“I think it would be a good idea”
(Mahatma Gandhi, when asked what he thought of Western civilization)

On seeing a locomotive for the first time, a peasant in India asked what makes it move. British engineers explained in detail its workings (the steam, the pistons, the wheels, etc). The peasant asked “yes, I understand, but what is it that makes it move”?
Bibliography

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• Hermann Goetz: The Art of India (1959)
• Hugh-George Rawlinson: A Cultural History of India (1937)
• Henri Stierlin: Hindu India (2002)
Theorem

• Worst Western misconception about India and China (and Japan etc): that they are all “Eastern” (Eastern philosophy, Eastern religion, Eastern art, etc)

• China and India have as much in common as France and Indonesia (different arts, different languages, different institutions, different traditions, different landscape, different economies…)

• “The central aim of Eastern mysticism is to experience all phenomena in the world as manifestations of the same ultimate reality” (Fritjof Capra)
Theorem

• Dravidian India is the remnant of the third great cradle of world civilization, having survived the Indo-European and Muslim invasions

• Three different minds: West, India, China, the Indian mind being best represented today in South Dravidian India
India’s identity

• A continent, not a country (including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan) no native name for the whole subcontinent
• A battleground for all the major religions (Greek, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam)
• Two main families of languages: Indo-European (e.g. Hindi) in the north and Dravidian (e.g. Tamil, Kannada, Telugu) in the south
India’s identity

- Landscape
  - Himalayas in the north
  - Deserts and steppes in the west
  - Rain forest in the east
  - Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra plains and river deltas
  - Arab Sea and Gulf of Bengal
  - Main migration route: from the eastern steppes towards the southern seas
Indus Valley civilization

• 3000 BC: Dravidian speaking people develop the civilization of the Indus Valley
• 2000 BC: Indus Valley is the largest bronze-age civilization in the world
• 1800 BC: the civilization of the Indus Valley declines
• Mohenjo-Daro: Continuously occupied for 4,000 years
• Independent discovery of writing?
Indus Valley civilization

- Steatite seals
  - No horses!

Metropolitan Museum, New York
Indo-European culture

- Indo-European migrations

1,600 BC
Indo-European culture

- The Indo-Europeans in India
  - Fragmented into small kingdoms along the Ganges
  - Domestication: sheep, goat, cow, dog
  - Horse-driven chariot
  - Main entertainment: music (India’s most ancient art)
  - Tripartite society (castes): priests, warriors, farmers
  - Worship of the Devas ("celestial beings", mostly representing natural phenomena)
  - Dyaus chief deity, who lives in the sky
  - Greatest glory: death in battle (cfr Homer)
Indian Languages

- Today:
  - India has 112 mother tongues with at least 10,000 speakers
Indian Languages

• Today:
  – 23 Dravidian languages are spoken by 180 million people, mainly in the south (Tamil in Tamil Nadu, Telugu in Andhra Pradesh, Kannada in Karnataka, Malayalam in Kerala)
Indian Languages

• Today:
  – Mandarin: 1051 millions
  – English 510
  – Hindi 490
  – Spanish 425
  – Arabic 255
  – Russian 254
  – Portuguese 218
  – Bengali 215
  – Malay 175
  – French 130
  – Japanese 127
  – German 123
  – Farsi 110
  – Urdu 104
  – Punjabi 103
  – Vietnamese 86
  – Tamil 78
The Dravidian Wall

• China’s “walls”: seas, mountains and steppes (and the Great Wall)
• India’s "walls": seas, mountains, deserts... and the Dravidian people
• Main cultural invasion: Persia
• First major invasion from Persia: Indo-Europeans
• Second major invasion from Afghanistan: Islam
• Neither completely conquered the Dravidian people, who moved to the south
The Dravidian Wall

- Dravidian dynasties created their own kingdoms in the south
- Their influence and domains extended as far as Indonesia
- Evidence that these southern kingdoms traded with the Roman empire
- The Dravidians maintained an identity that the invaders were trying to erase
The Dravidian Wall

- The European powers (the first powers capable of invading from the sea) tore down the Dravidian wall
- The European powers were the first invaders that did not come from northwest
Dravidian Art

• The essence of Dravidian art: manic density of detail
• Highly metaphorical
• Dravidian art is an endless process of decoding/interpretation
• Overwhelmingly Hindu (not Islamic or Buddhist)
• Every corner of a temple filled with sculptures
• A total experience
• Sensory overload
Indo-European India

- Rig-veda (1500 BC) in Vedic (Indo-European language)
  - Most popular deities
    - Gods of heaven: Varuna (god of the cosmic order) is the supreme god, Surya (sun god), etc
    - Gods of the air: Indra (god of war, most popular god of the Rig Vedas), Rudra, etc
    - Gods of earth: Agni (the fire god), etc
- Three goals of human life: artha (material success), dharma (righteous social behavior), and kama (sensual pleasures)
- All Vedas were reserved for male priests of the upper (Brahmin) caste
Indo-European India

- Vedism till 6th century BC
  - Monopoly of the Brahmins
  - Salvation can be attained only by secret rituals known only to the Brahmins
Indo-European India

- Upanishad (600 BC) in Sanskrit (Indo-European language)
  - The metaphysical counterpart of the Veda
  - Pessimistic vision of the human condition: life is evil/sorrow
  - Salvation is liberation (moksha) from the illusory world (maya)
  - Moksha is achieved when the individual soul (atman) becomes one with the universal soul (brahman)
  - Reaction of the Ksatriyas against the Brahmins: the Upanishads are not exclusive to the Brahmins
  - End of the monopoly of the Brahmins over religion
Indo-European India

- 527 BC: Siddhartha Gautama is enlightened
- 500 BC: the ascetic prince Mahavira founds Jainism
Indo-European India

• Six darshana (schools) of philosophy
  – Samkhya (5th c BC BC)
  – Vedanta (5th c BC)
  – Royal Yoga (2nc c BC)
  – Nyaya
  – Vaisesika
  – Purva-mimamsa
Indo-European India

- 327 BC: Alexander invades the Indus Valley
- 304 BC: Chandragupta Maurya gets the Indus Valley
- 300 BC: the “Ramayana” is composed
- 259 BC: Mauryan king Ashoka converts to Buddhism
- 200 BC: the “Mahabharata” is composed
- Vedism has become Hinduism
History of India

Mauryan Empire (250 BC)

Ayodhya
Pataliputra

304 BC - 184 BC
History of India

• A false start: Buddhist and Jain art, not Hindu art
• Mauryans protected both Buddhists and Jains
• Buddhist ability to create wealthy corporate institutions
• Buddhism prevalent over Hinduism in the visual arts till the 5th c AD
History of India

• Fundamental difference between Hinduism and Buddhism
  – No atman: no enduring consciousness, consciousness is a substance not a being
  – Salvation lies in escape from the illusion of the self: nirvana
  – "Only suffering exists, but no sufferer is to be found" (from the Visuddhimagga)
  – No brahman
  – Very difficult to do the right thing (requires meditation and practice)
  – Monasteries and universities
  – Anti-Brahminical
History of India

• Jainism
  – Buddha: the soul of the individual does not exist
  – Mahavira: everything has a soul (humans, animals, plants, objects)
  – Ultimate goal: purification, not nirvana, so that no more karma can attach to the soul
  – Purification leads to perfect knowledge (kevala, similar to moksha)
  – Also anti-Brahminical
• Jain art
World Religions

- Respect for life

- No killing of animals

- Killing never justified

- 2000 BC

- 1000 BC

- 600 BC

- 500 BC

- 0

- 600 AD

- JAINISM

- DAOISM

- BUDDHISM

- CHRISTIANITY

- JUDAISM

- HINDUISM

- ISLAM
World Religions

- Respect for unbelievers

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Ancient Indian Art

- Mostly religious architecture
- Ancient secular Indian architecture (palaces) were destroyed
- The famous palaces of India are either Muslim or British
Sri Lankan Art

- Sri Lanka:
  - Theravada Buddhism ("Doctrine of the Elders")
  - Oldest continuously Buddhist country
  - Tripitaka/Tipitaka assembled in Sri Lanka (1st c AD), written in Pali (Indo-European language)
Sri Lankan Art

• Theravada/Hinayana
  – The Buddha as a supremely enlightened human
  – Only one Buddha
  – Very difficult to achieve salvation
  – Arhat only saves himself
  – Atheistic

• Mahayana
  – The Buddha as a manifestation of a divine being
  – Many Buddhas
  – Easier to achieve salvation
  – Bodhisattva can save others
  – Monotheistic
Sri Lankan Art

- Sri Lanka:
  - Rock-cut temples ("caves")
  - Free-standing architecture
    - The stupa: funereal tumulus that developed into a cosmic building, both a memorial to a saint and a diagram of the spiritual universe
    - Balance of round and square shapes
    - First stupas in India: 5th c BC
Sri Lankan Art

- Anuradhapura (3rd c BC - 3rd c AD)
Sri Lankan Art

- Anuradhapura (3rd c BC - 3rd c AD)
Sri Lankan Art

Anuradhapura (3rd c BC - 3rd c AD)
Sri Lankan Art

- Dambula caves (1st c BC - 18th c)

Cave 2
Sri Lankan Art

Dambula caves (1st c BC - 18th c)
Sunga/Satavahan Art

185 to 73 BCE
Sunga Art

- Buddhist
- The chaitya hall: carving of chambers into living stone to accommodate stupas
  - Colonnaded aisles
  - Arched vaults
  - Curving ribs
- Vihara/monastery, originally series of rock-cut cells
- Preference for rock-cut “buildings” over free-standing buildings
Sunga Art

- Sanchi
- Bharhut
- Caves
  - Bhaja caves (1st c BC)
  - Karla caves (1st c BC)
  - Ajanta caves (1st c BC)
  - Udaigiri caves (Jain!)
Sunga Art

- Sanchi

  Stupa 1, Sanchi (2nd c. BC, oldest stone structure in India)

  Stupa 2, Sanchi

  Stupa 3, Sanchi (2nd c. BC)
Sunga Art

- Bharhut ((now at Kolkata’s Indian Museum))
Sunga Art

- Bhaja caves
Sunga Art

- Karla caves
Sunga Art

• Karla caves
Sunga Art

- Ajanta caves

Cave 10
Sunga Art

- Udayagiri caves
Sunga/ Satavahan Art

- Buddhist and Jain
- Very spiritual
Kushan Art

Most Sunga art continued and enlarged during the Satavahan era.
Kushan Art

• 0-300 AD four empires in Eurasia:
  – Han (Buddhist and Taoist)
  – Roman (Christian)
  – Parthian (Zoroastrian)
  – Kushan (Buddhist)
Kushan Art

• The spice road
Kushan Art

• Buddhist architecture
  – Kanishka's stupa at Peshawar (3rd c AD), about 200m tall
Kushan Art

• Gandhara school
  – Gandhara/Chandahara (northwestern Pakistan and Afghanistan), former Bactrian (Greek) colony
  – Kushan adopted Buddhism as official religion of the region (1st c AD)
  – Kushan king Kanishka (2nd c AD) convenes the Buddhist council that marks the schism of Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism
  – Gandhara statues of the Kushan period (1st-2nd c AD): first anthropomorphomorphic representation of Buddha
  – Buddha image derived from Roman imperial statues and Roman religious faces
Kushan Art

- Gandhara school

Four scenes of the life of Buddha from Gandhara 100-300
San Francisco Asian Art Museum
Kushan Art

- Nagarjuna (2nd century AD), first great Indian philosopher, Buddhist
Gupta Art

Gupta 318 - 528 AD
Gupta Art

• Decline of Buddhism, rise of Hinduism
• Reduced contacts with the West, following Persian-Roman wars
• Resurgence of the Brahmin priests
• Emphasis on priestly rites, not on metaphysics
• Old gods (e.g., Indra) abandoned in favor of the “trimurti”: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva (creation, preservation, destruction)
Gupta Art

- Vishnu the Sustainer (benevolent) and Shiva the Destroyer (terrible)
- Vishnu and Shiva both of Dravidian origin
- Vishnu has many incarnations (avatar): Rama, Krishna...
- Shiva’s phallus (linga) is the central shrine of temples and the personal shrine of households
- Shiva performs a cosmic dance while the world is being destroyed
- The Nandi bull is the vahana (vehicle) of Shiva (a Nandi faces the main shrine of every Shiva temple)
Gupta Art

• New cults:
  – Shiva's son Skanda (the war god) and elephant-headed Ganesh (5th c AD)
  – Surya, the sun god
  – Goddesses (each god is complemented by a female power): Laksmi (Vishnu's wife), Durga (Shiva's wife), and, in general, Shakti (Lakshmi is Vishnu's shakti and Parvati is Shiva’s shakti, and she is also Kali and Durga)
Gupta Art

• India’s classical age
  – First books (earliest extant: 350 AD)
  – Revival of Sanskrit
  – University of Nalanda (students from China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tibet, Nepal, Sri Lanka)
  – Literature (Kalidasa, poet and playwright in Sanskrit)
  – Drama (Nataka, derived from dance)
  – Six darshana (schools) of philosophy
Gupta Art

- Hindu temple architecture
  - Derived from Buddhist/Jain architecture
  - Brick and stone temples
  - Hindu temple: a small cella (central chamber), a shikhara (spire), representing a cave inside Meru
  - Cave temples evolving into free-standing temples
  - Architecture = sculpture
  - Body language of dancing transferred to sculpture and painting, introducing rhythm in the visual arts (“Vishnudharmottaram”, earliest manual on art: painting and sculpture derive from dance which derives from music)
Gupta Art

- Hindu temple vs Buddhist stupa
Gupta Art

• Hindu temple architecture
  – First international style in Asia, spreading to China, Japan, Central Asia, Southeast Asia
Enfers Dravidian India

- Chalukya (6th to 12th c)
- Pallava (4th to 9th c)
Chalukya Art

- Badami
- Aihole
- Pattadakal
Chalukya Art

- Badami 1 (Shiva)
Chalukya Art

- Badami 2 & 3

Vishnu
• Aihole
Chalukya Art

• Pattadakal

Virupaksha temple (725 AD)

Mallikarjuna temple (745)
• Pattadakal

Virupaksha temple

Mallikarjuna temple
Pallava Art

- Mamallapuram
- Kanchipuram
Pallava Art

- Mamallapuram

Relief of Arjuna's Penance (7th c)
Pallava Art

- Mamallapuram

  Relief of Krishna Mandapa (7th c)
Pallava Art

- Mamallapuram
  Relief of Krishna Mandapa (7th c)
Pallava Art

- Mamallapuram: temples carved in the living rock

Panch Rathas (630 AD)
Pallava Art

Mamallapuram

Panch Rathas (630 AD)
Panch Rathas (630 AD)
Pallava Art

• Mamallapuram: a free-standing temple

Shore/Arjuna temple (700 AD)
Sailodhava Art

- Bhubaneswar
- Parashurameshvara temple (65#AD)
Sailodbhava Art
Parashurameshvara temple (65 AD)
Pallava Art

- Kanchipuram Kailasanatha temple (720 AD)
Pallava Art

Kanchipuram Kailasanatha temple (720 AD)
Rastrakuta Art

- Ellora: Buddhist, Jain and Hindu rock-cut temples
- Elephanta: Hindu caves

735-982
Rastrakuta Art

- Elephanta caves
Rastrakuta Art

- Ellora: Kailasa
Indian Philosophy

• Adi Shankara (Kerala, 788AD), first great Hindu philosopher (Vedanta school)
Bhakti

• South-Indian bhakti (8th-11th c AD)
  – Hymns in Tamil by two groups of poets, Nayanars (worshipers of Shiva) and Alvars (Vishnu)
  – Singing in the language of ordinary people (not sanskrit) and passionately (almost erotically) intense
  – Sense of unrestrained joy, expressed in music and dance
  – The god's dancing girls (devadasis, sometimes also prostitutes)
  – Bhakti poets (writing in vernacular, not sanskrit) belong to any class (not only brahmin)
Bhakti

• South-Indian bhakti (8th-11th c AD)
  – Popular deities for bhakti
    • Vishnu
    • Shiva
    • Devi/ Durga/ Parvati/ Lakshmi/ Saraswati
    • Ganesha
    • Surya
    • Subrahmanya
Bhakti

- South-Indian bhakti (8th-11th c AD)
  - Great walled temple complexes of South India: small cities containing several shrines, bathing tanks, administrative offices, residences of the temple employees, workshops, bazaars, schools, banks, etc.
Bhakti

• South-Indian bhakti (8th-11th c AD)
  – Vimana (pyramidal instead North India’s shikhara/curved tower)
  – Mandapa (pillared hall)
  – Gopura (multi-storey tower-gate)
History of India

- Pandyan (southern India and Sri Lanka, 0 to 15th c)
- Chola (southern India and Indonesia, 0 to 13th c)
Chola Art

- Chidambaram: Nataraja temple (9th century)
- Thanjavur: Brihadiswara temple (11th century)
Chola Art

- Chidambaram

Shiva as ether
108 poses of the cosmic dance
Chola Art

- Thanjavur

octagonal cupola of granite
Chola Art

Thanjavur

four-mter tall linga
Bhakti Art

- Regional variations:
  - Khajuraho (Chandela dynasty)
  - Orissa (e.g., Ganga dynasty)
Chandela Art

- Khajuraho (10th-11th century)

Kandarya Mahadeva
Ganga Art

• Eastern Gangas (1038-1568):
  – Bhubaneswar (11th century)
  – Konark (13th century)
Ganga Art

- Bhubaneswar

- Mukteshvara

- Rajarani

- Brahmeshvara
Ganga Art

• Bhubaneswar: Rajarani
• Konark
Jain Art

- Mt Abu (11th-13th century)
History of India

- Medieval maps

Pratihar (6th-11th c)

Pala (8th-12th c)

Hoysala (1020-1342)
Hoysala Art

- Hoysala temples: star-shaped on jagged platforms and topped by a shikhara
- Completely covered with sculptures
- Belur: Chennakeshava temple (1117)
- Halebid: Hoysaleshvara temple (1150)
- Somnatpur: Keshava temple (1268 AD)
• Belur
  – asymmetric layout
  – interior
• Halebid

twin temples
• Halebid
• Somnathpur
  – dedicated to Vishnu

three star-shaped pyramids and a hall on top of one platform
• Somnatpur
Hoysala Art

Somnotpur
Hindu Art

- Hindu
- Little spirituality in Hindu temples (as opposed to Buddhist and Jain temples)
- Nothing in Hindu temple makes you think about maya/moksha (in fact, almost the opposite: Hindu art looks like a baroque tribute to what should be maya)
- What is missing in Hindu temples (but pervasive in Christian and Muslim and Buddhist ones) is sorrow.
- The point of a Hindu temple seems to be to celebrate, not to mourn.
- Consistent with the Ramayama and the Mahabarata (that expressed a much more positive/optimistic outlook than the Upanishads) and with the bhakti movement
- Joyful devotion
Indian Literature

• Sanskrit poetry (11th - 13th c):
  – Somadeva (Sanskrit, 1035): "Katha Sarit Sagara/ The Ocean of Streams of Story" (1081)
  – Jayadeva Goswami (Sanskrit, 11##): "Gita Govinda" (11##)
  – Jnaneshwar/ Jnanadev (Marathi, 12##): "Bhavartha Dipika" (129#)
Sri Lankan Art

• Polonnaruva: Vatanage stupa (12th century)

Buddhist
Very spiritual
Sri Lankan Art

• Buddhist sorrow and spirituality: Polonnaruva
Sri Lankan Art

- Polonnaruva: Gol Vihara
History of India

- **Muslim invasions:**
  - 1192-1526: Delhi sultanate
  - 1526-1707: Moghul
Islamic Sorrow and Spirituality

• Delhi
• Bijapur
• Agra
Delhi: Humayun's Tomb (1570)
Bijapur: Ibrahim Roza (1620)
Agra: Taj Mahal (1648)
Bijapur: Gol Gumbaz (1656)
Muslim Invasion

- Muslims change the identity of North India
- Muslims destroy many Hindu and Jain temples
- South India, that had already resisted the Indo-European penetration, maintains the true “Hindu” identity
History of India

Vijayanagar (1336-1646)
Vijayanagar Art

- Shrirangam: Ranganatha (13th-17th c)
- Kanchipuram: Ekambareswara (1506)
- Kanchipuram: Devarajaswami (16th c)
- Hampi: ruins of ancient capital (16th c)
- Madurai: Minakshi Sundareshvara (Nayak, 1659)
Vijayanagar Art

- Shrirangam
  - biggest functioning Hindu temple in the world
  - dedicated to Vishnu
  - 21 gopuras
  - a low building with a gold-plated roof instead of the vimana
• Shrirangam
• Kanchipuram: Ekambareshvara (1506)
Vijayanagar Art

- Kanchipuram: Devarajaswami (16th century)
• Hampi
Garuda shrine
Vijayanagar Art

- Madurai: Minakshi Sundareshvara (1659)
  - dedicated to Parvati and Shiva
12 gopuras
Vijayanagar Art

• Madurai: Minakshi Sundareshvara (1659)
Vijayanagar Art

Madurai: Minakshi Sundareshvara (1659)
Vijayanagar Art

- Madurai: Minakshi Sundareshvara (1659)
1,000 column hall with sculptures
The Hindu Temple

• The Hindu temple is also a place for social gathering
• Hindu religion does not prescribe how often the faithful have to visit the temple
• Families have a “god-room” to do "puja" at home
• Hindu temples are never silent/quiet
• The difference between home, town square and temple is more blurred than in other religions
• Hinduism encompasses every aspect of life, including sex.
• There are gods for everything.
Jain Art

- Palitana: Shatrunjaya sanctuary (16th c)
• Palitana: Shatrunjaya sanctuary (16th c)
Jain Art

Palitana: Shatrunjaya sanctuary (16th c)
Jain Art

• Palitana: Shatrunjaya sanctuary (16th c)
Jain Art

• Palitana: Shatrunjaya sanctuary (16th c)
North Ridge
Jain Art

Palitana: Shatrunjaya North Ridge
Jain Art

• Palitana: Shatrunjaya Middle Ridge
Jain Art

Palitana: Shatrunjaya Middle Ridge
168

Jain Art

Palitana: Shatrunjaya Middle Ridge
Indian Literature

• Fiction
  – Mullah Wajhi (Urdu, 15##): "Sabras/ Sab Ras" (16##)

• Poetry
  – Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva/ Shankara Deva (Assamese, 1449): "Kirtan" (14##)
  – Malik Jayasi (Hindi, 1493): "Padmavat" (154#) Meera Bai (Hindi, 1499): "Poems" (1547)
  – Tulsi Das (Hindi, 1532): "Ramacharitamanasa" (15##)
  – Eknath Swami (Marathi, 1548): "Ekanathi Bhagavata" (15##)
  – Abdur Rahim Khankhana (Hindi, 1556): "Poems" (16##)
  – Premananda Bhatta (Gujarati, 1636): "Poems" (1734)
  – Vali Mohammed/ Vali Dakhni (Urdu, 1667): "Diwan" (1707)
Theorem

• Worst Western misconception about India and China (and Japan etc): that they are all “Eastern” (Eastern philosophy, Eastern religion, Eastern art, etc)

• China and India have as much in common as France and Indonesia (different arts, different languages, different institutions, different traditions, different landscape, different economies…)

• “The central aim of Eastern mysticism is to experience all phenomena in the world as manifestations of the same ultimate reality” (Fritjof Capra)
Theorem

- Dravidian India is the remnant of the third great cradle of world civilization, having survived the Indo-European and Muslim invasions
- Three different minds: West, India, China, the Indian mind being best represented today in South Dravidian India
India’s Identity

• Sensory overload
India’s identity
India's identity
India's identity
India's identity
PLASTIC FREE ZONE

WARNING!

IN THIS AREA CARRYING/SALE/USE OF ALL PLASTIC BAGS AND PET BOTTLES IS BANNED BY LAW
India’s identity

• Distant relatives:
  – Persia (cultural deficit: more imports than exports)
  – Afghanistan (import: Islam, export: Buddhism)
  – China (one-way cultural trade, cultural surplus)
  – Indochina/Indonesia (ditto)
  – Christian Europe (cultural deficit)
  – USA (ditto… so far)
India’s identity

• Humanities
  – Vedas
  – Upanishads
  – Buddhist scriptures
  – Narrative poems
  – Classical Music: improvisation
  – Architecture (temples, religious)
  – Sculpture (temples, religious)
  – Painting (caves, religious)
India’s identity

- Humanities
  - Philosophy: six darshana + Buddhism
    - Samkhya: Atheism, World is real (due to two substances, prakriti and purusha)
    - Yoga: Theism (Isvara), World is real (prakriti/purusha)
    - Vedanta: Theism (Brahman), World is not real (only one substance, spirit)
India’s identity

• Sciences
  – Invention of the “Arabic” numerals
  – First treatise on algebra (Aryabhata, 499)
  – But way behind in Geometry and Astronomy
  – Nyaya, Vaisesika: Logic
  – Chess (6th c AD)
  – ...
  – Modern physicists: Satyendra Bose, Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman, Subramaniam Chandrasekar, Amitaba Sen, Abhay Ashtekar
India’s identity

• 20th century
  – Democracy
  – Melting Pot
  – First time in its history that it is divided along linguistic borders
  – Emigration (not as British slaves)
India’s identity

• The modern country of India:
  – Size: 3,287,590 sq km (seventh largest in the world)
  – Population: 1,095,351,995 (second or first in the world)
  – Fourth largest economy in the world (purchasing-power parity)
  – Median age: 24.9 (USA: 35.3)
  – Population growth rate: 1.38% (USA: 0.91%)
  – Life expectancy at birth: 64.71 (USA: 77.6)
India’s identity

• The modern country of India:
  – Religions:
    • Hindu 80.5%
    • Muslim 13.4%
    • Christian 2.3%
    • Sikh 1.9%
    • Buddhist 0.5% (California: 1.6%)
    • Jains 0.4%

• Fourth largest Muslim community:
  1. Indonesia 88% of 245M = 215M
  2. Pakistan = 166
  3. Bangladesh = 148
  4. India 13.4% of 1.1B = 147
India’s identity

• Religions of the world:
  – Christians 33.03% (of which Roman Catholics 17.33%, Protestants 5.8%, Orthodox 3.42%, Anglicans 1.23%)
  – Muslims 20.12%
  – Hindus 13.34%
  – Buddhists 5.89%
  – Sikhs 0.39%
  – Jews 0.23%
India’s identity

• Impact on the USA
  – British, Jews, Europeans, Chinese (colonizers and emigrants): science, warfare, family, political institutions, art/literature, spiritual life
  – Africans (slaves, not emigrants), Hispanic (conquistadores, not colonizers): party, sports, sexual revolution, gangs, music/dance, material life
  – Indians: ?
India vs China and the West

• The Western world: Persia, Jews, Christian world, Islamic world

• (Warning: in the 21st century the entire world is rapidly becoming westernized)
India vs China and the West

• Worst Western misconception about India and China (and Japan etc): that they are all “Eastern” (Eastern philosophy, Eastern religion, etc)

• China and India have as much in common as France and Indonesia (different arts, different languages, different institutions, different traditions, different landscape, different economies...)
India vs China and the West

- “The central aim of Eastern mysticism is to experience all phenomena in the world as manifestations of the same ultimate reality” (Fritjof Capra)
- This is common to all kinds of mysticism all over the world, from Herakleites (6th c BC) and Parmenides (5th c BC) to the Sufis to the Gnostics (1st c BC) to the Neo-Platonists (3rd c AD) to the Kabbalah (12th c) to the Pantheists (Spinoza, 17th c)
- The Upanishads are roughly contemporary with Herakleites and Daoism
- Pantheism is one of the most ubiquitous views of the world, in all ages in all parts of the world
- Neither Buddhism nor Confucianism nor Shintoism are Pantheistic, nor is China’s folk religion
India vs China and the West

- West: a continent (in fact, more than one) that was never one nation
- China: one nation, not a continent
- India: a continent that was at times one nation
India vs China and the West

- West: writing for accounting
- China: writing for divination
- India: writing for?
India vs China and the West

- West: multi-ethnic, lots of competition/warfare
- China: homogeneous most of the time
- India: multi-ethnic but little competition/warfare
India vs China and the West

- West: emphasis on war (both science and finance are driven by war)
- China: emphasis on social/political (outer) peace (meritocracy, massive public works)
- India: emphasis on inner peace

- West: violent chaos
- China: peaceful order
- India: peaceful chaos
India vs China and the West

- West: evil is ubiquitous
- China: evil does not exist, only inferior races and wrong behavior
- India: you “are” your own evil (bad karma)
India vs China and the West

- West: monotheist
- China: atheist (how to build an efficient society, how to live in harmony with nature)
- India: polytheist
India vs China and the West

- West: linear time (there is a beginning and there is an end to everything)
- China: static time (China always was and always will be the same)
- India: cyclic time (Brahma recreates the universe)

- West: emphasis on innovation/progress/knowledge
- China: emphasis on tradition
- India: emphasis on ultimate reality (self-knowledge)
India vs China and the West

- Western religion: creation myth at odds with Physics
- Chinese religion (Confucius, Daoism, Buddhism): no creation myth
- Hindu religion: creation myth surprisingly consistent with Physics
India vs China and the West

- West: prophets, oracles, etc (announce the future)
- China: sages (revere the past)
- India: gurus/ spiritual teachers (advise the present)
India vs China and the West

- West: exploration (exploring the world adds knowledge, and there are other places worth knowing)
- China: there are no other places worth knowing (exploring the world does not add to knowledge)
- India: no exploration (exploring the OUTER world does not add to knowledge)

- West: a land of emigrants, explorers and colonizers
- China: a land of emigrants
- India: not a land of emigrants, explorers or colonizers
India vs China and the West

- West: we are all equal
- China: we “must” be all equal (optimizes society)
- India: we are all different

- West: democracy because of Christianity (we are all equal) and communism as well (we are all equal)
- China: democracy an alien concept (because freedom weakens society), but communism a natural concept
- India: democracy a natural concept because of many cultures on equal footing
India vs China and the West

- West: architecture is grandeur (the king is great, the state is great, god is great)
- China: architecture is harmony (harmony with nature, mandate from heaven)
- India: architecture is joy
India vs China and the West

- West: emotional storytelling
- China: telling, not storytelling
- India: exemplary/didactic story telling
India vs China and the West

- West: The individual
- China: Society
- India: The legend/story
India vs China and the West

- West: sex is evil
- China: sex is natural ("decency")
- India: sex is a performing art
India vs China and the West

• West: death is bad
• China: death is natural
• India: death is birth
India vs China and the West

- West: I'll make you want what I sell
- China: I'll sell you what you want
- India: I'll sell you what I have
India vs China and the West

• West: only Western sports matter (win all gold medals in western sports)
• China: all sports matter (win all gold medals)
• India: only cricket matters (win zero gold medals)
India vs China and the West

• Peaks of human civilization
  – Indian sculpture
  – Chinese painting
  – Western architecture

  – Indian philosophy
  – Chinese politics
  – Western science

  – Indian dance
  – Chinese ?
  – Western music
India vs China and the West

- West: Individual bullshit
India vs China and the West

- China: Government bullshit
India vs China and the West

- India: Cowshit
India

You must be the change you wish to see in the world (Mahatma Gandhi)