

INDIA

Lessons for Mission Minded Kids

Lesson 2

The Country of India



India

Lesson 2: The Country of India

Goals for Lesson 2:

- Children will be introduced to the climate, culture, history, animals and people of India.
- Children will become more familiar with the verse for India and begin to understand how it can apply to themselves and others.
- Through an increased knowledge of the Indian people, children will also gain understanding and compassion for them.

Verse for India:

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- Read through the Light Burden Relay activity and discussion and prepare as necessary.
- Prepare the flag from the lesson cover the red India map and the other pictures as power point slides to show on a screen, or print them and back them with cardstock for stability. Locate a real flag of India if possible and display on a large wall or pole.
- Decide how you will use the flag and map pages and make necessary copies. Gather pencils, crayons or markers to use in class.

Lesson Plan:

- Open your time together with welcome, announcements and a brief prayer. (5 min.)
- Read or tell the story part of the lesson, using the pictures to illustrate details about India, and stopping to explain or discuss as necessary. (15-20 min.)
- Set up the room for the “Light Burden Relay”, and tell the children how to play without giving away the point of the experience. We will talk more about the effects of poverty and the emptiness of Hinduism in some of the other lessons. This activity will serve as a memorable point for future discussions about the heaviness of poverty, hopelessness and sin. (25-30 min.)
- Use the map and flag pages to finish your time in class, or as take home activities to remind them to pray for the country of India. (10-15 min.)

Lesson 2 Story: The Country of India

India is a large country, about 1/3 the size of the United States. It is the seventh largest country in the world, but the population in India is the second largest in the world (after China). There are 1,189,172,906 people living in India. This means that many parts of this large country are very crowded with many, many people living in small spaces.

(Use the red map of India to point out locations as you talk.) The southern part of India is very warm and tropical with jungles and lots of rain. The central part of India has flat, rolling plains and some dessert areas, and in the north, the Himalayan Mountains rise up to snowcapped peaks. The third tallest mountain in the world lies on the border of India and Nepal. (Do you remember that the very tallest mountain in the world, Mt. Everest, is in Nepal?)

India is divided into 28 states. New Delhi, is the capital and the largest and most modern city in India. The main part of the country holds 20 states and most of the population. The smaller northeast section, joined by a small strip of land, contains 8 more states. This region lies in the wooded foothills of the Himalayan Mountains and is home to more than 160 tribal groups, each with their own culture and native language. **(Show Taj Mahal and Varanasi pictures and read the captions out loud.)**

For thousands of years, the Indian people have been identified by their native tribal heritage and cultures. There are still hundreds of tribes, or individual people groups living all over India. Each one has their own language and traditional customs. Most households still speak their native language, and this is usually a child's first language. Hindi is the national language of India, which gives a common language among all the tribes for business, school and intertribal communication. This is the formal language that is used for speaking, reading and writing in public places.

Like the United States, India was once a colony of England from the 1850's to 1947. In 1947 they were granted independence and set up their own government. The Indian government is a democracy, with a parliament similar to England's. One remaining evidence of English rule is that the cars all have their steering wheels on the right, and they use the left lane to drive in. Also, the English

language is taught in most schools, so those who achieve a higher level of education often have mastery of three languages; their tribal language spoken at home, Hindi as the national language, and English, which is invaluable as a job skill and for international travel and study.

Many different animals live in the various climate regions. **(Show appropriate animal pictures as you talk.)** India is home to the smaller-eared Asiatic elephants, but their native habitats are becoming scarce. They live mostly in northern India and travel in herds made up of one older male elephant, mature females, and many young elephants. Sometimes, these elephants are used as work animals. Men called “Mahouts” train the elephants to move and carry heavy logs. The men ride on the shoulders of the elephants and use their bare feet to give commands to the animals by tapping them behind the ears.

In the sandy, desert areas of India, camels are used as transportation for people and loads of cargo. In many parts of India, water buffalo and Brahman oxen are used to pull carts and carry loads. In the jungle areas, many kinds of monkeys, birds and snakes, as well as tigers, rhinos, wild boar, and crocodiles live in the wild.

(Show real flag or flag picture as you talk.) India’s flag has three horizontal stripes. The stripe on the top is an orange color, called “saffron”. To the Indian people, this color represents courage and sacrifice. The white of the middle stripe represents peace and unity and truth. The green of the bottom stripe stands for faith and fertility. In the very center of the flag is a blue wheel with 24 spokes. The blue of the wheel symbolizes the sky and the ocean. This wheel is the Dharma Chakra (DAHR-mah CHOCK-rah), which means the “Wheel of Law”. This Chakra represents the continuing progress of the nation and is a Buddhist symbol dating back to ancient times.

India is a fascinating country with ancient cultures and religions. With its widely varied climates and social classes, its huge population, and its emerging industrialization, India has many struggles to overcome. Pray that the people of India will hear and accept Jesus’ offer to make their yoke easy to bear and their burden light.

Light Burden Relay

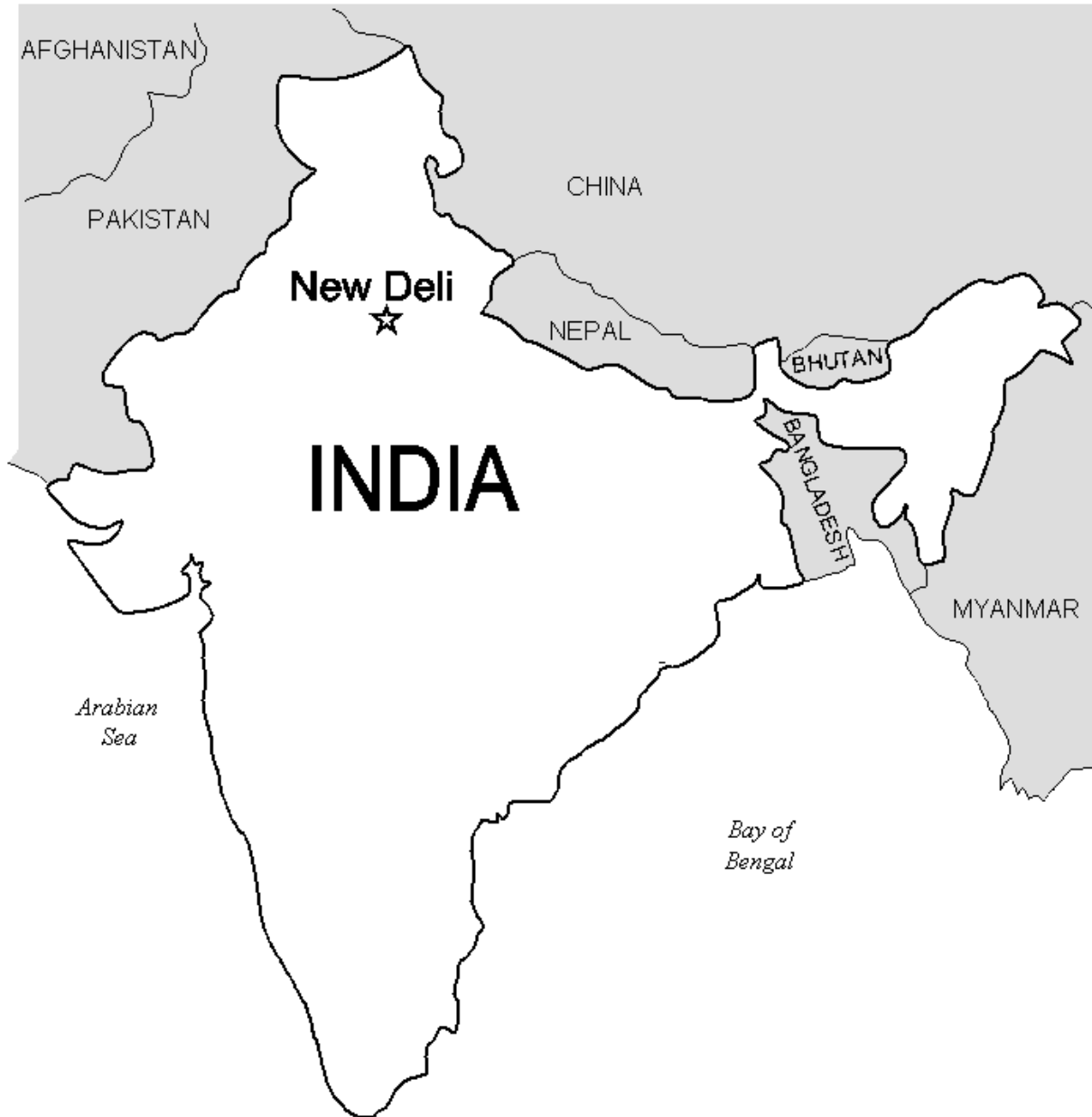
Preparation: Collect one large stone (at least 5 lbs. if possible) and at least 50 small pebbles and clean them well. Put the pebbles in a small bowl or basket and the large stone in a bucket or basket with a handle. Remove all verse cards from the poster board and place them in a pile in order, so that the first word/picture is on the top and the second under it, etc. Put a small roll of tape or ball of sticky tack over each space line on the poster board so children can easily stick the cards in the right place.

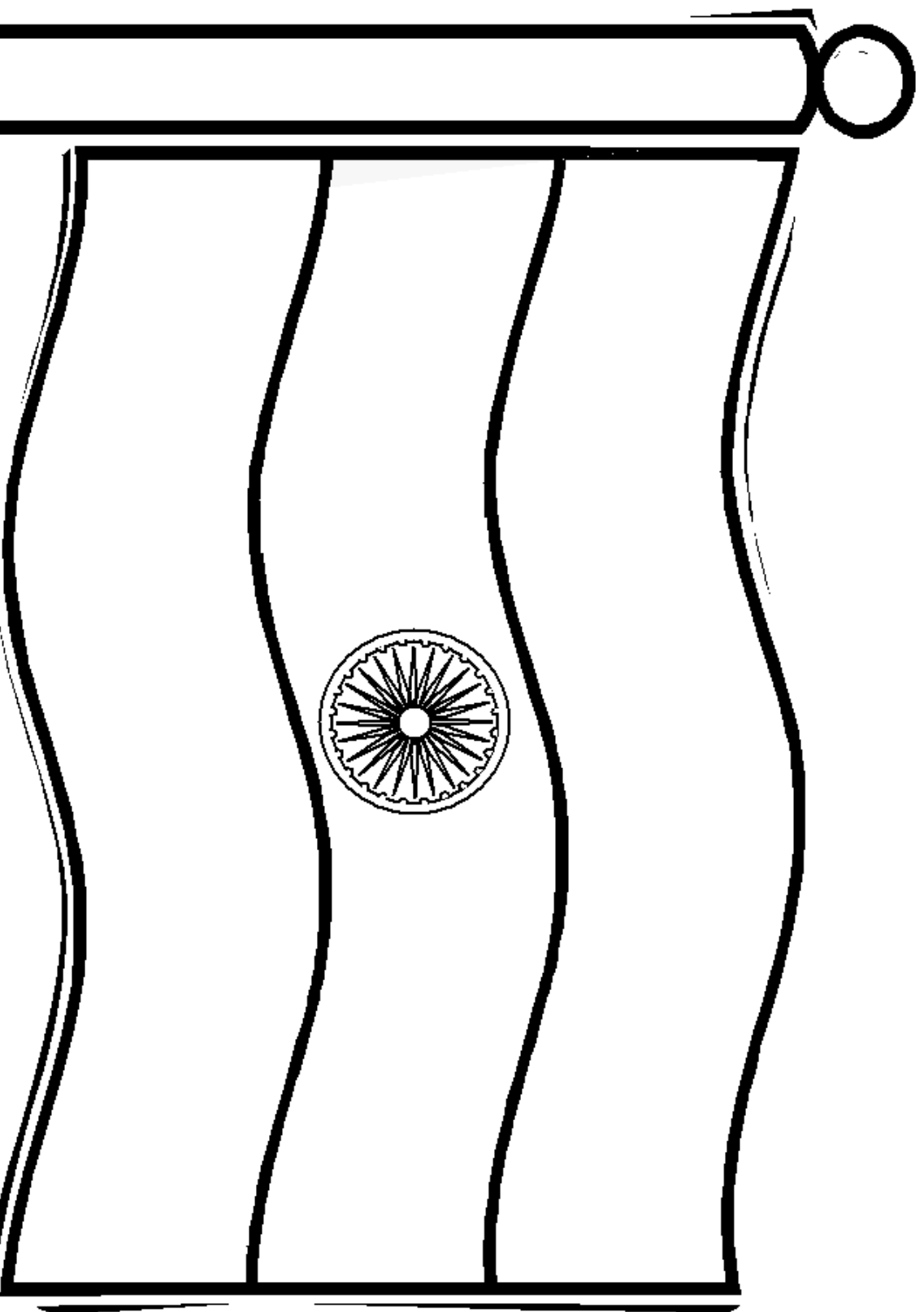
To Play: You will explain how to play without revealing the point of playing. As much as possible, you want the students to have their own “light bulb moments”, where they understand through experience the significance of Jesus making our burdens light. All students form a line, with the empty poster board about 10 feet in front of them. (You can put a piece of tape on the floor to mark the starting line.) The container of pebbles is placed on the floor beside the front of the line. The container with the stone is placed on the floor in front of the poster board. Each student will pick up a pebble and carry it to the poster board. They will drop the pebble into the container with the stone and place the card from the top of the pile onto the poster board over the next space line, saying their word out loud for the class to hear. That student goes to the end of the line and the next student continues, moving quickly through the verse until all cards and the reference are in place. Depending on the size of your class, you may move several times through your line to complete the verse.

Stop play at this point and read the verse out loud together as a class, keeping the children in their line. Remove the verse cards in order to make a new pile like the first one, and move the stone container to the beginning of the line. Tell the students that they are going to play again, but this time, all of the little pebbles have joined the big stone in one container, and they will need to pick up the container and carry the whole thing to the poster board, place their verse card in its space on the poster board, say it out loud and then carry the stones back to the front of the line for the next person to take it. Continue through the line until the verse has been completed the second time. Once again, read it out loud together as a class, and then have the children sit down.

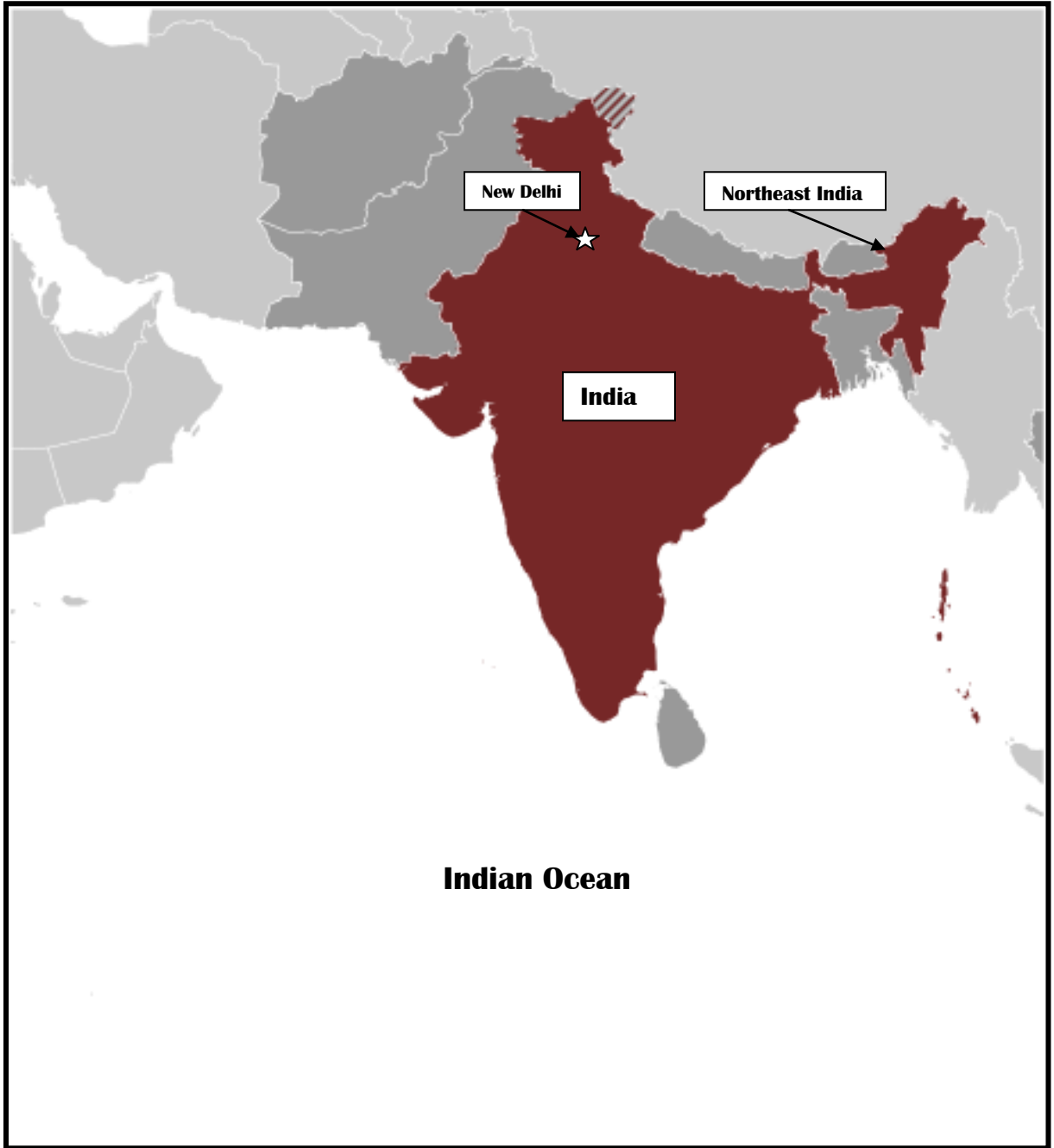
Discussion: This is the important part of the activity. Make sure you help the kids process what they just did. Ask questions like: Which relay was easier? Why? In your own life, what kinds of things seem like “easy” burdens to carry? What kinds of things seem like “heavy” burdens to carry? (Help kids to make the connection between carrying a physical thing like a stone, and being weighed down with something in our hearts, like the weight of guilt when we have told a lie.) Take a look at the verse together and help them figure out how a person’s heart can be weary and burdened, like carrying around the container with all of the stones all day long. This can happen in a physical way like difficult living conditions or not enough food and water, or in a spiritual way, like being weighed down with guilt or having no hope. Help them to see how Jesus can offer an easier, lighter burden, like carrying the pebble. This can also happen in a physical way, as He walks with us through life’s difficulties, or in a spiritual way, as He offers the joyful freedom of forgiveness and hope. This can be applied to your student’s lives, and to the lives of those living in India under the burden of poverty, the caste system and Hinduism. Make sure your children understand how they can trade in their own heavy burdens for the light and easy yoke Jesus offers. You might want to end with a prayer that they can repeat in their hearts, asking Jesus to take their own heavy burden and replace it with a lighter one. Pray also for the Indian people, that they would be introduced to Jesus, who can make their burden light.

India



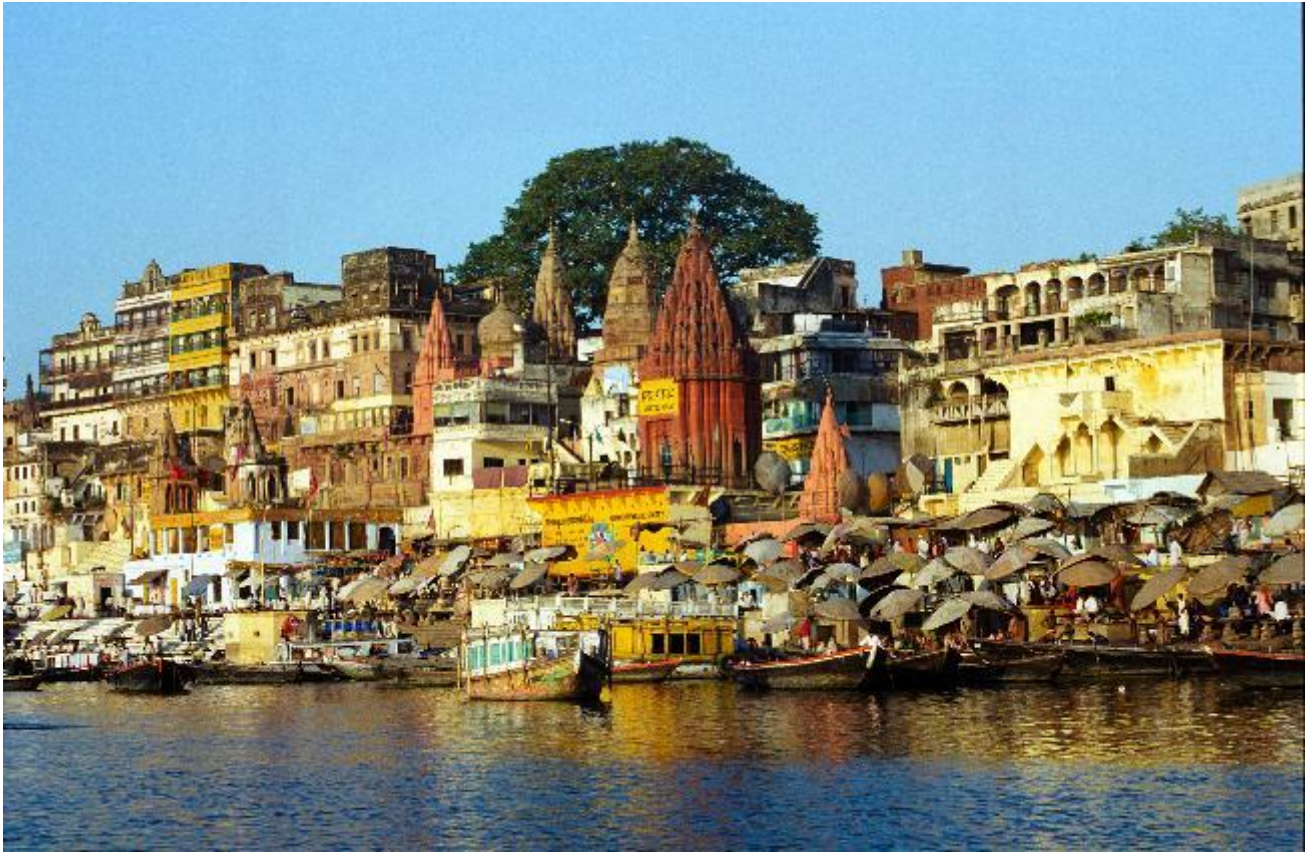


The top band of orange stands for courage and sacrifice. The middle band of white represents peace, unity and truth. The green band stands for faith and fertility. The blue of the “Dharma Chakra” in the middle symbolizes the sky and the ocean. This wheel of law is an ancient Buddhist symbol that reminds Indians of the importance of justice and their continuing progress as a nation.





The Taj Mahal was built by Emperor Shah Jahan between 1632 and 1653 to honor the memory of his favorite wife. Located 125 miles from New Delhi in Agra, it took nearly 22 years, 22,000 workers, and 1,000 elephants to complete the white marble mausoleum.



Varanasi, on the west bank of the River Ganges, is one of the oldest cities in the world and is often referred to as the religious capital of India. Hindu people journey to Varanasi hoping to cleanse their spirits in the river.



Indian Elephants have smaller ears than the African variety. The Indian people use elephants for riding and working.



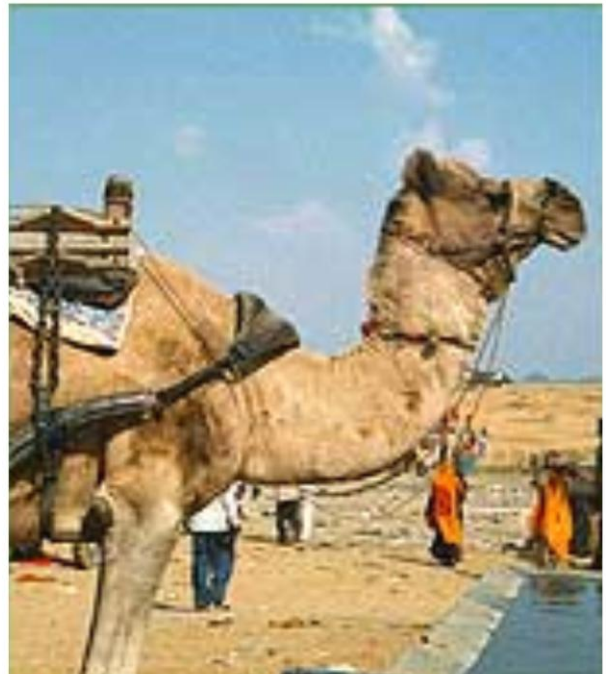
Royal Bengal Tiger



Indian Rhinoceros



Indian Wild Boar



Indian Camel