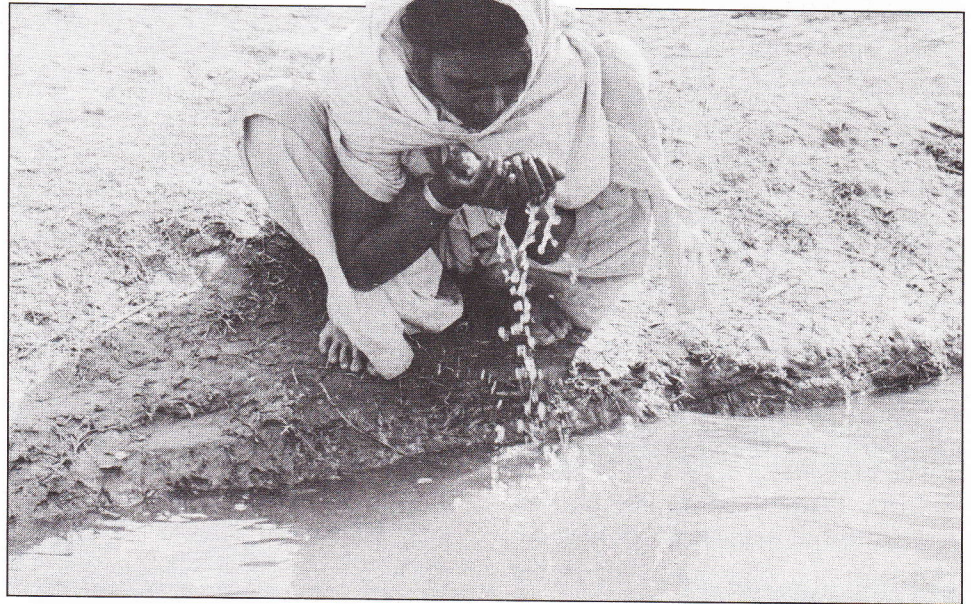
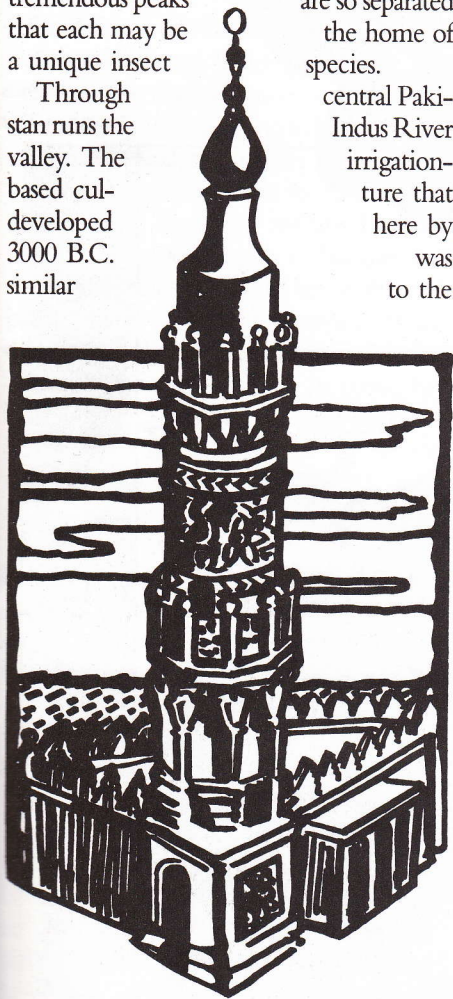


Looking at Pakistan

Pakistan has always been a land of migrants and nomads. Plate tectonics tells us that two hundred million years ago the very land on which it lies, the subcontinent of India, lay in what we now call Antarctica. For a hundred and fifty million years, it traveled north through the oceans until it "docked" along the coast of Asia. This cataclysmic joining produced the mountain ranges along Pakistan's border. The presence of marine limestone—calcium remains of undersea organisms—in the peaks shows that these highest mountains on earth once lay at the bottom of the sea. The glacial era further deepened mountain valleys; today the tremendous peaks are so separated that each may be a unique insect the home of a species.

Through central Pakistan runs the Indus River irrigation system that here by was similar to the



Nile and Tigris-Euphrates civilizations of about the same date. Unlike those other earliest cultures, however, the Indus Valley civilization lay undiscovered until 1921, although in 1865 local builders constructed a railway embankment from bricks they had found in a ruin. Contemporary tests show that these precisely manufactured bricks are more than thirty-five hundred years old!

The Indus Valley culture stretched a thousand miles along the river. Pottery and ruins show uniform manufacturing and decorating patterns throughout the area, evidence of a strong central government. Such uniformity is remarkable for a time of slow communications but is consistent with our knowledge of Egypt, which suggests that irrigation-based cultures depended on authoritative direction to make the best use of water resources.

By 1500 B.C., the valley's large cities had fallen into ruins. Soil depletion and floods, which still plague Pakistan today due to over-irrigation, deforestation, and monsoon rains, contributed to the decline. Finally, invading Aryans swept through the passes of the Hindu Kush and destroyed much of the

delicately balanced irrigation system. Although many Indus Valley inhabitants apparently survived the invasion, their written language, manufacturing and farming expertise, and town culture, which included indoor plumbing, did not. Hunting and nomadic herding replaced farming and town culture.

AN IMPORTANT GATEWAY

About 700 A.D., Moslem, Arab and Turkish invaders again made the Indus River a center of activity. They established bases there from which they carried out raids all over the subcontinent until, in the thirteenth century, the Mughal Empire was established in India. Pakistan's mountain passes were the gateway for goods and ideas, which now passed freely between the subcontinent and the Moslem Middle East and beyond into Europe, where Arab empires also held sway.

Exports from the subcontinent included one of humanity's most important inventions—the Hindu-Arabic place-value number system that we use today. Its superiority depends on the characteristic that