



Two Main Religions of Ancient India

***Virupaksha Temple, dedicated to
Shiva, in southern India***

1. Hinduism

Main texts:

- a. Vedas (composed c. 1500 BC)
 - i. Vedas—collection of poems about the creation of the world, gods and goddesses, and priestly rituals
 - ii. Indra, a warrior god of thunderbolts, is a major god in these works
- b. Vedantas—philosophical discussions of life and union with the godhead
 1. *Bhagavad Gita* (classic Hinduism)
 - i. conversation between the famed warrior Arjuna and the god Krishna
 - ii. Contained classic expression of monotheism
 2. Development of commonly-known Hindu beliefs in the Vedanta period
 - a. karma—energy created by your deeds, for good or evil
 - b. castes (varnas)—four brahmans, kshatriyas, vaisyas, and shudras
 - c. samsara (reincarnation)
 - d. other gods come to the fore: Shiva, Krishna, Brahma (one all-powerful creator)

2. Buddhism

Four Noble Truths

- a. Noble Truth of Suffering (life is pain)
- b. Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (craving and desires)
- c. Noble truth of the extinction of suffering (nirvana)
- d. Noble truth that leads to the extinction of suffering (the Eightfold Path):
right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action,
right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right
concentration.