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| Himalaya | The **highest mountains** in the world; located in the far north region of India. (Separate China and India.) |
| Ganges River | India's **holy** river. |
| Indus River | The location of the first **river valley civilization** of India. |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Subcontinent |  | | A large landmass that **juts** out from a continent. |
| Monsoon | A **strong wind** that blows across east Asia at certain times of the year. |
| Caste | A hereditary **social class** among Hindus. |
| Guru | A Hindu or Buddhist religious leader and **spiritual teacher**. |
| Brahmins | **Priests** and scholars in India’s caste system. Highest level in India’s caste system. |
| Untouchables | **Lowest class** of people in India’s caste system, they do all the dirty work of the society. |
| Siddhartha Gautama | Founder of Buddhism. **Buddha**  “Enlightened One” |
| Hinduism | A **religion** and philosophy developed in ancient India, characterized by a belief in **reincarnation** and a supreme being who takes many forms. |
| Brahman | In Hinduism he was the **universal soul**, and in the trinity of gods in Hinduism he was the Creator. |
| Reincarnation | Born, live, die, reborn.  **Repeat life cycle** over and over. |
| Dharma | In Hinduism, a person's religious and moral duties. |
| Karma | The effects of a person's actions. **Good deeds** bring good karma. **Bad deeds** bring bad karma. |
| Buddhism | The teaching of Buddha that life is permeated with **suffering** caused by **desire**, suffering ceases when desire ceases, and enlightenment obtained through right conduct and wisdom and meditation releases one from desire and suffering and rebirth. |
| Nirvana | A condition of **great peace** or happiness. |
| Theocracy | The belief in government rule by divine guidance. (A government **ruled by religion**) |
| Sanskrit | The most important **language** of ancient India. |
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| Stupa | A dome-shaped structure that serves as a **Buddhist shrine**. Place to meditate. |
| Pilgrim | Someone who **journeys** to a **sacred place** as an act of religious devotion. |
| Epic | A long **poem** that tells a story. |
| Vedas | Ancient Sanskrit writings that are the earliest sacred texts of Hinduism. (**Holy writing**) |
| Mahabharata | A great epic poem from India, reflecting the struggles of the Aryans as they moved south into India. (**War** **story**) |
| Ramayana | A Hindu epic written in Sanskrit that describes the adventures of the **king Rama** and his queen. |
| Four Noble Truths | As taught by the Buddha, the four **basic beliefs** that form the foundation of Buddhism. |
| Eightfold Path | In Buddhism a set of **guidelines** on how to escape suffering. |