

Hindu and Buddhist Influences In the mid-1900s, Indian leader **Mohandas Gandhi** (MOH•huhn•DAHS GAHN•dee) used *ahimsa* (nonviolence) in his fight against British rule to gain independence for India. His life inspired U.S. civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., who led nonviolent protests to gain rights for African Americans.

Today Hindu and Buddhist influences continue. For example, millions of people from other religions meditate and practice yoga.

▲ **FIND MAIN IDEAS** Describe how the religions of India influenced other cultures.

India's Artistic Legacy

▼ **KEY QUESTION** What are some important achievements in Indian arts?

The arts of India have strongly influenced the world. This influence can be seen in literature, art and sculpture, and architecture.

Literature One of India's greatest writers was **Kalidasa** (KAH•lee•DAH•suh). He may have been the court poet for Chandra Gupta II. Kalidasa's most famous play is *Shakuntala*. It tells the story of a beautiful girl who falls in love with and marries a middle-aged king. After Shakuntala and her husband are separated, they suffer tragically because of a curse that prevents the king from recognizing his wife when they meet again. Generations of Indians have continued to admire Kalidasa's plays because they are skillfully written and emotionally stirring.

Southern India also has a rich literary tradition. In the A.D. 100s, the city of Madurai in southern India became a site of writing academies. More than 2,000 Tamil poems from this period still exist.

Drama In addition to literature, drama was very popular in ancient India. In southern India, traveling troupes of actors put on performances in cities across the region. Women as well as men took part in these shows, which combined drama and dance. Many of the classical dance forms in India today are based on techniques explained in a book written during this period.

In many Southeast Asian nations, people perform plays based on the ancient Sanskrit epic the *Mahabharata*. The *Bhagavad Gita* has been translated into many languages and is read around the world.



▲ **Dance of the Ramayana** This dancer in Thailand is performing a piece from an Indian epic called the *Ramayana*. What does the dancer in Thailand suggest about Indian culture?

Art and Sculpture Indian art and sculpture have influenced art in other cultures. Both Hindu art and Buddhist art were important in the development of art in India.

The main difference between Buddhist art and Hindu art in India was its subject matter. Buddhist art often portrayed the Buddha or bodhisattvas, who were potential Buddhas. Hindu deities, such as Vishnu and Ganesha, were common subjects in Hindu art.

Beyond the differences in subject, Hindu and Buddhist beliefs had little influence on Indian artistic styles. For example, a Hindu sculpture and a Buddhist sculpture created at the same time and place were stylistically the same. In fact, the same artisans often created both Hindu and Buddhist art.



▲ **Ganesha** The elephant deity Ganesha, here pulled in his chariot by rats, is the deity of success, education, wealth, and wisdom.

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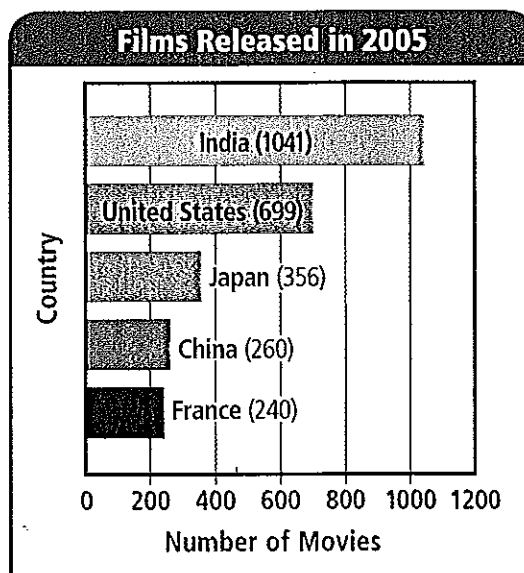
Bollywood

India's movie industry is called Bollywood, which combines Bombay and Hollywood.

Movies are very popular in India, which has the world's largest motion picture industry.

India's huge population and cultural diversity are reflected in its films, which are produced in 52 languages. About 5 million people work in Indian movies.

Indian movies are often based on myths and folk tales. They also feature love stories and crime dramas. *Devdas* is among the most expensive Indian films ever made.



Source: Australian National Film Board

CRITICAL THINKING

Make Inferences India's population is over one billion. How might this connect to the size of its film industry?

Architecture The influence of Hindu traditions can be seen in Indian architecture. Many architectural trends began in Gupta times. These include building with stone rather than wood; erecting a high, pyramidal roof instead of a flat roof; and sculpting elaborate decorations on the roof. The influence of Indian architecture spread throughout Southeast Asia, including Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

In northwestern Cambodia, ancient builders erected a large complex of Hindu temples called Angkor Wat. The architectural trends that began in Gupta times can be seen in this complex, which was built in the 1100s. It is the world's largest religious structure and is considered one of the world's greatest architectural achievements. It was built as a symbolic mountain dedicated to the Hindu deity Vishnu. Some years later, the complex became a Buddhist temple.

Indian influences are seen in the design of Angkor Wat. For example, the buildings in the temple complex have pyramidal roofs. They are built of stone, with elaborate sculptures decorating the roofs and walls. The complex covers nearly a square mile.

Angkor Wat The temples at Angkor Wat in Cambodia show how Hinduism and Indian artistic styles spread to Southeast Asia. ▼

▲ **FIND MAIN IDEAS** Discuss some important achievements in Indian arts.



The Legacy of Indian Mathematics

▼ **KEY QUESTION** How does the mathematical knowledge of ancient India affect our lives today?

The numerals we use originated in India. People in India have been using the numerals 1 to 9 for more than 2,000 years. Arab traders brought these numerals to the West; as a result, they are frequently referred to as Arabic numerals. However, in contemporary usage they are more often called **Hindu-Arabic numerals**.

The number system first developed in India and widely used today is called the decimal system. The name comes from the Latin word *decem*, which means "ten." In a number such as 5,555, each numeral is worth ten times as much as the numeral to its right. The **place** of a numeral—the ones place, the tens place, the hundreds place, and so on—tells how much that numeral is worth.

The decimal system would not work without a symbol for zero. It would be impossible to write a number like 504 without some way to show that the tens place was empty. In India, the use of the zero goes back about 1,400 years.

▲ **SUMMARIZE** Describe how the mathematics of ancient India affects us today.



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Section Assessment

Terms & Names

1. Explain the importance of

Mohandas Gandhi Hindu-Arabic numerals
Kalidasa

Use Your Reading Notes

2. Categorize

Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

Which of India's legacies has made the biggest impact on your life? Explain.

Legacy of India		
Religion	Arts	Mathematics

Key Ideas

3. What ancient Hindu and Buddhist practice inspired both Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.?
4. Which ancient Indian arts influenced Southeast Asian culture?
5. What number system did Indian mathematicians invent?

Critical Thinking

6. **Make Generalizations** What are three main ways Indian religion, art, music, literature, and dance reached the rest of the world?
7. **Sequence Events** How did Indian numerals come to be called Hindu-Arabic numerals?



Make a Travel Poster Research one of the Indian legacies you learned about. Advertise it on a travel poster about "Old and New India."