

Belief

Buddhism; Hinduism; Sikhism; Paganism

Attire

Religious dress visually communicates to observers that the wearer believes in a certain set of religious principles and practices.

The status distinctions that exist within any group are also visibly conveyed by dress, which sometimes articulates nuances in the power structure markedly.

At the same time, a religious group's ideology may emphasize simplicity and humility, with these aspects reflected in their choice of clothing.

Belief

Religions often begin as a small group of people who follow a spiritual leader. This pattern holds for the major world religions:

- Christianity began with the historical Jesus
- Buddhism developed around the figure of the Gautama Buddha
- Islam centered around the person of Mohammed

Belief

Small groups may die out after a short time, or they may attract large numbers of adherents and continue for many centuries.

Although it may have begun with a small and egalitarian nucleus, an institutionalized religion that has amassed many followers invariably becomes hierarchical in nature, and this is reflected in dress.

Belief

Religious dress may alter over time according to a number of factors: changing attitudes, modifications in ideologies, adaptations that take cultural differences into consideration, or practical reasons of climate and geography.

There are many beliefs I am not going to cover, but if someone wants to do an essay on a particular group let me know.

Ex: Indigenous people, Sects...

Belief

Within any one particular religion, there are often quite dramatic differences in the ways that the teachings are interpreted, differences that are mirrored in a group's choice of religious apparel.

Within Christianity, for example, the Roman Catholic Church and the simple Anabaptist group of the Amish are highly dissimilar.



Belief

Likewise, in the various Muslim cultures, the Islamic notion of immodesty and its threat to the social fabric of a religious community has led to a range of body coverings.

Niqab

A veil covering the head and face, but not the eyes, usually worn with a loose black garment (abaya) that covers from head to feet.



Hijab

A general term meaning 'to cover' or 'veil', most commonly refers to a headscarf that covers the hair and neck, but not the face.



Burka

A veil that covers the entire body and face, with a mesh window or grille across the eyes for a woman to see out of.



Chador

A full-length cloak worn by many Iranian women, typically held closed at the front by the wearer's hands or under their arms.



Dupatta

A long scarf loosely draped across the head and shoulders, common in south Asia and often paired with matching garments.





**Orthodox
Jewish woman,
Tradition**

**Catholic nun,
Devotion**



**Orthodox woman,
Religiosity**



**Muslim Woman,
oppression
submission
terrorism**

Belief

Each of the various sects of any religion, as well as each emergent and alternative religion, has its own reasons for the way its members dress, based on belief and/or scriptural precepts.

For the purposes of this course we will only cover the a few of the major religions from a broad point of view:

- Christianity (Dr. Dwyer)
- Muslim (Muslim Student club)
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Judaism

Buddhism

Buddhism originated in India about twenty-five hundred years ago when Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha, became enlightened at the age of thirty-five.

The basic philosophy of Buddhism is that one should lead a moral life, develop wisdom and understanding, and be mindful and aware of one's thoughts and actions.



Buddhist Symbols



Lotus Flower

Padma - Symbol of Purity. Can be of any colour except blue.



Dharmachakra

The wheel of the law. The eight spokes represent the eightfold path.



Stupa

The stupa is a symbolic grave monument where relics or the ashes of a holy monk are kept. It also symbolises the universe.



Triratana

The three jewels - the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.



Chattra

A parasol - protection against all evil; high rank.



Dhvaja

Banner - the victory of the Buddha's teachings.



Deer

The deer - usually in pairs - symbolises the first sermon of the Buddha which was held in the deer park of Benares.



Naga

The snake king. Vestige of pre-Buddhist fertility rituals and protector of the Buddha and the Dhamma.

Buddhist monastic robes

While Buddhist monastic robes vary, they all reflect basic Buddhist ideology: humility and detachment from the physical world in pursuit of enlightenment.

The robes indicate that the wearer undertakes to follow a life of simplicity based on the model of the historical Buddha, who is said to have worn a humble monk's robe made of patched pieces of donated cloth.

Monks' robes used to be made from discarded rags that no one wanted. They were boiled in dye to clean them and then stitched together. That is no longer the case, but they must be made of natural fibers—wool, silk, or plant fibers.

There are many subtle variations in styles between the different schools of Buddhism and individual temples.

Monastic Robes

As Buddhism spread from India to Tibet and other countries, the basic robe changed according to the particular region's climate and culture. I

n the Sanskrit and Pali languages, the monastic robe is called *civara*; it generally has three parts (*tricivara*): an inner garment, from the waist to the knee (*antaravasaka*); an upper robe, around the torso and shoulders (*uttarsanga*); and an outer robe used as an overgarment (*sanghati*). T

hese three items are worn by both men and women, but a Buddhist nun also wears a vest or bodice (*samkacchika*). The preferred materials for the robes are plant fibers such as cotton and hemp, silk, animal hair such as wool, or a mixture of some or all of these.

Pieced Cloth



Monks and nuns of the many schools in China, Korea, and Japan generally wear austere robes and colors such as brown or gray, Japan and Korea, robes eventually became gray, black and even bright blue.





In Japan, monks typically wear a white kimono under a pleated outer robe that is usually black and long-sleeved (though there are variations).

This is topped off with a bright yellow shawl called a *kashaya*, which is wrapped over one shoulder. Zen monks, however, wear a smaller yellow “bib” to represent the *kashaya*, instead of the full shawl.

While collecting alms, Japanese monks wear a straw hat that partly covers the face so that neither the monk nor the almsgiver can see each other.



Monks wear their robes in a number of ways, depending on their sect and country. The most universal style is the one used for the alms-round, when the robe covers both the shoulders.

Within the monastery or residence or during an audience with a more senior monk, a simpler style is adopted, as a gesture of respect and to facilitate work. The right side of the robe is pushed under the armpit and over the robe on the left, leaving the right shoulder bare.



The Saffron Robe

Mostly seen in southeast, the **Theravada** Buddhist monks wear saffron-dyed robes, which date back centuries. It is believed that this is the closest to what the original Buddha and his disciples wore.

These robes are made of three parts, a large rectangle wrapped over both shoulders or just the left shoulder, the lower body sarong, and an extra layer used for warmth, which is often draped over a shoulder in warmer climates and secured with a yellow sash.



Theravada Nuns

Theravada nuns wear light pink or white robes.



Alms bowls

Typically only seen during morning almsgiving rituals, alms bowls are worn around the neck.

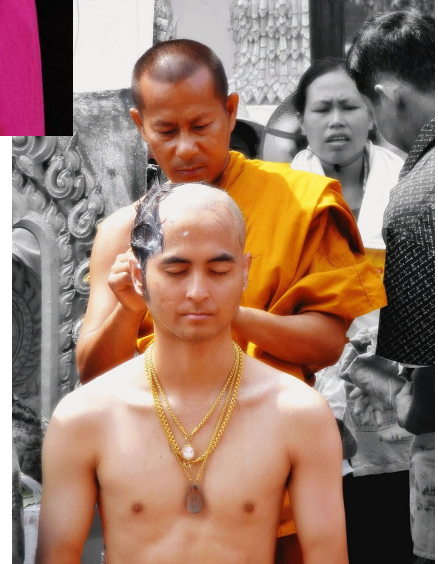


Shaving the head

Shaving the head also denotes the renunciation of worldly things and the overcoming of vanity to embrace the monastic life. Both men and women monks shave their head.

Buddhists see the act of shaving their heads as the first step on their journey of complete detachment.

[Shaving my head](#)



Maroon Robes

In Bhutan and Nepal, both monks and nuns generally wear only maroon robes, with some variation of red. Both countries practice Buddhism that is closely-related to Tibetan Buddhism.

Since these countries are in the mountains, an undershirt with cap sleeves is an added layer to keep warm and may sometimes be saffron instead of red.

Then come the upper and lower robes, completed by a shawl often draped over just one arm.

Monks in this region generally don't participate in almsgiving.



Tibetan Buddhism robe variations

Monks of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism wear somewhat different robes, but the dominant colors are maroon, yellow, and sometimes red, with blue piping on the sleeves of the dhonka.



The Dhonka

This sleeveless upper garment was created in the 14th century.

Made of burgundy and yellow woolen cloth, its protruding shoulders are said to represent the fearlessness of one engaged on the path of enlightenment.

The blue piping stands for the blue worn by Chinese monks honored from the 9th C.



The Shamthap

This lower robe is sewn to look like patched up cloth.

The tradition dictates that the shamthap be draped with the fold on the right side turning towards the back, symbolizing a monk or nun's renouncement of worldly life and negative actions.

The folds on the left turn towards the front, meaning their commitment to the Buddhist path and the virtuous activities that will contribute to accumulating merit.



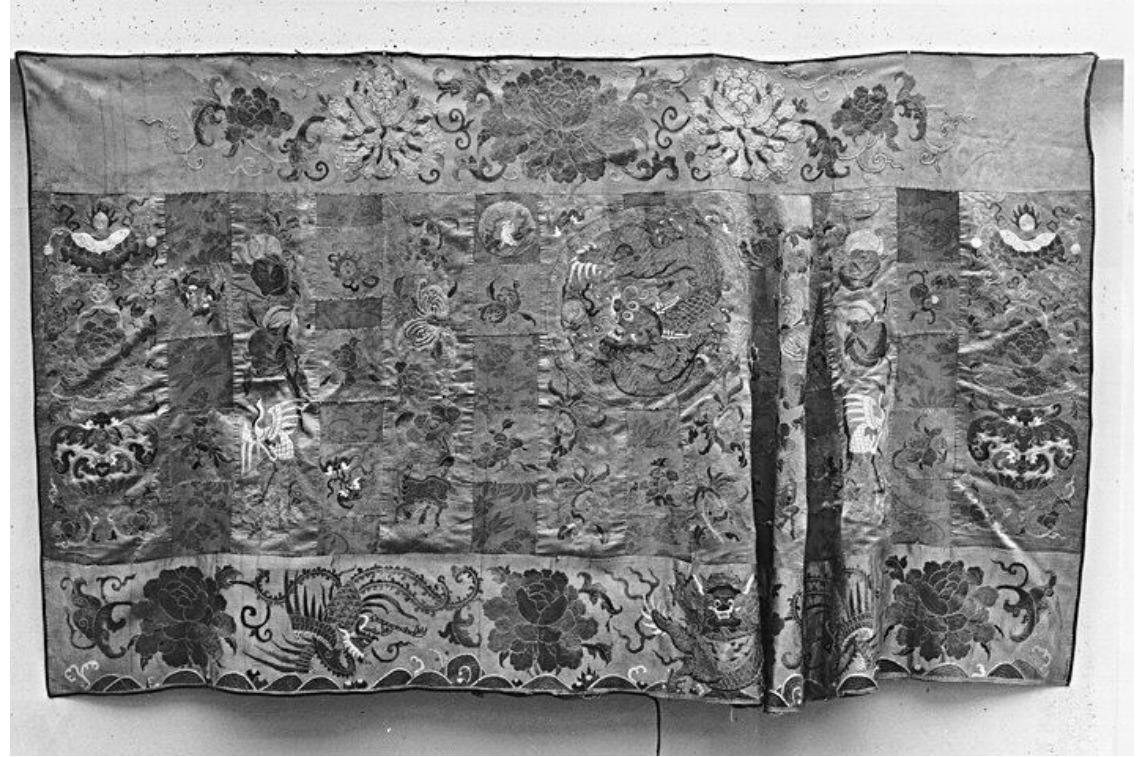
The Zen

A wraparound maroon shawl measures 5.5 meters for a full size and half of that for the smaller size in length and 1.25 meters in width. It can be draped to leave the right shoulder bare, but can also be fully wrapped.

According to rules, monks are not to wear sleeves, and the zen, which can be made of thick wool, provides shelter from Tibet's cold weather.



Kesa cloth - [Kesa](#)



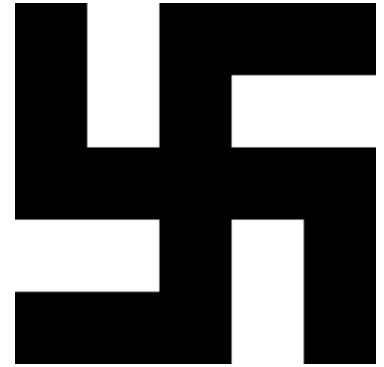
Kesa are usually patched together with scraps of fine silk brocade, again to imitate the Buddha's patchwork robe.

The geometric patterns are said to symbolize the universe.

Kesa cloth and swastika which the Nazi's appropriated



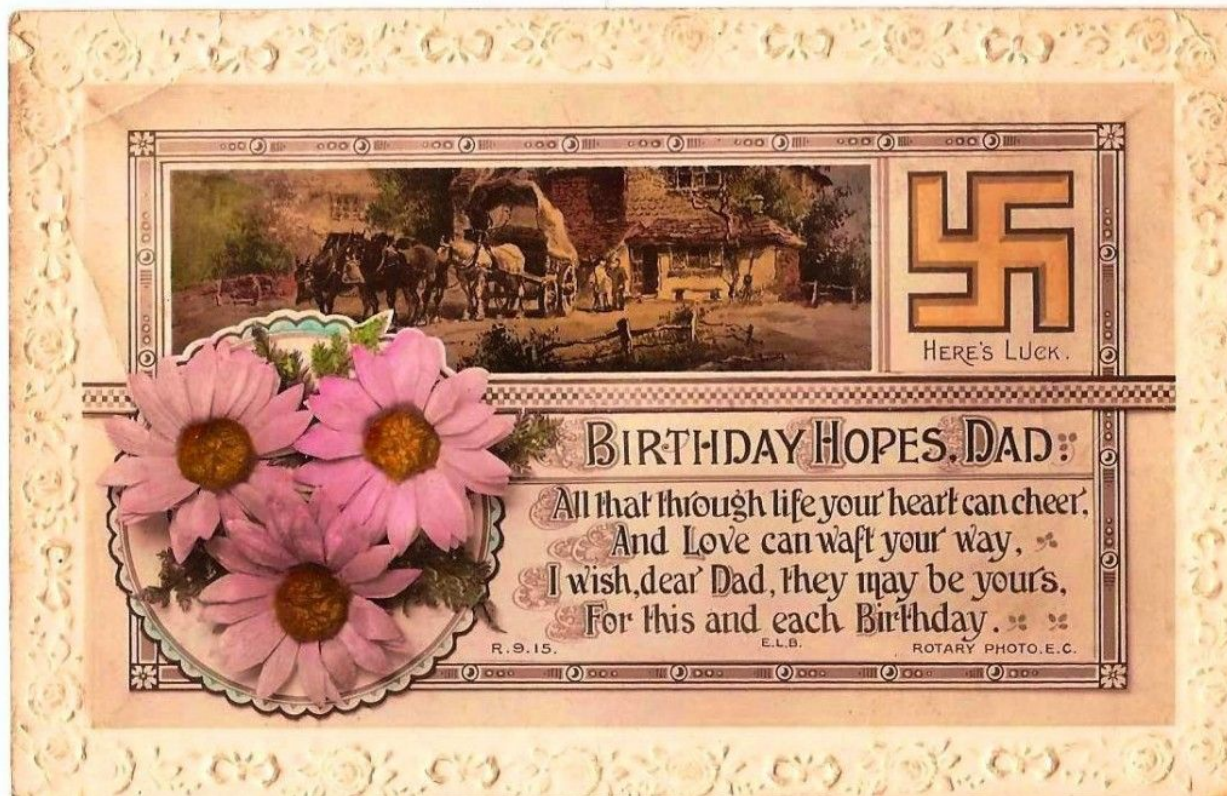
9th c.



The left-facing swastika is a sacred symbol in Buddhist traditions.

The right-facing swastika appears commonly in Hinduism.

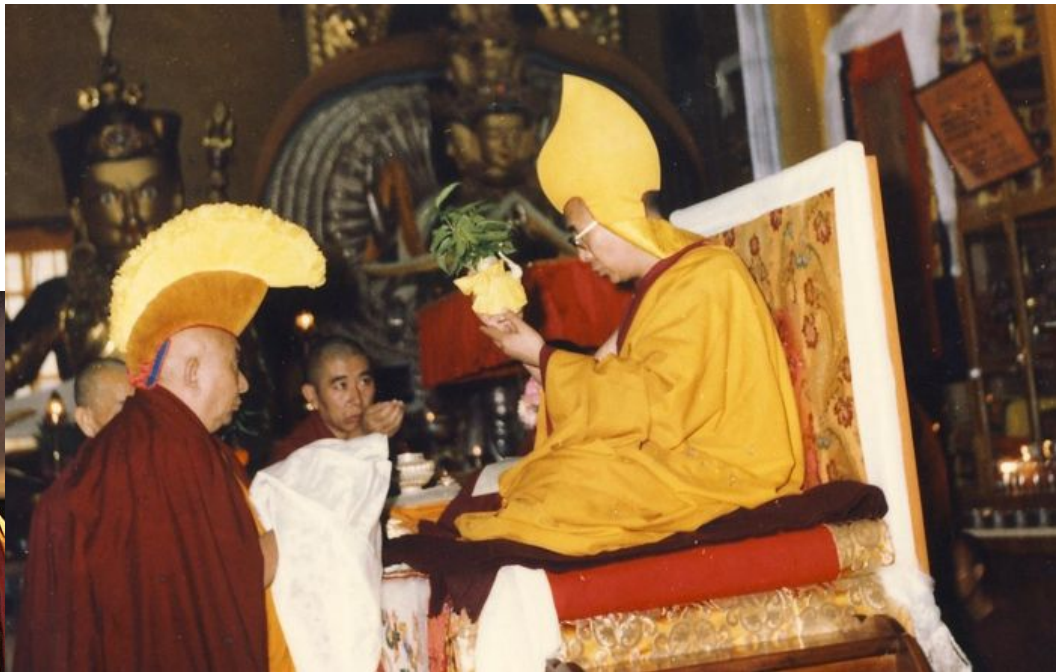
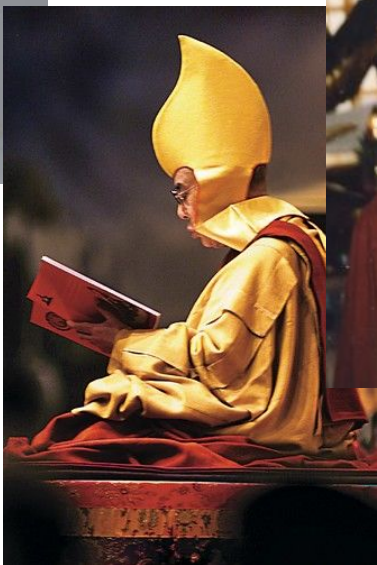
1920's postcard



Hats worn in ceremonies indicate teachers (Lamas) and specific orders.

Monks of the Gelukpa order, of which the Dalai Lama is the temporal head, wear yellow pointed hats.





Pandita Hat

Hats worn during special ceremonies.

In ceremonies such as exorcism rituals, lamas wear large helmet-like headdresses with crescent-shaped peaks





For initiation ceremonies, lamas wear crowns with five sections, each containing one of the five Dhyani Buddhas or the Sanskrit syllables that represent their essence.

While wearing such a crown, the monk or priest summons up a particular deity, who may be depicted in a painting wearing a similar five-part crown.



Red hats



Lotus Hat



Black Crown

Monastic Robes

- Robes are highly symbolic garments and when worn with the proper motivation and understanding of their significance act as constant reminders of the path chosen by the wearer.
- What is most important is that the wearer's attitude, mindfulness and way of life be in accordance with the meaning of the symbols.
- If monastics put on their robes each day with full awareness the symbolic meaning of their clothes will remain with them for the entire day.

Buddhist Robe

As well as being a form of dress, the robe is so versatile that it can be used as a blanket, a seat spread, a groundsheet, a head cover, a windbreaker, or any other practical purpose.

It is perhaps the oldest style of dress still in fashion after twenty-five hundred years.



Lay Buddhists

The lay community in Buddhism do not have any obligation to wear a particular type of robes.

Lay Buddhist clothing is indistinguishable from the dress of other people in any community. Modest dress and behavior are expected, and shoes are removed at the entrance of Buddhist temples.

However, during special occasions, the devout laypersons may wear austere robes. For example, during the days of a full moon, the laypersons may wear simple all white robes. This is to show their purity and the taking of the five ethical Buddhist vows.

Hinduism

Hinduism contains no single doctrine, nor does it have a single founder or teacher. The principal elements of Hinduism are reincarnation, the caste system, merging with ultimate reality, living a moral life, and attaining *moksha*, or the escape from the cycle of continuing reincarnations.

Hinduism

Hinduism has a pantheon of gods and goddesses, which are fundamentally symbols that refer to various attributes, functions, and manifestations of the one supreme and eternal Divine Absolute, the cause and foundation of all existence.

[Hindu Gods](#)

The individual gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are manifestations of the One, but they are only three among many.

[Creation Story](#)

Hindus may devote their prayers and practices primarily to one or several of the deities while acknowledging others.

Hinduism

Hinduism does not impose rigid beliefs and practices on any of its more than 800 million followers; instead, each person follows a path toward self-realization through a number of different means: worship, chanting, devotional surrender, service, yoga, meditation, and self-knowledge.

Rituals and Hindu philosophy draw on a large collection of philosophical literature and scriptures.

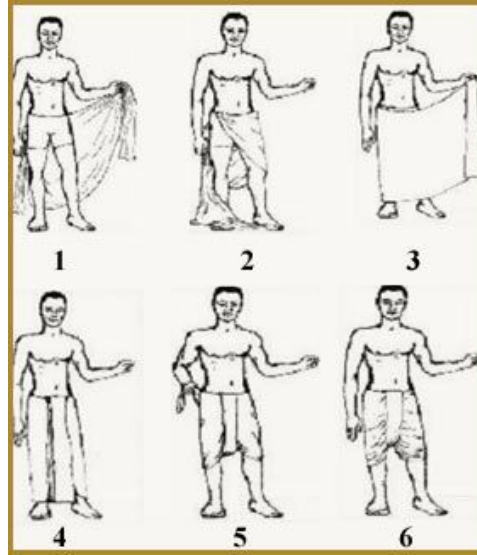
- Vedas
- Upanishads
- Brahma Sutras
- Bhagavad-Gita
- Epics - Ramayan and Mahabharatha

Hinduism

Among Hindus there is no special dress for religious festivals or other festivities; however, on these occasions, all who can afford it put on richer and better clothes than those ordinarily worn.

The traditional clothing is worn during festivals and prayer.

Traditional Hindu dress is the same as that worn all over India, the *sari* for women and the cotton *dhoti* for men.



Hindu Men

The man's traditional dhoti is a long draped garment worn in place of pants, topped by a long, loose Indian shirt, slit at both sides, with a long one-sided cape tied at the right shoulder and draped to the knees.



Hindu Women

The sari consists of several meters (about the same as several yards) of fabric, pleated and tucked into a slip.

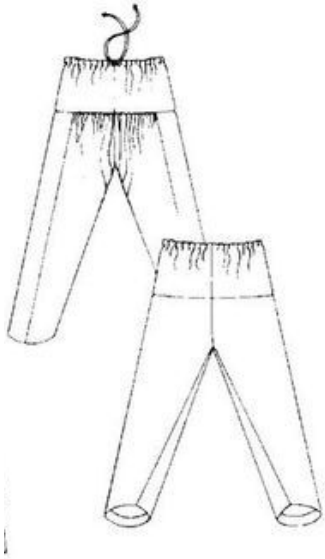
It also covers the head and may be pinned at the side of the cheek; for practical purposes, it may be draped over the shoulder when the woman is working rather than over the head.

Under the sari, a modest, short-sleeved short top (called *coli* or *choli*) is worn.



Punjabi

Pants are usually worn only by men, never by women, except for the Punjabi, which consists of loose pants over which a long tunic, slit on both sides, is worn.



Hindu Jewelry

Jewelry in the form of earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and ankle bracelets is worn, and noses may be pierced and a stud-type jewel or nose ring added.

Wearing jewelry signifies that you are asking for protection from these divine beings. It also a way of asking blessing.



Tilak

Women may wear a *tilak* (a dot of turmeric powder or other colored substance) on their foreheads as a symbol of their religion.



Hindu Widows



Widows usually indicate their status by wearing a white sari.

A widow is expected to shun all colours from her life and the customs demand that she wears only white.

A widow is restricted from leading a normal life with her family.

Hindu Wedding - women's attire

The Hindu wedding is a lavish and colorful ceremony that takes place over several days.

A bride wears a colorful sari, often red and gold (symbolizing happiness) and made of fine and heavily jeweled, beaded, and/or sequined fabric.

She wears an extensive array of jewelry that can include layers of bangles, nose rings, earrings, gold necklaces, anklets, toe rings, *bindi* (a mark placed between the eyes), and heavy makeup.



[Bindi](#)



Mehndi

Her hands are decorated with intricate lace-like henna patterns (*mehandi*).

Mehndi, otherwise known as henna, is a paste.

Indian Wedding tradition calls for a Mehndi ceremony to be held the night before the wedding as a way of wishing the bride good health and prosperity as she makes her journey on to marriage.



Vermillion

If they are married, they smear red makeup into the part of their hair.

The color red is associated with the Divine Feminine, usually embodied in the form of Goddess Adishakti, the consort of Lord Shiva. It represents engagement in worldly life and as such is a symbol of marriage, wealth and prosperity.



Hindu Wedding - men's attire

The bridegroom wears white cotton, silk, or rich and heavy brocade, with a turban on his head.



Hare Krishnas

A Hindu-based religion that began in India is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), more popularly known as the Hare Krishnas because it focuses on the Hindu god Krishna.

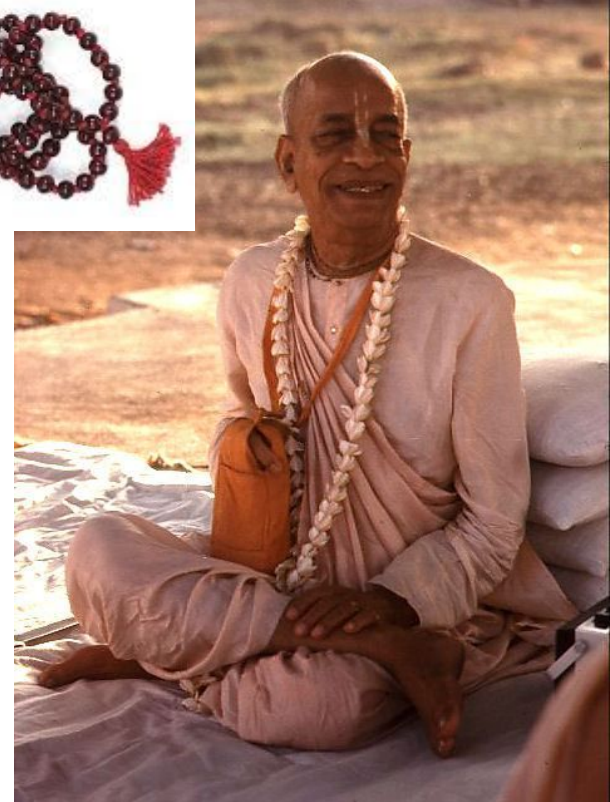
It was founded by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who left India for the United States in order to disseminate Vedic knowledge to the West.



Hare Krishnas

A uniform dress and hairstyle identifies followers of Krishna, especially those who live communally.

Each person owns only a pair of shoes, *japa beads* (prayer beads carried over the shoulder in a small cloth bead bag), a sleeping bag, and a few items of jewelry.



Hare Krishnas

All married devotees wear bright yellow clothing, dhotis for the men and saris for the women, and all unmarried celibate devotees wear saffron-colored dhotis or saris.

In winter, long underwear and heavy socks may be worn underneath the men's dhoti, and in very cold weather, warm jackets may be worn over the dhoti.

Leather is never used, and shoes are either canvas or plastic.

For some types of heavy work, pants are worn, but only because a dhoti could be dangerous.

Hare Krishnas

The male devotee shaves his head except for the *sikha*, a lock of hair that demonstrates his surrender to a life of Krishna-consciousness.

The Hare Krishnas believe that the *sikha* enables Krishna to pull believers out of *maya* (the phenomenal world that is viewed as an illusion) should they be tempted to return to it.

The *sikha* may be worn braided, tied back, or loose and flowing.





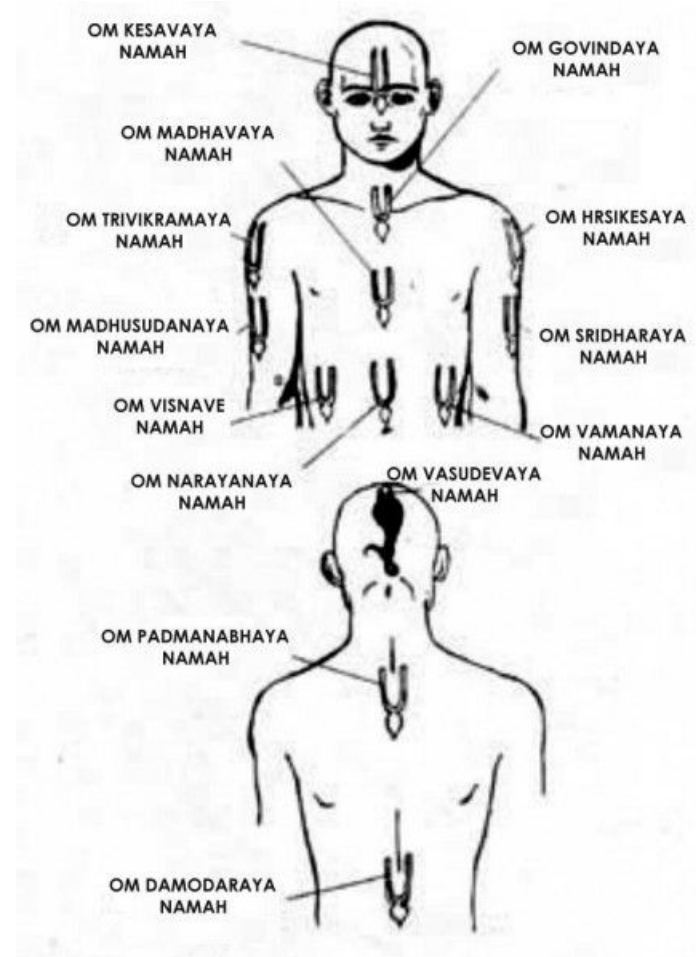
Hare Krishna Tilaka markings

Tilaka (clay markings) are worn on the body to mark it as a temple; the most prominent mark is on the forehead, from the hairline to a point on the nose.



Hare Krishnas and Tilaka

Some devotees write Hare Krsna with wet tilaka on the body, and all mark twelve places on the body with tilaka for sanctification and protection: the forehead, abdomen, chest, throat, right side of the waist, right forearm, right shoulder, left side of the waist, left forearm, left shoulder, nape of the neck, and lower back.



Hinduism

Care and attention are paid to clothing the body in the dress and hairstyles appropriate for a Krishna devotee,

Inside the temple, all devotees go barefoot, except when it is extremely cold, in which case they wear socks.

Each devotee carries japa beads as well as small beads made of *tulasi*, the sacred plant, around their necks.

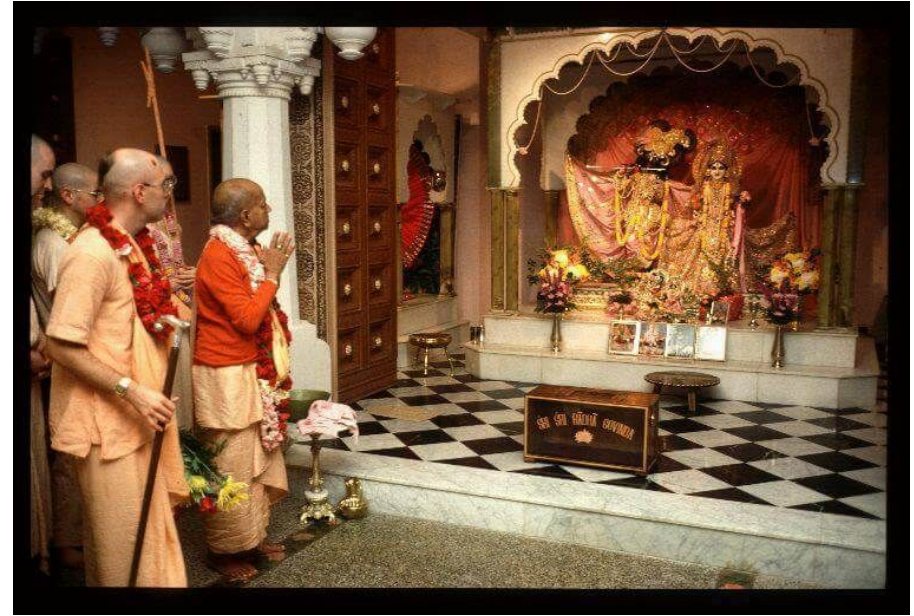


Hinduism

even more care and attention are devoted to dressing the life-like representations of Krishna and/or Swami Prabhupada inside the temple.

A portion of the devotees' regulated daily schedule is dedicated to bathing the temple personages and to dressing and garlanding them with flowers and jewelry.

Bouquets and garlands of fresh flowers are offered to them daily, and these are later distributed to devotees. The wearing of these garlands is considered very auspicious.



Temple in Brooklyn

Hindu Sadhus

Sadhus are India's itinerant holy men, thin ascetics, often with matted, dread-locked hair and thick beards, who have surrendered family and social responsibilities as well as material possessions to pursue their spiritual search through meditation, devotion, the study of sacred texts and pilgrimage.

Belonging to many different sects, their basic premise is devotion to a god, invariably Lord Shiva, and renunciation of physical pleasures which may lead to self-mortification.



Sikhism

Another Indian religion is Sikhism, which was founded in the fifteenth century in the Punjab, formerly a part of India but part of Pakistan in the twenty-first century.

Sikhs believe there is only one God, the same God for people of all religions.

The goal of a Sikh is to build a close and loving relationship with God through living a pure and honest life (*kirat karni*), meditating on the name of God (*nam japna*), and sharing through charitable work (*vand shakna*).

People of different races, religions, or sexes are all regarded as equal.

The Sikh faith regards gender equality as an important part of its teachings.

Sikh turban

The primary identifying feature of Sikh dress is the turban (*bana* or *dastar*): Wearing it indicates commitment to Sikhism.

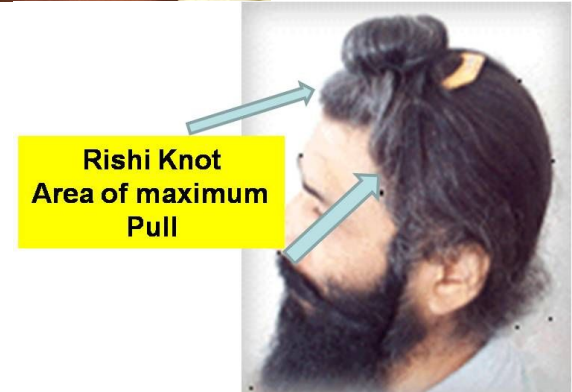
Turbans can be any color, but the three most commonly worn are white (to extend the aura), deep blue (the symbol of the warrior and of protection), and saffron orange (wisdom).

[Turban](#)

Sikh Hair

Underneath the five meters (about five yards) of cotton cloth that constitutes the turban, the uncut and untrimmed long hair of the Sikh is tied up in a *rishi*, a knot at the top of the head, the location of the tenth gate or the crown chakra, the chakra that assists in retaining a spiritual focus, helping the flow of energy during meditation.

Turban +



Female Sikh

A female Sikh may wear a chiffon scarf (*chuni*) draped over her turban or may simply wear the chuni.

Because a woman's hair is coiled differently from a man's, the style of wrapping the turban may appear to be different.



Sikh bracelet

The wearing of a **plain steel bracelet** (*kara*) symbolizes one God and one truth and that each Sikh is prepared to maintain a high moral character.

The Kara is a symbol of unbreakable attachment and commitment to God.



Sikh sword

The short sword (*kirpan*) that a Sikh wears symbolizes a willingness to stand prepared to defend righteousness.



Men's facial hair

Men's facial hair (mustaches and beards) indicates acceptance to live in the image of the infinity.





Wearing the Five Kapor or articles of faith

Paganism

Paganism is based on ancient beliefs and rituals that have been adapted over time, reflecting influences from a variety of Western sources: Neoplatonism, the alchemists, the Rosicrucians, the Spiritualists and Theosophists of the nineteenth century, Freemasonry, and some elements of the New Age movement.

Paganism began in Europe; it is polytheistic and animistic and has been called a “nature religion” with mystical elements.

Sacred space can be created anywhere; there is no central organization, nor is there a fixed sacred structure such as a church.

Groups of pagans are usually small and with no leader.

Skyclad

Clothing, or lack of clothing, is closely linked to pagan cosmology.

Ritual nudity, referred to as “going skyclad,” is regarded as a natural state of being that allows freedom from inhibitions.

The skyclad body also indicates the casting aside of social masks and roles, honoring the sacredness of each and every body, and placing all on an equal footing regardless of the size, shape, and flaws of the individual body.

Hence, there is no notion of a sinful body that must pay penance to become worthy.

Pagan Robe

The most basic item of dress that is shared across many of the various subgroups of paganism is the black hooded robe.

In its simplest form, the shape of the robe resembles an *ankh*, the cross-shaped ancient symbol of life, with the flared sleeves forming the horizontal bar of a T-shape and the hood the rounded loop of the cross.



Paganism

As well as basic black, the robe can be any color, selected according to individual preference.

Many robes are made of cotton, hemp, velvet, or satin, and some have highly elaborate symbols incorporated into the fabric.

Silver robes might represent the moon, gold ones the sun, while colors and designs might reflect the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water.

Personal taste determines the choice from a vast array of combinations and designs.

Pagans in general display their “magical selves” in a variety of ceremonial garments that reflect myths, fairy tales, and limitless displays of imagination.



Paganism

Pagan ritual places importance on being connected with the energy of the earth, so the feet are usually left bare to allow that connection to occur more easily.

Masks may be used in certain rituals in order to assume different persona, according to the particular focus of the rite.



Paganism

The *cingulum* (a long cord or cords), generally associated with initiations, is worn around the waist over the robe, and, for women, a velvet or cotton dress of medieval design is often worn under the robe; for men, a cotton shirt and pants are worn.

All this is variable and depends on individual preference.

Clothes worn only during rites are said to build up special energies.

A robe worn to many rites over several years is believed to contain an accumulation of energy and becomes very special to the wearer.



Pagan jewelry

Ritual jewelry includes necklaces, earrings, rings, bracelets, toe rings, headbands, amulets, or talismans.



Pentagram

The *pentagram* (five-pointed star) or *pentacle* (five-pointed star within a circle) is the symbol that expresses, at a glance, pagan cosmology.

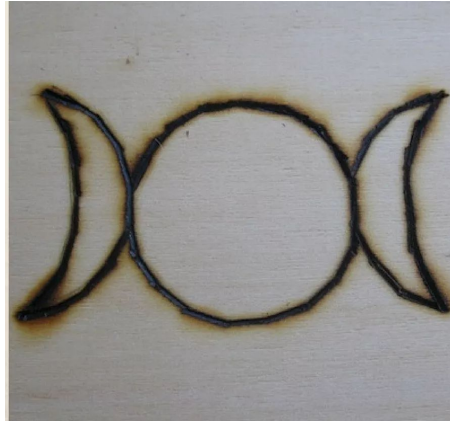
Four of the points of the pentagram represent the elements of earth, air, fire, and water, while the fifth stands for spirit.



Celtic Knots

Celtic knots and other designs on dress and jewelry are also highly favored among pagans who feel they have links to Celtic ancestry.

Symbols such as the crescent moon and Celtic knots may also be tattooed on the body.



The Purpose and Adaptability of Religious Dress

- Religious and ceremonial dress instills in the wearer a sense of the sacred and of the demarcation between the sacred and the secular, as well as establishing certain codes of behavior and mores.
- Dress gives a public face to personal religious beliefs, making strong statements about ideology, identity, and community.

The Purpose and Adaptability of Religious Dress

When religions are transplanted to other countries and cultures, they may undergo change for a number of reasons:

- the geography, climate, and flora and fauna (especially with regard to nature religions)
- the disparity between ideas, as well as rules that may conflict with the host country's norms (particularly in freedom of dress and bodily exposure)
- the clash between hierarchical systems and egalitarianism
- changing value systems.

All these things have an impact on dress, and the religious dress worn in a host country may vary considerably from the original traditional form of dress.

The Purpose and Adaptability of Religious Dress

Many other alternative religions and new religious movements exist, some with their own distinct styles of dress and others that are indistinguishable from the rest of the surrounding communities.

There are also widely varying indigenous religious traditions.