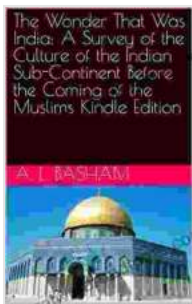


Survey of the Culture of the Indian Subcontinent Before the Coming of the West

The Indian subcontinent, a land of extraordinary diversity and cultural richness, has a history that stretches back millennia. Before the arrival of European powers in the 16th century, the region was home to a vibrant and sophisticated civilization that had developed its own unique blend of art, architecture, literature, and belief systems. This survey will explore the major aspects of this ancient culture, providing a glimpse into the world that existed before the West's influence began to transform it.



The Wonder That Was India: A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent Before the Coming of the Muslims Kindle Edition by A. L. Basham

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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File size : 17238 KB
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Print length : 1054 pages
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Screen Reader : Supported



Ancient Civilizations

The earliest known civilization in the Indian subcontinent was the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished in the region of present-day Pakistan and western India from around 3300 to 1900 BCE. This civilization was

renowned for its advanced urban planning, sophisticated irrigation systems, and a distinctive script that remains undeciphered to this day. Other ancient civilizations that emerged in the region include the Vedic civilization, the Mauryan Empire, and the Gupta Empire, each of which made significant contributions to the development of Indian culture.

Religion and Philosophy

Religion has always played a central role in Indian culture. The earliest religious beliefs in the region were animistic and polytheistic, with a focus on nature worship and the veneration of animals. Over time, more sophisticated religious systems emerged, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. These religions share a common emphasis on the importance of karma, rebirth, and liberation from the cycle of suffering. Indian philosophy, too, has a long and illustrious history, with notable traditions such as Vedanta, Nyaya, and Vaisheshika exploring the fundamental questions of existence, knowledge, and ethics.

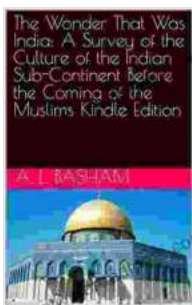
Art and Architecture

Indian art and architecture have a unique and distinctive style that has been influenced by a variety of factors, including religious beliefs, the availability of materials, and the climate. Indian art is characterized by its vibrant colors, intricate designs, and detailed storytelling. Notable examples of Indian architecture include the Taj Mahal, the Khajuraho temples, and the Ajanta Caves. These structures showcase the skill and artistry of Indian craftsmen and the deep connection between art and religion in the region.

Literature and Music

Indian literature has a rich and diverse tradition that spans centuries. The earliest written works in India include the Vedas, ancient scriptures that contain hymns, prayers, and philosophical treatises. Sanskrit, the classical language of India, has been used to create some of the world's greatest literary works, including the epic poems the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Indian music is equally diverse, with a wide range of styles and forms. Traditional Indian music is characterized by its use of complex rhythms, melodic improvisation, and intricate ornamentation.

The culture of the Indian subcontinent before the coming of the West was a vibrant and sophisticated tapestry of art, architecture, literature, religion, and philosophy. The ancient civilizations that flourished in the region made significant contributions to the development of human civilization, and the traditions and beliefs that emerged during this period continue to shape Indian culture today. This survey has provided a brief overview of some of the major aspects of this remarkable cultural heritage, but much more could be said about the richness and complexity of Indian culture. With its long and fascinating history, the Indian subcontinent is a region that continues to captivate and inspire.



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