



Environmental changes and the Indus civilization

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I am conducting the Indus project titled environmental changes and the Indus civilization at Research Institute for Humanity and Nature in Kyoto, Japan since 2007.

This research project examines the social character and environmental context of the Indus civilization, and attempts to determine how they are related to the civilization's short life and rapid decline. In particular, we aim to evaluate the impact of environmental change on the subsistence economy and trade network that sustained the Indus civilization's urban system. Our research will also provide data on the long-term processes of climate change in South Asia. Such data will help us develop historical perspective on, and practical understanding of, contemporary environmental problems in the region.

Our project is divided into four research groups: (1) the Palaeo-Environmental Research Group (PERG); (2) the Material Culture Research Group (MCRG); (3) the Subsistence System Research Group (SSRG); and (4) the Inherited Culture Research Group (ICRG). They integrate cultural and biological data obtained from archaeological excavations and other field activities, palaeo-environmental data obtained from satellite imagery and field study, and original accounts obtained from ancient texts. Important subjects of study investigated so far include: ancient climate change; avulsion of the Ghaggar River; the palaeocoastline of Gujarat; and palaeo-seismic activity.

In this paper I present main outcome of our research.