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## **Notion Press**

Old No. 38, New No. 6  
McNichols Road, Chetpet  
Chennai - 600 031

First Published by Notion Press 2018  
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ISBN 978-1-64249-288-0

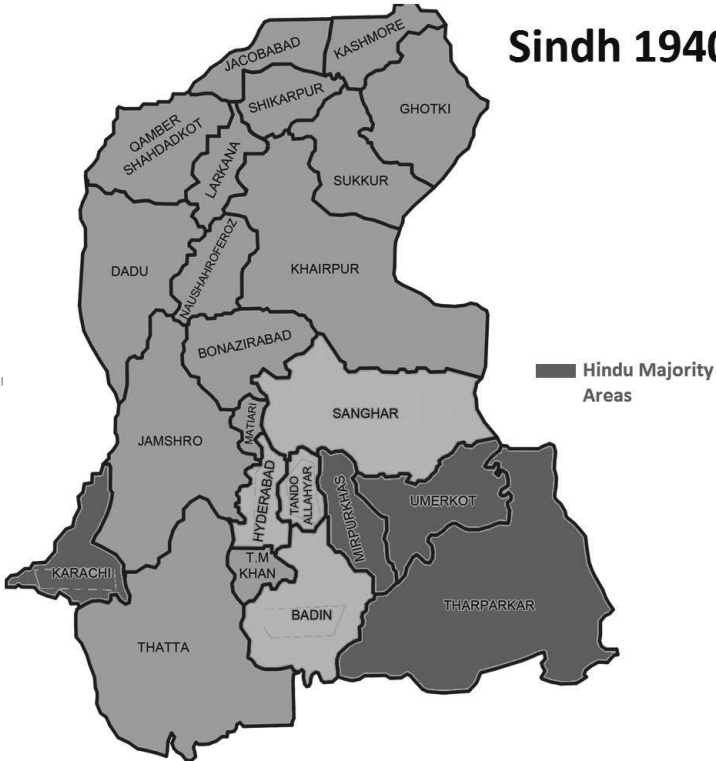
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# CONTENTS

PREFACE	10
ROOTS	14
INTRODUCTION	16
Chapter 1: SINDH AND THE SINDHU	23
Chapter 2: THE ARYAN CONNECTION	35
Chapter 3: RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF SINDHI HINDU CULTURE	79
Chapter 4: ANCIENT HISTORY OF SINDH	99
Chapter 5 .....	
5 – I : ACHAEMENID – PERSIAN RULE (550 BC to 330 BC)	125
5 – II : ALEXANDER & GREEK RULE (326 BC to 303 BC)	131
5 – III : THE MAURYA EMPIRE (322 BC–185 BC)	141
5 – IV : SUNGA – SHAKA & KUSHAN DYNASTY (185–220 AD)	151
5 – V : THE GUPTA DYNASTY (320–550 AD)	159
5 – VI : THE RAI & BRAHMIN DYNASTY (489–712 AD)	165
Chapter 6 .....	
6 – I : ARAB RULE (712 AD–1011 AD)	175
6 – II : SOOMRO DYNASTY (1025–1351 AD)	183
6 – III : SAMMA DYNASTY (1351–1521 AD)	191
6 – IV : THE MUGHAL DYNASTY (1591–1738 AD)	199
6 – V : KALHORO DYNASTY (1700–1784 AD)	207
6 – VI : THE TALPUR DYNASTY (1783–1843 AD)	215
6 – VII : THE BRITISH RAJ (1843–1947 AD)	227
Chapter 7 : ELEMENTAL SINDHI TRADERS OF	
THE BRITISH RAJ (1858–1947)	239
Chapter 8 : SINDHI LANGUAGE & SCRIPT	281
Chapter 9 : SUFI & THE SINDHI	303
Chapter 10 : SAYONARA SINDH	321
Appendix : PADMASHREE RAM JETHMALANI'S SPEECH	376
EPILOGUE	360
APPENDIX	376
INDEX	379

## Sindh 1940



## Chapter 1

# SINDH AND THE SINDHU

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*“Sindhu River is to Sindh what pulmonary vein is to the heart of the man. The social and the cultural phase of Sindh life and the political and economic situations of the country have always been affected and influenced by the river Sindhu” – Popati Hiranandani.*

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There can be no Sindh without the river Sindhu and glory to Sindh and the Sindhis who derive their name from the most ancient river Sindhu now called Indus. Since our culture has emanated and nourished from the banks of the river Sindhu, our first obligation would be to know and pay homage to Sindhu being the pride and passion of our ancestors.

The name Sindhu has two components, one is “Sim” which means region and the other is “Dhu” meaning a body of trembling water or river or ocean. The word “Hindu” is the Persian variant of the ‘Sindhu’ since the ‘S’ is interchangeable with ‘H’ in the Persian language the Iranians called it ‘Hindu or Hind’. The Greeks who followed the Persians termed the hegemony of the land as ‘Indu or Ind’ and finally was born the word ‘Indus’ due to the latinization of the word Hindu coined by the British during the British rule of India. It was from this Ind or Indie that the current name of India has taken its roots.<sup>1</sup>

This river was known to the ancient Iranians in Avestan as *Hindu*, in Sanskrit as *Sindhu*, to Assyrians (as early as the seventh century BC)

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<sup>1</sup> RG-Veda –Samhita-Edited by Prof W.F.Webster-Nag Publishers

as 'Sinda', to the Persians as 'Ab-e-sind', to the Greeks as 'Indos', to the Romans as 'Indus', to the Pashtuns as 'Abasind', to the Arabs as 'Al-Sind', to the Chinese as 'Sintow', and to the Javanese as 'Santri'.

The river Sindhu also called "Darya e Sindh" begins from the confluence of the 'Senge and Gar' rivers that drain the 'Nganglong Kangni and Gangdise' Shan mountain ranges in Tibet. It rises at 32 north latitude and 81 east latitude behind the mountainous wall of the Himalayas in the Tibetan Plateau in the vicinity of the Manasarovar Lake in the northern slopes of the Kailash range of mountains. This area is considered as the Elysium of the ancient Sanskrit Literature. It drips out from the lofty mountains and flows northwest 160 miles under the name of 'Singh Ka Bab' until it receives the Ghar river. The elevation of the Sindhu River is supposed to be 17,000 ft and at the junction of Ghar it is 13,800 ft above sea level.

It flows through Leh at the height of 10,500 ft and drops to 8,000 ft. It continues and travels south west into Jammu Kashmir till it reaches the Haramosh Mountain where it takes a turn at an acute angle and flows towards the regions of West Pakistan –Punjab. It touches the Sindh frontier 28-26 North latitude and 69-67 East longitude and after 450 miles of south westerly course and ends in the province of Sindh at the estuary close to the port of Karachi to merge into the Arabian Sea. Sindhu River at the Lloyd bridge at Sukkur has twice the annual flow of the Nile and 10 times bounteous than the Colorado river of USA.

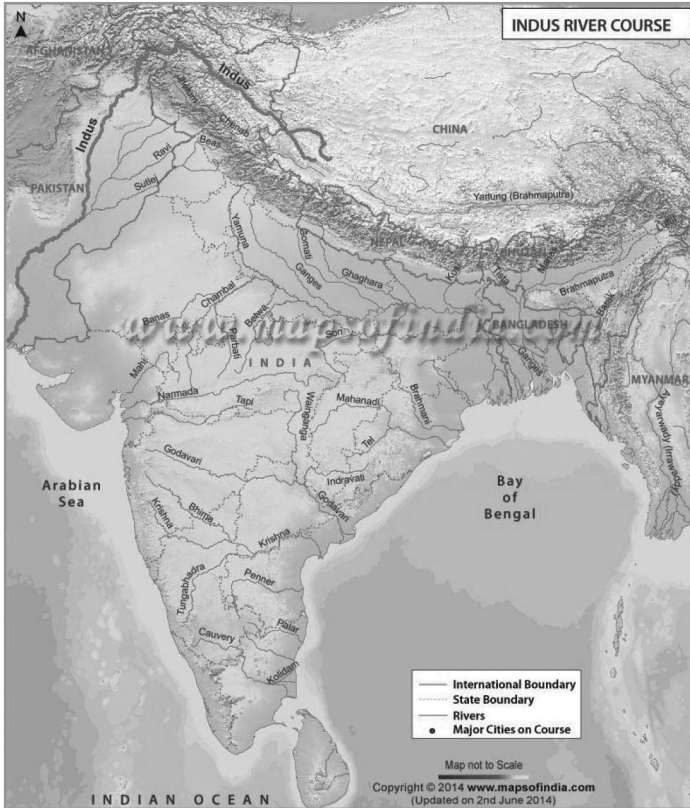
The width of this river in Sindh ranges from 600 to 1600 ft and its velocity increases from 5 miles an hour to 8 miles an hour, resulting in discharge of 19,000 to 100,000 cubic feet per second.

Along its course of 3,200 kms it mingled with 20 tributaries and together with the five rivers of Punjab, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and Jhelum as well as the extinct Saraswati river; the Sindhu formed the "Sapta Sindhu" delta in Sindh.

## **TRIBUTARIES OF THE INDUS RIVER**

The Indus river tributaries are: Astor River, Nagar River, Dras River, Balram River, Ghizar River, Gar River, Gumal River, Gilgit River, Kurram River, Kabul River, Shigar River, Panjnad River (Created

by the joining of the rivers Chenab, Beas, Jhelum, Ravi, and Sutlej), Sohan River, Shyok River, Zaskar River, and lastly the Tanubal River<sup>2</sup>.



One of the largest rivers in South East Asia has supported agriculture of about 44 million acres of farmland since millennia and its water is fed by the snow and glaciers of the Karkoram, Hindu Kush, Himalayan range of Tibet, Kashmir and the northern area of Pakistan.

The Sindhu River is not almost useless for navigation on account of the fast current and fluctuating nature and its shallowness as per the beliefs of some. Sindhu River transported men and material even troops of invaders, as well Haj Pilgrims to Karachi and Lakhpat for their onward journey by sea.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/rivers/indus.html>

The boats that ply on the river were called ‘*dundo* and *Zaurak*’ both cargo ships; the ‘*Kauntal*’ (ferry boat) and the ‘*dundi*’ are used mainly for fishing.<sup>3</sup>

According to the implications of intensive research and findings of marine geologist Peter Cliff and Jerzy Tajin, this ancient and majestic river Sindhu could have been in existence since 45 million years. Its uninterrupted flow since then has supported the eco system, temperate forests and plains and country side since antiquity and the inhabitants in its proximity.

A magnificent and the most auspicious river that has seen the emergence of Neolithic settlements to the rise of relatively advanced civilizations of ‘Mohen jo Daro’ and Harappa in Sindh; it irrigates Sindh and Punjab for the principal crop of cotton, wheat, Millet, corn and sugar cane, and the river itself is known for ‘Palla’ fish being the delicacy of the people in addition to the abundance of ‘Pomfret’ and prawns.

It has silently witnessed the invasions from the Middle East countries and their defeats and their conquests and the ruler – ship of several dynasties in the area of Sindh until the final foreign conquest and rule of the British (1843 AD – 1947 AD). Since its creative flows commenced in the mists of prehistoric times, it has never ceased to invoke a sense of awe and wonder to all those who came to its banks as friends or foes and far away people who heard of its splendor. As it flows even today it conceals in its majestic aura, secrets yet unknown and unrevealed, adding mystery over mystery to the present generation.

The earliest mention or tribute for the river occurs in the Rig Veda, one of the first of the four Vedic scriptures:-

*“Sindhu in might surpasses all the streams that flow, his roar is lifted up to the heaven above the Earth, he puts forth endless vigor with a flash of light.... Even as cows with milk rush to their calves, so other rivers roar into the Sindhu.... As a warrior king leads other warriors, so does Sindhu lead other rivers.... Rich in steeds is Sindhu, rich in gold, nobly fashioned, rich in ample wealth.”*

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3 Source: Sindhi through the Ages Vol I & II by Prakash Bharadwaj page 35-36



Glory to Sindh and Glory to Sindhu, the place where the first Vedic scripture was revealed to the denizens of Sindh-once upon a time the homeland of many Sindhis!

In Rig Veda sindhu deity is worshipped like Agni. Rig Veda does not contain hymns in celebration of the Ganga, such as we find for Sindhu and Saraswati. In the hymns of the Rig Veda we find the ‘Sapta Sindvas’, seven rivers often mentioned. The region lying between the two rivers was considered the holiest of holy grounds, the “Punya Bhoomi” or the land of the Gods.<sup>4</sup>



3

**Sindh** /Sind/ (Sindhi: (Perso-Arabic) (Devanagari); Urdu: سُندھ; Latin: *Indus*; Ancient Greek: *Indós*; Sanskrit: *Sindhu*) is the home of the Sindhi people. Sindh is also locally known as the ‘Mehran and Sauvira’ in olden times. The ‘indh’ is bounded to the west by Balochistan, to the north by Punjab, to the east by the Indian states of Gujarat and Rajasthan and to the south by the Arabian Sea.

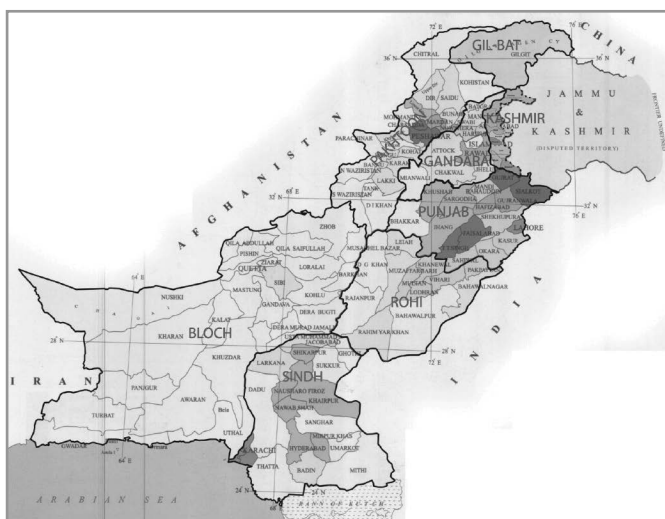
Geographically, Sindh is the region of lower Indus protected by almost impenetrable barriers from all sides. It is bound in the north by Bhawalpur and in the west it rests against the slopes of the Khirthar

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<sup>4</sup> RG-Veda –Samhita-Edited by Prof W.F.Webster-Nag Publishers

mountains which separate the turbulent hill tribes of the Baluchistan from the peaceful dwellers of the Indus Valley. On the east it gradually passes into the Great Indian Desert, the Thar, while the 'Rann' of Kutch forms the southern part or the south eastern boundary from Rajasthan to the Arabian Sea. At the base of the Deltic triangle, the Arabian Sea with its hostile coast protects the mainland, while its narrow apex penetrates into the plains of the five rivers of the north.

On the map this land mass occupies the position between 23 degrees and 29 degrees latitude and in the eastern hemisphere it lies between 67 and 70 degrees longitudes. Thus in width Sindh is spread across 120 miles and its length is 700 miles covering a territory of 47,569 square miles.



The Sindhis as a whole are composed of original descendants of an ancient population known as 'Sammaat'. The majority stock is that of Rajputs and Jats who are the descendants of "Sakas, Kushans and Huns" who constitute the majority of the population of Punjab. During Kalhora rule a number of Jat tribes such as the "Sials, Joyas and Khawars" came from the Punjab and settled in Sindh. They are called, 'Sirai' i.e. men from the north and speak 'Sirai' language.

Two main Rajput tribes of Sindh are: the 'Samma', a branch of the Yadav Rajputs who inhabited the eastern and lower Sindh and

Bahawalpur; and the 'Sumra' who, according to the 1907 edition of the Gazetteer are a branch of the Parwar Rajputs.

Among others are the Bhuttos, Bhattis, Lakha, Sahetas, Lohanas, Mohano, Dahars, Indhar, Chachar, Dhareja, Rathors, Dakhan, Langah etc. The 'Mohano' tribe is spread over 'Makran, Sindh and southern Punjab'. They are also identified with the 'Mallah' of the Punjab and both have in common a sub-section called Manjari. All these old Sindhi tribes are known under the common nomenclature of 'Sammata.' Sindhi is an Indo-European language, linguistically considered to be the sister language of Sanskrit, Balochi, Gujarati, Rajasthani languages have influences of Sindhi and Sanskrit however accommodating substantial Persian, Turkish and Arabic words.

**Key dialects:** Kutchi, Lasi, Parkari, Memoni, Lari, Vicholi, Utradi, Macharia, Dukslinu and Siraki. During British colonial period, 'Siraiki' evolved as a separate language.

## **THE INHABITANTS ON THE BANKS OF THE INDUS RIVER**

The inhabitants of the areas through which the Indus River flows on and creates a significant natural beauty and wealth, are varied in terms of faith, race, national and language settings.

In the district of Jammu and Kashmir on the northern itinerary of the river reside the Buddhist inhabitants of Ladakh, people of Tibetan ancestry, and the 'Dards of Dardic' or Indo – Aryan ancestry who follow Islam and Buddhism. Subsequently, the river goes down into Baltistan in north Pakistan, going by the important 'Balti city of Skardu'. While the river flows through Pakistan, it creates a characteristic border of society and traditions. On the western banks of the river, the people are mostly of 'Baloch, Pashtun', and other Iranian ancestry, with intimate economic, traditional, and communal ties with areas of Iran and East Afghanistan.

The eastern banks of the Indus River are mostly inhabited by citizens of Indo-Aryan ancestry like the Sindhis and the Punjabis. In the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and northern Punjab, tribal Pashtun people stay together with 'Dardic' populace in the hills (Kalash, Khohar, Shina, and others), Burushos (in Hunza), and Punjabi individuals. People of

Sindhi ancestry mostly inhabit the Sindh province. People of Pashtun and 'Baloch' background inhabit on the western banks of the river.<sup>5</sup>

All early civilizations were born in river valleys; the mountain and the sea were too inhospitable for the early man. The Indus valley civilization is one of the oldest civilizations known to have evolved near the banks of the Indus.

The early man not only needed river water for sustenance, he needed protection from the natural elements as well. It is therefore; believed that in the Sindh area the first habitation began in the 'Khirthar' range in the west, not far from the river. The mountain caves in this range provided a good natural shelter close to the river. It is therefore, no coincidence that remnants of Mohen-jo-daro, the crown of Indus civilization, are situated between the Indus and the 'Khirthar' range. The ancient 'Laki Tirath' is found in the same hilly area.

Historically and culturally, Sindh has always been part of India. The vast rocky Baluchistan desert has effectively cut it off from Iran in the west. But the small Kutch and Rajasthan deserts have also historically partially isolated it from the east, and that left the Indus as the main artery connecting Sindh to the city of Multan in the North. This gave Sindh a certain identity and personality of its own.

The ancient city of Multan assumed an important position as the capital of Sindh and served as a centre of contact with the rest of India and of diffusion of culture in the Indus valley. The city off Multan has served as connecting link with Punjab-Kashmir, with which Sindh has age long affinities – cultural-racial and linguistic. It is a small wonder that Sindhis have down the ages have been referred to as Multanis.<sup>6</sup>

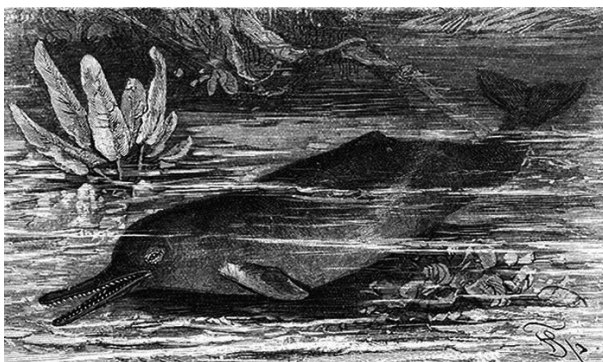
In ancient time Sindh was a much bigger region as its boundaries extended to Kashmir in the north and Saurashtra in the south and it is said that the Sindhi traders since ancient times had penetrated many parts of the world with their navigation skills and expertise of travelling by land.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/rivers/indus.html>

<sup>6</sup> The Sindh Story by K.R.MALKANI)

## FLORA AND FAUNA



Indus river dolphin

*Platanista gangetica minor* or the blind Indus River Dolphin is a breed of dolphin seen only in the Indus River. Earlier, the dolphin was also found in the tributaries of the Indus River. Palla fish (Hilsa) of the Indus River is a preferred food choice for inhabitants staying on the banks of the river. The number of fishes in the river waters is reasonably high. "Thatta, Sukkur, and Kotri" are the important fishing hubs – all located in the lower Sindh itinerary. However, irrigation and barraging has made fish cultivation a significant economic line of business. The big Indus valley delta is situated to the southeast of Karachi and it has been acknowledged by environmentalists to be one of the most significant ecological areas in the world. In this area, the river converts into several wetlands, torrents, and tributaries and joins the sea at low levels. You will see plenty of sea fishes and other creatures in this area, which include prawns and pomfret.<sup>7</sup>

The province of Sindh is mostly arid with scant vegetation except for the irrigated Indus Valley. The dwarf palm, *Acacia Rupestris* (kher), and *Tecomella undulata* (lohirro) trees are typical of the western hill region. In the Indus valley, the *Acacia nilotica* (babul) (babbur) is the most dominant and occurs in thick forests along the Indus banks. The *Azadirachta indica* (Neem) (Nim), *Zizyphus vulgaris* (Bir) (Ber), *Tamarix orientalis* (Jujuba lai) and *Capparis aphylla* (Kirir) are among the more common trees.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/rivers/indus.html>

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