From the Hearth of South Asia…

LARGEST HINDU POPULATIONS

1. India  755,135,000
2. Nepal   18,354,000
3. Bangladesh  15,995,000
4. Indonesia  7,259,000
5. Sri Lanka  2,124,000
6. Pakistan   1,868,000
7. Malaysia   1,630,000
8. USA        1,032,000
9. South Africa  959,000
10. Myanmar   893,000
Hinduism

- One of the oldest religions dating back 4000 years!
Originated... Indus River Valley
Practices include...
Ritual bathing
Pilgrimages to holy places

- Rivers (especially confluences) and lakes
- Hills and mountains
- Sites associated with particular deities (often with shrines and *murtis* there)
- Places connected with gurus, saints, and other religious leaders
- Towns and villages mentioned in sacred stories
- Places considered to be replicas or gateways to the higher realms
- Places where holy people congregate
Belief in reincarnation
Polytheistic OR Monotheistic? It’s complicated…

Brahman

Life of Pi scene
Most common gods in Hinduism

Brahma - The Creator
Vishnu - The Preserver
Shiva - the Destroyer
Let’s read some stories about these Gods!

In your quad group

1. Summarize the plot of the story
2. What lessons can be taught/learned from this story?
3. Can you find any similarities between this story and other religious stories (i.e. Greek or Roman mythology, parables, biblical references…)
Diffusion and the caste system

• Unhappiness with Hinduism and exposure to other faiths led to:
  – Conversion, especially by Dalits (untouchables)
  – Weakening of caste barriers

And…
A “compromise religion” developed in the Punjab region of India:

- **Hinduism + Islam = Sikhism!**
  - Monotheistic
  - Dislikes caste system
  - Retains belief in reincarnation (sort of)
  - Retains belief in Karma
Fundamental beliefs of Sikhism

Sacred scripture is called the Guru Granth Sahib (kept at the Golden Temple in Amristar - gurdwara)

- Faith and meditation
- Unity
- Equality of all humankind
- Engaging in selfless acts
- Social Justice
- Honesty conduct and livelihood
Practices and Prohibitions

Do

• Wear a dastaar (men) or Patka (young boys)
• Wear a kara (bracelet)
• Become baptised

Don’t

• Cut hair
• Give in to the “Five Thieves”: lust, rage, greed, attachment and conceit
• Become intoxicated
• Be an adulterer
• Brag or boast
• Eat meat
Several other religions appeared in India as a reaction to questions about Hinduism’s teachings. Reformers questioned Hinduism’s strict social hierarchy that protected the privileged and kept millions in poverty. One of those people was...
Prince Siddhartha, AKA Buddha
Like Christianity and Islam, Buddhism changed as it grew and diffused...

sutras = written teachings
Buddhism in 5 minutes
Zen Buddhism

A school of Mahayana

Started in China, spread to Vietnam, Korea & Japan

Meditation, interaction with an accomplished teacher, yoga
Daoism (AKA Taoism)

- From China
- Tao = the way or path
- Emphasis on nature
- Humans are a microcosm of the universe
What do you get when you mix Buddhism with a local religion in Japan?

Rituals