



Linking Past and Present

The Legacy of Southern Asia

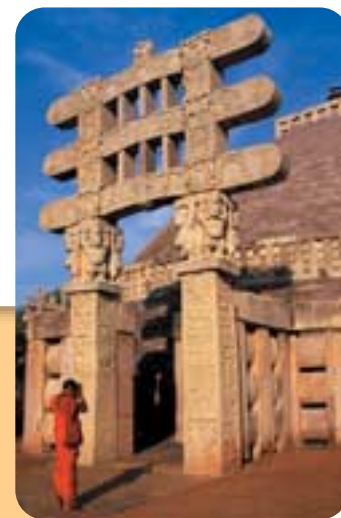


Theater and Dance

In ancient times, theater and classical dance productions were held in the temples and royal courts of India. Spectators watched dancers act out stories of Hindu gods and myths, especially from famous epics. The two most famous epics are the *Ramayana* (ruh•MAH•yuh•nuh) and the *Mahabharata* (MAH•huh•BAH•ruh•tuh). Folk dancing, another dance form, was popular in rural areas. Modern dance in Southern Asia includes elements of both classical and folk dancing.

Architecture

Even before the rise of Buddhism in the 5th century B.C., people in India made burial mounds for their dead. When the Buddha died, similar mound-shaped structures called stupas became symbols of his death and of Buddhism. Stupas became more elaborate over time. This architectural form spread throughout the Buddhist world and can be found in the pagodas—religious buildings—of Korea, Japan, and China, as well as in shrines in Sri Lanka and temples in Java.



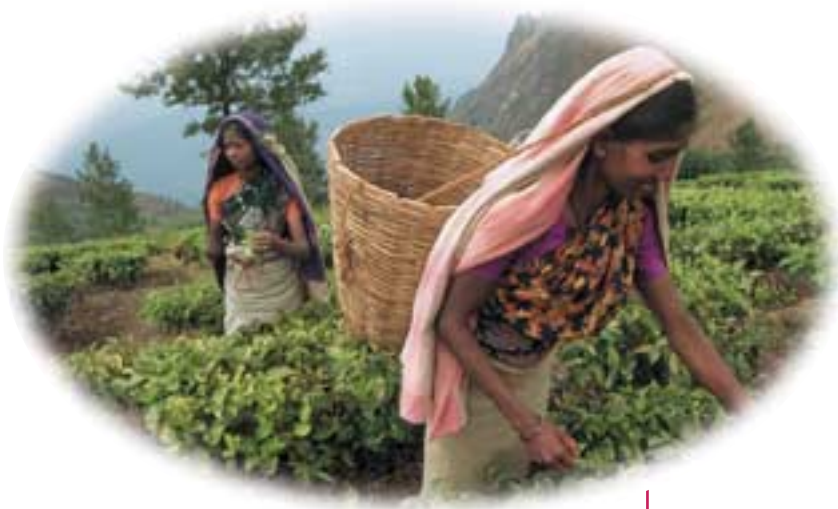


Cities

One of the first cities in the world, Mohenjo-Daro, was built along the Indus River in what is now Pakistan. After archaeologists discovered the 4,000-year-old city in 1922, they spent years excavating its ruins. What they unearthed was a city laid out in a grid pattern, with streets, houses, assembly halls, storerooms, public baths, and a sewer system. Many modern cities are laid out in grids, and some cities in India have public baths similar to the ones found in Mohenjo-Daro.

Find Out More About It!

Study the text and photos on these pages to learn about inventions, creations, and contributions that have come from Southern Asia. Then choose the item that interests you the most and use the library or the Internet to research the subject and learn more about it. Use the information you gather to create a diorama to share with the class.



Black Tea

Though tea bushes were found growing wild in Assam, India, in the 1820s, it was not until the mid-1880s that India began to export tea. Workers used a process that turned green leaves to a brownish black color to produce a blend known as black tea. Though tea had been grown in China for more than 3,000 years, by 1888 England was importing more tea from Southern Asia than from China. Today, some of the best black teas come from India.

Sanskrit Language

Sanskrit, the oldest written language of India, was first brought to India around 1500 B.C. The language has distinctive sounds, as well as complex grammar rules. Some of India's modern languages—Hindi, Bengali, and Punjabi—are based on Sanskrit. Though by 100 B.C. Sanskrit was no longer being spoken, it is still used in many Hindu ceremonies and in scholarly works and teachings.

