



# The Hindu Traditions

Three Paths to a Single Goal?

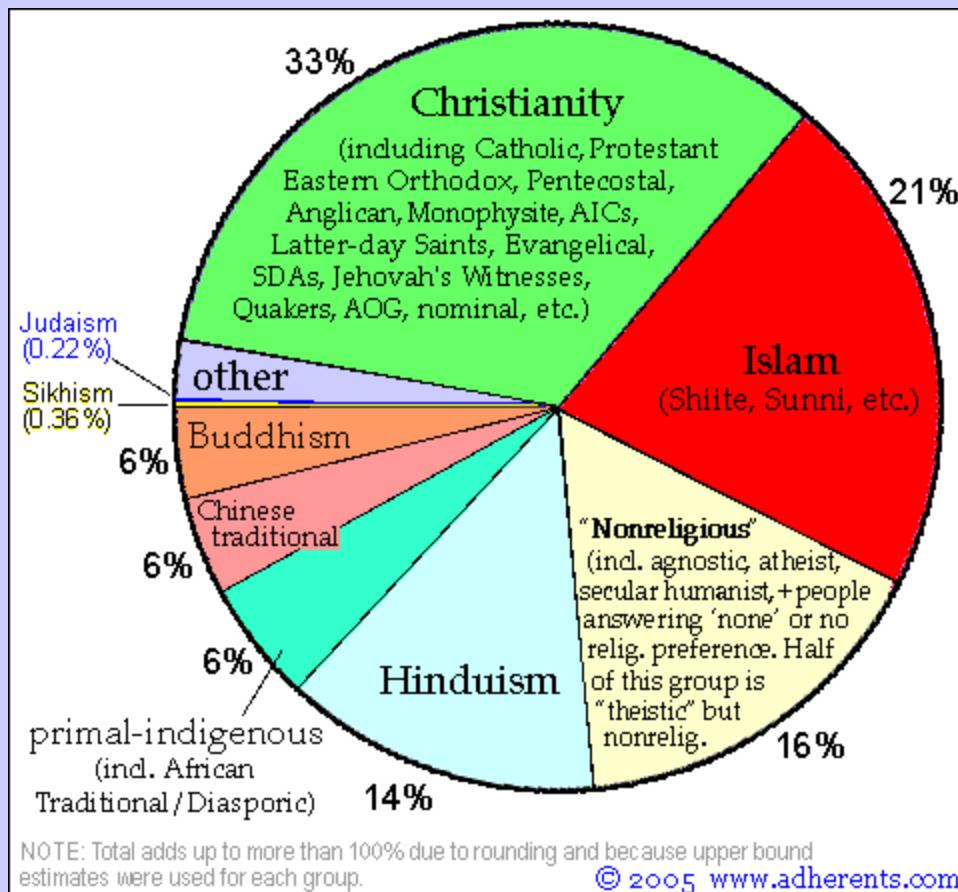
8/25/16

- I.      Background: Geography, History, Statistics
- II.     The Three Paths
  - A. The Way of Action
  - B. The Way of Wisdom
  - C. The Way of Devotion
- III.    Leading to...? (Views on Death & Afterlife)

Street scene, Jodhpur

*National Geographic*, May 1997, p. 53

# But first, some facts and maps



Christianity: 2.1 billion

Islam: 1.5 billion

Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist: 1.1 billion

Hinduism: 900 million

Chinese traditional religion: 394 million

Buddhism: 376 million

primal-indigenous: 300 million

African Traditional & Diasporic: 100 million

Sikhism: 23 million

Juche [North Korea]: 19 million

Spiritism [Brazil]: 15 million

Judaism: 14 million

Baha'i: 7 million

Jainism: 4.2 million

Shinto: 4 million

Cao Dai [Vietnam]: 4 million

Zoroastrianism: 2.6 million

Tenrikyo [Japan]: 2 million

Neo-Paganism: 1 million

Unitarian-Universalism: 800 thousand

Rastafarianism: 600 thousand

Scientology: 500 thousand

# Statistics - India

- 828 million Hindus
- 138 million Muslims
- 24 million Christians
- 19 million Sikhs
- 8 million Buddhists
- 4 million Jains
- 7 million Other

(“Other” includes 2.5 million Bahai; 69,000 Parsis; Jews in mid-40s were 30,000, but numbers now are much smaller, ~6000?)

For comparison: in the US Census for 2014, there were ~ 2 million people in NM and 38 million in CA

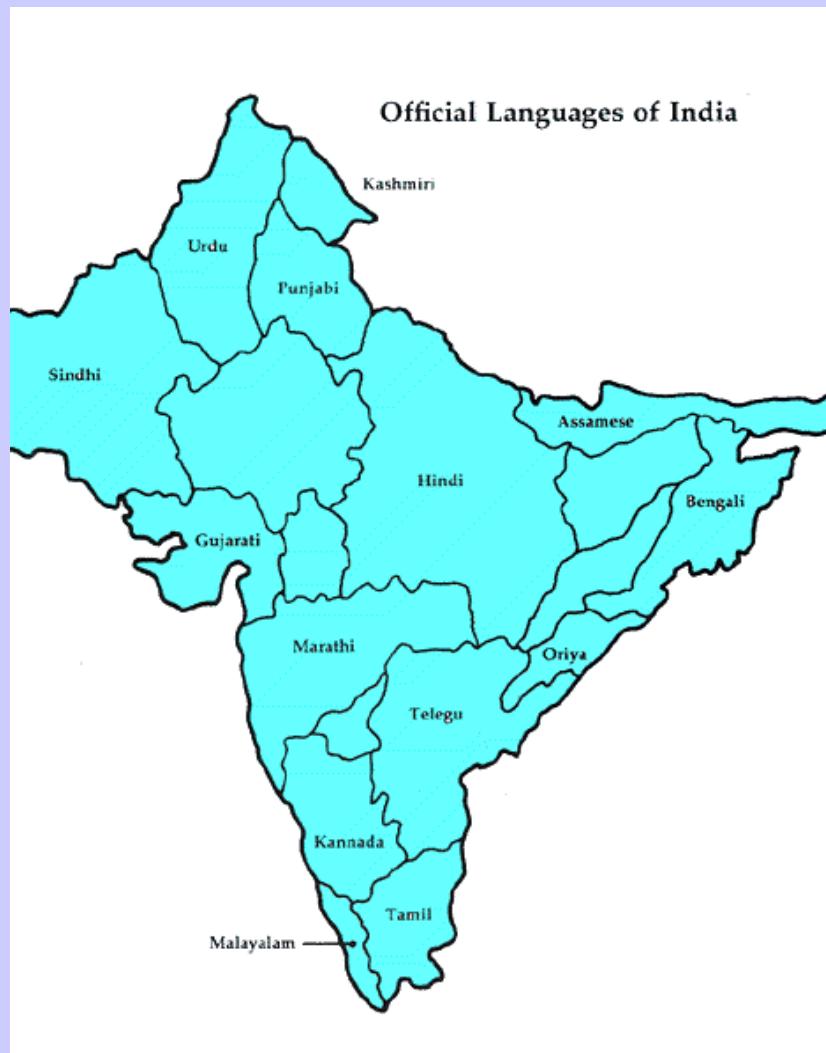


Hindu	80.5%
Muslim	13.4%
Christian	2.3%
Sikh	1.9%
Buddhist	0.8%
Jain	0.4%
Other	0.6%

(Indian Census, 2001)

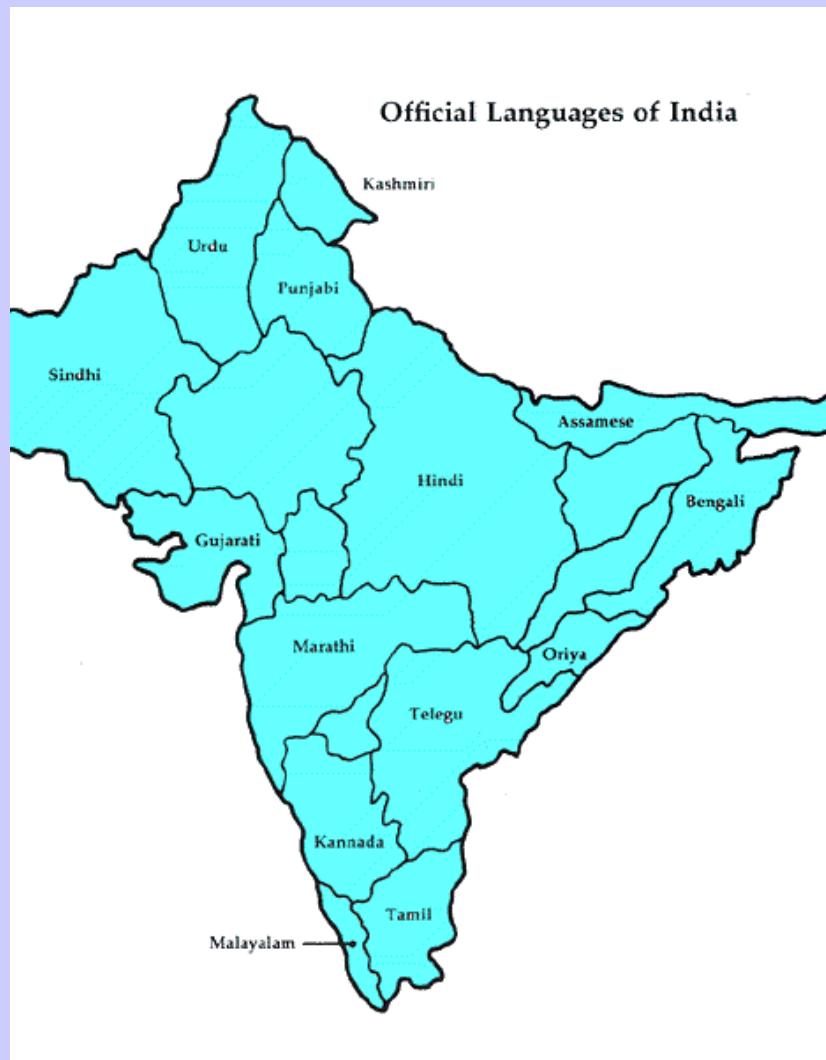
# Major Language Families:

- Indo-Aryan  
(most in north, 74% of population; Hindi has the most speakers)  
**\*\*\*\*\*STUPID MISTAKE ALERT\*\*\*\*\***  
A Hindu belongs to the religion  
Hindi is a language.  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dravidian (most in south, 24%; ex-Tamil)
- Other [Austro-Asiatic (1%), Tibeto-Burman (0.6%), tribal languages]
- 15 national languages. 1,683 'mother tongues' (official figure). An estimated 850 languages in daily use (Todd and Hancock 1986).



# Major Language Families:

- Indo-Aryan  
(most in north, 74% of population; Hindi has the most speakers)  
**\*\*\*\*\*STUPID MISTAKE ALERT\*\*\*\*\***  
A Hindu belongs to the religion  
Hindi is a language.  
\*\*\*\*\*
- Dravidian (most in south, 24%; ex-Tamil)
- Other [Austro-Asiatic (1%), Tibeto-Burman (0.6%), tribal languages]
- 18 national languages. 1,683 'mother tongues' (official figure). An estimated 850 languages in daily use (Todd and Hancock 1986). Two major *national* languages are Hindi and English.





## Chronology (all premodern dates approximate)

3000 – 1500 BCE	Indus Valley Civilization
1000 BCE	Indo-Europeans ('Aryans') & <i>Vedas</i> (hymns)
600 – 200 BCE	<i>Upanishads</i> (philosophical speculation)
550? – 480? BCE	the Buddha (Buddhism) & Mahavira (Jainism)
4th cent. BCE	Panini (Sanskrit grammarian)
300 BCE – 300 CE	Epics ( <i>Ramayana</i> and <i>Mahabharata</i> , incl. <i>Bhagavadgita</i> )
0	legal codes (e.g. <i>Laws of Manu</i> ) emphasize caste duties
1st cent. CE	earliest extant stone (cave) temples
500 CE	(1) Tamil poet-saints start <i>bhakti</i> (devotional) movement (2) start of composition of <i>Puranas</i> (stories about gods, etc.) (3) temple building & worship are widespread
1000 – 1707 CE	Islamic dynasties rule in northern India
1450? – 1547 CE	Mirabai (Rajasthani princess and saint)
1510	Portuguese in Goa; beginning of European colonialism
1575 CE	Tulsidas composes Avadhi [early Hindi] <i>Ramayana</i>
1857	First Indian Revolution ("Sepoy Mutiny") defeated; British rule
19 <sup>th</sup> century	"Reform" Movements (Brahmo, Arya Samaj; Vivekananda; etc.)
1947	Independence from British, "Partition" of India–Pakistan; 500,000(?) killed in Hindu-Muslim-Sikh riots; estimated 14.5 mill. emigrate
1987	Televised serial of (Hindi) <i>Ramayana</i>
1992	Hindu nationalists destroy mosque in Ayodhya; Hindu-Muslim riots
2002	Hindu-Muslim riots (again)

**NOTE:** You don't need to know actual dates, but you **MUST** know the relative chronology—e.g., the *Vedas* are older than the *Bhagavadgita*



# The Hindu Traditions

Three Paths to a Single Goal?

1/21/16

I. Background: Geography, History, Statistics

## II. The Three Paths

A. The Way of Action

B. The Way of Wisdom

C. The Way of Devotion

III. Leading to...? (Views on Death & Afterlife)

Street scene, Jodhpur

*National Geographic*, May 1997, p. 53

# 3 Paths

- Action (*karma*)
- Wisdom (*jnana*)
- Devotion (*bhakti*)



- Most people combine elements from each. But it's a useful way to organize a tremendous variety of religious activities & views
- Paths ≠ Sects
- Listed in approximate historical order

# Sects of Modern Hinduism

- Distinguished from one another by
  - deity worshipped (Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta)
  - region/language,
  - philosophical and/or liturgical schools, and sometimes
  - particular founder(s) or lineages
- Members of a sect will share certain ideas about deities, patterns of worship, saints or religious teachers, and/or a particular scripture that they emphasize.
- Almost all developed out of or were influenced by the devotional movements of the 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards and/or the reform movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century



# The Hindu Traditions

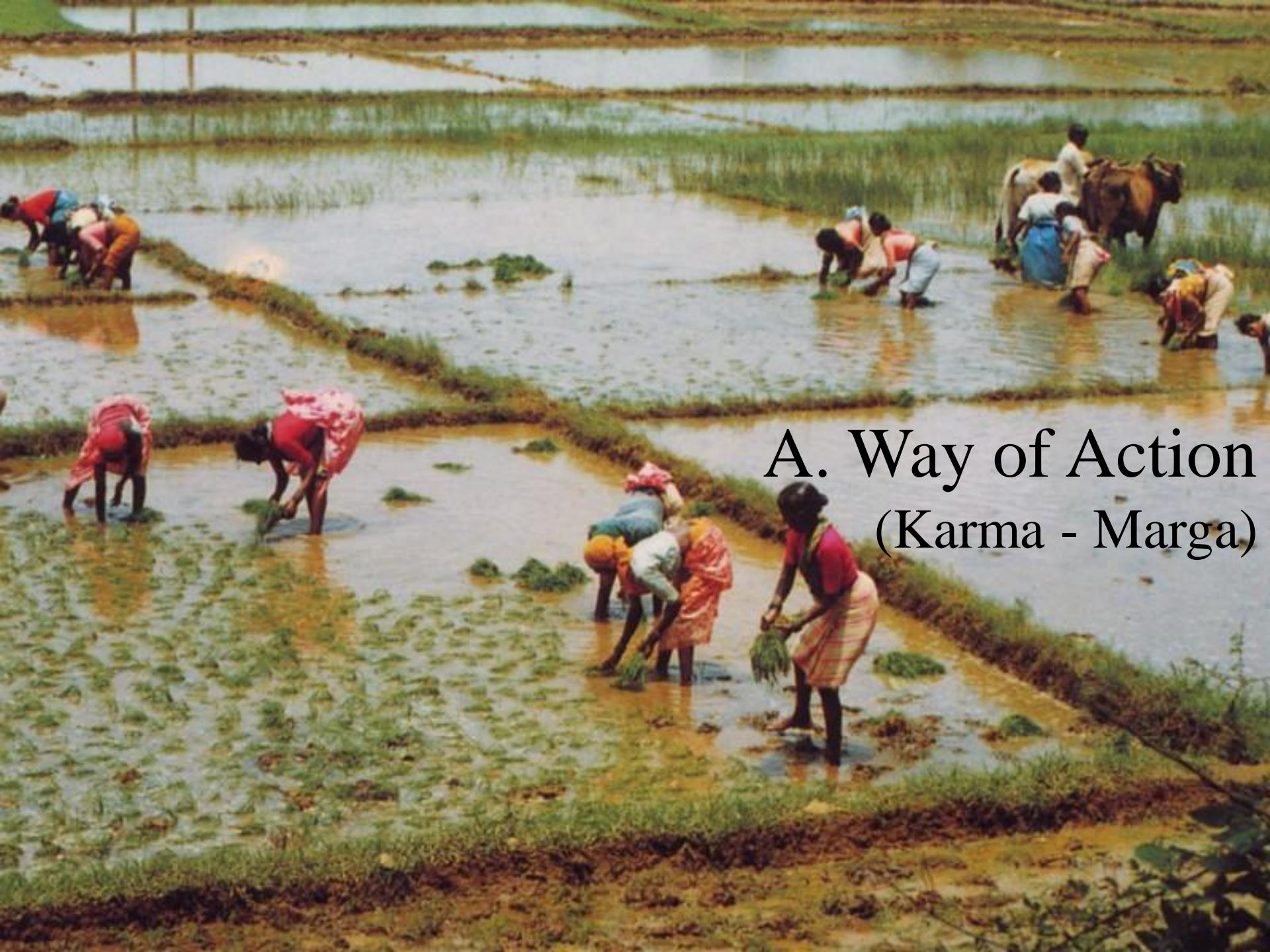
Three Paths to a Single Goal?

1/21/16

- I. Background: Geography, History, Statistics
- II. The Three Paths
  - A. **The Way of Action**
  - B. The Way of Wisdom
  - C. The Way of Devotion
- III. Leading to...? (Views on Death & Afterlife)

Street scene, Jodhpur

*National Geographic*, May 1997, p. 53

A photograph showing a group of farmers in a flooded rice paddy. Several women are bent over, planting rice seedlings in the water. A man on a horse stands on the right side of the frame. The water is shallow, reflecting the sky and the surrounding green fields.

## A. Way of Action (Karma - Marga)

# Karma (literally, action)

- In Hinduism: any morally or ritually consequential act producing result in the future (either this life or a future one); name also commonly used for that result
- Immutable vs. ‘bank balance’ – some think every act produces result, others that what matters is one’s ‘net’
- Accepted in theory, but not always in practice (esp. when something very bad happens)
- Fate (“handwriting”), astrology, the evil eye, ghosts and demons, divine whim also used to explain misfortune, either together with karma or in lieu of karma.

Snake  
Demon  
Mask  
Sri Lanka  
20<sup>th</sup> century  
LACMA



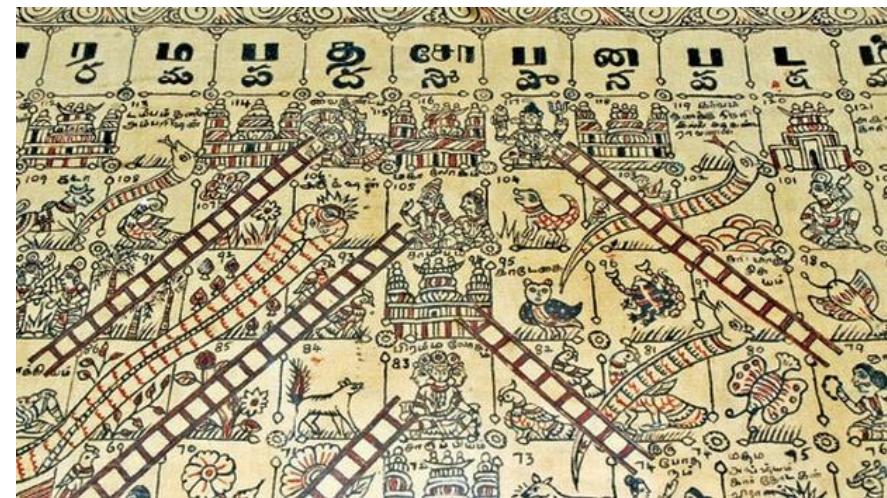
Rahu  
UP  
6<sup>th</sup> century  
LACMA

# Hindu (& Sikh) Views of Karma

- Some say that grace of God(dess) can eliminate karma (particularly in devotional traditions & Sikhism)
- some say that meditative insight can do the same (Hindu path of wisdom)
- some say that doing acts with particular attitude (detachment or devotion) avoids karma (as said in the Bhagavad-gita)
- there are lots of opinions
- ....

*Jnana bazi* or *Gyan bazi* game, India, 19th century, Gouache on cloth.

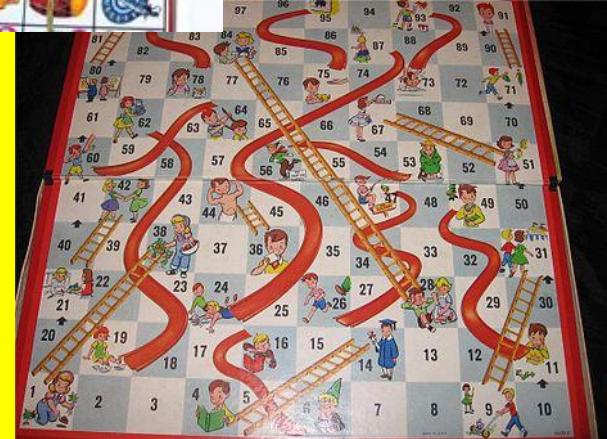
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snakes\\_and\\_Ladders#media\\_viewer/File:Snakes\\_and\\_Ladders.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snakes_and_Ladders#media_viewer/File:Snakes_and_Ladders.jpg)





<https://itunes.apple.com/in/app/paramapadham/id692737630?mt=8>

<http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/society/games-for-life/article5698953.ece>



Milton Bradley *Chutes and Ladders* gameboard c. 1952.

The way of action is to follow *dharma* (duty, religion) based on caste & stage of life (& gender, implicitly), in a spirit of detachment or devotion.

## *Bhagavadgita* (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE)

A man cannot escape the force of action by abstaining from actions; he does not attain success just by renunciation. (3.4; trs. Miller, 41)

Your own duty done imperfectly is better than another man's done well.  
....  
(3.35; trs. Miller, 46)



# Caste: Varna vs. Jati

A. Varna = “class”; the theory

- established by scripture  
(Rig Veda 10.90.12)
- found throughout India

1. Brahmin (priest) (approx.  
6% of the population)

2. Kshatriya (warrior)

3. Vaishya (merchant)

4. Shudra (servant)

+ *everyone else:*

‘S.T.s’ [scheduled tribes,  
8%]

‘S.C.s’ [scheduled castes,  
the group formerly known  
as ‘Harijans’ or  
‘Untouchables,’ AKA  
Dalits, 17%]



→ Thus, at least 25% of  
India’s Hindu population  
is not part of the varna  
system.



**Dr. B. R. Ambedkar  
(1891-1956; here, 1912)**

<http://www.socialjustice.nic.in/pdf/scorder1950.pdf>

*Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950*  
(PART III. — Rules and Orders under the Constitution)

<sup>1</sup>[THE SCHEDULE  
PART I. - *Andhra Pradesh*

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Adi Andhra   | 31. Madasi Kuruva, Madari Kuruva      |
| 2. Adi Dravida  | 32. Madiga                            |
| 3. Anamuk   | 33. Madiga Dasu, Mashteen             |
| 4. Aray Mala  | 34. Maher                             |
| 5. Arundhatiya  | <sup>2</sup> [35. Mala, Mala Ayawaru] |
| 6. Arwa Mala  | 36. Mala Dasari                       |
| 7. Bariki   | 37. Mala Dasu                         |
| 8. Bavuri   | 38. Mala Hannai                       |
| <sup>2</sup> [9. Beda (Budga) Jangam (in the districts of Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Mahbubnagar, Adilabad, Nizamabad, Medak, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam and Nalgonda)] | 39. Malajangam                        |
| 10. Bindla  | 40. Mala Masti                        |
| <sup>2</sup> [11. Byagara, Byagari]   | 41. Mala Sale, Nethani                |
| 12. Chachati  | 42. Mala Sanuyasi                     |
| 13. Chalavadi   | 43. Mang                              |
| <sup>2</sup> [14. Chamar, Mochi, Muchi, Chamar-Ravidas, Chamar-Rohidas]   | 44. Mang Garodi                       |
| 15. Chambhar  | 45. Manne                             |
| 16. Chandala  | 46. Mashti                            |
| 17. Dakkal, Dokkalwar   | 47. Matangi                           |
| 18. Dandasi   | 48. Mehtar                            |
| 19. Dhor  | 49. Mitha Ayyalvar                    |
| 20. Dom, Dombara, Paidi, Pano   | 50. Mundala                           |
| 21. Ellamalawar, Yellammalawandlu   | 51. Paky, Moti, Thoti                 |
| <sup>2</sup> [22. Ghasi, Haddi, Relli, Chenchandi]  | 3 ***                                 |
| <sup>2</sup> [23. Godagali, Godagula (in the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Vishakhapatnam)]   | 53. Pamidi                            |
| 24. Gedari  | 54. Panchama, Pariah                  |
| 25. Gosangi   | 55. Relli                             |
| 26. Holeya  | 56. Samagara                          |
| 27. Holeya Dasari   | 57. Samban                            |
| 28. Jaggali   | 58. Sapru                             |
| 29. Jambuvulu   | 59. Sindholu, Chindollu               |
| <sup>2</sup> [30. Kohupulvandlu, Pambada, Pambanda, Pambala]  | <sup>2</sup> [60. Yatala              |
|   | 61. Valluvan.]                        |

PART II. – *Assam*

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Bansphor                | 9. Kaibartta, Jaliya |
| 2. Bhuinmali, Mali         | 10. Lalbegi          |
| 3. Brittial Bania, Bania   | 11. Mahara           |
| 4. Bhupi, Dhobi            | 12. Mehtar, Bhangi   |
| 5. Dugla, Dholi            | 13. Muchi, Rishi     |
| 6. Hira                    | 14. Namasudra        |
| 7. Jalkeot                 | 15. Patni            |
| 8. Jhalo, Malo, Jhalo-Malo | 16. Sutradhar.       |

1. Subs. by Act 108 of 1976, s. 3 and the First Sch., for the former Sch. (w.e.f. 27-7-1977).  
2. Subs. by Act 61 of 2002, s. 2 and the First Sch.  
3. Entry 52 omitted by s. 2 and the First Sch., *ibid*.  
4. Ins. by s. 2 and the First Sch., *ibid*.

# Caste: Varna vs. Jati

- A. Varna = “class”; the theory
- established by scripture (Rig Veda 10.90.12)
  - found throughout India

- |  |
|--|
| 1. Brahmin (priest) (approx. 6% of the population) |
| 2. Kshatriya (warrior)                             |
| 3. Vaishya (merchant)                              |
| 4. Shudra (servant)                                |

+ everyone else:

‘S.T.s’ [scheduled tribes, 8%]

‘S.C.s’ [scheduled castes, the group formerly known as ‘Harijans’ or ‘Untouchables’, AKA Dalits. 17%]

→ Thus, 25% of India’s Hindu population is not part of the varna system.



- B. Jati = “caste” (literally, birth); the reality

- Found in particular regions (cf. “Schedule”)
- determines many lifestyle features (e.g., diet, dress, jewelry, rituals, burial customs, sometimes profession)
- Endogamous & hereditary

# Endogamy in Action: Matrimonial Ads

CSI ILLATHU Pillai (Pallikillam) 28/170,BE, fair,MNC/Bangalore,25000 p.m. seeks same caste fair IT professional/professionally qualified bride. Ph:9894840705.Send BP Box No.MA-24, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

**CSI NADAR** DEE, Multimedia, 27/170/10,000, Grafix Executive & Publishing seeks computer qualified, employed bride. Cell:98949-05965/98948-48043. Box No.MA-36, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

**HINDU NADAR** 28/175 Swathi Thulam BE MS MBA employed in USA \$6000pm seeks fair good looking girl with BE MCA from same caste around Madurai Dt. and Chennai.Send BHP Box No. HB207 THE HINDU Chennai-600002.

SOZHIYA VELLALA (NV), Avittam, 1969/175, M.Sc, M.Phil, M.Ed, BT Asst. (Govt.) seeks bride. Box No: MA-32, THE HINDU, Madurai - 625020.

DIVORCEE,AGAMUDAIYAR, Madurai, 1964, Lecturer (Govt.), lived 1996-97, seperated acceptable ground, one boy with mother, seeking homely Mukkulathore/FC bride,(0)9842103232.

VELLALAR ONLY son v.fair, 28/165 Ayilyam MCA,MNC,Chennai 5 lacs seeks employed bride,same caste. V.Rathinakiri, Vadivelkarai, Madurai-19. Ph:0452-2456180,94437-73224.

HINDU MARAVAR, 30/175,M.Sc.Comp. Science, IT Programmer, Sydney, Australia seeks bride from Mukkulathor with M.Sc./B.E./MCA.0452-2661441.BHP to Box No.MA-45, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

**HINDU NADAR** 28 MCA 168,fair, own Consultancy Office in Bangalore Rs.50,000 p.m.,parents Sivakasi native, well settled in Madurai seek slim,fair,graduate bride,in same caste. Box No.MA-65, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

NANJIL VELLALAR B.E.,31/159 Pooratathi own business earning 1lakh/month well settled family,seeks graduate brides from same caste.Send BHP.Box No.MA-69,THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

TAMIL YADAVA 36/163 Punarpoosam Kadagam (MBA), reputed businessman, Head of Social Organisation all over Tamilnadu seeks educated bride.Send BHP(R). Box No.MA-73,THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.ajaikannan@yahoo.com

HINDU DEVENDRAKULA Vellalar/33/167 Class-I Offr Simmam,Uthiram seeks fair goodlooking Govt empld preferably Teacher bride below 28 educated family.Ph:9442063033.Box No.MA-71,THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

IYER VADAMA, Kousigam, Revathy, 27/180/25,000, Manager-Chennai, B.Com, MCA seeks graduate, Employed girl, 22 to 25. Subsect ok. Box.No:MA-33, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

IYER VADAMAL Viswamitra 38,Uttaratathi, Project Manager, SW Co.,Mumbai seeks educated employed girl. Subsect no bar. Send BHP to A.S.Sundararajan, 9, 2nd Street, PT Rajan Road, Tallakulam, Madurai-625002.

IYER VADAMA boy 34, MBA 18000 p.m. Srirangam Srivaths Gothram Uthiratathi. Box No.MA-57, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

IYER VADAMA Sankriti Kettai 28/173 B.E, MS Intel California handsome affluent clean habits seeks professionally qualified goodlooking Girl India/US respectable family. Boy visiting April. Contact Dr.S.K.Ramalingam, 40/22, Meenakshi St, K.K.Nagar, Madurai -625 020 Ph: 0452-2580311.

# classifieds

See also <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgDGmYdhZvU> @ 1:30:07 and [http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/27/lessons-from-the-sunday-papers/?\\_r=0](http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/27/lessons-from-the-sunday-papers/?_r=0)

CSI VELLATHU Pillai (Pallikillam) 28/170,BE, fair,MNC/Bangalore,25000 p.m. seeks same caste fair IT professional/professionally qualified bride. Ph:9894840705.Send BP Box No.MA-24, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

CSI NADAR, DEE, Multimedia, 27/170/10,000, Grafix Executive & Publishing seeks computer qualified, employed bride. Cell:98949-05965/98948-48043. Box No.MA-36, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

HINDU NADAR 28/175 Swathi Thulam BE MS MBA employed in USA \$6000pm seeks fair good looking girl with BE MCA from same caste around Madurai Dt. and Chennai.Send BHP Box No. HB207 THE HINDU Chennai-600002.

SOZHIYA VELLALA (NV), Avittam, 1969/175, M.Sc, M.Phil, M.Ed, BT Asst. (Govt.) seeks bride. Box No: MA-32, THE HINDU, Madurai - 625 020.

DIVORCEE AGAMILUDATYAR, Madurai, 1964, Lecturer (Govt.), lived 1996-97, seperated acceptable ground, one boy with mother, seeking homely Mukkulathore/FC bride, 09842103232.

VELLALAR ONLY son v.fair, 28/165 Ayilyam MCA,MNC,Chennai 5 lacs seeks employed bride,same caste. V.Rathinakiri, Vadivelkarai, Madurai-19. Ph:0452-2456180,94437-73224.

HINDU MARAVAR, 30/175,M.Sc.Comp. Science, IT Programmer Sydney, Australia seeks bride from Mukkulathor with M.Sc./B.E./MCA.0452-2661441.BHP to Box No.MA-45, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

HINDU NADAR-28 MCA 168,fair, own Consultancy Office in Bangalore Rs.50,000 p.m., parents Sivakasi native, well settled in Madurai seek slim,fair,graduate bride,in same caste. Box No.MA-65, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

NANJIL VELLALAR B.E.,31/159 Pooratathi own business earning 1lakh/month well settled family,seeks graduate brides from same caste. Send BHP Box No.MA-69,THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

TAMIL YADAVA 36/163 Punarpooسام Kadagam (MBA), reputed businessman, Head of Social Organisation all over Tamilnadu seeks educated bride.Send BHP(R). Box No.MA-73,THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.ajaikannan@yahoo.com

HINDU DEVENDRAKULA Vellalar/33/167 Class-I Offr Simmam,Uthiram seeks fair goodlooking Govt empld preferably Teacher bride below 28 educated family.Ph:9442063033.Box No.MA-71,THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

IYER VADAMA, Kousigam, Revathy, 27/180/25,000, Manager-Chennai, B.Com, MCA seeks graduate, Employed girl, 22 to 25. Subsect ok. Box.No:MA-33, THE HINDU, Madurai-625 020.

IYER VADAMAL Viswamitra 38,Uttaratathi, Project Manager, SW Co.,Mumbai seeks educated employed girl. Subsect no bar. Send BHP to A.S.Sundararajan, 9, 2nd Street, PT Rajan Road, Tallakulam, Madurai-625002.

IYER VADAMA boy 34, MBA 18000 p.m. Srirangam Srivaths Gothram Uthiratathi. Box No.MA-57, THE HINDU, Madurai-625020.

IYER VADAMA Sankriti Kettai 28/173 B.E, MS Intel California handsome affluent clean habits seeks professionally qualified goodlooking Girl India/US respectable family. Boy visiting April. Contact Dr.S.K.Ramalingam, 40/22, Meenakshi St, K.K.Nagar, Madurai -625 020 Ph: 0452-2580311.



Tamil brahmin 9-yd sari (photo c. 1945),  
left image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sari>  
right: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madisar>

## Dharma varies by caste, gender, & stage of life (ashrama):

- Student
- Householder
- Forest Dweller
- Renouncers

Most people never become forest dwellers or renouncers; a small number skip 2-3 and go straight to the renouncer stage.



# The way of action & the way of devotion include RITUAL.

- The most common ritual in contemporary Hinduism is *puja*.
- *Puja* – ritual of worship for a deity, who is generally represented by a picture or statue.
- During the ritual, people offer incense, lamps, flowers, prayers, songs, etc. Statues are bathed in water, milk, yoghurt, etc.

<http://www.eprarthana.com/virtual/vganesh.asp>

<http://www.asia.si.edu/explore/indianart/videoPuja.asp>

- *Pujas* can be done in any ritually pure place; most are done in temples or in homes.
- *Darshan*—seeing and being seen by the deity—conveys blessings and along with *puja* is the main point of a temple visit.
- Anyone in a state of ritual purity (male, female, young, old, of any caste) may do *puja*, though in the main shrines of temples only the temple priest does the rituals.

\*\*\*\*\*STUPID MISTAKE ALERT\*\*\*\*\*

While the majority of large temples & some small ones will have priests belonging to a brahmin caste, many, many temples have non-brahmin priests. Many brahmins have jobs other than as priests. So ***not all priests are brahmins and not all brahmins are priests.***



© S. Huyler, *Meeting God*



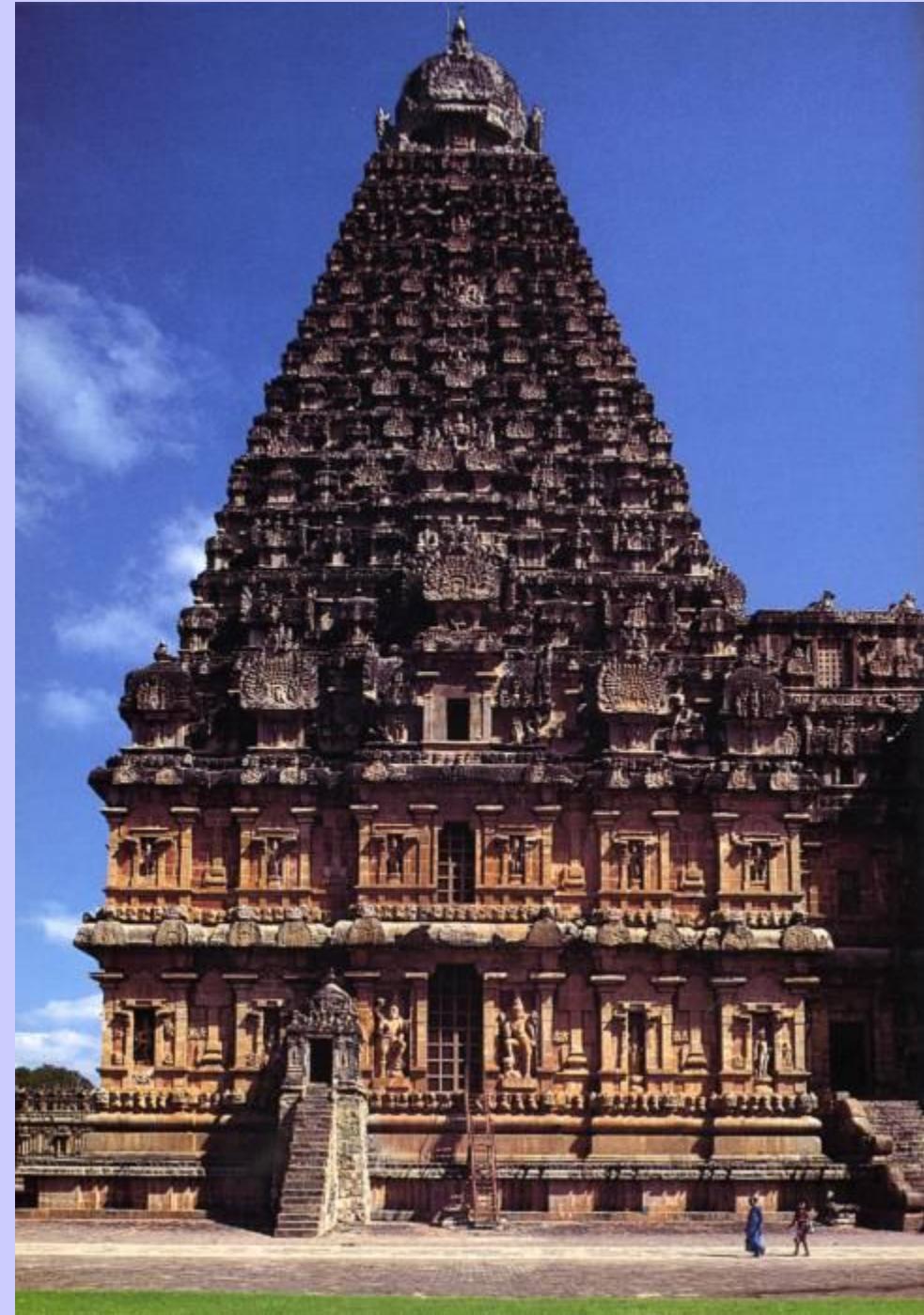
Chennai, 2000, © K. Ulrich





© S. Huyler, *Meeting God*

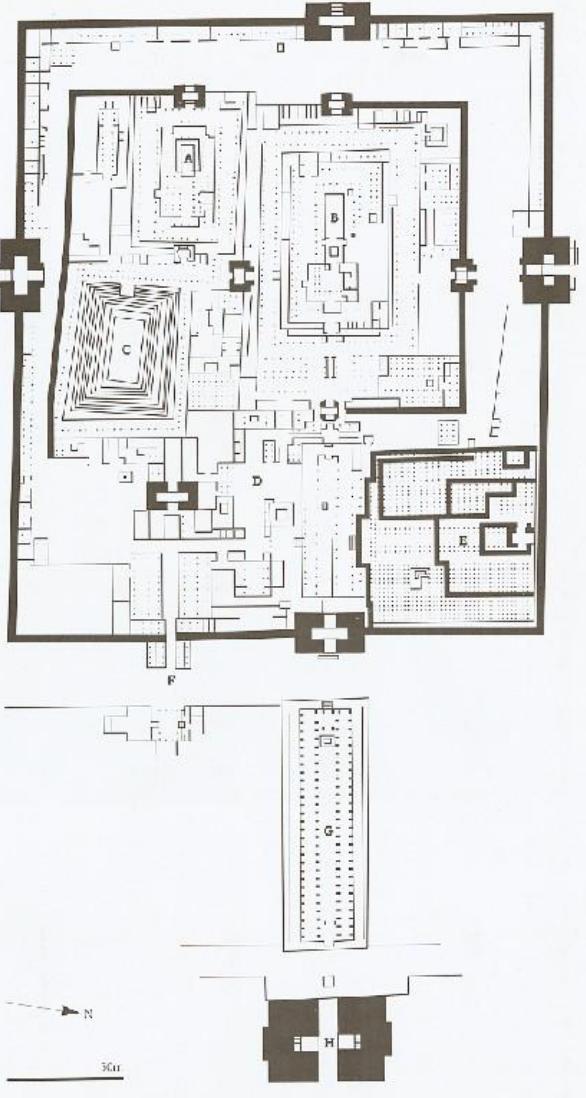
Rajarajeshvara  
Temple (aka  
Brihadehwara  
Temple) for  
Shiva,  
Tanjavur, c.  
1010





Minakshi Temple, Madurai, TN,  
1996; © K. Ulrich





Minakshi Temple, Madurai, tower & plan



Saraswati puja, Calcutta; photo © 1999 S. Huyter; *Meeting God*, p. 189.

Oppiliappan [Vishnu] Temple, Tamilnadu,  
March 2012 © K. Ulrich



Ahmedabad, March 2012

© K. Ulrich



T-Nagar, Chennai,  
TN, 2000  
© K. Ulrich





© S. Huyler, *Meeting God*; see <http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu/Exhibitions/meetingGodExhibit.html>



© S. Huyler, *Meeting God*

Some pujas are done out of love for God; some are done as a prayer for help. The latter often include fasting & self-denial



Mariyamman Temple, Punalur,  
Thanjavur Dt., TN; © S. Huyler,  
*Meeting God;*



Mariyamman Temple, Palani, March 4, 2012  
© K. Ulrich





Goat sacrifice, Pandikoyil, Madurai, 2000. Photo © Kristen Bloomer.

# Final notes about the way of action:



Photo © Kristen Bloomer

- (1) The way of action is to live your life in accordance with duty (*dharma*) based on caste and stage of life (and, implicitly, gender). This includes ethical behavior as well as ritual activity
- (2) Though some Hindus practice the way of action as a means to obtain liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth (Gandhi, for example), many ritual acts, including many *pujas*, have as their goal well-being and prosperity in this world.

<http://www.eprarthana.com/poojas/specpooja/specpooja.asp>

- (3) Thus, most people do their job to earn a living, do rituals for this-worldly benefits, and at most, hope their actions will result in a better rebirth
- (3) One major result of the reform movements of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century is that Hindus are now more likely to
  - (a) interpret rituals symbolically,
  - (b) regard the millions of gods and goddesses as manifestations of a single supreme being or principle,
  - (c) reject certain aspects of the tradition such as animal sacrifice, caste-based discrimination, and the poor treatment of widows.

*“More likely” is not “always” – many Hindus still sacrifice animals, marry within their caste, and regard widows as bad luck.*

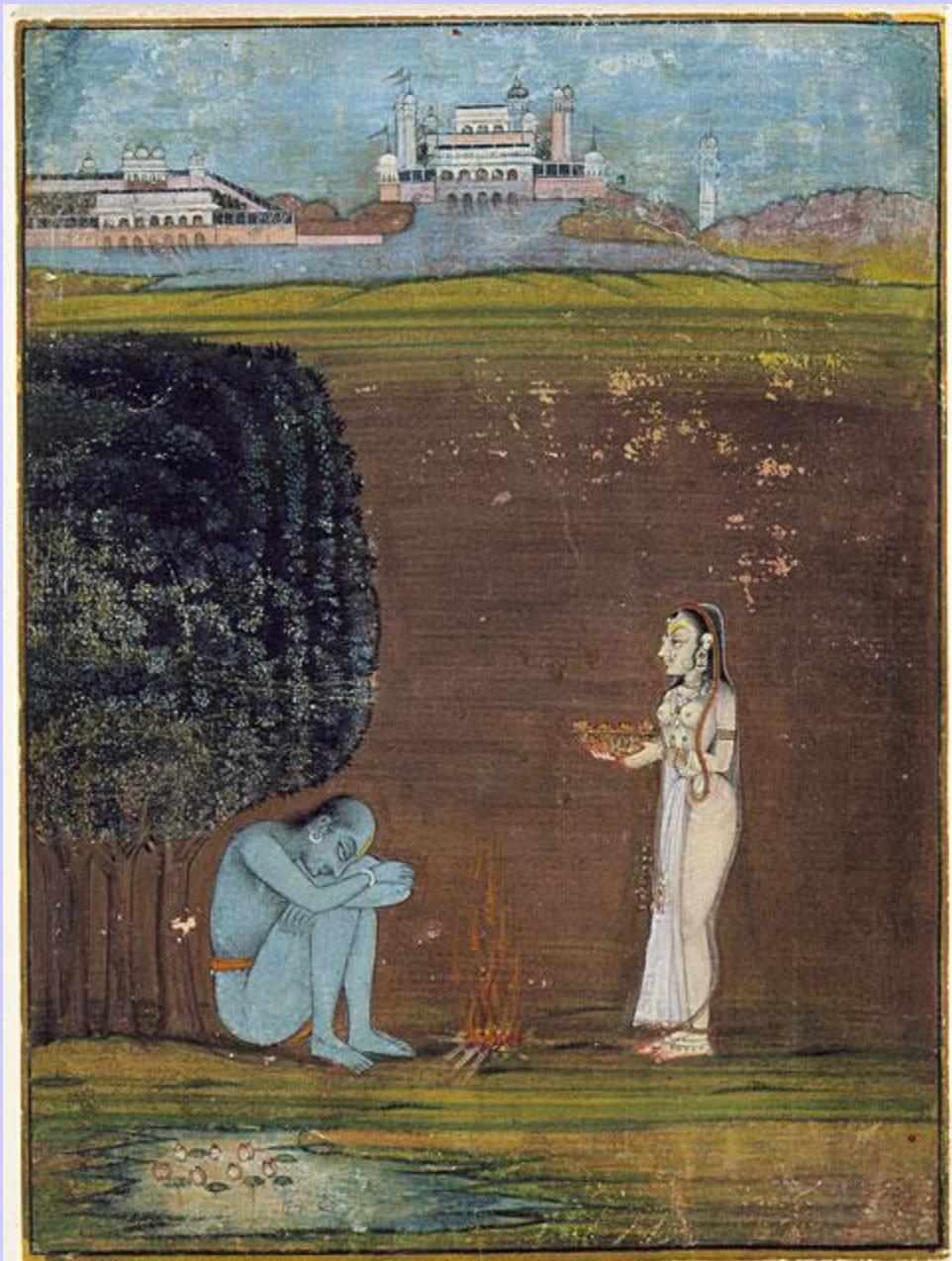


## B. Way of Wisdom (Jnana Marga)

# Meditation (*dhyana*)

- Done to attain *moksha*, liberation from the cycle of death & rebirth [cycle=*samsara*]
- Knowledge leads to wisdom, culminating in a liberating insight.
- Meditation can be on a particular deity or form of a deity. . .
- Or on Brahman.

Woman bringing offering to ascetic.  
Rajasthan, Kishangarh, 1750  
LACMA



\*\*\*\*\*STUPID MISTAKE ALERT\*\*\*\*\*

**Brahman** (no diacritics) – Godhead as an undifferentiated principle that is the source of everything (cf. Dao). (In textbook, *brahman*)

**brahmin** – a member of the priestly caste (alas, spelled in Sanskrit *brāhmaṇa*, and sometimes appearing in western literature as Brahman or Brahmin)

**Brahmā** – creator god (seldom worshiped)

## Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 4.2.4, 4.3.21-22, 4.3.32

(On the self) “About this self (*atman*), one can only say ‘not ---, not ---.’ He is ungraspable, for he cannot be grasped. He is undecaying, for he is not subject to decay. He has nothing sticking to him, for he does not stick to anything. He is not bound; yet he neither trembles in fear nor suffers from injury. . . . It is like this. As a man embraced by a woman he loves is oblivious to everything within or without, so this person embraced by the self (*atman*) consisting of knowledge is oblivious to everything within or without. . . . Here a father is not a father, a mother is not a mother, worlds are not worlds, gods are not gods, and Vedas are not Vedas. . . . Neither the good nor the bad follow him, for he has now passed beyond all sorrows of the heart. . . . He becomes the one ocean, he becomes the sole seer! This, Your Majesty, is the world of *brahman*. . . This is the highest goal! This is the highest bliss!” (trans. Olivelle 1996: 57, 61-62)

# Chandogya Upanishad 6.10

“Now take these rivers, son. The easterly ones flow towards the east, and the westerly ones flow towards the west. From the ocean, they merge into the very ocean; they become just the ocean. In that state they are not aware that: ‘I am that river’, and ‘I am this river’. In exactly the same way, son, when all these creatures reach the existent [ie, Brahman], they are not aware of that: ‘We are reaching the existent.’ . . . The finest essence here – that constitutes the self of this whole world; that is truth; that is the self (*atman*). And that’s how you are (*tat tvam asi*), Shvetaketu.” (trans. ibid. 153).

Basically the Upanishads represent the Brahman-atman relationship in 2 ways:

- (1) Brahman and atman are identical (majority view) [rope/snake]
- (2) Brahman and atman are distinct (minority view) [rose/red]



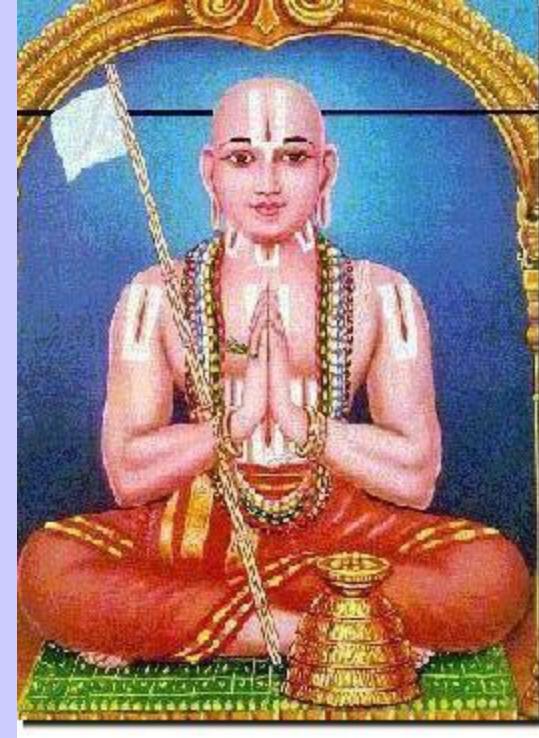
The philosopher Shankara (9<sup>th</sup> century CE) is famous for describing this path to salvation, founding the sect or school of Advaita (nondual) Vedanta, and establishing formal monastic orders as part of Hinduism.

The goal of meditation in Advaita Vedanta is to attain realization of the unity of one's individual soul (*atman*) with Brahman, Ultimate Reality without form or characteristics. The closest one can get to describing Brahman is to say it has being, consciousness, and bliss. Many Hindus understand the particular forms of gods and goddesses as manifestations of Brahman.

For the record (you don't need to know this), there are six schools of orthodox Hindu philosophy:

### Darshana (& founder) (philosophical schools)

- Sankhya (Kapila)
- Yoga (Patañjali)
- Nyaya (Gautama)
- Vaisheshika (Kanada)
- Purva Mimamsa (Jaimini)
- Uttara Mimamsa a.k.a. Vedanta (Badarayana)
  - » Advaita (Shankara)
  - » Vishishtadvaita (Ramanuja)
  - » Dvaita (Madhva)
  - » Dvaitadvaita (Nimbarka)
  - » Shuddhadvaita (Vallabha)



Ramanuja, c. 1100 CE  
[Founded the other major Vedanta school, Vishishtadvaita (Qualified Non-dual Vedanta)]



# The Hindu Traditions

Three Paths to a Single Goal?

1/21/16

- I.      Background: Geography, History, Statistics
- II.     The Three Paths
  - A. The Way of Action
  - B. The Way of Wisdom
  - C. The Way of Devotion**
- III.    Leading to...? (Views on Death & Afterlife)

Street scene, Jodhpur

*National Geographic*, May 1997, p. 53



## *C. Way of Devotion (bhakti)*

# Bhaj and Bhakti

- **Bhaj** : the root from which ‘bhakti,’ devotion, is derived
- cl. I. P. A1, **to divide**, distribute, allot or apportion to (dat. or gen.), **share with** (instr.) RV. &c. &c. ; (A1.) **to grant, bestow**, furnish, supply ib. ; A1. (rarely P.) to obtain as one's share, receive as (two acc.), **partake of, enjoy** (also **carnally**), **possess**, have (acc., Ved. also gen.) ib. ; (A1., rarely P.) to turn or resort to, engage in, assume (as a form), **put on** (garments), experience, incur, undergo, feel, go or fall into MBh. Ka1v. &c.; **to pursue, practise, cultivate** Mn. R. Sus3r.; to fall to the lot or share of (acc.) MBh. R. &c.; to declare for, prefer, **choose** (e.g. as a servant) MBh.; **to serve, honour, revere, love, adore** MBh. Ka1v. &c.: Caus. {bhAja4yate}, {-te} (aor. {abIbhajuH} S3Br., {ababhAjat} Gr.), to divide Su1ryas. ; to deal out, distribute Gaut. ; to cause any one (acc.) to partake of or enjoy (acc. or gen.) RV. S3Br. ; to put to flight, pursue, chase, drive into (acc.) Bhat2t2. ; to cook, dress (food) Vop.: Desid. [Cf. Gk.; Lat. {fa1gus} ; Goth. Old S. {bo1k} ; Germ. {Buch}, {Buchstabe} ; Eng. {buck-}, {beech}.]

→ ‘Bhakti’ means devotion, in particular emotional, whole-hearted devotion to a particular god or goddess.

## From time of Hindu Epics

(ca. 300 BCE-300 BCE),

the most important three deities:

- Vishnu (god)
- Shiva (god)
- Devi (goddess)



Each of these 3

- (1) Is worshipped all over the country
- (2) Has an extensive mythology in Sanskrit scriptures, in which they kill demons, save devotees, grant liberation, and create, sustain and/or destroy the cosmos.
- (3) Is regarded by a large number of people as **the** most important god or goddess, the one who does it all. For many Hindus, their favorite deity is ultimately responsible for everything – other deities only work at their bidding (what KU calls ‘practical monotheism’).

Vishnu, Devi [Minakshi], Shiva, Madurai Minakshi Temple, from V. Dehejia, *Indian Art*





## Vishnu [Viṣṇu] & his wife Shri /Lakshmi [Śrī/ Lakṣmī]

A royal figure, the god who protects and preserves cosmos.

Worshippers are called *Vaishnavas*. Two of his incarnations are particularly popular:

- (1) Krishna (Kṛṣṇa) – hero of epic Mahabharata (which includes the Bhagavad-gita) &
- (2) Rama (Rāma) – hero of the epic Ramayana

## Shiva [Śiva] & his family

(wife Parvati; sons Ganesha & Murugan).

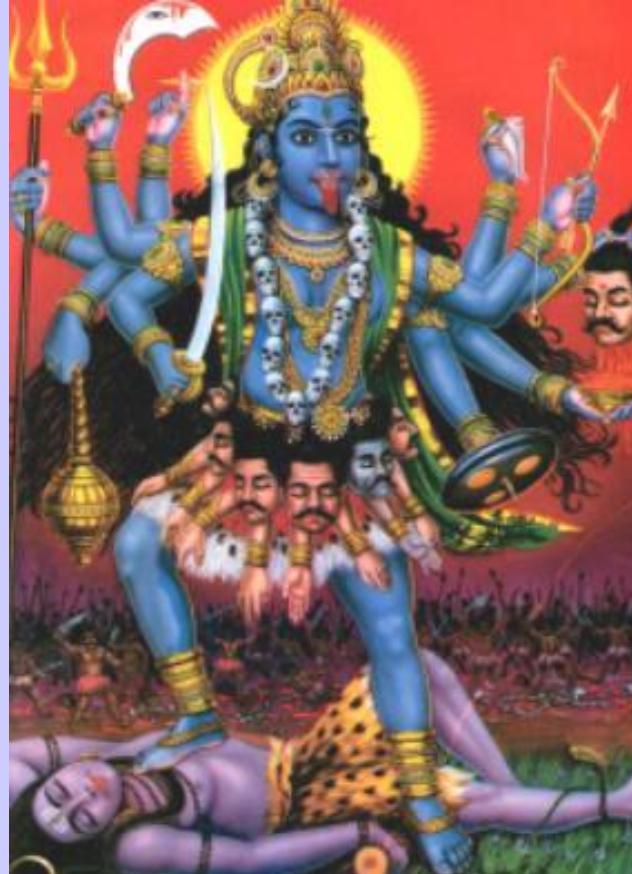
This god is a model yogi, ascetic, & meditator; his dance destroys the cosmos at end of each cycle.

His worshippers are called *Shaivas*.





Durga



Kali (standing on Shiva)



Lalita

Devi & her forms (esp. Durga, Kali, Lalita).

The goddess is the power (*shakti*) animating the cosmos and the male gods. Worshippers are called *Shaktas*.

Since the 6<sup>th</sup> century, it has been widely believed that all goddesses are forms of one Great Goddess ('Mahadevi').

\*\*\*\*\*STUPID MISTAKE ALERT\*\*\*\*\*



Names ending in ‘a’ can be male or female. Thus:

Brahmā (w/ 4 heads) – male, creator

Vishnu (Viṣṇu; blue, center) – male, preserver

Shiva (Śiva; blue, viewer’s R) – male, destroyer

Durgā (on tiger) – female, demon-killing goddess

Thus, Brahmā, Shiva, Krishna, & Rama are ALL GODS but

Durga, Sita, and Ganga are GODDESSES

\*\*\*\*\*

Undiscerning men who delight  
in the tenets of ritual lore

# Bhagavad-gita (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE)

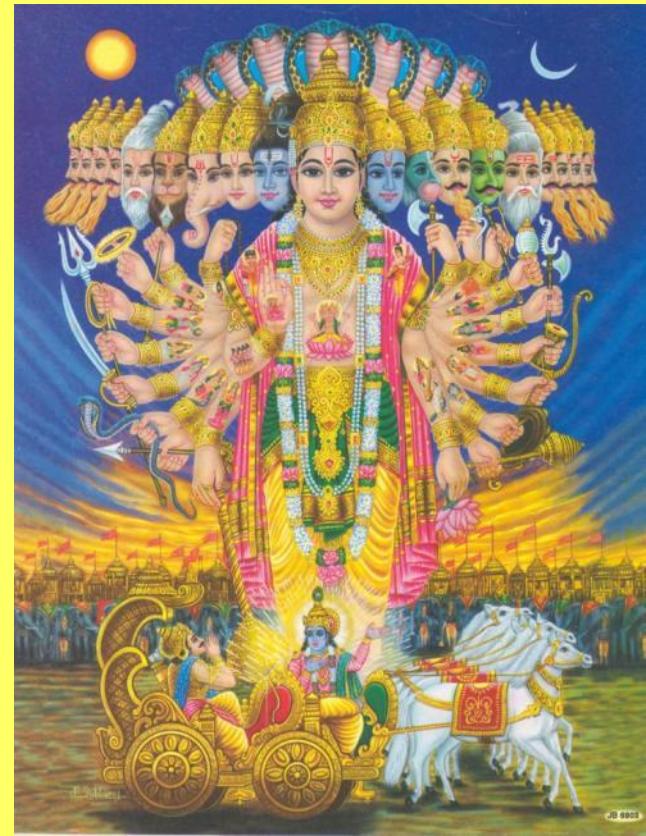
Driven by desire, they strive after heaven . . .

but their intricate ritual language  
bears only the fruit of action in rebirth.

2.42-43 (*Bhagavad-gita*, trs. Miller, p. 35)

Nothing is higher than I am;  
Arjuna, all that exists  
is woven on me,  
like a web of pearls on thread. 7.7 (Miller, 72)

When devoted men sacrifice  
to other deities with faith,  
They sacrifice to me, Arjuna . . . 9.23 (Miller, 86)

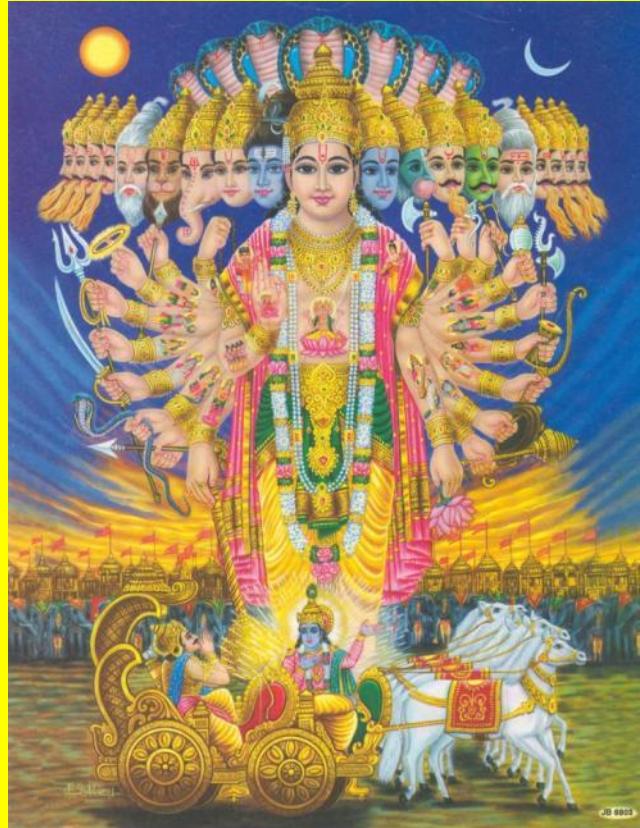


The leaf or flower or fruit or water  
that he offers with devotion  
I take from the man of self-restraint  
in response to his devotion. 9.26 (Miller, 86)

If they rely on me, Arjuna,  
Women, commoners, men of low rank, . . .  
reach the highest way. 9.32 (Miller, 87)

By devotion alone  
can I, as I really am,  
be known and seen  
and entered into, Arjuna 11.54 (Miller, 108)

It is more arduous when their [people's] reason  
clings to my unmanifest nature;  
for men constrained by bodies,  
the unmanifest way is hard to attain. 12.5 (Miller, 111)

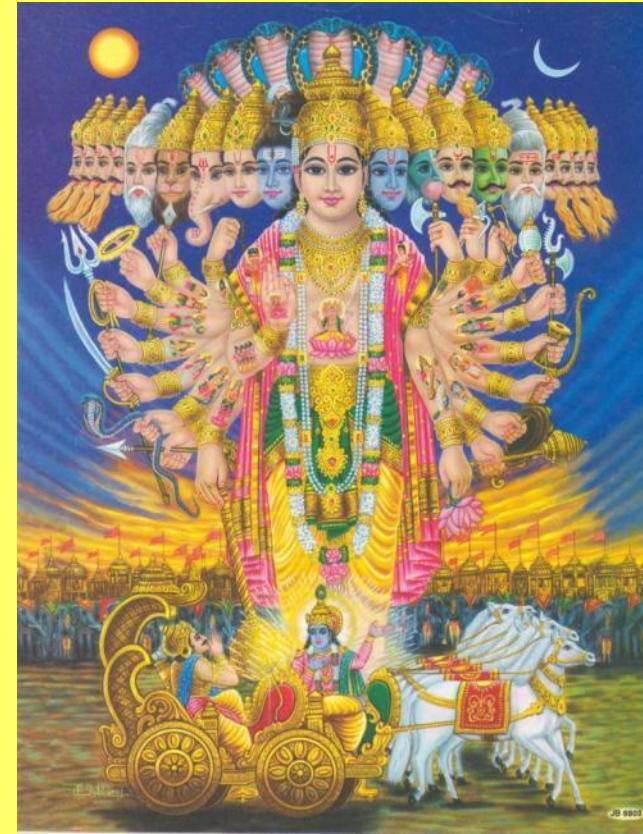


# Note the shift in tone from this...

Content always, disciplined  
self-controlled, firm in his resolve,  
his mind and understanding dedicated to me,  
devoted to me, he is dear to me. . . .

Disinterested, pure, skilled,  
indifferent, untroubled,  
relinquishing all involvements,  
devoted to me, he is dear to me.

He does not rejoice or hate,  
grieve or feel desire;  
relinquishing fortune and misfortune,  
the man of devotion is dear to me. (Bhagavadgita 12.14, 16-17; trs.  
Miller, 113)





. . . to this:

“O god with matted hair!” she cries.  
“You are my sole refuge!” she cries.  
“Bull rider!” she cries and faints in awe.  
O Lord of Marukal [=Shiva]  
Where the blue lily blooms in field  
waters,  
is it fair  
To make to make this woman waste from  
love’s disease?

(Campantar 2.154 Marukal; trans. Peterson, *Poems to Siva*, p. 248)

(Starting with Tamil-speaking poet-saints in the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE, the bhakti ‘movement’ developed a far more emotional edge than the bhakti of the *Gita*)

Sangam poem:  
*In Praise of a Cremation Ground*

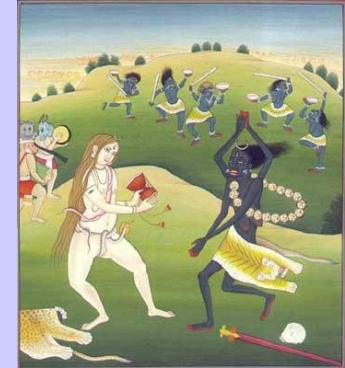
The jungle spreads.  
Cactuses grow.  
Owls hoot even by day.  
And haunted by she-demons  
gaping in the light of crematory fires,  
this ancient smouldering cremation ground  
looks fearful.  
Lovers' tears  
wept from the heart  
quench the burning white  
ash and bones.

This ground,  
it is the end  
of everyone in the world,  
looks upon the backs of all men,  
and hasn't seen anyone yet  
who will look upon *its* back.

--Kataiyan Kannanar, *Purananuru* 356  
(trans. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War*, 190)

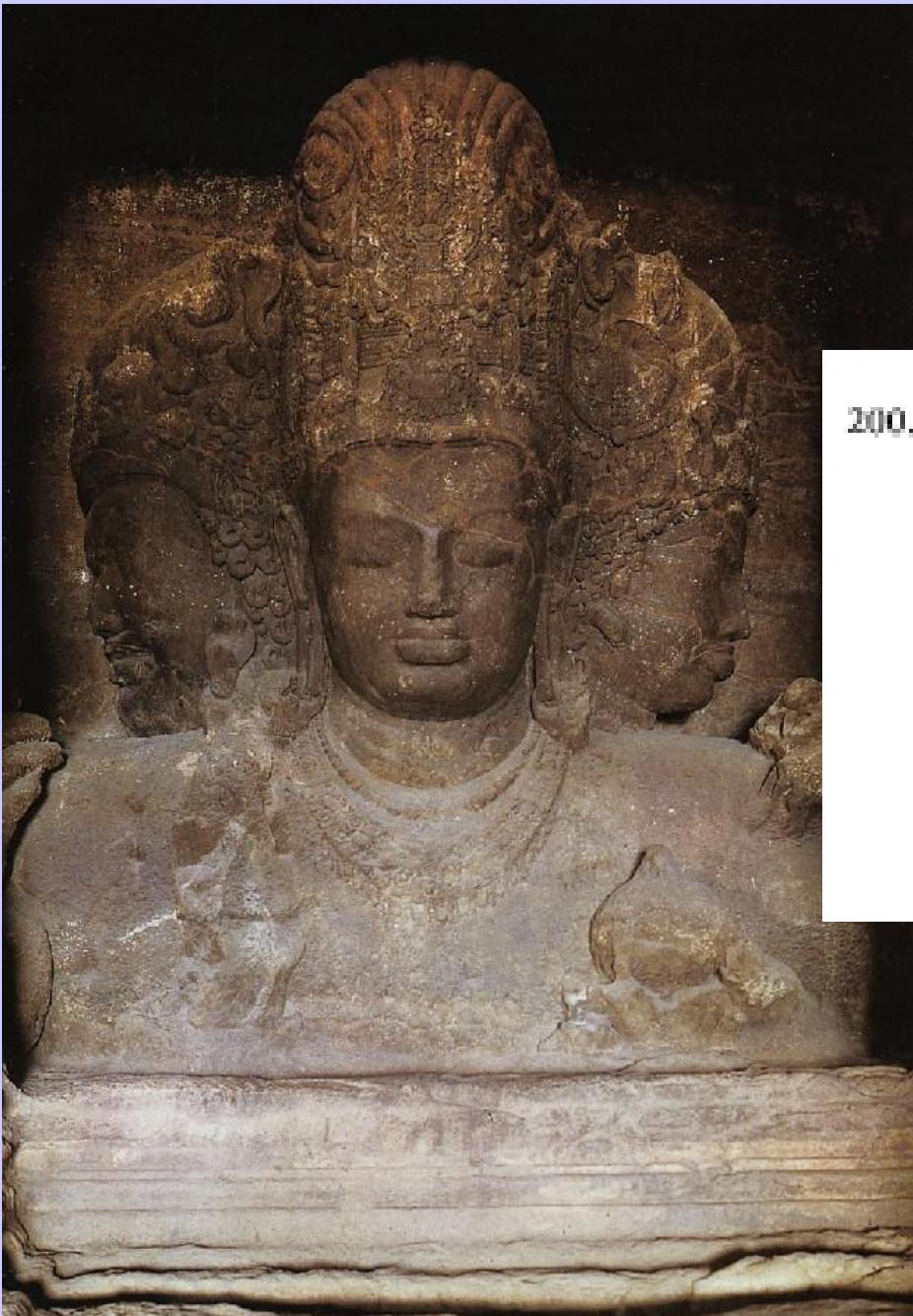
Bhakti poem:  
Pecked by birds  
are whitened skulls  
With holes in them

....



Owls fly low up and down  
A terrified baby owl  
blinks its eyes in fear  
as the *vuman* chases it.  
A jackal howls aloud  
and tears apart a corpse –  
He lives in that forest. . .  
the Lord of dance.

-- Karaikkal Ammaiyar  
(trans. Dehejia, *Slaves of the Lord*, 131)



In the bhakti context, gods and goddesses can eliminate karma:

200. Campantar 1.89.3 *Erukkaṭampūliyūr*

Karma cannot touch  
those who can cry, "Lord of the gods!  
God, bull rider, madman who is  
man, woman, and in-between,  
moon-crowned god,  
our King who lives in Erukkaṭampūliyūr's  
shrine, which we revere!"

Peterson, *Poems to Siva*, 257

Parankunru is the shrine  
of the Lord who shares his body  
with the girl who plays with a ball  
the god who rose as a splendid  
column of light,  
whose greatness was beyond the  
grasp  
even of Mal who in a single stride  
once spanned this whole earth . . .  
(Campantar, trans. Peterson 127)



Ardhanareshvara, 11<sup>th</sup> century  
Tiruverkadu, now in Madras  
Museum , photo © K. Ulrich

## Scriptures in Hinduism

- For different groups, different texts are important. Many scriptures are in Sanskrit, a dead language (cf. Latin).
- The Vedas are the oldest scriptures (ca. 1200 BCE), and given lip service as the most authoritative. Certain hymns are used in temple ritual, life-cycle ritual (weddings), & formal prayers, but people rarely, rarely (if ever) read the Vedas for advice about how to be a good Hindu (they are in an archaic form of Sanskrit). The Upanishads (ca. 800 BCE), Sanskrit texts containing philosophical speculations, are read by a small number of people, mainly upper caste people influenced by the way of wisdom.
- Most people know the major stories of the Sanskrit epics (Ramayana & Mahabharata, both ca. 300 BCE-300 CE) and puranas (Sanskrit mythology), but often hear them from their grandmas, temple storytellers, or (nowadays), TV, comic books, and cartoons rather than read them in the Sanskrit original.
- The poetry of the Tamil saints is very important for SOME Hindus, most often those from South India, where the poetry often replaces Vedic & Sanskrit liturgies in temple ritual. But a Krishna-worshiping brahmin from Delhi likely will have never read (or perhaps even heard of) the poetry of Tamil saints.
- The Bhagavad-gita, a portion of the Mahabharata containing a dialog between Krishna and his devotee Arjuna, is very important for SOME Hindus, most often worshipers of Krishna. But a low-caste worshiper of Shiva from Madras likely will never have read (or perhaps even heard of) the Bhagavad-gita. THE GITA IS NOT THE ‘BIBLE’ OF HINDUISM—there’s no such thing (or rather, there are thousands of Bibles).

# Characteristics of Fully Developed Devotionalism

1. Use of vernacular languages  
(Tamil, for example)
2. Challenges conventions and hierarchy (gender, caste hierarchy often reversed)  
example →
3. Devotion to devotees (importance of saints)
4. Devotee views deity as the most powerful deity, to the point of ‘practical monotheism’
5. Personal and emotional relationship with a specific deity
6. Relationships often modeled on human ones:

Kabir (Benares, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> cent)

If caste was what the Creator had in mind,  
why wasn’t anyone born  
with Siva’s three-lined sign?

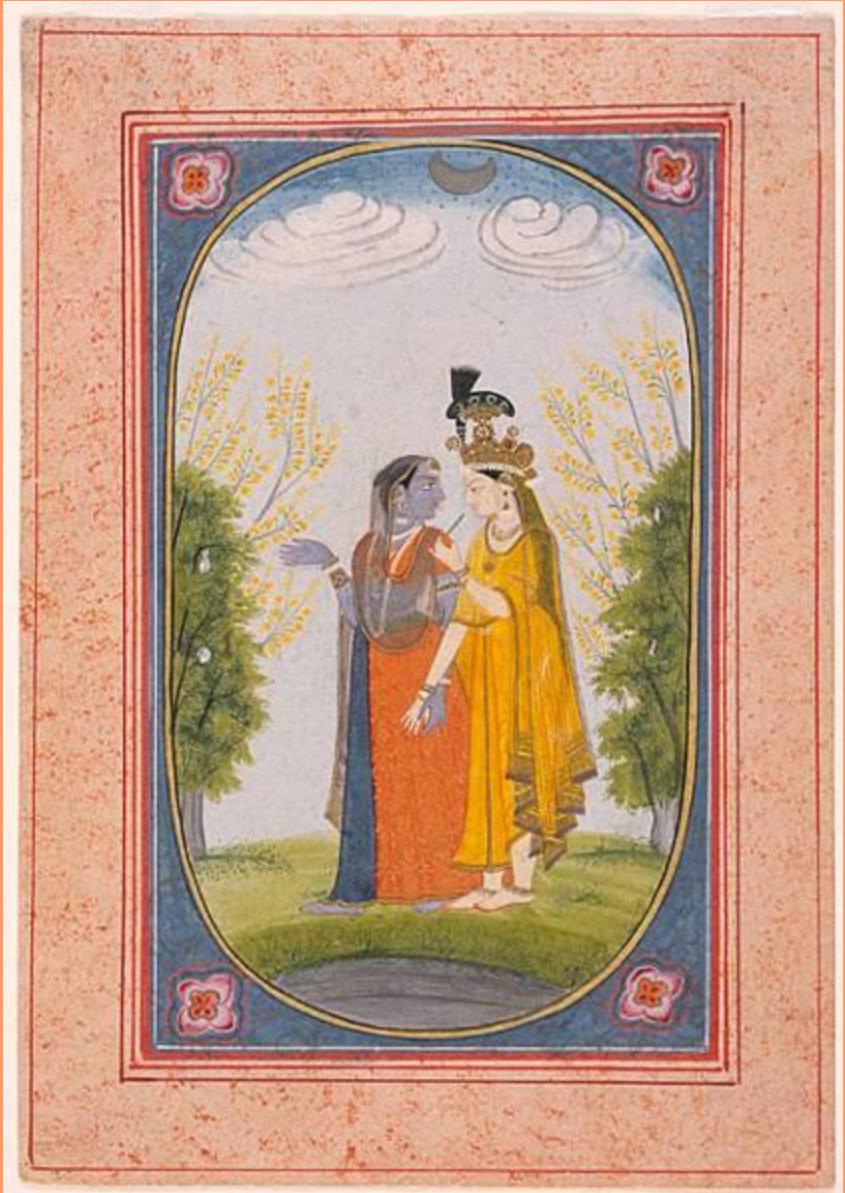
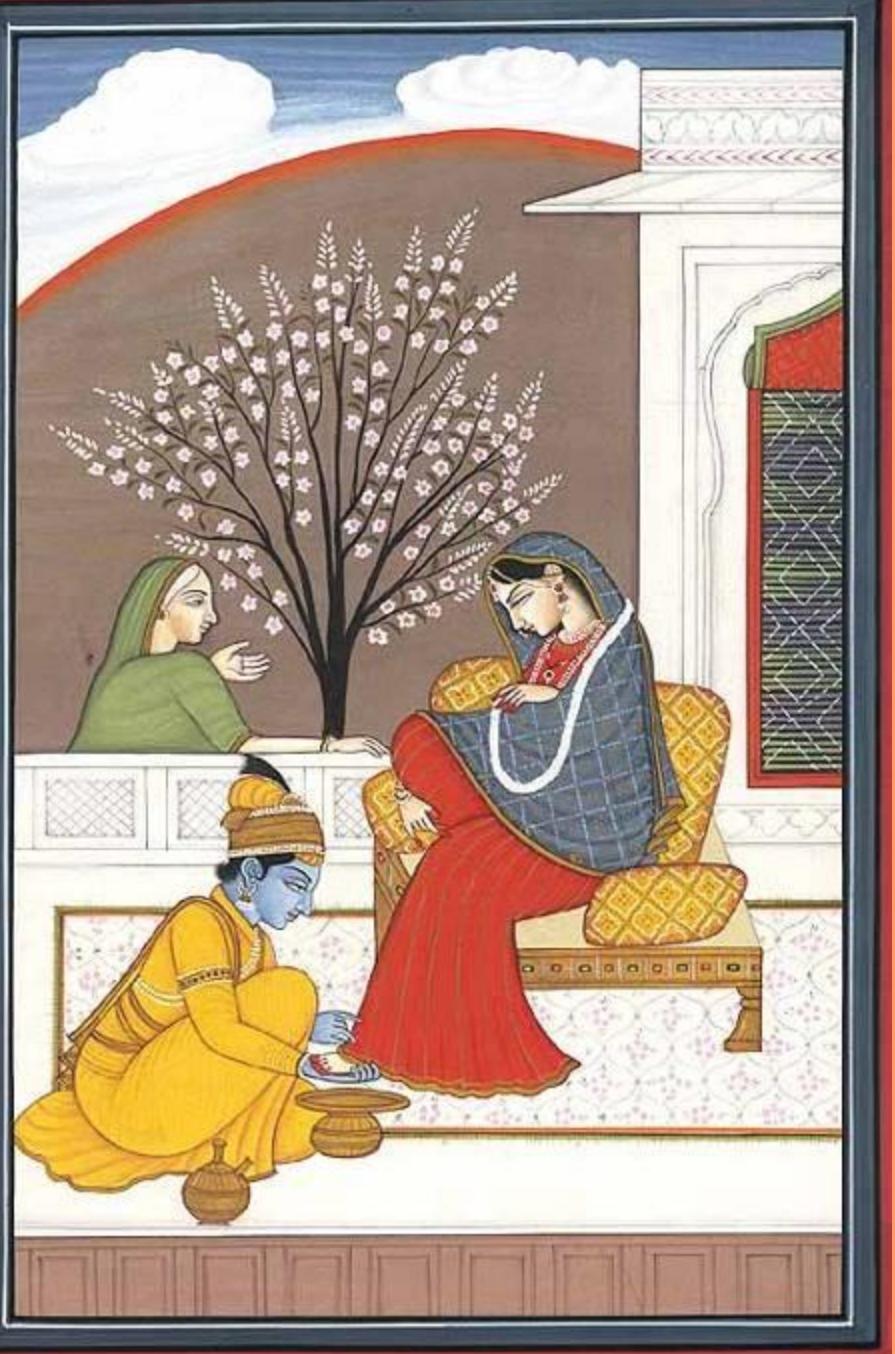
If you’re a Brahmin,  
from a Brahmin woman born,  
why didn’t you come out some special  
way?

And if you’re a Muslim,  
from a Muslim woman born,  
why weren’t you circumcised inside?

Says Kabir: No one is lowly born.

The only lowly are those  
who never talk of Ram.

(KG *pad* 182; trans. Hawley and Juergensmeyer, *Songs*, 54)



e.g., lover – beloved (Radha – Krishna)



Pining for  
Madhava of eternal fame  
dark as the blue sapphire,  
crowned with a cluster of gems,  
is it right  
that the conch shell bangles  
should slip off my wrists?  
Koelbird who lives in flowery groves  
of laurel, pear, wild poppy and *nalal*,  
fly to my lord of the coral lips  
stay with him, call his names repeatedly,  
ask him to hasten to my side.

(Antal, Nacciyar Tirumoli 1.4, 5.1, trans.  
Dehejia, 76, 91)

Mirabai

[Rajasthan, 16<sup>th</sup> cent. (?)]



I saw the dark clouds burst, dark  
Lord,  
Saw the clouds and tumbling down  
In black and yellow streams they  
thicken,  
Rain and rain two hours long.

See –

my eyes see only rain and  
water,  
watering the thirsty earth green.

Me –

my love's in a distant land  
and wet, I stubbornly stand at  
the door,

For Hari is indelibly green, Mira's  
Lord,

And he has invited a standing,  
stubborn love.

(Caturvedi, no. 82; trans. Hawley  
and Juergensmeyer, 15)

# Ramprasad Sen (Bengal, 18<sup>th</sup> cent.)

Does suffering scare me? O Mother,  
Let me suffer in this world. Do I require more?  
Suffering runs ahead of me and runs after me.  
I carry it on my head and set up a stand  
In the bazaar to peddle it.  
I'm a poison worm, I thrive on poison.  
I carry it wherever I go.

Prasad says: Mother, lift off  
I need a little rest. It's amazing  
Others brag about their happiness  
I brag about my suffering.



The dark Mother  
Is flying a kite  
In the world's fairground.

O mind, see – you are up there  
In the gusts of hope,  
Payed out on the string of illusion,  
Your frame strung together  
Skeleton and pulse stuck on.

But the Maker overdid it,  
Giving the kite too much ego  
In the building,  
Toughening the string with glue  
and powdered glass.

So Mother, if out of a thousand kites  
You lose one or two,  
Laugh and clap.

Prasad says: that kite is going to take off  
In the southern breeze,  
And on the other shore  
Of this ocean of lives  
It will dive fast to its freedom.  
(trans. Nathan and Seely, 30, 37)



# The Hindu Traditions

Three Paths to a Single Goal?

1/21/16

- I. Background: Geography, History, Statistics
- II. The Three Paths
  - A. The Way of Wisdom
  - B. The Way of Devotion
- C. The Way of Action**
- III. Leading to...? (Views on Death & Afterlife)

Street scene, Jodhpur

*National Geographic*, May 1997, p. 53



# The Hindu Traditions

Three Paths to a Single Goal?

1/21/16

I. Background: Geography, History, Statistics

II. The Three Paths

A. The Way of Wisdom

B. The Way of Devotion

C. The Way of Action

**III. Leading to...?  
(Views on Death & Afterlife)**

Street scene, Jodhpur

*National Geographic*, May 1997, p. 53

The goal of all this....?

*Moksha*, ‘liberation’ from  
*samsara*, the cycle of death and rebirth.



Moksha is understood differently by different people: for some, unity with Brahman; for some, residing in heaven with their favorite deity.



*National Geographic*, May 1997, p. 49

**G. Nandhini being purified in Kaveri River in Kodumudi,  
Tamilnadu, March 2012, © K. Ulrich**









**G. Nandhini and G. Malini performing their paternal grandmother's memorial rites**















**Nandhini, Malini, & their cousin  
Saumya, changed out of polluted  
clothing after the rituals**

## VOCABULARY

**Atman** – the soul, which is eternal and unchanging and equal to Brahman

**Bhakti** - “devotion,” in particular emotional, whole-hearted devotion to a particular god or goddess. The *way of devotion* is a spiritual lifestyle characterized by this.

**Brahman** – Ultimate Reality, Higher Power, undifferentiated source of the universe, its gods and people etc., that cannot be described.

**Devi** – “goddess,” when capitalized, *the Goddess*, the animating power of the universe & one of 3 major deities of Hinduism

**Dharma** – duty, what is right, religion

**Durga** – popular form of the Goddess, famous for her defeat of the Buffalo Demon

**Jnana** – “knowledge,” wisdom, liberating insight (often identified as the realization of the identity of atman and Brahman). The *way of knowledge* is a spiritual lifestyle characterized by meditation and often renunciation, in search of this.

**Kali** – another popular form of the Goddess, dark-skinned and fierce in appearance

**Karma** – literally, ‘action’; morally or ritually consequential act that produces result in the future (this life or future ones); the *way of action* is a spiritual lifestyle emphasizing ritual and performing one’s duty (dharma)

**Krishna** – Hindu god, incarnation of Vishnu; a hero of the Mahabharata

**Mahabharata** – Sanskrit epic tale of struggle between 2 sets of cousins, in which Krishna plays a decisive role. Contains the Bhagavad-gita and is, along with the Ramayana, one of the most important Hindu scriptures.

**Moksha** – “liberation,” release from cycle of death and rebirth, characterized as union with Brahman or existence in heaven presided over by Vishnu, Shiva, or Devi.

**Puja** – worship ritual performed for Hindu deities in which people offer an image incense, oil lamps, food, flowers, & prayers.

**Rama** - Hindu god, incarnation of Vishnu, hero of the Ramayana and slayer of Ravana

**Ramayana** – Sanskrit epic tale of struggle between the god Rama and demon Ravana; often retold in local languages and along with Mahabharata, one of the most important Hindu scriptures.

**Shiva** – Hindu god, portrayed as ascetic, dancer, and destroyer, & one of 3 major deities of Hinduism

**Vedas** – Sanskrit hymns used during rituals, oldest and most authoritative scripture in Hinduism

**Vishnu** - Hindu god, portrayed as ruler and preserver, & one of 3 major deities of Hinduism

	EARLY & THERAVADA BUDDHISM	HINDUISM
DEITIES	exist but not useful for salvation (the Buddha is NOT a god)	can give liberation, health, wealth, etc. Vishnu, Shiva, & Devi are the most popular ones.
SOUL	denies existence	affirms existence (eternal, unchanging, for some, equals Brahman, Ultimate Reality)
GOAL	nirvana (end of rebirth; Buddha refused to answer further questions but denied annihilationism)	moksha (for some, equals heaven; for some, equals merging with Brahman)
RITUAL	generally useless, save as a means to cultivate mind or acquire merit	very useful, both in terms of mental cultivation and producing results
MEDITATION & RENUNCIATION	Crucial	One possible path (others are action & devotion)
SCRIPTURES	Teachings of Buddha (in Pali, a language related to Sanskrit but closer to the vernacular)	Vedas, Upanishads, Epics (Ramayana, Mahabharata, including Bhagavad-gita), devotional poems and hymns; most in Sanskrit, though local-language versions often more popular



**ASIA**

Copyright © 2009 National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.



education



Copyright © 2009 National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.