

Social and Cultural Issues



Culture

- Shared meanings
- Transmitted across generations



Social Identity: Traditional & Modern



Traditional versus Modern

- Collectivistic
(my group first)
- Extended Family in Residence
- Hierarchical Relations
- Obedience to Assigned Role in Family & Society
- Fatalism
- Individualistic
(me first)
- Nuclear Family in Residence
- Egalitarian Relations
- Flexible Roles
- Self-efficacy

Traditional versus Modern

- Emphasis on Past and Present
- Religious Explanations of World
- Emphasis on Future
- Scientific Explanations of the World

କଠିପ୍ରସାଦର



ସମସ୍ତ ଅଧିକାର



卐 "शादी में जबर आना!" 卐



monsoon
WEDDING



An exuberant family drama set in Punjabi culture, where ancient tradition and dot-com modernity meet and mix.

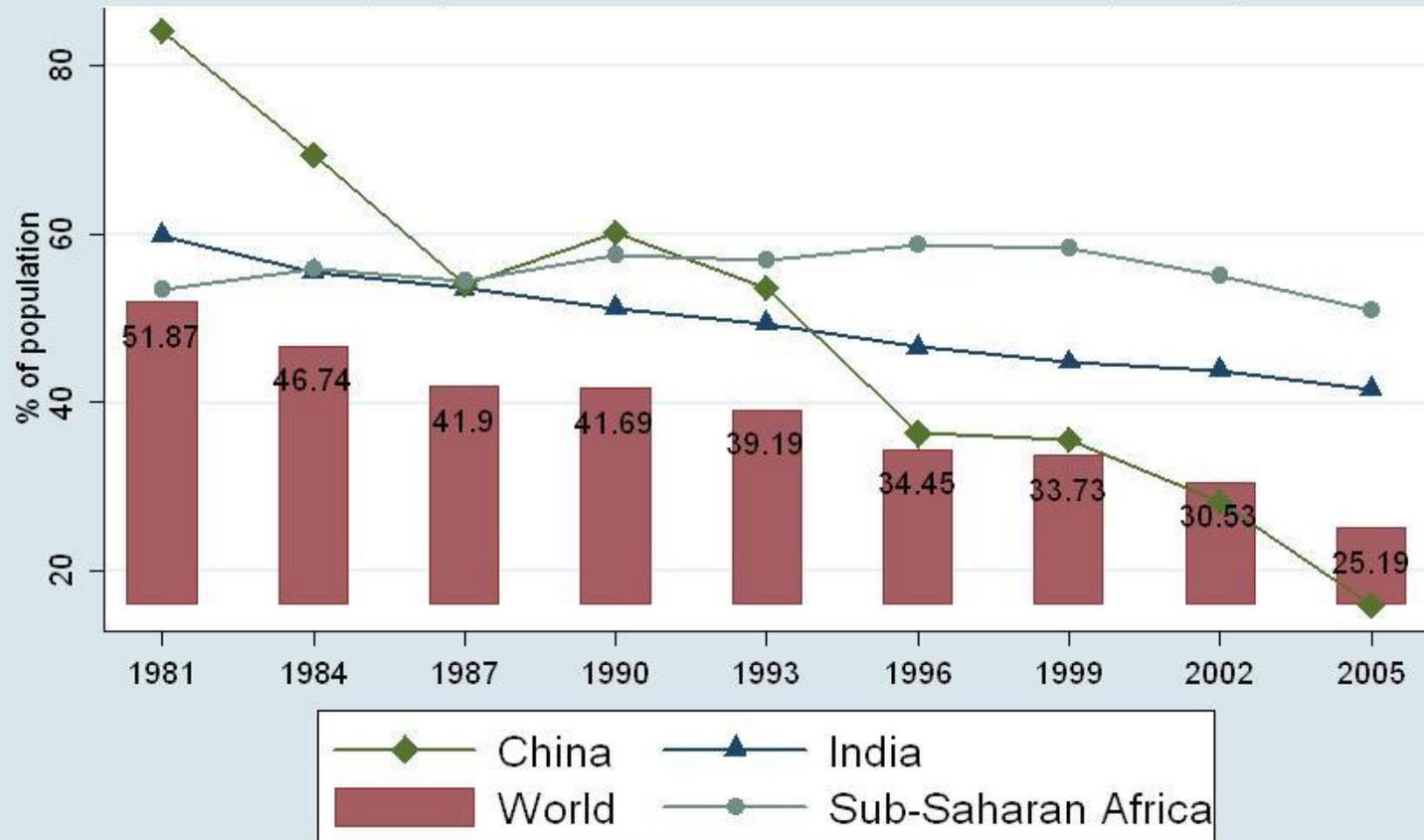
Social Issues

- Poverty
- Caste System
 - Dalits (formerly “untouchables”)
- Gender Issues: (GEM: 128 out of 177)
 - Widows
 - Dowry and The Daughter Deficit
 - Sati (Suttee)
 - Rape
- Empowerment of Women
 - Ladies Special
 - Grameen Bank and Micro-loans

Poverty

World Bank Poverty Estimates

% of people whose income is below \$1.25 per day



Source: World Bank

Caste System

- For traditional Hindus, one was born into a given subcaste (*jati*)
- Subcaste defines where one will live, with whom one will associate, one's marriage partner, and one's livelihood.
- Caste is disappearing where people are able to separate themselves from their villages, occupations, and *jati*-related dialects.
- Familiarity and cohesion within *jatis* and attachment to place help to explain the persistence of this system

Caste System

- Mahatma Gandhi began efforts to eliminate the caste system.
- Later, India began an affirmative action program, reserving government jobs, higher education spaces, and parliamentary seats for lower castes
- Norm changes: Inter-caste marriages are increasingly common
- India has been moving increasingly toward a meritocracy; in a meritocracy, you're free to succeed or fail

Dalits

- Dalits (meaning “crushed under foot”) are outside the caste system
- Dalits were called called “untouchables” because their touch was enough to cause impurity and pollution
- B.R. Ambedkar, a great leader of the Untouchables and architect of the Indian constitution, had the practice abolished
- There are ~ 170 million Dalits in India; they make up 21% of UP
- Dalits are excluded, exploited and humiliated

Dalits: Exclusions & Humiliations

(Sooryamoorthy, 2008, Untouchability in Modern India)

- most villages do not allow Dalits in homes of non-Dalits; do not allow temple entry
- in nearly half of the villages, Dalits are refused entry into shops; seated separately in tea shops; must keep distance from shop counters; merchandise is kept on the ground and Dalits must leave their money there; cannot enter police stations to register complaints; denial of access to public cremations.
- Dalit youth cannot wear fashionable clothes; if they do, they can suffer reprisals and beatings

Dalits: Exclusions & Humiliations

- Jobs: Unclean occupations such as removing carcasses, cleaning human waste from sewers and public and private latrines
- Sexual favors & rape

Dalit Women Gaining Political Strength



Still, the two-glass tea shop is not the exception but the rule!

Mayawati Kumari: Politician from the Dalit Community!



FUTURE PM?
U.P. CHIEF MINISTER MAYAWATI

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Social Issues: Widows



Many of the widows of Vrindavan have to rely on charity.

Vrindavan Widows



Some widows sing at local temples in order to get food.



Child actress, Sarala Kariyawasam, in academy award nominated film "Water."

Dowry

- UNICEF estimates that around 5,000 Indian women are killed in dowry-related incidents each year.
- Dowry is payment to the groom's family for taking on the burden of a woman.
- A dowry may cost many years of wages and often throws a family into debt.
- Thus, having a girl is undesirable and puts the new bride at the mercy of her in-laws should they decide her dowry is too small.

The Daughter Deficit

See NYT article for more

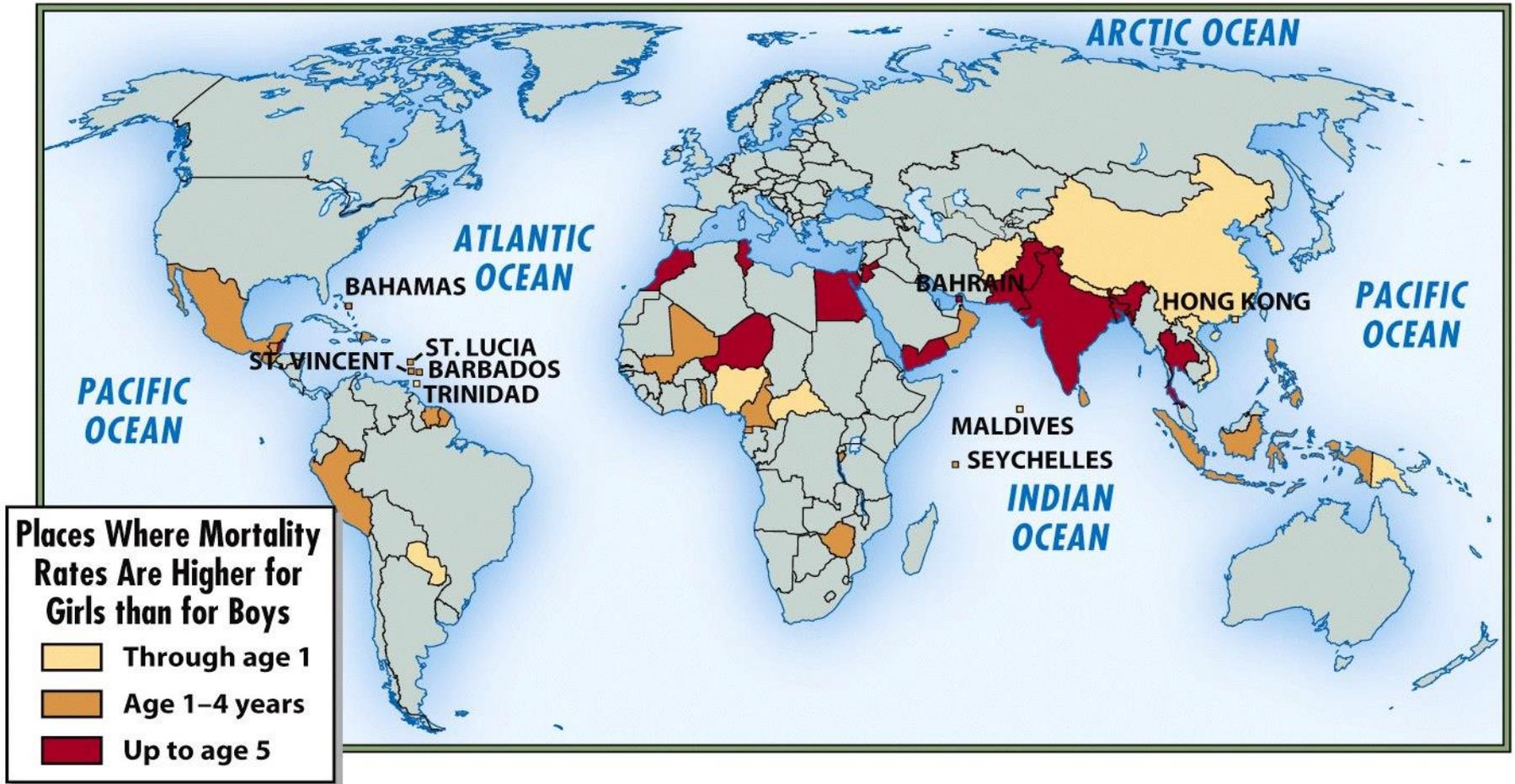


Figure 1-19
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The Daughter Deficit: Why?

- Daughters are costly
- Sons = Social Security
- Patriarchy = a male dominated society
 - family can lose its property if there's no son
 - legally women can inherit property but in some parts of India they risk ostracism if they claim what is legally theirs

The Daughter Deficit

- A second daughter is 2.36 times more likely to die than a first born daughter.
- Another result of son preference is big families (i.e., population growth)

The Daughter Deficit

- Hindi expression: “Investing in a daughter is like planting a seed in the neighbor’s garden.”
- Ultrasound advertised: “Pay 5,000 rupees today and save 500,000 rupees tomorrow.”

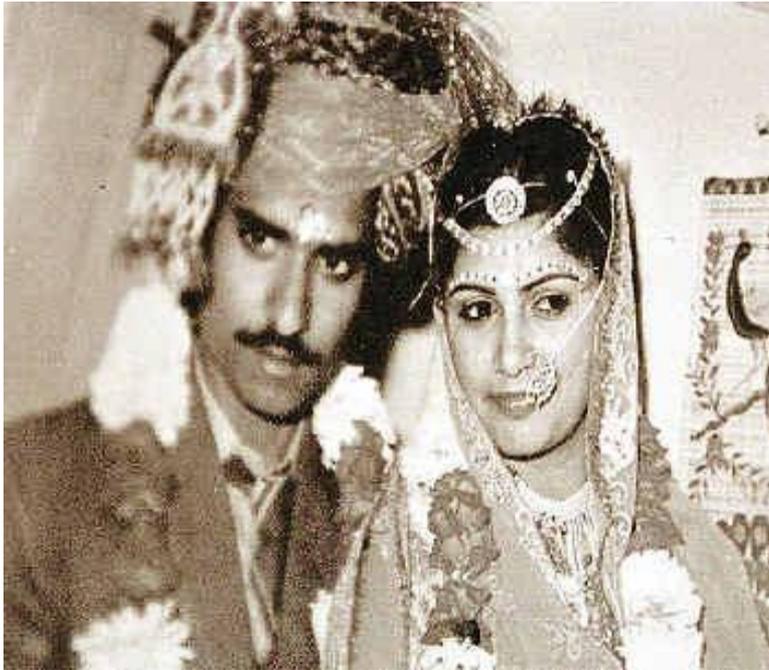
The Daughter Deficit



Sati (Suttee)



Sati (Suttee)

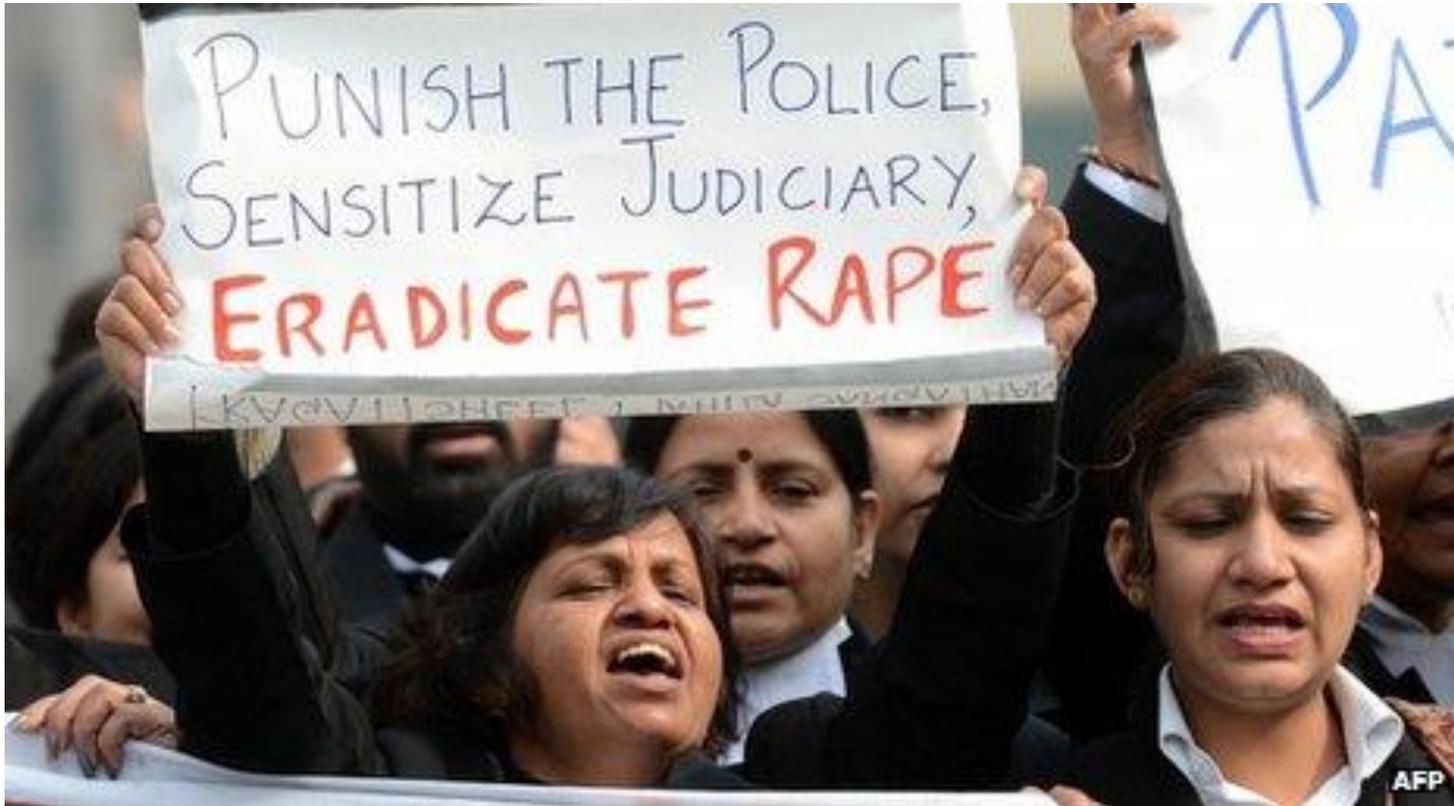


**Roop Kanwar with husband
after their wedding.**

Demonstrations by women following
the sati of Roop Kanwar in 1987.



Rape



There have been widespread protests in India since the 16 December 2012 gang rape.

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Eve Teasing and the Ladies Special Commuter Train

- The problem: Regular trains were packed with vegetable sellers, pickpockets, beggars and lots of men who would pinch, grope, shout insults and catcalls at women.



Ladies Special consists of eight new commuter trains exclusively for female passengers. Mamata Banerjee, the new minister of railways, made it happen!

.Women relaxed on the Ladies Special from Palwal to New Delhi.



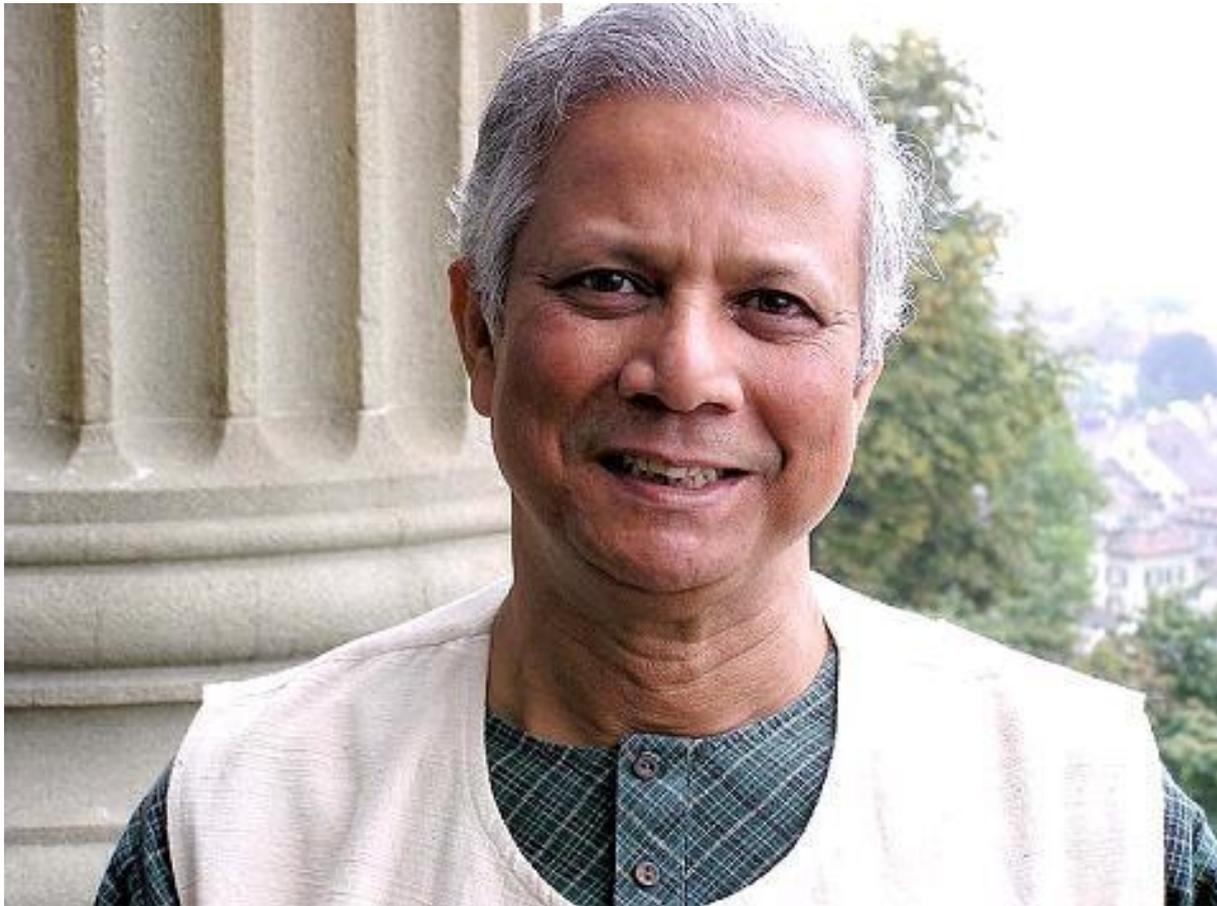
Socioeconomic Issue: Women and Microloans

Lending may seem risky, but this is overcome by arranging potential borrowers into groups that are responsible, as a whole, for paying back the loans.



Nonprofit organization: Freedom From Hunger

The Grameen Bank: Micro-Credit Loans



Mohammed Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize Winner

Social Issues: Gender

- *Gender Equality at the Village Level and Beyond*
 - A strong activist movement in India has led to more enthusiastic enforcement of constitutional protections.
 - In the 1980s, *panchayati raj* (village government) was introduced to encourage gender equality in village life.
 - In Indian cities, the number of professional women is growing.
 - India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan have all had female heads of state.

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Culture: Shared Meanings

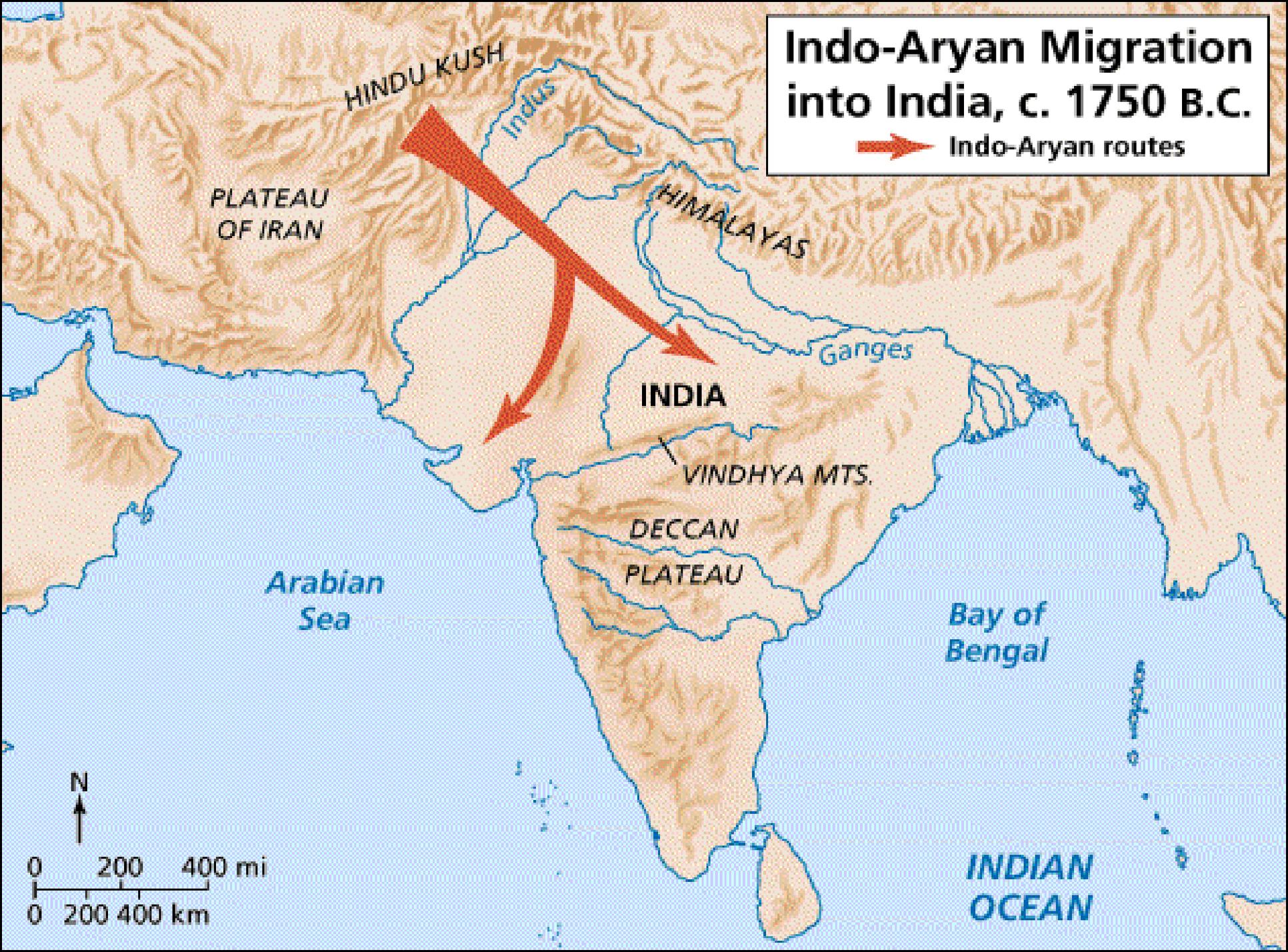
- Aryan and Dravidians
- Indian Epics
- Religion

Culture: Shared Meanings

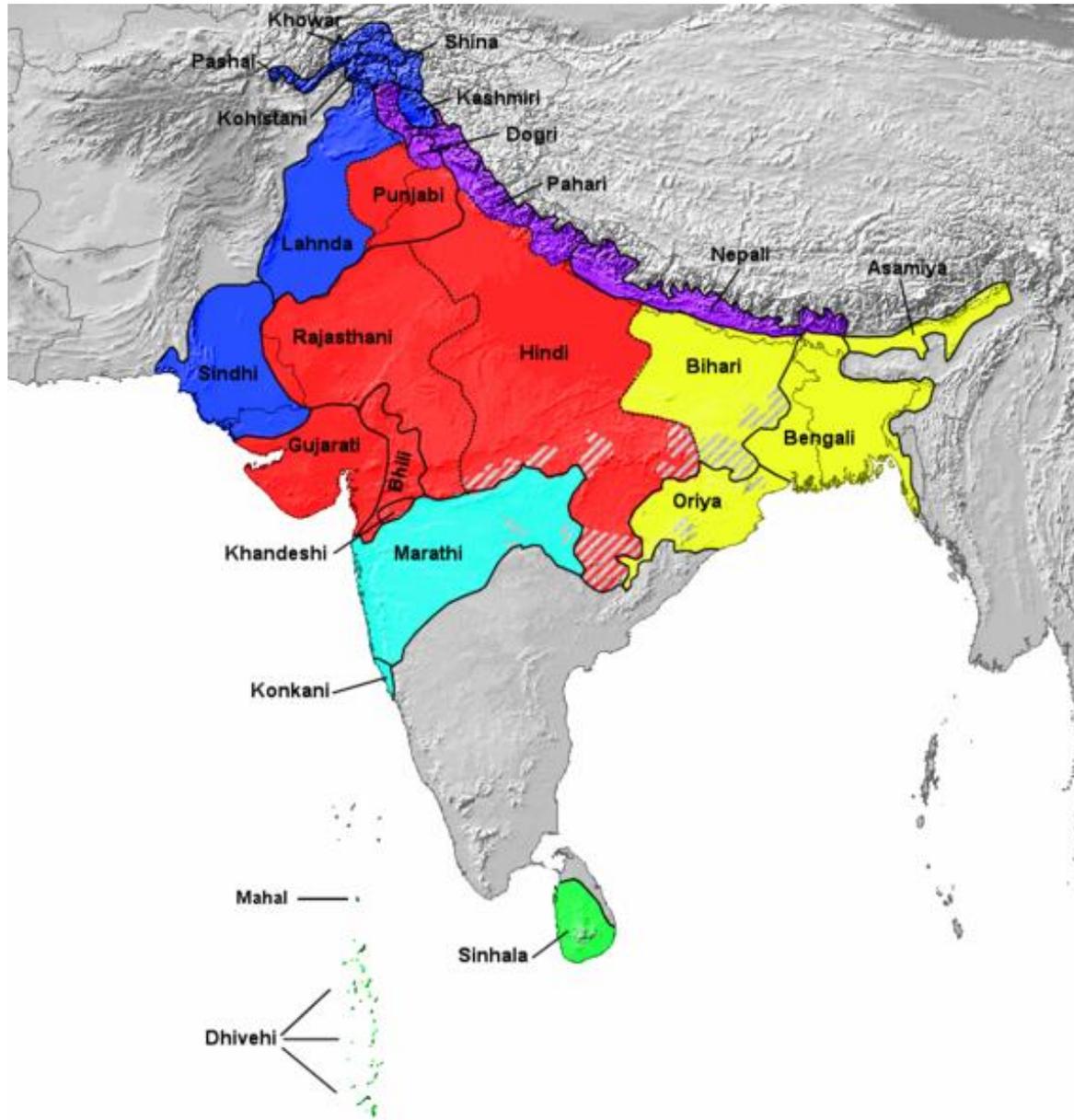
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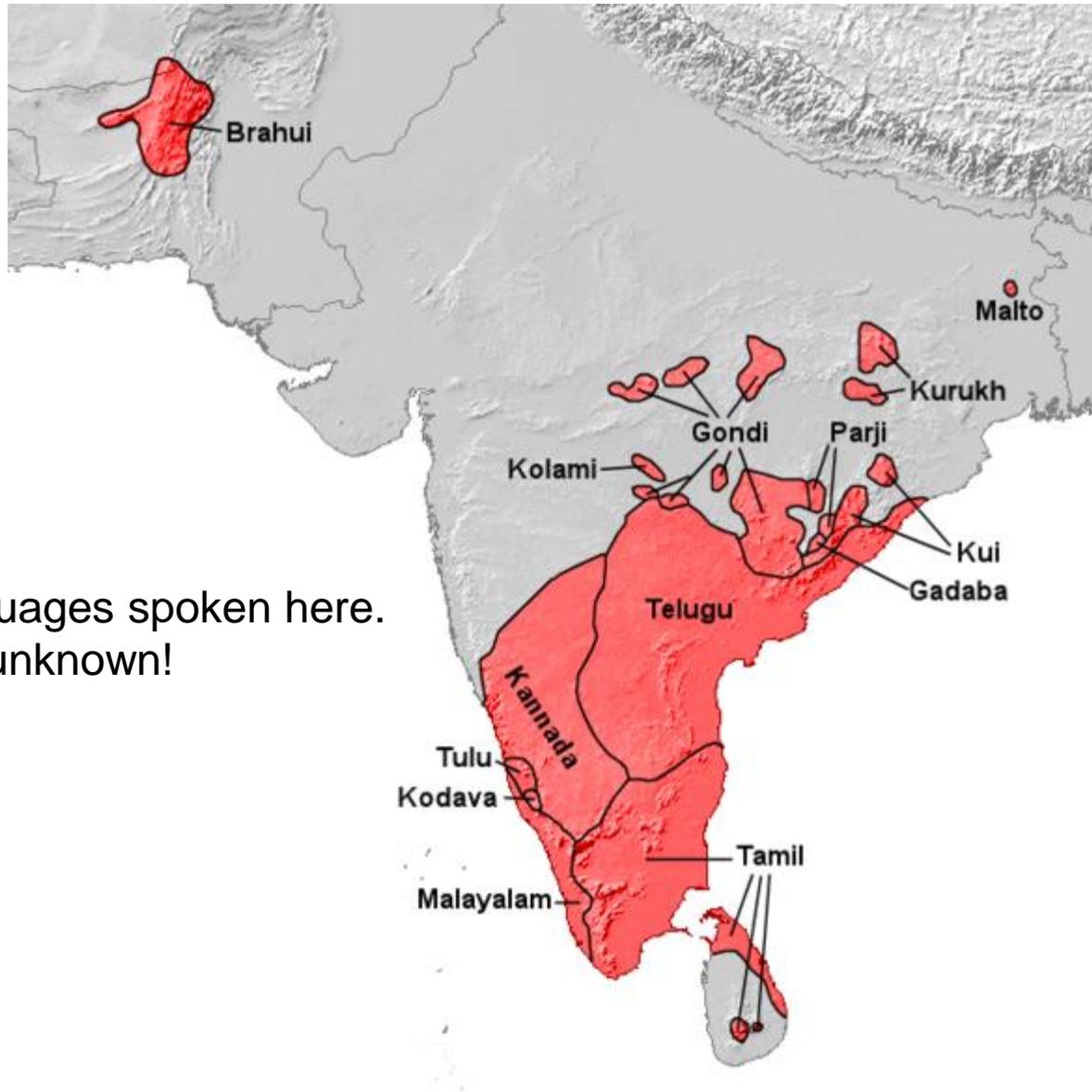
Indo-Aryan Migration into India, c. 1750 B.C.

➔ Indo-Aryan routes



Languages of Indo-Aryan Family





Dravidian languages spoken here.
Origins? Still unknown!

Language Diversity and Shared Meanings

Dravidian Indians (from southern India)



Northern Indian Child

Culture: Shared Meanings

- Aryan and Dravidians
- Vedas
- Religion

Vedas (Knowledge)

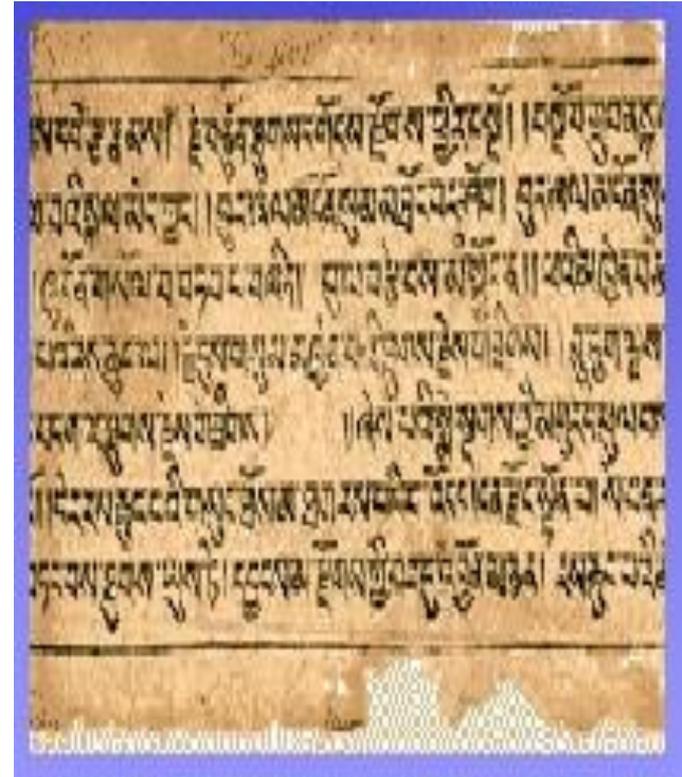
- Rig Veda: oldest religious text
- Epic Poems: Ramayana & Mahabharata

Rig Veda: Hinduism's Most Sacred Text & Oldest Religious Text in the World

Poems, first sung (hymns);
later written in Sanskrit ~1000 BC.

Creation Hymn

Who really knows, and who can swear,
How creation came, when or where!
Even gods came after creation's day,
Who really knows, who can truly say
When and how did creation start?
Did He do it? Or did He not?
Only He, up there, knows, maybe;
Or perhaps, not even He.



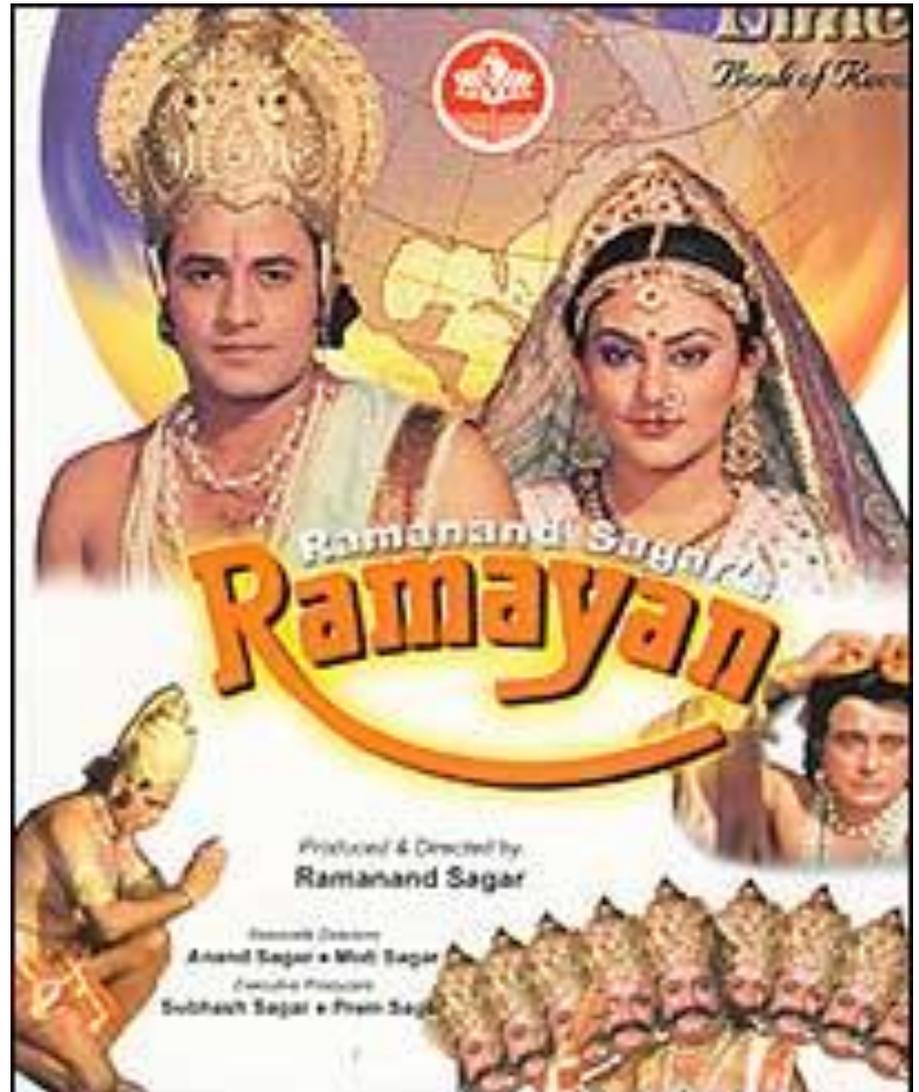
The Hindu Epics: Culture as Intergenerational Transfer of Shared Meanings



The *Ramayana* is to Easterners as Adam and Eve is to Westerners.

78 Part TV Series

The *Ramayana* was shown on Sunday mornings in 1987 and 1988.



Happy Dewali!



Culture: Shared Meanings

- Aryan and Dravidians
- Indian Epics
- Religion

Hindu Temple



Culture and Religion

- Hinduism is a complex belief system with a broad range of beliefs and practices, as notions of divinity are quite flexible.
- Nonetheless, almost all Hindus believe in reincarnation and many still participate in the caste system.

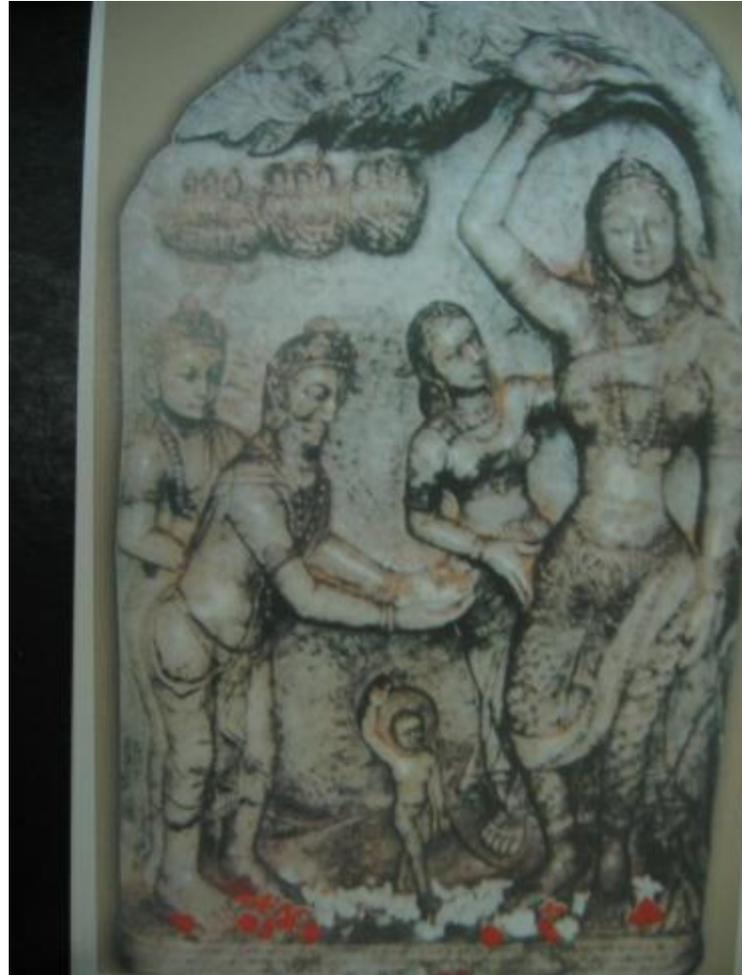
Ashoka Pillar and Lion Capital



Queen Mayadevi gave birth to Siddhartha Gautama



Mayadevi giving birth to Prince Siddhartha



Buddhist Shanti Stupa

International Peace Pagodas are built by Japanese monks, supported by Nipponzan Myohoji, an international Buddhist Organization.

Dedicated 2001 in Lubini.



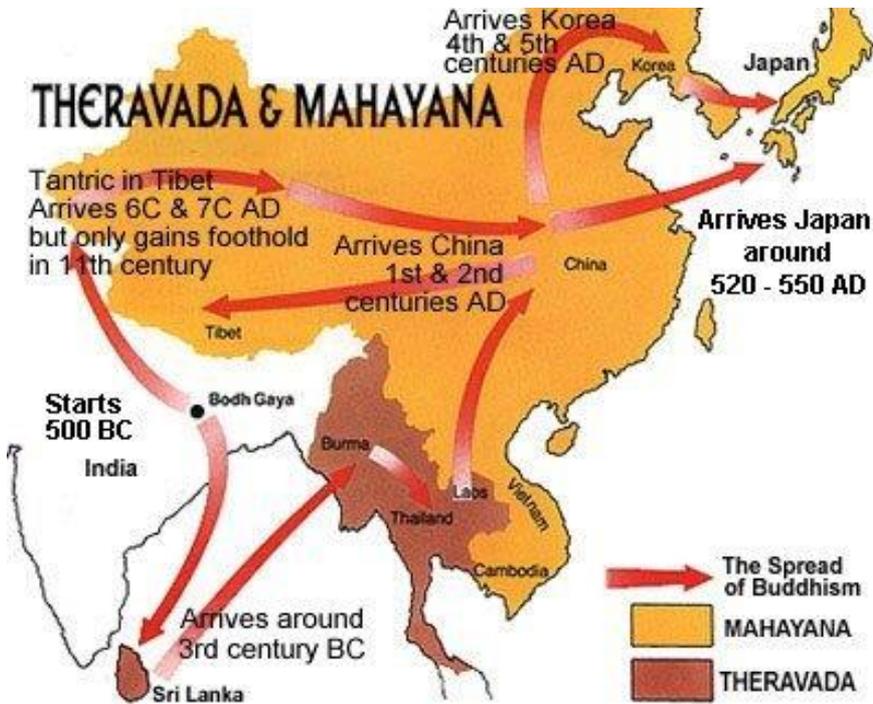
Ashoka is considered the founder of the Mahabodhi Temple (Great Awakening) in Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India.

The temple commemorates the site where the Buddha attained enlightenment.



Mahabodhi Temple from late Gupta period, made entirely from brick – restored by the British.

What happened to Buddhism?



The Spread of Islam

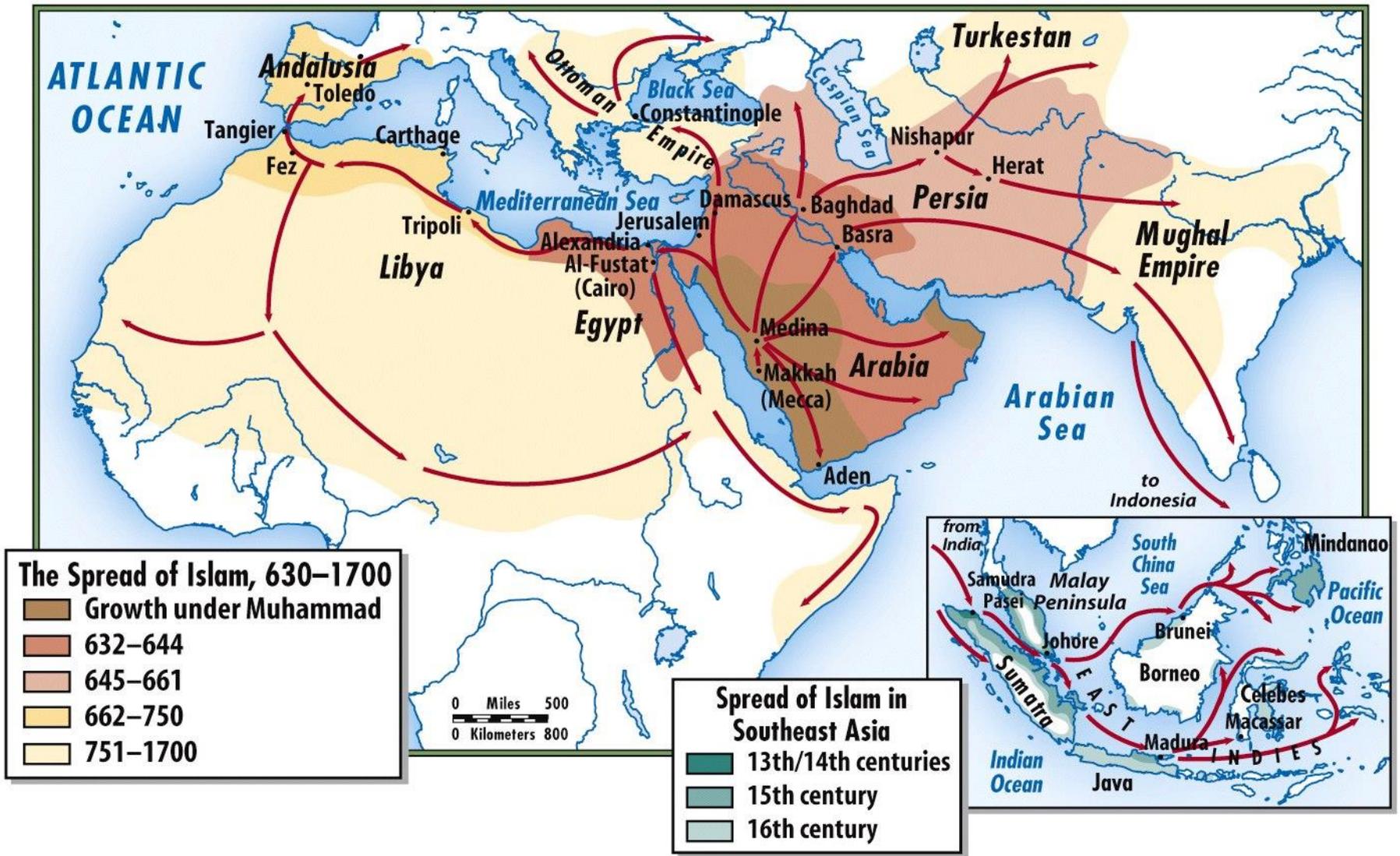
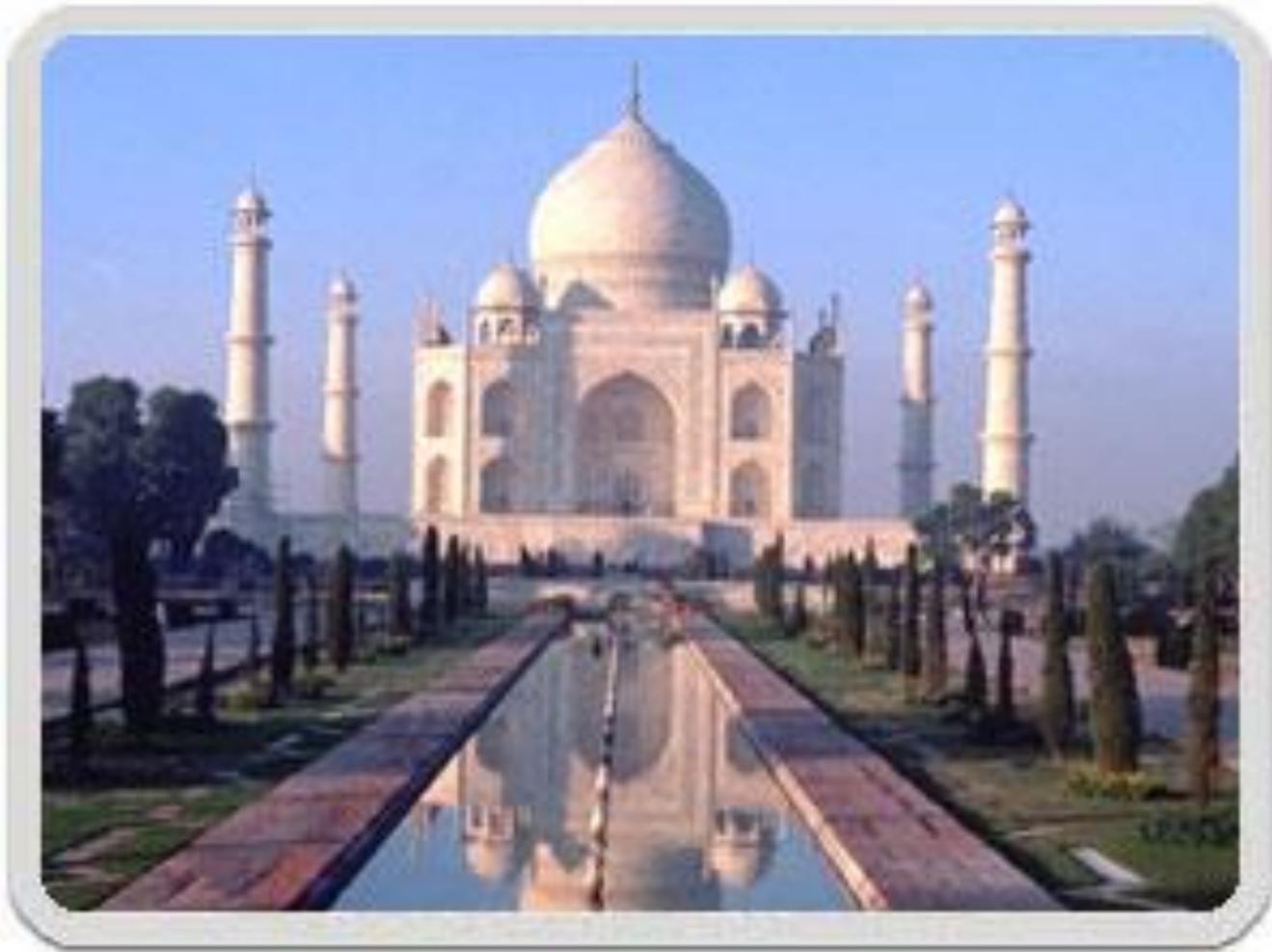


Figure 6-5
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Islam & Taj Mahal



Jama Masjid

Commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan



The Red Fort in Old Delhi



Cultural Diversity

Islam

- Monotheistic.
- No idols.
- One sacred book.
- Uniform dogma.
- Reject dogma of other religions

Hinduism

- Polytheistic.
- Many idols.
- Various sacred writings.
- Varying beliefs.
- Absorbed other religions.

Cultural Diversity

Islam

- Bury deceased.
- Social equality.
- Eat beef/Sacrifice cows.

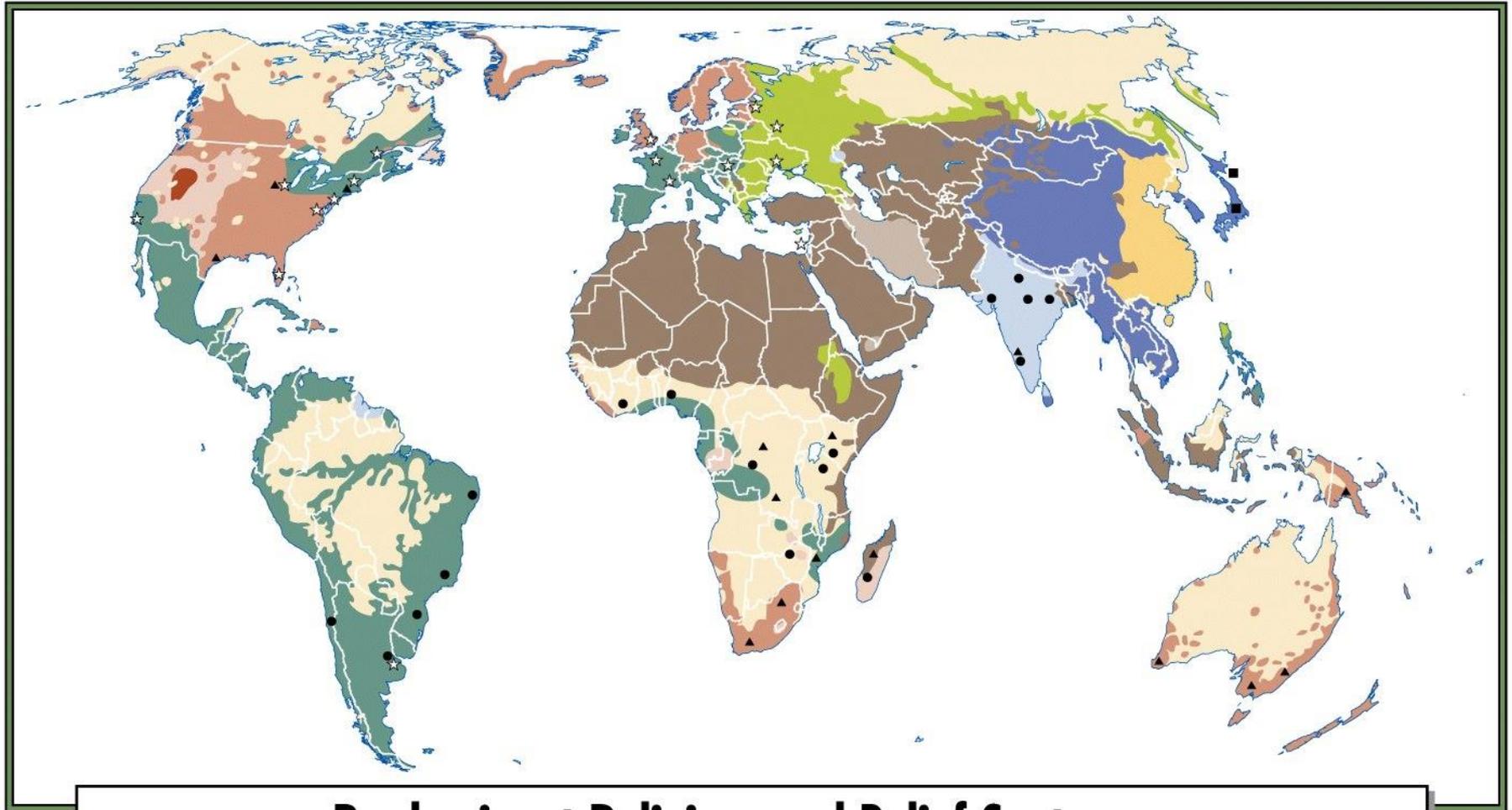
Hinduism

- Cremate deceased.
- Caste separation.
- Venerate cows.

Culture: Religion and Geographic Patterns

- Hindus are found mostly in India; the Ganga River plain is considered the heart of Hinduism. Eight-hundred million of the world's 900 million practicing Hindus reside in India.
- Buddhism's origins are in northern India and it has spread to eastern and southeastern Asia. Only 1 percent of South Asia is Buddhist, but they form the majority in Bhutan and Sri Lanka.
- Muslims form the majority in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Maldives; they are an important minority in India.

Culture and Religion (shared beliefs)



Predominant Religions and Belief Systems



Figure 1-7

Culture and Religion

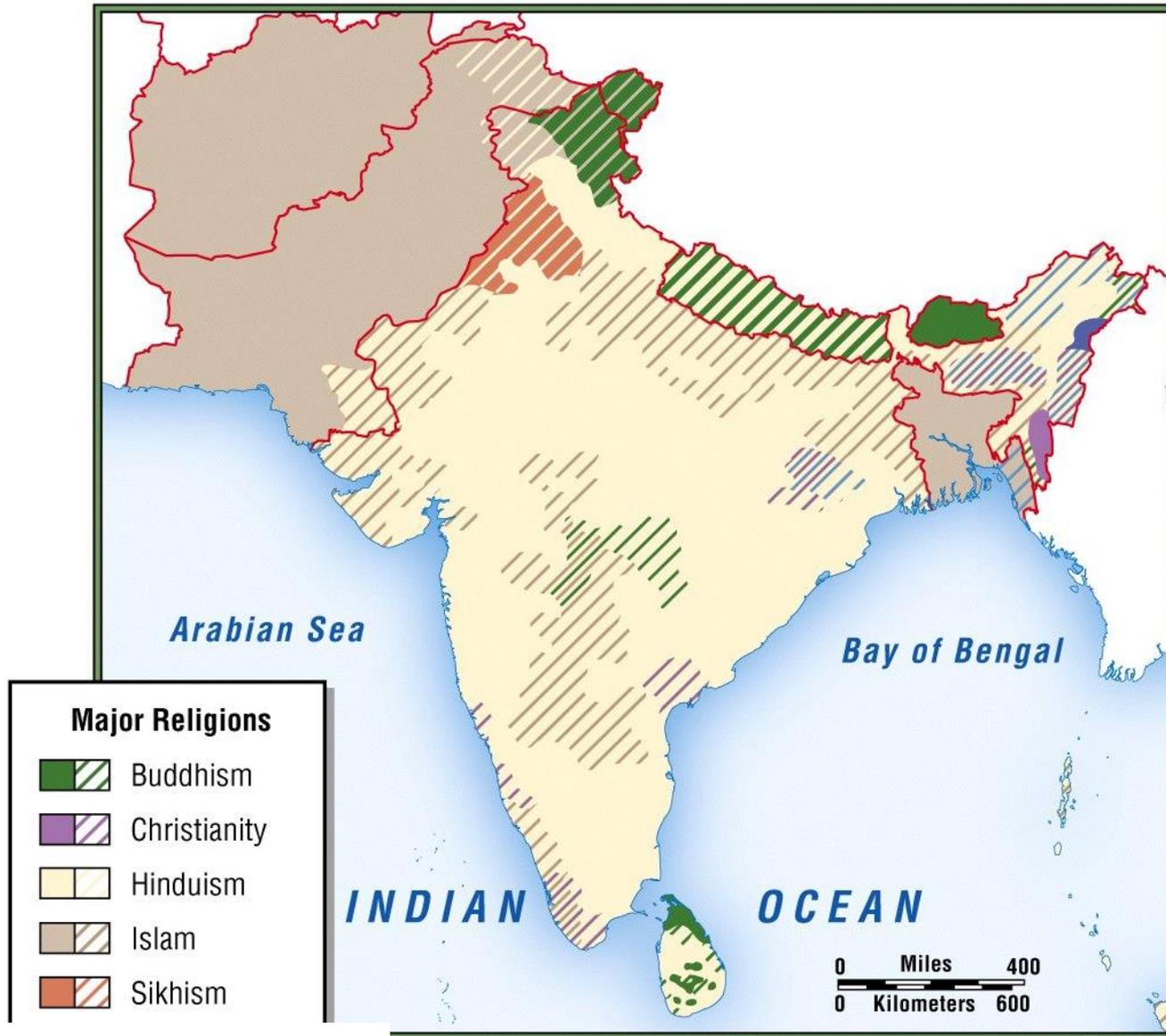
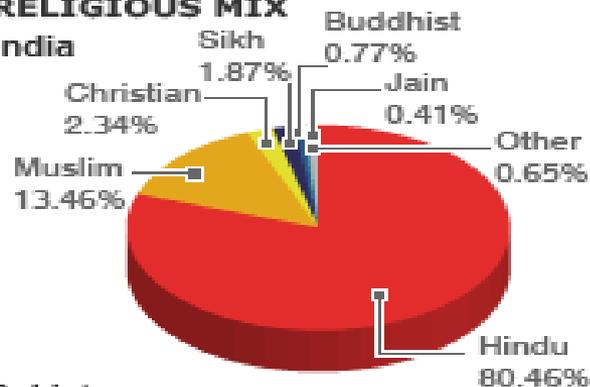


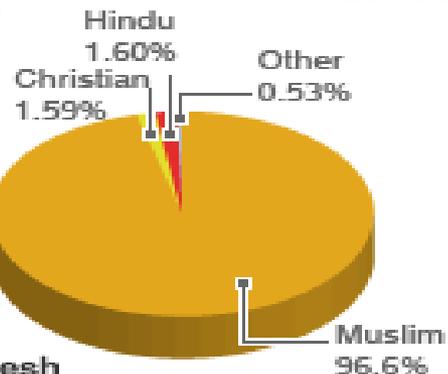
Figure 8-14

RELIGIOUS MIX

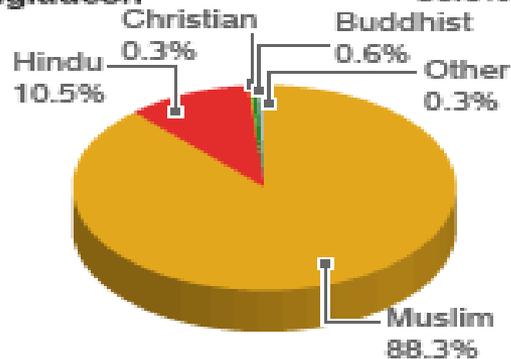
India



Pakistan



Bangladesh



SOURCE: US Department of State; Census of India 2001; Pakistan Population Census Organisation 1998

Sikhism: A blended religion?

- Sikhs – inspired by Hindu as well as Islamic ideas – live mainly in Punjab in northwest India. More live in diaspora communities than in India itself.
- Belief in reincarnation
- Monotheistic
- Once baptism is taken, the devotee is prohibited from hair trimming, adultery, meat eating, smoking, drinking, and drugs.

Gurudwara Bangla Sahib

(Sikh House of Worship, Delhi)



The pond inside its complex, known as the "Sarovar", whose water is considered holy by Sikhs and is known as "Amrit"





Culture: Religion and Geographic Patterns

- Christians are an important minority along the west coast of India. In some places in northeast India, more than half the descendants of the ancient aboriginal inhabitants are Christian.
- Small communities of Jews are found along the Malabar Coast and in major cities.
- Animism is practiced throughout South Asia, especially in central and northeastern India where ancient aboriginal inhabitants still live.

Culture: Religion and Geographic Patterns

- Those who follow the tradition of Jainism are found mainly in western India and in large urban centers. They are known for their nonviolence and vegetarianism.

The Hare Krishna Movement

- Monotheistic religion within Vedic tradition
- Based on Bhagavad-gita, the spiritual teachings of Lord Krishna
- See iskcon.org



ISKCON Temple in New Delhi

Lotus Temple: Baha'i House of Worship



India is a Cool Place!

