

## Hindu and Buddhist Literature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Context: Buddhism was founded in India about 500 BC and is based on the teachings of the philosopher Gautama Buddha. Hinduism is considered to be the world's oldest living religion. It originated in India approximately 4,000 years ago. About 80 percent of Indians are Hindus.

## BUDDHIST LITERATURE

*The Dhammapada: Sayings of Buddha*

The Dhammapada is a collection of Buddha's sayings that have been passed down by his followers. It teaches morality and encourages the development of self-mastery and strength of character. As you read the passage below, pay attention to how good and evil are contrasted.

1. Everything has mind in the lead,  
has mind in the forefront, is made by mind.  
If one speaks or acts with a corrupt mind, misery  
will follow, as the wheel of a cart follows the foot  
of the ox.

2. Everything has mind in the lead, has mind in the  
forefront, is made by mind. If one speaks or acts  
with a pure mind, happiness will follow, like a  
shadow that never leaves.

15. One who does evil sorrows in this world and  
after death, sorrowful in both.

Seeing the pollution of one's own actions, one is  
tormented by sorrow and grief.

16. One who does good is happy in this world and  
after death, happy in both. Seeing the purity of  
one's own actions, one is happy, most joyful.

## HINDU LITERATURE

*Bhagavad Gita*

Bhagavad Gita means "The Song of the Blessed One." Although no one is certain of when the text was written, some scholars date it as early as the fifth century. As you read the passage below, pay attention to how the statements express the Hindu philosophy of life.

## THE BLESSED LORD SAID:

Fearlessness, purity of heart,  
persistence in the yoga of knowledge,  
generosity, self-control,  
nonviolence, gentleness, candor,

integrity, disengagement,  
joy in the study of the scriptures  
compassion for all beings, modesty,  
patience, a tranquil mind,

dignity, kindness, courage,  
a benevolent, loving heart—  
these are the qualities of men  
born with divine traits, Arjuna.

Hypocrisy, insolence, anger,  
cruelty, ignorance, conceit—  
these, Arjuna, are the qualities  
of men with demonic traits.

The divine traits lead to freedom;  
the demonic, to suffering and bondage.  
But do not be concerned, Arjuna:  
the traits you have are divine.