hinduism

1

hinduism

- Began in India around 1500 B.C.
- The world's oldest religion.
- There are 750 million Hindus in the world today.
- Most Hindus still live in India.

2

hindu beliefs

- Polytheistic.
- Brahman
  - a transcendent power beyond the universe.
  - is present in everything
  - is the power which upholds and supports everything
- Other gods are aspects of this supreme power.
- Altogether, there are 33 million gods in Hinduism.

3

trimurti

- Trimurti is the Hindu "triumvirate."
  - Three primary gods
  - Responsible for the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world.
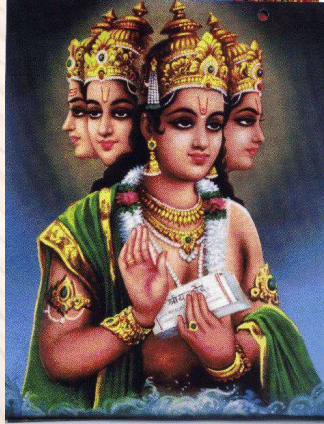

4

1

brahma

- First god in the Trimurti.
- Creator of the universe and everything in it.
- Least worshipped of the three Trimurti gods.

5

brahma

- Depicted with four heads.
- Had five heads, but Shiva cut one of them off.
- Not to be confused with "Brahman" or "Brahman" caste.

6

brahma

- Sometimes he is shown with four arms.
- Sometimes he is bearded.

7

vishnu

- The second god in the Trimurti.
- The preserver and protector of the universe.
- Hindus believe he comes to the earth in troubled times and restore the balance of good and evil.

8

vishnu

- What does he look like?
  - Blue skin
  - Four arms
  - Always carries certain items:
    - Conch shell: symbolizes creation
    - Chakra (disc): symbolizes the mind
    - Lotus flower: represents freedom and beauty
    - Mace: strength
  - Often shown with snakes above his head and below his feet.

9

shiva

- The third god in the Trimurti.
- The destroyer
- He is the source of both good and evil.
  - He destroys in order to allow for recreation.

10

shiva

- He is always shown with the following features:
- He is blue.
- Third eye
- Cobra necklace
- Three lines across forehead
- Crescent moon in hair.
- Trident
- Often dressed in simple clothing (animal skins)

11

shiva

Sometimes Shiva is depicted dancing.
- Shiva Nataraja (Lord of the Dance)

12

other hindu gods

Ganesha
- Remover of obstacles
- One of the most worshipped gods in Hinduism.

13

other hindu gods

Rama
- An avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu.
- hero of the Hindu epic called the *Ramayana*.

14

other hindu gods

Krishna
- Another avatar of Vishnu.
- Shown as a boy playing the flute.
- Teacher of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

15

other hindu gods

Saraswati
- Goddess of learning
- Wife of Brahma
- Hindu students pray to her before taking exams.

16

other hindu gods

Lakshmi
- goddess of good fortune, wealth, and well-being.
- Wife of Vishnu

17

other hindu gods

Durga
- Protective mother of the universe

18

other hindu gods

Indra
- King of Heaven and lord of the gods
- a protector and provider of rain.

19

other hindu gods

Agni
- God of fire
- Presides over all fire rituals

20

other hindu gods

Hanuman
- The monkey king
- Helper of Rama
- Features in the epic *Ramayana*

21

other hindu gods

Kali
- Goddess of death and time.
- An incarnation of Parvati, the wife of Shiva

22

sacred writings

- The *Vedas* collections of Sanskrit hymns.
  - c. 1500-500 BC.
  - Written down c. 600 BC
- The *Upanishads*: the mystical and philosophical teachings of Hinduism.
  - composed between 800-200 BC

23

sacred writings

- The *Mahabharata*: one of the great epic poems of ancient India.
  - The story is about the battle of one family over a kingdom in northern India.
  - written between 300 BC and AD. 300.
- The *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of God)
  - part of the *Mahabharata*.
  - A dialogue between Krishna and the hero Arjuna on the meaning of life.

24

krishna and arjuna

25

sacred writings

- The *Ramayana*:
  - written 3rd c. BC
  - tells story of Rama, and his wife, Sita
  - Rama and Sita are generally seen as ideal examples of great manly heroism and wifely devotion.
  - Reciting the *Ramayana* is considered a religious act, and scenes from the epic are portrayed throughout India and Southeast Asia.

26

rama and sita

27

hindu concepts

- Dharma: the power that maintains society
  - People maintain dharma by living virtuously and fulfilling their duty.
- Reincarnation: the belief that the soul repeatedly goes through a cycle of being born into a body, dying, and being reborn again in a new body.
- Karma: a force that determines the quality of each life, depending on how well one behaved in a past life.
  - Hinduism says we create karma by our actions on earth. If you live a good life, you create good karma. If you live a bad life, you create bad karma.

28

hindu concepts

- <u>Samsara</u>: the cycle of rebirth
- <u>Moksha</u>: Freedom from samsara
  - Each time a Hindu soul is born into a better life, it has the opportunity to improve itself further, and get closer to ultimate liberation (i.e. freedom).
  - One attains Moksha when one has "overcome ignorance", and no longer desires anything at all.
  - The ones who reach this state no longer struggle with the cycle of life and death.

29

hindu duties

- Each Hindu has 4 daily duties:
  - Revere the deities
  - Respect ancestors
  - Respect all beings
  - Honor all humankind

30