



Ethnic Groups and Religious Groups of Southern and Eastern Asia

Comparisons and Contrasts

Ethnic Groups

- ✦ Identify with each other through a common heritage
- ✦ A common language
- ✦ A common culture
- ✦ A common ancestry
- ✦ A shared interest in a geographic region

Religious Groups

- ✦ Identify with each other through a common religion
- ✦ A denomination is a subgroup of a religion
- ✦ May be spread throughout the world
- ✦ Generally regard one region as a holy land or sacred place

Ethnic Groups of Southern and Eastern Asia

- ✦ In India, there are 1,652 different languages spoken
- ✦ Indian society is divided into castes or clans rather than ethnic groups
- ✦ China officially recognizes 56 different ethnic groups
 - ✦ The largest is the Han Chinese
 - ✦ The “one child only” policy applies to the Han Chinese



Major Religions of Southern and Eastern Asia

Hinduism

- ✦ Founded in 1500 BC
- ✦ The Books of Knowledge
 - ✦ Contained holy hymns
 - ✦ Called Vedas
- ✦ Polytheism
 - ✦ Belief in many gods or goddesses
- ✦ Reincarnation
 - ✦ Soul does not die with the body and enters another being
 - ✦ Evil people will suffer in the next life
- ✦ Karma - actions determine fate



Hinduism continued

- ✦ Ultimate goal in life is to achieve Moshka – which is freedom from reincarnation
- ✦ Believe in Karma – ones actions determine their fate
- ✦ Believe in caste system – divides citizens up into different “classes”
 - ✦ Brahmans (_high priests/holy_)
 - ✦ Kashatriyas (soldiers)
 - ✦ Vaishyas (_merchants/artisans/traders)
 - ✦ Shudras (laborers)
 - ✦ 5th caste untouchables
- ✦ You are born into your caste and cannot move to a different one
- ✦ Followers are called Hindus

Buddhism

- ✦ Founded in 500 BC
- ✦ Siddhartha Gautama
 - ✦ Rich nobleman who was troubled by poverty and suffering
 - ✦ Became a wandering monk until he simply sat and meditated on the unhappiness of man.
 - ✦ Man will not be happy until he rejects greed and desire.
- ✦ He became “enlightened” and took the name of “Buddha” or the “The Enlightened One.”



Buddhism continued



- ✦ Four Noble Truths – basic instructions about Buddhism
- ✦ Holy book is called the Tripitaka and contains the teachings of Buddha
- ✦ Ultimate goal is to reach nirvana– state of peace
- ✦ Believe in following the Middle Way or Eightfold path
- ✦ Followers are called Buddhists

Islam

- ✧ Founded 7th century AD
- ✧ Five Pillars of Islam
 1. Profession of faith
 - ✧ There is only one god and Muhammad is his prophet
 2. Pray five times a day facing Mecca
 3. Charity
 4. Fasting during Ramadan
 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in life



Shinto

- ✧ The earliest religion of Japan
- ✧ Shinto means “way of the gods”
- ✧ Reverence for the kami, divine spirits that live in nature
- ✧ Prayers and rituals to honor or please the kami



Confucianism

- ✦ NOT a religion, but it a PHILOSOPHY
- ✦ Widely practiced in China, said to be the foundation of Chinese history culture
- ✦ Confucius was the most important scholar in Chinese history.
- ✦ Social order is key to peace
- ✦ **Golden Rule of Behavior**
 - ✦ What you do not like when done unto yourself, do not do unto others.
- ✦ Five Basic Relationships
 - ✦ Ruler and Subject
 - ✦ Father and Son
 - ✦ Husband and Wife
 - ✦ Older Brother and Younger Brother
 - ✦ Friend and Friend

