

HINDUISM

A WORLD RELIGIONS RESOURCE LIST FOR TEENS

► DIANE COLSON

Hinduism is an ancient religion that encompasses all facets of life for the practitioner. The time to get up in the morning, the food to eat, the right person to marry—all are covered in the massive Hindu scriptures. In contemporary practice, there are varying degrees of compliance with ancient customs, but many rituals of worship have remained unchanged for centuries. Some aspects of Hindu culture, such as yoga, vegetarianism, and mehndi, have become popular among teens with Western backgrounds.

BELIEF AND PRACTICE

General

Chopra, Deepak. **Fire in the Heart: A Spiritual Guide for Teens.** Simon & Schuster, 2004. 199p.



\$14.95. 978-0-689-86216-8. \$9.95 Trade pb. 978-0-689-86217-5. VOYA August 2004.

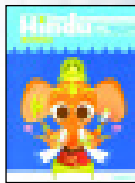
The best-selling author, a medical doctor with abiding interest in the mind-body connection, recounts a dialogue from his own youth, when a mysterious wise man teaches him the ancient principles of Hinduism.

Huyler, Stephen P. **Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion.** Yale University Press, 1999. 268p. \$21 Trade pb. 978-0-300-08905-9.



This comprehensive look at the powerful devotional practices of Hinduism, as witnessed by the author in his travels throughout India, includes the author's stunning and intimate photographs of Hindu worship.

Patel, Sanjay. **The Little Book of Hindu Deities: From the Goddess of Wealth to the Sacred Cow.** Plume/Penguin Putnam, 2006. 141p. \$14 Trade pb. 978-0-452-28775-4.



In a lighthearted but delightfully informative way, the author looks at fifty Hindu deities, accompanied by his Japanese-style artwork.

Rosen, Steven J. **Essential Hinduism.** Praeger, 2006. 266p. \$44.95. 978-0-275-99006-0.

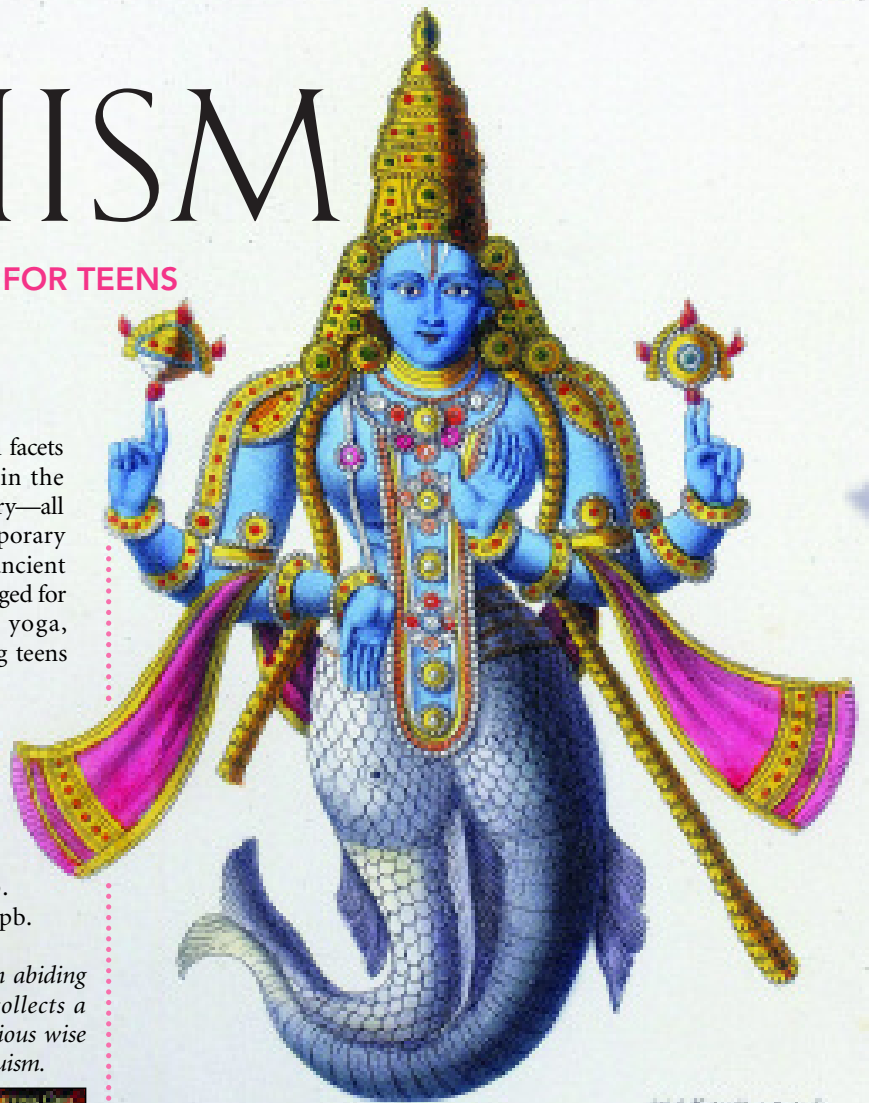


This sophisticated but readable book covers just about everything there is to know about Hinduism. The history of India, the caste system, sacred texts, deity worship, and much more is thoroughly and reverently discussed. Older teens with an interest in Hinduism will find this book fascinating.

Viswanathan, Ed. **Am I a Hindu? The Hinduism Primer.** Halo Books, 1992. 321p. \$13.95 Trade pb. 978-1-879904-06-4.



A child poses questions about his Hindu heritage to his father, who responds with elegant explanations gleaned



Malyavatara.
S. मल्लवतारः K. मल्लवतारः

from both Scripture and common Hindu practice. Written in the charmingly formal English of East Indian natives, it provides an insider's presentation of Hinduism.

Publishers' Series

The Complete Idiot's Guides. Alpha Books.

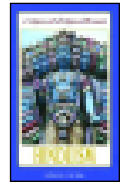
Johnsen, Linda. **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hinduism.** 2002. 408p. \$18.95 Trade pb. 978-0-02-864227-7.



Here is a surprisingly complete look at many aspects of Hinduism theory and practice, presented in this publisher's easy-to-ingest format embellished with entertaining sidebars.

Religions and Religious Movements. Greenhaven Press.

Hinduism. Jeff Hay, Ed. 2006. 223p. PLB \$34.95. 978-0-7377-2569-8. VOYA April 2006.



This impressive collection of essays on subjects ranging from marriage in the caste system to preserving Indian heritage in the United States is very readable and appropriate for middle and high school libraries.

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Religions of the World.

Lucent Books.
Streissguth, Thomas. **Hinduism.** 2002. 112p. PLB \$28.70. 978-1-56006-985-0.

In this excellent presentation of the complex beliefs that comprise Hinduism, the prose is simple enough for middle school yet could easily hold the interest of older teens.

What Makes Me . . . ?

KidHaven Press/Greenhaven.
George, Charles. **What Makes Me a Hindu?** 2004. 48p. PLB \$23.70. 978-0-7377-2267-3.

With elemental explanations of Hindu beliefs and practices, this book is most suitable for middle school and younger readers.



World Faiths.

Kingfisher/Houghton Mifflin.
Barnes, Trevor. **Hinduism and Other Eastern Religions.** 2005.

40p. \$6.95 Trade pb. 978-07534-5881-5. VOYA June 2006.

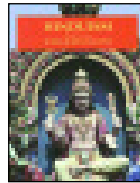
In this slim but colorful volume, Hinduism and its theological offspring (Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism) are highlighted. It's especially useful to see the relationships among the different religious traditions.



World Religions.

Facts on File.
Wangu, Madhu Bazaz. **Hinduism.** 2006. 128p. \$30. 978-0-8160-6611-7.

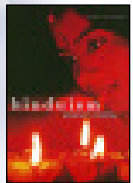
Offering one of the most detailed accounts of the practices of Hinduism, expertly set within historic and contemporary context, this book is slim on illustrations but heavy on content, best suited for high school and above.



World Religions.

Marshall Cavendish.
Young, Serinity. **Hinduism.** 2007. 127p. PLB \$27.95. 978-0-7614-2116-0.

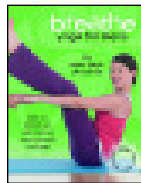
With clean writing and an abundance of color photographs, this book is especially appealing for anyone seeking an introduction to Hinduism. The author also includes translations of passages from Hindu texts, which are essential in communicating the spirit of the religion.



POPULAR PRACTICES

Chryssicas, Mary Kaye. **Breathe: Yoga for Teens.** DK Publishing, 2007. 160p. \$14.99 Trade pb. 978-0-7566-2661-7. Includes DVD.

Once practiced only by ascetics in the Himalayas, yoga is now a favored exercise routine, best performed by the young and flexible.



Gallanis, Bess. **Yoga Chick: A Hip Guide to Everything Om.** Warner, 2006. 136p. \$12.95 Trade pb. 978-0-446-69432-2.

This just-for-fun look at yoga and the benefits of deep breathing also covers chakras, gem therapy, and other Hindu extractions, presented in modern lingo.



Roome, Loretta. **Mehndi: The Timeless Art of Henna Painting.** St. Martin's/Griffin, 1998. 162p. \$17.95 Trade pb. 978-0-312-18743-9.

Along with the history of the beautiful body art practiced by Hindu brides for centuries are tips and techniques for producing your own mehndi look.



SACRED TEXTS

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, A. C. **Bhagavad-Gita As It Is.** Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 2003, ©1989. 318p. \$9.95. 978-0-89213-338-3.

This annotated translation of Hinduism's most famous sacred text is written by the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.



Prabhavananda, Swami, and Frederick Manchester.

The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal. Vedanta Press, 1947. 232p. \$9.95. 978-0-87481-040-0.

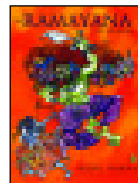
The massive texts of the Upanishads are condensed into a readable translation but are still very esoteric; they might require further explanation for young readers unfamiliar with Hinduism.



Sharma, Bubul. **The Ramayana for Children.** New Delhi, India:

Penguin Global, 2004. 198p. \$15.99. 978-0-670-04964-6.

Boisterous illustrations accompany this story-like retelling of the famous Hindu epic of Rama, his exile into the forest, and the heroic battles of his monkey soldiers.



VEGETARIANISM

Krizmanic, Judy. **The Teen's Vegetarian Cookbook.**

Puffin/Penguin Putnam, 1999. 192p. \$10.99 Trade pb. 978-0-14-038506-9.

Easy-to-follow recipes introduce the teen reader to healthy vegetarian cooking. Although not specifically targeted to a Hindu audience, this cookbook is still helpful for Hindu teens seeking to maintain their vegetarian diet.



Narayan, Shoba. **Monsoon Diary: A Memoir with Recipes.**

Random House, 2004, ©2003. 240p. \$12.95 Trade pb. 978-0-8129-7107-1.

Narayan recalls her home life in India as a child and her subsequent adventures as a college student at Mount Holyoke. Each chapter is followed by a recipe for one of the author's favorite Indian dishes.

Schwartz, Ellen. **I'm a Vegetarian: Amazing Facts for Healthy Vegetarians.** Tundra Books, 2002.

112p. \$9.95 Trade pb. 978-0-88776-588-9.

Teen vegetarians, including teen Hindus, will appreciate the lighthearted tips for surviving in a meat-heavy environment.



HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND POLITICS

For many centuries, Hinduism has been the main belief system for people on the Indian subcontinent. Muslims, however, have long been a powerful minority, and ruled India to some degree from the sixteenth century until the rise of British colonialism. The tension between these two groups has led to some of the bloodiest religious battles in recent history.

Collingham, Lizzie. **Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors.** Oxford University Press, 2005. 352p. \$28. 978-0-19-517241-6. \$15.95 Trade pb. 978-0-19-532001-5.

The author elaborately traces the evolution of curry in this unique mix of history and cuisine. Although there is a lot of detail, it will appeal to teens with special interest in the history and politics of India.



Koul, Sudha. **The Tiger Ladies: A Memoir of Kashmir.** Beacon Press, 2003, ©2002. 218p. \$15 Trade pb. 978-0-8070-5919-7.



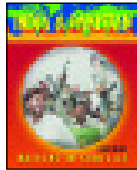
Sensual recollections of the author's Brahmin childhood in Kashmir create a stark contrast to the violence that ravaged the area in recent years. Although this book is mostly memoir, it is also an excellent look at the escalating hostility between Muslims and Hindus in a place where the two groups have co-existed for centuries.

Publishers' Series

Nations in Conflict. Blackbirch Press.

Hughes, Chris. **India & Pakistan.** 2003. 48p. PLB \$23.70. 978-1-56711-539-0.

This brief but clear overview of the historical and religious context of the Indo-Pakistani conflict is illustrated with photographs.



BIOGRAPHIES AND MEMOIRS

Wilkinson, Philip. **Gandhi: The Young Protester Who Founded a Nation.** National Geographic, 2007, ©2005. 64p. \$6.95 Trade pb. 978-1-4263-0132-2.

Ideal for younger teens, this biography concentrates on Mahatma Gandhi's formative years before he became the leader of India's nonviolent rebellion. It contains plenty of photographs and a time line along the bottom of each page.

Yogananda, Paramahansa. **Autobiography of a Yogi**, 3rd ed. Self-Realization Fellowship, 1981, ©1946. 499p. \$24.50. 978-0-87612-082-8. \$14 Trade pb. 978-0-87612-083-5.

This deeply affecting memoir of a twentieth-century Hindu saint is a challenging read, but it has become a revered classic in the sixty years since its first publication.

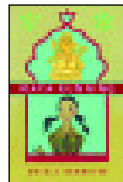
THE HINDU DIASPORA

The latter decades of the twentieth century saw unprecedented numbers of Hindus settling far outside of India. Because India was once part of the British empire, many Hindus speak fluent English, making it relatively easy to migrate to the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. Cultural differences, however, make the experience more complicated for young teens, who are often pulled between Western youth culture and the old customs of India.

Fiction

Banerjee, Anjali. **Maya Running.** Wendy Lamb Books/Random House, 2004. 209p. \$15.95. 978-0-385-74656-4. \$5.99 pb. 978-0-553-49424-2. VOYA February 2005.

Living in a small Canadian town, Maya has problems typical of a thirteen-year-old, including teasing about her dark skin and parents who don't understand her. But Maya thinks that she's found a secret weapon in Ganesh, the elephant-headed god who removes obstacles.



Clarke, Judith. **Kalpana's Dream.** Front Street, 2005. 164p. \$16.95. 978-1-932425-22-2. VOYA August 2005.

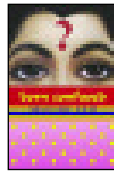


When Neema's grandmother, Kalpana, comes from her village in India to stay with Neema's family in Australia, they don't seem to have much in common. It takes the magic of the flying boy to form a connection between Neema and her imaginative grandmother.

Desai Hidier, Tanuja. **Born Confused.** Scholastic, 2002. 413p.

\$16.95. 978-0-439-35762-3. \$7.99 pb. 978-0-439-51011-0. VOYA February 2003.

Dimple Lala traces her adolescent turmoil to being born backwards, resulting in a basic confusion over her ethnic identity. Is she American or Indian? And why is it that each one is equally attractive and repellent?



Gilmore, Rachna. **Mina's Spring of Colors.**

Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2000. 143p. \$14.95. 978-1-55041-549-0. \$8.95 Trade pb. 978-1-55041-534-6. VOYA December 2000.

Each year, eleven-year-old Mina looks forward to her family's Americanized celebration of the Hindu festival, Holi. But this year, the festival is marred by the presence of Mina's native Indian grandparents and Mina's own misinterpretation of the true meaning of Holi.



Krishnaswami, Uma. **Naming Maya.** Farrar Straus Giroux, 2004.

178p. \$16. 978-0-374-35485-5. VOYA June 2004.

At home in New Jersey, she gets teased about being Indian, but when Maya returns to her mother's native Tamil Nadu in India, she feels very much the foreigner. This rich, layered story explores family bonds and the stresses of time and distance.



Perkins, Mitali. **The Not-So-Star-Spangled Life of Sunita Sen.** Little, Brown, 2005. 192p. \$6.99 Trade pb. 978-0-316-73453-0.

*Thirteen-year-old Sunita Sen is a typical American teen until her Indian grandparents settle into her California home. Suddenly, Sunita is eating spicy food and even worse, forbidden to hang out with boys! This book was previously released in 1993 as **The Sunita Experiment.***



Rana, Indi. **The Roller Birds of Rampur.** Fawcett/Random House, 1994, ©1993. 320p. \$3.99 pb. 978-0-449-70434-9. VOYA February 1994.

Seventeen-year-old Sheila has lived in England since she was seven, but now she returns to India, the country of her birth. When a childhood friend enters an arranged marriage, Sheila finds herself unsure whether to pity or envy her.

Sheth, Kashmir. **Blue Jasmine.** Hyperion/DBG, 2004. 186p. \$15.99. 978-0-7868-1855-6. \$5.99 Trade pb. 978-0-7868-5565-0. VOYA August 2004.

When twelve-year-old Seema moves to Iowa City from a small town in Gujarat, she can't even speak English. It takes some time, and even a trip back to India, before she is able to call this new place home. This book is appropriate for middle school and younger readers.



Vijayaraghavan, Vineeta. **Motherland.** Holtzbrinck, 2002, ©2001. 232p. \$12 Trade pb. 978-1-56947-283-5. VOYA August 2001.

At fifteen, Maya has spent most of her life away from South India, where she was born. When she returns for a summer, she reexamines the nature of her family relationships and learns more about the Indian culture that has shaped her own life. This sophisticated read is best enjoyed by older teens.



Nonfiction

Maira, Sunaina Marr. **Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City.**

Temple University Press, 2002. 244p. \$22.95 Trade pb. 978-1-56639-927-2.

This academic but readable examination of young, first-generation Indian Americans includes issues involved with integrating Hindu beliefs into non-Hindu cultural settings.



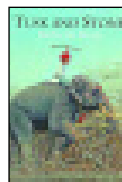
Prashad, Vijay. **The Karma of Brown Folk**. University of Minnesota Press, 2001, ©2000. 272p. \$18.95 Trade pb. 978-0-8166-3439-2.



Although this sometimes scathing look at the reception of white America toward East Indians focuses on racial discrimination, Prashad also turns a critical eye on the “Yankee Hindutva,” a syndicated form of Hinduism that provides a cultural identity for Indian Americans.

GENERAL FICTION

Bosse, Malcolm. **Tusk and Stone**. Front Street, 1995. 244p. \$15.95. 978-1-886910-01-0. \$8.95 Trade pb. 978-1-886910-74-X. VOYA February 1996.



The Hindu caste system forms the framework for the travails of Arjun, a young Brahmin boy stripped of his identity in seventh-century India.

Sheth, Kashmira. **Koyal Dark, Mango Sweet**. Hyperion/DBG, 2006. 249p. \$15.99. 978-0-7868-3857-8. \$7.99 Trade pb. 978-0-7868-3858-5. VOYA June 2006.



Sixteen-year-old Jeeta knows that her mother sees Jeeta's dark skin as a liability in arranging a good marriage. But Jeeta starts to hope that her marriage, unlike those of her older sisters, will be based on love and not duty.

Staples, Suzanne Fisher. **Shiva's Fire**. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000. 275p. \$18. 978-0-374-36824-1. \$6.99 Trade pb. 978-0-06-440979-7. VOYA June 2000.



From the moment of her birth, Parvati seems to be capable of a mystical power that manifests itself in her inspired classical Indian dance. But when an equally mysterious maharaja's son enters Parvati's life, her destiny becomes uncertain.

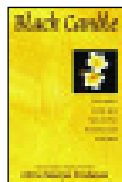
Whelan, Gloria. **Homeless Bird**. HarperCollins, 2000. 216p. \$16.99. 978-0-06-028454-1. PLB \$16.89. 978-0-06-028452-7. \$5.99 Trade pb. 978-0-06-440819-6. VOYA February 2001.



Bound by cultural and religious obligations, thirteen-year-old Koly is first married to a sickly husband and then subjected to the brutal life of a Hindu widow.

POETRY

Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. **Black Candle: Poems about Women from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh**, Rev. ed. Calyx Books, 2000, ©1991. 106p. \$26.95. 978-0-934971-75-1. \$12.95 Trade pb. 978-0-934971-74-4.



Often joyous, often tragic, this haunting collection of poems speaks for women whose voices have long been silenced by tradition.

WEB SITES

Hindu Students Council (<http://www.hscnet.org>). This international forum offers activities for Hindu teens who are interested in learning about their heritage. Activities include study groups, celebration of festivals, conferences, and camps.

The Hindu Universe (<http://www.hindunet.org>). The “Kids and Youth” link on this busy Web site leads to a variety of information such as Hindu newspaper links, educational opportunities in India, and the meaning of Hindu prayers.

Hinduism Today (<http://www.hinduismtoday.com>). This Web site



of a magazine published by a monastery in Hawaii is read by Hindus in 39 countries.

Religious Tolerance—Hinduism (<http://www.religious-tolerance.org/hinduism.htm>). The Hinduism link leads to explanations of Hindu practice for non-Hindus, and includes a discussion on the possible connection between Jesus Christ and Krishna.

Tattva (<http://www.hinduyuva.org/tattva>). This attractive online magazine for Hindu youth focuses on Hindu traditions and mythology, along with some current events. ■



Diane Colson is the Youth Services Manager at the Alachua County Library District in Gainesville, Florida. She has long been fascinated by Eastern religions, which culminated in a trip to India several years ago. Diane is currently serving on the Alex Award Committee for the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and has been a VOYA reviewer for the past eight years.