

HISTORICAL HINDUISM

Monday Quiz

- Questions will cover:
- Residential Schools
- Confucianism
- Daoism
- Hinduism

Long Answer Questions: Will be one of these three

- With **three (3) examples**, explain the major differences between Philosophical Daoism and Confucianism.
- With **3 points**, explain the meaning of the Yin-Yang symbol (you need to explain the meaning of yin, yang, the dots, and the idea reflected by this symbol).
- Explain the Hindu caste system. Name and define each caste. What is one social problem associated with caste?

Lingering Questions

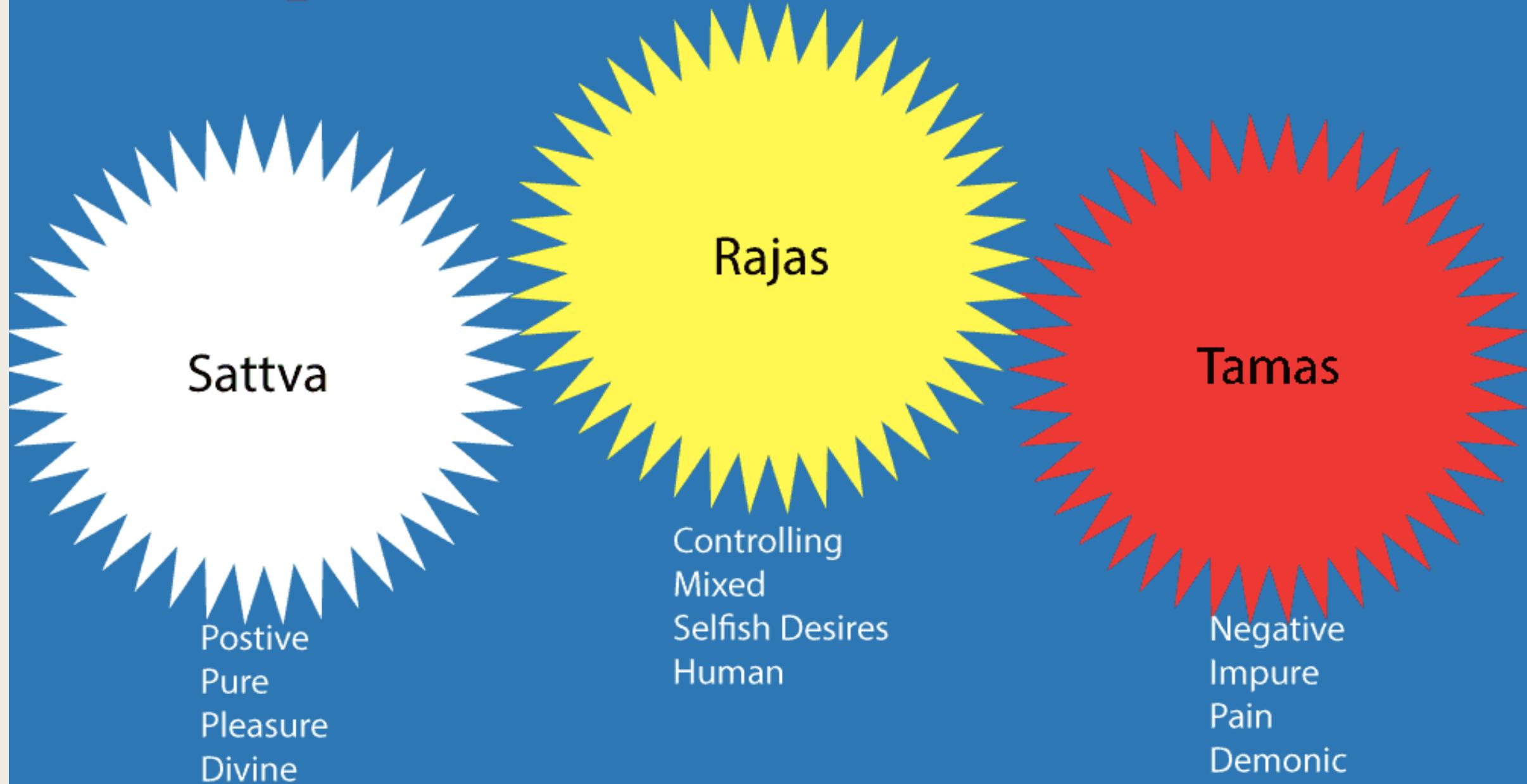
- Are there recent avatars of Vishnu?
- **No, the most recent avatars of Vishnu are in the epics**
- Are all non-Hindu untouchable?
- Kind of? There is no central authority on who is/is not untouchable, nor does every Hindu person strictly follow the caste system.
- Can/do Hindus marry outside of their caste?
- **Yes! There is a lot of support for inter-caste marriage in hopes that it will end the caste system.**
- Also many who oppose it and see it as insulting to the family of the higher caste person

Final Questions for Outline of Ritual Theory Assignment?

Today: Hindu practices and modernity

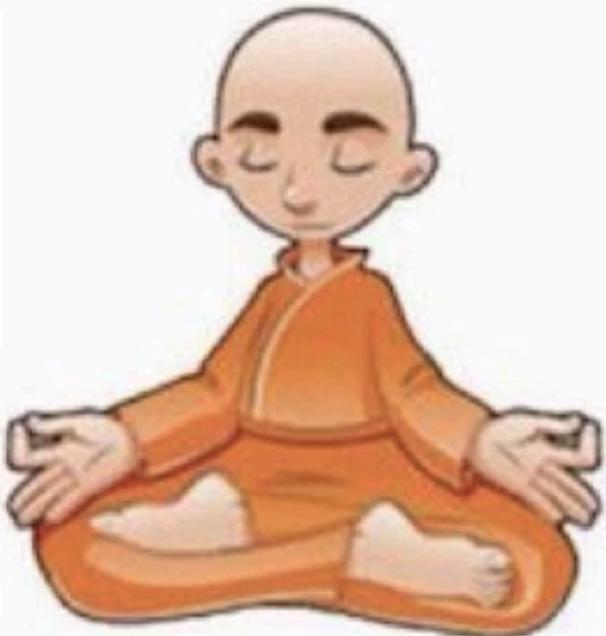
- Three Gunas
- Four goals for Hindu life
- Three ways to salvation
- Goddesses

Triple Gunas or Modes of Existence



Three Gunas (Samkhya school)

- “*Guna*” literally means “thread” or “quality”
- Gunas categorize elements of the world
- Gunas can be thought of as qualities of the mind and the body



SATTVA

Balance

Harmony

Positive

Peace

Clarity



RAJAS

Movement

Activity

Energy

Excitement

Passion



TAMAS

Inertia

Inactivity

Negative

Apathy

Dullness

Sattva

- “being” or “existence”
- Refers to the real, true, good, and virtuous
- It is a purely positive quality

Rajas

- Activity, energy, passion, dynamism

Tamas

- Darkness, inertia, lethargy, ignorance

The Gunas and the world

- The world of matter and energy is made up of these three threads
- All three exist in all things in greater or lesser proportion
- Individual people possess these qualities in different combinations

The Gunas in people

- A sattvic person is healthy, calm, clear, and self controlled
- A rajasic person is mobile, driven, active, frenetic, needy, bold, arrogant, hostile
- A tamasic person is heavy, ignorant, sleepy, lazy, confused, and indifferent

The Gunas in food

- Foods high in sattva include: fruits, most vegetables, beans, and nuts
- Foods high in rajas are usually stimulants and include coffee, tea, sugar drinks, chocolate, spicy food, and food that is bitter or sour
- Foods high in tamas make us dull and heavy and include meat, garlic, onions, and spoiled food

Four Goals

- Hinduism promotes the attainment of four goals
- Dharma (virtue and order)
- Artha (wealth and success)
- Kama (pleasure)
- Moksha (release)

Dharma

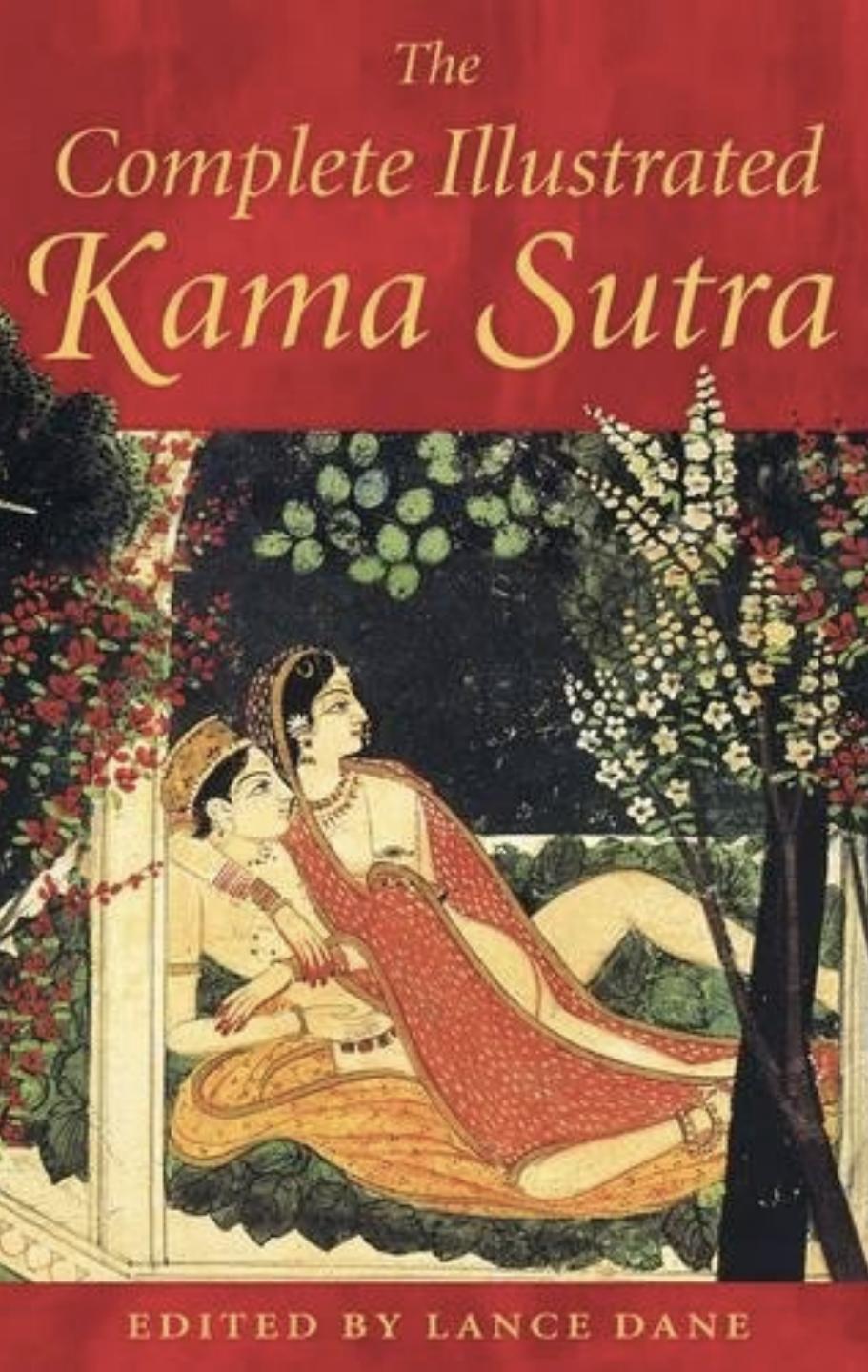
- Requires living an ethical life (recall Rama)

Artha

- Means achieving success in terms of both wealth and power
- Being wealthy and powerful is good and desirable

Kama

- Pleasure of various kinds
- Includes:
- Art
- Music
- Literature
- Sexual intercourse



Kama Sutra

- Discusses pleasures of the flesh
- Also discusses music, dance, and sensuality

Moksha

- Release from samsara
- Requires turning away from the first three

Three Paths in Hinduism

- Three paths that lead to the same goal, attaining moksha
- Path of Knowledge
- Path of Action
- Path of Devotion
- Most Hindus follow a combination of the three paths

Jnana Marga: Path of Knowledge

- Emerges from earliest Hindu texts, Vedas and especially the Upanishads
- Seeks an “intuitive knowledge of truth” to effect moksha
- More than technical or even philosophical knowledge

Karma Marga: Path of Action

- Focuses on dharma: correct, selfless action
- Rules of dharma encompass rules of caste behaviour

Bhakti Marga: Path of Devotion

- Marked by strong individual attachment to a personal deity
- Goddess or God
- Basic goal to nurture love within ones self and direct it to a deity
- Bhakti movements often social movements that aim to dissolve hierarchical social structures
- Only requirement for this path is a love of god



DEVI (GODDESS)

Goddesses

- Hinduism has ancient and continuous diverse history of goddess worship
- Male deities do not (entirely) dominate female deities
- *Important* although goddesses are worshipped by millions, men and women, this does not necessarily reflect a parallel between the treatment and status of human women and of goddesses

Devi

- Sometimes imagined as the entire cosmos
- Omnipresent being
- Creates the universe out of her own body
- Mountains are bones
- Rivers are veins
- Trees her body hair
- Sun and moon her eyes

Shri Lakshmi

- Goddess of fertility
- Model wife (consort of Vishnu)
- Sita was an avatar
- Often depicted devoutly massaging Vishnu's feet

Durga

- Warrior Goddess of war
- Protective mother

Depicted with 8-18 arms, each with weapon



Kali

- Form of the Goddess Parvati
- Goddess of time, creation, destruction, and power
- Wears a necklace of human heads
- Often depicted dancing on her consort Shiva

- Kali is drunk from the blood of her enemies
- Shiva lies prone beneath her and calms her down

GANGA (THE GANGES RIVER)



- The river is the personification of the goddess
- The river is considered holy and bathing in it is believed to help facilitate moksha
- Ganga descended from heaven to earth, so the Ganges aids in the ascent from earth to heaven
- Very desirable to be cremated near the Ganges, or have ashes spread into the river

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

From secular perspective, the Ganges is one of the most polluted rivers in the world



Religious Concerns

- Political greed and corruption that accompany globalization have made the Ganges *ritually polluted, gandagi*
- Ganges both materially polluted and ritually polluted
- One problem:
- Ganges in materially polluted with corpses
- But the Ganges ritually purifies corpses

Religious and Secular Coming together

- Religious specialists point out that the corpses in the river should have been fully cremated
- So the material pollution of the corpses is also a sign of ritual impurity, the public is showing a lack of respect for ritual order

Clean the Ganges

- Since the Ganges is a goddess, it is not possible for her to be ritually impure (being ritually polluted is something different)
- So there is disagreement over how to treat material pollution in the river
- At present, the river is still extremely polluted