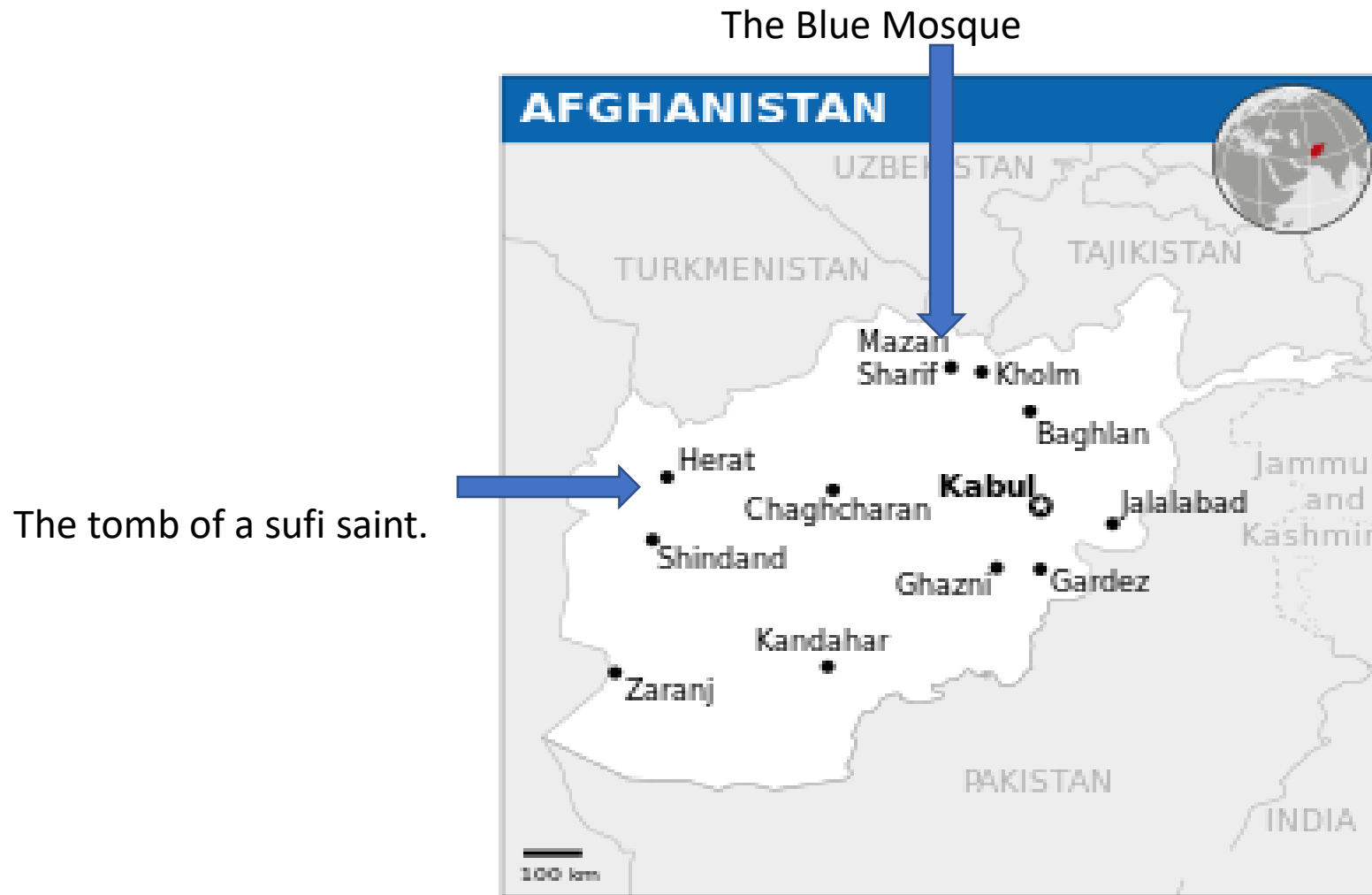


SOME ANCIENT AND SOME
LESSER KNOWN SACRED PLACES

Asia

Afghanistan

two sites sacred to Muslims.



The Blue Mosque at Mazari Sharif.

- The Seljuq dynasty sultan Ahmed Sanjar built the first Blue Mosque at this location.
- It was destroyed by Genghis Khan in the invasion around 1220.
- It was rebuilt in the 15th century by Sultan Husayn Mirza Bayqarah.



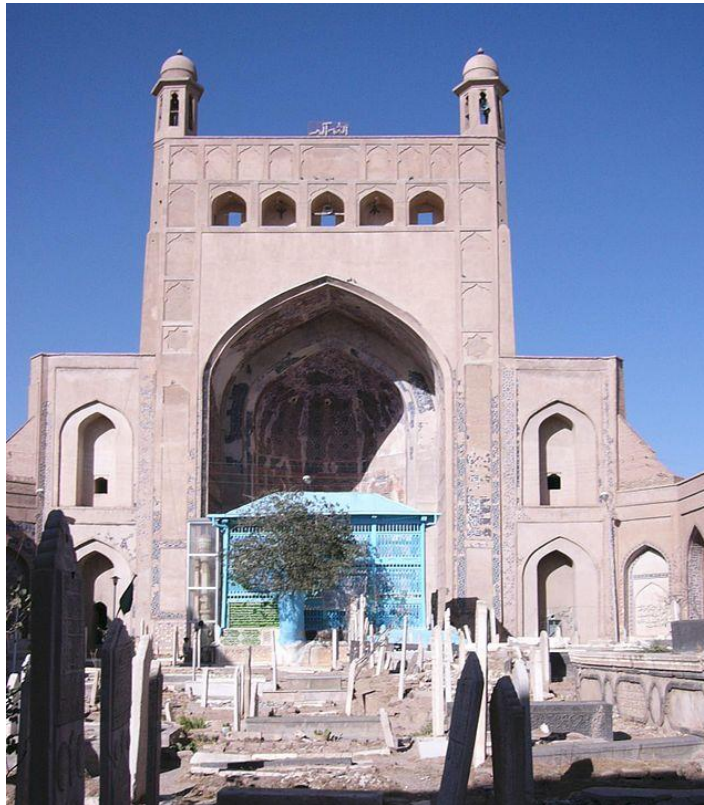
Colours in Islam and Judaism.

- In Islam colours have particular significance.
- Blue is believed to be the colour of protection. Green is believed to be the colour of paradise.
- In Judaism blue is believed to be the colour of divinity, possibly related to the colour of the sky and sea.
- A Samaritan Torah scroll wrapped in blue:
- (By Ovedc - Own work).



Khwaja 'Abd Allah Ansari shrine in Herat.

- The tomb of the Sufi mystic and saint Khwajah Abdullah Ansari, also known as the guardian pir (wise man) of Herat.



Divider slide.



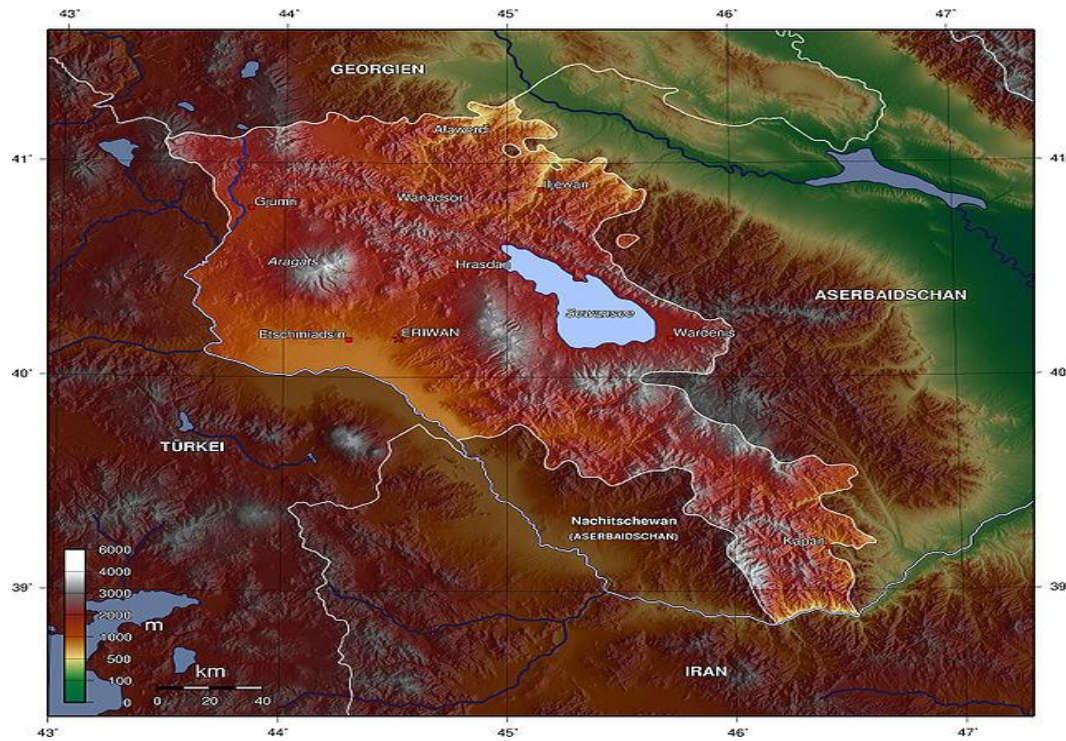
Armenia

The Temple of Garni is a first century Hellenic temple near Garni, Armenia.

- It is the only pagan temple in Armenia that survived the Christianisation of the country in the early 4th century.
- The temple had collapsed in the 1679 and was reconstructed between 1969 and 1974, under the supervision of Alexander Sahinian.



Location of Garni province Of Kotayk Marz.



Kotayk Marz



The ruins of the temple in the early 20th century

- The actual building is a peripteros temple resting on an elevated podium and was most likely dedicated to the god Mihr in the first century CE.
- Peripteros is the special name given to a type of ancient Greek or Roman temple surrounded by a portico with columns



Divider slide.



China

- The "three teachings" in China are:
- Confucian philosophy.
- Taoism (or Daoism), a philosophical, ethical, and religious tradition of Chinese origin that emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao.
 - The term Tao means "way", "path" or "principle", and can also be found in Chinese philosophies and religions other than Taoism.
 - In Taoism, however, Tao denotes something that is both the source and the force behind everything that exists
- Buddhism.

There are at least 16 sacred mountains in China.

The Five Great Mountains (East, West, North, South and Centre): Tai Shan, Huà Shān, Héng Shān and Sōng Shān.

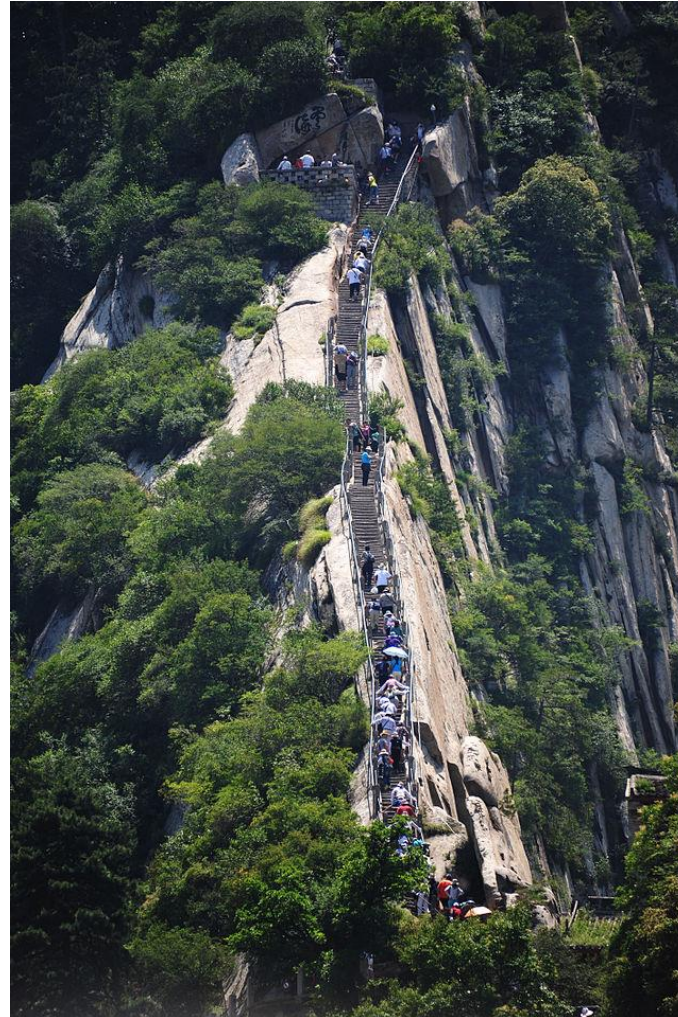
- These mountains were the subjects of imperial pilgrimages by emperors throughout ages.
Although not traditionally categorized as either Taoist or Buddhist mountains, these five mountains have a strong presence of both.
- Temple complex at the top of Mount Tai(left).

- Western summit of Hua Shan (Shaanxi



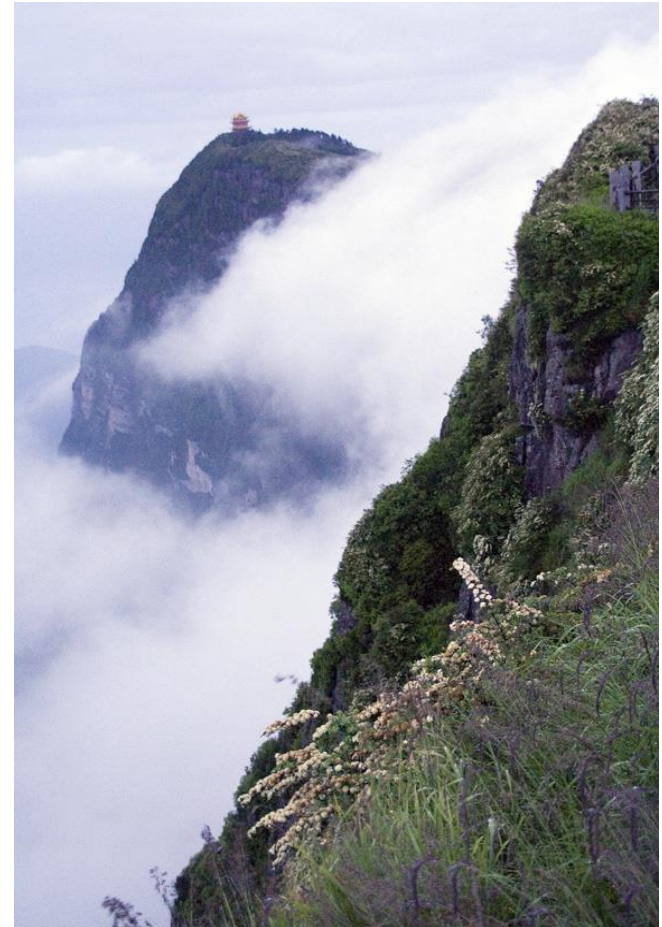
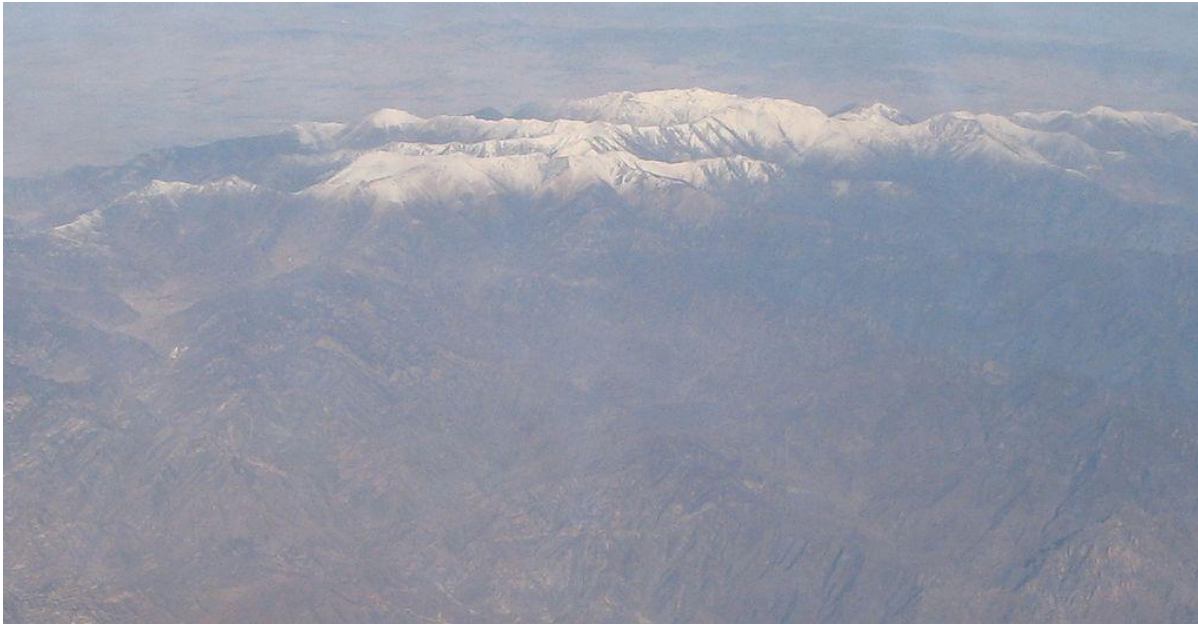
Climbing Hua Shan and a bridge on the mountain.

- Not for the faint-hearted.
- (It is improved now).



The Four Sacred Mountains of Buddhism are **Wǔtái Shān**, **Éméi Shān**, Jiǔhuá Shān and Pǔtuó Shān.

- Mount Wǔtái (left) and Mount Éméi.



The Four Sacred Mountains of Taoism are Wǔdāng Shān, Lóngghǔ Shān, Qíyūn Shān and Qīngchéng Shān(the most secluded place in China).

- Wǔdāng mountains (left) and cliff of Lóngghǔ Shān (right).

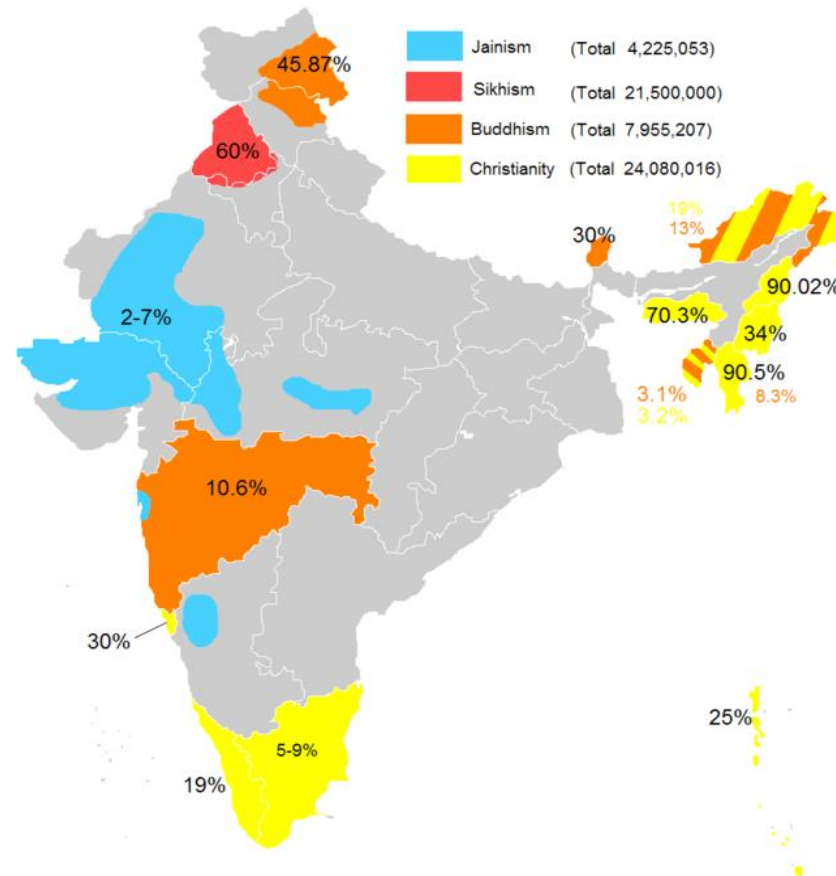


Divider slide.



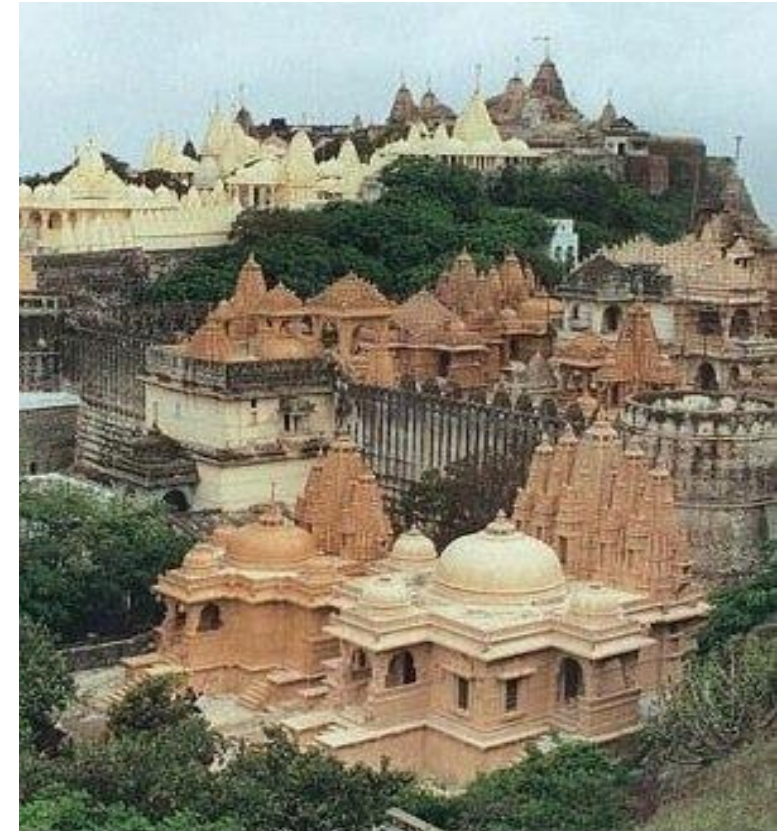
India

- In 2001, in India, the numbers according to religions were:
- Hinduism (80.5%),
- Islam (13.4%),
- Christianity (2.3%),
- Sikhism (1.9%),
- Buddhism(0.8%),
- Jainism (0.4%),
- Other (0.7%).



Shatrunjay Hill, overlooking the town of Palitana in Gujarat, India, is the holiest site of the Jain religion.

- Palitana is near Kolkata.

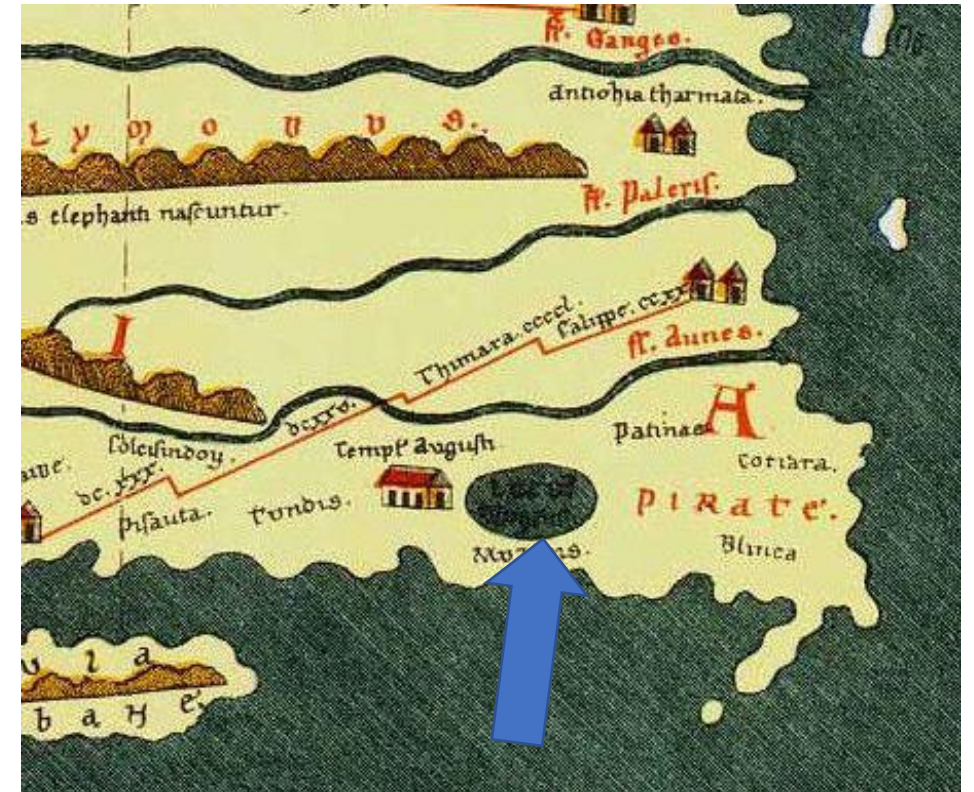


Shatrunjay Hill.

- It is a city so holy that not even priests can sleep there.
- No animal can be killed within its walls; not even insects should be harmed.
- Worshippers look at its thousands of statues through mirrors in order not to insult the gods and goddesses with a direct gaze.
- Nobody knows exactly how many temples are there.
- Estimates vary from 1250 to 1500.
- They were built in the 11th and 12th centuries during the religion's architectural renaissance and are elaborately carved out of marble and other stone and filled with colourful statues of Jain deities.

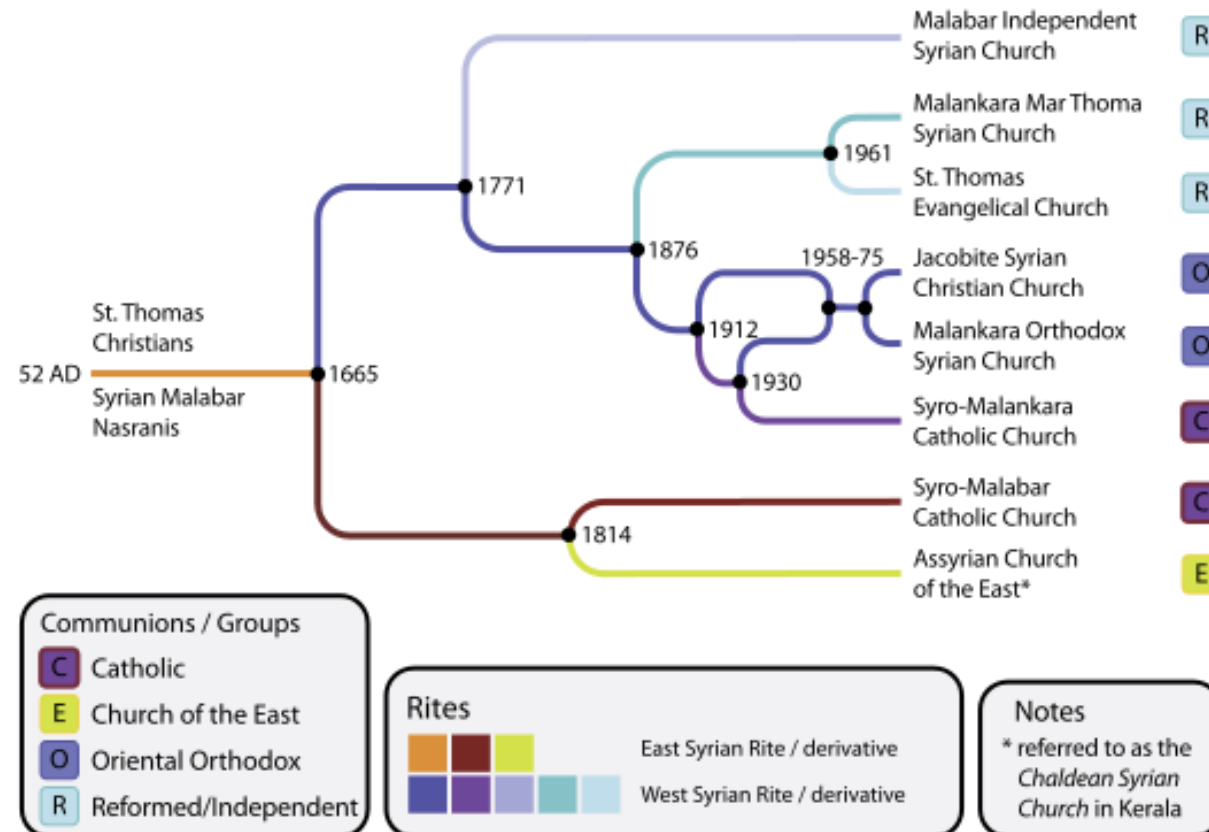
According to Indian Christian traditions, the apostle Thomas arrived in Kodungallur (also Muziris), Kerala in 52CE.

- Converts were largely Jewish proselytes among the Cochin Jews who are believed to have arrived in India around 562 BC, after the destruction of the First Temple.



A suggested development of Christianity in India.

- Earliest Indian churches are known to have used the Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic) New Testament.



A Christian sacred site in India.

- San Thome Basilica in Chennai is built over the site where The apostle Thomas is believed to be originally interred.



The Harimandir Sahib(Abode of God)commonly known as the Golden Temple, the most sacred site for Sikhs.

- This Sikh gurdwara is located in the city of Amritsar, Punjab, India.
- The city was founded in 1574 by the fourth Sikh guru, Guru Ram Das.
- On 3rd January 1588 Guru Arjun laid the foundation stone of the Harmandir Sahib and in 1604 he completed the Adi Granth, the holy scripture of Sikhism, and installed it in the gurdwara(gateway to the guru).



The Harimandir Sahib lit up.

- A golden glow.



Sacred rivers.

- Water is of special significance in Hinduism, not only for its life-sustaining properties, but also because of its use in rituals and because of the stress given to cleanliness.
- Bathing also has religious significance, especially in rivers considered sacred as it washes away sins.
- There are seven major sacred rivers.
- The Ganges river has a number of tributaries, one of which is the Yamuna river and another, the legendary Saraswati River which is invisible and is said to flow underground and join the other two rivers from below.

The “invisible” River Saraswati is an ancient river that flowed in northern India during the Vedic era.

- The Yamuna and Ganges rivers merge at Triveni Sangam, Allahabad.



Yamunotri is the source of the Yamuna River and the seat of the Goddess Yamuna in Hinduism.

- It is situated at an altitude of 3,293 m in the Garhwal Himalayas and located approximately 30 km North of Uttarkashi, the headquarters of Uttarkashi district in the Garhwal Division of Uttarakhand, India.



The Gangotri Glacier, a major source of the Ganges.

- A major source of the Ganges, is at Gomukh, in the same district in the Himalayas as the Yamuna river.
- The Ganges is the most sacred and longest river of India.
- Gomukh, terminus of the Gangotri glacier (lower right in image, behind prayer flag).
- The Bhagirathi peaks rise in the background.



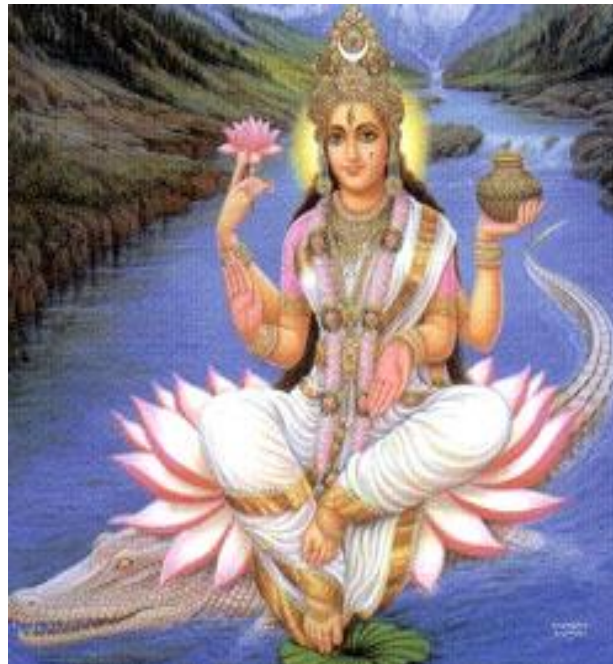
Another picture of Gomukh

- Hindu pilgrims trek into this wilderness to get as close as they can to the Gangotri Glacier.



The Goddess Ganga, riding her crocodile. She plays an important role at the beginning of the Mahabharata.

- The Mahabharata is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, the other being the Ramayana.
- In Hinduism, the river Ganges is personified as the goddess known as Ganga.



Another site.



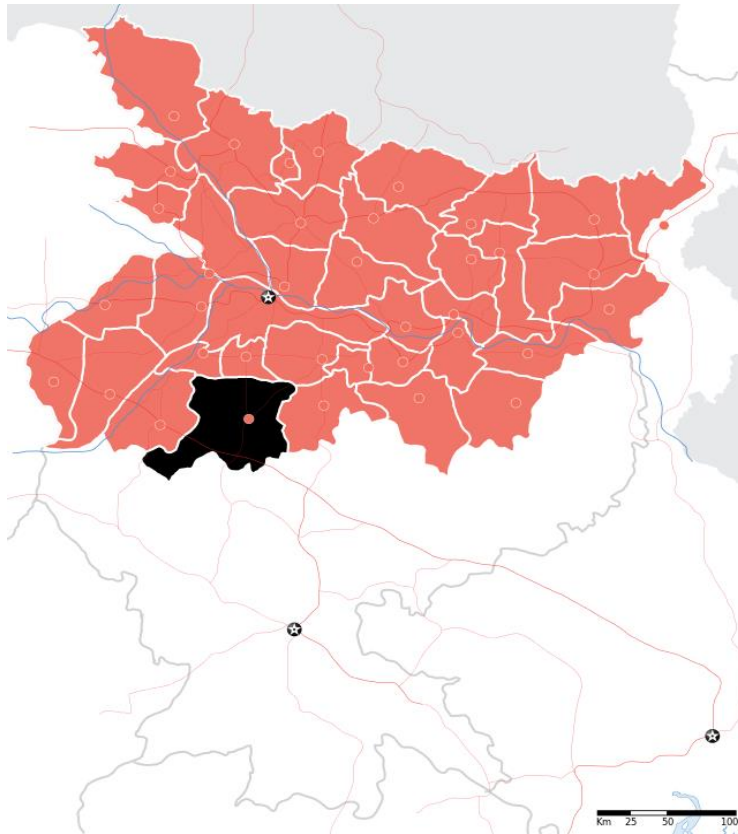
A sacred site for Buddhism, in India.

- The Mahabodhi Temple, in Bodh Gaya is UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the four holy sites related to the life of the Buddha, and particularly to the attainment of Enlightenment.
- The first temple was built by The Indian Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE, and the present temple dates from the 5th century or 6th century CE.
- See next slide for location of Bodh Gaya.



Location of Bodh Gaya.

- The birthplace of Buddhism was in nearby Nepal or in India, yet only 0.8% of the 2001 population were Buddhists.



Hazratbal Shrine at Srinagar Known As The “Home of Prophet Muhammad Hair”.

- Nestled on the western shores of Dal Lake, Hazratbal Shrine is the most important Islamic site in Kashmir.
- The main significance of Hazratbal Shrine lies in the fact that it houses a hair of the prophet Mohammad.



Divider slide.



Sri Pada in Sri Lanka is sacred to many faiths.

- A giant footprint is believed to be the site of Shiva's dance (Hinduism), the presence of Buddha, Adam's first step when he trod upon the earth and Saint Thomas's footprint when he first brought Christianity.

