

Concepts and Contexts of Hinduism:

Indian Hindu Art: Context - History:

Pre-history:	c. 2500 BCE	civilization in the Indus Valley
	c. 1800 BCE	Aryan (Indo-European) invasion from the north
Vedic Period:	550 BCE	Buddhism established (Sakyamuni Buddha born c. 563 BCE)
	327 BCE	Alexander the Great in northern India - Greek culture introduced into India
Hinduism:	2nd Cent BCE	Hinduism emerges with the Bhagavad Gita - the fundamental doctrine of Hinduism
Maurya Dynasty:	273-232 BCE	Asoka makes Buddhism the dominant religion
		By 185 BCE Hinduism becomes favored religion
Gupta Empire:	320-c. 600 CE	Indian culture reaches new heights - sustained peace - Hindu temples
		Hinduism adopts aspects of Buddhism - increases popularity
Chola Bronzes:	10th Cent	South Indian bronzes originally created solely as icons of worship to be carried through the temple and adjoining areas of a town

Hindu History:

Hinduism has no founder or date of origin - it is the oldest faith structure in the world.

Hinduism is thought to have gotten its name from the Persian word *hindu*, meaning "river," used by outsiders to describe the people of the Indus River Valley.

The first sacred texts of Hinduism, dating from around 1200 BCE, were concerned with the ritual sacrifices associated with numerous gods representing forces of nature.

Basic Beliefs and Ideas:

Hindus regard their religion as eternal but *not* a homogeneous organized system

Hindus refer to their religion as *sanatama dharma* ("eternal religion")

The three main gods of Hinduism, based on the idea that evil will be eradicated

1. Brahma (The Creator) *generally worshipped*
2. Shiva (The Destroyer) *worshipped by Brahmins and Iyers*
3. Vishnu (The Protector) *worshipped by Brahmins and Iyengars*

Hinduism:

1. Hindus believe in a one, all-pervasive Supreme Being, who is both immanent and transcendent, both Creator and Unmanifest. Reality
2. Hindus believe that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation, and dissolution.
3. Hindu believe in *Karma*, the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words, and deeds.
4. Hindu believe that the soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all karmas have been resolved, and *moksha*, liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. Not a single soul will be deprived of this destiny.
5. Hindus believe that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice *ahimsa*, non-injury, in thought, word, and deed.
6. Hindus believe in the divinity of four *Vedas*, the world's most ancient scripture, and venerate the *Agamas* as equally revealed. These primordial hymns are God's word and the bedrock of *Sanatana Dharma*, the eternal religion.
7. Hindus believe that divine beings exist in unseen worlds and that temple worship, rituals, sacraments, and personal devotionals create a communion with these devas and Gods.
8. Hindus believe that an enlightened master, or *satguru*, is essential to know the Transcendent Absolute, as are personal discipline, good conduct, purification, pilgrimage, self-injury, meditation, and surrender in God.
9. Hindus believe that no religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others, but that all genuine paths are facets of God's Light, deserving tolerance and understanding.



199 - Angkor, the temple of Angkor Wat

202 - Shiva as Lord of Dance (Nataraja)



200 - Lakshmana Temple

199 - The temple of Angkor Wat
Jayavarman VII as Bud

