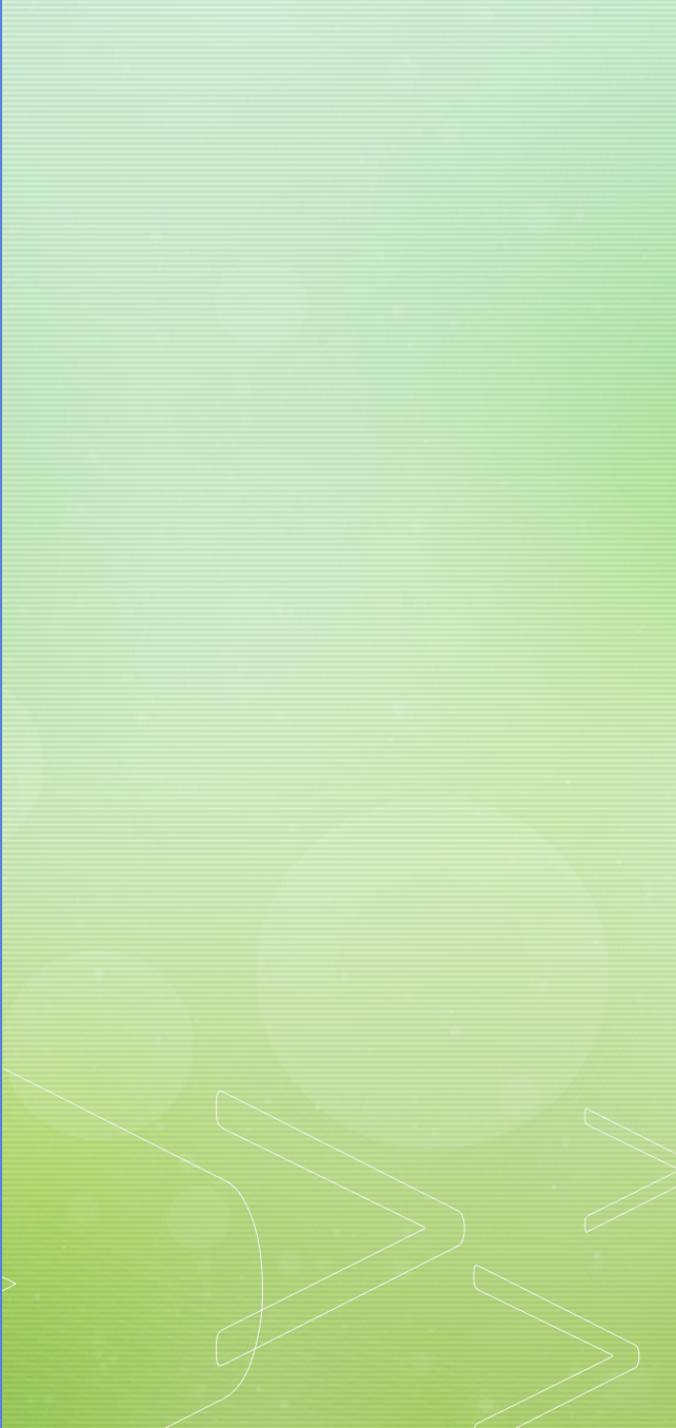




# Hinduism and Buddhism



# Hinduism Backstory

- Oldest continually practiced religion in the world
- Originated in Indus River Valley 4,500 years ago (modern-day India and Pakistan)
- Currently 3<sup>rd</sup> largest religion in the world

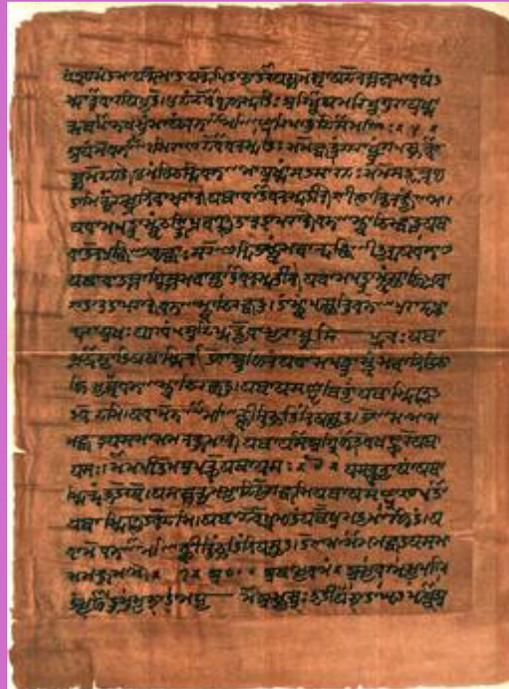
# Divine Power



- Divine power can manifest as different entities
- Not polytheistic – all entities are different representations of a single Supreme Being → henotheistic
- **Brahman:** Supreme Being, mysterious power that flows through everything

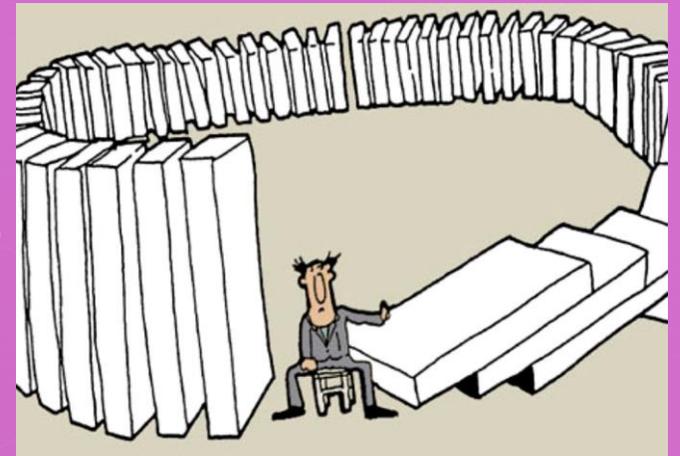
# Divine Texts

- **Vedas:** multiple sacred texts which contain hymns and rituals, mostly written in Sanskrit
- **Four Vedas**
  - Rig Veda
  - Sama Veda
  - Yajur Veda
  - Atharva Veda



# Important Facts

- **Dharma:** set of principles which refer to one's duty in the world to do the right thing
- **Karma:** notion that your actions are balanced cyclically in this and future lives
  - “You get what you deserve!”



# A Few More Facts

- **Samsara:** reincarnation, cycle of death and rebirth experienced by a soul while it's in the material world and on its way to freedom
- Ethnic religion concentrated in India and Nepal, but has spread to U.S. and U.K.
- Hindu temples are heavily decorated to embody ideas of Hinduism
- More than 1,000 Hindu festivals each year
  - Typically evolve around seasonal changes
  - Diwali and Holi



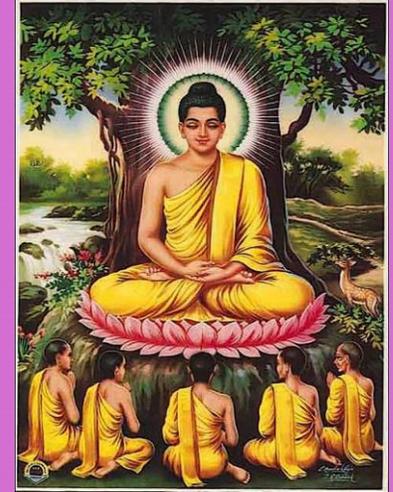
# Caste System

- **Caste system:** people are born into social classes that dictate their professions, who they marry, who they can have contact with
- Cannot change your caste in your lifetime
- How you live your life will determine the caste you are born into next lifetime
- Scholars argue it was invented by the powerful to perpetuate their social status and is not rooted in scripture
- Still evident in some rural areas

# Caste Groupings

- **Brahmins:** priests, teachers, judges, and intellectuals who understood the dharma
- **Kshatriyas:** warriors, noblemen who ran govt and had the most power over daily life
- **Vaishya:** skilled merchants and farmers
- **Sudras:** unskilled laborers
- **Untouchables/Outcastes:** so low on the ladder they didn't count as part of the caste systems

# Buddhism Backstory



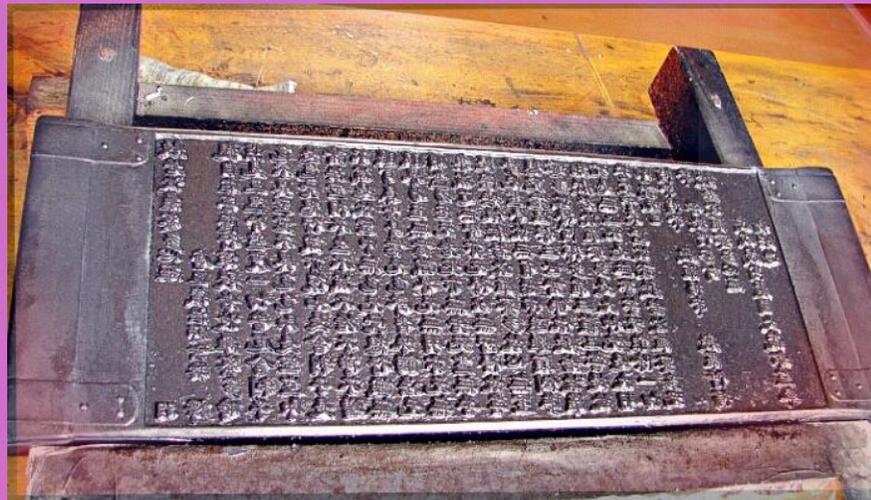
- Siddhartha Gautama 500 BC
- Gave up upper-class life for poverty and spiritual devotion at age 35
- Meditated under a sacred fig tree until he achieved enlightenment
- Known as Buddha or “enlightened one”

# Divine Power

- There isn't one!
- Deemphasizes the role of a god
- Stresses importance of personal responsibility

# Divine Texts

- Buddha's writings preserved on scrolls and kept in 3 baskets
- **Tripitaka:** name of Buddha's scriptures, means "3 baskets"



# Important Facts

- Buddha's teachings encourage leading a moral life by accepting the **Four Noble Truths**
  - Life is suffering
  - Suffering arises from attachment to desire
  - Suffering ceases when attachment to desires ceases
  - Freedom from suffering is possible by following the "middle way"
- **Middle way:** encourages people to live in the present, act in moderation, and accept others

# A Few More Facts

- Grew out of Hinduism
- Believe in reincarnation and karma
  - People go through cycles of rebirth as they attempt to reach enlightenment
- **Nirvana:** enlightenment reached, freed from life's suffering
- Does not recognize the caste system
- **Stupas:** Buddhist temples, often contain holy relics



# The Buddhist Divide

- **Theravada:**

- Disavows supernatural aids for reaching enlightenment
- No god, no supernatural solution to earthly problems

- **Mahayana:**

- Group of Buddhist faiths – Zen and Tibetan
- Does contain supernatural element
- Encourages individuals to become bodhisattvas
  - Compassionately refrains to enter nirvana in order to save others, worshipped as a deity

# Buddhist Holidays

- Not all traditions celebrate all holidays, not all celebrated at the same time
- Well-known bodhisattvas celebrated
- Buddha's birthday (Vesak or Visakah Puja)
- Buddhist New Year