Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31

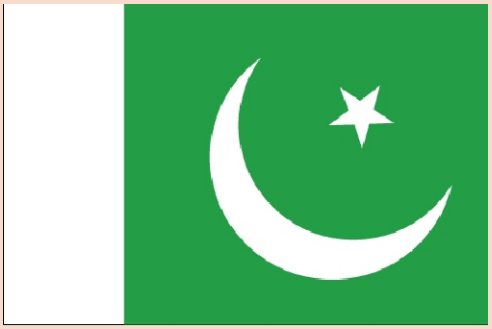
INDIA: country profile

Capital: New Delhi
Population: About 1.2 billion
Currency: Rupee
Religion: Hinduism (80%), Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism
Language: 17 major languages, 844 dialects and English



PAKISTAN: country profile

Capital: Islamabad
Population: About 158 million
Currency: Rupee
Religion: Muslim (97%), Hinduism and Christianity
Language: Urdu, other regional languages and English



India and Pakistan became two independent states in 1947 when British rule came to an end. This box contains a variety of objects from both countries.

Brass lion lamp

This brass lion has a hole in its head where oil would have been poured. A wick was then put into the hole and lit. The tail of the lion forms a handle. Thousands of oil lamps are used during Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.



Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31

Doll



This doll is wearing a sari, which is the traditional garment worn by women in India. It is also worn in Pakistan but only for special occasions as the salwar kameez (loose fitting trousers and top) is now more popular.

A sari is a very long piece of material, which can be wrapped around the body in different ways. The most common way is for the material to be wrapped around the waist and then the loose end (called the pallu or pallav) is draped over the shoulder, as you can see on the doll.

In the past saris were always made of hand-woven material. The richest women could afford beautiful finely woven silk while the poorer women wore coarse cotton.

Nowadays, saris are often mass-produced in a factory, although handmade material can still be bought and used for special occasions.

Sandals



These shoes were probably worn by a Hindu priest from India. The ornate piece of carved wood goes between the big toe and the second toe and is the only thing that keeps the sandal on the foot. They must have been difficult to walk in!

The role of a Hindu priest is to perform ceremonies in the temple and carry out daily ritual duties.

School bag



This square shaped shoulder bag has a fringe along the bottom and zigzag patterns embroidered into the material. Bags like this are often made in India and Pakistan and sold all over the world.

Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31

Walnut sikara



This model of a Sikara (sometimes spelt Shikara) boat is made of walnut wood and has some panels of carved patterns as decoration.

Sikaras are small wooden boats most commonly found on Dal Lake in Kashmir. Kashmir is an area in the north of India that has been at the centre of a fierce argument between Pakistan and India, who both want to claim it as part of their own country.



The boats come in many different shapes and sizes and are traditionally used by people to meet on the lake and sell their goods, like a floating market. They trade goods such as vegetables, cattle feed and flowers. This picture shows a boat filled with flowers for sale.

Sikaras are also used as transport between islands, for fishing on the lake and for tourism.

Khadi cotton

Khadi is a hand-spun cotton made popular in the 1920s by Mahatma Gandhi, who was a very important person in India's struggle for independence from Great Britain. Ghandi didn't believe in violence and encouraged people to show strength through peaceful campaigns and wear clothes made of khadi cotton that had been hand produced in India. Even today Indian politicians only wear khadi and the Indian flag should not be made of any other material.

This piece of khadi cotton has a printed pattern on it depicting a tiger carrying a deer in its mouth.



Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31

Jewellery: Earrings, Spiral bangle and Ceremonial necklace



This box has examples of traditional jewellery from India and Pakistan. This type of jewellery can be worn in everyday life and also plays an important part in ceremonies.

In a Hindu wedding ceremony the bride is thought to be like Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and good luck, and so wears a beautiful sari with lots of jewellery to match. She wears necklaces, earrings, finger rings, pins in her hair and bangles, some of which can be seen here. The groom's parents also give gifts of jewellery to the bride during the ceremony.



Spiral bangles are never worn alone. It is common to see many bangles on both arms. Traditionally they were made of glass and metal, although cheaper plastic versions are now worn for everyday use. The bangles made of glass and metal are still preferred at traditional functions such as weddings and festivals and make a lovely jingling sound.

Seed necklace



This necklace is made of seeds that come from a plant native to India called Rattan. The Rattan is a type of palm and other parts of it are used to make furniture and baskets.

Seeds are often used to make jewellery as they are not only attractive but also very tough.

Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31

Ivory carving of Vishnu



All gods in Hinduism are different expressions of the supreme God Brahman. Hindus usually choose one of these gods to worship and the most popular is Vishnu. He is the creator and preserver of the universe and has visited earth nine times. Vishnu worshippers believe that the next time he visits will be the end of the world.

This statue is probably carved from the ivory of an Indian elephant tusk. It has been illegal to buy and sell ivory since the 1970s but it still happens occasionally.

Brass spoon



This brass spoon is used in Hindu ceremonies to scoop powdered incense from a dish onto a fire. Incense is an important part of ceremonies in many religions. It is made of plant matter and essential oils and releases a fragrant smoke when burnt.

Sometimes the incense is made into sticks, which are gently waved in front of an altar as an offering to a God.

Elephant bell

Bells like these are attached to Indian elephants along with other decorations as part of ceremonies, festivals and processions. You can always recognise an elephant bell by the long thin pieces of metal hanging down from the rim. The style of the bell has not changed for hundreds of years and it makes a very rich sound.



Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31

Ebony elephant



Carved wooden elephants are very popular ornaments. This one is carved from ebony, which is very dense and black in colour.

You can tell this is an Indian elephant because it has small ears and two humps on its head. The African species has larger ears, a smooth head and is generally bigger.

Brass figure

This old man is from India. He is thin and uses a stick to walk. Living conditions vary greatly in India. In some poor areas people are only expected to live until the age of 50, but in the wealthy suburbs of big cities people with modern homes and servants can expect to live longer.



Playing cards

The wooden painted box contains circular playing cards for a game called ganjifa. There are nine suits in this pack with twelve cards in each suit. The suits are usually made up of the numbers one to ten, a minister and a king, although some are missing here. The cards are designed and painted by local artists who decide what pictures to use for the suits. For this set the artist has chosen crops, circles and human figures or gods.

