors, but time and tide had beaten us. ”

Digging in the Indus Valley

Railway workers found signs of an ancient civilization in the Indus Valley more than 135 years ago. Archaeologists first excavated the site in 1922. Yet today, we still know very little about the Indus Valley civilization. One reason is the geography of the valley, which poses special problems for digging.

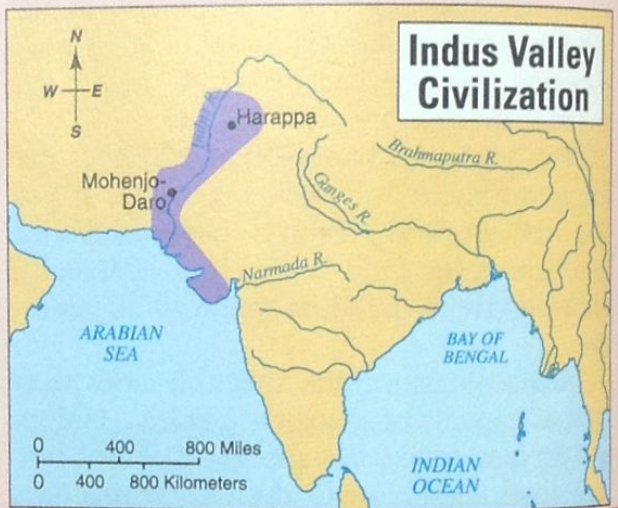
In 1950, British archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler set out to excavate the lowest level of ruins at Mohenjo-Daro. He hoped to trace Mohenjo-Daro's development over the centuries. As archaeologists dug, though, underground water from the river kept seeping into the site.

To cope with the water problem, Wheeler brought powerful mechanical pumps to the Mohenjo-Daro site. Wheeler described what happened next:

“ We struck water at fifteen feet below the . . . surface, and with mechanized pumps and careful engineering, we dived for a further ten feet into the streaming mud. . . . Then, one night,

Wheeler refused to accept defeat. After careful study, he devised a method of digging that was suited to Mohenjo-Daro's particular geography. As a result, Wheeler was able to add greatly to our knowledge of Indus civilization and to suggest the date 2500 B.C. for its beginning. In addition, the new techniques he developed for Mohenjo-Daro were important contributions to the science of modern archaeology.

1. How did the geography of the Indus Valley create a problem for archaeologists?
2. **Making Inferences** What personal qualities do you think a successful archaeologist would need?



could not provide food for the cities. Perhaps the Indus River changed course, which would have affected food production. Centuries of farming may have exhausted the soil. Some evidence suggests that floods may have contributed to the decline.

As the Indus Valley civilization decayed, people migrated to other parts of the Indian subcontinent. Scholars think that the Dravidian people who live in southern India today may be descended from these Indus Valley settlers. Many centuries after the Indus

Valley civilization disappeared, the Dravidians built flourishing kingdoms in the Deccan Plateau.

Arrival of the Aryans

The arrival of a nomadic and warlike people, the Aryans, may have contributed to the final collapse of the Indus Valley civilization. Already in decline, the Indus people were probably too weak to resist the newcomers.

The Aryans swept into India through the high passes of the Hindu Kush Mountains. They came from the region of the Caucasus Mountains. As they traveled, they came in contact with the peoples of the Middle East. From them, the Aryans learned how to make iron tools and weapons.

The Aryan migration into India took hundreds of years. In time, the Aryans overran the towns and cities of the Indus Valley. Their success was due in part to their iron weapons. In addition, they were skilled charioteers who used fast, horse-drawn war chariots to overpower their enemies. Over time, the Aryans absorbed ideas from the Indus Valley civilization.

Aryan Culture

The Aryans gradually spread out across the northern plains. Much of what we know about them comes from oral religious traditions, known as the Vedas (vay duhz). The Vedas include hymns, prayers, and rituals used in religious ceremonies. They were composed between about 1500 B.C. and 1000 B.C. Today, the Vedas are still part of Indian religious life. People recite Vedic hymns and prayers on many special occasions, such as weddings and funerals. (📖 See Connections With Literature, page 804, “Night” from the *Rig Veda*.)

Religious beliefs. At first, Aryan priests memorized the hymns and prayers. Religious beliefs passed by word of mouth from generation to generation. Much later, the Aryans developed a written language, called Sanskrit, and their oral religious traditions were written down.

From the Vedas, we learn that the Aryans worshipped many gods. Among the most important was Indra, a warrior god. Indra had many human characteristics and enjoyed such pleasures as eating and dancing. By contrast, the god Varuna was a strict figure. He governed the workings of the universe and punished sinners.

Aryan worship centered around sacrifices to the gods. Priests performed the sacred rituals on open-air altars. They set out food and drink for the gods, while singing hymns and prayers. The Aryans believed that if the sacrifices were generous and offered correctly, the gods would reward them with wealth, healthy children, long life, and success in war.

Villages. As the Aryans moved across the northern plains, they settled into villages. The pattern of village life that developed over the centuries continues to influence India today. (See pages 214–217.)

The Aryans were both farmers and herders. They placed great value on cattle. Men received cattle as a reward when they were successful in war. People measured wealth in terms of cattle. The Vedas compare the Earth to a cow. Rain is like the cow’s milk, and the sun is its calf.

Hereditary chiefs, called **rajahs** (RAH juhzh), ruled the villages. A council of warriors assisted the rajah. The chief priest also held great power. He alone could carry out the sacrifices needed to please the gods.

Social classes. The Aryans divided people into four classes, called **varna**.* At the top of society were Brahmans, or priests. Next came Kshatriyas (kuh SHAT ree yuhzh), or warriors. The third class, Vaisyas (vīs yuhzh), were landowners, merchants, and herders. At the bottom of society were the Sudras (soo druhzh), servants and peasants who waited on others.

The following hymn from the Vedas explains the origins of the four social classes:

* In Sanskrit, *varna* means “color.” Some scholars suggest that the light-skinned Aryans wanted to distinguish themselves from the darker-skinned peoples whom they conquered.



Honoring Cattle The beliefs and customs of the early Aryans developed into the religion of Hinduism. Aryan customs that valued cattle evolved into Hindu beliefs that forbid the slaughter of cattle. Today, cows wander undisturbed even in crowded cities. This statue of a bull is at the temple at Baijnath, a major Hindu pilgrimage site.

Fine Art How are Hindu beliefs reflected in India's art?

“ When the gods divided the Man,
into how many parts did they divide
him?

What was his mouth, what were his
arms,
what were his thighs and his feet
called?

The Brahman was his mouth,
of his arms was made the warrior,
His thighs became the Vaisya,
Of his feet the Sudra was born. ”

Over time, the social classes of the Aryans developed into a more rigid system of **caste**, or social groups based on birth.* You will read about caste in Chapter 8.

* Indians use the word *jati* to describe their social system. When the Portuguese reached India, they used the word *caste*, which other Europeans adopted.

SECTION 3 REVIEW

- 1. Locate:** (a) Indus River, (b) Harappa, (c) Mohenjo-Daro.
- 2. Identify:** (a) Dravidian, (b) Aryan, (c) Vedas, (d) Sanskrit.
- 3. Define:** (a) decipher, (b) rajah, (c) varna, (d) caste.
- 4.** (a) What do the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro reveal about the Indus Valley civilization? (b) Why is our knowledge of the Indus Valley civilization limited?
- 5.** How was Aryan society organized?
- 6. Synthesizing Information** What can we learn about a culture by studying its hymns and other religious texts?
- 7. Writing Across Cultures** Using the Vedic hymn at left as a model, write a poem explaining the structure of American society.

CHAPTER 7 REVIEW

Understanding Vocabulary

Match each term at left with the correct definition at right.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. subcontinent | a. determine the meaning of |
| 2. monsoon | b. hereditary chief of the Aryans |
| 3. dialect | c. seasonal wind |
| 4. decipher | d. large landmass that is smaller than a continent |
| 5. rajah | e. regional version of a language |

Reviewing the Main Ideas

- (a) What rivers are important to South Asia? (b) What role do these rivers play in South Asian culture?
- (a) How do monsoons shape the seasons of South Asia? (b) Why do South Asians celebrate the arrival of the wet monsoon?
- (a) How do the Himalayas affect rainfall patterns in South Asia? (b) Why is the Deccan much drier than the coastal plains?
- Give three examples of cultural diversity in South Asia.
- (a) What were the two main cities of the Indus Valley civilization? (b) How did farmers and merchants help support the civilization? (c) How might geography have contributed to the decline of the civilization?
- (a) Why were the Aryans able to defeat the Indus Valley people? (b) Where does most information about the Aryans come from?

Reviewing Chapter Themes

- The cultures of South Asia differ from those of the rest of Asia. How did its geography help South Asia to develop unique cultures?
- Geographic features have contributed to the cultural diversity of South Asia. Choose two features and describe how each has promoted cultural diversity.
- The people of the Indus Valley built an advanced civilization. Discuss three pieces of evidence that support this statement.

Thinking Critically

- Understanding Causes and Effects** (a) Why is so much of Bangladesh's population concentrated in a single region? (b) What problems has this caused? (c) How might high population density worsen the effects of flooding?
- Making Global Connections** (a) Why do Indians speak many different languages? (b) Why do you think there is less variation in languages spoken in the United States?

Applying Your Skills

- Reading a Map** Use the map on page 166 and what you have read to answer the following questions. (a) In which directions does the wet monsoon blow? (b) Which part of South Asia receives the first rainfall during the wet monsoon? (c) In which directions does the dry monsoon blow? (d) Based on the map, explain why the dry monsoon occurs in the winter. (See the Skill Lesson on page 48.)
- Analyzing a Quotation** A well-known Indian, Jawaharlal Nehru, once wrote: "India is like some parchment on which layer and layer of thought . . . has been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer has completely hidden or erased what has been written previously. All of them exist together in our common selves, and . . . they have gone to build up the complete, mysterious personality of India." Based on what you have read in this chapter, explain what Nehru meant.