THE GREAT COURSES®

A History of India

Professor Michael H. Fisher
Oberlin College

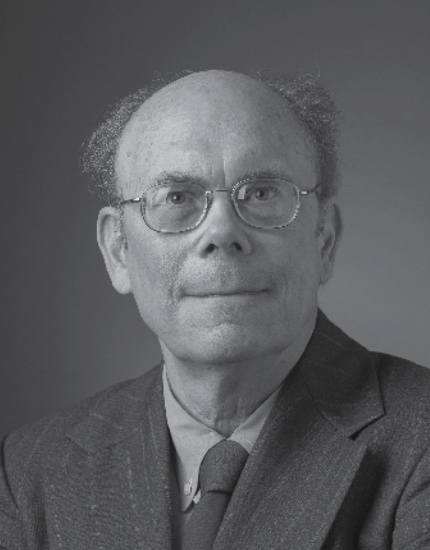## Michael H. Fisher, Ph.D.

Robert S. Danforth Professor of History
Oberlin College

Dr. Michael H. Fisher is the Robert S. Danforth Professor of History at Oberlin College, where he offers a range of courses on the history of South Asia, the environmental history of the Indian subcontinent, Pakistan, Mahatma Gandhi, and early travel narratives about India. In 1972, Professor Fisher received his B.A. from Trinity College's English Department. He received his M.A. in 1973 and his Ph.D. in 1978 from the University of Chicago. Both of his graduate degrees were in History, with a concentration on South Asia. Since 1978, he has taught Indian history at the college and university levels and to scholarly and general audiences on three continents.

Professor Fisher has published 12 books and more than 50 articles on aspects of Indian history. Among his special interests are the interactions between Indians and Europeans, both in India and in Europe, from the 16th century onward. His books include individual biographies of Indian settlers and visitors to Britain, including one on the first Indian to write and publish a book in English and one on the first person from India to be elected to the British Parliament. Dr. Fisher has also published books about the British Empire as it originated and developed in India and on migration in world history. His most recent book is *A Short History of the Mughal Empire*.

Since 1971, Professor Fisher has lived, researched, and taught for long periods in India, with briefer trips to Pakistan and Bangladesh. He has

been a visiting faculty fellow at the University of Delhi, University of Hyderabad, University of Allahabad, Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, and the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh.

Professor Fisher has twice served as Chair of Oberlin's History Department. He has also served on committees of the American Historical Association and the American Institute of Indian Studies. Dr. Fisher has also been on selection committees for the American Council of Learned Societies and for the Fulbright Program and Fulbright-Hays Program of the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Education. ∎

Table of Contents

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

A History of India

SCOPE

Over the past 5,000 years, the cultures and people of the Indian subcontinent have developed in fascinating and complex ways. Today, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh comprise one of the most dynamic and increasingly significant parts of humanity. South Asians currently total 20 percent of the world's population. The Republic of India alone will in less than a decade surpass China in size. Indians have long been part of globalization through trade, the spread of religions, and migration. The best way to understand present conditions in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh is to follow the development of their people from the origins of humans in the region up to the present.

The Indian subcontinent's diverse geography ranges from just north of the equator for more than 2,000 miles north into the glacial Himalaya mountains. Rivers and mountains define its many environmentally diverse regions, each with its own ecology. Over 50 centuries, various people have immigrated into each region, developing dozens of distinct languages, economies, societies, and governments. While outsiders may think of the Indian subcontinent as one place, it has rarely ever been united under a single ruler or culture.

Various Indian lands have been settled over the centuries by multiple waves of immigrants, from Africa, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe. Some forest-dwelling communities descended from the earliest humans to enter India. One of the first urban civilizations in the world arose along the Indus River, with its own system of writing as old as that of any in history. The major religions of Hinduism and Buddhism emerged as other cities and kingdoms developed more than 2,000 years ago. Other, smaller religious communities also created other ways of believing and living. Later immigrants added Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Islam. Occasionally, empires under Buddhist,

Hindu, Muslim, and Christian rulers temporarily extended over much of the subcontinent, but regional identities persisted within or apart from them. India much like Western Europe in its geographical, political, and ethnic variety, but there have always been more people living in on the Indian subcontinent than in Europe or the Americas combined.

Over the last seven decades, the people of the new, emerging nations of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh individually and collectively have a rich array of achievements. But they also face vital challenges. While all three nations are committed to representative democracy, they also have endured different degrees of authoritarianism. India and Pakistan have already fought multiple wars, and each now has a substantial stockpile of nuclear weapons. They are participating ever more in the global economy, generating great wealth, but they also contain about one-third of all the poor people on earth.

Over this course's 36 lectures, we will explore the reasons this major part of humanity has developed in its own distinctive ways over time. ∎

Earliest History of the Indian Subcontinent

I n order to understand the people living on the Indian subcontinent, it's important to start by exploring its environment: the land, the atmosphere, and the interactions between them. In this lecture, and the course overall, we'll see how this complex environment affected the culture and people of India, and how they altered that environment. After exploring the environment, this lecture will introduce some terminology that will be important for the rest of the course.

INDIA'S GEOGRAPHIC HISTORY

■ About 100 million years ago, the huge mass of rock and earth that we know as the southern part of Asia was then located at the earth's South Pole. It was next to Africa and Antarctica, and part of a huge supercontinent. Plate tectonics, or continental drift, has since helped it move to its current position.

■ The huge Indian tectonic plate is composed of a crust of solidified stone, some 20–60 miles thick, floating on the hot molten rock below. Gradually breaking away from the southern continent, this Indian plate moved northward across what is today the Indian Ocean.

■ By about 30 million years ago, this Indian plate began smashing into the larger Asian plate, forcing itself under and twisting in the process. Most of the major geological features of India today resulted from this impact and are still slowly changing.

■ One of the major effects of this plate tectonic movement has been the creation of various mountain ranges. Along India's north rise

the vast Himalayan mountains. These mountains are actually the southern edge of the Asian tectonic plate, which continues to lift up today as the Indian plate slides beneath it.

■ The vast weight of these mountains and the continued grinding of these two plates cause occasional earthquakes, often of great magnitude. India, Pakistan, and Nepal have all suffered severe earthquakes already this century.

■ Nepal and Tibet lie in this Himalayan Mountains region, with historical connections both to India and to China. But these mountains are so difficult to cross that there has been relatively little direct exchange between India and China even though the civilizations exist on either side of this same mountain range.

■ Because of the angle that the Indian plate smashed into Asia, the mountains in India's northeast are rugged but not as steep. This means that people from Southeast Asia, especially what is today Thailand and Burma or Myanmar, have interacted with people in India's northeast quite extensively over time.

The Khyber Pass

■ In India's northwest, the mountains are very rugged. But rivers have carved passes through them. The most famous is the Khyber Pass, which currently runs from Kabul in Afghanistan into Pakistan. This is a relatively narrow and twisting passage.

■ Many immigrants from Iran, Afghanistan, and central Asia have walked or ridden animals through the Khyber and other passes into India over the centuries, and much trade has also passed through them in each direction. But many invading armies, marching into India or out of it, have been decimated by the local people shooting down from the steep walls of the Khyber Pass, or halted by defending forts.

- However, over India's long history, most successful invaders have fought their way through the Khyber and other passes in the northwest. Once settled in north India, these conquerors have often prepared to defend their new kingdoms against the next set of invaders from the northwest. Blocking the Khyber Pass has been an important strategy for many rulers of India's northwest quarter.

INDIA AND THE SEA

- India has long coastlines, although relatively few secure natural harbors. People, ideas, and trade goods have moved back and forth across the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal for thousands of years.

- Most people who arrived by sea were sailors, merchants, holy men, and immigrants who settled in India. As a result, historically, Indian rulers rarely feared people arriving by sea. But then, in 1498, the Portuguese admiral Vasco da Gama discovered the direct sea passage around southern Africa and reached India.

- This began the long process of invasion by Europeans from the sea. Starting in the late 18th century, the British established and expanded their colonial rule, conquering inland from the coasts.

- The impact from the collision between the Indian and Asian tectonic plates also tilted India. The western edge of the Indian plate rose, while the eastern edge remained lower. Hence, running just inland along the western coast is a long mountain range called the Western Ghats.

- There is also a coastal mountain range along the east, but these Eastern Ghats are less imposing since that edge of the Indian plate did not rise up. In between the Western and Eastern Ghats is the central Indian upland called the Deccan Plateau.

- India also has internal mountain ranges, most running west to east. Over the long centuries, most of these internal mountains have eroded into rugged hills, but they are still difficult to cross.

■ Because of the tilt in the Indian plate and these internal mountain ranges, many of India's major rivers run from west to east across the subcontinent. Only two major rivers run differently: The Narmada River runs east to west along the northern edge of the Deccan upland, while the Indus River system drains the western plain southward, along the mountains now in Afghanistan.

■ All these mountains and rivers mean that there are four distinct macro-regions:
   ◆ A flat plain that runs across the north, surrounding the famous Ganges River.
   ◆ India's central upland, the dry and rugged Deccan Plateau.
   ◆ The vast Indus River, which runs from the Himalayas southward to the Indian Ocean, and waters an otherwise dry plain. This forms the core of Pakistan today.
   ◆ India's southeastern plain, today covered by wet rice paddies. This is the agriculturally rich part of India's peninsular tip.

■ Very rarely have these macro-regions ever been united under one single government. Instead, much like Western Europe, most of India's long history has seen many different rulers in each of its geographically defined macro-regions.

CLIMATE AND WEATHER PATTERNS

■ Out of the annual interaction between these land formations and the atmosphere comes India's dominant rainfall pattern: the monsoons. The term *monsoon* comes from the Arabic word for *season*, since for about four months continuously, the winds largely blow in the same direction.

■ This predictable wind pattern enabled seamen and merchants in sail-powered vessels to ride across the Indian Ocean from Arabia and east Africa to India during one season, and then ride the prevailing wind back in the other direction in the next season.

- There is no experience quite like the monsoon. Imagine hurricane-like torrents of rain, which pour down every day for months. Yet, that rain has always been vital for the entire Indian economy.

- As a result of continental drift, the Indian subcontinent now lies in the Northern Hemisphere, with the Tropic of Cancer running through its middle. Therefore, most of India tends to be quite hot throughout much of the year.

- But the very far northern part of India, lying in the Himalayas, ranges between cool and very cold, with some glaciers. Hence, the Indian subcontinent has an extremely wide climatic range.

- Another effect of India being in the Northern Hemisphere is that, starting during the spring, it heats up as the sun beats more directly on the land. Since the surrounding oceans do not heat up as quickly, the warmer air over the land rises up, drawing in winds from the southwest. These begin annually in June, and this southwest monsoon continues all summer.

- These southwest winds are heavily laden by moisture from the Indian Ocean, so when they hit the Western Ghats, they rise up, cool, and drop their moisture in the form of the intense monsoon rains. Since these heavy rains make the land amazingly productive, the coastal plain west of these mountains can support a rich agricultural economy and dense population. But often this rainfall is so voluminous that cities, towns, and villages flood.

- As the southwest monsoon continues beyond the Western Ghats, it loses much of its moisture. This means that the interior Deccan highland, even not even very far from the coast, is much dryer.

- As this southwest monsoon continues across the Bay of Bengal, it again picks up moisture and energy. This means that as it curves northward, diverted by the landmass of Southeast Asia, it often produces cyclones. These drop huge amounts of rainfall on the upper eastern coast, mostly in the region of Bengal (which is now half in India and half in Bangladesh).

- The southwest monsoon then continues up the Ganges plain, diverted by the looming Himalayas. As it moves westward, this monsoon gradually decreases in its rainfall, until little or none is left. There is consequently a gradual shift from wet rice to dry crops as you go west up the Ganges plain.

- By the autumn, the land has cooled enough that the southwest monsoon pattern dissipates and begins to reverse. The oceans are now relatively warmer than the land, so the northeast monsoon begins to blow. Cool winds come off the Himalayas, bringing frost to the upper Gangetic plain, but limited rainfall.

- As the northeast monsoon passes over the Bay of Bengal, however, it picks up moisture. Therefore, the southeastern region of the Indian peninsula receives much of its annual rain during the winter months.

NICHES AND DEMARCATIONS

■ Across India are many ecological niches. Each receives a different amount of rainfall and is often divided from the next area by mountains or rivers. Each also has its own specific ecosystem.

■ Within each of these regions, distinctive cultures have developed over time. As an indication, the people of the subcontinent today speak more than 24 major languages, with hundreds of dialects. Each region has had its own political history, often independent.

■ Regarding this course's terminology: The term *India* often refers to the entire subcontinent, and we'll use it that way quite often. But since 1947, this Indian subcontinent has been partitioned into separate nations: the Republic of India in addition to Pakistan. Pakistan initially had western and eastern wings; the latter seceded in 1971 to become Bangladesh. Hence, many scholars use the term *South Asia* to describe this region throughout time.

■ Further, the term *India* is in itself loaded with meaning. The derivation of the name India comes from the Indus River, implying that India is the land beyond the Indus. At first only outsiders used the name. The term *Hindu* also comes from this same term, again meaning the belief system of people who live beyond the Indus River. Early European explorers used the term *East Indies* for both South and Southeast Asia, in contrast to the *West Indies*, meaning the Caribbean.

■ Over most of history, the people living in South Asia did not identify themselves as Indian or Hindu, at least until relatively recently. Rather, each region of South Asia had its own identity. Many people still strongly consider themselves as part of that regional culture, with many regions having their own language.

■ For the rest of this course: When we learn about the perceptions held by people of the culture being studied, we will use the term *emic*. Of course, in a culture as diverse as that of India, there are always many different emic perspectives. In contrast, when we are looking from

the perspective of outsiders, we will refer to that as an *etic* viewpoint. Again, various outsiders have frequently asserted different interpretations of the same event or topic, so there is usually not one single etic explanation.

Suggested Reading

Gadgil and Guha, *This Fissured Land.*

Internet Indian History Sourcebook, http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/india/indiasbook.asp.

McDermott et al., eds, *Sources of Indian Traditions.*

Schwartzberg, *A Historical Atlas of South Asia*.

Migration and the Adivasi

India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh today are each amazingly diverse societies. A vast variety of people and cultures have come together over many centuries. Taking the long historical perspective, we can see how each new culture contributed. Broadly speaking, we can identify three broad origins for ancient South Asia: the original people, the urban-based culture of the Indus River, and the Sanskrit-speaking people who are best known by their sacred tradition of the Veda. This lecture is devoted to that first group: the earliest humans to settle in India and their descendants.

THE ADIVASI

- Today, over 100 million men and women in India call themselves *Adivasi*, meaning "aboriginal." This is the largest number of aboriginal people in any country around the globe today.

- But the term *Adivasi* is controversial in India. Advocates for the rights of forest dwellers coined this word in the 1930s. The name helps them claim descent from the original inhabitants of India, who arrived tens of thousands of years earlier.

- As the descendants of the indigenous people, they argue, they have moral and legal property rights over all the land that was later taken from them by outsiders. But the government of India does not admit that these people's ancestors were in India before anyone else. The government officially uses the term *tribal*, which describes an isolated, forest-dwelling way of life and often carries a pejorative connotation.

- Out of respect for the wishes of many of India's forest-dwelling communities, this course will identify them collectively as Adivasi. But not all forest-dwellers think of themselves only as Adivasi, so the

course will also use the names of individual communities, like the Kharia, when they are discussed specifically.

- About 30,000 years ago, Adivasis were 100 percent of people living in India. Today, those officially classed as Adivasis compose only 8.6 percent of India's total population. This dramatic shift resulted from various powerful historical forces and processes. Many of these are still active today.

APPRECIATING THE ADIVASI

- Recovering and appreciating any kind of historical evidence about the earliest people who entered India and their descendants presents challenges. Adivasi languages had no script until very recently (and some to this day don't have one). Therefore, they produced no written historical records.

- Instead, much of our knowledge of the past of these communities comes from the Adivasis' own oral cultural traditions, especially about their religious beliefs. Taking just one out of many examples of such Adivasi origin accounts, we can look at how the Kharia

community recounts the creation of the world, including plants, animals, and the Kharia themselves.

■ The Kharia are only one of the hundreds of distinct Adivasi communities who still live in the forested hills of central India. One account of their creation story was recorded and translated from the Kharia language by two Indian anthropologists, R. C. and S. C. Roy, who listened to the Kharia during the early 20th century.

■ The account tells of the Kharia god Ponomosor, who created the earth, then two clay images, one male and one female. These grew into the first people, who had offspring themselves. They at first lived on "wild fruits and roots," but after prayer, the god provided food for them by creating birds.

■ But, this origin account continues, the Kharia people three times displeased the god, so he tried to exterminate them with a flood, a rain of fire, and then another flood. Each time, only one family of Kharia survived. The final time, the only survivors were "one old Kharia and his nine sons [and their wives, who had taken] shelter in a cave."

■ After they emerged from the cave, the sons first killed a deer and split it into nine pieces among themselves, then set off in search of water. Each had "an entirely different experience, for each had seen a different animal or object. … The old man when he heard their narratives, decided that each of his nine sons should adopt for his respective clan the name of the object he found." This is an explanation by the Kharia of their origin and the reason they have nine clans today.

■ Each Adivasi community has one or more such oral origin histories. Most highlight their particular community's shared descent from the same ancestral father and mother.

Etic History

■ Using other kinds of evidence, in contrast, produces a different account of the origins of the Adivasis. This is called *etic* history, meaning from outside of the culture being studied.

■ Anthropologists and historians are using recent scientific technologies like DNA testing and linguistic analysis to reconstruct the history of India's earliest immigrants and their relationships to today's Adivasis.

■ Genetic and linguistic analysis strongly shows that most Adivasi communities are descended from the very earliest *Homo sapiens*. They began expanding out of Africa about 60,000 to 70,000 years ago. Eventually, some of their descendants entered India. We know there have been human communities there for at least 30,000 years, and perhaps far longer.

■ Further, other groups continued to immigrate into India, both from the northwest and also from the northeast, leading to diverse and intermixed Adivasi cultures.

Adivasi Communities

■ Adivasi communities in India found ecological niches. Various communities developed locally specific hunting, fishing, and gathering economies. Each community also developed a distinct identity; for example, local dyes enabled particular coloring of clothing, and house designs reflected local environmental conditions.

■ Much of India was originally heavily forested. But early Adivasi tools did not enable the uprooting of large trees. Most Adivasi communities developed a type of farming which many of them today call *jhum*, but what outsiders call *swidden agriculture*, *shifting agriculture*, or, more negatively, *slash-and-burn agriculture*.

- This means that a community will cut down and burn off the low undergrowth. Using that ash as fertilizer, they plant useful crops in among the surviving large trees. When, after a few years, the soil there is exhausted, they shift to another region, again cutting and burning the undergrowth and farming before having to move on again.

- Because Adivasi communities moved so often, most could not accumulate much material wealth. As a result, most Adivasi groups were not stratified, except by age and gender.

- Elders held, and still hold, great respect. Women and men specialized in different, complementary productive activities. Women often did more domestic labor like weaving, cooking, and gathering forest products, while men often went on extended hunting or raiding expeditions, including taking cattle from the surrounding communities.

Young people from an Adivasi tribe

Other Groups Move In

- Over many centuries, other groups migrated into India, settled there, and cleared lands that had been forests, reducing the overall area available for Adivasis. Many Adivasis and their descendants survived by mixing into the surrounding society.

- Often, it was the most able and enterprising young men who left to find even low-wage manual labor on nearby or distant farms, or in towns and cities as these developed over the last 3,000 years in India. But in this process, they left behind much of their separate identity and cultural traditions in order to assimilate.

- Adivasi and non-Adivasi men and women intermarried. Most of their descendants do not today identify themselves, and are not identified by others, as Adivasi, despite their genetic heritage.

- The overall trend, however, was for these other cultures to push many of the remaining Adivasi communities to the margins, out of the most productive agricultural lands, and back into the hills and the remaining forests. According to the last official Indian census, about 90 percent of Adivasis live in rural areas, often in the most rugged and agriculturally unproductive forestland.

- With less land available, the migration cycles of swidden agriculture had to be reduced, meaning that the land didn't have time to recover and therefore produced only meager crops. As a result of these broad historical forces, Adivasis have long been a particularly impoverished population.

- As India's invaders developed kingdoms or more settled communities, their rulers often tried to control the forest dwellers, demanding taxes and obedience. When conflict erupted, it was often the better armed and more numerous outsiders who drove roads through forests, or cut or burned them down, or forced away the forest communities into less productive lands.

- Adivasis have also long come under pressure to adopt the religious traditions brought to them by outsiders, including Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam.

- These broad processes continue down to the present. In India, about 90 percent of the forests have been cut down or deeply degraded; only about 3 percent are virgin forests that were never cleared. Due to natural and man-made causes, about 40 percent of India's total area is degraded forest or wasteland, not hospitable for either Adivasis or other people. This has put increasing pressure on Adivasis and their distinctive way of life.

- Over many decades, the government's forest department has tried to assert its authority over many of the communities still living in the forests, including by banning forest fires by Adivasis who were practicing their customary jhum.

- But relations between Adivasis and outsiders are not necessarily competitive or hostile. Many Adivasi communities have long provided forest produce, including plants, animals, wood, and handicrafts, to the surrounding farming communities.

ADIVASIS AND THE GOVERNMENT

- Both the British colonial government and also the independent government of India since 1947 recognized that Adivasis are among the least well off of India's communities. Seeking either to protect or advance Adivasi cultures, both governments have implemented what have often proven to be conflicting policies and programs.

- One goal has been to preserve Adivasi culture, particularly by protecting it against intrusions of outsiders or major changes in lifestyle. This has led to efforts designed to isolate Adivasis from integration into the surrounding economy and to recognize the special status of each individual Adivasi community.

- On the other hand, a different set of government policies have been directed at improving the health, education, quality of life, and participation in the larger society by Adivasis, often at the cost of losing their distinctive culture and way of life.

Adivasis Today

- Today, about half of all the official Adivasis live in a band stretching across the rugged and still somewhat forested lands of central India. Adivasi activists here were successful in their demand for separate provincial governments, leading to the creation in the year 2000 of two new provinces: Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, where the Adivasi majorities can elect people who look after their special interests.

- Most of the other half of India's Adivasis live in the northeast, which is also a mountainous and forested region. Here, the distinct identities of various Adivasi communities eventually led to the creation of seven provinces. Some Adivasi activists are still demanding further separate provinces that recognize and empower their individual ethnic group with yet more state governments of their own.

- Timber, coal, hydroelectric energy, and other valuable resources are located in the mountainous or hilly lands where Adivasis have long lived. This has meant that outsiders have often exploited or fought with them.

- Because many Adivasis today live near fast-flowing rivers, they are often dislocated by the construction of major dams. Many Adivasi and allied outsider human rights advocates have organized protests against the displacement of Adivasis by such development projects.

- Indeed, many Adivasi regions are today the sites of conflict, even violent Maoist-style guerilla revolution against the surrounding society and the Indian government. A map of ongoing insurgencies,

particularly left-wing guerilla conflicts, would feature the same areas where Adivasi communities concentrate: the rugged and still somewhat forested lands of central India, and India's mountainous and forested northeast.

SUGGESTED READING

Baviskar, *In the Belly of the River.*

Mohanty, *Paraja.*

Rath, ed., *Tribal Development in India.*

Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus River civilization, an urban-based society, was as technologically developed as any in the entire ancient world of its day, roughly 2600 B.C.E to 1900 B.C.E. Indeed, the Indus River civilization covered a larger territory than its much more famous and roughly contemporary ancient cultures, including those along the Nile in Egypt, between the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, and along the Yellow River in China. After 700 years of flourishing, the Indus civilization declined and then dissipated. Its people and cultures and their descendants evidently spread across the Indian subcontinent, where they form major, but often unacknowledged, parts of today's society.

THE INDUS PEOPLE

- The people of the Indus civilization dispersed nearly four thousand years ago. They left fascinating but also tantalizingly incomplete evidence about themselves and their achievements.

- By around 2600 B.C.E, people living along the lower Indus River in western India had already developed extensive and intensive settled agriculture along with livestock husbandry.

- These early Indus communities don't seem to have used swidden agriculture, so they weren't Adivasis. But they may have originally developed from once-Adivasi communities who innovated new forms of agriculture and pastoralism that set them on the path to a more complex and urban-based economy and society.

- The Indus population may also have included immigrants from the Iranian plateau, with some who may have come from elsewhere in

the Persian Gulf region or from Central Asia. The few skeletons that have survived suggest a physically diverse population.

- As the economy continued to expand, these cities came together into a well-organized, multi-city society. But, after about 700 years, this civilization declined and dispersed. For dozens of centuries, knowledge of this Indus civilization was lost as its abandoned cities decayed into ruins and were buried under yards of wind-blown earth.

- Then, starting in the 1920s, British and Indian archaeologists began to explore the intriguing mounds of rubble in the lower Indus plain. They discovered that beneath the rubble were the buried remnants of entire cities.

- By now, several large cities have been largely unearthed. One major city, called Dholavira, is now in the Republic of India, along the coast. Two other cities, the largest found so far, are now in Pakistan; we call them Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. In addition, many other smaller towns and other sites have been found throughout the region, which extends about a thousand miles up the Indus River plain.
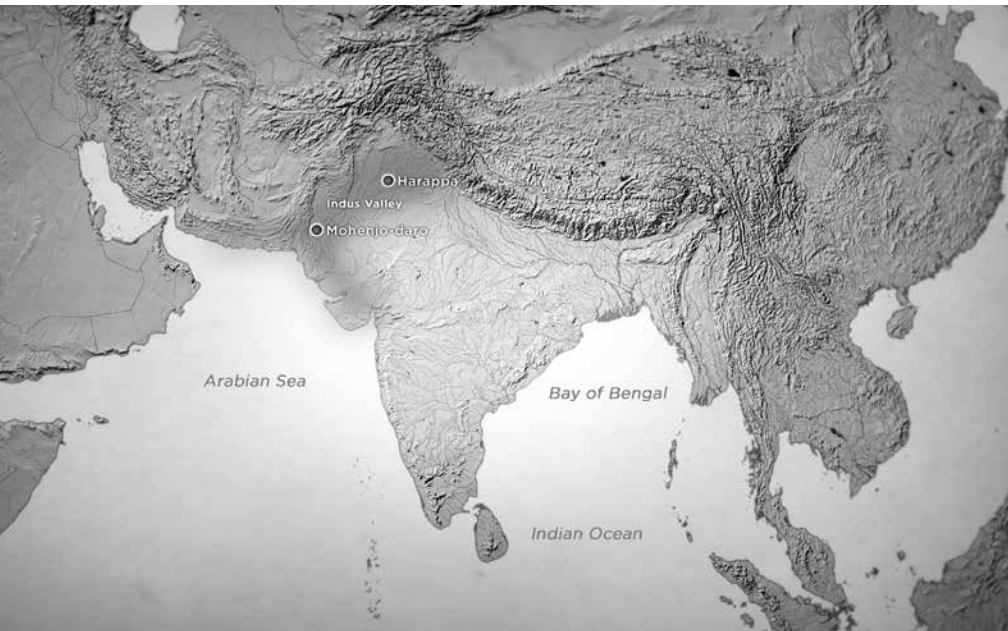
- As archaeologists dug deeper into the ruins, they found what had been amazingly organized cities, with surrounding walls, straight streets, an extensive system of sanitation, substantial houses, and what seem to be large public buildings like assembly halls, grain-storage warehouses, and bathhouses.

- The city walls, like the houses and other buildings, were of fired bricks carefully built up high. Unlike cities in other civilizations, the walls of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa were evidently not designed mainly for defense against major military attacks. But these walls would prevent people, especially those laden with grain or other goods, from entering or leaving except through the few city gateways. In this way, leaders could collect taxes from people entering or leaving the city, or at least keep track of them.

- Straight main streets show a high level of organization. These cities also had elaborate sanitation systems, with large and watertight sewage drains leading from toilets and bathing rooms inside houses into collective channels beneath the streets leading into soak pits.

- In the larger two-story houses that have been excavated, the walls facing the street are blank, with relatively narrow doorways leading into a separate entryway. This indicates that people wanted a well-defined private space within.

- While some of the cities have impressive buildings near their center, none have the vast palaces or temples that would indicate a powerful king or priesthood characteristic of other contemporary civilizations.

Indus Writing and Artifacts

- Archaeologists have found thousands of stone seals with animals carved on them, as well as clear writing, which is especially exciting. Some scholars have tried to find similarities or common origins between the Indus writing system and that of the nearest other civilization, the Mesopotamian.

Mohenjo-daro ruins

- But any apparently similar features might have come instead from independent invention, when people from each of the two civilizations came up with similar representations for physical objects that they saw. Unlike those of the contemporary Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Chinese civilizations, the Indus form of writing has not yet been deciphered.

- The many animals on these seals can also provide insights into the Indus culture and natural environment. Some of the animals are direct representations of actual creatures, including humped bulls, so we can assume that these were animals that the Indus people had as livestock.

- Animals like rhinoceros seem to have been very common locally, while others, like the elephant, seem to have been famously rare. But many images are unrealistic combinations of several natural animals, such as a tiger's stripes on an animal with bull's horns.

■ A few highly refined busts and other sculptures have also been found, including that of a man who many take to be a confident leader, perhaps of Iranian or Central Asian ethnic origin. Another striking object is the thin graceful figure of a young woman, perhaps in a dancing pose. But lacking any indigenous explanation or context, we can only speculate about the intent and purpose of these works of art.

Indus valley animal depiction

■ Less polished but more frequently found are simpler clay images of men and women. Some of these images seem to have features of both men and women. They were evidently made in two parts, the upper and lower, separately and then joined in the middle.

■ Further, there are some models of wheeled carts, evidently pulled by domesticated animals. These may have been children's toys. But they suggest the technology used by this civilization, especially for moving the large volume of grain from the surrounding villages to the city, where it was evidently stored in large granaries.

■ A few graveyards have also been discovered. In these graves, men, women, and children were carefully interred, often with food and some other simple grave goods. This suggests that they were being honored, and probably provisioned for an afterlife.

■ We can be sure that the Indus people traded up and down the Persian Gulf with parts of the Mesopotamian civilization. Burial mounds in Bahrain, for example, contain lapis lazuli and other stone artifacts

that can be traced using chemistry to quarries in the mountains surrounding the Indus civilization.

THE DECLINE

- It is clear that the Indus cities did not suffer a sudden violent end, but rather a gradual decline and emigration of its population, who carried their culture with them. One contributing factor seems to have been regional climate change. Most of the land where the Indus civilization stood is now dry and desiccated, incapable of sustaining the high level of agriculture necessary for the urban-based economy we know was once there.

- Some of this may have been a natural process. For example, the Indus River and its branches have has long since shifted their course away from where it was during the period of the Indus culture. There is some evidence that a river, sometimes later identified as the Ghaggar-Hakra or the Saraswati, silted or dried up. With less access to river-based trade, the commercial economy would also decline.

- But there may have been more dramatic natural factors as work as well. A series of massive floods down the Indus River may have disrupted the economy and society, leading to a decline.

- Another possible explanation comes from geological evidence that the region where the Indus and other rivers debouched into the sea was pushed up by the same forces that moved the entire Indian tectonic plate into Asia. This meant that these rivers backed up, first flooding the lands upstream and then diverting to another course to the sea.

- Other possible contributing causes were human made. A vast amount of wood would have been needed to fire the huge number of bricks that this culture used to build walls and houses. More wood was needed to make artifacts and cook food.

- It's possible that the culture itself deforested the surrounding areas, reaching out ever farther over time as local forests disappeared but the need for wood increased. Such deforestation would have increased soil erosion as well as desiccation of the environment, making this a possible very early example of a human-made environmental disaster.

Migration Patterns

- As the economy evidently declined, the people living in this region would have emigrated to more productive lands. Some probably migrated southeastward and eastward to regions where their farming methods would have thrived. We can use linguistic and other cultural evidence to support these broad migration patterns.

- In south India today, there are four major languages (and many smaller ones) that are collectively known to linguists as the *Dravidian language family*. These are closely related to each other but not to any other known language except one smaller Dravidian language, Brahui. That language's speakers today are located in the hilly upland area of today's Pakistani province of Baluchistan, just northwest of where the Indus civilization was based.

- A plausible theory is that most of the Indus people migrated to the southeast, but some remained nearby. In this way, the Indus language would survive, although linguists have not yet proven this origin.

- Many scholars see likely ancestral connections between the large majority of the men and women now living in north India and the people who lived in the Indus civilization. Their farming skills and knowledge of mathematics and civil engineering would have come with them as they migrated eastward.

Difficulties

- As we've briefly seen in this lecture, the Indus civilization is fascinating yet also frustratingly difficult to understand. We would

like to do more archaeological excavation. But some of the prime areas are in politically troubled parts of Pakistan, where it may be dangerous to dig.

- Also, there are towns right on top of some areas, including above parts of Indus cities that we already know about. We can't displace those people and tear down their homes and businesses in order to dig beneath them.

- Human agricultural irrigation as well as rainfall continue to crumble the bricks that remain from some of these cities, making preserving what has been unearthed difficult, and exploring further even harder.

- Finally, the ancient and remarkable nature of the Indus culture makes it a continuing political issue today. It hasn't received the same level of international attention as have its contemporary Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Chinese civilizations, since the connection between the ancient Indus people and the current people of Pakistan and India today are not as evident.

Suggested Reading

Harappa.com.

Lahiri, *Finding Forgotten Cities.*

Parpola, *Roots of Hinduism.*

Indo-European Vedic Culture

Today, men and women legally identified as Hindu total about a billion people. Hinduism contains a broad range of religious traditions with a wide variety of beliefs and practices that developed and changed over many centuries. Hindus also include people of many different biological ancestries. In order to understand the origins of Hinduism, in this lecture we will go back to its ancient foundations. Then, we'll follow the fascinating and complex historical development of both the religion and of the communities of diverse people collectively known as Hindus.

THE VEDAS

- This lecture will focus on the people of the Vedas, a body of sacred texts whose name means "that which is known." People have been memorizing and reciting these texts virtually unchanged for 3,000 years. This is the longest continuously used body of sacred texts in human history.

- Using the Vedas and other sources, we'll try to reconstruct the history of the clans that collectively identified themselves with the Vedas. Through interactions with the other two sources for ancient Indian cultures, these people evolved a model for society that spread unevenly across the subcontinent.

- In looking closely at the Vedic texts themselves, we should also keep in mind that they are still sacred for many believing Hindus today. As such, the Vedas as a whole are considered by many in the Hindu community to be uncreated truth, the entire universe in the form of sound. The collection of texts that comprise the Vedas hold status as *Sruti*, "knowledge from hearing."

- For centuries, the Vedas remained an oral tradition. Because of its sacredness, these sounds were preserved precisely, with every syllable intact. More than a hundred generations of students down to the present day have devoted themselves to memorizing and internalizing parts of the Vedas.

- Further, today, many Hindus believe passionately that they are the people of India, divinely endowed with that land. Likewise, they believe the Vedas have eternally been Indian and have preserved knowledge of an ancient, ideal Indian society with a morality, technology, and other achievements that far surpassed any other culture, even those of the 21st century.

- Today, Hindus comprise more than 80 percent of the people in the Republic of India. The political party currently in office represents a movement dedicated to Hindutva, or "Hindu-ness," as the essence of the Indian nation. The Vedas, from the emic perspective, are thus eternally beyond human historical time.

- Scholars from outside of the Hindu tradition, and also many within it, however, often adopt an etic perspective. This locates the Vedas as part of human history and the product of people.

- Etic linguists calculate the speed with which the language of the Vedas evolved. Such scholars can give a rough date to each Vedic poem, and put each into an historical sequence. Other scholars plot geographically the regions and animals mentioned in each Vedic text. Most etic scholars assert that the earliest Vedic hymns date back to around 1500 B.C.E, while some Vedic texts continued to be composed over the following 10-century-long period.

COLLECTIONS WITHIN THE VEDAS

- Within the Vedas as a whole, there are several major collections. The first of these is the Rig Veda, which contains 1,028 poetic hymns totaling some 10,600 verses. Each poem addresses and praises one
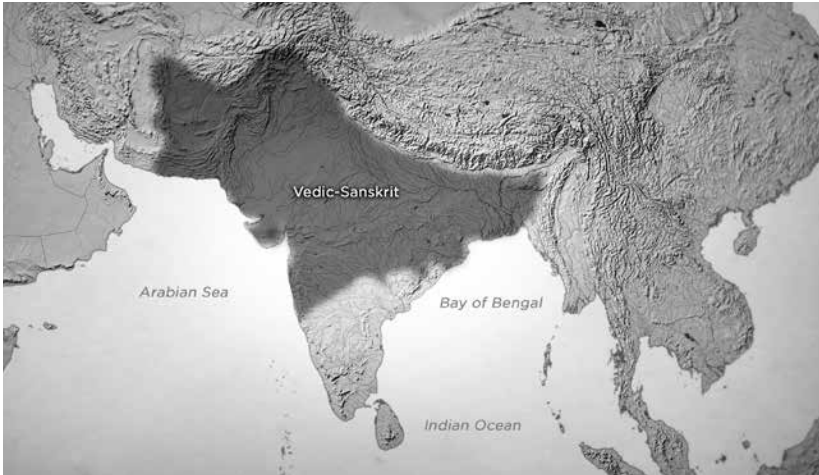
or more divine beings. They are arranged into 10 books, with the middle six known as the family books, since each was preserved by a particular clan. For etic scholars, these six appear to be the oldest, since their language is earliest and the lifestyle they describe is that of related clans migrating into northwestern India.

- Later books, composed around 1000 B.C.E according to etic scholars, are the products of Vedic clans as they settled in north India and traded, contended, and mixed with the other communities already living there.

- In addition to the Rig Veda, there are other Vedic collections that highlight the rituals of sacrifice to divine beings, provide the rhythmic models for recitation of the hymns, and contain charms, spells, and medical guidance.

- The Brahmanas are detailed guidebooks for how to properly perform the elaborate Vedic rituals or teach other bodies of knowledge, including mathematics or astronomy. According to etic scholars,

these seem to date from the period of roughly 1200 to 600 B.C.E, overlapping but generally later than the Rig Veda.

■ Then, dating from about 900 to 500 B.C.E, there are the Aranyakas and Upanishads, which are more philosophic texts concerning the largest issues about the nature of existence, including the universe and all its components.

■ Sruti uses an ancient language known as Vedic Sanskrit. Since the 18th century, etic linguists have identified Vedic Sanskrit as the oldest surviving language within the Indo-European language family. It likely originated somewhere in west-central Asia and then spread outward across Asia and into Europe.

CLANS AND COMMUNITIES

■ The Vedic texts include much detailed information about the clans that composed them as well as the other communities and cultures that they encountered. By looking closely at how the composers of the Vedic poems describe themselves, we can reconstruct their ways of life and beliefs.

■ The early Vedic poems largely describe herding clans called *jana*. These clans did not have much internal social differentiation, except that elders were honored and men and women tended to contribute in different ways to the community.

■ Clearly, some members of some clans devoted themselves to reciting devotional hymns in order to obtain the favor and gifts of the Vedic gods. Most Vedic poems end with a request, like the defeat of enemies, sunlight, protection from darkness, rain, fertility of the clan's livestock and its married couples, the strength of a bull, or the transforming power of fire.

■ As the power of these Vedic hymns grew, since they apparently produced the desired result, the reciting poets preserved them and

Reading of an ancient Hindu text

passed them on to students. The early Rig Veda thus seems to show the specialization of some men or families as priests with expertise in rituals. The Vedic deity Varuna was an early model of the moral and religious leader among the gods, and perhaps also a model for these emerging human priests as well.

- Other poems show how these migrating Vedic clans traveled by wagons and carts, sometimes drawn by oxen. They evidently had goats, donkeys, and dogs, some trained to hunt boar. Cattle were especially highly valued.

- The Vedic cultures had also mastered horses. They seem to have used these horses to pull three-wheeled chariots, especially when charging into battle. The Vedas describe halters and harnesses for these chariot horses, but not horseshoes or stirrups or saddles, so they may not as often have ridden on horseback.

- Some Vedic clans and individuals seem to have specialized in protecting the clan and in capturing the cattle and resources of others. The model for human warriors was the fierce, black-bearded god Indra, the martial leader of all the Vedic divinities.

- The authors of some Rig Vedic hymns call upon Indra to guide them to victory against other clans of Arya, meaning "the noble people," which is how the Vedic clans often refer to themselves. This suggests intra-clan conflicts, not unusual among people anywhere in the world.

- The Rig Veda also describes Indra as the war leader of the group of gods called the Deva, the "shining ones." In the early Rig Vedic hymns, another group of divinities were the Asura, sometimes described as the relatives of the Deva, evidently their elder brothers or even father. But in the later Rig Vedic hymns, the Asura became enemies of the Deva.

- The Asuras eventually became evil demons whom Indra strips of their powers and supporters, then defeats. Significantly, this apparently shows us the growing human conflict between the Indo-European clans that migrated into India and those clans that migrated into Iran.

- As the Zoroastrian religion developed in Iran, its divinities were called the Ahura, while the demons were called the Daeva. Thus, as these two cultures separated and conflicted, their religious traditions did as well. Vedic gods, Devas, became Iranian demons and Iranian gods became Vedic demons, Asuras. As one Rig Vedic poem states, "From the high plain they went apart in opposite directions."

Later Society

- The later Vedic poems indicate that, as the society settled and developed trade, it was becoming more complex. These poems describe peaceful villages, surrounded by fields, soothed by the lowing of well-fed domesticated cattle.

- Some Vedic poems mention musical instruments, including flutes, lutes, harps, and drums. The poems also describe people's problems: One poem is an evocative lament by a man addicted to gambling with dice, while in several hymns a woman laments being a co-wife, living in rivalry with other wives and striving to hold the affections of their shared husband.

- Ideas emerged that would remain strong currents in later Indian society. Generally, women seem to have been able to marry into a higher social class, a process known to etic anthropologists as *hypergamy*. In Vedic poems, when mortal women married divine males, these hypergamous marriages customarily succeeded. But when goddesses or other divine females married mortal men, the wife often became dissatisfied and left her human husband behind.

- Both linguistic and genetic evidence indicates that the main settlement area of the Vedic communities was across north India, especially in the Ganges plain. Over the centuries, they settled in different ecological niches and developed their own distinct cultures, including cuisine and language. The major languages in northern India are all daughter tongues of Sanskrit. But the people who speak these distinct, regionally based languages, and their thousands of local dialects, seem mostly to be biological descendants of all three sources: Vedic, Indus, and Adivasi.

- In contrast, the four major languages of South India are not part of the Indo-European language family, and thus are not derived from Sanskrit. This suggests that the descendants of Vedic communities did not migrate as much into that region. And those who did either remained a small but distinctive minority, often preserving Sanskrit, or else merged into the local communities.

Suggested Reading

Bryant and Patton, eds., *The Indo-Aryan Controversy.*

Jamison and Brereton, tr., *Rigveda.*

O'Flaherty, tr., *The Rig Veda, an Anthology.*

Lecture 5

Caste: Varna and Jati

T he caste system is probably the most distinctive feature of Indian society. Outsiders have understood it in their own ways, and Indian traditionalists and reformers have continually debated the inequalities it represents. So, the various beliefs and practices now associated with the term *caste* have long and complex histories. We should consider some of the earliest models from ancient Indian society that may reveal some of the origins of what twenty centuries later was called the caste system by Europeans.

CASTE

- The word *caste*, or *casta*, is Portuguese. When Vasco da Gama discovered how to sail from Europe around southern Africa and reached India in 1498, he tried to understand Indian society in his own terms. Vasco da Gama and his Portuguese successors tried to describe the many hierarchically ranked social groups they encountered when they entered India's ports.

- The Portuguese term *casta* means "breed," as in a breed of horses or a breed of cattle. While this term stuck as *caste*, and is still widely in use today, it did not accurately describe either Indian social models or actual social practice.

- In order to see the emic origins of this model—that is, the earliest Indian explanations of its origins—we should turn to a close reading of the one sacred Vedic hymn that explains the creation of the four orders of human beings, as part of the origin of the cosmos.

- As analyzed by etic scholars, the earliest of the Vedas revealed clans who were herders with little internal social differentiation. Some

individuals and families seem to have specialized in preserving and reciting the cosmic knowledge contained in the Vedic hymns and in performing the rituals that gained the favor and gifts from the gods. Over time, these Vedic ritual specialists claimed more power for themselves.

■ The concept of the sacrifice stood central to the creation of the universe, including the creation of human beings. Since these priests possessed the Veda and performed sacrifices, when we look at Vedic poems we are usually seeing things from the priests' perspective.

■ One late Rig Vedic hymn, the often-cited book 10, hymn 90, proclaims how the gods themselves served as priests in the primal sacrifice that created the entire universe. This text describes a cosmic man, whom the gods sacrificed. During the sacrifice, everything in the universe emerged: the Veda, the seasons, all animals, and humans as well.

■ This hymn then goes on to describe how the respective parts of the cosmic man—his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet—each became an order of humans.
   ◆ Created from his mouth were Brahmins, the ritual specialists who spoke the Veda and ritually consumed the food that fed the gods and ancestors.
   ◆ From the arms of the cosmic man came the rulers known as the *Rajya* and later *Kshatriya*.
   ◆ From the thighs of the Cosmic Man came the rest of the Vedic people, the Vaishya.
   ◆ From his feet came the Shudra, who were to serve the other orders.

■ This one late Vedic hymn thus evidently shows how an emerging social order, the Brahmins, perceived the origins of humans in a way that legitimated their own status at the highest level.

■ Since all people classed as human came from the same cosmic man, all are parts of the same entity. Nevertheless, the hymn shows a
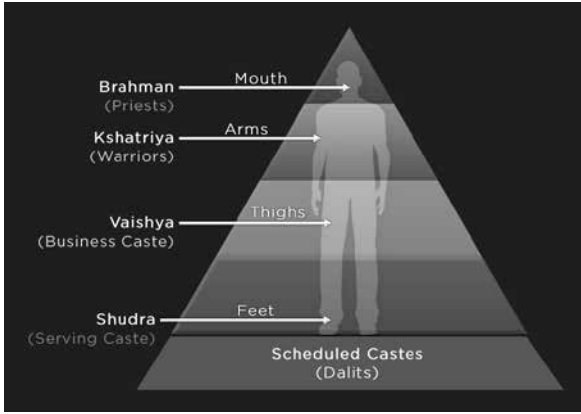
ranking of the four social orders, later known as *varna*, literally meaning "ritual color." Brahmins were associated with white, Kshatriyas with red, Vaishyas with green, and Shudra with blue or blue-black.

■ The top three varnas would contain only about 20 percent of the population. In contrast, people classed as Shudras comprised more than half of the population. The remaining quarter of the population did not have a varna. Hence, they were often throughout history called the *fifth order*, or *outcastes*, or *untouchables*. This non-varna group also included most Adivasis.

The Jatis

■ During the same late Vedic period that Brahmins were conceptualizing varnas, social and cultural forces were also creating more localized social groups, known as *jati*. The core concept of a jati was that people were born into this social group with an inherited, specific *dharma*, meaning "code for conduct." Broadly, this birth group could be any social category—for example, women and men are spoken of as separate jatis.

- The most widespread use of the term jati referred to people with the same traditional occupation, like weavers, goldsmiths, herders, warriors, or professional priests.

- Compared to the system of varna, where the groups were huge in number, the system of jatis was more relevant to everyday life. Not all members of a jati, however, actually earned their living from that traditional occupation.

- Marriages generally took place within jatis. Each jati had a specific diet, sometimes vegetarian or with a restriction on consumable meats. On ritual occasions, the members of a jati would openly dine together, signifying their shared identity.

- Anthropologists today identify between 10,000 and 20,000 jatis (depending on how these jatis are defined). While the current median size of a jati is between 5,000 and 15,000 people, they range in size from a few hundred to millions.

The Brahmins

- While Brahmins were all part of one varna, they also diverged into different ways of life, which became distinct jatis. Brahmins who were less engaged in the world tended to rank higher in ritual terms.

- Some Brahmins were especially revered. Receiving gifts of land, cattle, and other wealth from respectful rulers and merchants, these Brahmins could devote themselves to reciting the Veda and performing its ritual sacrifices within their homes.

- Other Brahmins withdrew from society in order to pursue higher forms of spiritual and mystical knowledge. Some of these took on ascetic practices to control their desires and liberate themselves from their physical bodies and from the material world.

- Some late Vedic hymns celebrate those long-haired ascetics who relinquished society and wandered homelessly, without desire, seeking unity with the divine. The Aranyakas and Upanishads—the "forest" and "esoteric" books, respectively—emerged largely from this path, as thinkers and philosophers considered the nature of the self, Atman, and its relationship to the universe as a whole, called Brahman. They are part of *Vedanta*, or "the end or goal of the Veda."

- Yet other Brahmins worked as professional priests, performing Vedic ritual sacrifices for patrons. The late Vedas show numerous specialties emerging among priests, some pouring the sacrifice into the fire, others as expert chanters of the Veda, and still others as the supervising conductor of the ritual. Professional priests necessarily were obliged to serve others in society, including many non-Brahmins.

The Kshatriyas

- As with the Brahmins, many different jatis developed among the Kshatriyas. These jatis were often called *Rajputs*, literally meaning the "sons of kings or princes." Such warrior clans led their followers, or *jana*, to occupy and control territories.

- In the early Vedic period, some men rose to become war leaders, but did not actually rule. In the late Vedic period, hereditary *rajas*, or kings, gradually emerged as rulers of distinct kingdoms known as *janapada*.

- Late Vedic hymns describe a royal consecration rite, or *rajasuya*. Among the grandest such rites was the Ashvamedha, in which Brahmin priests sanctified a special horse to represent the king. Then, the horse was let loose to roam symbolically throughout the universe.

- In mundane terms, the horse was physically directed to move only through that raja's own kingdom, or, more ambitiously, to enter a neighboring kingdom. Should that neighboring raja oppose the passage of the sacred horse, their armies would clash. If defeated, the neighboring raja would have to accept subordinate status to the

conquering king. At the end of a year, the horse returned to his king's capital, so that its sacred power could be ritually transferred to him.

■ When we look at textual and linguistic evidence from the late Vedic period, the centuries before and after 500 B.C.E, we can count up 600–700 janapadas across north India, centering on the Gangetic plain but extending beyond that as well.

NETWORKS

■ Over time, a network of towns and one or more cities developed. Communities began to develop a relationship to that particular place. Each place contained a particular mix of varnas and jatis. Each developed its own cultural identity, with a language or dialect distinguishing its inhabitants from those of the neighboring janapadas.

■ Political and commercial links within each janapada were also strong. Some janapadas evidently had a more powerful ruling raja, who had territorial authority. Others were led by a council of men representing the leading clans within that kingdom, with the raja as the chairman.

■ The development of the economy also strengthened mercantile groups. Trade often extended beyond the kingdom's boundaries. We begin to see money in the form of actual silver or copper coins appearing from about the 6th century B.C.E. Such an even partially monetized economy enabled commerce to flourish as never before.

■ To manage particular kinds of production and commerce, merchants developed *shrini*, or trade guilds. These seem to have coordinated the prices charged and paid by its members, leading to their cooperation rather than competition.

■ To carry grain, hand-manufactured products, and other goods, jatis of transporters and mobile traders emerged. Often such transporters loaded their cargo on the backs of bullocks and other cattle, which meant that they were not dependent on smooth roads as carts or

wagons would be. Given the torrential monsoon rains that bring floods every year, maintaining roads has always been a major issue in India. Furthermore, many rulers did not see long-distance road building and repair as part of their obligation.

- Many people were not systematically integrated into the economy. There were still many Adivasi living in the forests, who rarely paid taxes and periodically emerged to raid, as well as trade with, the settled farmers nearby.

- Sometimes these Adivasi groups became associated or integrated with the surrounding society of settled agriculturalists. They then functioned as low-ranked jatis.

- As various janapadas developed into kingdoms, especially in north India, they produced accounts of fabled warriors and kings. Starting around the 5th century B.C.E, these accounts were gradually collected into extended epics by bards, who were often Brahmin courtiers.

Suggested Reading

Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age.*

Jaffrelot, *Religion, Caste and Politics in India.*

Mines, *Caste in India.*

Lecture 6

Epic Literature: Ramayana

The epic poem Ramayana recounts the life of Rama, the perfect prince, and his efforts to liberate his faithful wife, Sita, from her demon abductor. In this lecture, we'll start with an examination of the Ramayana as the premier example of Kavya, a leading Sanskrit poetic genre. We'll note its differences and similarities with classical Greek and Latin epics and also today's ideas about history writing. As we briefly recount the narrative of the life of Rama, we'll discuss what we, as etic historians, can learn about the political, social, and cultural world the Ramayana describes. We'll end by looking at how people have used the Ramayana over time.

WESTERN COMPARISONS

■ In its genre and scope, the Ramayana is often compared by Western readers with Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Each is a work of literature, but each also conveys the history of a divinely descended man. Homer's Odysseus has as an ancestor the Greek messenger god, Hermes. Aeneas, Virgil tells us, is the son of the Roman goddess Venus. And Rama, according to many tellers of his life, is an *avatara*, or birth on earth in human form, of the god Vishnu. Each of these massive poems also tells us much about their authors' respective cultural and social worlds, although in differing ways.

■ One repeated criticism by outsiders has been that, unlike that of the West, Indian history writing does not have real biographies. But the Ramayana is the life story of Rama. In emic terms, Rama is the god Vishnu born on earth, but he is still born as a human, with human limitations and a life story. Further, one main purpose of Rama's birth and of the Ramayana itself is to teach moral behavior, or dharma, to people.

- Many Western biographers also use their subject's life to teach moral lessons, and many people read them in order to find role models to emulate, or avoid. In this sense, the life story of Rama compares to the genre of biography.

- The setting of the Ramayana includes some very real places and social formations. Recall that from about the 6th century B.C.E onward, especially in the north Indian Gangetic plain, hundreds of locally based janapadas, or "people's places," were developing into small kingdoms. One of these kingdoms was Koshala, with its capital of Ayodhya, where the Ramayana begins and ends.

- The Ramayana is mainly an elite text, primarily focused on rajas, their extended families, and their supporters, servants, and enemies, demonic and human.

AUTHORSHIP

- Emic and etic ideas about the complex authorship of the Ramayana differ in significant ways. A leading emic view credits the sage Valmiki with composing the most authoritative, original Sanskrit telling of the Ramayana. Valmiki was a reformed bandit who had achieved great merit through becoming a forest-dwelling ascetic. He gives Raja and Sita shelter near the beginning and end of the Ramayana, but is otherwise not very

Depiction of Rama with his family and Hanuman

involved in the story. Instead, as the Ramayana explains, Valmiki hears Rama's whole story from the demigod Narada and then is ordered by the creator god Brahma to retell it.

- The emic tradition credits Valmiki with inventing the specific 32-syllable poetic meter, called a *shloka*, in which the Ramayana and various other classical Sanskrit poems were recited.

- In etic terms, Valmiki could not have been the sole author of the Ramayana, given its sheer volume and many centuries of composition. In the current form of the Sanskrit Ramayana attributed to Valmiki, the Ramayana is 50,000 lines long, which is double Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* combined. Further, linguists and historians of religion analyze the text as the product of about 900 years of adding to, altering, and editing by many sequential authors — each of whom, however, gave Valmiki credit for the entire text.

Rama's Life

- Before Rama's birth, King Dasaratha rules the north Indian kingdom of Ayodhya. While both etic and emic scholars agree that this was a real place, the center for an expansive janapada, there is no etic evidence for this particular king.

- Brahmin priests perform a great sacrifice, producing four male heirs from three mothers for Dasaratha. The god Vishnu comes to earth as the four male heirs, but mostly as Rama. He does this to fight the demon king Ravana, who can't be harmed by gods or other demons, but can fall to a human.

- Sita, the embodiment of the goddess Lakshmi — that is, Vishnu's wife — is voluntarily born on earth in order to be Rama's bride.

- Eventually, King Dasaratha decides to abdicate and crown Rama as the new king. But political machinations lead to Rama's exile to the woods and the crowning of his brother Bharata. Bharata rules in

Rama's name, refusing to accept the throne. Rama's wife Sita joins him in the woods.

■ The pivotal point in the Ramayana comes when Ravana carries off Sita. Ravana does this out of his lascivious lust for her and also to get revenge for his mutilated sister, Surpanakha. The demons generally all act with excessive desire. While that is their dharma, they also receive punishments for acting on it.

■ In order to perform his dharma by recovering Sita, Rama recruits the local population of monkeys and bears as his allies. Most notable among these is Hanuman, a divinely descended monkey who becomes Rama's leading servant and a very popular deity in his own right.

■ In the great war between Rama's forces and Ravana's demon armies, many battles and perils are detailed, each with a moral lesson attached. For instance, at one point Rama's brother Lakshmana is gravely wounded and about to be carried off by the exultant demons. But Lakshmana remembers that he is Vishnu incarnate and therefore invulnerable. At the same time, however, Lakshmana must be human or he cannot aid in the killing of Ravana.

■ To revive Lakshmana, Hanuman is sent off to a distant mountain to bring back a special healing herb. On his arrival there, he realizes he isn't educated enough to identify the needed medical plant. He cleverly brings back the entire mountain, enabling the physicians at Lakshmana's side to select the herb and cure him. This emically shows how even uneducated servants can cleverly use their brute strength in devoted service of their elite masters.

■ With Hanuman's help, Rama tracks down and kills Ravana, then liberates Sita. When she rushes to rejoin Rama, however, he repudiates her as having become impure by living under Ravana's power. For some emic commentators, this shows that Rama has acted only out of moral duty, not his personal desire for Sita. Other analysts in India and the West critique Rama for blaming the victim,

Hanuman

Sita, for her unwilling abduction—just as so many abducted women have been blamed by their family and by society in so many cultures.

- Valmiki has Sita then enter a sacred fire to prove her purity to the world. Only then does Rama accept her back. To explain his action, Rama proclaims that he knew she was pure all along, but since less enlightened people might not understand that, he had her demonstrate her purity to them by this fiery test.

- After the return of Rama and Sita to Ayodhya, they rule as king and queen completely virtuously. But, once again, the unenlightened subjects of Ayodhya misperceive dharma and begin ignorantly questioning Sita's virtue.

- Rama feels he must send Sita away, banishing her to Valmiki's hermitage, unaware that she is pregnant with his twin sons. As youths, those sons come to Rama's court and recite the Ramayana, which Valmiki has taught them. Then, Sita returns to her divine form as Lakshmi. Finally, Rama too ends his earthly life and again becomes the god Vishnu.

INTERPRETATIONS

- In etic terms, Rama may have been a real prince, or several princes, whom local people deified. In emic terms, Rama is a beloved deity to whom people can relate, often more accessibly revered than the more distant Vishnu.

- As filled as the Ramayana is with moral lessons, branch stories, and numerous episodes, it is also a biography of Rama. To many Hindus today, every word of Valmiki's telling of it is absolute truth. But for many others, Hindus and non-Hindus, the story of Rama could be used for other purposes.

- After Valmiki, many other authors retold the story of Rama in slightly or greatly different ways. Each of these later authors, using his or

her own language, highlights different features of Rama's story. The 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar his Muslim officials supervise the translation of the Ramayana into the Persian language of his imperial court, as a major work of both history and moral teaching.

- Many devotional films for the popular Bollywood and various Indian regional cinemas have used parts of the Ramayana as their plot. In recent years, various television producers have used that medium to present the story of Rama.

- There have also been many translations and retellings in English, most recently from Valmiki's Sanskrit telling, under the general editorship of American scholars Robert and Sally Goldman.

- But critics of the Brahmanic system of Varnas and dharma have also used the story of Rama to prove a very different history. For example, there is a substantial jati, or birth group, that proudly calls itself the descendants and followers of Valmiki, although elite Hindus used to class them as "untouchable" before untouchability became illegal in today's India. So various communities have challenged their low status in the Brahmanic system by using the prestige of the Ramayana.

- Over the last few centuries, many fiction writers have also used episodes or characters from the Ramayana to convey a variety of messages that clash with those of Valmiki's telling. Feminist short story authors and playwrights celebrate Sita, often portraying her as a strong, independent woman wronged by an insensitive husband.

- Some social reformers have critiqued orthodox tellings of the life of Rama, claiming those elite authors justify his abuses of his lower-class and lower-Varna subjects. Most prominently, a cultural nationalist movement in the Tamil-speaking region of south India, called the Dravidian movement, started in the 1930s to attack Brahmin domination.

- Although Brahmins were a small minority in the Tamil region, they controlled much of the political and economic power there. Under the charismatic Erode Venkata Ramasamy, known as E. V. R., this movement pronounced the Ramayana to be the history of an unjust invasion by north Indians.

- E. V. R. mounted massive public processions in which images of Rama were beaten with defiling shoes and pictures of him. Out of this Tamil cultural movement came the political parties that have dominated the government in the region for many decades.

Suggested Reading

Narayan, *The Ramayana.*

Richman, ed., *Many Ramayaṇas.*

Valmiki, *The Ramayaṇa of Valmiki.*

Epic History: Mahabharata

I n this lecture on the epic Mahabharata, we'll see how Hindus developed a new genre that was explicitly history writing, called in Sanskrit *Itihasa*. That term literally means, "thus it happened." This type of work involves a sequential narration of past events mostly on earth, mostly carried out by human beings on a relatively realistic scale. However, there are no consistent dates given, key episodes take place in heaven, and divine figures occasionally intervene. We'll start this lecture by looking at the sources and nature of the Mahabharata. Then we'll survey its main plot, discussing as we go what this text has meant from emic as well as etic perspectives on ancient Indian history.

MAHABHARATA OVERVIEW

- The Mahabharata stands as the longest major text in human history, containing about 1.8 million words. The Mahabharata is also one of the world's most complex texts in terms of its multiple origins and multilayered structure. Many branch stories, frame stories, side stories, and asides interweave diverse material around an already complex central plot, currently arranged into 18 major books, 100 minor books, and an appendix.

- The Mahabharata has a complex authorship. Vyasa is the emically credited author, although he dictated so fast that only the elephant-headed Hindu god Ganesha could write fast enough and long enough to take it all down.

- In addition, Vyasa is also a significant figure in the plot, being the biological grandfather of the two sets of royal cousins who battle each other as the central theme in the narrative. But Vyasa is not actually present or an eyewitness to many of the events he narrates;

in emic terms, he instead relies on divine inspiration and cosmic insight.

- In etic terms, the Mahabharata was probably compiled from many sources, including folk tales and regional religious traditions, and by many authors from the 6th century B.C.E. to the 4th or 5th century C.E.

- The Mahabharata describes a north Indian social, cultural, and political world similar to that in its contemporary text, the Ramayana. Both texts have as their central figures Kshatriyas, who try to follow that caste or Varna's martial dharma.

- The leading figure in the Ramayana acts flawlessly. In contrast, none of the main figures in the Mahabharata acts perfectly; all occasionally deviate from their dharma, especially in politics or the heat of battle. This makes the Mahabharata more complicated, and also more human.

- For military historians, the epic's combat details provide rich evidence about warfare in ancient India. Further, for the main intended audience of Kshatriyas, the detailed martial accounts that stand at the core of the Mahabharata were endlessly captivating.

- The political world of the Mahabharata is that of many rival, regionally based Hindu kingdoms. Each was constantly striving to survive or expand by building a loose coalition through marriage and other political alliances. Fighting and political intrigue could be very fierce and bloody.

KING SHANTANU

- We can greatly simplify the Mahabharata's plot by starting with one of its most prominent members, the virtuous and powerful King Shantanu. He ruled over Hastinapura on the upper Ganges River. Although we don't yet have any etic evidence about King Shantanu

himself, we know that Hastinapura was one of many hundreds of rival janapadas.

- As the Mahabharata explains, the man who becomes King Shantanu has, in a previous life, been so virtuous that he reached heaven. But on his arrival there he was attracted to a bevy of beautiful goddesses, in particular the goddess of the Ganges River. When a puff of wind blew up the skirt of her sari, he stared at her legs, thus gaining demerits for improper desire.

- His act condemned him to be immediately reborn on earth as King Shantanu. But before leaving heaven he begged the Ganges River goddess to voluntarily take birth in the world as his queen. She graciously agreed on the condition that he never question anything she did, or else she would abandon him.

- The Ganges River goddess bears King Shantanu's seven healthy sons, but she drowns each at birth. Every time, King Shantanu restrains himself from questioning her. But on the birth of their eighth son, he can no longer restrain himself and protests this infanticide. He thus breaks their prenuptial agreement.

- Before she departs for heaven, she explains that the dead sons were gods cursed for a minor fault to live in the world but who begged her to kill them at birth before they could commit any bad karma on earth. She also allows the last-born boy to survive. This surviving son, who is thus also a god incarnated on earth, grows up as a model prince and dutiful son.

- Shantanu's surviving son arranges the remarriage of his father. King Shantanu has fallen in love with a lowly but young and beautiful fisherwoman, Satyavati. To persuade the bride's parents to agree to this extremely unequal marriage, the son makes a tremendous vow that he will cede the throne to the fisherwoman's sons and himself never have any children who might rival his half-brothers.

- In thus giving up his own royal inheritance and his sexuality, he receives the name Bhishma, meaning, "the awesome vowing one." In due time, Bhishma becomes the clan elder. But King Shantanu 's biological dynasty soon gets challengingly twisted. Indeed, one of the leading Euro-American translators of the Mahabharata, the late J. A. B. van Buitenen, argued that Brahmin genealogists composed the most complex inheritance line possible as a series of perplexing puzzles for one another.

- The fisherwoman has two unhealthy sons with Shantanu. But the elder dies childless. The younger is too feeble to win a royal bride for himself, so Bhisma now has to enter a bridal contest for his inadequate half-brother.

- In a contest among princes, Bhisma wins three royal sisters: Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika. The first, Amba, already has an intended groom and begs release from Bhisma. He graciously lets her go. But Amba's would-be spouse feels slighted and rejects her. She then vows revenge on Bhisma, cremating herself in order to acquire enough merit to achieve this in her next life. Indeed, she is reborn as the person who will later cause Bhisma's lingering death.

- Bhisma gives the other two royal sisters he's won to his half-brother, who dies of exhaustion while unsuccessfully trying to impregnate them both. This leaves King Shantanu's throne vacant.

- His fisherwoman-queen remembers an incident from her girlhood, when she bore a premarital son with a Brahmin sage. This son is Vyasa, the emic author of the entire Mahabharata. Vyasa is summoned to impregnate the widowed daughters-in-law of the fisherwoman, but succeeds in only producing the blind Dhritarashtra and the diseased Pandu. Neither is deemed fit to serve as king. A third attempt by Vyasa produces the perfect Vidura—but his mother is a maidservant, and so he cannot be king.

- The younger, pale prince, Pandu, eventually marries a senior wife, Kunti, and also a junior wife. But, while hunting in the forest, he fatally shoots a stag while it is in union with a doe. The stag is really a human hermit in disguise, who with his dying breath curses Pandu to die the first time he has sexual intercourse, meaning Pandu can have no biological sons.

- This would have terminated his branch of the descent line. But Pandu's senior wife, Kunti, remembers that she had earned a boon from the gods during her youth. This enabled her to call down any god and have a son by him. She uses this to produce five brothers, known collectively as the Pandavas. They form one royal faction that claims the throne, although their connection to King Shantanu is quite indirect.

- When Pandu succumbs to desire for his junior wife, he dies, as the curse on him promised. So his half-brother, the blind Dhritarashtra, governs as regent until the succession is resolved. Dhritarashtra's 100 sons, known collectively as the Kauravas, also claim the royal inheritance. But, since their father was disqualified for kingship, their claim must jump a generation, and is even weaker than that of their cousins, the Pandavas.

- The Pandavas eventually built a new capital city, named Indraprastha. Having built the new Pandava capital, the senior brother, Yudhishtira, performs the great coronation sacrifice. The ritual requirements for this ritual include a dicing match. Conventionally, the new ruler always wins this match to prove his good karma.

- But in the Mahabharata, Yudhishtira loses not just once but multiple times to the Kauravas. The end result is 12 years of exile and a 13th year in disguise. Should the Pandavas be identified during that thirteenth year, they will have to accept yet another twelve years of exile.

- The Mahabharata details the many adventures of the Pandavas in exile and during their year-long incognito. When they successfully

pay off this gambling debt, they return to face their cousins. Each side lines up allies, and the armies confront each other. Even the crows and jackals flock to feast from the inevitable heaps of corpses.

- Just at that apex moment, the two impatient and bloodthirsty armies pause while the Pandava brother Arjuna engages in philosophical dialogue with Prince Krishna, who is his chariot driver, cousin, and brother-in-law. This dialogue became known as the Bhagavad Gita.

- To conclude the great war of the Mahabharata, the Kaurava army has so many dignitaries that they decide to have each one be the sole commander-in-chief in sequence. First, Bhisma takes command. Wherever he leads, the Pandavas are vanquished. The Pandavas ask him directly how he can be killed.

- He replies that he would never fight against a woman or someone born as a woman. Arjuna hides behind Princess Amba, who has vowed revenge on Bhisma, been reborn as a woman, but then traded her gender for that of a man. In battle, Arjuna shoots from behind her, now him, and mortally wounds Bhisma. This violates the dharma of a warrior, but the Pandavas argue that it was necessary to win.

- Next, the Brahmin teacher Drona takes command of the Kaurava forces. He too vanquishes all the Pandavas he faces. So, the Pandavas name an elephant Ashvatthaman, after Drona's son, and execute it. Yudhishtira then lies that Drona's son had been killed. Since Drona had only involved himself with the princes for his son's sake, Drona stops fighting and dies. Yudhishtira has betrayed his own father, the god of dharma, but it was necessary to win.

- Finally, Karna takes charge of the Kaurava forces. Even when his birth mother, Kunti, begs him to reveal that he is the eldest of the Pandavas, he refuses to betray his adoptive parents and his Kaurava allies. (Kunti had Karna with the sun god but gave him up out of embarrassment over premarital pregnancy.)
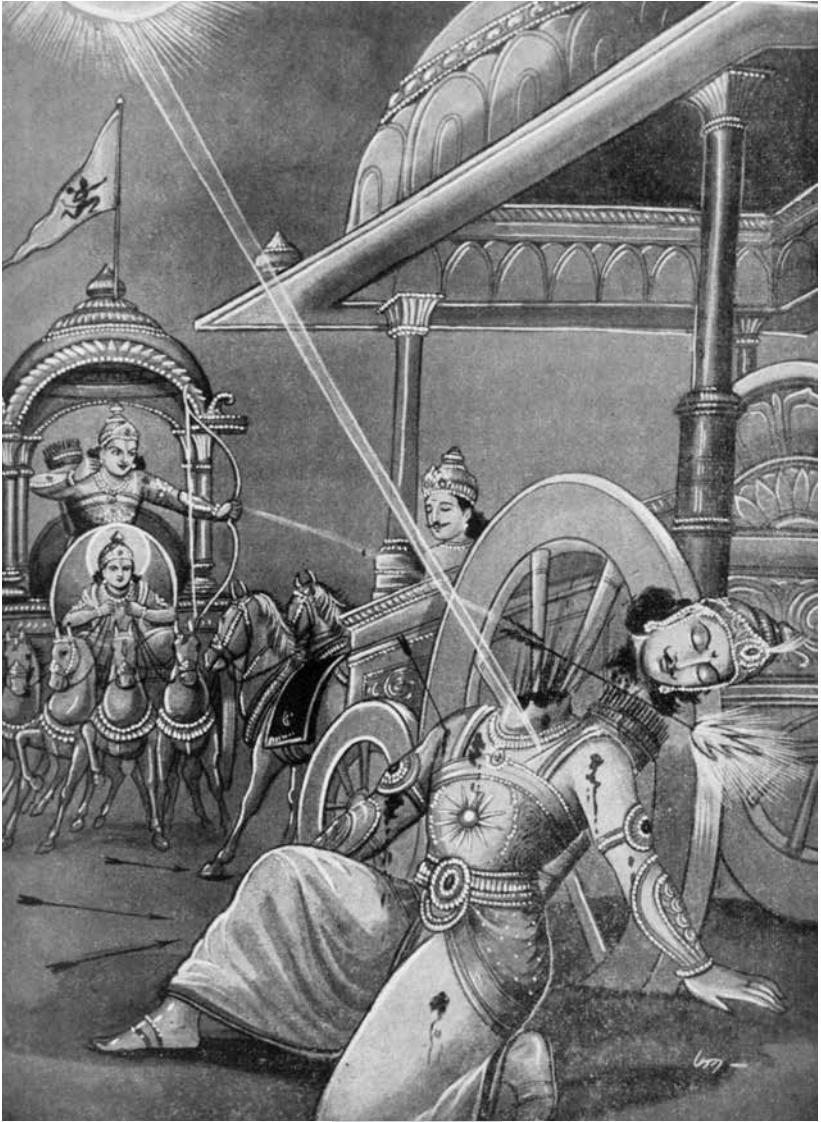
Karna's death

- When Arjuna's father, Indra, tries to trick Karna out of his armor of invulnerability, Karna knowingly gives it up. Then, Arjuna shoots Karna in the back during a time of truce, again a violation of the Kshatriya dharma.

- While the Pandavas win the 18-day-long battle, much evil has been done. Almost all the prominent figures die, and few of their children survive. As a result, this battle marks the beginning of the fourth, last, and worst age of the Hindu universe, called the *Kali Yuga*, in which we live today. This conclusion of the epic struggle between these rival Kshatriya cousins thus powerfully proclaims not martial glory but rather the disorder and immorality brought on by war.

Suggested Reading

Narayan, *The Mahabharata.*

Thapar, *Early Indiaw.*

Vyasa, *The Mahabharata.*

Dharma in the Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita, or "Lord God's Song," stands as the Hindu religious and philosophical text that has long held the widest attention in the West. It also continues to have major significance within India. Indeed, so sophisticated are the teachings by the divine Krishna in the *Gita* that leaders across the political spectrum have cited and relied upon it. This text deserves our close attention so that we can begin to understand its broad significance in Indian and world history. In this lecture, we'll explore the emic and etic origins of the Bhagavad Gita, its complex, multilayered message, and why it has been used so widely and diversely for so long.

Overview of the Bhagavad Gita

- During the last lecture, we saw that the Mahabharata culminates in a disastrously destructive 18-day melee between two sets of royal cousins fighting for the throne of their north Indian kingdom. On the eve of that battle, Arjuna, the best warrior on the Pandava side, despairs at the inevitable carnage, throws down his bow, and decides to surrender to his cousins rather than seek to slaughter them.

- Arjuna's cousin, brother-in-law, and charioteer, Prince Krishna, drives Arjuna into the no-man's-land between the impassioned, bloodthirsty armies. There, Krishna answers Arjuna's existential doubts by elucidating the nature of the cosmos, the ideal paths for humans, and their relationship to the divine.

- The Bhagavad Gita is only 700 poetic verses long, taking about 90 minutes to recite in Sanskrit. In contrast, the Mahabharata as a whole contains some 100,000 couplets. However, in emic terms, the Gita stands at the emotional peak of the Mahabharata. It is god revealing

himself and his message to Arjuna at the center of the battlefield and to humanity as a whole.

- Many etic scholars regard the Mahabharata as a whole as having been composed by multiple authors over roughly nine centuries from the late Vedic period onward, with the final versions fully compiled only by the 4th or 5th century C.E. Different authors must have contributed different sections or versions of the text, inserting new episodes and editing or deleting others.

Medium Changes

- In both religious and in technical terms, the structure of Indian narratives like the Mahabharata during that period made such insertions, amendments, and deletions relatively easy. In addition, over the centuries that the Mahabharata remained an oral tradition, it was rarely recited as a whole because of its size.

- Even after the Mahabharata was written down, it could be physically altered relatively easily. Keep in mind that Indian culture did not use paper until many centuries later. Instead, the traditional mode of writing was using a pointed stylus to inscribe letters on palm leaves or bark that had been flattened, cut into extended rectangles, and polished smooth.

- Since each copy of each palm-leaf manuscript was handwritten, even the best scribe made inadvertent errors. Any scribe could alter the text to conform to what the scribe believed should be there, even if it was not in the text being copied.

- Beyond that, palm leaves are themselves inherently physically fragile. Corners and edges easily break off, leaving gaps in the text. This impermanence of the medium was made worse by the alternating dryness and dampness of India's environment, which rapidly decayed all such organic matter.

- Scribes had to frequently recopy texts even as the older ones molded or rotted and became illegible. This frequent recopying again introduced unintentional and also intentional changes in each copy, while the original text soon became unusable. Within a generation or two, many different copies existed, with no original to check them against.

- Each episode of the Mahabharata worked best if it was only one leaf long, so episodes might be edited to fit that physical length. At 1.8 million words, the Mahabharata must have required an enormous number of leaves. To keep these leaves in sequence, holes were inserted for string to tie them together. More holes meant more

Statue of Prabhupada

cracks and more lost fragments. Strings eventually broke, leaving a pile of disordered leaves.

■ All this means that the Gita could very well have been added quite late in the compilation of the Mahabharata. This would explain the sudden prominence of Krishna and his innovative message, which was so different in tone from the rest of the text. Additionally, the Gita also displayed later philosophical developments, ones that many Hindu thinkers continued to draw upon.

■ Many people have come to treat the Gita as a freestanding text, quite apart from the rest of the Mahabharata. For example, the most scholarly translation, by J. A. B. van Buitenen, was published as a separate volume in 1981 by the University of Chicago Press.

■ The most popular devotional translation was made in 1968 by Swami Prabhupada. Over 23 million copies of his English version alone were distributed by his International Society for Krishna Consciousness, perhaps better known as the Hare Krishna Movement.

Krishna's Teachings

■ Now we'll look at what Krishna teaches in the Bhagavad Gita. Facing the impending carnage of battle, Arjuna questions the purpose of life, specifically his obligation to kill his elders, cousins, and teachers. How can that killing be psychologically or morally justified under any circumstances?

■ To this very human dilemma, Krishna provides multiple and multilayered answers, which have enabled people from an array of political and moral positions to draw support and guidance from the *Gita*.

■ One major message from the *Gita* is that all life in this manifest world is impermanent. Every being will die. Therefore, it should

not be psychologically or morally troubling either to die or to kill in accordance with a higher principle.

▪ Some advocates of nonviolence, like Mahatma Gandhi, stressed the former—that is, one should be prepared to die for a larger principle. Do not fear death if you are sincere in your commitment to your ideal.

▪ Others, like Gandhi's assassin and other violent revolutionaries, concluded that it is fully justified to kill for a higher principle. Do not let the lives of even innocent people, let alone guilty ones, hold you back squeamishly from the larger and overriding goal.

▪ In more specifically Hindu terms, the individual's self, or atman, is only misperceived by many people living in this world as being separate from Brahman, the ground of universal being or oneness. Either to die or kill only relates to the self as if it had existence independent of the cosmos, which it does not.

▪ In the Gita, then, we find one of the earliest full Hindu explanations of rebirth, or metempsychosis. Each aman is born, dies, is reborn, and dies again until moksha, or release, is realized and one remerges with the universal Brahman, the ground of all being. As Krishna puts it:

> As a man discards his worn-out clothes
> And puts on different ones that are new,
> So the one in the body discards aged bodies
> And joins with other ones that are new.

▪ Arjuna asks: If life and death are futile, though, what is the point of any action? In response, Krishna teaches that one must act in the world. At the same time, one must discipline oneself not to desire or even consider the consequences of one's actions.

▪ Throughout the Gita, Krishna elaborates various paths to achieve this liberation from desire. For discipline or method, he uses the

Sanskrit term *yoga*, from the same Indo-European root word that produced the English word *yoke*.

- One path prescribed by Krishna is the discipline of action, karma yoga. Each of us has a *swadharma*, our own specific duty and code for conduct that we should follow selflessly. Arjuna's is as a male Kshatriya—a warrior—so he should fight and, if need be, kill or die honorably. If one acts according to swadharma, regardless of the fruits of those actions, all moral questions and doubts disappear.

- Another path that Krishna preaches is the discipline of knowledge, *jnana yoga*. By acting in the world while fully understanding its transitory nature and also the transcendent ground of all being, we do not desire anything. The enlightened mind can prevent the senses from attaching themselves to things or beings in this transitory world.

- As Krishna explains, "Wise are they who see no difference between a learned, well-mannered Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and an eater of dogs." In this way, we come to understand fully the nature of the divine. This insight makes all moral questions and doubts disappear.

- Further, Krishna prescribes what many people think of as *meditative yoga*: "Keeping outside the impressions from the outside world, centering the gaze between the eyebrows, evening inhalation and exhalation within the nostrils, controlling senses, mind, and spirit, totally devoted to release, with no trace left of desire, fear, or anger, [thereby] the seer is released forever." This control makes all moral questions and doubts disappear.

- The next, and most innovative path, is the discipline of devotion, *bhakti yoga*. By acting in the world with total devotion to the divine, we do not desire anything. This devotion makes all moral questions and doubts disappear.

- Building on this concept, Krishna in the *Gita* reveals to Arjuna the unimaginable nature of the divine. But Arjuna, like most people, cannot comprehend or even endure the totality of divinity.

- When he looks into Krishna and sees inexorable time itself, it is so awesome that Arjuna begs Krishna to return to his limited earthly form. Later bhakti movements have all had to grapple with the infinity of the divine and the limits of human existence in this world.

KRISHNA'S CONNECTION

- In the Gita, Krishna also opens the path of devotion to all humans, regardless of their birth. He is not himself a Brahmin, but rather a Kshatriya. Unlike the Brahmanic tradition, Krishna does not base his authority on the sacred Vedas. Instead, Krishna speaks directly as the divine to Arjuna and to all people. He connects without intermediaries to everyone.

- Therefore, anyone can act out of love for god, often in a personal form as Krishna appears for Arjuna. Even the humblest offering, or the offering of one's self to those with nothing else, is received equally by god.

- The path of bhakti challenges the orthodox, Brahmanic structures of Hinduism and also strengthens Hinduism by incorporating diverse people committed to its deities on an intense personal level.

- But what's especially innovative in the Gita is the idea that god loves his devotees as much, or even more, than they love god. Often, however, in the later bhakti movements, the devotee had to wait impatiently for god to reach down and pluck him or her from the disorder and futility of the manifest world. The metaphor often used is that humans awaiting god's grace are like women in many social traditions awaiting a male lover to bring them to union.

- Through the Gita, Krishna offers Hindus a way to salvation that does not depend on the Vedas, on ritual sacrifices by Brahmins, or on status by birth. Instead, men and women could achieve transcendence through their own individual actions. This message continues to appeal to many.

Suggested Reading

Deutsch, *Advaita Vedanta.*

Gandhi, *The Bhagavad Gita according to Gandhi.*

Vyasa, *Bhagavadgita in the Mahabharata.*

Lecture 9

The Origins and Rise of Jainism

Nonviolence is one of the most prominent, essential, and admirable elements in Indian culture and society. Over 2,500 years ago, India developed Jainism, a religious tradition that values absolute nonviolence toward all living beings. From its origins in the 6ᵗʰ century B.C.E., Jainism has continued as an important social and religious community in India until today. This lecture first takes a look at the core beliefs of Jainism. Then it describes the work of Mahariva, a role model to the Jains. The lecture closes by describing why Jainism has endured and what it looks like today.

THE CORE OF JAINISM

■ At the core of Jainism is the concept of the *jiva*, a word that we can approximate with the awkward term *life monad*—that is, a distinct living entity that exists regardless of the physical body it inhabits. Your jiva is you, but your jiva has been born in the world before, sometimes as a human being, sometimes as an animal, or sometimes as a divinity. Jain philosophers speculated that there were 8,400,000 different levels of births, each ranked in order from imperceptible motes of dust floating in the air up to divinities.

■ Jains teach that your karma, meaning the deeds or actions that you perform in one birth, decides the level of birth in your next incarnation. For Jains, karma is a particulate substance, especially something produced by violence of any type. Some actions are so bad in karmic terms, like killing another jiva, that they are very substantial. Other actions are less violent, like violent thoughts, so the bad karmic matter they produce is subtler.

- We can think of the jiva as an invisible sphere: when karmic matter sticks to it, the sphere becomes heavier, more material, and sinks in the next birth.

- How can a person get rid of the karma that attaches to his or her jiva? The process of living in this world burns off some karma. People, animals, divinities, and other beings who burn off more karma than they produce through violence will move a little higher in the next life.

- There are some ways of living that do little or no violence, and so generate little or no new bad karmic matter. Doing austerities, like voluntarily taking on and enduring suffering, burns off even more karma. Ultimately, in the Jain tradition, a truly nonviolent person can burn off all the karmic matter attaching to the jiva, and so escape from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that makes up the manifest world around us.

The Model Jains

- According to the Jain tradition—that is, emically—there were 24 model Jains who, in the past, have achieved this escape. They are known as heroic Tirthankara, or "ford-crossers," whose jiva have gone beyond this world to the total stillness beyond it.

- That state of absolute transcendence and peace is described by the concept of *nirvana*. The ultimate goal of each Jain is to emulate the death-conquering Tirthankaras and thus to liberate his or her jiva by achieving the condition of nirvana.

- The last of the 24 Tirthankara remains particularly relevant to many Jains. He is known to his followers as Mahavira, the "great hero," for his conquest over violence. He was famously born sometime between 600 and 540 B.C.E. to a Kshatriya family.

- He avoided violence and embraced asceticism:
    - He didn't kick his mother in the womb, nor did he cause her any labor pain.
    - He did not follow the warrior dharma of his family but rather lived nonviolently, without generating any more karmic matter.
    - At age 30, Mahavira renounced his family and the rest of the world to become an ascetic. He did austerities and let his clothing fall away from him, symbolic of his letting go of this material world.
    - He ate only the minimum amount of food, and only food that did not contain a jiva, such as grain that had not been sprouted and so had no life.
    - He meditated peacefully to gain insight into the true nature of existence.

- Mahavira's followers took the collective title *Jina*, meaning "conquerors" of this world through nonviolence. From that term comes the name *Jain* for their religion and community.

- Most of Mahavira's followers over the centuries have lived his lessons as far as they were able by adhering to five Jain vows. The first vow is that a true Jain must avoid killing any jivas. The other four Jain vows are to avoid falsehood, theft, ostentatious pride in one's possessions, and un-chastity.

- Metaphysically, Jains improve the condition of their jivas to the extent that they live up to these five Jain vows. With less karmic matter attached to their jivas, they will be born higher in the next incarnation, and therefore better able to adhere to these Jain vows.

- Mahavira himself lived for 40 years as an ascetic, spreading his teachings about nonviolence. Finally, he chose to burn off the last of his karma and thereby enable his jiva to achieve transcendence.
    - He stood unmoving and therefore not disturbing even the microscopic jivas around him.

Mahavira

- ◆ He stopped eating or drinking anything, fasting away his remaining karmic matter.
- ◆ Finally, his jiva escaped his diminished physical body, having achieved nirvana. The dating of his release varies between 527 and 468 B.C.E. and is traditionally located in the lower Gangetic region of Magadha.

- There are three levels in the Jain human social order. Highest are the ascetic members of the sangha, committed fully to nonviolence.

- Next are laypeople who follow the Jain path as best they can, perhaps to join the sangha later in life.

- Below these are people who do not follow the Jain teachings. These are people who live lives based on violence, including Brahmin priests, Kshatriya warriors, and any Vaishyas, Shudras, outcastes, and Adivasis who live or profit from some form of killing or other violence.

WHY JAINISM HAS ENDURED

- When considering the Jain movement from an outsider, etic perspective, we can see many reasons why Jainism has continued in India to today. Mahavira was roughly contemporary with Gautama the Buddha. The 6th to 5th century B.C.E. was a period of intellectual, cultural, social, economic, and political ferment in India that produced these great moral leaders and their dynamic religious movements.

- These competing movements vied for the hearts and minds of similar pools of potential followers. Mahavira not only repudiated the sacredness of the Veda and its Varna social order, he and his followers also reached out to the many non-Sanskrit speakers.

- Many Jain teachings were in one of the Prakrits, the regional languages of north and central India. These languages had developed from

Sanskrit but were spoken by the common people. This did away with the near-monopoly of access to sacred religious texts that Brahmins used to support their own ritually high status.

Princess Mairavati

- Over time, Jain teachers adapted popular folk stories that made them accessible and attractive to men and women. In one Jain parable, Princess Mairavati's excessively proud father, the king, asks his assembled courtiers, "Do you think there is another monarch on earth who has as much material prosperity, illustrious court, and gifted kinsmen as I have?"

- Princess Mairavati, unlike the other courtiers, disagrees with this claim, and again when the king repeats it. Furious, the king decides to prove his power over Mairavati by marrying her to the poorest, lowliest, and sickest man in his kingdom.

- Mairavati, firm in her conviction that her own karma determines her future, calmly accepts this husband. Even when the guardian deity of the kingdom offers her a young and handsome groom instead, Mairavati remains faithful to her husband.

- Suddenly, her husband throws off his leprous body and resumes his true form as a divine king who has been searching for a pure woman to reward by making her his queen. This divine husband then forces Mairavati's father to submit and to dress as a humble peasant before being forgiven for his baseless pride.

- Thus having received the fruits of her good karma, Mairavati devotes the rest of her life to Jain spiritual practices. Such a parable, showing an idealized woman fulfilling her moral duty, would appeal to many women and men, giving them great incentive to practice Jainism.

Visual Lessons

- One Jain visual lesson in morality depicts a man hanging by two ropes, high up in a tree. Above him, a beehive slowly drips honey onto his tongue, which is his sole focus. He does not notice the black and white rats that are gnawing at the ropes that suspend him over a pit full of vipers. This often-reproduced image is a metaphor for human existence and a lesson about the need to transcend it.

- In artistic depictions, often a Tirthankara has behind his head a sun-like radiant halo or the overarching and protecting hood of a many-headed cobra. These form umbrella-like symbols of sovereignty, not just in the material world but over the entire cosmos as well.

- A Tirthankara conventionally has extended earlobes, showing how they were stretched down during his affluent youth by golden-jeweled earrings. But these distended earlobes are now empty, showing that he abandoned these jeweled earrings along with the rest of his worldly wealth.

- A Tirthankara's hair is customarily shown in short curls, looking almost like stylized snails. Most images show them wearing no clothing, having abandoned that as well.

- Since the Tirthankaras all ended their jiva's existence with total nonviolence, they are not conventionally portrayed as active but rather in a meditating and unmoving pose. Later images show vines growing up around their legs, so long have they stood motionless.

The Spread of Jainism

- Over the centuries since Mahavira, the Jain movement spread beyond its original heartland in the central Gangetic plain. The oldest part of the tradition shifted its center to western India, today the regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat. These were commercial centers where Jain merchants flourished.

- Then, a branch of the Jain movement extended into south India, bringing in Dravidian-language speakers. Gradually, from around the 4th century B.C.E. onward, cultural and metaphysical differences developed between these two branches. The south Indian branch believes it has remained closer to what it preserved as the teachings of Mahavira himself. Known as the *Digambara* or "sky-clad" branch, its monks abandoned all clothing, as did Mahavira. This branch does not permit women to become nuns and therefore also reject clothing.

- The northern branch, known as *Svetambara* or "white-clad," feels it has developed according to the essence of Jainism. In this branch, both monks and nuns are permitted, and they wear unstitched and

Jain religious ritual

therefore pure simple white robes. There are also subtle philosophical and political differences between these two branches.

- Although it has always centered on merchants, Jainism has attracted men and women from other ways of life as well. The founder of the Mauryan dynasty, Chandragupta, is claimed by Jains as a convert to their religion.

- Today, Jains total fewer than five million people, comprising only 0.4 percent of the population of India. Another one or two million Jains live outside of India. Occasionally, Indian newspapers celebrate the renunciation of a rich Jain merchant who scatters all material wealth and takes on the monastic life, or a Jain ascetic who starves himself to death out of devotion to the Jain path.

Suggested Reading

Cort, *Framing the Jina.*

Dundas, *The Jains.*

Long, *Jainism.*

The Origins and Rise of Buddhism

Buddhism began in India over 2,500 years ago. Ever since, the cosmic and moral truths taught by Siddhartha Gautama the Buddha have moved many diverse people's hearts and minds. One of the core concepts in Buddhism is that any person can achieve a higher condition in worldly and in universal terms. This is done through giving generously, relinquishing desire, and practicing the nonviolent Middle Way between pleasure and asceticism. In this lecture, we'll examine the Indian origins and early developments of Buddhism as a religion and as a community, both as they have come to be regarded emically from within that tradition and also from an etic perspective of outside historians.

SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA

- According to later Buddhist tradition, Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born around 560 B.C.E. as the heir to the royal Shakya clan, which ruled over a small kingdom in the Himalayan foothills.

- To protect their precious son, Siddhartha's royal parents raised him in a perfect world by excluding any possible sources of sorrow. He mastered all the arts and pleasures. At age 16, he married his beautiful and pure royal cousin and soon had a son. But, as recounted by devout Buddhists, the gods arranged for Siddhartha to rise above pure pleasure by encountering the limitations of human existence in the world.

- Suddenly, Siddhartha saw for the first time an old man, who was frail, bent over, and white-haired, with few remaining teeth. Next, he encountered a sick man, covered in boils and shaking with fever. Then, Siddhartha saw a corpse being carried by sorrowing relatives to the cremation ground. Finally, Siddhartha perceived a wandering

mendicant, someone who sought to escape from the pains of this earthly human existence.

- These four peace-shattering sights enabled Siddhartha to free himself from his pleasure palace. He left behind his family and all his possessions, cut off his luxuriant hair, and joined a band of ascetics.

- Like the Jain teacher Mahavira, Siddhartha pushed self-sacrifice and austerities to the limit. Unlike Mahavira, Siddhartha found himself growing weaker from fasting, unable to concentrate his thoughts on the eternal.

- After six years as the ideal ascetic, Siddhartha repudiated that path of austerities, seeing them as leading not to salvation but to painful frustration. Instead, he resumed eating, and as his body strengthened, he began to meditate deeply on the nature of humanity and the cosmos.

- In Buddhist tradition, the various gods, especially the god of death, strove in vain to distract him from his meditation. Finally, sheltering under a sacred fig tree, he achieved enlightenment as the Buddha. This took place in the city of Gaya, which was then in the expanding north Indian kingdom of Magadha, and is now in the Indian province of Bihar.

AFTER ENLIGHTENMENT

- Siddhartha, now the enlightened Buddha, began to preach. Later Buddhists recount his first sermon, which conveyed the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path that became the core of their religion.

- The first Noble Truth asserts that this worldly existence is inherently filled with suffering. The second Noble Truth reveals that all this suffering stems from sensual desire and attachment to this world. The third teaches that, by withdrawing the senses, desire and attachment will disappear, and so too will suffering. The fourth and

Buddha statue

final Noble Truth lays out the Buddhist Middle Way that rejects the extremes of both pleasure and asceticism.

- This Middle Way is the Eightfold Path that consists of right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. By performing these eight perfectly, anyone can reach nirvana, a final condition of absolute peace, beyond all desire and suffering.

- Throughout the rest of the Buddha's life in this world, until his death at age 80 around 480 B.C.E., he lived and taught these ideals. When two armies from rival Indian kingdoms poised for war, the Buddha stepped between them and preached nonviolence. He, and then generations of his followers, elaborated on the meanings of the Buddhist truths and laid out the details for following the Middle Way.

- Early teachings were often in the Pali language rather than in the archaic Vedic Sanskrit preserved by Brahmins. Therefore, early

Buddhists used the Pali term *dhamma*, rather than the Sanskrit version of the concept, *dharma*, in order to describe their Middle Way as an ideal code of conduct.

■ As growing numbers of dedicated followers gathered around the Buddha, he organized a *sangha*, or monastic order. Members of the sangha wandered ascetically for eight months of the year. They then lived during the four months of the Indian monsoon rains in a monastery. These became the three gems of Buddhism: the Buddha, the dhamma, and the sangha.

■ According to emic accounts, the Buddha initially only accepted men into the sangha. But after the appeal of Siddhartha's foster mother and aunt, he did allow nuns.

The Spread

■ Since Buddhism accepts all who adopt its Middle Way, it spread rapidly among many different classes in India. The Buddha and subsequent Buddhist teachers developed the tactic of appropriate teaching—that is, presenting as much of the Buddhist message as that specific audience could appreciate.

■ In order to convey Buddhist morality to even uneducated people, Buddhist teachers often adapted folk tales. Sometimes, such teachers used these folktales as the basis for accounts of the previous lives of the Buddha before he was born for the last time as Prince Siddhartha.

■ In the most authoritative collection, there are 537 of these *jatakas*, or accounts of his previous lives, presented in poetic form with prose commentaries. Significantly, none of these jatakas have him born female, suggesting residual Buddhist favoring of males.

■ In one jataka, for example, the Buddha-to-be is born as a royal Brahmin called Prince Five-Weapons. When encountering a shaggy ogre, he uses his poisoned arrows, sharp sword, piercing spear, and

mighty mace. Each of these, however, fails to penetrate the ogre's thick, sticky, matted hair.

■ The prince then uses his two fists, two feet, and forehead against the ogre. The only result is his being stuck fast to the ogre, who prepares to eat him. The prince overcomes the ogre only by teaching him the inevitability of death, the futility of fearing death, and the virtue of not killing. Consequently, the ogre is convinced of the spiritual and moral power of the prince, releases him, and becomes his nonviolent supporter.

The Buddhist Social Model

■ In the Buddhist social model, people are ranked according to *dana*, that is, how much they give. Monks and nuns give up everything and donate their lives to following the dhamma, so they rank the highest. But laypeople can also follow the Middle Way, to the extent that they are able.

■ Over time, people who gave the most, including donations to Buddhist monasteries and shrines, took precedence over those who gave less. This meant that rich merchants and kings who gave wealth generously stood highest among laypeople. Those others who did not give to Buddhism at all ranked lowest—these included Jains, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and other non-Buddhist members of other Varnas.

■ Further, according to emic Buddhist accounts, the Buddha emerged victorious in heated debates with leaders of these other groups, proving, for example, that birth was no criterion of moral worth despite what Brahmins claim.

■ The Buddhist Middle Way attracted many converts in ancient India. In particular, many economically rising merchants, who could live without themselves killing and who had the means to give substantially, found Buddhism attractive.

- In addition, men and women from other groups in Indian society who did not find the Brahmanic Varna model persuasive also joined or supported Buddhism. Shudras and other non-Kshatriyas who had fought their way to kingship, for example, preferred to patronize Brahmins less and Buddhists more.

- In India, several schools of metaphysics developed within the Buddhist tradition. They agreed that the individual self is incarnated in birth after birth, as a human or an animal.

- This self consists of a bundle of sensory perceptions and desires that retains karma—the good and bad actions that one has done in this and previous births. As one gives up desires, one's karma is also released. Final liberation comes when all desires and attachments are relinquished and one's self achieves nirvana, never to suffer birth, death, rebirth, and re-death ever again.

AFTER THE BUDDHA

- Upon the Buddha's final earthly death, his body was cremated. Despite his teachings about the unreality and worthlessness of the material body, his followers preserved his ashes and charred bones and teeth. For many devotees, these remains contained some of the sacred power of the Buddha himself. In order to house these relics, donors, including kings and rich merchants, built hemispheric structures called *stupas*.

- In order to convey Buddhist teachings visually, artists have used a series of strategies. Since the Buddha had achieved transcendent nirvana, some early artists portrayed him by his absence. Some early Buddhist sculptors used the tree of enlightenment with an absence beneath it indicating Buddha.

- Other sculptors convey the same message by showing the Buddha's footprint, indented with the auspicious marks of his sole. Yet others

A stupa

show the symbolic wheel of dhamma, which rolls throughout the cosmos establishing the Buddhist law.

A WORLD RELIGION

- Over the centuries, Buddhism became a world religion, spreading throughout much of Asia. Starting around the 3rd century B.C.E., missionaries from mainland India went to Sri Lanka, where the vast majority of the population converted. There, they followed the original teachings, called the *Theravada* or *Hinayana* ("Lesser Vehicle") form.

- From Sri Lanka, this form of Buddhism spread to Southeast Asia, where it remains dominant in Burma (now Myanmar), Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Indonesia. Other religious traditions from India, like

Hinduism also extended along these routes. But, in each case, local societies adapted these religious traditions to their own cultures.

- As Buddhist ideas in India continued to develop, the *Mahayana* ("Greater Vehicle") form emerged around the 1st century C.E. This spread by land into what is today Afghanistan. From Afghanistan, Mahayana Buddhism spread to China and then to Japan, adapting to local traditions as it went.

Statue of Xuanzang
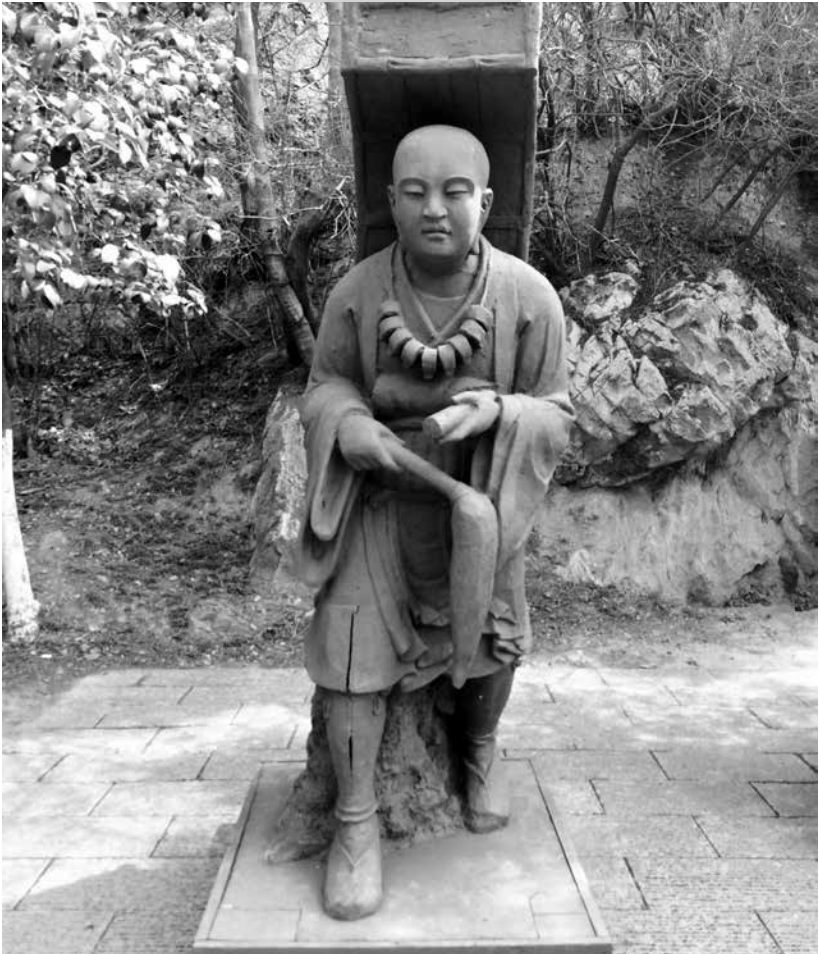
- The third major type of Buddhism to develop in India is known as the *Vajrayana*, or the "Thunderbolt Vehicle," since, among other doctrines, it features sudden enlightenment. By the 7th century, this form had spread to Nepal and Tibet.

- Although India was the land where Siddhartha Gautama the Buddha lived and taught, Buddhism died out there over the centuries, in part because of wealthy donors causing the religion to lose its connection with the general populace. By the 7th century C.E., when a Chinese pilgrim, Xuanzang, came to India seeking relics and original Buddhist scriptures, he found very little evidence that Buddhism had survived there.

- Then, in the mid–20th century, a Buddhist community reappeared in India. B. R. Ambedkar was a major leader of the low-ranked social group that used to be called *untouchables* but that now prefer the term *Dalit*, those who have been oppressed or ground down.

- Buddhism discounted a person's status by birth and instead stressed his or her individual achievement. Further, it was deeply Indian in its origins. Seeing this, Ambedkar led many of his Dalit followers to become Buddhists. Today, there are about 8 million Buddhists in India, mostly so-called neo-Buddhist Dalits.

Suggested Reading

Behl, *The Ajanta Caves.*

Cowell, ed., *Jataka.*

Lopez, *Buddhism.*

Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught.*

Shaw, tr., *Jatakas.*

Lecture 11

The Mauryan Empire

This lecture looks at the career of Chandragupta Maurya and the empire he founded in north India in 320 B.C.E. His empire was exceptional in Indian history. Chandragupta had to draw together many competing regional states and diverse communities and cultures. Through Chandragupta's many military and diplomatic conquests, he extended his empire over more of South Asia than any previous ruler had ever managed to do. To examine Chandragupta, we'll start with a description of the area from which he began his rule, then look at his martial and political exploits, and close with Chandragupta's late-in-life transformation.

MAGADHA

- By about 600 B.C.E., 16 maha janapadas, or "great people's places," had emerged across north and central India through conquest and consolidation of the earlier 600–700 janapadas. These smaller janapadas still survived in their own home regions, but they also became components as provinces within these 16 larger states.

- Over the next century, out of the 16, five even larger maha janapada states emerged. One of these five seems to have been governed by some sort of council, with the raja as war leader. The other four, including Magadha, were evidently ruled by a hereditary raja as king.

- Unlike the other janapadas, the Magadha region of the middle Ganges plain is particularly well endowed with natural resources. This meant that as people gradually settled down in the Magadha janapada, circa 600 B.C.E., they had much economic potential.

- They slowly cleared the parts of the region that had been under primeval forests, incorporating or pushing away the Adivasi living in them. The enterprising farmers of Magadha increasingly learned how to manage the water and soil to cultivate wet rice.

- Through experience, they even mastered the multistage method for producing two harvests of rice in a single calendar year. This requires farmers to start the second rice crop in nursery fields, even before the first crop has been harvested from the main fields. The farmers and their laborers must then carefully transplant the rice seedlings into the main fields right after they are harvested and prepared for the next crop. This technique requires very careful watering.

- This kind of intensive rice agriculture is about three times as productive as dry crops like wheat, millet, or barley, so Magadha could generate more grain and support a much denser population than could many other rival regions of its day. Hence, the ruler in Magadha had more resources to draw upon than his neighboring kings.
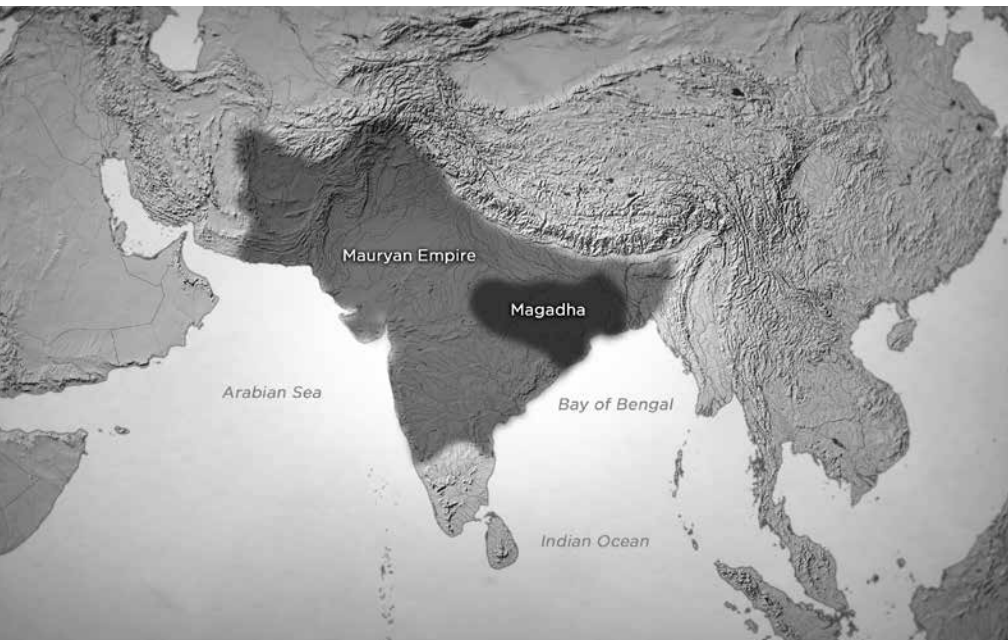
■ The mountainous and hilly areas nearby were a natural habitat for wild elephants. Some Adivasi communities in those regions had mastered elephant catching and taming. The ruler of Magadha could obtain such elephants by taxing, trading, or raiding Adivasis. Elephants trained for work or warfare were highly valuable.

■ The same areas in and around Magadha were also sources of vital wood and minerals. Those areas have long produced much of India's coal and iron supply. Together, timber, coal, and iron enabled the artisans of Magadha's growing towns and cities to produce metal tools, weapons, and other artifacts.

■ But many economically upwardly mobile merchants did not find the relatively low status assigned to them in the Brahmanic Varna system very attractive. They often sought alternative religious and social models. Magadha lay beyond the upper Gangetic heartland of Brahmanism, which meant there was more opportunity for people there to consider non-Vedic models.

■ Gautama the Buddha gained followers in Magadha, including one of its early kings. Many others in Magadha turned to Jainism, in which anyone, regardless of birth, could follow the Jain path based on its five vows: nonviolence, no lying, no theft, no ostentatious display or pride in one's material possessions, and chastity. The most prominent Jain leader, Mahavira, personally taught in Magadha and then himself gained nirvana near Rajagriha, the growing capital city of that kingdom.

RULERS

■ Often in human history, a charismatic political leader can harness the potential of a region and develop it into a powerful and expansive kingdom or empire. In Magadha, a series of such rulers emerged.

■ The first of Magadha's dynamic rajas we know by name is Bimbisara, but evidence about him is limited. He rose to rule around 500 B.C.E.

He evidently spurred on the economy of Magadha by fostering agriculture, hand manufacturing, and trade. He also built up his state's power to govern and control his subjects by ordering the construction of roads and a more regular and effective system of taxation.

■ Through a war of conquest and a marriage alliance, Bimbisara subordinated additional janapadas to his realm, although they were never incorporated very extensively. His reign ended abruptly in 490 B.C.E. when his even more ambitious son, Ajatashatru, overthrew, imprisoned, and executed him.

■ This new king expanded his empire based in Magadha even further by conquest over neighboring janapadas. But there were limits on how far his empire could expand: His governance and war technology could not even attain an empire that extended across north India.

CHANDRAGUPTA RISES

■ Although the Magadha region itself remained a powerful base, in the following century, three other dynasties successively seized rule there. The third of these upstart dynasties was founded by Chandragupta Maurya.

■ He led a rebellion that grabbed power in 320 B.C.E. He made his capital Pataliputra, near where the current city of Patna is located. This was an especially strategic location on the south bank of the Ganges River.

■ Chandragupta's dramatic rise to power has long been associated emically with his close Brahmin advisor and then chief minister, Chanakya. He embodied mastery over all the sciences of politics. His pitiless assassination tactics, networks of spies, and constant testing of the loyalty of the king's ministers and generals became legendary.

ALEXANDER'S INFLUENCE

- Chandragupta had another major, but inadvertent, aid to the expansion of his empire. This was a series of dramatic events far from Magadha on India's western frontier, over 1,000 miles away.

- The dynamic Persian Achaemenid Empire had long extended its power over the Indian lands west of the Indus River. But when Alexander inherited the throne of Macedonia at age twenty in 336 B.C.E., he determined to conquer the world. He marched his army east and rapidly defeated the Persian Emperor Darius III, and thus ended the Achaemenid Empire.

- Alexander the Great was not yet satisfied. By 327 B.C.E., he had led his army into far western India, crossing the Indus. Several kings in the region of the Punjab submitted to him, and others fought bravely against this invader from the west. Although Alexander's army eventually triumphed, these were bloody and exhausting campaigns.

- Finally, the Greek core of Alexander's army refused to go any further. These soldiers had been on the march for eight long years without a break. Although Alexander personally wanted to continue east to the end of the world, his soldiers convinced him to return westward. After a decade of campaigning, he died in Babylon at age 32.

- Alexander's army's migrations had left behind many distant colonies. These cities opened up trade routes that linked Greece, Egypt, and India, along which many subsequent ideas, goods, and people would travel in both directions for centuries thereafter. Magadha lay at the eastern end of this new intercontinental trade network, and it prospered as its economy was even further stimulated.

- While several of Chandragupta's rivals to his west had been fatally damaged by battling Alexander, Magadha was too far away to be weakened. Chandragupta marched his own vast forces from Magadha into the disordered region along the Indus River.

Statue of Alexander the Great

SELEUCUS AND MEGASTHENES

■ There, Chandragupta fought until 303 B.C.E. against another Greek army, this one led by Alexander's general and would-be successor in Asia, Seleucus I Nicator. After this bloody battle, Chandragupta evidently gained the advantage. The ensuing truce treaty gained Chandragupta the daughter of Seleucus as a bride and also rule over the lands west of the Indus as far as Baluchistan and Kabul. In exchange, Chandragupta gave 500 elephants to Seleucus.

■ Seleucus also sent a courtier and diplomat, Megasthenes, as his ambassador to Chandragupta. He lived at Chandragupta's court for four years (302–298 B.C.E). Megasthenes was a keen observer who recorded what he saw and heard about Chandragupta's empire and about India's wonders.

■ His original text has not survived, but later Greek and Roman historians who had access to it paraphrased it extensively. Megasthenes thus provides a valuable outsider's account, although he did not always understand what he was seeing.

■ Megasthenes described Chandragupta's thriving capital city of Pataliputra, which he said extended nine miles along the banks of the Ganges River. The outer palisades surrounding the city were guarded by more than 600 towers and fortified gateways. Megasthenes also lauded Chandragupta's vast wooden palace, from which he controlled an extensive and effective administration.

■ Megasthenes described a board of 30 counselors who advised and implemented the emperor's directives. There were also six separate departments of state, each charged with a different responsibility, from promoting the economy, to registering births and deaths, to attending to foreign ambassadors and guests like Megasthenes. He evidently asserted that Chandragupta's administration accomplished all this without the use of any written records, since they had no system of writing.

Chandragupta's Reign

■ Territories from Afghanistan in the west, Bengal in the east, and over part of the central Indian Deccan Plateau in the south came under Chandragupta's sway. But, as elaborate as his administration was, it did not penetrate very deep into the society and into the culture of the many janapadas that acknowledged Chandragupta's rule.

■ Thus, his empire had deep roots only in Magadha, although it extended much further over the lands of north and part of central India. We might visualize his empire as a vast umbrella, which is a common Indian symbol of sovereignty. The central pillar was Magadha, but the canopy only cast its protection over the surrounding janapadas.

Chandragupta's Religion

■ It may seem incongruous for such a battle-proven conquering emperor to become a Jain, that religion of absolute nonviolence. While none of the surviving historical sources say much about Chandragupta's character, his actions show him to be a bold, even ruthless warrior.

■ Perhaps he finally found the horrors of war too much to face. For whatever personal reason, there is much evidence that Chandragupta eventually relinquished his throne after more than two decades of bloody rule and became a Jain monk. Further, he evidently ended his life by fasting to death, thus burning off the bad karmic matter from the many acts of violence that had caked his jiva, or life monad.

■ Jain texts assert that he did this out of personal conviction. He may have felt remorse for the many deaths of people and other living things that had accompanied his rise to power and the expansion of his empire.

■ But we can also see why he may have pragmatically supported Jainism during his reign. Many in the rising class of merchants that

had powered his empire economically were also Jains. Also, as a relatively low-born king, Chandragupta may have not accepted the Brahmanic system of Varnas or been accepted by Brahmins as a worthy king to serve.

Suggested Reading

Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times.*

Thapar, *The Past Before Us.*

Ashoka's Imperial Buddhism

In India, even today, the most famous and celebrated person from ancient history is Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty. There are many reasons why he has been so extensively idealized. He ruled an empire that encompassed not only virtually all of the current Republic of India but almost all of South Asia. While Ashoka was a victorious conqueror, he later became known for his nonviolence and energetic benevolence as ruler. This lecture looks at his record as a ruler, his embrace of Buddhism, and the decline of his empire following his death.

FROM CHANDRAGUPTA TO ASHOKA

- Ashoka inherited what had already become an empire of a scale unprecedented in Indian history. Ashoka's grandfather, Chandragupta, had risen up to found their Mauryan dynasty as the ruler of the resource-rich north Indian region of Magadha. He eventually reigned from Afghanistan in the west to Bengal in the east, and across much of the Deccan highlands of central India.

- Chandragupta evidently abdicated and starved himself to death in the ideal Jain way. Though Chandragupta's son and direct heir, Emperor Bindusara, left little evidence of this reign, a disordered interregnum seems to have followed.

- However, by 269 B.C.E., Chandragupta's grandson Ashoka finally eliminated all his royal rivals and controlled Magadha and its remaining subordinate provinces. During Ashoka's first 10 years of rule, he consolidated his power and developed the efficiency of his army and administration. One of his most effective measures appears to be his creation of the very first Indian system of writing, today called the *Brahmi script*.

- Scholars continue to debate where Ashoka took the elements of the Brahmi script from. At present, there are two leading theories about the source of Ashoka's Brāhmī script.

- The first and earliest of these theories, developed mostly by European scholars, is that the Brahmi script developed from the Semitic script via Aramaic. The second main scholarly position is that Brahmi came from an Indian source, which would please many Indians.

- Another plausible explanation for the first development of the Brahmi script is that Emperor Ashoka directed his officials to create it out of several existing sources already present in India. In this explanation, Ashoka may have had his officials draw upon a system of record-keeping then used by Indian merchants. Such an indigenous origin would especially please many Indians who identify with Ashoka.

- The Brahmi script matches the sounds of the popular Indic languages derived from Sanskrit, including Pāli, the language of the Buddha's teachings and most of Ashoka's inscriptions.

- Over the following centuries, the Brahmi script clearly evolved into today's writing systems of both the north Indian Sanskrit-derived languages and the four major south Indian Dravidian languages. However, these systems of writing have since changed so much that north Indian writing and south Indian writing look very different and are mutually illegible.

- Since Ashoka's administration used the Brāhmī script, they must have also had something to write it on. The most common technique in India was to use a flattened palm leaf. Ashoka's administration probably used that, or wrote on wood, cloth, or leather. But all of these are very perishable, and so no actual records on these materials have survived from his reign.

- Instead, all the surviving Ashokan writings were carved on polished rocks and on stone pillars. Although weathered and eroded, these

have lasted for more than 2,300 years. However, their meaning had been lost for most of that long period. The Brahmi script continued to develop so that, a few centuries later, no one alive could read it in its oldest form.

The Turn to Buddhism

- Generally, ancient, long-forgotten scripts can be deciphered when they appear along with the same message written in other scripts that we do know how to read. Bilingual coins from a later Indo-Greek ruler enabled a British chemist, antiquarian, and orientalist in India, James Prinsep, to decipher Kharoshthi, the other script used by Ashoka, and from that to decipher the Brahmi script.

- According to Emperor Ashoka's own chronology in the inscriptions, eight years after he gained the throne, he led his armies to victory in an especially brutal and bloody war. The enemy was the land

Emperor Ashoka accompanied by troops

called Kalinga, which we call Odisha province of eastern India today. Then, as now, many Adivasis lived in the area's interior forested hills. Kalinga was near Magadha, so it must have been an especially resistant and fierce holdout against the Mauryan Empire to remain unconquered for so long.

- As Ashoka himself recalls, in this war of conquest his armies killed 100,000 local people and deported or enslaved 150,000 more. Even vaster numbers died from the devastation of their region. While these specific figures are probably not exact, the massive violence that Ashoka inflicted shocked even him into reconsidering his entire role as emperor and in life.

- As a result of this horrific war, Ashoka began to turn to Buddhism. In another inscription, Ashoka also credits one of his most charitable queens, Karuvaki, who, he says, guided him toward the Buddhist path.

- Becoming a Buddhist while ruling a vast empire, however, had to be a gradual process. Ashoka recorded how difficult it was for him, writing, "at first I did not make much progress." It was even more difficult for him to make his imperial household completely vegetarian. He writes: "Formerly in the Beloved of the God's kitchen several hundred thousand animals were killed daily for food; but now at the time of writing only three are killed — two peacocks and a deer, though the deer not regularly. Even these three animals will not be killed in future."

- For whatever reason, Ashoka does not discuss the transcendent goal of Buddhism, called nirvana. Instead, he repeatedly asserts that all those who follow the Buddhist dhamma will be reborn in heaven.

- For him as a Buddhist emperor, that dhamma meant protecting the poor and weak — the slaves and servants among his subjects. He ordered his governors to implement uniform, impartial, and predictable administration and regulations.

- For the officials governing the shattered region of Kalinga, he gave special instructions, publicly available for anyone to see, that the devastated people should be reconciled with and won over. He also made Dhauli, the site of the bloodiest battle of his conquest, into a center where monks, nuns, and other Buddhists could assemble and pray.

- It was even more difficult to make all the people of his empire follow the Buddhist dhamma of nonviolence. Ashoka tried diligently to convince them that Buddhism was more virtuous and effective than other religions, including Jainism, which had been followed by his grandfather, and the Brahmanic Vedic tradition, which was followed by the vast majority of his subjects.

- He created a ministry of dhamma and sent out state officials as missionaries to persuade people to follow dhamma. But Ashoka did not outlaw the other religious beliefs and practices of his subjects. An exception: He did ban Brahmanic Vedic animal sacrifices in his capital, although he evidently could not forbid them outside of it.

- Ashoka performed the Buddhist duty of dana, giving to the Buddhist sangha of monks and nuns. But he also gave charity to Brahmin and Jain teachers and ascetics.

Rock Inscriptions and Pillars

- Since Ashoka and his officials could not be everywhere in his vast empire, he ordered his decrees inscribed on many smoothly polished rock faces and on stone columns. Ashoka clearly wanted the local people to be able to read and understand these inscriptions, having them written in local languages.

- By plotting the location of each site of his surviving rock inscriptions, we can see an outline of the extent of his empire. Almost all of South Asia, except the very southern tip, seems to have recognized his sovereignty, however distantly.

Ashoka pillar

- Ashoka also ordered a sandstone quarry at Chunar near Banaras to carve out many 40-foot-long pillars, each weighing up to 50 tons. These massive columns were transported by animal-drawn carts for hundreds of miles to key sites within his empire, polished smooth, and inscribed with his edicts.

INNOVATIONS

- Ashoka is credited with organizing and systematizing Buddhism. Around 250 B.C.E., he called to his imperial capital all the major Buddhist leaders for what would be the third great Buddhist council. There, they codified the Buddhist canon in the Pali language and established doctrinal boundaries, meaning that some heterodox sects were declared non-Buddhist.

- While Ashoka repeated his personal and official commitment to Buddhism, he was still the ruler of a vast empire. He advocated for peaceful obedience from his subjects, but should any oppose him, he promised severe punishment. He vowed to protect the trees and animals of the forests that still made up a sizable part of his realm, and he warned the Adivasis against destroying imperial trees or animals.

- To foster commerce, as well as the movement of his officials and armies, Ashoka constructed roads across his vast empire. Along these, he ordered that shady trees and mango fruit groves be planted and that refreshing ponds and wells be dug along them.

- Nevertheless, communication and the movement of officials and armies remained relatively slow. Controlling so many diverse regions and cultures, over such vast distances, has historically proven very difficult for all empires in South Asia. The Mauryan Empire was the first empire of pan-Indian scale.

- While Ashoka seems to have directly governed the region around his imperial capital, Pataliputra, he sent out at least three and

perhaps more relatively autonomous governors to administer the empire's other distant provinces. But governors and officials did not always follow his directives. Ashoka lamented that officers did not always completely understand what he wanted, and that unjust imprisonment and torture were a problem.

THE DECLINE

- Ashoka wanted to make his regime and its principles eternal, but his dynasty lasted only five decades after his death.

- There were many reasons for the rapid decline of the Mauryan Empire. Such a patrimonial state needed an exceptionally strong leader like Ashoka. Evidently, none of his Mauryan heirs could rise to his level of power or authority.

- The technology available to the imperial administration had been overstretched, one example being slow communication over such a vast expanse of territory.

- Taxes no longer flowed to the imperial capital and emperor's treasury. Instead, various governors asserted their autonomy from the imperial center, keeping local revenues and establishing their own regimes.

- Further, the strongly distinct identities of India's historical regions, based on language and on social and economic bonds, reemerged from under the Ashokan. The glue of Buddhism that Ashoka had tried to use to hold together his universal imperium could not withstand the pull of the more regionally grounded Brahmanic traditions.

- Therefore, although some Mauryan successors sustained a rump kingdom for 50 years after Ashoka's death, a Brahmin imperial general assassinated and displaced the last, weak Mauryan king around 187 B.C.E. That general founded his own Shunga Brahmin dynasty in Magadha.

Suggested Reading

Mookerji, *Asoka*.

Olivelle, Leoshko, and Ray, *Reimagining Asoka.*

Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas.*

Lecture 13

Deccani and Southern States

The fragmentation of the Mauryan Empire in the 2nd century B.C.E began a millennium during which many different regionally based kingoms briefly expanded and then shrank. Despite the chaos, there were a few patterns: Overall, the economy grew; different social classes and groups sought appealing ideological and religious systems; and tension grew between resilient local cultures and kingdoms on one side and outsiders on the other. These broader processes occurred within each of the four macro-regions of the Indian subcontinent during the post-Mauryan age. These macro-regions were the Indus River and northwest, Gangetic north India, the Deccan highland, and the peninsular south. In this lecture, we'll concentrate first on the Deccan highland and then turn to the far south.

LINKS

- While the Deccan highland and the south were in many ways distinct, they were not isolated from each other. First, rivers and trade linked them. Many of the most important rivers flow east or southeast from the upland Deccan to the seashore. Merchants conveyed crops and products up and down these rivers between the interior and the coast.

- There was a cultural gradient rather than a sharp divide between these two macro-regions. The northern Deccan incorporated both Sanskritic north Indian and also Adivasi and Dravidian cultures. Moving south reveals less north Indian culture and more Adivasi and Dravidian features.

- This is clearly evident in the dominant languages. In the north Deccan, the major languages, like Marathi, Hindi, and Odia, are

derived from Sanskrit. However, from even earlier, many Dravidian-language-speaking people had settled in the southern Deccan and in south India's various and diverse ecological niches. There they developed the four major languages in the Dravidian language family: Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Malayalam.

- The Dravidian society of the south did not conform easily to the Brahmanic model, and Sanskrit was a language from outside the culture—a language that only a small, elite percentage of the society used.

The Satavahana Dynasty

- With the fragmentation of the Mauryan Empire, various regionally based rulers and governors asserted their autonomy. The most prominent of these in the Deccan area was the Satavahana dynasty.

- They had apparently been locally powerful chieftains who accepted the lordship of Emperor Ashoka Maurya. They were originally based in the western part of the Deccan plateau, today inland in the Maharashtra province of India. When the Mauryan dynasty ended,
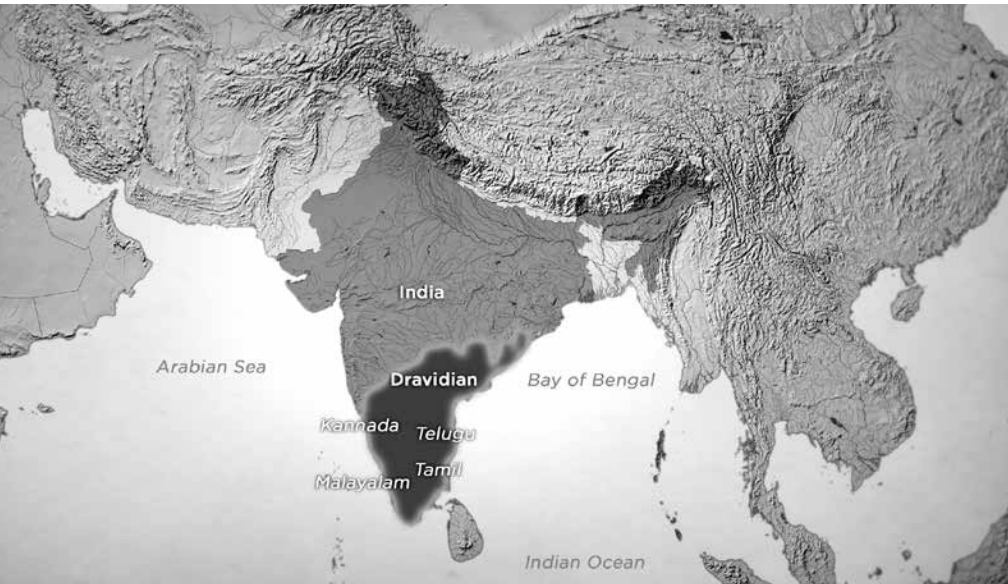
the Satavahanas reasserted their own kingship. Then they spread their regime eastward. Eventually, they also became known as the Andhra dynasty, which is the name of the eastern part of the Deccan.

■ The Satavahanas also reached militarily and politically toward both the north and the south. To their northwest, they faced the incoming Sakas, who were central Asians who erupted into India from the northwest and settled in what today are Gujarat and Rajasthan. The Satavahanas and Saka kings alternated victories with defeats, with no ruler being able to hold onto his military conquests for very long.

■ In contrast, the Satavahanas achieved greater military success advancing southward down the Godavari River to the southeast coast of India. By spanning the Deccan from coast to coast, the Satavahana Empire prospered through overseas trade.

■ But the loosely controlled Satavahana empire could not last. Saka armies weakened and fragmented the Satavahanas by about 220 C.E., although a rump of the Satavahana state lasted a few decades longer.

THE PALLAVA DYNASTY

■ One of the Satavahana dynasty's successors in its southeast was the Pallava dynasty. For about 600 years (from the 4th century through the 9th century C.E.), the Pallava regime dominated the agriculturally and commercially rich lands around Kanchipuram, in India's southeast.

■ This region receives irrigation from both rivers flowing down from the Deccan and also from seasonal rains during the northeast monsoon. This makes rice growing especially productive. Additionally, inland and overseas trade brought riches.

■ The origins of the Pallavas are ambiguous, perhaps intentionally obscured as a series of different families over the centuries each tried to claim that dynastic name. More certain is that the first Pallavas were local subordinates of the Satavahana conquerors. The earliest

firm historical evidence of the Pallava dynasty has been preserved on copper plates that we can date to around 275 C.E. This was just when the Satavahana empire was fragmenting and its subordinated kings were breaking free.

- Over the next centuries, Pallava armies sporadically conquered north and south up the Tamil coast. At their peak in the late 6th century, their armies conquered westward up the rivers into the dry interior, even as far as the Western Ghats, covering about 7,000 square miles. The Pallavas also created a navy in order to extend their power into the island of Sri Lanka. But beyond their core region, Pallava rule tended to be relatively thin, enforced by armies but also by the soft power of their culture.

- For example, one especially prominent Pallava king, Mahendravarman I, who ruled from 600 to 630 C.E., proved himself a cultured man as well as a successful warrior. Some of his surviving inscriptions describe how he was born a Jain but then converted to the Hindu sect of Shaivism due to the influence of Saint Appar.

- Appar was a famous poet and leader of a Tamil religious movement devoted to Shiva, the major Hindu god of creative destruction. Appar had also converted from Jainism.

- Even if this may not prove to be a historically accurate biography of Mahendravarman, it shows how Jain and Hindu Shaivite religious communities were in tension, each seeking to bring the Pallava king into its community. But the Shaivites seem to have won since the Pallava royal seal showed the lingam, or phallic, symbol of Shiva and also an image of his vehicle, the bull Nandi.

- Eventually, Pallava kings lost power, and their empire fragmented by the late 9th century. Their Tondaimandalam region remained agriculturally rich, with prosperous land and overseas trading networks, although now under the rule of former Pallava subordinates.

PALLAVA SUCCESSORS

■ Among the Pallavas' successors were the Cholas based in the temple town of Thanjavur (or Tanjore). They largely took over the coastal plain of the southeast part of the peninsula and extended their trade and naval power extensively in Southeast Asia. These were again a series of families that claimed that same dynastic title.

■ Under the Cholas, temples became ever larger and more elaborate. Some were vastly wealthy from donations. For example, the Thanjavur temple reportedly had an annual income from 300 villages that totaled 500 pounds of gold, 250 pounds of jewels, and 600 pounds of silver. This temple alone employed 600 people including priests, temple dancers, and 57 musicians and text readers.

■ Another eventual successor dynasty were the Pandyans. They were based not in the wetter coast but rather in the dryer upland interior of the Tamil-speaking region. The royal Pandyan dynasty is mentioned in texts dating from the 4th century B.C.E. The dynastic title lasted, in one form or another through a series of families, for about 1,500 years. The Cholas and Pandyans serve as excellent examples of the Dravidian model of kingship that was strongest in peninsular south India.

LOCAL DEITIES

■ As various local communities settled in south India and elsewhere, they often focused on a local deity. Emically these deities spoke the local language, in this case Tamil. Many were fierce warrior goddesses who ate the meat offered them by their non-vegetarian devotees. Their martial and cosmic energy, or Shakti, was enhanced. Many of these goddesses were also unmarried, so their Shakti was not controlled by a husband. This made them especially powerful but also dangerous to those who opposed or disregarded them.

■ Some such local goddesses represented major diseases, for example, smallpox. Any devotee who survived that disease did so through the grace of the goddess.

- In the Dravidian state model, the local deity stood as the divine sovereign while the king customarily served as the divinity's first-ranked human worshipper and earthly agent.

- Over time, however, many south Indian kings like the Cholas and Pandyans wished to attract into their kingdoms Brahmins and their ritual prestige and authority. Such kings conventionally gave gifts of tax-free land in order to entice these Brahmins to settle.

- An all-Brahmin community became known as an *agrahara*. Each a*grahara* was surrounded by its fields and dependent villages, where the lower-ranked tenants did the farming but lived outside the *agrahara*.

- In many cases, Brahmin priests gained control over already important local religious sites and temples. The model of fierce meat-eating, unmarried local goddesses, however, did not conform to conventional Brahmanic concepts of the divine.

- In etic terms, we can perceive a process by which these local deities were incorporated into the Brahmanic model. This is a process named *Sanskritization* by the distinguished Indian anthropologist M. N. Srinivas, since Sanskrit is the premier and sacred Brahmanic language. To Sanskritize is for a lower-ranked family or community to aspire to upward ritual and social mobility by imitating the ways of life of Brahmins or Kshatriyas.

- In cases where the local deity is male, he might be Sanskritized into a manifestation or son of a Brahmanic male god, especially Vishnu or Shiva. If the local deity is female, she might be ritually wedded to a male Brahmanic god. But many local people still envisioned the deity in her earlier, local identity as their own. This sometimes let to tension over possession of the identity and property of that deity.

Minakshi

■ As a prime example of the Sanskritization process, we can consider the Pandyan dynasty and the goddess Minakshi in their major south Indian pilgrimage city, Madurai.

■ Minakshi conventionally has a green complexion and holds a parrot. She first emerged from a sacred pond full of golden lotuses. This suggests in etic terms that she might have originally been a local Adivasi forest goddess taken over by Dravidian culture.

■ The earliest historical accounts have her as a Tamil-speaking, fierce, unmarried, meat-eating goddess. In emic terms, her divine Shakti enabled the local Pandyan dynasty to conquer and rule the region for generations, with her Madurai home as the dynasty's capital.

■ But after she was Sanskritized, the Brahmanic history of Minakshi became that she was the all-Indian goddess Parvati, the consort of the god Shiva. She had originally agreed as an act of grace to be born on earth as the daughter of the Pandyan king. The Pandyan king and queen had been promised a son, but instead they received a daughter with three breasts. They raised her as a warrior.

■ She led the Pandyan armies to victory in all directions, over both earthly kings and also over all but one of the gods. When she confronted Shiva, her husband in heaven and her husband to be on earth, however, her third breast disappeared. She became shy, and she accepted him as her lord.

■ One of the major rituals in the city of Madurai is the reenactment of the wedding of Minakshi to Shiva. The Brahmanic god Vishnu stood as the bride's brother, giving her to her groom. Being invited to attend this wedding, and being seated near the ceremony, remains for many leading people in the region a symbolic high mark of status.

■ Today, the major temple in Madurai includes Minakshi's original golden lotus pond and her special shrine. But they are now off center,

Hindu deities

with the main part of the temple now being the home of Shiva and Minakshi as a married couple. This vast temple complex dominates the heart of the original city of Madurai.

Suggested Reading

Chamakalakshmi, *Religion, Tradition, and Ideology.*

Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time.*

Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India.*

Northwest and North India

I n the last lecture, we considered the Deccan and peninsular South India following the fragmentation of the Mauryan Empire in the 2nd century B.C.E. Now we can concentrate on developments within and between India's other two macro-regions in the millennium after the Mauryan Empire's fragmentation. On the Gangetic plain, the expanding agricultural and trade-based economy supported social and cultural changes that powered the Gupta Empire and other expansive states. In the northwest, martial and peaceful immigrants from Central Asia periodically entered the Indus plain, linking India by land with other Asian lands and the Mediterranean.

KNOWLEDGE SOURCES
- There is little architecture and few surviving artifacts from the northwest and the Gagnetic plain that we can study to learn about the culture and technology of that time.

- One potential source: A hoard of coins accidently lost and later discovered by chance can tell us the names, religious affiliations, and titles of rulers whose coins were included. Material quality and minting techniques can tell us about economic health and metallurgy methods.

- Religious texts from this period also contain rich information. During this period, we do begin to see more examples of the Sanskrit *Purana* genre, meaning accounts of the "ancient." These conventionally begin with the creation of the universe, and highlight the origins of deities and the cycles of cosmic time.

- Some of these Puranas also include the genealogies of dynasties (often from a divine ancestor) and lists of the dynasty's kings. But there was no standardized chronological system in place across India, so they are often hard to date very accurately. Further, these and other texts do not usually state who the writer was, except that they were often attributed to a divine or legendary author.

- Kings during this period made special efforts to glorify themselves in inscriptions, some of which have survived. From the 2nd century C.E., royal inscriptions tended to follow a very eulogizing style. They often vastly inflate claims, listing many more defeated or subordinated kings and regions conquered than actually occurred.

MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

- One of the main recurrent features of the post-Mauryan millennium was the growing movement of people and commerce into and out of India through the northwest, what is today Afghanistan on one side of the mountain passes and the Indus River plain on the other.

- Alexander the Great's invasion of 327 B.C.E. had destabilized the kingdoms in that region and left it a cultural shatter zone. Greek, Iranian, Central Asian, and even Chinese people and cultures overlapped with Indian ones there. Trade routes linking the Mediterranean, India, and China flourished and enriched communities and kingdoms along the way. This later became known as the Silk Road, although many different high-value products flowed along it.

- On the western flank of this region were Iranian-based empires. The Seleucids had arisen as the successors to Alexander's eastern empire. But their own eastern governors, or *satraps*, in Afghanistan and the Punjab soon asserted their autonomy. These many small kingdoms are collectively described by historians as Indo-Greek Bactrians. This suggests that they built upon Indian Buddhist, Hindu, Greek, and Central Asian cultures and state formations.

The Kushanas

- A series of Central Asian groups brought trade and periodic raids. One of these groups aggressively migrated into the northwest as far as the Indus plain and then ruled there. These were the Kushanas, probably known to the Chinese as the dangerous Yuezhi.

- One of their most powerful early kings, Kanishka, and his successors recognized and built their authority on the cultures of the array of people they ruled. For example, some Kushana rulers proclaimed their royal status using Greek, Roman, Iranian, Chinese, and Indian titles simultaneously.

- The Kushanas dominated the northwest region from the 1st through the 3rd centuries, gaining control of key parts of the Silk Road. Eventually, however, the Kushanas were subordinated during the 4th–5th century by the Sasanian Empire of Iran, which mounted expeditions eastward into the Indus plain.

The Sakas

- Another incoming Central Asian ethnic group were the Scythians, known in India as the Sakas. They pushed their way into northwestern India and beyond the Indus into western India starting from the 2nd century B.C.E. One branch historians call the Western Sakas gradually conquered much of today's Gujarat and Rajasthan.

- The Sakas fought perennially against the Satavahanas, who ruled the Deccan and stood high in Brahmanic Hindu society. The Saka king Rudraman I (r. 130–150 C.E.) gave one of his daughters to the Satavahana king as a bride.

- This created a political marriage alliance. In Indian cultural terms, it showed both Rudradaman's acceptance of the social and political superiority of his Satavahana son-in-law and also Satavahana acceptance of the Sakas as Hindus.

Assimilation

- Various Saka clans and other settling ethnic groups began to assimilate into Indian Hindu society. This was usually a gradual, multistage process.

- The nature of the so-called caste system of Varnas and jatis meant that clans could live amidst other groups while not dining or intermarrying with them. But gradually they connected themselves more with the local society. In doing this, some former outsider groups began to take on social and cultural characteristics recognized locally as Kshatriya.

- The martial, often ruling jati of Rajputs, literally "sons of kings," was both accepted as part of the Kshatriya Varna and also as a status into which powerful outsiders could assimilate. This is the process known by social scientists as *Sanskritization*, since Sanskrit is the sacred language of Brahmins.

- Outsiders also sometimes enhanced their identification by themselves and others as Rajputs through a two-stage process of intermarriage. First, the former outsiders would use their political power and economic resources to convince already recognized Rajput families in the region to accept brides from them. (Since brides customarily married upward, the bride giver recognized the social superiority of the bride receiver.)

- The next step came when the former newcomers clearly had risen in power above already established Rajputs. Then they convinced the latter to give brides to them. This provided public proof that the former outsiders were now high-ranking Rajputs, standing above the bride givers.

- As another component of this process of proving themselves Rajputs, the upwardly mobile clan often hired Brahmins. In exchange for payment and other patronage, these Brahmins would perform royal rituals that only Kshatriyas were supposed to be eligible for.

Further, some Brahmins "discovered" their patron's true genealogy as descended from a great Kshatriya ruler and, ultimately, from the sun, the moon, or from a sacred sacrificial fire.

THE GUPTAS

- Over the centuries following the fragmentation of the Mauryan Empire and the collapse of the Sunga dynasty, the Gangetic plain was the arena in which various regionally based dynasties arose, attempted to expand, and then either fragmented or shrank back to their core region.

- Eventually, the most prominent and successful of these were the Guptas. This dynasty arose from uncertain origins, established their regime in the still-wealthy Magadha region, and built an empire starting in the early 4th century C.E. The Gupta Empire lasted powerfully for 200 years in the face of recurrent invasions by Central Asians.

- Our attention is drawn to the Guptas not only for their political and military accomplishments but also because of the flourishing of Sanskrit and Hindu culture under their patronage.

- The Guptas began their rise to power when the dynamic Gupta general named Chandragupta I married into the Licchavi clan that was dominant near Magadha around 320 C.E. Once in control over the rich resources of Magadha, Chandragupta stood forth as a king and began a decade of conquests that his four successors would greatly extend over the next 200 years.

- In addition to being effective military commanders, the Guptas succeeded in their conquests by recruiting huge armies, mostly bow-armed infantry. They also used elephants as war animals.

- At its greatest extent, the Gupta Empire stretched over the entire Ganges plain. Tributary kings recognized Gupta overlord-ship as far west as the Indus River and as far south as Kanchipuram.

- The Guptas also made marriage alliances that extended their power. For example, in the 5th century, one Gupta princess, Prabhavati, married the current king of the Vakataka dynasty in the western Deccan. When her husband died, Prabhavati took over as regent, ruling that kingdom as a Gupta ally while her son grew up.

- While the core of the Gupta Empire was in Magadha, they tried to buttress their administration in the western part of their regime by making the historically significant city of Ujjain their second capital.

- Especially in the Gupta capital cities, royal and other patrons sponsored authors of Sanskrit literature. The two great Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, reached their final and most polished form under the Guptas.

- Although the Guptas favored the worship of the Hindu god Vishnu, they also patronized Buddhism. Several Chinese pilgrims who traveled through the Gupta Empire in search of the original teachings of the Buddha noted the extensive system of Buddhist monasteries.

- For a century, the Gupta Empire repulsed repeated assaults by Central Asian Huns from the northwest. But the Gupta dynasty was drained of resources from this constant warfare and finally collapsed by 550.

After the Guptas

- Over the following century, dozens of rival, regionally based dynasties fought to survive and expand in north India as further martial immigrations came from the northwest. One king, Harsha, emerged out of this melee and briefly created an empire that echoed Gupta accomplishments.

- Harsha's family had been locally prominent as rulers of Thanesar. Harsha got his chance at roughly age 16 when his older brother was assassinated around. Harsha therefore inherited their father's small kingdom around the year 606.

- Then Harsha defeated the assassins of his sister's late husband, who was ruler of a larger and more significant kingdom, based in Kannauj. With that as his base for his half-century long reign, Harsha led ever-growing armies against his neighbors in all directions, including still-wealthy Magadha, which provided him with even more resources of men and materiel.

- Harsha's triumphs reached their southern limit, however, when he tried to invade the Deccan around 630. That campaign overextended his forces, and he lost to the Chalukyas, a series of rulers who had eventually largely succeeded to the territories earlier ruled by the Satavahanas.

- In part, we know so much more about King Harsha than about his many rivals because of the literature, including historical accounts, that flourished under his patronage. One of Harsha's courtiers, the poet Bana, was a brilliant Brahmin praise singer.

- He glorified his patron by composing a literary biography in Sanskrit entitled *Harshacharita*, or *The Deeds of Harsha*, which begins with Harsha's miraculous conception and birth and ends with him about to begin his glorious reign of conquest. Despite this supernatural account of Harsha's origins and early reign, this text still preserves for us valuable knowledge of the culture of Harsha's court and his historical context.

- Yet more knowledge about Harsha's reign comes from the Chinese pilgrims who passed through his kingdoms seeking to find Buddhist texts and relics. But a later Chinese visitor, Wang Xuance, an ambassador from the Tang Emperor who reached Kannauj in 647, found Harsha's throne had been usurped by his minister. This both gives us a termination date for his reign and indicates that Harsha's heirs proved unable to hold on to his throne.

- Instead, the northwest and the Ganges region experienced centuries of brief conquests by a series of warrior-kings. Among these were Rajputs (perhaps originally Sakas) who spread across north India from the 8th through the 10th centuries.

- One king from Kashmir, Lalitaditya Muktapida, briefly conquered much of north India between 724–760. Other powerful kings fought their way up the Ganges from Bengal while yet others made incursions north from the Deccan. However, rarely could any conquering dynasty hold a transregional state together for more than one reign.

Suggested Reading

Bana, *The Harsa-carita.*

Olivelle, ed., *Between the Empires.*

Thapar, *Sakuntala.*

Lecture 15

Brahmanic Synthesis

To survive and flourish, religions and their leaders must adapt to changing circumstances while seeking to retain their core principles. Over the long period from the 3rd century B.C.E. to the 8th century C.E., Brahmins gradually built up their prominence in Indian society. To do so, they made their models of and for the universe and society into what is today called Hinduism. In this process, Brahmins absorbed many of the most attractive features of their rivals, particularly Jainism, Buddhism, and popular movements centered on particular gods and goddesses.

ADAPTATIONS

- From the 3rd century B.C.E. onward, the new religions of Jainism and Buddhism taught nonviolence and alternative paths to the Vedic model based on sacrifice. These newer religions attracted kings of non-royal origin, especially the Mauryan emperors, as well as rising classes in Indian society, particularly merchants.

- Brahmins, for their part, strengthened their religious leadership. They expanded upon the sacred Veda, which had, in etic terms, been compiled starting over a millennium earlier. Society had changed greatly as Vedic pastoralists largely settled down to become farmers or town or city dwellers starting around 500 B.C.E.

- The specific words of the Veda no longer related to their lives. Vedic Sanskrit had become an archaic language. Even educated people spoke a later form of Sanskrit or a Sanskrit-derived language. As a result, Brahmin teachers increasingly interpreted the Veda into ways that the vast majority of the population of India found more compelling.

- Brahmins coopted some of popular devotionalism, called *bhakti*. They highlighted specific Hindu gods and goddesses as objects of *puja*, or worship. Brahmins proved especially successful under rich, powerful, and culturally sophisticated patrons like the Gupta Empire of the 4th to 6th centuries C.E.

- Since many of the core features of what we call Hinduism consolidated during this period, we'll use that term from now onward, although it is somewhat anachronistic to do so since the term was not actually used widely until much later in India's history.

The Shastras

- Over many centuries, Brahmin scholars composed in the Sanskrit of their day a series of formal teachings, or *shastras*. These teachings linked the Veda with explanations and rules for most aspects of living people's lives.

- The major shastras were composed as Brahmins successfully re-exerted influence the hearts and minds of most Indians. The shastras are emically classed as *Smrti*, that is, "remembered knowledge," or "tradition," the product of divinely inspired but human authors. This genre is therefore less sacred than the Veda, which is regarded as uncreated truth—the universe in sound form. The teacher-authors of these shastras did not all agree, so there are often different versions of the same shastra.

- In its model structure, each shastra begins with devout students reverently approaching their semi-divine teacher with a deep question. The dharma shastra, for instance, has students wanting to know the origin of each of the four Varnas and of the thousands of jatis, and the duties, dharma, for men and women in each of these.

- In response to his students' questions, the semi-divine teacher then elaborates, based on his complete comprehension of the Veda. The teacher thus provides commentary that makes the lessons relevant to

the contemporary society and concerns of his students. This question and response is a powerful rhetorical strategy used by many cultures around the world.

■ To illustrate what the shastras say, and how they convey their teachings, we'll look at the three main Brahmanic shastras. These present, first, the science of morality — dharma — second, the science of material power — artha — and third, the science of sensual pleasure — kama. When applied expertly, each of these sciences leads to moksha, that is, release from the cycle of rebirth and re-death.

THE DHARMA SHASTRA

■ Dharma stands as the highest path toward moksha. It is also the path that its authors and audience have found most widely relevant since it addresses many of the social patterns and tensions of its era.

■ As with the other shastras, there were many versions of the dharma shastra. The version that has become most widely used is attributed to a legendary semi-divine figure, Manu.

■ The dharma shastra provides room for all three Brahmin turns of life — the householder, the forest dweller, and the wandering ascetic — honoring each. To do so, the shastra prescribes different *ashrama*, or life stages. Each ashrama is initiated by a specific rite of passage, a *samskara*, which transforms one into the next stage or level of existence.

■ In the classic dharma shastra model, children do not have full status as members of human society until they have been initiated. This initiation was the major rite of donning of a sacred thread that makes one "twice born." This sacred thread is a ritually constructed white cotton cord around the torso, draped from the left shoulder across the chest and back, with the lowest portion at the right waist. Once donned, this sacred thread has to be kept pure and periodically renewed.

- Ages for receiving the thread vary, but the standard for a Brahmin boy is eight years after birth; for a Kshatriya boy, it's age 11, and for a Vaishya, it's age 12. Only male Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas are eligible. Today in India, twice-born men total only about 10 percent of the population.

- Once initiated, a twice-born man should study the Veda under a worthy Brahmin teacher, called a *guru*, meaning someone heavy with knowledge. The student must remain celibate, live on food given freely by donors, and be fully obedient in the service of his teacher.

- Some devote much of their lives in this student stage of life. The shastra prescribes 36 of Vedic study as ideal, but other students pass through this stage much more rapidly—some in just a matter of hours.

- The dharma shastra prescribes the next major rite of passage, marriage, for men and women of all Varnas. Hence, it is the second samskara for twice-born men but the first for everyone else.

HOUSEHOLDERS

- Since the ashrama of householder is a mandatory stage of life for all people, the shastra ranks it as the vital foundation for society. The householder produces children, especially sons, who perpetuate the father's lineage. The twice-born householder also performs the Vedic rituals that sustain the universe and human society as well.

- Much of the dharma shastra is devoted to prescribing the ideal life for a householder. As the shastra's authors do throughout, they especially address a male Brahmin audience. It is clear, in etic terms, that Brahmins incorporated many of the most persuasive features of the rival Jain and Buddhist traditions.

- Among these was to regard nonviolence highly. The shastra forbids animal sacrifices, and instead prescribes the offering of clarified

butter called *ghee*, fruits, flowers, and other plant products. People dedicated their devotion to particular gods, especially Shiva or his family or Vishnu and his incarnations. This made the puja more personal and less formulaic.

- Since some acts of violence could easily be incurred by living in the world, the shastra provides three means of expiation of the negative effects of those acts. First, the person can cleanse him or herself. Second, if the person does not do the expiation, then the king should punish him or her instead. Third, if a person dies with the bad karma unpurged, then the consequence will be a birth at a lower level. For instance, the authors of the shastra declare that a Brahmin who drinks spirituous liquor enter the body of an insect, a bird feeding on ordure, or a destructive beast.

FINAL STAGES
- Once a householder has secured his lineage, when his sons themselves have sons, he can voluntarily enter the optional next stage of life as a forest dweller. In this stage, he begins to withdraw his senses and his involvements with society. Women could also enter this stage of life, although the shastra does not discuss their doing so very extensively.

- In the dharma shastra, there is a final optional stage, one that leads directly toward moksha. This stage comes after one's symbolic cremation, a ritual that symbolically ends one's social identity. In this final stage of life, one wanders homelessly, without any family ties, eating only when fed, neither desiring life nor desiring death.

ARTHA SHASTRA
- The artha shastra deals with the second highest ranked path of material power and wealth. While Brahmins claimed precedence in ritual terms, during this post-Vedic period kings and merchants had been rising. Much of the support for Jainism and Buddhism

came from those rising classes, so some Brahmins compiled the artha shastra to address the concerns and dharma of those classes in particular.

- Credit for this text later went to a Brahmin, Chanakya of the Kautilya clan, who had reportedly masterminded the rise of the first Mauryan emperor around 320 B.C.E. But internal evidence indicates that the most prominent version of the artha shastra was compiled hundreds of years after Chanakya's death. As we discussed in the lecture on the origins of the Mauryan Empire, etic historians have found unique source material about that empire in this shastra.

- The artha shastra focuses mostly on the role of king, but this shastra also provides rich evidence about how its authors envisioned the households of the expanding middle and upper classes, especially those living in the burgeoning cities of that post Vedic era.

- For example, this shastra prescribes the highest ranked of type of wedding as one in which the bride's parents give a dowry, including jewelry. Unlike dowry customs in India today, in this shastra, the bride retained much authority and control over that wealth. But there are also limits set by the shastra about the extent a woman could move about in public without incurring a fine from the state.

The Kama Shastra

- The third major shastra also deals with key parts of society. This is the kama shastra, sometimes known as the Kama Sutra. *Kama* means the pleasurable relationship between the material world and a person as experienced through the senses. Here, as with the other two paths to moksha, the goal is to perform masterfully the duties appropriate to one's social identity but with total non-attachment.

- The kama shastra addresses a more limited audience. It specifies that young urban men and women should study its teachings for a cultivated life of pleasure. But courtesans are the special focus,

since their livelihood depends on their mastery of its principles and practices.

■ For a courtesan, or indeed any women, the shastra prescribes training and mastery of the classical 64 arts. These include a vast range of expertise, from singing, playing a variety of instruments, gymnastics, and magic, to cooking, carpentry, architecture, and chemistry.

■ Other parts in this shastra detail the arts of seduction, titillation of one's partner, and the ideal types of kissing, touching, and sexual intercourse. These last sections have attracted much international attention, but there are also many misconceptions about it. As with all the shastras, the purpose of the kama shastra is to enable a devoted and dispassionate practitioner of its sciences, someone who is in complete control over the senses, to achieve moksha, never to be born again.

Suggested Reading

Agarwal, *Rise and Fall of the Imperial Guptas.*

Doniger, tr., *Hindu Myths.*

Manu, *The Law Code of Manu.*

Murthy, *Samskara.*

Lecture 16

Indian Parsis, Jews, and Christians

Superficial impressions of India may make it seem like a Hindu nation or, at most, a Hindu nation with a substantial Muslim minority. But Indian society has long been more diverse than that. Numerous minority communities with their own particular religious and cultural traditions have for many centuries lived as parts of Indian society, identifiably separate and yet extensively interacting with the majority. Some of these minority communities originated and have developed within India, like the Jains and Buddhists. But other minority communities originally came from outside of India. Such groups include the Parsis, Jews, and early Christians in India whom we will discuss in this lecture.

THE PARSIS

- Much of the distinctiveness of the Parsi community comes from its ancient tradition in Iran. The ancient sage Zoroaster founded a religious tradition that for many centuries dominated there. He taught that there is a constant conflict between the forces of good on one hand and those of evil on the other. He also taught that humans should respect the purity of the three prime elements: fire, water, and earth.

- Until the coming of Islam in the 8th century, Zoroastrianism was the state religion of Iran's Sassanian Empire. According to the emic history recounted by Zoroastrians in India, when Islam arrived, they fled in order to remain true to their faith. They found refuge in the trading ports of the Gujarat region of India.

- According to the most commonly told version of their origin, these refugees were at first refused entry by the local Hindu king. He showed them a bowl filled to the brim with milk. The message was

that nothing more could be added without the bowl—symbolically his kingdom—overflowing.

■ But when the Zoroastrians sprinkled sugar on the milk, it was absorbed without causing an overflow and added sweetness. The then accepted the Zoroastrians under five specific conditions:

- ◆ They should explain their beliefs to the king.
- ◆ They should abandon their own language, Parsi or Persian, and adopt the local language, Gujarati.
- ◆ Their womenfolk should wear Gujarati-style clothing, with the sari wrapped in a distinctive way so that the end comes over the right shoulder and drapes over the chest.
- ◆ Their menfolk should disarm and live peacefully as merchants.
- ◆ They should not disturb the indigenous population with wedding processions during the daytime.

■ Etic scholars interpret this account as revealing both how the Parsis actually reached and settled in India, and how they explain their origins to themselves. Scholars believe that, instead of arriving as refugees, Parsis were actually part of a long-standing trade diaspora network throughout the Indian Ocean, especially linking Iran and India.

■ The five conditions all justify why the Parsi culture looks so similar to the local Gujarati Hindu one, at least outwardly. While they are to explain their beliefs to those who wish to listen, they are not to force it upon others through warlike behavior or intruding on their social space with processions.

■ Although this is not sanctioned by Zoroastrian doctrine, three distinct social classes have developed. These function much like Hindu Varnas. The highest are the hereditary priests. Then there is the general Parsi community, who have predominantly been merchants. The lowest group are the people who carry the dead into the Towers of Silence and prepare them for dismemberment there.

- As outward-looking merchants, centered in the commercial ports of Surat and later Bombay (today Mumbai), the Parsis were among the most successful communities during the period of European colonialism. Parsis adapted quickly and effectively to the opportunities that these Europeans opened up.

- Some of the leading corporations in India today, like the Tata Group, were started by Parsis who adapted to business opportunities in India and then the larger world. They often combined commercial acumen with a sense of social responsibility, so there are many philanthropic institutions and organizations started and run by Parsis.

- But the Parsi community has been shrinking over the last century. More educated Parsi youth marry late, marry outside the community, or do not marry at all. They have fewer children. At present, there are only about 60,000 Parsis in India, and they are aging, with a third of the entire community over age 60.

The Cochin Jews

- The oldest of the three major Jewish communities in India was located along the southwest coast, especially in the port city of Cochin (now renamed Kochi, in the Indian province of Kerala). There was a well-established, and at times prosperous, settlement there since ancient times.

- Later ethnographic research shows that this Cochin-based community developed two subgroups. One kept the name *pardesi*, meaning "foreigners." They claimed direct descent from Yemeni Jewish people and appeared largely of that genetic heritage.

- Ranked below them were people who became known as the Black Jews. They also claim direct Jewish descent. But there is etic evidence that they have mixed Indian and Yemeni ancestry or only Indian ancestry.

- The Cochin Jewish community reached its economic peak during the period when the Abbasid Caliphate, based in Baghdad, flourished for the five centuries starting in 750 C.E.

- As the Abbasid Caliphate expanded its authority over the northern and western shores of the Indian Ocean coast during the 9th and 10th centuries, it created conditions that fostered prosperity for merchant communities trading there, including the Cochin Jews. The caliphs minted uniform gold and silver coins and created communication systems, which increased the market's effectiveness.

- But the Mongols destroyed Baghdad in 1258. With the collapse of the Abbasid system, the prosperity of the Cochin Jews in Kerala declined.

The Baghdadi Jews

- The second major center for Jews in India was the trading center in Bengal. There they became known as Baghdadi Jews because they came overland from Iraq, through Iran, and across Afghanistan and north India.

- They sent their sons to yeshivas in Baghdad, where they formed networks that would prove mutually beneficial for international trade as the former students returned to their trade diaspora communities around the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal.

- Much artisanal production, especially handspun and handwoven cotton and silk cloth, concentrated in Bengal. Merchants throughout north India brought raw materials and finished products down the Ganges River, where Jewish and other traders shipped it overseas.

- They also purchased products arriving from southeast Asia and China. Thus, these merchant communities prospered from the extensive commerce that flowed in and out of the Bay of Bengal.

The Bene Israel

- The third major Jewish community settled on the upper western coast of India. This community became known as the Bene Israel. Their origins are disputed. Many in the community claim direct descent from the Jewish biblical tribes. But many outsiders propose one or another later arrival date for their arrival in India. They may have been a branch of the Cochin Jews.

- They seem to have settled first in Surat (now in the Indian province of Gujarat), which was a long-standing trading center. After the Surat port silted up, many moved to the new British trading outpost of Bombay. The oldest active Bene Israel synagogue in present-day Mumbai dates from 1796, during the period when the English East India Company governed Bombay.

- Since the Bene Israel lived in the thriving British-ruled port of Bombay, they lasted longer than the other two Jewish communities in India. However, when Indian and, more importantly, Israeli independence came in 1947 and 1948 respectively, most Jewish people immigrated to Israel.
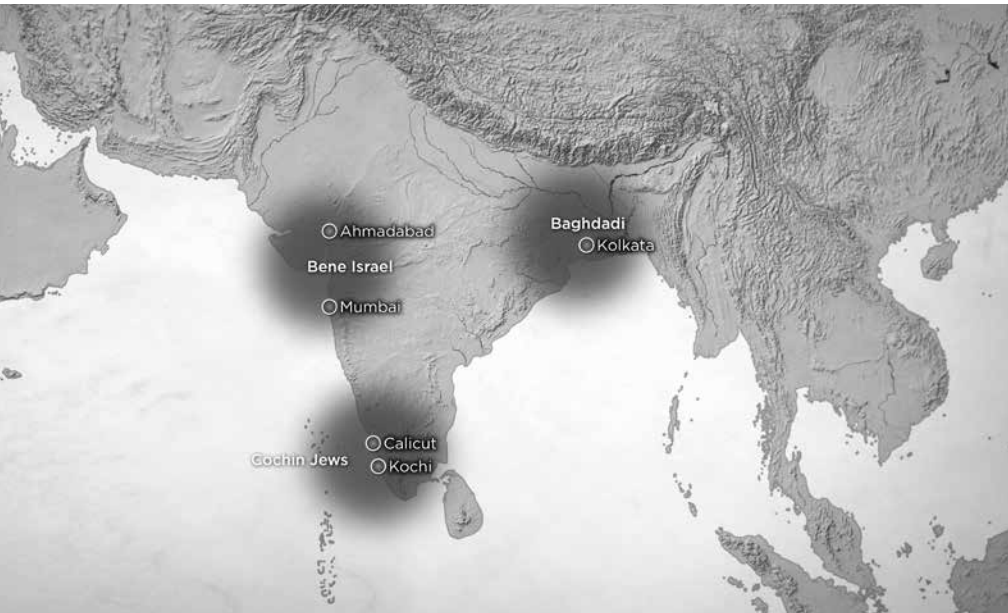
- The total number of Jewish people in India declined rapidly. In 1947, there were about 17,000 Bene Israel, 6,000 Baghdadi, and 2,000 Cochin Jews in India. Today, the total number is about 5,000, mostly Bene Israel.

SYRIAN CHRISTIANS

- The third community that we'll consider in this lecture is made up of people known as Syrian Christians, since they follow the Syrian Nestorian form of Christianity and have Syriac as their liturgical language.

- The Nestorians were a branch of Christianity that had split off over doctrinal issues in the 5th–6th centuries and based themselves in Persia and Syria. The Syrian Christians who settled in India were an eastern outpost of this distinctive branch of Christianity.

- Like the Cochin Jews, they are concentrated along India's southwest coast. They also have several emic origin stories. The most prestigious account of their origins includes personal conversion by St. Thomas, one of Jesus's 12 apostles. Another emic origin account has a merchant, Thomas of Cana, doing the conversion.

- Scholars highlight the biological ancestry of this community. They describe a process like what we saw for Jews: merchants who came from the west across the Indian Ocean interacted with local Indian people and established families with them.

- The merchants among them prospered from their overseas commercial networks in the Indian Ocean, and as far east as Indonesia. They also benefited from the authority of the Abbasid Caliphs, and the earliest European merchants who began to arrive by sea around Africa from the early 16th century.

- The Syrian Christian community also had and continues to have more extensive roles within Indian society. They speak the local

language, Malayalam. Many fulfill ritual roles like those of Brahmins, being approached by people, Hindus as well as Christians, who want purification. Many other Syrian Christians were prominent soldiers who served Hindu kings in the region.

- Outside social scientists also see how Syrian Christians adapted preexisting religious institutions. For example, St. Thomas Mount appears to have been a religious shrine before the Christian era. It sits atop a prominent 300-foot-high hill, the kind of place that would be considered sacred in many cultures.

- As their numbers rose, Syrian Christians established inland pepper plantations and trading links that stretched into the interior. They also seem to have intermarried with the powerful Nayar Hindu community of warriors and landholders, some of whom converted to Christianity. Leading Syrian Christian families held prominent positions as donors to major Hindu shrines, temples, and festivals.

- By the mid-17th century, there were a reported 200,000 Syrian Christian families in Kerala. The 1871 census confirms this scale, counting about half a million Syrian Christians, which made them a majority of the total population in particular districts of Kerala.

- When Roman Catholic Portuguese explorers and commanders began to reach India directly from 1498 onward, they regarded the Syrian Christians first as potential allies but later as heretics. The Portuguese had been searching in the for the kingdom of the legendary Prester John, and some thought that the Syrian Christians might be it.

- Further, as powerful warriors and landholders, with strong connections with the society and economy of the Kerala region, these Syrian Christians appeared to the Portuguese to be useful clients. There were some early benefits to both sides. But as the Portuguese established their own chain of coastal enclaves in India, they needed the Syrian Christians less.

■ The Portuguese took over the shrine to St. Thomas, building a Catholic church under their control there in 1523. They discovered bones there that they proclaimed those of the saint himself. A few decades later, the Portuguese increased their pressure on the Syrian Christians to convert to Roman Catholicism. Many did so, but others did not. These tensions between Europeans as new outsiders and Indian people would persist as European colonialism began to assert itself over India.

Suggested Reading

Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings.*

Ghosh, *In an Antique Land.*

Katz, *Indo-Judaic Studies in the Twenty-First Century.*

Lecture 17

Islam Comes to India

S outh Asia has the largest number of Muslims in the whole world, about a third of the entire total. There are over half a billion Muslims in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. In this lecture, we'll consider the several different historical ways by which so many South Asians became Muslim. We'll divide these overlapping and complex patterns of conversion to Islam into three broad types. First, we'll focus on coastal communities. Then, we'll look at how Muslim holy men inspired large numbers of Indians to convert to Islam. Finally, we'll consider ways that Muslim rulers and other warriors who entered South Asia established kingdoms and empires, at first in the north and then gradually across most of the subcontinent.

BASICS OF ISLAM

■ Orthodox Islamic theology asserts a single core creed: there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his final prophet. The foundation of religious authority on earth for Muslims comes from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

■ Key practices, often known as the five pillars of Islam, are supposed to be shared by all Muslims. In addition to the Islamic core creed, the other four pillars are:

◆ Ritual prayer at set times during the day and always oriented to a cubical building within Mecca, the Kaaba

◆ Fasting during daylight hours, which all observant Muslims (except those who are pregnant, travelling, or ill) should respect during the lunar month of Ramadan

◆ The hajj, or ritual filled pilgrimage to Mecca, during the appropriate holy month
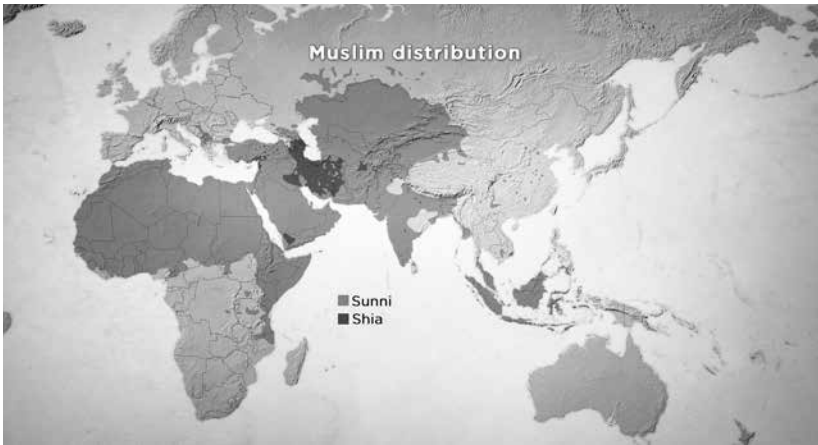
- ◆ The pillar of alms, in which the common wealth of the entire Muslim community is expressed through charitable giving

- In practice, some people born to Muslim parents are not very religious themselves, so we should differentiate between Muslim people ethnically and Islam as a religion.

- The Muslim community, which began in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century, rapidly spread across much of Africa and Asia. Arabic remains the sacred language of the Quran, of formal prayer, and of many important Islamic texts. But Islam has proven persuasive around the world to people who continue to speak their own languages. Islam is open to converts: Anyone who submits to Allah thereby becomes a Muslim.

COASTAL COMMUNITIES

- One important way by which people in India came to become Muslims centers on the Indian Ocean trade. This trade has continued for over 2,000 years, ever since seamen and merchants recognized how the seasonal monsoon winds could aid them.

- While these winds were predictable, they also required merchants and seamen to make only one round-trip cycle per year. This meant Arabs and east Africans often spent long months in Indian ports waiting for the monsoon winds to reverse.

- Often, such extended visits meant that these seamen and merchants formed relationships with local Indian families. Some visitors married Indian women, had children with them, and established their own families in these ports.

- After the 7th-century founding of Islam, many of these visiting Arab merchants and seamen themselves converted to Islam. The status of such visitors as Muslims then influenced their friends and families in India.

- Similarly, when Muslim holy men called *Sufis* traveled to coastal India, they also sometimes married local women. The children of such Indian-Muslim families carried on some of the traditions from each side of their ancestry. Some of these Indian-Muslim communities became known as *Mappila*, meaning "son-in-law," since they derived their identities from outside men who joined the Indian family.

The Sufis

- The second of the three broad ways by which Muslim communities emerged in South Asia was through the actions and influences of the Sufis.

- From early on in Islam, some Muslims sought direct experience of God. Such Sufi seekers sometimes found that the prescribed duties for Muslims of prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and alms sharing were not enough. Some even found such mundane duties to be distractions from their personal devotion to Allah.

- From among these devotees emerged especially powerful saints or other holy figures, including a few holy women. Leading Sufis

gradually formed religious orders, in which the charismatic founder inspired many and passed on his wisdom and spiritual power to chosen successors, sometimes a son, other times a leading disciple.

- Gradually, from the 11th century onward, Sufis began immigrating to spread their spiritual message in India. Eventually, Sufis extended their beliefs widely across India, and settled down in many different regions. Often, they were themselves inspired by Indian bhakti ways of personal devotion to the divine.

- Many South Asian individuals and communities responded to these Sufis by accepting their religious messages, which often reinforced their own spiritual traditions. Since some Sufis were so eclectic, some of their ways of reaching and expressing their love of the divine were amalgamations of Muslim and Hindu forms of worship.

- Some Sufis and their disciples also carried with them more practical expertise that would enable their local Indian supporters to prosper. One example occurred in the upper Indus region known as the Punjab, where the land tended to be arid and unable to support settled agriculture through rainfall alone. Many people there were herders whose grazing animals required less surface water.

- Sufis who came from Iran and Central Asia were familiar with irrigation practices that had been developed in those lands. These included the Persian waterwheel, where a series of buckets driven by a gearing system and powered by draft animals could raise a large volume of underground water to the surface. With the construction of such new irrigation methods, herders in the western Punjab in particular could settle as farmers, often clustering around a Sufi hospice or shrine.

- Over in the eastern region of Bengal, much of the land was still heavily forested, so many Adivasi people living there followed swidden agriculture. After Sufis and their followers arrived, these local communities learned to master the metal technology of steel axes and plowshares that enabled them to cut down and uproot large trees.

- For thousands of years, river networks have eroded silt from the Himalayan mountains and north Indian plain and deposited it as Bengal's rich deltaic soil. Therefore, once cleared of forests, these lands could be very richly productive.

- The people of this region also learned methods of intensive wet-rice agriculture, which is somewhat complicated but highly productive. With the knowledge brought by Sufis and their followers, many Bengalis, particularly in the eastern part of that region, cleared the trees, settled, and prospered as wet-rice farmers.

- Their communities grew more numerous and simultaneously converted to Islam. As in the Punjab, many of these converts carried with them their pre-Islamic ideas and followed eclectic combinations of Hindu and Muslim customs and beliefs.

MUSLIM RULERS

- The third broad way that South Asians became Muslims was through the influences and effects of Muslim rulers who invaded and established kingdoms in several Indian regions.

- From its earliest days, the Muslim community in Arabia sought to defend itself and also expand by force, persuasion, and conversion. In 711, an Arab general, Muhammad ibn al-Qasim captured Sind, the region around the mouth of the Indus River. This was less than a century after the emergence of Islam.

- Sind has remained under Muslim rulers virtually ever since. Sind now forms the second most populous province in Pakistan. Sind's main port of Karachi is Pakistan's largest city and its economic powerhouse.

- A few hundred years later, Muslim rulers based in Afghanistan or Central Asia began to invade India by land from the northwest. India was such a rich land that some Muslim rulers made repeated

incursions. In particular, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (in today's Afghanistan) conducted a series of 17 raids between 998 and 1130.

- More influentially, starting in 1206 and lasting for 300 years, a series of five Muslim dynasties made Delhi their capital. Expanding out from Delhi, they conquered much of north and central India.

- Most of these rulers came from Afghanistan and Central Asia. But these regimes tended to be very fragile, with their governors and military commanders breaking off to form independent kingdoms of their own, especially in the central Indian Deccan and in the eastern region of Bengal.

- Thus, while some of the most expansive of the Delhi sultans, like the early 14th-century Muhammad bin Tughluq, managed to briefly conquer most of India, none of these five dynasties ever succeeded in creating a stable or long-lasting empire.

- In contrast, the Muslim Mughal dynasty from Central Asia eventually defeated the last of the Delhi sultans and gradually established one of the world's wealthiest, most powerful, and most extensive empires.

- Some Muslim rulers rewarded those of their employees and subjects who became Muslims. Indeed, a substantial number of the Indian warriors, officials, artists, and workers who served these Muslim rulers converted to Islam, out of conviction or practicality.

- Many of the families, clans, and communities who became Muslims also carried with them much of their pre-Islamic culture, including their social status and their family traditions and customs.

- Some hereditary landholding clans in north India and the Deccan came to include both Muslims and Hindus simultaneously. They evidently decided that those of their members who interacted with these Muslim rulers should become Muslims. But others of these

same landholding clans remained Hindu, particularly those who dealt with their Hindu tenants and employees.

■ One of the issues faced by all Muslim rulers in India was the legal status of the vast majority of their subjects who remained non-Muslim. Within Islamic doctrine, some non-Muslim communities can hold status as *dhimmi*, protected subjects.

■ Often, in exchange for this status, these non-Muslims must pay a special tax, called *jizya*. But to qualify for this protected status, many Muslim legal scholars and theologians claim that Allah must have chosen a prophet from that community to receive the Quran.

■ The Quran itself specifically mentions earlier prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. But there is no evidence in the Quran that Hindus were ever chosen by Allah to have a prophet. Consequently, some rigorously orthodox Muslim scholars assert that Hindus cannot legally be protected subjects. Yet, since Hindus formed the massive majority of people under virtually all the Muslim rulers in India, most of these rulers allowed them protected status anyway.

Three Nations

■ By surveying these three broad ways that various communities in South Asia converted to Islam, we can begin to see why they eventually formed three different nations.

■ In 1947, the large concentrations of Muslims in the northwest and in the east became West and East Pakistan. But the cultural and historic differences between the people of these two wings of Pakistan, separated by a thousand miles, contributed to their breaking apart in 1971.

■ East Pakistan seceded and became the independent republic of Bangladesh. What had been West Pakistan became all of Pakistan,

with the Punjab and Sind as its two largest provinces, collectively constituting about three-quarters of the entire national population.

- Within the constitutionally secular Republic of India, about 14 percent of the population is Muslim, making them the largest minority community in that nation. But these Muslim communities are diverse and geographically spread across India, with one of the largest concentrations in Kerala, where the Mapillas emerged, and another in the heartland of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire.

Suggested Reading

Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760.*

Miller, *Mappila Muslim Culture.*

Wink, *Al-Hind.*

Lecture 18

Indian Sultans

Often, the history of the Indian subcontinent over the past millennium has been seen in terms of religious conflict, particularly Muslims versus Hindus. But a binary division between Muslims and Hindus greatly oversimplifies the complex interactions among diverse and overlapping Indian communities. This lecture looks at the first eight centuries of Muslim rule over parts of South Asia so that we can explore some of these processes. The lecture also describes several shifts in power between various rulers.

MUSLIM AND HINDU ACTIVITIES

- By 711, conquesting Muslims had reached Sind in the lower Indus plain. An army under Muhammad bin al-Qasim created an extension of the Islamic caliphate there. Relatively few Muslims actually ever immigrated, and gradually this became more of an Indian-based sultanate. This sultanate made itself independent of the caliphate by 985.

- Various Hindu rulers largely contained expeditions over the next century by Sind's sultans up the Indus River plain. Many of these rulers were Rajputs, who were themselves trying to expand in the Indus River plain.

- Since the death of the Indian ruler Harsha in 647, there had been no single dominant stable empire in India. Instead, various rival Hindu-ruled kingdoms fought bitterly against each other, even as trade and commerce generally expanded.

- Meanwhile, from the 8ᵗʰ century onward, Muslim rulers had expanded overland across Iran and established themselves in what

is today Afghanistan. The most aggressive of these sought to conduct raids even more distant raids into the richer lands of India. Scholars have identified over ninety distinct military clashes involving Muslim and Indian non-Muslim rulers during the period between 636 and 1205.

■   However, that is only one clash every six years. The number is also misleading since many of there were undertaken by a single ruler, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, who was responsible for 17 of those clashes.

■   Next, the Ghurid clan seized power in Afghanistan and continued this pattern of raids into India. By the end of the 12th century, Muhammad Ghuri had conquered Sind and territory as far east as Bengal. The speed of his warhorses enabled them to outflank the elephant-centered forces of his Indian opponents.

MAMLUKS

■   These Afghan rulers relied heavily on a system of military and administrative slaves. They captured or purchased young boys, often from the nomadic Turkish communities who migrated around Central Asia. These rulers then raised and trained these slaves to be loyal warriors.

■   The most skilled of the slaves became generals, with many of their officers and soldiers also being slaves. When these slave generals captured territories, their owner and ruler often entrusted them with governing those lands. These kind of slaves were in the Islamic world known as mamluks. They also became prominent in Egypt during the period from 1250 to 1517.

■   The advantages for the ruler of this system of military-administrative slavery included his capacity to expand greatly the body of men loyal to him. In contrast, using the ruler's own sons as his commanders and governors had limitations. He could not increase the number of

them very rapidly, no matter how much he tried. Further, sons often challenged their father, trying to overthrow him and take over the throne themselves.

Qutbuddin Aibak and Successors

■ Muhammad Ghuri ordered his slave general Qutbuddin Aibak to command the key fortified outpost at Delhi. This was a longtime strategic location on the Jamuna River, which is the western boundary of the Ganges River plain.

■ From Delhi, armies commanded by Qutbuddin and manned by his fellow slaves roamed widely, collecting spoils that he then passed on to his owner, Muhammad Ghuri, until the latter's death in 1206.

■ Thereafter, Qutbuddin held on to Delhi, obtained his personal freedom from the weak Ghurid successors, and proclaimed himself sultan. Qutbuddin and his band of mamluk generals then ruled collectively as the first of the five dynasties of the Delhi sultanate.

■ Qutbuddin was succeeded in 1211 as Sultan by another Turkish manumitted slave-general, Iltutmish. Having deposed the remaining Ghurid rulers in Afghanistan and Sind, Iltutmish sent gifts to the Abbasid caliph, asking for authorization for his own regime.

■ Then, in 1221, a Mongol invasion by Genghis Khan ravished Afghanistan. Repeated Mongol invasions up to the Indus River over the next century kept Afghanistan weak while the Delhi Sultanate fought to repel them and rose in power. As the mamluk regime stabilized, it regularized their system of taxation on the surrounding region.

■ When Iltutmish died of cancer in 1236, he tried to pass on his rule to his daughter, Raziyya. She was clearly a strong personality, but there was much opposition from the other mamluks who wanted

Genghis Khan

power for themselves. Finally, after four years of perilous rule, she was assassinated in 1240.

■ In 1266, another Turk slave-commander, the ruthless Balban, killed the incumbent sultan, whose daughter he had married. Over the next two decades, Balban consolidated power in his own hands. Cut off from his Central Asian homeland, he increased the pace of Indianization. But without a clear line of dynastic descent, almost every succession among these mamluks led to battles among contenders, and no ruler could feel secure even in his own court.

The Tughluq Dynasty

■ The period of these Turkish slave-generals ended soon after Balban's death, when the Khalji clan seized power in 1290. The Khaljis were Afghan-Turks who had settled in India. After only 30 years of rule, the Khaljis were overthrown by one of their own slave-commanders, who founded the Tughluq dynasty in 1320. For nearly a century, the Tughluqs held on to power in the sultanate.

■ The most famous and dynamic in this Tughluq dynasty was Muhammad Tughluq. He seized the throne from his own father in 1325 and then ruled for a quarter century. He tried various innovations in order to expand and deepen his regime. He even re-centered his kingdom by moving his capital over 750 miles south to a city he renamed Daulatabad. But this experiment failed, and he shifted his court back to Delhi again.

■ We know much about life at the court, capital, and kingdom of Muhammad Tughluq from the richly detailed travel journal, or *Rihla*, of Ibn Battuta. He was a scholar from Morocco who traveled throughout the Islamic world, living for eight years in India, starting in 1333.

■ When he reached Muhammad Tughluq's court in Delhi, his prestige as a scholar from the Islamic west gained him an appointment as a judge of Islamic law. In addition, he was made the manager of the

well-endowed mausoleum of an earlier Sultan. This endowment was the revenue from 30 villages. This more than paid for 460 attendants who worked under Ibn Battuta's supervision.

- But Ibn Battuta lived beyond even this generous income. He ran up huge debts that he could not pay off. Instead, using his polished Arabic-language skills, he wrote a poem dedicated to Sultan Muhammad. Graciously, the sultan paid off the debt, and even gave Ibn Battuta much more. But the sultan was both generous and pitilessly arbitrary. Anyone who even slightly annoyed him was tortured and executed.

- Ibn Battuta decided that remaining at the Delhi court was too dangerous. He wished to find a gracious way of leaving and also to continue his travels, so he accepted a place in Sultan Muhammad's embassy that was being sent to escort a delegation of 15 Chinese ambassadors back to the Yuan imperial court.

- This expedition was attacked less than 100 miles from Delhi. In the melee, Ibn Battuta was separated from the rest of the delegation. He describes how he was captured and nearly killed by bandits who took everything he had except his trousers. But they finally showed pity and allowed him to escape.

FIRUZ SHAH

- The next Sultan of the Tughluq dynasty, Firuz Shah (r. 1351–1388), was selected by the leading generals and theologians at court. One historian and prominent Sunni Islamic theologian, Ziauddin Barani, wrote a tarikh, or Persian language history, of the reign. This genre of history is similar to Western-style histories. The narrative proceeds chronologically, recounting the words and deeds of humans, although occasional references to Allah's will appear.

- Sultan Firuz Shah also consulted with Barani on the best way to rule the sultanate. That scholar explained how Islamic theology regarding

Vijayanagara

the equality of humans as the creations of Allah should be reconciled with the jati social system prevalent within the sultanate. Barani explained that God created all humans as equal but then allotted them appropriate degrees of virtue and vice. In Barani's theology, the Hindu caste system is also valid in Islamic theology.

- At the same time, many Muslim rulers had spiritual, and also political, relationships with Muslim saints and other holy men, called Sufis. By giving land and other gifts to these influential Sufis, the Muslim ruler gained the support of their spiritual power and also the loyalty or obedience of these holy men's popular following, which often included non-Muslims as well as Muslims.

- These gifts of land were often on the frontiers of the kingdom. As Sufis brought this land into production, it increased the kingdom's material wealth as well.

DECLINE OF THE TUGHLUQS

- The Tughluq dynasty gradually fragmented. It lacked the manpower and administrative expertise to effectively control regions beyond its heartland around Delhi. The sultan's local commanders and governors successively broke away to establish sultanates of their own, either temporarily or permanently. This occurred in Madurai in 1334, in Kashmir in 1339, in the Deccan in 1347, in Bengal in 1345, in Jaunpur in 1394, and in Gujarat in 1407.

- In addition, there were various regionally based kingdoms, many with Rajput or other Hindu rulers. Whenever possible, these subordinated regional rulers threw off the sultan's rule.

- What became the largest of these kingdoms arose in the early 14th century in the southern Deccan. This kingdom was named after its capital, Vijayanagar, meaning "City of Victory." The founders of this dynasty were brothers, Harihara and Bukka. According to some accounts, they were Hindus who had converted to Islam and served in the army of the sultanate before striking out on their own and reconverting to Hinduism from 1336 onward.

- Their followers were mostly mixed Kannada and Telugu speakers, and included both Hindus and Muslims. While some outmoded histories try to pose Vijayanagar as a bastion of Hinduism against the Muslim sultanates, this erases their many similarities in the forms of their administration, army, and culture.

- The Tughluq regime was fatally weakened when another Central Asian Muslim, the Turkish warlord Timur, also known as Tamerlane, invaded India in 1398–1399.

- He sacked Delhi, taking vast wealth and many skilled artisans back to his own capital, Samarkand. Timur installed a loyal governor in Delhi. This became a new dynasty that claimed to be Sayyids, Arabs descended from the Prophet Muhammed himself. But they could

not stabilize their dynasty and were succeeded in 1451 by the fifth dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate, the Lodi Afghan clan.

- Gradually, the Lodis reconquered most of north India, reincorporating some of the remaining sultanates there. Although power was shared within the Lodi clan, one family managed to stay on the throne in Delhi until 1526. At that point, a descendant of Timur named Babur invaded from Afghanistan and founded the powerful Mughal Empire.

Suggested Reading

Eaton and Wagoner, Power, *Memory, Architecture.*

Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, 1192–1286.*

Michell and Zebrowski, *Architecture and Art of the Deccan Sultanates.*

Stein, *Vijayanagara.*

Lecture 19

The Early Mughal Empire

I n 1526, a Muslim Central Asian adventurer named Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur led a small and diverse army from Kabul to conquer north India. His decisive victory over the fragmented Delhi Sultanate opened the upper Gangetic plain to him. This was the improbable beginning of what would become one of the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful empires of its day, famously known as the Mughal Empire. In this lecture, we'll consider Babur's origins and tempestuous career, his complex relations with the people and cultures of India, and the checkered career of his eldest son and main heir, Humayun.

Babur's Early Life

- Babur was born as the eldest prince in the small Central Asian kingdom of Farghana. Babur's mother was distantly descended from the Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan. Babur's father was one of many competing descendants of the Turkman conqueror Timur, or Tamerlane. Therefore, by birth Babur could claim imperial status, although he spent almost all of his life searching for an empire to conquer.

- In 1494, when Babur was just 11, two invading armies approached Farghana, one led by a relative of Babur's father and the other led by a relative of his mother. Suddenly, the royal pigeon loft collapsed, killing Babur's father. This left young Babur to rally his scattered forces, which temporarily fended off his invading relatives.

- Three times he briefly captured Samarkand, which had been Timur's glorious capital and remained the biggest prize in Transoxiana, the land between the rivers Amu Darya and Syr Darya. But Babur could not hold Samarkand or even Farghana. His repeated defeats often

Babur

left him a refugee, fleeing for his life or begging shelter from more successful relatives.

■ We can follow Babur's perilous adventures and interior life through his remarkable personal journal, known as the *Baburnama*. At age 19 he expressed great frustration and a desire to go to Mongolia. But in 1501, he moved with his household over the Hindu Kush mountains toward Kabul. Two hundred Mongol and Turk mercenaries guarded them. By a stroke of good fortune, Babur seized Kabul from a cousin-in-law. For the next two decades, Babur struggled to hold on to his new kingdom by subduing the rebellious Afghan clans around him.

■ He also preserved his aspirations to recover all the lands that his distant ancestor, Timur, had once conquered. Only after Babur failed in Central Asia, however, did he turn to north India, which Timur had briefly raided in 1398.

Next Moves

■ In 1519, Babur ineffectively demanded the submission of young Sultan Ibrahim of Delhi, a fellow Sunni Muslim. It would be seven years later, on Babur's fifth attempt, that he finally defeated the vastly larger Delhi Sultanate army on the battlefield at Panipat.

■ Sultan Ibrahim's huge army of about 100,000 men and hundreds of elephants emerged from Delhi to face Babur. But Ibrahim's force was unwieldy and internally divided among unruly generals. Ibrahim encamped near Panipat and then waited, immobile, for Babur to attack.

■ In contrast, Babur estimated he had less than 12,000 followers. Babur's men included Turk, Mongol, Arab, Afghan, and Baluch warriors. Most were horse-mounted, bow-armed mercenaries who only followed him into India in order to plunder. But Babur's army was extremely mobile.

- Further, he had some muskets and small cannon. He used those to strengthen his center, protecting them behind about 700 carts that he had roped together. Babur also used his cavalry to harass supply lines.

- When Ibrahim belatedly moved his army forward, Babur's center held while his Mongol horsemen swept around both enemy flanks. Ibrahim's war elephants scattered, he died, and his army fled, leaving many thousands killed.

- Facing no further organized opposition, Babur marched the sixty miles to Delhi. There Babur seized the rich royal treasury and proclaimed his own rule in the city's mosques. Babur also dispatched his eldest son, Humayun, to seize more distant Agra.

A Rival Emerges

- Babur's shattering of the Delhi Sultanate opened new possibilities for expansion by ambitious rival Indian rulers and warlords. The most threatening ruler who marched against Babur was Maharana Sangram Singh, a Hindu.

- He now pressed north into the heart of India, leading a coalition of Rajput, Indo-Afghan, and Indian Muslim clans. Babur concentrated his forces, now including substantial numbers of Indian Muslims.

- For the first time, Babur faced a predominantly non-Muslim army. Hence, he sought sectarian and divine support by highlighting his Islamic identity more than ever before. He exempted all Muslims from taxes on cattle and goods. He publicly renounced wine (forbidden in Islam), even destroying a large, newly arrived shipment of wine from Ghazni.

- He shattered his gold and silver drinking vessels, distributing the valuable shards to poor Muslims. All the soldiers of what Babur now

called his "Army of Islam" swore on the Quran to fight as *ghazi*s (Islamic warriors) in a *jihad* until death.

■ In 1527, the armies clashed near Agra. After desperate fighting, Babur's forces prevailed and Maharana Sangram Singh fled wounded. In triumph, Babur built a huge tower of enemy skulls in the Timurid fashion and seized territories from those who had opposed him. Featuring his newly emphasized Islamic identity, Babur officially added *Ghazi* to his own titles and coins.

LATER IN BABUR'S LIFE

■ During the four years before his death, Babur remained personally ambivalent about settling in India, but he displayed a remarkable openness to new experiences there. He inquisitively explored selected aspects of his new domain, fascinating for their unexpectedness.

■ He devoted many pages of his autobiography to describing in meticulous detail the nature of India's distinctive animals and plants, and its monumental buildings and systems of weights and measures.

■ Significantly, he wrote relatively little about India's diverse people or their cultures. Babur sought to create pleasurable refuges in the Central Asian style that would isolate him and his household from India's hot dry winds and dust.

■ An inevitable problem for any kingdom is succession. Babur tried to settle his legacy by allocating his territories among his sons: Humayun, the eldest, was to receive India and the imperial status of Padshah, and his three other sons received Kabul and other territories.

■ When Babur died in Agra in 1530, his body was returned to Kabul for burial as he had directed. Despite Babur's testament, but following Timurid practice, his four sons would fight desperately for

supremacy. Indeed, his main successor, Humayun, proved unable to sustain the Mughal Empire that his father had initiated.

Humayun's Rule

- When Humayun acceded at age 22, he was largely unfamiliar with India. In fact, he spent a total of 80 percent of his life outside it. Effectively administering an empire the size of north India required practical policies and techniques unfamiliar to Humayun.

- Instead, he sought to locate himself symbolically within the cosmic order, reflecting his own mystical claims to be the universal sovereign. He constructed his court as a microcosm of the universe, centered on his own sacred self. He draped a veil over his turban and face, sheltering his courtiers from his divine splendor, occasionally ritually raising his veil to reveal his effulgence.

- Immediately upon his accession, Humayun decided to conquer much of South Asia despite the many powerful rulers and warlords pressing against him and despite his limited knowledge of his new domain.

- Threatening Humayun from the central and lower Ganges plain were shifting coalitions of Indo-Afghans and the Sultan of Bengal, supported by local landholders and cultivators. Continuing Babur's military momentum, Humayun's imperial forces under his direct command gained some initial victories there.

- But then another threat impinged from the southwest: the wealthy sultanate of Gujarat, which controlled major ports for India's trade across the Indian Ocean. Humayun's campaigns there met opposition from his major Central Asian commanders. Humayun abandoned this effort.

- Seeking to restore his regime's confidence and his ability to reward his supporters with looted treasuries, Humayun again led his main

forces down the Ganges toward the wealthy sultanate of Bengal. Although his army achieved some victories, many of his Central Asian supporters felt uncomfortable in humid, riverine Bengal. For his part, Humayun reportedly withdrew from active leadership, shutting himself off with his wives in a pleasure palace, indulging in opium.

THE DOWNFALL

- As Humayun's political and military situation deteriorated, a younger brother, Hindal, claimed his own sovereignty in Agra. Humayun decided unwisely to move his army up the Ganges, too late to avoid the monsoon that made roads virtually impassable.

- An increasingly powerful Sher Khan, supported by growing numbers of other Indo-Afghan commanders who had abandoned Humayun, blocked his way. In June 1539, as Humayun's weakened forces marched westward from Bengal, they met Sher Khan's more effective army at Chausa.

- Humayun's sodden, dispirited and outmaneuvered Mughal army lost badly. He escaped to Agra. Seeking to recover his lost territories and prestige, Humayun marched against Sher Khan again, losing even more decisively at Kannauj in May 1540. His demoralized imperial army scattered even before serious combat began. Again, Humayun escaped.

- Driven out of India by Sher Khan (who acceded in Delhi as Sultan Sher Shah), Humayun fled west to the Punjab, losing supporters at each stage. Finally, he moved with his ever-shrinking entourage into the Sind desert.

- The Central Asian commanders had virtually all left. So thin was the layer of imperial administration over India that, after Humayun's departure, few traces of his regime remained. The Mughal Empire virtually ended, just 14 years after it commenced with Babur's invasion.

- Still on the run, Humayun was attracted to a young woman in his entourage named Hamida, then in her early teens. Her family and guardian objected that Humayun was too poor to marry. Hamida also asserted her personal objections and refused Humayun for weeks. Humayun, however, persisted until she finally wed him in desert exile.

- Within a year, in October 1542, Hamida bore Humayun his first surviving son (and fourth child), Akbar. But only months later, Humayun's entire band was nearly captured by his rebellious brothers. Humayun, Hamida, and about 30 followers hurriedly escaped, abandoning Akbar. Akbar remained a royal hostage in his uncles' custody for much of his infancy.

- Humayun and his small band, reduced to eating horsemeat parboiled in a battle helmet, crossed the Iranian frontier unannounced in 1544, hoping for honorable treatment. After negotiations, the Safavid emperor Shah Tahmasp provided an imperial welcome to his "younger brother" (although Humayun was, in fact, eight years older).

- In 1545, after Humayun had spent about a year in Iran, Shah Tahmasp sent an army of 12,000 to assist Humayun in seizing Afghanistan from his brothers. Later that year, Humayun recaptured Kabul, recovering his imprisoned son, Akbar, as well.

- For the next decade, Humayun lived largely as his father had for 20 years—as Kabul's insecure ruler, launching predatory raids in order to attract and reward warriors with loot. Humayun twice temporarily lost Kabul (and custody of Akbar) only to recover them. Not until 1555 did he actually invade India—when Sher Shah's successors were particularly divided and weak.

- Despite 15 years of exile, Humayun's diverse forces defeated the main Indo-Afghan army and seized Delhi in 1555. But, only seven months later, Humayun tripped while descending a steep stone staircase. He died from his injuries days later in January 1556. His 12-year-old son Akbar now began his half-century-long reign.

Tahmasp with Humayun

Suggested Reading

Dale, *Garden of the Eight Paradises.*

Fisher, *A Short History of the Mughal Empire.*

Begam and Beveridge, tr., *The History of Humayun.*

Thackston, tr., *The Baburnama.*

Lecture 20

The Reign of Emperor Akbar

A kbar's reign (1556–1605) established the Mughal Empire. When his father, Emperor Humayun, unexpectedly died in 1556, it was not clear that young Akbar would be able to gain the throne, or even survive. Akbar was the eldest son, but he was only 13 years old and the Mughal Empire was very fragile and insecure. Eventually, however, Akbar emerged as the last man standing in a power struggle that saw him take autocratic rule. From there, Akbar instituted many policies that formed the Mughal Empire, as we'll see in this lecture.

POLICIES, PART 1

- In order to examine Akbar's long reign, we should highlight three types of the many innovative policies that he devised and implemented to establish and expand the Mughal Empire.

- First, Akbar drew many Hindus, especially royal clans of Rajput regional rulers, into his administration and army. He married many Rajput brides. He employed their kinsmen and other Hindu warrior communities. Further, he generally reduced the sanctions and discrimination against Hindus that had characterized most Muslim regimes in India up to that time.

Akbar

- The initial impetus for Akbar's Rajput marriages and subsequent incorporation of Hindus into his household, administration, and army seems to have come from an aspiring Rajput clan leader. Raja Bihari Mal was the beleaguered ruler over the small kingdom of Amber in today's Rajasthan. In 1562, Bihari Mal offered his daughter, Harkha Bai, in marriage to 20-year-old Akbar, who had just emerged from regency.

- Akbar already had two Central Asian Muslim wives, as was customary for his family. For decades, Akbar would continue to make political marriage alliances by wedding additional women from Muslim ruling families. But Akbar's Hindu Rajput weddings were a dramatic innovation.

- Those Rajput royal clans who gave brides to the Mughal imperial house gained much in exchange. Their sisters and daughters became empresses and their nephews potential emperors. Their own menfolk gained prominent positions in the imperial army and court.

- Akbar recognized the hereditary right of loyal Rajputs to rule over their traditional kingdoms, although under Mughal sovereignty. Thus, loyal Rajputs gained wealth and power in contrast to those rival Rajput clans that refused to provide brides to Mughal emperors.

- Akbar combined these Rajput policies with other measures that recognized Hindus and other non-Muslims as respected subjects. In particular, Akbar ended several taxes and regulations that discriminated against non-Muslims. Overall, Akbar's incorporation of many non-Muslim Indians made the Mughal Empire much more of an Indian empire.

POLICIES, PART 2: ADMINISTRATION

- With his second major set of policies, Akbar reorganized and centralized the imperial administration. Akbar ordered the leading thousand or so top officer-officials into a single, ranked hierarchy. Each

man received a numerical rank, from 10 up to 5,000, called a *mansab*. This rank could not be inherited. Instead, each man worked his way up through the system based on how much he pleased the emperor.

- These mansab holders, called *mansabdars*, had no fixed terms in office and often had very varied careers: Akbar might transfer them suddenly from one post to another in response to a campaign or crisis, or because of performance reasons.

- While Akbar's innovative mansab system had many new bureaucratic features, it also contained many personal and patrimonial characteristics. There was no entrance examination, nor could rich merchants buy their way in. Rather, appointments and promotions were all based on Akbar's personal inspection and superhuman insight about the man's true worth, usually supported by recommendations from high officials whom Akbar trusted.

- At the mansabdar's death, all his property went to the emperor. Sometimes, the emperor might restore some of it to a favored official's sons. This further increased a mansabdar's and his family's dependence on the emperor's continued goodwill.

- These numerical ranks also specified the number of cavalrymen that the mansabdar was required to recruit and pay for. Those soldiers served him, but he served the emperor, so the imperial army largely consisted of contingents of different sizes under individual mansabdars.

- By 1595, Akbar had 1,823 mansabdars, with an official collective obligation to provide an estimated 141,000 cavalrymen. Additionally, there were considerable forces directly paid by and serving under Akbar, making Akbar's standing imperial army one of the very biggest in the world at that time.

- In order to efficiently control the growing land revenues, Akbar's administration began to survey all the villages in the empire, even

measuring individual fields. His officials calculated how to extract as much tax income as possible without overtaxing the farmers.

- Then Akbar's central administration began to assign to each high official the revenue from specific lands. This revenue assignment became known as a *jagir*. A mansabdar ranked 1,000, for example, would receive a jagir that produced exactly the right amount of revenue income for his official salary at that rank. If he were promoted to mansab 2,000, he would be assigned additional jagirs.

- One of the major improvements of Akbar's systems was that these jagirs were not permanent. Instead, the central administration reassigned them periodically. That way, a mansabdar would not be able to put down roots in his jagir. Rather, he would be dependent on the emperor's continued approval in order to receive new jagirs to replace ones reassigned away from him.

- Akbar also began to systematize the administration in each province. He appointed a governor for each province, as well as a revenue supervisor, a military commander, a chief judge, and a head news writer.

- Akbar also decreed that the official language of his government would be Persian. This meant that the records anywhere in the empire could be read by all officials trained in Persian. The many Indian Muslims and Hindus who were employed in the imperial administration as clerks, record keepers, tax collectors, and accountants were all socialized into the Persian language and Mughal imperial court culture.

POLICIES, PART 3: IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

- Akbar created an imperial ideology that drew together diverse Islamic mystical religions ideas and practices as well as Indian ones. This new imperial ideology weakened the earlier connection

between orthodox Sunni Muslims and the empire. But this ideology gave Akbar more control over his own religious policies.

- In particular, he created an imperial devotional cult centered on himself. This attracted the reverence of key imperial officials, and also many of his Indian subjects, both Muslim and Hindu.

- During Akbar's early years, he respected the orthodox Sunni traditions of his ancestors. But with his third set of policies, Akbar gradually created innovative imperial ideologies, incorporating the cultures of his diverse subjects.

- For instance, around 1575, Akbar built a highly controversial building, called the Ibadat Khana (Arabic for "divine worship hall"). This building housed fiery debates among leading religious scholars and leaders, over which Akbar arbitrated.

- In 1578, during a hunt, Akbar collapsed in a fit, terrifying his attendants. After regaining consciousness, he suddenly ordered thousands of trapped animals freed. He had his hair shorn (reportedly to enable his soul to escape at death).

- Akbar apparently felt empowered by this experience. He soon added to his many Islamic titles Amir al-Mu'minin, "Commander of the Faithful." This asserted his leadership over the Muslim community in India and globally.

- The next year, in 1579, a mahzar (pronouncement) circulated at court. This mahzar attested that Akbar had the ultimate power to decide all religious questions as long as his interpretation did not contradict the Quran. All the prominent Sunni religious scholars at court felt compelled to sign, or else face exile.

- Akbar next broadened his Ibadat Khana debates to include scholars and holy men from various Indian religious communities. He listened closely, challenging each speaker's assertions, testing them

against his own developing theology, and adopting parts of their ideology when they confirmed or advanced his own.

- Around 1583, Akbar reportedly ceased performing the orthodox five daily Islamic prayers. Instead, he began publicly worshipping the sun four times daily and divine light more generally.

- Akbar also had an elaborate protruding balcony, called a *jharoka*, atop an outer wall of his citadel. From there, he displayed himself daily to his subjects on the ground below, who variously reassured themselves of his good health, savored his latest sartorial fashion, or worshipped him.

- Akbar quizzed the Jesuits at his court about an atlas they presented to him. He questioned how the European cartographer could know the names and locations of Indian cities. But Akbar made no practical use of the atlas or of European-style globes he later received, treating them as curiosities not a new technology.

- Akbar also recognized the value of Europeans as potential military and political allies, or else troublesome adversaries. In 1582, Akbar dispatched two envoys to King Philip II of Spain and Portugal, proposing regular diplomatic exchanges and requesting Arabic and Persian translations of the Pentateuch, Gospels, and Psalms.

- Akbar's emissaries, however, never got farther than Goa. Further, Akbar found unconvincing the Jesuits' insistence on monogamy, the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the low status of the Prophet Muhammad. Ultimately, Akbar frustrated Jesuit expectations for his conversion.

- Gradually, Akbar created a new court culture centering on him. Service to Akbar would be the main — perhaps the only — way for men to reach their highest virtue. Their own households should be microcosms of his, and they themselves work to become perfect men within them.

- Reorienting time, Akbar devised a new solar-based calendar, called Tarikh-i Ilahi (meaning the "Divine Era"), which began with his own accession.

- Akbar also added "Allahu Akbar" to imperial documents and coins. This phrase conventionally means, "God is Great," but it also literally means, "Akbar is God." The emperor was suggesting his own divine status.

- Among Akbar's courtiers and household, a special imperial cult developed that centered on him as the universal spiritual master and cosmic sovereign, superior to all other religious or political authority. The initiation reportedly involved especially deep prostration to Akbar and repudiating all other religions.

- Initiates received from Akbar an icon of the sun, a special turban, and a small portrait of him to wear on the head or breast. Imitating Akbar, but going against orthodox Muslim custom, many disciples shaved off their beards.

- Akbar's publicist Abu'l-Fazl repeatedly proclaimed him "divine light" itself: an earthly embodiment of the sacred, the millennial sovereign. But many orthodox Sunnis objected strongly to Akbar's pretensions, although few dared to attach him openly.

Suggested Reading

Abu al-Fazl, Blochmann, tr., and Jarrett, tr., *Ain-i Akbari*.

Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting.*

Wink, *Akbar.*

Lecture 21

Later Mughal Emperors

T he Mughal Empire expanded across South Asia during the 16th and 17th centuries to become one of the world's largest, wealthiest, and most potent states. Much of its power and authority resulted from Emperor Akbar's innovations. However, Akbar's successors each reigned in his own imperial style. Emperor Jahangir elaborated on Akbar's accomplishments, ever desirous of exceeding his father. Next, Emperor Shah Jahan constructed the most sophisticated and impressive manifestations of Mughal glory, including the jewel-encrusted Peacock Throne, the Taj Mahal, and the walled capital city of Shahjahanabad (now famous as Old Delhi). In this lecture, we'll consider these two emperors.

AKBAR PASSES

■ Throughout his long reign, Akbar had become ever more religiously heterodox. Many conservative Sunni Muslim generals, officials, and scholars supported Jahangir against allegedly heretical Akbar.

■ Jahangir even arranged the assassination of Akbar's closest confidant, the historian Abu'l-Fazl. Jahangir gleefully received the severed head and rewarded the assassin lavishly.

■ While the armies of the father and the son threatened each other, the women of the imperial family sought to smooth over their differences. Finally, as Emperor Akbar lay dying, his rebellious son Jahangir reluctantly begged his forgiveness, accepted a short and symbolic punishment, and was recognized as the official heir.

Jahangir Takes Over

- After Jahangir finally acceded to the throne in 1605, he determined to make his reign even more glorious than his father's. Over the years, Jahangir innovated creatively. He redefined imperial weights and measures, which required the recalculation of all official accounts.

- He commissioned coins portraying him holding a wineglass. He also increased by 20 percent the size of silver coins minted for general circulation, which disrupted the economy. Jahangir realized that he had overreached here, so after six years, he restored the official coinage to Akbar's standards.

- As prince and then emperor, Jahangir patronized a large staff of expert painters. He commissioned art both for its own aesthetic sake and also as political propaganda. Jahangir preferred naturalistic and direct representations, having himself portrayed as a peaceful and serene ruler, engaged in spiritual rather than worldly concerns.

- Jahangir quizzed men from various religions, often posing provocative questions and pitting theologians against each other. For instance, Portuguese Jesuits were a small but constant presence at his court. They recorded how Jahangir probed their beliefs about Jesus and his miracles.

- Jahangir was clearly bemused by their explanations about monastic celibacy and the Catholic concept of the Holy Trinity. But in 1610, he permitted Jesuits to baptize three of his nephews. The Jesuits saw this as Jahangir's gradual acceptance of Catholicism, but some later historians explain this as a way for Jahangir to disqualify those disfavored nephews from imperial succession.

- Europeans also affected the empire through increasing intercontinental trade. They imported vast amounts of silver and gold, originally extracted from the Americas. With this money, they purchased Indian-made textiles and other products.

Emperor Jahangir

Further Developments

- While Jahangir's armies achieved victories in all directions, many newly conquered territories were never fully integrated administratively. This resulted in an ever more sprawling empire.

- Like his father, Jahangir needed to rely on Hindu Rajput generals. But he appointed no Hindus to high offices at the imperial center and only a few as provincial governors. Jahangir respected his own Rajput mother, and he married at least five Rajput wives (in addition to about 14 Muslim women).

- But Jahangir was devoted only to his final wife, Nur Jahan, who eventually dominated the final decade of his reign. More than any other Mughal empress, Nur Jahan prominently participated in public affairs. She conducted diplomacy and issued imperial orders and minted coins. Further, she sought to perpetuate her power by determining the imperial succession.

- Jahangir and Nur Jahan initially favored his third son (by a different wife), whom they married to Nur Jahan's niece. They honored him with the royal title Shah Jahan ("King of the World") and gave him command over the imperial armies in the strategic Deccan region of central India.

Jahangir's Fall

- Gradually Jahangir weakened from his longstanding alcohol and drug addictions. From 1620 onward, he traveled almost every spring to Kashmir, where he spent the summer savoring its cool mountain climate, far removed from the heat and politics of north India.

- Up to that point, Jahangir's relations with the Iranian Safavid Empire had largely continued through competitive diplomacy rather than warfare. However, ailing Jahangir's complacency was shattered in 1622 when a powerful Safavid expedition seized the strategic Afghan city of Qandahar from the inadequate Mughal garrison.

- A shocked Jahangir immediately ordered almost all his imperial forces diverted from their current deployments for a massive expedition to retake Qandahar. In particular, he demanded that Shah Jahan bring his armies from the Deccan to lead this expedition.

- Despite Shah Jahan's superior military reputation, he lost repeatedly against stronger imperial armies. Each time, his status as imperial prince and possible next emperor enabled him to gather more forces, only to be defeated again. Finally, Shah Jahan negotiated a submissive truce, sending his sons to Nur Jahan as hostages and agreeing to stay away from the imperial court.

- After the ailing emperor's final visit to Kashmir, he died in 1627. This deprived Nur Jahan of her strongest claim to imperial authority: acting in Jahangir's name. Meanwhile, Shah Jahan and his supporters defeated, imprisoned, blinded, and then executed his remaining brothers and all other possible heirs. But Shah Jahan allowed Nur Jahan to withdraw quietly from imperial politics.

Shah Jahan

- Shah Jahan seized the throne in 1628. He then proceeded to reshape the imperial court and empire over his three-decade-long rule. He soon commissioned the uniquely brilliant golden Peacock Throne: a raised platform under a high canopy surmounted by ornamental peacock figures, everything thickly gem-encrusted.
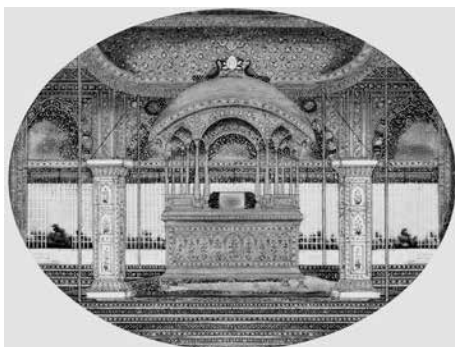
The Peacock Throne

- Shah Jahan identified strongly with his Sunni Muslim Central Asian ancestors. Indeed, he always devoutly performed the required five daily prayers and the month-long fast during Ramadan. Although Jahangir had compelled him to start drinking wine at age 24, Shah Jahan repudiated the practice at 30.

- Shah Jahan's biological mother was a Hindu Rajput. He employed Rajputs extensively as generals and warriors, including on several imperial expeditions into distant Central Asia. However, he gave Rajputs no high appointments in his central administrative and only one governorship. Further, he strongly condemned marriages in which either spouse left Islam for Hinduism.

- Unlike predecessors who personally wrote their own memoirs, Shah Jahan instead closely supervised the series of historians he commissioned to compile his massive official regnal chronicle, the *Padshahnama*. Shah Jahan had drafts regularly read out to him for his correction or elaboration.

- Advancing his commitment to glorifying his reign, Shah Jahan personally supervised most major imperial building projects and periodically inspected their progress. In particular, he deeply engaged himself in the design and construction of the Taj Mahal in Agra, which was the tomb of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

- After this tomb's construction, Shah Jahan ordered the huge number of skilled builders and workmen to migrate to Delhi in 1639. There he commissioned his new imperial capital, Shahjahanabad. This city had an imposing red-sandstone-walled citadel, popularly known as the Red Fort, overlooking the Jumna River.

- Throughout the city, imperial hydraulic engineers constructed water supply and sewage systems. Plentiful potable water came from wells in each neighborhood and from the Jumna River, either raised by Persian waterwheels or channeled from upstream by canals.

The Taj Mahal

CHALLENGES AND CHILDREN

- Meanwhile, the empire faced challenges. Various local rulers and landholders within the empire paid tribute or taxes only under compulsion. Rebellions erupted whenever imperial armies were committed elsewhere. Prominent rebels were eventually punished by superior imperial force, but most who begged forgiveness were pardoned and reinstated by Shah Jahan.

- Evoking his family's own origins, Shah Jahan oriented himself culturally and politically toward Central Asia. From 1646 onward, he sent substantial armies to conquer there. However, these expeditions gained the empire virtually nothing while costing money, manpower, and prestige.

- Like his predecessors, Shah Jahan wanted (but failed) to delay the succession struggle until after his own death. He tried to bequeath the empire intact to his eldest son, Dara Shikoh. All four brothers were children of the late Mumtaz Mahal.

- Shah Jahan also kept his eldest child and favorite daughter, Jahanara Begum, near him. Upon the death of her mother, Mumtaz Mahal, Shah Jahan gave half her huge wealth to 17-year-old Jahanara. The other half was divided among her siblings. Jahanara remained unmarried, led the harem, and managed the imperial household despite the fact that Shah Jahan had two living wives.

- In 1644, Jahanara's clothing accidently caught fire. Two of her maids died extinguishing the blaze, and Jahanara suffered life-threatening burns. Shah Jahan personally tended her and, upon her recovery, distributed her weight in gold as charity.

- With her own funds, Jahanara bestowed much patronage, commissioning gardens and mosques in Shahjahanabad and Kashmir. Combining her religious and literary commitments, she had herself initiated into two Sufi orders and wrote accounts of their leading saints. Like Shah Jahan, she strongly supported Dara, her younger full brother, who shared many of her inclinations.

- Dara initiated into a Sufi order and wrote five works on Sufism. He sought the universal truth of Islam, including through esoteric Indic religions.

- The emperor kept Dara near him, but deployed his three other sons as governors and commanders throughout his empire. This gave them administrative and military experience and enabled them to build their own factions. Over time, Shah Jahan's third son, Prince Aurangzeb (later known as Emperor Alamgir), proved the most successful. While governing the Deccan, Aurangzeb assembled and commanded the empire's most powerful and battle-hardened armies.

- The actual succession crisis began prematurely, when Shah Jahan suffered a serious intestinal disorder in September 1657. While disabled, he entrusted rule to Dara. Although Shah Jahan recovered by November, the three younger sons had already agreed to unite against Dara. But each of the three also declared himself emperor.

- Driving onward, Aurangzeb imprisoned Shah Jahan in Agra and then defeated and executed his brothers and their main supporters, including his own eldest son. Thus, the pattern of Shah Jahan's accession recurred at his reign's end: Only one imperial prince survived the bloody succession war. However, this time, the former emperor remained alive.

- For nearly eight years, Aurangzeb kept Shah Jahan imprisoned in Agra Fort. Shah Jahan died at age 74 from natural causes. Even then, Aurangzeb allowed little ceremony for his interment next to Mumtaz Mahal. Aurangzeb would rule for five decades.

Suggested Reading

Faruqui, *Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504–1719.*

Habib, *Atlas of the Mughal Empire.*

Koch, *Complete Taj Mahal.*

Wade, *Imaging Sound.*

Lecture 22

The Mughals and the Marathas

I n 1658, a 40-old Mughal prince ruthlessly fought his way to seize the imperial throne. He chose as his official imperial title Alamgir, meaning "Seizer of the World," to show his limitless ambitions. Over Emperor Alamgir's nearly 50-year-long reign, he extended the martial power of the Mughal Empire from its north Indian heartland. He conquered almost all of South Asia, more territory than any previous ruler in Indian history. But Alamgir proved unable to politically or culturally incorporate the diverse, regionally based rulers and communities within the boundaries of his domain. The most prominent of those who rose against him were the Marathas, whom we'll examine in this lecture after looking at Alamgir's Mughals.

ALAMGIR'S RELIGION

- Emperor Alamgir consistently sought to behave and govern according to his strongly orthodox Sunni Muslim beliefs. Throughout his life, he was known for strictly following the devotional, dietary, and sartorial practices of an observant Muslim.

- After his enthronement, Alamgir began to purify his court of what he considered the unorthodox and un-Islamic practices of his predecessors. For instance, he prohibited his courtiers from wearing gold or red garments, considered improper by many devout Muslims.

- Alamgir also terminated the heated debates among advocates of various religious traditions that his predecessors had patronized at court. Instead, he ordered his best Sunni scholars to compile the most authoritative legal judgments of the Hanafi school of law into the Persian-language *Fatawa-i 'Alamgiri*. Orthodox Sunni Islamic scholars always received his patronage.
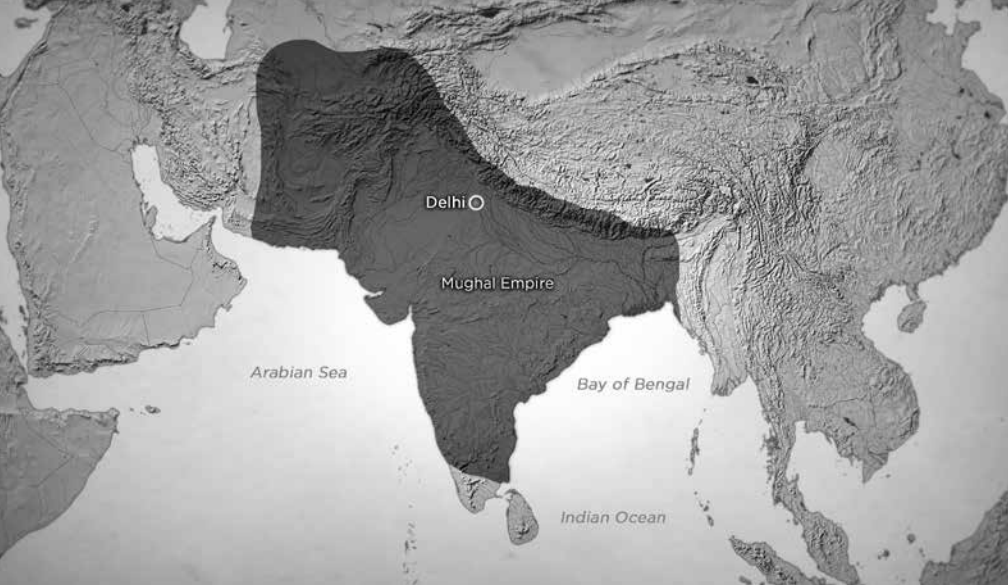
- The emperor also presented himself as a leader within the larger Islamic world. He sent a series of richly laden embassies to the Sharif of Mecca, seeking legal validation for his reign. Alamgir's agents also prominently distributed vast amounts of charity in that holy city, though he later expressed frustration at additional requests from the Sharif for ever more presents.

- During his reign, Alamgir expressed his deep commitment to Sunni Islam by particularly favoring officials and subjects who did likewise, including converts. Meanwhile, he increasingly ordered constraints on Hindus, which estranged the vast majority of his subjects and a large proportion of his officials.

RESISTANCE TO ALAMGIR

- Alamgir imposed policies that specifically burdened his Hindu Rajput officials. He reduced their incomes by assigning them less valuable jagirs, that is, land revenue awards. He forcefully intervened in the succession of one of their leading kingdoms, Marwar, located in the Rajasthan region of west-central India.

- When the Marwar Rajputs resisted Alamgir's intervention to their line of royal succession, he annexed Marwar. Some Marwar and other Rajputs continued fighting a guerilla war for decades, until after Alamgir's own death.

- Other long-subordinated communities across north India also rose up against Emperor Alamgir. In the Punjab, the region north of Rajasthan, a new religious movement had arisen during the 16th century: the Sikhs, who followed a series of gurus.

- During the early 17th century, the Sikh community revolted repeatedly against Mughal rule and repulsed several Mughal suppression campaigns. Emperor Alamgir tried to control this community by deciding the succession of its gurus. This interference only mobilized increasing militant Sikh resistance against Mughal authorities.

- In 1675, Alamgir arrested and executed their current guru, Tegh Bahadur. But Sikhs continued to fight for control over their homeland for decades, successfully achieving their own independent kingdom in the Punjab by the early 18th century.

Alamgir Moves On

- In 1681, Alamgir left the north Indian heartland of the empire, never to return. Instead, he spent the remaining 26 years of his reign in the war-wracked Deccan.

- When his sons failed to achieve victory as generals there, Alamgir personally took command over the costly conquests of the remaining Deccan sultanates of Bijapur and Golkonda.

- Eventually victorious, he annexed both sultanates and imprisoned their rulers. But their former officials, landholders, and subjects remained resistant. Overall, these newly conquered lands proved disordered and unprofitable for the Mughal Empire.

- Alamgir next committed his armies against the Marathas in the western Deccan. Seeking to coopt their generals, he awarded official imperial rank and incomes to many of them, until they outnumbered Rajputs among his high officials. These new Maratha officials rarely received prominent administrative posts and lacked any real commitment to the empire.

- Other dangerous forces along India's coasts were the Portuguese and other European powers, especially the British East India Company. Alamgir had no blue-water navy and so he was powerless to oppose Europeans at sea.

THE DECLINE

- As Alamgir passed through his 70s and 80s, he increasingly struggled to manage the empire as a whole. Alamgir expended considerable resources in his interminable Deccan wars. His massive imperial armies proved extremely costly and inefficient.

- Nonetheless, imperial commanders continued to expand. They raided kingdoms into the very far southern tip of India during the early 1690s, making those rulers nominal tributaries. But the imperial administration exerted little control there, or even over earlier captured Deccani territories. All this intensified the empire's structural deficit as expenditures far exceeded income.

- The empire began to segment as revenue flows and communication links between north and south were periodically interrupted en route due to predations by bandits, warlords, and even intermediate imperial officials.

- In the Deccan, many imperial officials who originated in north India — including Rajputs and many long-settled Muslims — had been serving far from home through decades of frustrating harassment by local insurgents, especially Marathas. Imperial commanders often

saw little prospect of defeating these insurgents or particular benefit to the empire or themselves from doing so.

- Instead, many imperial generals preserved their own financial and manpower resources by negotiating private settlements with those enemies, despite Alamgir's repeated, explicit orders forbidding this. For their part, many new Maratha and other Deccani officials, whose submission had been thus purchased, had little loyalty to the empire.

- In both north India and the Deccan, many tributary rulers, landholders, and other subjects—including peasants, artisans, merchants, and bankers—faced revenue demands from the empire but increasingly doubted the value of paying. Imperial officials had diminished capacity to provide justice or compel tax payments. In contrast, local rajas and landholders often had bonds with the local population and retained more revenues, which they used to bolster their own power.

- As Alamgir aged, he feared for his dynasty, not perceiving much capacity in any of his potential heirs. One of his five sons had rebelled and then died in exile in Iran. Another rebel son had died in imperial prison.

- Alamgir had punished each of his other three sons at one point or another. Further, Alamgir kept them and his nine maturing grandsons dependent on his cash and manpower. Hence, by Alamgir's death, none of his heirs was particularly strong, especially compared to powerful imperial commanders and governors.

- Some later historians use Alamgir's death in 1707 to mark the end of the Mughal Empire, since none of his descendants proved able to prevent the empire from fragmenting. Nonetheless, the dynasty and empire continued for another 150 years under a series of weak emperors who reigned but rarely ruled.

The Marathas

- Displacing the Mughals were various rival powers that competed for domination over India. The most prominent of these were the Marathas.

- Many Marathas were small-scale, independent farmers who worked their own land. Many were also prepared to fight to defend or extend their holdings against all neighbors and outsiders.

- As the Muslim-ruled Deccani sultanates and Hindu-ruled Vijayanagar arose in the early 14th century, some Marathas served in their armies, gaining battle experience as soldiers and generals.

- The youthful Shivaji followed in his family's martial tradition, rising through service in the armies of various regional rulers. After he emerged as an independent commander, Shivaji's reputation mounted, as did the spoils he seized.

- As Emperor Alamgir fought to extend Mughal imperial control in the Deccan, he sent some of his best commanders and troops against Shivaji. But they repeatedly failed to defeat him. Spectacularly, Shivaji withstood a two-and-a-half-year-long siege by one of the highest ranked Mughal generals. Then Shivaji unexpectedly set out in 1663 to beat the much larger besieging imperial army.

- Nine months later, Shivaji sacked the rich strategic Mughal port of Surat. This gained Shivaji and his followers vast wealth and prestige. These repeated disasters at Shivaji's hands humiliated the Mughal Empire.

- Stubbornly, Alamgir sent against Shivaji an even more powerful army under one of his top commanders, a Hindu Rajput named Raja Jai Singh. Partially defeated, Shivaji had to relinquish most of his forts and territories. But he received approval to retain the rest and allied with the Mughals against the Bijapur Sultanate.

- Alamgir himself sought to incorporate Shivaji by investing his young son, Sambhaji, with high imperial rank and by summoning them both to the Mughal court at Agra in 1666. However, like many newcomers to Alamgir's court, Shivaji was alienated rather than assimilated. Shivaji deceived his guards, dramatically escaped back to his homeland, and rallied his followers there.

Shivaji's Measures

- As the sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda, various other rulers, and rival factions within the Mughal administration all engaged in multisided conflicts in the Deccan, Shivaji intermittently supported or opposed each of them. In 1670, Shivaji plundered Surat yet again, adding to his own wealth and fame and again humiliating its imperial defenders.

- Shivaji further enhanced his status by ordering his own elaborate Brahmanic enthronement in 1674, with the new status of Chatrapati Maharaja (a traditional Sanskrit term meaning "Universal Emperor").

- Shivaji eliminated many of the Persian-language terms and titles that had been used by his administration, copied from the sultanate and Mughal systems. Instead, Shivaji ordered the use of the Marathi language throughout his domain. He also made elaborate royal processions to the main centers and holy sites under his rule.

- In these ways, Shivaji claimed that his regime stood for both Hinduism and a Marathi regional identity. His military success continued to attract followers. By his death in 1680, Shivaji ruled over 50,000 square miles, with revenue perhaps one-fifth as much as the entire Mughal Empire's.

After Shivaji

- Thereafter, the Maratha coalition remained the most expansive force in the Deccan. Even occasional triumphs by Alamgir failed

Statue of Shivaji

to suppress the Marathas. During the 18th century, as the Mughal Empire fragmented under Alamgir's weak heirs, various powerful Maratha commanders repeatedly led armies northward. They occasionally seized the Mughal capital of Shahjahanabad.

- They also marched eastward into Bengal. In each region, Maratha chiefs negotiated or simply collected taxes. Maratha forces also conquered south. But occasional battlefield defeats along with periodic internal conflicts led to temporary withdrawals.

- Perhaps the bloodiest battle in all of Indian history was fought at Panipat in 1761. The Maratha army, with many Indian allies, fought against the Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali. Both sides were so battered that the Marathas withdrew from north India for a decade and Ahmad Shah left India, never to return.

- However, Maratha generals gradually recovered as the dominant force in the Delhi region. They fought the expanding British East India Company armies in three wars, from 1775–1782, 1803–1805, and finally 1817–1818. Defeat at the hands of the British in the last of these wars meant the end of Maratha ambitions to extend their own empire across India.

Suggested Reading

Alam, *Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India, 1707–1748.*

Asher, *India before Europe.*

Gordon, *Marathas, 1600–1818.*

Lecture 23

Competing European Empires

In 1498, three small Portuguese ships under Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, up the east African coast, and crossed the Indian Ocean. No one could have foretold the long-term consequences of this and other European explorations. In this lecture, we'll first look at the Portuguese, who rapidly expanded around the world with the Indian west coast city of Goa as the center of their oceanic empire in Asia. We'll next discuss the competing East India Companies that sought to profit from India's exports, especially the British (or English) East India Company. The consequences of these early interactions between diverse Indians and Europeans would dramatically alter the world.

THE PORTUGUESE

- Even before Alexander the Great fought his way to the western borderlands of India in the 4th century B.C.E., Europeans had imagined distant India as a fabulously wealthy land, the source of spices, fine cloths, and exotic luxuries. But, following the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453, the rising Ottoman Empire came to control European access east across the Mediterranean to the rich Orient.

- The Portuguese used their strategic location on the southwestern corner of Europe's Atlantic coast to their advantage. Armed explorers under the sponsorship of the Portuguese king developed naval technology and navigational skills to try to reach Asia by sailing south around Africa. Thus, the expedition of Vasco da Gama was only one high point in a long series of Portuguese expeditions appointed and funded by the Portuguese king.

- Vasco da Gama was able to find India only with the guidance of local seamen experienced in long-distance navigation across the

Vasco da Gama

Indian Ocean. The first Portuguese vessels landed at Calicut (a port in the southwestern province of Kerala now again called by its Indian name, Kozhikode). They first had to figure out who they had "discovered." Since they did not really know about Hinduism, they assumed all the non-Muslim people living in India were Christians.

■ The Indian Ocean had long experienced violence, with armed conflicts among various coastal kingdoms and roving pirates. However, the Portuguese ships, known as *caravels*, were more heavily armed than anything else afloat in that ocean. The caravels were also relatively fast and maneuverable. Thus, they were the world's most advanced naval technology of their day. These naval advantages, and Portuguese ruthlessness, raised the intensity of the violence in the Indian Ocean.

■ Vasco da Gama and his Portuguese successors mercilessly proved their might by seizing and burning rival Indian, Arab, African, Jewish, and Ottoman vessels and slaughtering the captured crews and passengers. The Portuguese did not accept ransoms as was customary. Indeed, they often acted with a millenarian determination to destroy Muslims.

Portuguese Machinations

■ The Portuguese Empire along the shores of India expanded greatly after 1509 under Viceroy Alfonso de Albuquerque, a nobleman and experienced military commander. He established a chain of fortified Portuguese enclaves along the coasts of India and China. Many of these—like Diu and Bombay—were islands that were easily defended against attacks from the land. The largest Portuguese coastal enclave, and the capital of its empire in Asia, was Goa, which was protected from Indian land-based kingdoms by a river and canal.

■ The Portuguese ships could not carry much cargo, so the Portuguese concentrated in the pepper trade, where a small volume of freight

could sell in Europe for many times its cost in India. Since the Portuguese did not have enough capital to purchase as much pepper as they wanted at prevailing market prices, they often blockaded other outlets and excluded other buyers so as to force down the price and raise the supply offered to them.

- The Portuguese king also profited by forcing all non-Portuguese ships crossing the Indian Ocean to purchase a cartaz, a license or pass from authorities in Goa or another Portuguese outpost. This was a document bearing a Christian cross. Portuguese warships seized any ship that lacked a cartaz.

- Individual Portuguese officials and officers got only small salaries from their king. To make more money, they invested their personal capital with local merchants. Thus, the Portuguese Empire in India proved profitable for both the king and his employees.

- Indirectly, there were substantial consequences of the establishment of the Portuguese Empire in India. For one thing, the Portuguese imported various new crops from the Americas. These included tomatoes, potatoes, and chili peppers, which spread widely. It is hard for us today to think of Indian food without these new world crops.

- Invasive species and diseases affecting plants and people also arrived with the Portuguese. So did the more destructive European-style cannon and other gunpowder weapons, which spread inland as Indian rulers purchased them and hired Portuguese mercenaries.

- The Portuguese also tried to convert Indians to Roman Catholic Christianity. From 1578 onward, there were almost always Jesuit Catholic missionaries at the Mughal imperial court.

- While the Portuguese did increase the number of Roman Catholics in India, these were never more than a tiny fraction of the population. A large number of Indian Catholics were converted Syrian Christians

who had already been living along the southwest coast for over 1,000 years.

■ These Syrian Christians often proved to be useful commercial and political allies for the Portuguese. They provided local knowledge to their fellow Christians while receiving some favorable policies from the Portuguese in their coastal enclaves. But many Portuguese believed they had the religious duty to convert Syrian Orthodox communities to the "true" Roman Catholic form of Christianity. From 1560, the Portuguese set up an Inquisition and pressured Syrian Christians to convert to Roman Catholicism. Many did, but not all.

■ While the Portuguese were the most powerful seaborne state, they never extended their territories inland. Instead, the Mughal imperial dynasty expanded across India's lands during the late 16th and the 17th centuries. The Mughals, who arrived in India almost 30 years after the Portuguese, proved able to control the Portuguese on land whenever they became too disruptive.

The English East India Company

■ On New Year's Eve in 1600, Queen Elizabeth I bestowed a royal charter on a group of London merchants who wanted to tap into the vast wealth of the Indies. Queen Elizabeth decreed that this new English corporation, the English (or British) East India Company, would have a monopoly over all trade there, from southern Africa all the way to the Philippines. The royal charter also allowed the company to use force and establish trading posts to advance its commercial goals.

■ The English East India Company represented the beginning of a new economic world order. Earlier, when an individual European merchant had sent out a ship full of his own trade goods to Asia, he took a massive risk over the year or more until the ship returned, if it ever did. But when a corporation with many shareholders sent out

Elizabeth I

ships, the risk was spread among them. Further, the profits from the cargoes that did return were large enough to cover the losses and also pay dividends to all the stockholders.

■ This company had a growing number of permanent employees, with expanding archives of detailed records. It used a fleet of specially designed ships that it hired on long-term contracts. This all meant that the competing English East India Company, Dutch East India Company, and French East India Company had the potential to become much bigger than the Portuguese royal enterprise.

■ English and other northern European shipwrights knew how to build larger vessels than the Portuguese caravels. These so-called East Indiamen ships had more cargo space and could carry enough cannons to protect themselves against the Portuguese, the pirates of the Indian Ocean, and the small coastal forces of Indian rulers.

■ Growing numbers of Indian weavers began working to supply the export market, some 80,000 in Bengal alone by the mid-18th century.

■ At first, the English East India Company's stockholders were mainly interested in profitable trade, with as few expenses from political or military entanglements as possible. The relatively few East India Company merchants who reached India soon developed partnerships with Indian merchants, bankers, and brokers who negotiated and profited as middlemen between the Europeans and the Indian producers.

■ From the start, the East India Companies sent envoys to the Mughal emperor and to local regional rulers seeking rights to trade, tax concessions, and land on which to build their warehouses.

■ On the west coast, the English East India Company built a warehouse at Surat in 1613. Later, when Surat's harbor silted up, they shifted to Bombay in 1668. The company also got land in southeast India, principally at Madras in 1639, then in Bengal at Calcutta in 1690.

- While Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, grew into major cities, none had been more than a tiny village before the English East India Company built warehouses and then fortresses there. They had to be fortified since they contained treasuries for the purchase of valuable Indian products awaiting shipment to Europe.

CONFLICT

- This was a period of much conflict in India. Over the 18th century, the Mughal Empire fragmented as its governors broke away to create their own kingdoms and as new regional powers like the Marathas rose up through conquest. These many competing rulers and warlords regarded these European enclaves as an easy source of taxes or plunder. But the experience of the many long 18th century European wars meant that European military science was developing fast. Infantry, weapons, and combat cohesion had all improved.

- As an alternative to expensively training and importing European soldiers, the English hired Indian soldiers starting in about 1660. These Indian soldiers became known as *sepoys* when they were trained and armed in the European style. Sepoy regiments almost always defeated the larger cavalry-based armies of Indian rulers. At its peak, the English East India Company armies contained a quarter of a million Indian sepoy volunteers.

- The French and English sepoy armies grew and fought each other as the various European wars extended to Asia. The War of the Austrian Succession in the 1740s is known in the U.S. as one of the French and Indian Wars. In 1745, the English and their American colonists captured the Fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island, Canada, from the French. The next year, in India, the French East India Company captured Madras from the English East India Company. In the 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, London and Paris agreed to swap back Louisburg and Madras.

▪ Eventually, English control over the oceans and greater commercial success globally meant that the French were driven out of India. The Dutch East India Company concentrated its efforts in Indonesia. By the late 18th century, the English East India Company dominated other Europeans in the Indian Ocean region. The volume of trade exploded, with English imports from India rising over 500 percent between 1670 and 1740.

SUGGESTED READING

Dalrymple, *White Mughals.*

Dasgupta, and Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800.*

Pearson, *The Portuguese in India.*

Subrahmanyam, *Career of Vasco da Gama.*

Lecture 24

The British East India Company

Between 1757 and 1857, the British East India Company (also known as the English East India Company) went from being mainly a commercial corporation to seizing direct or indirect control over all of India, totaling roughly a million and a half square miles. This made it bigger than any other empire in all of India's history. Plus, India had a huge population, at least 270 million people around 1800. This empire building was even more striking since there were only a few thousand British officials and officers there at any one time. In this lecture, we'll survey the major ways that the various Britons and Indians interacted over this first century of expanding British colonial rule.

ROBERT CLIVE

- By the late 18th century, weak Mughal emperors still nominally reigned over most of India, but they were really prisoners of one or another regent. Instead, most parts of India were under either regionally based kings or else Mughal successor states.

- For example, in 1756, Siraj ud-Daula at age 23 inherited his grandfather's position as nawab, or Mughal governor, of the rich province of Bengal. One of his first acts was to attack the English East India Company's outpost in Calcutta.

- The British officer Robert Clive rushed by sea from Madras, bringing with him Indian sepoys. They quickly recovered Calcutta. Clive then marched his forces, totaling about 800 Europeans and 2,200 sepoys, against Siraj ud-Daula's army of about 50,000 men.

- Clive bribed one of the opposing generals, Mir Jafar, promising to make him the new nawab of Bengal if he would betray his master
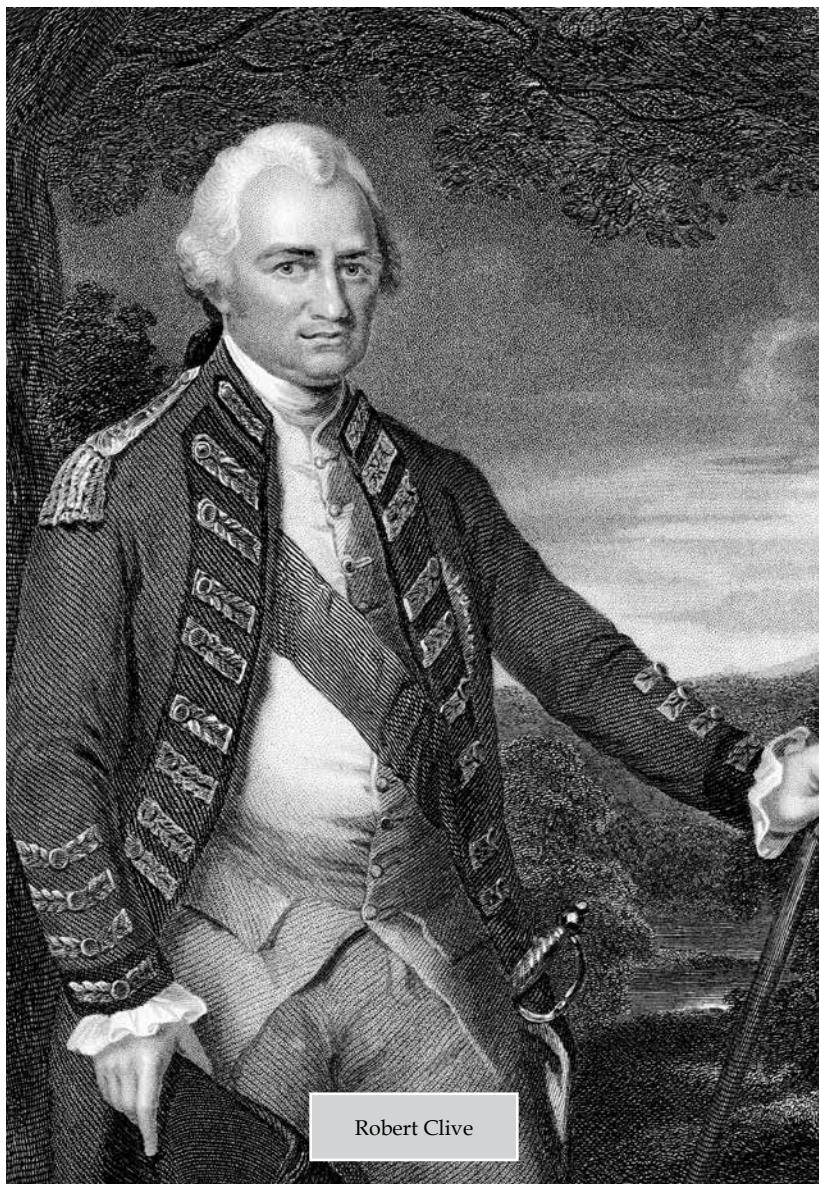
Robert Clive

and also pay up to 20 million rupees. Part of the money went to the East India Company, but also much went to Clive personally.

- The company also demanded and received a trade monopoly over some of the most profitable and prestigious products in the region. The famous June 23rd, 1757 Battle of Plassey turned out to be more bribery than actual fighting. Mir Jafar then hunted down and executed the defeated nawab.

- The East India Company's officials in India had thus suddenly seized vast power and wealth. In fact, after Plassey, the East India Company controlled an area that three times the size of England and far more densely populated.

- From this point onward, the East India Company was able to take enough from its trade monopolies and the taxes it collected from Bengal that it could purchase all the Indian products it wanted and still ship home additional gold and silver. For the first time in history India, not Europe, had a trade deficit.

- But Clive and many other Englishmen believed that a commercial corporation like the East India Company should not be a ruler. In 1759, just two years after Plassey, Clive wrote to the most influential British minister, William Pitt the Elder, Earl of Chatham. Clive pleaded that the British government rule over this captured land.

- He also proposed sending a couple of thousand royal army soldiers who would conquer more land and drive the French out of India. Additionally, Indian sepoys could be cheaply hired to do most of the actual fighting.

- But Pitt rejected Clive's pleas. Many British politicians at that time believed that it was morally corrupting for the English crown to have a land empire in Asia.

■ Money that Robert Clive took from India made him one of the wealthiest men in England and a baron. But in 1772–1773, Parliament launched a probing investigation of Clive for corruption, both financial and moral. Although he was not convicted, he died a year later, at age 49, from either suicide or a heart attack.

AFTER CLIVE

■ These debates about British imperialism continued in London for decades. Pitt's son, William Pitt the Younger, passed the 1784 India Act, which forbade exactly what Clive had requested. In order to rein in the company, Parliament also created the Board of Control to supervise it.

■ To coordinate all of the East India Company's policies in India, in 1772 the company's directors appointed a governor-general. The first governor-general, Warren Hastings (who held the office from 1772–1785), recognized the value and utility of some Indian men and traditions.

■ Hastings's policies were known at that time as Orientalist, meaning they valued Asian knowledge. But Hastings was simultaneously acting as a paternal and self-appointed preserver of Indian traditions.

■ Hastings also imposed British power onto nearby Indian kingdoms. He personally led military expeditions that punished resisting Indian rulers. He annexed their territories and made himself personally rich.

■ But this eventually provided his political opponents in London with much evidence against him. On his return to England, the British House of Commons impeached him for corruption. He went on trial before the House of Lords in 1787. He was not acquitted for nearly a decade.

Cornwallis

- To replace Hastings as governor-general, the British government sent a very different type of man: Charles Cornwallis. He came from the landed aristocracy and was a career officer in the British royal army, best known in America for surrendering at Yorktown in 1781 to George Washington and his French allies.

- Despite this setback, Cornwallis retained much political influence in London. He was appointed governor-general in 1786, just five years after his Yorktown surrender.

- In India, Cornwallis tried to impose on the Company's administration some of the theories he brought with him. He believed Indians were corrupt, and he believed strongly in the value of landownership. This followed the then-influential French physiocrat school of economics. The central idea was that agricultural land grounded every sound economy.

Surrender of Lord Cornwallis by John Trumbull

- Cornwallis went to India determined to impose this physiocrat economic system on Bengal, even though he knew nothing about it before he arrived. He intended to establish a network of Indian landlords, like the landed gentry and squires of England, who would tend the land, improve agricultural production, and thereby advance the whole Indian economy.

- In 1793, he recognized legal ownership rights by a class of Indians known as *zamindars* ("land holders"). They could now buy and sell their lands as their personal property. As an incentive to invest in improving their land, Cornwallis ordered that the land tax would never be raised. This was the Permanent Settlement, since the taxes due were "settled permanently." However, if any landowner failed to pay his taxes exactly when they were due, the British would auction off his lands.

- The Permanent Settlement produced unintended effects. Indian zamindars historically did have specific rights over particular lands, with the main one being the right to collect taxes for the government and keep a share. But other people also had rights to that same land, including the farmers who actually did the work plus temples and village officials who also received a share of the taxes.

- When the zamindars were legally transformed from landholders into landlords, those other parties lost out. Many farmers became tenants whom the landlord could now legally expel. Late taxes often meant that many estates were auctioned off, and urban-based rich Indian merchants purchased them.

SUB-IMPERIALIST WAR

- Many governors-general sought glory for themselves through sub-imperialist wars. One of the more aggressive governors-general was Lord Richard Wellesley (elder brother of the later Duke of Wellington).

- Wellesley's generals defeated the ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan, killing him in 1799. They annexed some of that kingdom and set up a puppet ruler over the rest. In 1801, Wellesley annexed half the kingdom of the company's longest subordinate ally, Awadh.

- Wellesley also defeated the Maratha confederacy and made the Mughal emperor a palace prisoner, taking much of their lands. But London kept scolding him for these wars and annexations, and Wellesley had to resign in 1805.

THE RECEIVING END

- Many Indian regional rulers fought battles against the British, but few won wars since most could not afford to equip and pay such large sepoy armies. Also, they could not match British control over the sea.

- Instead, the many different Indian rulers acted in their own individual interests, often fighting against each other. Most surviving rulers believed that they could do better by cooperating (or seeming to cooperate) with the company than by openly opposing it.

- There were substantial classes of officials who did much of the actual administration before the company took over. Some of these people remained loyal to their Indian rulers, and so faded from power with them. Other traditional service elites learned how to adapt to the British. They continued to collect taxes, keep records, and make the legal system function, except now there were white British officials commanding them.

RAM MOHAN ROY

- Out of the interactions among these various Indians and Britons emerged hybrid systems of government. Often the British Anglicized customary Indian procedures and laws. Conversely, many Indians Indianized British procedures and laws.

- We can see some of these processes in the career of one of the most remarkable men of his day, Ram Mohan Roy. For a decade (1804–14), he worked as an official in the British administration of Bengal, seeing how the British functioned from within the system. He then retired at age 42 in order to devote himself to improving his own community.

- He led like-minded Indians in the Bengal Renaissance, a cultural movement based in Calcutta that strove to modernize Hindu society. In 1828, Ram Mohan started a reforming Hindu movement, called the

Statue of Ram Mohan Roy

Brahmo Sabha. He found in the ancient Hindu scriptures the model of a monotheistic and formless creator god, Brahma, who they could worship.

■ He put pressure on the government to outlaw the practice of sati, where a Hindu widow proved her faithfulness to her late husband by killing herself, either on his funeral pyre or later. The governor-general at that time, Lord William Bentinck, accepted Ram Mohan Roy's advice, and that of British missionaries and officials, and ordered sati outlawed in 1829.

BENTINCK'S POLICIES

■ In order to make the administration of India as efficient as possible, Bentinck reduced its expenses, including the salary of British officials. He hired more Indian officials, since he could pay them less salary than British men.

■ In order to increase the government's income, Bentinck declared that all opium grown in British India had to be sold to the British East India Company, at prices it set. This monopoly meant large profits when the company auctioned off that opium to British, Indian, and American merchants, who then smuggled it into China for the growing millions of addicts there.

■ Governor-General Bentinck also strongly believed in technological progress, encouraging steam navigation on the Ganges River. Bentinck abolished flogging in the company's army, even though such whipping as punishment continued in the British army for decades.

■ But Bentinck's administration also imposed the Anglicization of the government's educational system for Indians. There had long been debates between Anglicists and Orientalists. Anglicists argued that English was the language of science and progress, so Indians should have to be taught in it. Orientalists believed that Indians

should be educated in their own languages. By "education," both sides really meant the education of a few Indian male elites, not mass education. In 1835, under Bentinck, the balance tilted in favor of the Anglicists.

SUGGESTED READING

Bayly, *Empire and Information.*

Green, *Islam and the Army in Colonial India.*

Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions.*

Lecture 25

The Issues and Events of 1857

Throughout the torrid summer of 1857, across the heart of the north Indian Gangetic plain, Indians and Britons clashed viciously. Fighting and heartless executions continued for more than a year, leaving hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children dead. In many ways, these bloody events marked a major turning point in the history of India, affecting virtually everyone. It radically reshaped relations between Indians and Britons and also the nature of colonial rule over India. The historical meanings of these events of 1857 have remained heatedly contested ever since.

An Unusual Army

■ Over the century leading up to 1857, an unusual colonial army had conquered the million and half square miles of India and its 270 million inhabitants. One distinctive feature is that the army was 85 percent Indian. That is, the army contained only about 40,000 Europeans and a quarter of a million Indian soldiers, generally called sepoys.

■ Another distinctive feature of this army was that it was officially part of the English East India Company, a joint-stock corporation whose official goal was making profits to pay dividends to its shareholders. But from the mid-18th century, this company had begun to seize and rule vast territories in India.

■ There were actually three distinct East India Company armies. The biggest one was based in Bengal, but there were two smaller armies based in Madras and Bombay. The Indians in the Madras and Bombay armies remained largely uninvolved in the 1857 fighting, so we'll concentrate on the company's Bengal army.

Sepoy Discontent

■ This colonial army had become ever more clearly divided along racial lines. White and Indian soldiers served separately, never mixing except in the heat of battle. The artillery, in particular, was considered too technical and powerful in battle to trust to Indians, although Indian servants did much of the hard work.

■ Even in sepoy regiments, Indians could not be promoted higher than petty officer, a noncommissioned rank, never in command over white soldiers. Moreover, especially in the decade leading up to 1857, the financial allowances that had previously been allowed to sepoys were being reduced. Sepoys also saw that many of the British officers treated them less respectfully. This reflected a growing British sense of cultural and racial superiority.

Depiction of a British officer stopping mutineering Indian soldiers

■ Many sepoys resented this situation, especially when their British commanding officers used their rank to force Indians to obey orders they found disgraceful. For example, some British officers preached Christianity to their soldiers, who could not avoid these sermons without disobeying orders.

KINGLY DISCONTENT

■ Indian sepoys were not the only ones who rose up against the British in 1857. Over the previous century, hundreds of Indian kings had been defeated and exiled by the East India Company's armies.

■ The company then annexed their kingdoms on one justification or another. Even loyal dynasties were taken over during the 1840s and 1850s under the so-called Doctrine of Lapse. This meant that the East India Company claimed to inherit the kingdom of any Indian ruler who died without a legitimate male heir whom the company approved.

■ Some of the annexed kingdoms became centers for anti-British sentiment and fighting in 1857. Two key examples are Jhansi and Awadh.

■ In 1853, the Hindu king of the small central Indian state of Jhansi died, with many wives but only an adopted son. When the Company annexed this kingdom for its own administrative convenience under the Doctrine of Lapse, the youngest widow, Rani Lakshmi Bai, objected. The Company derecognized the adoption and took over Jhansi.

■ Rani Lakshmi Bai became one of the most celebrated heroines of the 1857 fighting, leading her followers into battle. She died of wounds suffered fighting nobly against the British.

■ In 1856, one of the biggest remaining Indian kingdoms, Awadh, was annexed by the company on the grounds of misgovernment. For nearly a century, this Shiite Muslim dynasty had been obediently

Statue of Lakshmi Bai

subordinate to the British. It had loaned the East India Company vast amounts of money, much of which had never been repaid.

- While the Awadh king was deposed and pensioned in Calcutta, his mother, one of his wives, and his brothers went to England to plead his case before the British Parliament and Queen Victoria, to no avail. As the fighting broke out in 1857, another wife of the ex-king and another of his sons became rousing symbols for the forces fighting the British.

The Fighting Begins

- On May 10, 1857, in the garrison town of Meerut, the Indians of the Bengal Army's 3rd Light Cavalry finally rose up against their British

officers and their wives and children. These Indian soldiers had many specific provocations.

- The previous month, 85 of them had been arrested for disobeying the direct order to use a new type of rifle, the .577 caliber Enfield P-53, a rifle that came with pre-manufactured cartridges in which an exactly measured amount of gunpowder, along with the bullet, was covered by a greased paper. By biting off the top of this cartridge, pouring the gunpowder down the barrel, and then using the rest of the cartridge paper as a pre-greased wad, a soldier could fire much faster and efficiently, even in the heat of battle.

- Indian soldiers wanted to know the source of the grease on the paper that they were putting in their mouths. Many sepoys were sure it was made from cow fat, pig fat, or a combination. Putting cow fat in your mouth polluted many Hindus, especially the high-caste Brahmins and Rajputs. Pig fat offended many Muslim sepoys. The British officers claimed it was vegetable oil but in truth did not really know.

- One Brahmin sepoy, Mangal Pandey, became famous among Indians (and infamous among Britons) for his violent resistance to his British officers at the Barrackpore base, near Calcutta. He was executed on April 8.

- On April 24 in Meerut, when soldiers of the 3rd Light Cavalry regiment refused to bite on the greased cartridge as ordered, dozens of them were imprisoned, court-martialed for mutiny, and sentenced to 10 years of hard labor imprisonment. Faced with this prospect, many other Indian soldiers were ready to rise up.

- In addition, many of the Indian townspeople of Meerut ridiculed the sepoys stationed there for becoming outcastes by serving the British and for using polluting new cartridges. They also called the sepoys cowards for not liberating their imprisoned comrades. This further aroused the Indian soldiers.

- Early on May 10 the soldiers in Meerut attacked the military prison, released their comrades, killed about 50 of their British officers and their families, and rushed the 36 miles to Delhi, which they quickly captured.

- These Indian soldiers pushed their way into the Red Fort, where the 82-year-old Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II was a palace prisoner. Although he was reluctant to get involved, they proclaimed him the restored ruler over all of India.

- News spread rapidly, sparking uprisings across much of the Ganges plain. Britons, including officers, officials, and merchants, as well as their families, fled. Hundreds were hunted down and executed or imprisoned. Institutions and symbols of the East India Company's government, including prisons, treasuries, post offices, telegraph stations, record rooms, and officers' quarters, were looted and destroyed.

British Response

- As soon as news of the Meerut uprising and capture of Delhi reached British officials, they began to mobilize forces to restore British rule across north India. In Bengal, the government intercepted British army regiments on their way to China and marched them up the Ganges. The British forces began to retake regions and cities they had lost. Banaras and Allahabad were retaken in a month.

- In the Punjab, the British had some white regiments. Those few Bengal Army sepoy regiments stationed in the Punjab that showed signs of discontent were disarmed. The British also began to heavily recruit Punjabi Sikh soldiers.

- British officials in Nepal convinced the Gurkha ruler to send his army to help restore British rule over north India. British forces recaptured Awadh's capital of Lucknow in March 1858.

- The northern part of the Deccan remained the last major battleground, with Jhansi and Gwalior falling to the British in June 1858. But some of the scattered Indian leaders, and many sepoys, remained in resistance for another year at least.

BRUTALITY AND DIVISION

- So traumatic were these events that many people involved responded brutally. Indian sepoys, peasants, landholders, and bandits killed many British men, women, and children.

- As the British forces fought back, they were even more brutal, executing tens of thousands of Indians who looked like they might have been sepoys or even just sympathizers. In fact, the British army often used a particularly gruesome form of execution: tying the sentenced man to the front of a cannon loaded only with gunpowder and not a cannonball, and then firing it off.

- Much of the strong racial animosity that characterized the later British Raj arose from the killings by both sides of people on the basis of their race. After 1857, there arose among the British the idea that Indians were bloodthirsty killers and threats to the sexual purity of white women. Many post-1857 British novels, poems, plays, and other works of popular literature featured this inflammatory theme.

- The British also began to emphasize differences among Indians. Not only did the British separate Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs in legal terms, they also tried to keep them apart politically. This was the British strategy of divide and rule.

- After 1857, the British also made major changes in their military and political policies. The East India Company armies were substantially reorganized. Many longstanding sepoy regiments were demobilized and the rest transferred into the new British-Indian army, under the

direct command of the British monarch, but still separate from the royal British army.

- The new army used the "martial race theory" to punish the communities whose sepoys had risen up against the British and also to reward those communities that supported them. In particular, the high-caste sepoys from Bengal and the central Ganges plain were degraded by the British as an allegedly "effeminate race," unworthy of being soldiers.

- In contrast, Nepali Gurkhas, Punjabi Sikhs, and also Muslims from the Northwest Frontier region received the new designation "martial races." These regions and communities had supported the British in 1857.

- In November 1858, Queen Victoria's government took all political power in India away from the East India Company, and eventually closed it down entirely, paying off its stockholders. The British crown became the ruler of India.

- The British and Indian employees of the East India Company now worked for the royal government of India, or the British Raj as it is popularly known.

- Many Britons came to believe that Indians did not deserve the benefits of allegedly enlightened British rule. Instead, they felt that Indians preferred their so-called natural leaders, who were feudal Indian princes. The British Parliament had Queen Victoria issue a proclamation promising the more than 600 surviving Indian rulers that, unless they had directly fought against the British, they were guaranteed to keep their dynasties on their thrones and to maintain possession of their territories.

- These Indian "princely states" remained legally independent, with the largest of them having British-recognized sovereigns, until 1947. About a third of the Indian subcontinent's total territory and

a quarter of its people remained officially under the rule of these princely states. The largest of these princely states, Hyderabad, was about the size of France.

■ Any prince who became too independent minded was deposed, with a more compliant brother or son put in his place. This was the British system of indirect rule, which they developed in India and then copied in many other colonies in Asia and Africa.

Suggested Reading

Bates, *Mutiny at the Margins.*

Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal.*

Singh, *The Rani of Jhansi.*

Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered.*

Lecture 26

The British Raj and Early Nationalism

British colonial rule over India, known as the British Raj, lasted for almost 90 years, until 1947. During that period of "high colonialism," many British men and women worked to create institutions that would control India. But these very institutions of colonial rule created conditions that led a growing number of Indian men and women to strive for their own nation. In this lecture, we'll begin by surveying the structure of British colonial rule over India as it changed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We'll also see how various competing nationalist movements began to develop during this period.

THE RAJ EMERGES

- The British Raj emerged from the aftermath of the fighting of 1857–58, termed variously the Indian Mutiny, First War for Indian Independence, or the People's Uprising. This bloody conflict in India, the 1865 Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica, and the Maori wars in New Zealand (1845–1872) solidified British ideas about race as being biological and immutable.

- Since Britain had conquered India and Indians, the reasoning went, it must be morally and racially fitter. Many officers and officials of the British Raj tried to institutionalize what they considered British racial and social superiority.

- After 1857, an array of new British policies developed that were designed to prevent the recurrence of the sepoy mutiny and armed popular uprising. The British Indian Army replaced the three East India Company armies.

- This army recruited so-called martial races, including Muslims and Indian communities that had remained loyal to the British like Sikhs and Gurkhas. The sharply marked distinction between white British commissioned officers and non-white Indian noncommissioned officers and sepoys continued.

- In the civil service, the British instituted a similar, racially based pattern. After 1858, the white British officials of the East India Company became the Indian Civil Service (ICS), which administered the two-thirds of India under British direct rule. The ICS also indirectly ruled the hundreds of Indian princely states that collectively comprised the other third of India.

- Starting in 1863, a few Indian highly Anglicized young men traveled to London in order to take the ICS entrance examination. British officials made it very difficult for Indians to even take the exam. Not only was the examination in English, it was also in Western subjects including English, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and German languages and literature. Further, it was only offered in London, so an Indian candidate had to travel there and take it in an unfamiliar place.

- Many members of the ICS saw themselves as protecting the simple, childlike Indian peasants and much-abused Indian women against the morally suspect Indian middle-class men who were allegedly constantly exploiting them.

- These career ICS officials took great pride in "modernizing" India, at least in terms of technology. Telegraphs had begun to transform communication, and by 1865, there was even a mostly undersea cable laid between India and Britain.

- Other innovations included railways (which enforced racial separations) and irrigation canals. Many Britons believed that these massive civil engineering projects were proof that science and nature had both been mastered by British civilization.

THE TWO ENGLANDS

- From the 1830s onward, British colonial government sponsored an Anglophone educational system in India that allowed elite Indian men to study subjects like English literature, English history, and Western-style science. A few of the more enterprising Indian elite families began from the early 19th century onward to send their sons to England itself for higher education.

- Wherever they studied, these young men were taught about the superiority of British culture and England's traditions of liberty and democracy. But gradually some of these Anglicized Indians began to question the discrepancy between British humanist ideals and the exploitative practices of colonialism.

- Jawaharlal Nehru articulated this as the "two Englands." He distinguished between "[t]he England of Shakespeare and Milton, of noble speech and writing and brave deed, of political revolution and the struggle for freedom, of science and technological progress" and "the England of the savage penal code and brutal behaviour, of entrenched feudalism and reaction."

CHALLENGES TO THE RAJ

- By the late 19th century, various Indian people began increasingly to challenge the permanence of the British Raj and its racial segregation. In 1885, about 70 Indian Anglicized elite men from all over India came together in Bombay for what was called the Indian National Congress (INC). The man who organized this was Allan Octavian Hume, a British former ICS official who believed that Indians should begin to play a larger role in governing India. Hume had actually been pushed out of the ICS for his relatively liberal views.

- The Indians who assembled in 1885 began to see their nationally shared interests for the first time. There had been earlier scattered discussions about a possible nation, but hitherto mostly confined within specific provinces.

- Since no single language is shared among India's various regions, English was the common link language among them. With that came English concepts like formal resolutions. The early meetings of the Indian National Congress passed a few resolutions, but these were all intended to contribute to the British Raj, not end it.

- Resolutions included the opportunity to take the ICS examination in India so more Indians could serve the British monarch. The viceroy declined to implement any of these resolutions.

- Nonetheless, the INC continued to meet annually in one Indian city or another. Since the INC proposals were quite general about what the Indian nation would be, elite men of various communities participated. One Parsi leader, Dadabhai Naoroji, had spent many years in England as a merchant and part-time teacher of his native language, Gujarati, at University College, London. He also participated in British politics, actually winning a seat in the British Parliament in 1892.

- One of Naoroji's insights was how Britain had long been "draining" India of its capital, thereby funding the British industrial revolution while stunting Indian development. Naoroji brought to the INC great insights into British political processes.

- Gradually, some of the younger, more assertive men in the INC began to push more strongly for changes in the Raj. They were termed extremists, although their

Dadabhai Naoroji

proposals were not actually very radical. This led to an open split in the INC during its 1907 meeting in Surat over just how self-governing India should be in the future be.

RELIGION AND THE RAJ

- Calcutta in particular was a major center for Indian Hindu leadership, especially men who were enriched by the Permanent Settlement of 1793. So, in 1905, the British Raj divided the Bengal presidency. The official reason was administrative convenience, but the effect was to separate these Calcutta-based Hindu nationalists from the political resources of their landed estates in east Bengal.

- Conversely, in the new province of Eastern Bengal, the large majority of the population was Muslim. This split had intentionally opened up a protected political space for Muslim leaders.

- In 1906 in Eastern Bengal, a new political party was organized: the Muslim League. Many of its leaders were major landlords who claimed to be speaking for their Muslim tenants. Thus, the British Raj's policy of "divide and rule" led to a second major elite voice along with the INC. The Muslim League's leaders wanted British protection from the Hindu majority.

- Further encouraging Muslim separatism, the Raj instituted separate electorates for Muslims, where only Muslims could vote and only a Muslim candidate could be elected.

- The 1905 partition of Bengal, however, mobilized people far more widely than the British had anticipated. These rising Indian leaders used the concept of *swadeshi*, meaning "of one's own land" — that is, only products made in India should be purchased.

- In 1911, the British Raj reversed the partition of Bengal (although the British would repeat it in 1947). The British deprived the

Calcutta-based politicians of their direct influence over the imperial government by shifting the capital to New Delhi.

- As a symbol of an eternal British Raj, they built a planned new city adjacent to the old Mughal capital of Shahjahanabad, now renamed Old Delhi. So, instead of Bengalis in Calcutta, now north Indians in the region around Delhi, including many Muslim leaders there, had direct influence over the colonial government.

WAR

- Britain declared war on Germany in 1914, and declared India at war too. The British government did not consult Indians but expected them to pour their manpower and resources into World War I. This forced many Indian nationalist politicians to decide whether they had a moral duty to support the empire when it went to war.

- Many, including Mohandas Gandhi, did so, since they were demanding the rights due citizens of the British Empire and

therefore felt that they were obliged to defend it. Gandhi and other Indian leaders encouraged the recruitment of Indian soldiers to go fight in Europe.

■ In all, almost 1.7 million Indian soldiers, plus many military laborers, volunteered to support the British. This was nearly 20 percent of the entire global British imperial army. These Indians fought in Europe and the Middle East. Recruitment came widely across India, thereby discrediting the British pretense that there were martial and effeminate Indian races. Further, many more Indians became officers, taking on more authority since there were fewer white British officers available.

■ Many Indians suffered during this war. More than 130,000 Indian soldiers were either killed or wounded. The Indian economy was also greatly affected as it supplied food, clothing, and money to desperate England.

■ The British rhetoric designed to mobilize popular support for the war, calling it a war for democracy, encouraged many Indians to expect it for themselves. They were also encouraged by promises by President Woodrow Wilson about postwar national self-determination. So, at the armistice, many Indians had a growing sense that they had earned self-government, at least, if not total independence.

■ But many British politicians wanted instead to return to a renewed British Raj in India. Instead of rewarding India, the British Raj put into place continued restrictions like the Rowlatt Acts of 1919, which authorized arrest and detention without trial.

■ Other brutal British actions included the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in the Punjab. In the city of Amritsar, nearly 400 innocent Indians were killed and another 1,100 seriously wounded when the British officer Reginald Dyer ordered them shot in a confined square.

■ During the interwar years, many more Indians got involved in politics due to British acts of coercion as well as developing Indian

leadership. A range of Indian leaders arose who mobilized different constituencies around different models for the nation to come.

■ By the time of World War II, India had moved closer to independence. That war repeated some of the processes of World War I. This time, about 2.5 million Indian soldiers joined the British Indian Army, which expanded to 10 times its prewar size. A few Indians were able to become commissioned officers.

■ These Indian forces fought in Europe as well as in Asia defending the British Empire. Indian taxpayers also contributed greatly, by choice or by compulsion. Distressed Britain barely saved itself and could no longer hold on to India or many of its other widespread colonies. Independence came in 1947, but the bitter conflicts over the shape of the nation, or nations, that emerged would continue.

Suggested Reading

Guha, ed., *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986–1995.*

Hosain, *Sultana's Dream.*

Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision.*

Peers and Gooptu, eds., *India and the British Empire.*

Lecture 27

India and Indians in the World

Most studies of Indian history, appropriately enough, concentrate on India itself. But we should also consider the long history of how Indian people and cultures extended into the wider world beyond the subcontinent. In this lecture, we'll start with a brief look at the pre-colonial period, highlighting a few illustrative examples of India's significant effects on other parts of Asia. Then we'll turn to the growing movement of Indians across the globe, especially from the beginning of the colonial period up to the early 20th century.

EARLY MOVEMENTS

- The earliest human migrations from Africa spread into India about 60,000 to 70,000 years ago. These initial migrations eastward then continued as humans extended from India into Southeast and East Asia.

- By 3,000 years ago, people living along the shores of the Indian Ocean began to build boats that could brave the sea. Relatively soon afterward, Indian Ocean mariners discovered the predictable monsoon winds that made longer, more reliable voyages far from land possible.

- To the west, dhows and other types of sailing ships moved people and cargoes extensively among east Africa, Arabia, Iran, and India. To the east, monsoon-powered ships linked India with coastal Southeast Asia and China.

- We can see evidence of these exchanges in the biological and cultural heritage of various communities throughout the Indian Ocean region. For example, there are many Indian merchants who over the

centuries settled up and down the east African coast, establishing communities in Zanzibar and many other major trading ports there.

- Additionally, there are clearly east African–descended groups that have long been living within India, most notably the Siddi community in today's Gujarat and Maharashtra coastal regions.

- Looking east, cultural exchanges have also flourished since ancient times. For instance, Hindu and Buddhist religious movements that started in India inspired massive monuments and vital traditions within local societies and kingdoms throughout Southeast Asia. Indonesia still boasts of its shadow puppets that enact the 4th-century Indian Hindu epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata. On Java, there is the vast 9th-century Buddhist temple complex at Borobudur.

- Muslim merchants, holy men, and conquerors from Arabia reached western India in the 8th century, soon after the emergence of Islam. Indian Muslims carried the message of the Prophet Muhammad with them as they traded, preached, and ruled throughout coastal Southeast Asia.

- When we consider the passes through the mountains in India's northwest, we find many different groups emigrating and immigrating during much of human history. For example, small groups of Indian merchants, philosophers, mercenaries, and their wives went along to Greece and Egypt with the retreating armies of Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C.E.

- Many more Indians also moved west out of India over subsequent centuries. For instance, monks and merchants carried the teachings of Gautama Buddha from India into Afghanistan from the 3rd century B.C.E. onward.

- Other types of Indians also migrated westward. For instance, the nomadic Roma people migrated from northwest India around the 5th

century. The Roma now number 11 million people in Europe alone, mostly in Romania and Bulgaria.

European Arrivals

- Starting in 1498, the arrival of European ships really began to integrate Indians into a truly global system. Not only did Indian products increasingly go worldwide on European ships, Indian men and women of all social classes did as well.

- From the early 16th century onward, some of the Portuguese ships returning from India around the tip of South Africa brought a few Indians back to Europe. Many were Indians who had converted to Roman Catholicism and served the church, the king, or elite Portuguese families.

- From the early 17th century onward, northern Europeans, in particular the English East India Company, sent larger and more frequent ships to India than had the Portuguese. This greatly increased the flow of many different types of Indian men and women going to Europe, especially to Britain, and back.

Lascars

■ During the 17th century, about half the ships that left England for India never returned home, being sunk by storms or shipwrecked on uncharted shores. Those European vessels that did reach India often faced severe maritime labor shortages. In the Indian Ocean, large numbers of European sailors died from disease or violence, or they deserted to seek their individual fortunes ashore.

■ To replace them, European sea captains hired growing numbers of Indian seamen, known as *lascars*. During the 17th and 18th centuries, these lascars customarily received higher wages than did European sailors, so desperate were the European captains for replacement manpower for the voyage back to Europe.

■ By the 1850s, several thousand lascars annually disembarked in London's docklands. Most lascars only remained in England for a few months until they sailed back to India again. But hundreds settled in cities and villages across Britain, sometimes for a few years, many for the rest of their lives.

■ After steamships replaced sailing vessels from the mid-19th century onward, the status of these lascars changed. British maritime labor unions and government regulations restricted the employment of Indian seamen and lowered the wages that they received relative to European sailors. Many Indians no longer sailed as skilled seamen but rather as stokers shoveling coal in the sweltering engine room or as servants for the passengers and crew.

Servants

■ Another growing class of Indians who went to Britain temporarily or permanently were thousands of male and female servants. Indian servants who went to Britain were not slaves, but rather working-class people who agreed to go.

■ Most servants eventually left Britain, often working for Britons on the voyage back to India. A substantial number of them made multiple trips to Europe over their lifetimes, so they knew what to expect there. About half were women. Many worked as ayahs, or nursemaids, looking after the children of their European employers.

■ From the 17th until the early 19th century, Indian servants were quite expensive to bring to Britain, so they added much rare, exotic prestige to their employer's household. Thereafter, steamships and changing British government regulations made Indian servants more common, and therefore less valued.

■ As British colonialism expanded from the mid-18th century onward, increasing numbers of the Indian wives, mistresses, or children of Europeans went back to Europe with them. They soon merged into European society.

DIPLOMATS

■ Mughal emperors and other Indian rulers also sent embassies to London. By the 1850s, there had been 30 of these Indian diplomatic missions, some with hundreds of Indians in them, mostly servants supporting the ambassador. Several of these ambassadors or their attendants wrote down book-length accounts of their political and personal experiences there.

■ In their writing for fellow elite male Indian readers, many of these visitors repeatedly commented about their relatively free social mixing with British women of their own social class. This was a level of socializing that they would not have permitted between their own womenfolk and European male visitors in India.

■ These accounts by early Indian visitors also uniformly remarked at how uninformed and parochial the British public were at that time. These Indian authors gave examples of how crowds of mystified

but well-disposed Britons gathered around them whenever they appeared in public wearing Indian clothing.

Laborers

- There was a small trade in Indian slaves until the early 19th century, when the British outlawed the slave trade internationally. Thereafter, the British used Indian prisoners as workers in many of its colonies.

- The largest number of Indians, about 30 million men and women, went overseas as manual laborers under the indentured labor system. Their contracts gave the worker a cash advance and provided sea passage to where he or she would work. The indentured laborer had to work at low wages to repay the advance, usually for five or seven years.

- The original indentured laborers were actually Europeans during the 17th and 18th centuries. Europeans continued to emigrate by indenture until the early 19th century when the system largely ended for Europeans.

- But with the end of European indentured labor and the 1833 British legal ending of the intercontinental slave trade, a demand for new sources for large numbers of cheap worker arose.

- Such manual laborers were especially needed by European-owned sugar plantations in Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka), Burma (now called Myanmar), Malaya, Fiji, the Caribbean, Mauritius and Reunion islands, and south and east Africa. Europeans and freed African slaves generally refused such poorly paid and dangerous employment, as did the local population.

- However, periodic famines and political upheavals—including from El Nino–related droughts and India's 1857 uprising—drove many Indians and other Asians to emigrate as free or indentured labor.

- After they reached the overseas plantations, many indentured laborers worked under conditions as horrific as slavery. The indentures could be bought and sold, and the laborers had to work for whoever owned them. If they broke their indenture, the British classed it as a criminal act, not a civil contract violation, so the police enforced their bondage.

- Nonetheless, unlike transatlantic slaves, the children of indentured immigrants were legally born free, although their parents might indenture them.

- While most Indian indentured immigrants were men, many of the receiving governments and plantations preferred families in order to create more stable worker communities. Immigrants who completed their indenture legally had the option of return passage home, but many chose to stay on as free settlers.

INDIAN ELITES

- From the mid-19th century onward, growing numbers of ambitious Indian elite families sent their sons to Britain for professional educations, like law or medicine. Some went to take the examination that gained them entry into the prestigious Indian Civil Service. Far fewer Indian women went, even from elite families.

- Overall, these 19th and early 20th century Indian students generally encountered less strong racial prejudice in Britain than they endured in India. The British Raj in India depended on strong racial separation. However, since there were so many fewer Indians living in Britain, that society felt less threatened. Further, the strong class differences prevailing in Britain meant that elite Indian men stood higher than many working-class British men and women.

- By living in England, these young Indians gained a better understanding of their colonial rulers. They studied British liberal movements and the humanistic values held by many Britons. These

227

Indian students and visitors learned firsthand about Parliamentary government and representative democracy. Some who lived there long enough could vote in British elections.

■ A few, starting in 1841, were elected to the British Parliament by English constituencies. A range of movements for socialism or progressive Christianity were attractive to British youth, and many of these movements welcomed Indian supporters and members.

■ Middle- and upper-class Indian men and women also saw how European imperialism affected not just their home colony but other non-white colonies around the world. They learned from strong European critics of British imperialism like Karl Marx. All this made them aware of their own humanity and rights as citizens, which contrasted with their position in British colonies as oppressed racial inferiors.

■ Therefore, many of the early Indian and African anticolonial nationalists actually studied in Britain. For example, at age 16, Jawaharlal Nehru, later India's first and longest-serving prime minister, went to Harrow, an elite England private school. Nehru went on to earn a bachelor's degree in natural science from Cambridge University, and qualified for law school in London.

Suggested Reading

Fisher, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet.*

Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies.*

Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars, and Princes.*

Younger, *New Homelands.*

Mahatma Gandhi

Few people in all of human history are as famous, admired, and imitated as Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi. Within India, most people consider him the father of the nation. In this lecture, we'll consider Mohandas Gandhi as he lived in four distinct worlds, each during a different period of his life. First, we'll explore Gandhi's youth, spent in India under British colonial rule. Next, we'll follow Gandhi to London, where he went to train as a lawyer and also to study English manners. Then we'll travel with Gandhi to South Africa, his third world, where he remained for over 20 years. Finally, we'll follow Gandhi back to India. This was a very different world from what he had left decades earlier.

GANDHI'S ROOTS

- For three generations, Gandhi's male ancestors had served as prime ministers of small coastal kingdoms in the western Indian region of Gujarat. He himself was born in 1869 in the small kingdom of Porbandar.

- Gandhi's own father was the chief minister of this kingdom. He served under the maharaja of Porbandar, one of the more than 600 remaining Indian rulers who were really under the power of the British Raj.

- The British conquered India mainly by force, but they ruled over Indians in large measure by convincing them of British racial and cultural superiority. Hindus like Gandhi's family had felt themselves inferior, not only to the white Christian British but also to the Muslim kings who had ruled much of India for hundreds of years before the British.

- Gandhi followed his family's custom and entered an arranged marriage at 16. Although the couple's first son died at birth, they soon had two other sons. But Gandhi determined to leave them all behind in order to improve himself.

Gandhi in London

- At age 18, Gandhi traveled to London to study law and become an Anglicized gentleman. During Gandhi's three years in Britain, he had three major projects.

  ◆ First, he enrolled to become qualified as a barrister, the British term for the highest-status lawyers who could appear before a judge in court. Gandhi needed to pay and attend 72 meals in one of the Inns of the Court over a three-year period, and take two simple examinations.

Gandhi

  ◆ Second, Gandhi worked to become as Anglicized as he could. In practice, students of the law were supposed to pay a fee to apprentice with a working barrister. This Gandhi did not do. Instead, he spent his time and limited funds trying to become an English-style gentleman. He studied dancing, violin, and French but mastered none.

  ◆ Third, he wanted to explore his own identity and place in both his Indian heritage and in the world of London.
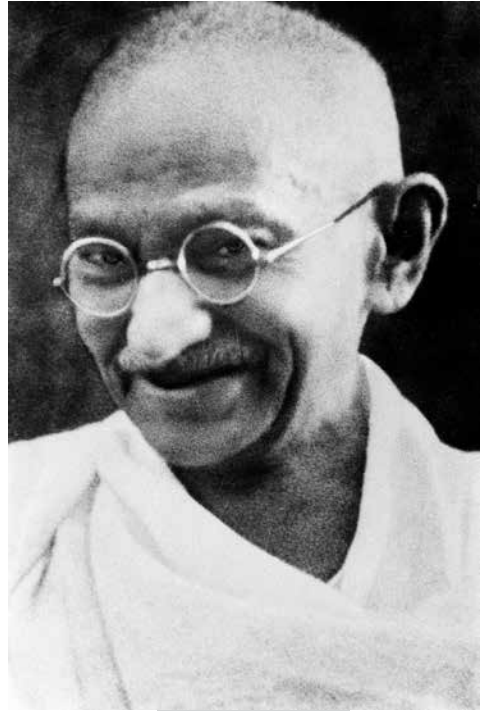
■ He described his several dates with British women as failures, since he always lost his nerve. He revealed that he was married as a way to get out of one such relationship.

GANDHI IN SOUTH AFRICA

■ When Gandhi returned to his family at age 21, he found he actually knew little about how to practice law. The first and only time he found a client and tried to represent her in court, he could only stammer and rushed out in disgrace.

■ Finding no place for himself in India after his very expensive education in London, Gandhi left and did not return there to live for more than 20 years. Moving to South Africa at age 24, Gandhi entered his third world.

■ At that time, there were four separate governments in South Africa. In the interior were the two countries of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Both were settled and ruled by white Afrikaners, also known as *Boers*, meaning "farmer" in Afrikaans. In the southwest was the British-ruled Cape Colony. And on the eastern coast, along the Indian Ocean, was the British-ruled colony of Natal, with Durban as its capital.

■ Natal had many sugar plantations. After the slave trade ended, plantations began to import Indian indentured laborers. By the time Gandhi arrived, there were about 40,000 Indians in Natal, counting both those under indenture and those who were free laborers.

■ When Gandhi first went to South Africa, the legal system of racial segregation and inequality was just beginning. This later became the apartheid system. To keep Indians from becoming free, the government doubled the length of the indenture from 5 to 10 years. The government levied a new special tax on all Indians, which was almost impossible for free but working-class Indians to pay.

- Gandhi mobilized peaceful but forceful protests using his growing experience as a public speaker. These protests got the government to reduce this tax by almost 90 percent, and it was eventually repealed.

- New laws required non-white people to live in certain designated areas of towns and cities, and have a passbook signed by a white man before they could leave those areas. Gandhi stayed on in South Africa for over 20 years in order to oppose each of these early apartheid laws. He devoted himself to campaigns of petitioning and letter writing, to writing for and starting newspapers, and to fighting each law in court.

- Over time, Gandhi brought almost all the Indians into an organization he formed, called the Natal Indian Congress. A few sympathetic whites also supported him.

SATYAGRAHA

- Gradually, Gandhi developed his most famous practice of nonviolent noncooperation with injustice. This is sometimes called *passive resistance*, although Gandhi eventually rejected that term as not active enough.

- Because this concept was so new, Gandhi held a contest to invent a name for it. The term *satyagraha* won. *Satya* means "truth," in the largest sense, while *agraha* comes from the same word root as "grasp." Therefore, *satyagraha* literally means "grasp truth." Never submit to untruth or injustice.

- Using satyagraha, Gandhi opposed each apartheid law by deliberately breaking it. He led nonviolent marches and sit-ins. Gandhi and his arrested followers eventually filled up the jails, so they had to be let out to make room for more protesters. Gandhi did not win many of these struggles, but he managed to force the British colonial government to modify some of these laws for the Indian community.

Complications

- One issue that arose from Gandhi's career in South Africa was the contrast between his dedicated commitment to the Indian community and his limited involvement with the much larger community of black Africans living around him. Many Indian symbols Gandhi used meant nothing to black African cultures, and a language barrier existed as well.

- Plus, the racial segregation laws reinforced the separation between Indians and black Africans. While Gandhi's Natal Indian Congress inspired the later African National Congress, which some Indians joined, tensions continued in South Africa between the Indians who remained there and the much larger majority of black Africans.

- Another issue was Gandhi's relationship to his wife and four surviving sons. How should any leader who is totally committed his community, and to all the people within it equally, treat his own wife and children? Gandhi's decision was to reject many of the personal demands on him from his family.

- This led to some strains in his relationships with his wife and each son. For example, he insisted that all jewelry given to her by supporters be used only for the movement. He denied his sons the advanced Anglicized education that he had received and then devalued as immoral.

Return to India

- At age 46, Gandhi decided to return home to India, where he felt he could do more to help his people. The Indian National Congress was the most prominent Indian political movement when Gandhi returned. It mainly represented the interests of its elite male members and had not yet accomplished much.

- Gandhi quickly rose to lead a younger and more active generation in the Indian National Congress. Significantly, Gandhi broadened the orginzation's support base.

- Just two years after he returned to India, Gandhi went to a remote region of north India, called Champaran, to support farmers of indigo in their strike against the British plantation owners. The farmers had taken loans, but then the price of indigo had fallen. German-invented chemicals could produce blue dye much less expensively. The Indian farmers could not repay the loans.

- Gandhi encouraged the Indian farmers to hold out against the demands of the British owners. When he refused to back down and was arrested, Gandhi used his own trial to bring attention to the farmers' plight.

- Intelligently, he used police agents who were recording evidence against him by making them witnesses of abuses by the British owners. He then negotiated a compromise that both Indian farmers and British could accept.

- Later that same year, Gandhi went to Ahmedabad, the capital of his home province of Gujarat, to support Indian textile workers in their strike. British taxes had suppressed the once thriving Indian cloth-weaving industry. Instead, almost all Indians bought British-manufactured cloth, often made from Indian raw cotton that had been shipped to Britain and woven there.

- Only a few Indian cloth factories existed, and this strike was by Indian workers against Indian factory owners. When plague had hit the city, the factory owners had raised wages to keep workers on the job. After the plague subsided, the owners wanted to lower wages to their former level, leading the workers to strike.

- Gandhi told the workers that to end the strike without success would be an injustice, and vowed to fast until death if they did so. This was the first of his many public fasts. Impressed by Gandhi's commitment to take suffering upon himself rather than accept injustice, both sides compromised.

SYMBOLISM

- During his career in India, Gandhi proved particularly astute in evoking powerful symbols, especially ones he shared with the vast majority of the population who were also Hindu.

- His most popular title, Mahatma, literally means "Great Soul." This was given by popular acclaim to Gandhi, and also to many other holy men in the Hindu tradition. His core concept of nonviolence and his powerful tactic of the public fast both came out of the high Hindu tradition. But the symbols and ideas he used to mobilize the majority of the population failed to attract sizable minorities.

Rejection

- About 20 percent of India's population were men and women traditionally classed as untouchables or outcastes. These people lived in small hamlets scattered everywhere in India, doing the necessary but dirty work of sanitation, leatherworking, and other services.

- Gandhi tried to lift these people out of their degraded status, renaming their community Harijans, literally, the "Beloved of God Vishnu." But some leaders of this community regarded Gandhi as an outsider who was trying to speak for them.

- Another large minority that increasingly rejected Gandhi's leadership was the quarter of the Indian population that was Muslim. British laws intensified the distinctions and tensions between Muslim Indians and Hindu Indians.

- The Muslim League was a political party founded to represent separate Muslim interests. The split between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League ultimately led to the partition of colonial India into the separate independent nations of the secular Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1947.

- However, Gandhi worked until the end of his life building peace between the two religious communities and then the two nations. In 1948, a Hindu nationalist assassinated Gandhi for being too sympathetic of Muslims.

Suggested Reading

Gandhi, *Autobiography.*

Guha, *Gandhi Before India.*

Hardiman, *Gandhi in His Time and Ours.*

Kumar, *Radical Equality.*

Lecture 29

Nationalists Ambedkar, Bose, and Jinnah

During the first half of the 20th century, as India began to emerge from colonialism, a range of people worked to assert many competing models for their nation to come. Mohandas Gandhi was the most famous of these. However, in this lecture, we'll consider some of the major alternative models and means by looking at the careers and ideas of three significant leaders, each of whom opposed Gandhi over fundamental issues: Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Subhas Chandra Bose, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

AMBEDKAR

- Being born as a so-called untouchable, even in the late 19th century, almost certainly meant a life of degradation. Yet a combination of ability and opportunity enabled Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar to lead his community and his emerging nation forward.

- Ambedkar was a Mahar by jati. Mahars traditionally worked as untouchable village servants. In their homeland of western India, Mahars are one of the largest communities. So, when full democracy was implemented and people could vote freely, each with an equal vote, Mahars collectively achieved substantial electoral power. Ambedkar is widely credited for gaining this power for Mahars and other ex-untouchables.

- Because of his father's position in the army, Ambedkar could attend state primary school. However, most teachers and other students treated him as an untouchable. Nonetheless, he was able to gain admission to secondary school and graduate, one of the first in his family to do so. He then graduated from Bombay University, again as a pathbreaker for his entire community.

B. R. Ambedkar

- The local Indian prince of Baroda awarded Ambedkar a small scholarship in 1913 to study at Columbia University in the U.S. This made Ambedkar the absolutely first of his entire community to get an advanced, post-graduate education.

- On his return to India, Ambedkar faced discrimination while working for the princely administration of Baroda and then in a faculty position in a business school in Bombay. He eventually began work as a political leader and lawyer, using the British-run courts to defend his people. He started social reform movements. He also became an influential journalist, using the developing print media to publish articles, journals, pamphlets, and books in English and his native Marathi language, demanding civil rights for his community.

Gandhi and Ambedkar

- Ambedkar remained convinced that Hinduism could not free itself from caste discrimination. In this, he clashed with Gandhi. For Gandhi, the degrading Hindu practices of untouchability were morally wrong. He worked with Ambedkar to enable untouchables to enter Hindu temples and to get access to public water sources, for example. But Gandhi believed it was higher-caste people who needed to change and start treating all people as full human beings.

- Ambedkar advocated for separate electorates where only untouchables could vote and only an untouchable candidate could win. Muslims had gained political power from such separate electorates since 1909, so untouchables should have them, too.

- Gandhi adamantly opposed Ambedkar's demand since separate electorates only divided what should be a unified India. When Ambedkar insisted and the British concurred, Gandhi went on a public fast until death against this.

- Reluctantly, Ambedkar gave ground. He and Gandhi negotiated the Poona Pact of 1932. This reserved 18 percent of voting districts for untouchables, where only an untouchable candidate could win—but everyone except Muslims voted in those constituencies. Therfore, the winning untouchable candidate had to appeal to the majority of the voters who were not untouchables. Gandhi stopped his fast, but Ambedkar never reconciled with him.

Independent India

■ After independence was achieved, Ambedkar led the committee that drafted the new Indian constitution. He made sure that untouchability was absolutely forbidden. He could not change the Poona Pact, but the new constitution continued the special quotas in government employment and state education for untouchables, as well as the quotas for Adivasi forest-dwellers.

■ In the first independent Indian government, Ambedkar served as law minister. He made sure that these constitutionally guaranteed rights were actually enforced. But in 1951, he left government to devote himself full-time to journalism and social activism for his community.

■ Ambedkar believed that Hinduism was never going to change, so he determined to renounce it. Just months before his death, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism. Its theology promised status based on personal achievement, not birth. Ambedkar led half a million of his followers, mostly Mahars, in a dramatic public mass conversion to Buddhism in 1956. Many millions more converted later.

■ The struggles by ex-untouchables continue, nearly 60 years after Ambedkar's death. Today, many in his community call themselves *Dalit*, meaning the "ground-down ones." Like the American Black Panther movement, there was a Dalit Panther movement, with powerful poetry and other cultural assertions of their distinctive identity.

■ Ambedkar, fondly called Babasaheb, remains a celebrated hero to many Dalit movements and political parties. In statues and images of him, he is almost always portrayed in a British-style suit and tie, wearing glasses, to show how he used modern education and universal civil rights law for the advancement of his people.

Subhas Chandra Bose

- Subhas Chandra Bose became a leading advocate for violence as the only effective way to expel the British and simultaneously restore Indian self-esteem. Bose came from a professional Bengali family.

- With the support of the more militant members of the Indian National Congress party, Bose was elected its president in 1938. While he continued to differ from Gandhi regarding violence, Bose was reelected the next year. But then Gandhi used his own influence to block Bose's policies and forced him to resign.

- Instead, Bose formed the All-India Forward Bloc within the Indian National Congress party, demanding immediate independence. He also argued that only a 20-year-long authoritarian "iron dictatorship" would purge Indian society of its problems, like the escalating Hindu-Muslim conflicts.

- During World War II, Bose asserted that Indians should take advantage of British weakness. In 1941, he dramatically escaped from house arrest in Calcutta. He traveled in disguise through Afghanistan to Moscow and then on to Rome and then Berlin.

- With Hitler's support, Bose started broadcasting radio messages to India, calling for a violent revolution against the British Raj. In August 1942, there were mass uprisings by Indian workers and peasants in the "Quit India" movement that Gandhi had initiated but which more violent leaders were enflaming.

- Bose also arranged with the German military high command to let him organize Indian prisoners of war to fight against the British as the Free Indian Legion. While some of the few thousand Indian Legion soldiers did defend France against the Allies, they were too small in number to make much of a military contribution to the Axis war effort.

Statue of Subhas Chandra Bose

- In 1943, Bose traveled by German submarine around the southern tip of Africa to rendezvous with a Japanese submarine. The Japanese had captured some 70,000 Indian soldiers, many of them abandoned by their British officers when Singapore fell suddenly in early 1942.

- The Japanese then released about 40,000 of these prisoners of war so they could form the Indian National Army and invade India under Bose's command. He also gained much support from Indians living in Burma, which the Japanese had also captured.

- While small parts of India fell to the Indian National Army, the war was already entering its final stages. The Indian National Army took heavy losses. When the Japanese finally surrendered unconditionally in August 1945, so did the Indian National Army.

- Bose himself tried to escape to continue the war of liberation, only to have his overloaded plane crash in Taiwan. Some Indians still see him as the inspiring figure for India's modern future as a militarily and economically strong world power. This is far from the model of India that Gandhi wanted.

- Bose's vision has increasingly been achieved in the last few decades. After all, the Indian army is the third largest in the world. India has fought four wars with its neighbors, and it is armed with nuclear weapons. Further, India is an emerging global economic power. All this is much closer to Bose's vision than to Gandhi's.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah

- Even more disappointing for Gandhi during his last years was seeing India violently divided into two separate nations that immediately began fighting. The man widely given credit, or blame, for opposing Gandhi and creating Pakistan is Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He was a much more successful lawyer than Gandhi.

- At 29, Jinnah joined the young Indian National Congress (INC), even before Gandhi had done so. Jinnah was among the most articulate members of the INC and one of the few Muslims in it. He rose quickly into its leadership. In 1909, Jinnah was elected to the Muslim reserved seat for Bombay on the advisory Indian Legislative Council.

- Jinnah did not join the Muslim League until 1913, seven years after it was founded. Most of the leaders of the Muslim League were rich landholders. They recognized that only Jinnah had the political and legal

Muhammad Ali Jinnah

skills to advance their cause. Just three years after he joined the Muslim League, Jinnah was elected its president.

- As a leading member of both the INC and the Muslim League, Jinnah pushed for coordinated policies. The INC and Muslim League held joint sessions in 1915 and 1916. Under Jinnah's leadership, they formalized this cooperation in the Lucknow Pact of 1916. In Hindu majority provinces, Muslims would receive disproportionate legislative representation, and vice versa.

- Jinnah advocated at that time for their united goal of being part of one nation, although there needed to be legal and political protections for the Muslim minority community within free India.

- However, Jinnah felt ever less respected in the INC. Gandhi mobilized much support from India's countryside, in part by evoking Hindu symbols. He also tried to be incorporative of all religious traditions. As Gandhi's influence over the INC rose, Jinnah realized that his own vision for the future was no longer being supported. He resigned in 1920. Then, in 1930, Jinnah retired from politics. He moved to London for the next four years, where he developed a lucrative legal practice.

- The 1935 Government of India Act led to the first provincial elections in 1937, with a wider but still limited electorate, only one-sixth of the Indian adult population. Much to the Muslim League's dismay, the INC won over half the seats and formed governments in 8 of British India's 11 provinces.

- Muslim League candidates won less than a quarter of the separate legislative seats reserved for Muslims. Rather than honor the Lucknow Pact, the INC proclaimed that this election showed how unpopular and undeserving of power the Muslim League was.

- Jinnah had been called back out of retirement to rescue the Muslim League, but not in time to avoid the election debacle of 1937. However, during the years of World War II, the INC-backed ministries all resigned since the British viceroy had declared India at war against Germany and then Japan.

- Many of the INC leaders were jailed for much of the war. During that time, under Jinnah's leadership, the Muslim League supported the British government and earned political rewards as a result.

- As negotiations for independence proceeded during and after the war, Jinnah drove hard bargains with the last viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, and the INC leaders. All efforts at compromise failed and Pakistan was partitioned out of India in August 1947.

SUGGESTED READING

Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent.*

Jaffrelot, *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability.*

Jalal, *Sole Spokesman.*

The Partition of 1947

I n August 1947, the British Empire withdrew its rule over South Asia and partitioned its colony into two new nations: India in the center and Pakistan with one wing in the west and the other 1,000 miles away in the east. This British withdrawal was far too late for many people, and abruptly too soon for others. While many people in South Asia had long been demanding that the British quit India, the births in August 1947 of the separate nations of India and Pakistan were nonetheless sudden and traumatic.

WORLD WAR II

- Throughout World War II, the British demanded great sacrifices from India, but provided little in return other than vague promises for the postwar future. Some 2.5 million Indian soldiers served the British Empire, comprising about 20 percent of all its armed forces. Many of them returned with military training and an awareness that they were as martial as Europeans, and not racially inferior.

- The British war effort demanded vast amounts of clothing, equipment, and food from India, taken with little concern for the effects on the Indian economy or people. The 1943 famine in Bengal became tragic proof that British policies prioritized its wartime goals over the lives of Indians.

- As the imperial Japanese army began to invade the frontiers of India along its border with Burma, the British government confiscated grain and boats in its path. Many millions of people began to starve. Of these, about 3 million people died, mostly in rural areas.

- Further, throughout most of World War II, the British imprisoned many in the Indian National Congress high command, including Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Gandhi. That greatly contributed to a weakening of the INC's control over popular anti-British sentiment.

- On the left, the Communist Party of India lost credibility during the war when it was directed by Stalin first to support Hitler and then to support Russia's British allies. However, other leftists worked hard to liberate their Indian nation. Especially in August 1942, there were widespread, and often violent, uprisings in many regions.

- In Bihar, for example, 170 police stations, post offices, other government buildings were destroyed. But there were large numbers of British troops stationed in India, which was the major staging base for the war in the Pacific. The British colonial government used these troops to crush many such popular movements.

- On the right, the war proved an opportunity for the hundreds of Indian princes to prove their loyalty to the British with manpower and financial and political support.

- Hindu nationalists also expanded their support during the war. Their use of religious symbols like the Mother Goddess mobilized large numbers of Hindu supporters into political action. But in the process, they alienated many Muslims.

- The Hindu Mahasabha political party started in 1909. The membership in this party overlapped with the right wing of the INC. The more forceful Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was founded in 1925 as a well-disciplined national service organization, composed of men who had dedicated their lives to working full-time for the advancement of India as a Hindu nation.

The Muslim League

- Most significantly, the Muslim League, under the sole command of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was able to advance its own agenda during World War II. The British government needed their support and was willing to make concessions in order to obtain it.

- The abstract idea of a Muslim nation had been developing for decades, but it was not until 1940 that the Muslim League resolved to create a separate dominion for Muslims. They did so with British support.

- In his presidential address to the Muslim League that year, Jinnah shifted his rhetoric radically to characterize Muslims as a separate "nation" from Hindus. Through astute appeals to Muslim voters that Islam was in danger, Jinnah proved able to mobilize them as never before. He eventually convinced most Muslim voters that they would betray their religion if they voted for any candidate not committed to the new nation, Pakistan, and the Muslim League party.

- Meanwhile, British efforts to hold India during the war and after faltered. In June 1945, the British sought to retain control by balancing equal numbers of Hindu and Muslim members in an Indian executive council to head an interim government. But Jinnah demanded that he alone select all the Muslims appointed. This meant that any Muslim leader who supported the INC would be excluded.

Jinnah's Challenge

- Jinnah could not afford to be very precise about what the nation of Pakistan would be, or even where it would be located. He needed the votes of as many Muslims as possible, so he deliberately used only an abstract concept of Pakistan.

- In his negotiations with the British and with rival INC and other political leaders, however, Jinnah had to be more specific. His most comprehensive demand was that all of the provinces that had Muslim majorities had to go entirely to Pakistan.

- In particular, this meant all of the large provinces of Punjab and Bengal. But large minorities in those provinces were Hindu or Sikh. Jinnah therefore had to convince his negotiating opponents that, despite his fiery rhetoric, the substantial non-Muslim populations in these provinces would be fully protected citizens.

- Countering Jinnah, the INC and the British argued that only districts—that is, counties—with a Muslim majority and also that were contiguous in the western and eastern regions would go to Pakistan. That meant the partitioning of the major provinces of Punjab and Bengal, since there were Muslim majorities in only about half those regions. Jinnah dismissed this as a "moth-eaten" Pakistan, but that is what finally came to pass.

MOVING TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

- As the Allied war against Germany and Japan ended in a costly victory in 1945, the end of British colonial rule over India became ever more evident. The powerful promise by Franklin Roosevelt, echoed by Harry Truman, that the war was for national self-determination put pressure on the British government to withdraw from India. Britain had been exhausted of blood and treasure, making imperial rule in India impossible to sustain.

- The divide among Indian voters between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League also hardened. In the elections of 1945–46, the INC won 90 percent of open seats for the center government and also established INC ministries in 8 of the 11 provinces of British India.

- For its part, the Muslim League won all the seats reserved for Muslims in the central legislature and 80 percent of those reserved for Muslims in the provincial legislatures. Overall, it secured 75 percent of all Muslim votes.

- The nature and extent of the new nations that were about to be born remained disputed. Early in 1946, the British Cabinet sent a mission with a plan for three loosely federated collections of provinces based on their religious majority, with only a very weak central government. The hundreds of Indian princes would be free to join their states to either India or Pakistan, or to remain independent.

- At first, Nehru seemed to accept this plan, although it gave all of Punjab and Bengal to the western and the eastern collections, respectively. While Jinnah disliked many aspects of this plan, it did meet his demand that Muslim majority provinces not be divided. But then, in a July 1946 speech, Nehru asserted that everything could be reorganized once the British left. This enabled Jinnah to claim betrayal and repudiate the plan, too.
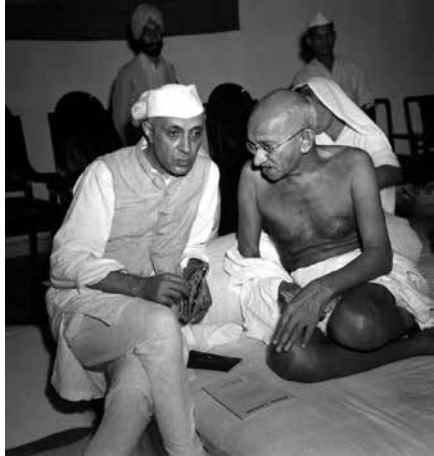
Nehru and Gandhi

- As negotiations for independence proceeded, Jinnah drove hard bargains. To prove his popular support, in August 1946, he declared a "Day of Direct Action." While he did not explicitly call for violence, it broke out in several areas. Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh mobs, including many demobilized but battle-hardened soldiers, clashed. More than 10,000 people were killed over the following week, with many more wounded and burned out of their homes.

- Also in 1946, scattered groups of Indian seamen and soldiers rejected the authority of their British commanders. The British lost the trust they had held in the loyalty of the Indian armed forces.

THE SITUATION ESCALATES

- In February 1947, the British appointed Lord Louis Mountbatten as the last viceroy to oversee the transfer of power. Mountbatten immediately moved the projected date of independence ahead by nearly a year, to August 1947. This meant that the official preparations had to be greatly rushed.

Gandhi with the Mountbattens

- The government, army, and the entire administration including the treasury had to be divided in a hurry. Further, Mountbatten pressed Jinnah and Nehru to accept that two new independent nations would be partitioned out of colonial India, with the Punjab and Bengal divided along religious lines.

- Since the official commission on boundaries contained both Muslim League and Congress members, who could not agree, its chairman, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, made the impossible decisions about where the boundaries would be.

■ The commission did not even announce its allocations until days after Pakistan and India were already independent nations. Desperate fighting had already been going on for months. The result was what would today be called ethnic cleansing, leaving the western wing of Pakistan 97 percent Muslim, with about 5 million Hindus and Sikhs driven out.

Fallout

■ The madness and trauma of the partition remains almost inconceivable even today, especially for many of the survivors. For instance, a man who made himself among the world's greatest short story writers, Saadat Hasan Manto, struggled to convey to his contemporaries the all-too-real, inexplicable experiences of the partition, using the unreality of fiction.

◆ Perhaps his most famous short story, and one that is particularly relevant here, is entitled "Toba Tek Singh." The central figure is a Sikh landholder who has long been locked up in a lunatic asylum located in what has now become Pakistan. As the emotions around the partition rise and peak, the inmates each try to comprehend what suddenly being an Indian or a Pakistani means.

◆ They begin to divide into increasingly hostile factions, based on what they confusingly remember about their past lives. Eventually, the new governments of India and Pakistan decide to relocate the inmates based on their officially recorded religion and also the location of their family homes. But the inmates themselves often have no clue as to which side of the newly created border their homes now lie.

◆ Since Hindus and Sikhs are to be expelled from Pakistan, the inmate known as Toba Tek Singh is finally driven out from Pakistan. But he refuses to enter India. The story ends with him collapsing, either catatonic or dead, in the no-man's-land between.

- The general number of the partition's refugees and deaths is disputed, but the most likely figures are 10–12 million refugees and 1–2 million deaths. In any case, this was one of the largest tragedies and forced migrations in human history.

- About as many Muslims stayed in India as lived in West or East Pakistan. While India is officially secular, there are leading politicians and political parties who question the place of Muslims in today's India.

- Gandhi became one of the last victims of the partition on January 30, 1948. He was assassinated by Nathuram Vinayak Godse, a pro-Hindu nationalist who believed that Gandhi was favoring Muslims and Pakistan by fasting until India gave the share of the pre-partition treasury legally due to Pakistan.

Suggested Reading

Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence.*

Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines.*

Manto, *Selected Stories.*

Roy, *Partitioned Lives.*

West and East Pakistan

As Pakistan emerged out of the heated negotiations and fiery events of the 1947 partition, its citizens and competing political leaders had to determine the nature of their new nation. Many diverse people and groups have continued to clash during the subsequent seven tumultuous decades of Pakistan's history down to the present. In order to discuss and illustrate these complex issues, we'll look selectively at chronological events and developments affecting Pakistan. In this lecture, we'll consider events up until Pakistan divided in 1971, with its western and eastern wings each becoming an independent nation.

TENSIONS

- Almost immediately upon independence in 1947, tensions arose between Pakistan's western and eastern wings. These wings were culturally very different and located 1,000 miles apart across Indian territory.

- East Bengal comprised more than half of Pakistan's population, but almost all of the new nation's most prominent political and military leaders were based in the western wing. Their vision of the new nation only imperfectly included the Bengali eastern wing. After all, there is no B for Bengal in the name Pakistan, which is an acronym for Punjab, Afghania, Kashmir, Sindh, and Baluchistan, all located in the western wing.

- Pakistan's leader at the time, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, made his only visit to the country's eastern wing in March 1948. In a speech in English that alienated many people there, Jinnah directed them to use Urdu in place of their own language, Bengali. This was for many Bengalis an ominous warning that West Pakistani leaders considered

them culturally inferior, and even considered them not good Muslims. Yet, being Muslim was the primary reason that Bengalis were part of Pakistan in the first place.

■ Although the Punjab region had been divided between India and Pakistan at the partition, the Pakistani part of the Punjab by itself held about two-thirds of West Pakistan's population. One of the recurring tensions in West Pakistan has always between Punjabis and all the other ethnic identities.

■ Pakistan's second largest province by population is Sindh. This was the first part of South Asia that came under the rule of Muslims. But, over the 13 centuries since then, an amalgamated Indian and Muslim culture developed.

■ While the port of Karachi is located on the Sindh coast, it remains culturally, politically, and economically somewhat apart from the rest of that province. Karachi was Pakistan's first national capital. After independence, Karachi began to expand into Pakistan's industrial
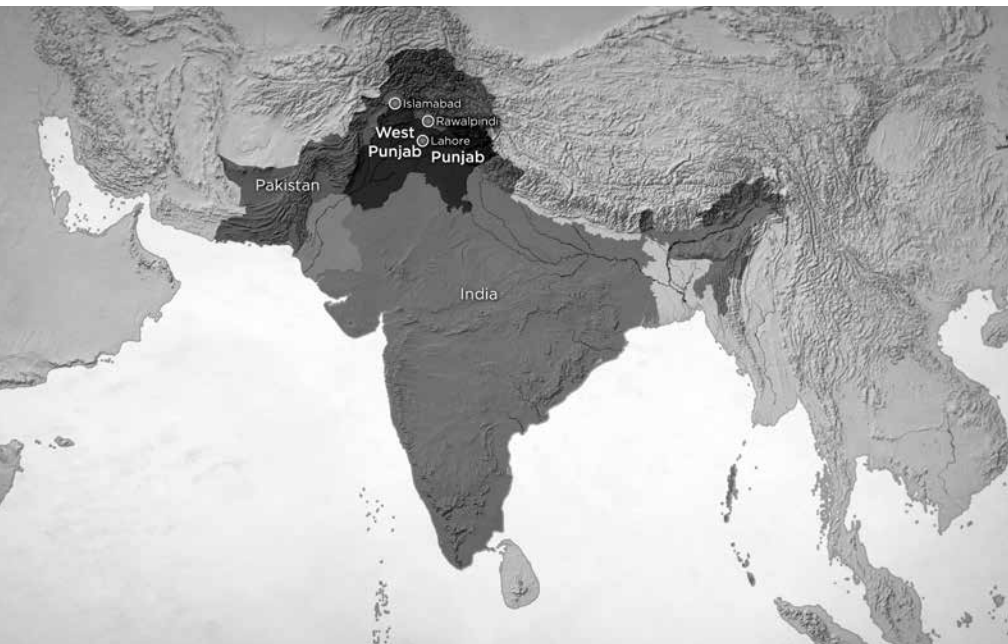
center. Its current population is more than 17 million people, but only a small minority of Karachi's inhabitants is ethnically Sindhi.

Muhajirs

- Since independence, Karachi's politics and economy have been dominated by the self-styled Muhajir community. These are people whose families left north India and migrated to Pakistan at the time of partition. Many of them were refugees, driven out of their homes because they were Muslims. Others migrated to Pakistan out of a commitment to Islam or to the idea of a Muslim nation.

- In 1947, Muhajirs tended to be better educated and sometimes had more capital and experience with entrepreneurship than did Sindhis and other West Pakistanis. They often gained possession of the houses and businesses left behind in Karachi and some other cities in Sindh when Hindus left for India in 1947.

- Their community's language is Urdu, which became the official language of Pakistan, although few outside the Muhajir community had that language as their mother tongue. Many of Pakistan's early leaders, including several military dictators and influential national religious leaders, have been Muhajirs.

- For many Sindhis and other ethnic groups in Pakistan, there is sometimes a sense that Muhajirs acted like carpetbaggers. They had been accepted as refugees, but they took over the entire nation. Plus, many Muhajirs are Shiites, which is the minority sect in Islam and in Pakistan. Many of their mosques and their people have been attacked by militant Sunnis as a result.

Baluchistan

- Baluchistan is the Pakistani region that is geographically largest and most richly endowed with some strategic natural resources, especially natural gas and uranium. But the Baluch people are among

the poorest and most marginalized in Pakistan. They have received few economic benefits from those natural resources extracted for use in Sindh and the Punjab.

- The Baluch comprise only about 3 percent of the population of West Pakistan. Since many Baluch people live in Iran or in Afghanistan, their nationalism cuts across what are today national boundaries. Baluch guerrilla movements have thus been fighting, with varying degrees of intensity and violence, against the Pakistani, Iranian, and Afghan governments for seven decades.

The Pakhtun People

- Many Pashto-speaking Pakhtun people are also disputing the national boundaries that divide their ethnic community. In Pakistan, the province that the British called the northwest frontier has recently been renamed Khyber Pakhtunwa — that is, the land of the Pakhtun people in the Khyber River region.

- From colonial times onward, a strategic part of this province has stood largely outside of government control. This is FATA, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, where the Pakistani legal code does not apply. Sharia law is in force.

- Various Islamist groups are based there, most notably the Taliban of Pakistan. Additionally, the rival Taliban of Afghanistan, al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State all have considerable support there. The Pakistani army has struggled to assert control.

Pakistan's Government

- Because Jinnah wanted to be a strong Governor-General, he established a presidential system of government, since the head of the executive branch holds the most political power. But that presidential model has only intermittently prevailed in Pakistan.

- Instead, following Jinnah's death just a year after independence, the head of the legislative branch, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, took over. This shift came even before the constitution of Pakistan had been written, so there were no actual legal changes.

- Liaquat Ali Khan directed the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan to write a constitution that recognized Allah as Pakistan's sovereign. Non-Muslim minorities were to be protected, but "the State will create such conditions as are conducive to the building up of a truly Islamic society."

- Liaquat Ali Khan also did not live to implement his vision for Pakistan. He was assassinated in 1951, just three years after Jinnah's death.

- Eventually taking over the government in this dangerous time of instability was a businessman and civil servant, Ghulam Muhammad. He used the office of governor-general to seize power in order to quell escalating social violence.

- Just four years later, an ill Ghulam Muhammad was forced out by a retired general, Iskander Mirza, who took over the office and powers of governor-general. As governor-general, he instituted Pakistan's first constitution and was unanimously elected president by the new parliament. But his regime was unstable.

- In 1958, he had to turn to the army to quell widespread disorder, declaring martial law, abrogating the young constitution, and dismissing parliament. But within weeks, the man whom he'd appointed chief martial law administrator and the head of the army, General Ayub Khan, forced Iskander Mirza to go into exile in London. This was the first of four successful military coups in Pakistan's short history.

MILITARY RULE

■ Ayub Khan was a career army officer until his coup. During his 11-year rule, secularism and economic development, rather than Islam, guided his policies and the new constitution he imposed in 1962.

■ He shifted the national capital from Karachi to a new planned city, Islamabad, in the shadow of the army's national headquarters in Rawalpindi. He also moved Pakistan into a military alliance with the U.S., providing a base for American U-2 spy planes flying over the Soviet Union.

General Ayub Khan

■ The U.S.-equipped Pakistani army fought its second war against Soviet-equipped India in 1965. In addition to Kashmir, there was a disputed border in the far south, in the Rann of Kutch. This land was sometimes underwater, but during the dry part of the year it was a salt flat, ideal for rapid tank combat.

■ Despite a month of bitter fighting and a few thousand casualties, neither army gained much ground. But both India and Pakistan lost much foreign aid. Finally, the Soviet government called the belligerents to Tashkent for peace negotiations.

- Ayub Khan's government was weakened by the failure of the Pakistani army to achieve its much-promised victory over India. Economic disparities increased within both West and East Pakistan, and also between these two wings. Popular and political unrest rose against his regime.

- This led in 1969 to yet another army-forced transfer of power, as General Yahya Khan took over first as chief martial law administrator, and then as Pakistan's president. He suspended the young constitution, dissolved Pakistan's parliament, and replaced civilians with military administrators.

- International and domestic criticism of military rule led Yahya Khan to bring at least one civilian into his government. He chose the energetic Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had served in several previous military-dominated cabinets since 1958.

The Pakistan People's Party

- In 1967, Bhutto created the Pakistan People's Party in order to broaden his political base. This party reached out to the masses across Pakistan, although its core support was in Sindh province. Ideologically, Bhutto combined an appeal to Islam with promises of socialism.

- Influenced by Bhutto, General Yahya Khan declared a national election late in 1970 to elect a new constitutional convention that would be succeeded by a national assembly. This was really the first popular democratic election in Pakistan's history, coming more than two decades after independence.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

- Led by the charismatic Bhutto, the Pakistan People's Party won a strong majority of all the seats in West Pakistan, but won none of the seats in the eastern wing of the nation. In East Pakistan, another dynamic political leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led the Awami League party to a resounding victory. Yahya Khan and other West Pakistani politicians regarded the Awami League as secessionist or even treasonous.

MILITARY EVENTS

- Rather than recognize this shift of political power from West to East Pakistan, Yahya Khan suspended the start of the newly elected body. He also sent in a large part of the Pakistan Army to, as he saw it, restore order in the east.

- In Operation Searchlight, the army and its local militant supporters used force to arrest or even kill political and cultural leaders. The violence escalated, and there were mass executions. About 10 million East Pakistanis fled as refugees into India. Many of the young male refugees were organized and equipped by the Indian army into the Mukti Bahini, or freedom force, that waged guerilla war against the Pakistan Army.

- As international pressure intensified on Pakistan to halt this repression and recognize the outcome of the election, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto defended the Pakistani government heatedly. He spoke forcefully at the United Nations against these international designs to intervene in the affairs of the sovereign state of Pakistan. When he failed to persuade the international community, Bhutto threw his papers into the air and dramatically strode out of the UN General Assembly.

- After a brief war, the third between Pakistan and India, the Indian Army captured the entire Pakistani army posted in the east, almost 100,000 soldiers. This partitioned the two wings of Pakistan into separate nations.

- As both the electoral victor in the west, which was now all that was left of Pakistan, and as its most popular and fervent defender, Bhutto set aside Yahya Khan and took over first as a civilian chief martial law administrator and then as president. This ended the long period, from 1955 until 1971, that the Pakistan military controlled Pakistan's government.

Suggested Reading

Devji, *Muslim Zion.*

Malik, *The History of Pakistan.*

Rushdie, *Shame.*

Lecture 32

The New Pakistan

I n 1971, Pakistan was transformed when its eastern wing, which held more than half its population, broke away. Many of the same issues that had long convulsed West Pakistan continued after the split. Ethnic groups vying for political advantage, the debate over secular versus Islamic society, gaps between the rich and poor, and gaps between men and women are just a few of the factors that have led to social tensions in Pakistan. The nature of government and international affairs have also played a role. We've seen how each of these many issues affected Pakistan's development over its first quarter century, from 1947 until 1971. In this lecture, we'll continue our selective narrative of Pakistan up to the present.

ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO

■ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto stood forth after the 1971 civil war ended with the eastern wing's secession and the Pakistani Army's humiliating defeat. Military dictator Yahya Khan was forced to resign. Bhutto then took office as the first civilian chief martial law administrator and commander-in-chief of the army. He then imposed a new constitution in 1973, with himself as the greatly empowered prime minister.

■ The liberation of the eastern wing of Pakistan by Bengali nationalists encouraged diverse Baluch, Sindhi, Pakhtun, and Muhajir nationalists in the western wing to demand their own independence. Under Bhutto and various of his successors, the Pakistan Army has used great force to suppress movements seeking to further divide Pakistan.

■ Bhutto created the Federal Security Force, which was more heavily armed than the police. This gave Bhutto a paramilitary loyal to him and further reduced his dependence on the army.

- Although Bhutto retained his family's huge landed estates in Sindh, he reached out to the working classes across the nation. One of his first major programs was to nationalize many large industries, banks, cotton- and grain-processing mills, utilities, schools, and hospitals, implementing his promises about socialism. Like other progressive Muslim leaders around the world, he called this Islamic socialism.

- His electoral rhetoric encouraged trade unions, which had never been strong in Pakistan before. But these unions began to make demands, reinforced with strikes, for more pay and other benefits. Bhutto's government clamped down on them.

- Internationally, Bhutto also enhanced his own and Pakistan's role through a strengthened alliance with Mao's China. This gave him leverage against the Soviet Union, the U.S., and India.

- Bhutto initiated two competing nuclear arms programs. One concentrated on a uranium nuclear bomb, the other on a plutonium one. One of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programs succeeded, making Pakistan both an atomic power and also the source of nuclear weapons proliferation in Iran, Libya, and North Korea.

General Zia ul-Haq

- To prove his authority to Pakistan and the world, Bhutto ordered a national election in 1977. The PPP won decisively, but many political adversaries accused Bhutto and the PPP of widespread election irregularities, including the assassination of some opposing candidates.

- Based on those accusations, in 1977 the head of the Pakistan Army, General Zia ul-Haq, led a coup, ejecting Bhutto from office and imprisoning him. Bhutto was tried for murder and other crimes. He was executed by hanging in 1979. Following his coup, General Zia took over first as chief martial law administrator then later as president, ruling from 1978 until 1988.

■ In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded neighboring Afghanistan. There had been a communist government in Afghanistan that was pro-Russia, but a different communist faction displaced it.

■ Mobilizing resistance to the Soviet army, General Zia with U.S. support recruited a collection of fighters known as the *mujahidin* ("those who wage jihad"). Many of these mujahidin were Pakhtun Afghans who had fled the Soviets for refugee camps in Pakistan.

■ Without the cooperation of General Zia's administration, the U.S. could not supply arms and funding to these mujahidin, so President Ronald Regan decided to work with General Zia's military regime rather than oppose it. This arming of the mujahidin drove the Russians out in 1989. But then the U.S. abruptly withdrew its involvement in Afghanistan, leaving Pakistan feeling abandoned and alone in having to deal with the aftermath of that war.

ISLAM IN PAKISTAN

■ General Zia instituted policies that would make Pakistan more Islamic. This both reflected his personal faith and also gained him the support of Islamist leaders and parties.

■ Most prominent among the Islamist leaders was Maulana Maududi. Like General Zia, he had emigrated from India to Pakistan. Once there, he had organized a movement, the Jama'at-i Islami ("Islamist Party"), which sought to create the perfect Islamic society.

■ Under General Zia's rule, the Jama'at-i Islami and its policies gained ground. General Zia instituted the Federal Shariat Court. The religiously trained members of this court had the power to overrule any of Pakistan's laws that did not accord with the Sharia, the Islamic law based on the Quran and the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad.

- Another controversial legal change under General Zia's rule were the Hudood Ordinances of 1979. Those set out punishments as stipulated in the Quran, including whipping for criminals. In theory, married adulterers could also be stoned to death and thieves could have a hand amputated, but these are not the actual practice in Pakistan.

- These Hudood laws also defined who has legal standing. The testimony of non-Muslims and even of Muslim women in law courts is worth less than a Muslim man's. Contracts and other legal documents signed by women and non-Musllims carry less weight as well.

- When the legislature began to differ from General Zia, he dissolved it in 1988. Some senior military officers were convicted of treason. Some journalists and outspoken political opponents were imprisoned. The ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) branch of the military expanded its power.

BENAZIR BHUTTO

- The most prominent opponent of General Zia was Benazir Bhutto. The eldest child of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, she had been her father's closest supporter during his imprisonment. Her two younger brothers died under highly suspect circumstances.

- Benazir Bhutto herself suffered rigorous and physically debilitating imprisonment for years, until General Zia allowed her to leave Pakistan for medical treatment in 1984. From exile, she led the loosely allied umbrella group of opposition parties, called the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy. She also headed the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) that her late father had started.

- Bravely, Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan in 1986, defying General Zia's regime. Wherever she went, crowds thronged, seeing her as the defiant hope for democracy. Improving her status for conservatives,

Benazir Bhutto

in 1987 Benazir Bhutto married. She agreed to marry Asif Ali Zardari with the understanding that she would retain her name and political career while at the same time having a family life with him.

■ In 1988, General Zia's military plane crashed. Aboard were the American ambassador and many top Pakistani generals. The cause of the crash has never been officially determined.

■ In the election that followed, Benazir Bhutto's PPP won enough seats to make her prime minister. She took office in 1988. But neither the PPP nor the competing branches of government fully supported her. Accusations of ineffectiveness and corruption mounted against her and her husband. Then, after just two years, the president of Pakistan, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, evoked the 8th amendment to the constitution and dismissed her from office.

- In the election that followed in 1990, the Bhutto family's major opponent, Nawaz Sharif, led the Punjab-based Pakistan Muslim League to victory, forming a conservative coalition government.

- Many of Benazir Bhutto's programs were reversed and some of those of General Zia reinstated. But again, accusations of incompetence and corruption grew against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. After less than three years, the president of Pakistan evoked the 8th amendment and, with army backing, forced Sharif from office.

- In the election that followed, voters turned back to Benazir Bhutto, making her prime minister once more. She barely survived an abortive military coup. Again her administration failed to overcome the many obstacles it and she faced. Pakistan's economy faltered, and accusations of corruption flourished.

- After only three years, the president of Pakistan, then Farooq Leghari, evoked the 8th amendment to the constitution and dismissed her from office again.

- In the 1997 election that followed, Nawaz Sharif returned to office with a substantial victory. Newspapers reported that his followers physically intimidated the Supreme Court. Benazir Bhutto fled with her children into exile, while her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was imprisoned for eight years on corruption charges. Nawaz Sharif also used his large majority in the legislature to amend the constitution before it could be used against him again.

Tensions

- When India conducted a series of underground nuclear weapons tests in May 1998, Pakistan was ready to respond. Nawaz Sharif ordered Pakistan to test as many atomic weapons as India had just fired, plus one more.

■ Tensions between Pakistan and India broke out in spring of 1999 when a Pakistani force dug itself into positions along a mountain ridge at Kargil in Kashmir. This war remained undeclared, making it the third-and-a-half war between Pakistan and India. As the Indian forces fought their way up the steep mountainside, the Pakistani forces withdrew.

PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

Pervez Musharraf

■ The head of the Pakistan Army, General Pervez Musharraf, blamed Nawaz Sharif for the failed attempt at Kargil and then the humiliating retreat. Nawaz Sharif in turn dismissed General Musharraf, choosing a time when the general was flying back and denying his plane landing rights anywhere in Pakistan. The general ordered his plane to land anyway and organized a counter-coup to seize the airport and then the government.

■ The army, which was very experienced in taking over the government, arrested Nawaz Sharif and put him on trial for airline hijacking, kidnapping, terrorism, and attempted murder, since he had ordered the general's plane not to land even though it was running out of fuel. General Musharraf allowed Nawaz Sharif to go into exile rather than be imprisoned if he promised to stay out of politics.

- In 1999, once again Pakistan had a military government. Pervez Musharraf appointed himself the chief executive and then the president, and he also retained authority as commander of the army for eight more years.

- General Musharaff sought popular and international legitimacy for his regime. He created a loyalist political party, the Pakistan Muslim League (Q). The Q is for Quaid-i-Azam, the honorary title for M. A. Jinnah. In the disputed 2002 elections, his party led a coalition government under his presidency.

- The September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda attacks against America led to the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 to depose the Taliban government. General Musharraf came out in support of the U.S., allowing masses of supplies to enter Karachi port and be trucked into Afghanistan.

- But widespread popular and judicial opposition to continued military rule began to mount. In 2007, General Musharraf suspended the constitution and declared a state of emergency.

- To lead the opposition, Benazir Bhutto again returned to Pakistan at great personal risk. She again stood up as the voice of democracy. But this time, repeated assassination attempts finally lead to her death in December 2007.

- This increased the pressure on Pervez Musharraf until he resigned the next year in the face of impeachment, leading to the election of a new president. In the wave of sympathy for Benazir Bhutto, her widowed husband, Asif Ali Zardari, won that election.

- Tensions among the various branches of government persisted. Zardari proved a relatively weak president, although he remained in office throughout his elected term. When the election of 2013 was held and his term ended, Zardari peacefully transferred power to the

new prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, who had returned from exile to hold that office for the third time.

SUGGESTED READING

Bhutto, *Daughter of the East.*

Hanif, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes.*

Siddiqa, *Military Inc.*

Talbot, *Pakistan.*

Lecture 33

Independent Bangladesh

Bangladesh is roughly the size of Iowa, yet contains the world's eighth largest population—that is, about half of the entire population of the U.S. In addition to extreme population density, Bangladesh faces high poverty rates and an inefficient and corrupt government. Further, there are new challenges, like rising sea levels caused by climate change, which will flood its highly productive southern coast. Still, the men and women of Bangladesh have always proven themselves to be resilient and enterprising. They endured three disrupting partitions, in 1905, 1947, and 1971. Each entailed major political, social, and cultural instabilities. Even today, Bangladesh is racked by questions about the essence of the nation.

THE FIRST TWO PARTITIONS

- In 1905, the British Raj divided the majority Muslim East Bengal from the predominantly Hindu West Bengal. This was the first of Bengal's three partitions during the 20th century. Most scholars agree that this was a British political effort to weaken the Indian nationalist leaders based in Calcutta. Many of these were Hindu landlords with landed estates in the east. The 1905 partition put those estates in a different province.

- Widespread popular protests convinced the British Raj that this partition was a major blunder. Just seven years later, the British Raj pushed East and West Bengal back together again.

- The British Raj next tried in a different way to weaken the Calcutta-based Indian nationalists by shifting the imperial capital of India to the newly built planned city of New Delhi. While Bengali politicians continued to be active in the nationalist movement, many of the new

leaders came from other regions. Examples were the Nehru family, based in north India, and Mohandas Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, based on the west coast.

- In August 1947, as the British left India, they partitioned Bengal once again. This time, Muslim nationalists led by Jinnah and the Muslim League demanded the partition. These Muslim politicians had wanted all of Bengal to be included in their new country of Pakistan, but they only got the eastern half of Bengal.

- About 1–2 million Hindu Bengalis, including many of the landlords and other social, educational, and economic leaders, fled to India. Many millions of Muslims moved east, and millions of Hindus remained. Today, about 12 percent of the population in Bangladesh

is Hindu. In contrast, almost all non-Muslims fled or were killed in Pakistan's western wing, leaving Hindus as only 3 percent of the population.

■ The 1947 partition also cut across Bengal's economy. One of the most valuable crops of East Bengal, jute, had been processed in factories in Calcutta into ropes and hemp cloth, still used widely in shipping bags. Now, the two complementary parts of this economy were severed. The east still exports jute and rice, but mostly as raw materials, with low profit margins. Recently, Bangladesh has made itself a major exporter of ready-made garments.

West and East Pakistan

■ During the quarter century that East Pakistan was joined to West Pakistan, many Muslim Bengalis felt impoverished, alienated, and demeaned. The economic arrangements between West and East Pakistan greatly benefited the western wing.

■ The vast expenditures on the Pakistan Army and the costly 1965 war against India both seemed ill-advised to many East Pakistanis. Since Bengalis lived both in the West Bengal state within India and also in East Bengal within Pakistan, this made India appear less threatening to many East Pakistanis.

■ Almost all of the political, economic, and cultural leadership of Pakistan favored that nation's western wing. Very few Bengali politicians rose up prominently in Pakistani governments.

Self-Determination

■ From the creation of West and East Pakistan in 1947, many East Pakistanis felt themselves to be an "internal colony," with only frustrated hopes for independent national self-determination. In response, during in the early 1950s, many Bengalis rose up around their proud cultural heritage through a highly politicized Bengali

language movement. But its peaceful street protests met with heavy-handed police repression. The language movement continued even after 1954, when Bengali was officially made an additional national language for Pakistan.

- In what proved to be a miscalculation, in 1969, the latest West Pakistani military dictator, General Yahya Khan, ordered the election of a new assembly in the following year. This election opened up the possibility for a new kind of Pakistan. Support rose in East Pakistan for the politician Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League, which had pro-Bengali aspirations.

- Coincidentally, a month before the election, a terrible storm left hundreds of thousands of Bengalis dead and millions more displaced. The situation was made much worse since the Pakistani government had not provided adequate advance warning and accomplished little in the way of rehabilitation.

- Consequently, in the 1970 election, Mujibur Rahman's Awami League swept the polls in the east with 99 percent of the vote, winning almost all the seats available there. This gave the Awami League the absolute majority of the seats in the assembly.

- But the Awami League won no seats in West Pakistan, where Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party gained a majority. Instead of accepting the results of the election he had authorized, General Yahya Khan suspended the assembly.

- After heated negotiations between Mujibur Rahman and Bhutto broke down, the Pakistan Army went in to crush the East Pakistani leadership and populace in Operation Searchlight. Millions of Bengali refugees fled to safety in neighboring India. Many of the refugee men were armed by India and allowed to return to the fighting as the Mukti Bahini, or Freedom Force guerrillas.

- Pro-Pakistani Islamists, including many Bihari immigrants, allied with the Pakistan Army. Many organized into the militant Razakars, a militia that stood accused of some of the worst atrocities. For example, the main university was surrounded and students executed. Labor leaders and other activists were also killed. Many women were sexually assaulted to break the spirit of Bengalis.

- All this fighting entailed mass killing. Pakistani authorities have reluctantly admitted about 300,000 killed, but many Bengalis claim 10 times as many died.

- Finally, the Indian Army invaded in support of the Mukti Bahini. Allied Indian and Bengali forces swiftly captured the entire Pakistan Army in the east, about 100,000 men. Then the Indian Army withdrew, leaving Bangladesh independent.

New Identity

- A predominant majority of Bangladesh's people are Muslims. This includes most but not all Bengalis, plus Biharis. But Islamists had been discredited in many people's eyes for having supported Pakistan in 1971. A strongly Muslim identity would exclude millions of Bengali Hindus and mostly Christian Adivasis who are legally citizens of Bangladesh.

- These factors have continued to compete in the national identity, one more inclusively Bengali and more strongly Islamic. The former has led to more affinities with India, the other with the larger Muslim world.

- There are also powerful divisions with Bangladesh based on economic class. For many leftist citizens of Bangladesh, their new nation represented new opportunities for radical restructuring. In his rhetoric, Mujibur Rahman had long promised social and economic reforms that would lead to the nationalization of industries and the expansion of public services, and would prioritize the reduction of economic inequality

MUJIBUR RAHMAN'S IN POWER

- Mujibur Rahman stood forth as provisional president at independence, but then chose to be elected prime minister. Ever since, Bangladesh has wavered between a British-style parliamentary democracy and a strong, executive presidential government.

- While Mujibur Rahman was considered honest, many people regarded his administration as ineffective and corrupt. The disordered economy made worse a vast famine in 1973–74, in which tens of thousands starved to death.

- Subsequently, Mujibur Rahman declared a state of emergency and consolidated power as the strongly executive president. He also amended the new constitution to make Bangladesh a one-party state. The militia loyal to him used force against his political opponents.

COUPS AND CHANGES

- There were deep splits between two factions — the Mukti Bahini and career army men — in the new Bangladesh Army officer corps. Bangladesh has subsequently suffered from hundreds of attempted military coups, although only a few of them were successful.

- The first successful coup came in August 1975. A band of army officers assassinated Mujibur Rahman and most of his family. A daughter, Begum Sheikh Hasina, happened to be away from home at the time. She inherited the leadership of the Awami League and some of the prestige of her martyred father.

- Begum Hasina so far has been elected prime minister on three separate occasions. Her party tends to stress the Bengali component of the national identity, and her policies have tended to be favorable toward India.

- This 1975 coup against Mujibur Rahman was followed by a period of disruption and instability in the government. This only ended in 1977

when General Ziaur Rahman, a career officer, consolidated power. His model for Bangladesh moved away from Mujibur Rahman's secular socialism in favor of more free-market development and toward Islam. He also organized a political party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), to institutionalize his support.

- But he was assassinated in 1981 in an attempted coup by rival military officers. His BNP party and cause were inherited by his widow, Begum Khaleda Zia. So far, she has been elected twice as Bangladesh's prime minister, and she is still the leading opposition figure. Her party tends to stress the Islamic component of the national identity, often allying with explicitly Islamist parties, and her policies have tended to be less favorable toward India.

- General Hussain Muhammad Ershad led yet another army coup in 1982. He became chief martial law administrator and then president. In order to organize support, General Ershad created a new political party, the Jatiya Party. This party won controversial elections in 1986 and 1987 but has remained a relatively minor player in the larger battles between the Awami League of Begum Hasina and the BNP of Begum Khaleda Zia.

- General Ershad, under pressure from the opposition, was forced to resign in 1990. In the elections of 1991 that followed General Ershad's resignation, Begum Khaleda Zia's coalition won enough seats to make her prime minister. But street protests by the opposition forced her to have a neutral caretaker government run the 1996 election.

- Next, Sheikh Hasina's Awami League and its allies won enough seats to elect her prime minister. But once again, growing street protests led to a neutral caretaker government running the 2001 election.

- This was won by Begum Khaleda Zia's BNP, leading a coalition of four parties, including the Jama'at-i Islami, an Islamist Bangladeshi party. This time, growing street protests were ended by another army coup.

- The army appointed as its advisor a technocrat and economist, Fakhruddin Ahmad. Over two years of military rule, this regime created a new system of identification cards for all citizens. This allowed the removal of spurious names and deceased voters from the voter rolls.

- When the elections were held late in 2008, Begum Hasina's Awami League alliance won a decisive victory, reinstating her as prime minister. Her regime was overwhelmingly reelected in 2014, largely because the BNP and its allies boycotted the election hoping in vain to discredit it.

Begum Khaleda Zia

- For her part, Prime Minister Begum Hasina has tried to break up the Islamist movement within Bangladesh. In 2009, her government created a tribunal to investigate the mass deaths of the independence movement and put alleged collaborators with Pakistan on trial.

- About a dozen have been found guilty of crimes against humanity during the 1971 war, with several executed so far. Many see this as overdue delayed justice, others as mortal vindictiveness by the current government against its political opponents, the BNP and Jama'at-i Islami.

Suggested Reading

Guhathakurta and Van Schendel, eds., *The Bangladesh Reader.*

Raghavan, *1971.*

Van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh.*

Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh.*

Lecture 34

India under Nehru

The Republic of India will soon be the largest nation by population in the world, overtaking China. Remarkably, India has since its inception been the world's largest democracy by far, with impressively high levels of political participation by its citizens. India has also made great strides economically, militarily, and has even launched a space program. We should examine how India accomplished these dramatic developments, even as it inherited innumerable internal and international challenges. We'll start in this lecture with independent India's birth, and then we'll selectively discuss events and developments up until the death of its first and longest-serving prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in 1964. In the next lecture, we'll continue to consider India's recent history up to the present.

DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

- From the beginning, most of India's leadership and citizens have remained committed to full electoral democracy. Much of the credit for India's remarkably strong commitment to democracy should go to Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleagues in the Indian National Congress (INC) party.

- While the Congress was by far the largest political party, there have always been alternative voices arguing for other models for the nation. On the left, India now has three major communist parties, with varying degrees of revolutionary fervor. Both within and without the Congress, there have also been socialist factions and parties.

- On the right, there are various more conservative factions that push for a more capitalist, free-enterprise economic system. There are also

parties and movements that identify strongly with one or another religious community, or with a particular caste.

- Even within the Congress, there were factional and personal disagreements about what national model would be best for India. For instance, Mohandas Gandhi favored extremely decentralized power. In contrast, Nehru and his close supporters envisioned a Westminster-style parliament with centralized planning for the key parts of the economy.

- However, both Nehru and Gandhi were strongly committed to a secular state. In India, secularism means that the government supports all religions equally. Controversially, the Indian law system still today has different civil codes for Muslims, Christians, and Hindus, as well as a secular code.

The Indian Constitution

- Even before independence, Nehru and the INC party headed the interim transitional government. Among the new nation's first and most vital undertakings was to envision, write, and ratify India's constitution. After years of much heated debate, the drafting committee and constitutional assembly

Nehru signing India's constitution

produced the constitution, which went into effect on January 26, 1950. This became India's Republic Day, still celebrated annually.

- Despite the constitutional assembly's aspiration to represent a new beginning, it drew heavily from Western political traditions. The opening phrase should be familiar to all Americans: "We the people."

■ This recognizes that Indian sovereignty emerges from the citizens. The Indian constitution then promises liberty, equality, and fraternity, echoing the French. It also promises social, economic, and political justice and equal status and opportunity for all Indian citizens. These principles have been goals toward which the new Indian nation has been striving, but much remains to be done.

■ In a pledge to the nation, the constitution guarantees fundamental rights to all including free speech and assembly, a free press, protection of private property, the right to form labor unions, and the abolition of untouchability.

■ Another guaranteed fundamental right is for equal protection and legal status for everyone. But the constitution also allows limitations on that equality through compensatory discrimination in favor of women, children, and other socially and educationally disadvantaged people, termed the *backward classes*.

■ The last category includes Scheduled Castes (formerly known as untouchables) and Scheduled Tribes (also known as Adivasis). They are called *scheduled* since their communities are on an official list or schedule. This has meant, among other provisions, special reservations or quotas for entry into educational and other government institutions.

INDIA'S GOVERNMENT

■ In more practical terms, the constitution created a bicameral legislature, but with unequal chambers. The directly elected Lok Sabha, or House of the People, holds more legislative power. The Rajya Sabha, or upper house, holds only a secondary role, like the British House of Lords. It can delay legislation, but can be overridden by the Lok Sabha.

■ The constitution accords most powers to India's indirectly elected president. But governance is really exercised by the prime minister,

India's Parliament House

who is elected by the parliament. Nehru preferred to be a strong prime minister with a figurehead president, so this became customary.

■ This means that the legislative leader also runs the executive branch. The strong civil service that carries out the actual administration serves the prime minister and his chosen cabinet. That civil service is supposed to be apolitical, composed of career bureaucrats with strong local authority. In practice, however, often politicians pressure local officials to obey.

■ As in most parliamentary systems, the prime minister has no guaranteed term and must resign should any of his or her major bills fail in parliament. Some of India's prime ministers have served only for days before losing a parliamentary vote. But Nehru and later his daughter, Indira Gandhi, remained prime minister for 18 and 15 years, respectively, never losing a major bill.

■ The Indian Constitution also recognizes a separate judiciary, headed by an American-style Supreme Court. For the most part, this judiciary

has effectively checked the combined legislative and executive branches of government, both at the central and at the state levels.

- As was generally true for the British colonial administration, India does not have trial by jury. This makes courtroom judges powerful interpreters and implementers of the law, some of which dates to British colonial times.

VOTING IN INDIA

- Unlike most former colonies, India has always had generally free elections. In the first national election of 1951–52, 200 million Indians voted. Although 88 percent of them were illiterate, voting participation was high.

- In part, this resulted from the numerous caste associations, which have mobilized voters. Each caste association represents a particular community, for example Jats, a jati of farmers, or Dalits (Scheduled Castes).

- Since a single caste association may not be large enough to deliver electoral victory, politicians often make differential appeals. They form alliances with one or more caste associations, or combine those with a class or other issue-based appeals.

INDIA'S ECONOMY

- Nehru recruited India's leading economists into a planning commission that set out economic five-year plans. India's first five-year plan, covering 1951–56, was devoted to improving agriculture. Agricultural production rose by 25 percent, but full food self-sufficiency was accomplished only after decades of further effort.

- Coming out of colonialism into the post–World War II international economy, India's industries were less developed and unable to

compete with the U.S., for example. To protect India's fledgling industries, Nehru imposed very high tariffs on imported goods.

- The second five-year plan, covering 1956–1961, shifted the government's resources toward heavy industry. India's natural resources of coal, iron ore, and timber were to be used to build up national production.

- The government owned many of India's largest factories and mines. While such socialist policies appeared attractive to many new nations, this part of the Nehru's legacy has not achieved his vision. Government-owned steel mills, airlines, and other industries have largely proven to be inefficient, costly drains on the government's budget, not only in India but in Russia, Eastern Europe, and other nations as well.

FEDERALISM

- Given India's vast population and great regional diversity, most political leaders accepted federalism for India, with many governmental functions at the state level. Many Indian states are bigger in population than most independent countries. For example, the three largest current Indian states would rank as the 6th, 12th, and 13th largest nations in the world today.

- A chief minister heads both the state legislature and the state executive branch. A governor is appointed by the central government but generally remains a figurehead. Only in times of emergency can the center suspend the state legislature and proclaim the governor's rule.

- The Indian constitution accords many powers to the state governments, including education and police. This decentralized structure has meant that states often have a powerful leader, with a well-developed political base, often in the caste associations strongest in that state.

LANGUAGE

- From even before independence, there were heated debates at the national and state levels about what the official language should be. For over a century, the British colonial government had used English as their language of rule. Gandhi, Nehru, and many other Indian nationalists wanted to replace English with Hindi, written in Devanagari—that is, the Sanskrit-based script.

- But the vast majority of the Indian population did not speak Hindi. Many objected that enforcing Hindi would disadvantage them compared to native Hindi speakers. Therefore, the Indian Constitution recognized 14 official Indian languages and called for a 15-year transition during which English could also be officially used.

- As that 15-year period ended in 1965, there were mass, and often violent, protests against Hindi, especially in the Tamil-speaking region of the south. As a compromise, English was officially allowed associate language status.

- Yet the central universities and many leading private colleges and schools continue to use English. This has helped educated Indians participate in the global economy, but has also entrenched different classes of literacy.

STATES

- The British Raj had drawn provincial lines on the basis of the historical accident of colonial expansion, as well as British administrative convenience. But many Indians identified strongly with their regional culture.

- In the years after independence, local movements began to demand self-governance by culturally defined groups in several key states. For example, in Madras state, various languages were each centered in a region with the state boundaries. These cultural communities began to demand states of their own. From 1956 onward, these demands
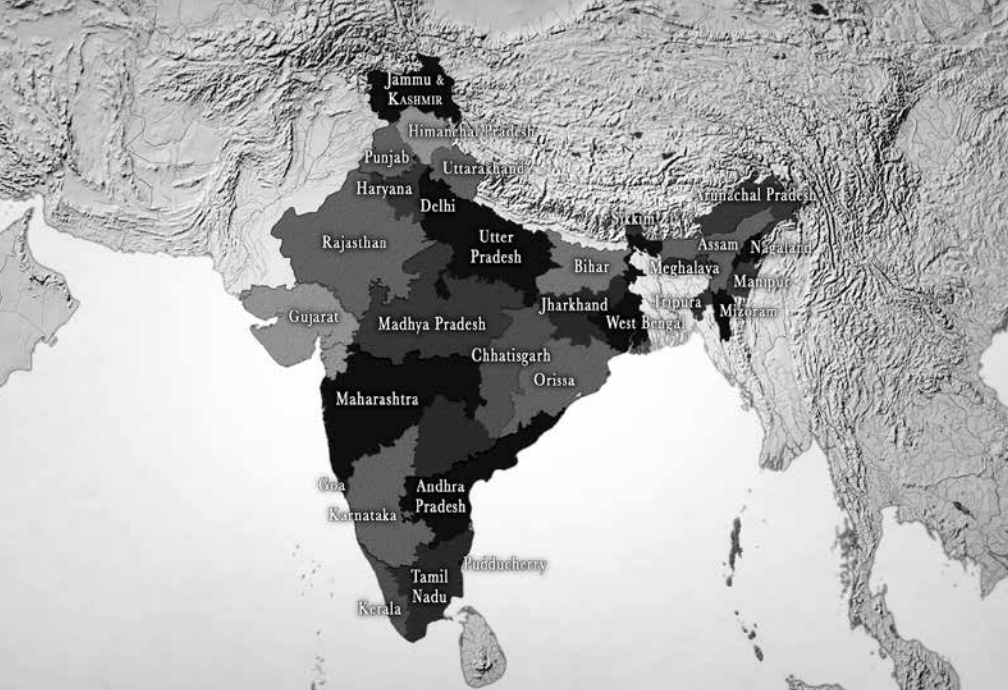
were successful in reorganizing many British-created provincial boundaries to reflect the extent of the dominant regional language.

- Since independence, India has roughly doubled the number of states. There are currently 29 states plus seven union territories. The most recent new state came into existence in 2014. But regional groups, especially in India's northeast, continue to demand their own new separate states, often using guerilla warfare.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- During his years as India's most powerful leader, Nehru worked to advance India's position internationally. Nehru made France give up its colony of Pondicherry and in 1961 forcibly annexed Goa and Portugal's other small enclaves.

- The Bandung Conference of 1955 was an attempt to end the Cold War by advancing an alternative to either the Western Bloc or the

Soviet Bloc. Nehru became a major leader of this movement, along with Indonesia's Sukarno, Yugoslavia's Tito, and Egypt's Nasser. But their vision did not succeed since the interests of these various leaders and nations diverged.

■ Nehru's most significant international frustration was India's alliance with China. India and China had border disputes dating back to when the British Empire was strong and imperial China weak. The Chinese leader Mao wanted these borders redrawn. When China invaded Tibet, Nehru gave refuge to many Tibetan refugees, including the Dalai Lama in 1959.

■ Then, in 1962, China's People's Liberation Army invaded the disputed border areas of Aksai Chin, located next to Tibet, and Assam, on India's northeast. The ill-prepared Indian army retreated.

■ This political and military humiliation weakened an already ailing Nehru. He never fully recovered, although he remained in office until his death in May 1964. Nonetheless, in many ways Nehru's dominant policies continue to shape India.

SUGGESTED READING

Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India.*

Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru.*

Nanda, *The Nehrus.*

Lecture 35

Modernizing India

I f the dominant national political figure for India's 18 years was Jawaharlal Nehru, then the next dominant figures were his daughter, Indira Gandhi, and her two sons, Sanjay and Rajiv. Following them was Rajiv's widow, Sonia. Understanding the history of India requires understanding this central Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. In this lecture, we'll consider the decades following the Nehru years. The lecture will focus on the careers of Indira, Sanjay, Rajiv, and Sonia Gandhi in the context of the many changes in India's condition.

AFTER NEHRU

- At the time of Nehru's death in 1964, the Indian National Congress party still prevailed at the center and in most states. Reportedly, the party bosses, known as the Congress Syndicate, offered the vacant leadership position to Indira Gandhi, daughter of Nehru. She was the widow of a man named Gandhi, but no relation to Mohandas Gandhi. Having no real experience in government, she declined.

- Next, they selected Lal Bahadur Shastri. A socialist, Shastri had a long and respected career in the nationalist movement and as a supportive member of Nehru's cabinet. But he had little political base of his own.

- Just at this time of post-Nehruvian political transition in India's central government, the second war with Pakistan erupted in 1965. A month of fighting left a few thousand soldiers dead but did not result in territorial gains for either belligerent. However, just after the signing of the peace treaty under Russia's mediation in Tashkent, Prime Minister Shastri died of a sudden heart attack.

■ This time, the party bosses again selected Indira Gandhi as prime minister. Once in office, Indira Gandhi increasingly devised her own policies. She pushed hard for new kinds of agriculture, with hybrid crops and intensive irrigation and fertilization.

THE SPLIT

■ Indira Gandhi increasingly resisted control by the Congress Syndicate powerbrokers. Instead, she aligned more with left-wing and regional parties. This led in 1969 to a decisive split, with supporters of the Syndicate becoming the Congress (O)—for Organization—while supporters of Indira Gandhi became the Congress (R)—for Requisition.

Lal Bahadur Shastri

■ Following this split in the Congress, Indira Gandhi began to implement policies that challenged the old entrenched economic and political elite represented by the Syndicate. Her party won an overwhelming majority in parliament.

■ This enabled her to change the Indian constitution to limit personal property rights. She nationalized many of India's largest banks, insurance companies, and coal mines, promising to use these resources for the development and benefit of India's people. She also

- moved India more into an alliance with the Soviet Union and away from the U.S.

- When East and West Pakistan fought their civil war in December 1971, she ordered the Indian army to intervene. This divided Pakistan by rapidly liberating Bangladesh. Further asserting her and India's might, in 1974 she ordered the underground testing of what she called a peaceful nuclear device.

OPPOSITION

- Indira Gandhi's more authoritarian control over politics alienated many political leaders who had been working for their nation since before independence. Among the most prominent of these was Jayaprakash Narayan, a well-respected socialist leader.

- During the 1971 election in Indira Gandhi's home constituency of Rae Bareli, there had been some campaigning irregularities. Her campaign manager and some of her election expenses had been paid by the government, for example, which was technically illegal for a political campaign. In June 1975, India's Supreme Court ruled against her, calling her election illegal and ordering her to cease voting in parliament.

- Emboldened, Jayaprakash Narayan declared what he called a total revolution, even calling on the army and police not to obey Indira Gandhi's illegitimate government. Many labor unions went on strike, deeply affecting the Indian economy.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

- Instead of resigning, Indira Gandhi declared an authoritarian internal state of emergency. During this state of emergency, which lasted for nearly two years, Indira Gandhi directed parliament to amend the Indian constitution, placing the prime minister above the authority of the courts. Mass imprisonments and newspaper

censorship followed, and the parliamentary elections due in 1976 were postponed indefinitely.

■ Both domestically and internationally, Indira Gandhi asserted that national discipline was vital before India could truly develop. For example, many of India's economic gains had been dissipated among the rising population, which had increased fifty percent since independence, reaching nearly 700 million.

■ Indira Gandhi decided that vasectomies were the most effective means of contraception. Any man with two or more children was "motivated" by the government to undergo this operation.

■ During the emergency, she increasingly relied on her second son, Sanjay Gandhi. He often acted without restraint. For example, Old Delhi had long been home to many Muslim families and various small-scale industries. Led by Sanjay, the police suddenly cleared away many of its densest slums, relocating about half a million of its inhabitants in distant locations. He supervised massive vasectomy camps.

THE JANATA PARTY

■ Although widespread resentment against these harsh emergency measures grew, few could oppose them openly. Hence, Indira Gandhi believed she had popular support. To prove her support, in 1977 she released her political opponents and ordered the postponed parliamentary elections to be held immediately afterward.

■ United by their opposition to Indira Gandhi, an array of political figures joined under the umbrella of the Janata or People's Party. Even members of Indira Gandhi's own cabinet who had remained silent during the emergency split away to join the Janata. This left the remnants of her party renamed as the Congress (I), for Indira.

■ The Janata Party soundly defeated the Congress (I). Almost all of north India, Muslims, and the poor voted against Indira Gandhi.

- But the Janata Party, having accomplished its almost only uniting goal, began to break down into its rival component parties and factions. In the 1980 national parliamentary election, Indira Gandhi successfully contrasted her strong administration against the ineffective Janata. Her Congress (I) won a two-thirds majority.

Rajiv and Indira

- Indira now trusted no one but Sanjay to share her power. She made him deputy prime minister, and her heir apparent. But only six months after the election, Sanjay crashed his high-performance acrobatic plane, killing him and a passenger.

- Suddenly bereft of her son and chosen heir, Indira Gandhi turned to her elder son, Rajiv Gandhi, who had originally stayed out of politics but reluctantly accepted and became Indira's heir apparent.

- In her restored regime, Indira Gandhi determined not to be challenged politically again. She exercised highly centralized control over the Congress (I), allowing only total loyalists to rise. This meant that her party had only a very weak organization, relying instead on her personal popularity.

The Khalistan Movement

- Indira Gandhi also schemed to weaken rival parties. For instance, she tolerated an increasingly armed Sikh separatist movement in the Punjab that demanded their own independent separate nation, Khalistan. These militants drained support away from the more establishment Sikh political party that opposed Indira Gandhi.

- However, by 1984 the Khalistan movement became so violent that she finally ordered the Indian Army to assault its fortified arms factory in the holiest Sikh site, the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The army's Operation Blue Star destroyed much of the Golden Temple and killed hundreds of innocent Sikh pilgrims trapped inside. Many

Rajiv Gandhi (center)

Sikhs in the army felt betrayed. Indeed, Indira Gandhi's own Sikh bodyguards assassinated her four months later.

- As Rajiv Gandhi rose above his grief and took over the government, many of Indira Gandhi's fervent followers in the national capital region took revenge by killing about a thousand innocent Sikhs and burning out many more.

- In subsequent years, the army and armed police forcefully crushed the Khalistan movement. In 1990 alone, some 4,000 people died in the Punjab fighting, many in armed confrontations with the police.

Rajiv's Efforts

- During the period of national mourning for his mother, Rajiv called a national election and led the Congress (I) to a strong victory. The party won only 48 percent of votes but 80 percent of parliament's seats.

- But the efforts by Rajiv Gandhi to modernize India rapidly and even to retain control over the Congress (I) both faltered. He tried to replace the established Congress (I) leaders with technocrats including experts in information technology. But this lost the party a series of state elections.

- He began opening the Indian economy to world trade, but that threatened India's inefficient industries and the comfortable middle classes.

- He tried to appeal to conservative Muslim voters. This created space for the rise of a Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP.

- In 1987, Rajiv ordered an 80,000-man peacekeeping force to end the bloody civil war in Sri Lanka between the Tamil Tigers and the Sinhala government. This was a debacle that alienated Tamils in India, Sri Lanka, and internationally, and made the world question India's role as regional policeman.

- Rajiv claimed to be above corruption, but mysterious payments of millions of dollars into a Swiss bank account suggested his involvement. Hence, his popularity plummeted and the Congress (I) lost the 1989 national election.

The 1990s and 2000s

- Only another weak coalition party, called the Janata Dal, managed to scrape together a minority government. It elected Vishwanath Pratap Singh as prime minister on the basis of his leading role as a critic of

Rajiv's alleged corruption. This government survived only briefly with the uncertain support of both left political parties and the BJP.

- A new election commenced in 1991. Rajiv Gandhi appeared to be headed for victory, only to be assassinated while campaigning, evidently by a Tamil suicide bomber in revenge for Rajiv's blundering incursion into Sri Lanka. While the Congress (I) managed to form a loose governing coalition, the aging compromise prime minister, Narasimha Rao, was relatively weak.

- India's economy was also weak. It remained largely based on Nehru's program of large state-owned industries and private companies that were highly regulated by licenses and quotas.

- The government began to open up the economy to world trade, a process that has hesitatingly continued until today. This has enabled entrepreneurial middle- and upper-class businessmen and investors to profit greatly from India's hitherto pent-up but now mostly opened markets.

- The Hindu nationalist BJP continued its rise. Many people in the majority Hindu community were also among those threatened by the Congress (I)'s economic reforms. The BJP also appealed to those who felt the Muslim minority had been especially protected by the Congress (I).

- The BJP made the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya a symbol of Muslim oppression. This mosque was constructed in 1527, allegedly on the site of a demolished temple marking the sacred birthplace, Janmabhumi, of the god Ram. In 1990 and then in 1992, BJP-led assaults on that mosque demolished it. In retaliation, Muslim militants set off bombs in Mumbai, which led to anti-Muslim riots.

- In the political instability of the period, a series of very short-lived coalition governments struggled to hold power. In 1996, the BJP prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee held office for only 13 days before losing a vote and having to resign. Two very insecure United

Front coalition governments struggled to stay in office over the next two years. Meanwhile, desperate to find a unifying focus, the Congress turned to Rajiv Gandhi's widow, Sonia Gandhi.

- A coalition headed by the BJP won the 1998 election. Vajpayee returned to office as prime minister for the second time. Vajpayee's coalition was strengthened in the 1999 elections. This time his government survived for the full five-year term. This government advanced liberalization of the Indian economy and the privatization of some state-owned corporations.

- But in the 2004 elections, rallying around Sonia Gandhi, the Congress led a coalition of 15 political parties that overmatched the BJP's coalition. A respected economist but weak political leader, Manmohan Singh, presided as prime minister for two terms.

- Neither of Sonia Gandhi's children, that is, Nehru's great-grandchildren, have emerged as major political figures. Priyanka (born in 1972) married a Christian Indian businessman and has largely stayed out of politics. Rahul (born 1970) has several times entered the political arena but has not proven himself effective there.

- The Congress is currently at one of its very lowest point in terms of parliamentary representation and popular support. In contrast, a resurgent BJP, under its new dynamic leader, Narendra Modi, returned with a resounding victory in 2014.

Suggested Reading

Ganguly and Mukherji, *India Since 1980.*

Guha, *India after Gandhi.*

Mistry, *A Fine Balance.*

Roy, *The God of Small Things.*

Lecture 36

South Asia into the 21ˢᵗ Century

Throughout this course, we've seen how the major themes of South Asia's long history have expressed themselves into the 21ˢᵗ century. In this final lecture, we'll first briefly review some of the larger themes that are still important today. Then we'll turn to consider some of the current conditions in each of today's major South Asian nations individually. Finally, we'll conclude with some of the major issues facing South Asia as a whole, now and into the future.

MAJOR THEMES

■ The interacting histories of a complex variety of individuals and communities have produced South Asia's vast diversity. Starting some 60,000–70,000 years ago, various groups with their own cultural heritage and social organization immigrated and settled in each ecologically specific region of the subcontinent.

■ A pattern found in many regions has been pastoralists and shifting agriculturalists settling as farmers, then clearing farmland by cutting down forests and pushing back forest-dependent people.

■ Today, the resource demands of cities and industries are putting further stresses on the remaining forest-dwelling communities. Tensions among these several different ways of life continue, for example, when settled villagers or the government claim exclusive forest rights and exclude herders and Adivasis who have traditionally used those forests as well.

■ Rural populations have been migrating temporarily or permanently to cities for centuries. But the rate has dramatically increased in recent decades. Among the dozen largest megacities in the world today are

India's Delhi and Mumbai, Pakistan's Karachi, and Bangladesh's Dhaka, with populations of 15 million or more each.

■ Other identities, like social and economic status and religious beliefs and practices, also vary at the very local level, by region, and across the subcontinent. There are inequities based on class, caste, and gender within each region and nation, although to different degrees. We've also seen how much political differentiation there has always been and remains today within South Asia.

■ From the 3rd century B.C.E. onward, only relatively short-lived empires have sporadically conquered much of South Asia. The two longest lasting of these empires were the Mughal Empire, which lasted from the mid-16th through the 17th centuries before gradually fragmenting, and the British Empire, which lasted from the late 18th to the mid-20th centuries.

■ South Asia's present political division into the separate independent nations of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh is not unusual. Each nation is a product of its regional and transregional histories, with many geographical boundaries set by the British colonial Raj being still disputed.

■ Another major South Asian theme is the relationship between South Asians and the surrounding world. For the last five centuries, this has encompassed the entire globe, especially via European ships during the colonial period.

South Asia Today

■ The nation that dominates South Asia in population, geographical size, and economic, political, and military power is the Republic of India. Over the next decade, it will become the largest nation in the world, surpassing China. India also is emerging as an economic powerhouse with ever more influence in the world. But, like the

other South Asian countries, the issue of national identity remains heatedly debated.

■ Jawaharlal Nehru and his political allies and heirs stressed the secular, incorporative nature of the nation. Meanwhile, the current Bharatiya Janata Party government and other parties on the so-called Hindu right have accused the Congress party of being pseudo-secularist—that is, of not treating all of Bharat's citizens equally.

■ At this time, the current Congress leadership is quite weak. The Nehru-Gandhi dynasty has led the Congress since Indian independence. With the one exception of the two-year state of emergency from 1975–1977, India has been highly unusual among former colonies around the world for its strong and continuous commitment to democracy.

■ The Congress party largely held together, despite various splits, due to the primacy of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. Even today, the strongest figure in the Congress is Rajiv Gandhi's widow, Sonia, although she is an Italian-born immigrant.

■ In contrast, in recent decades, the BJP has, with some setbacks, been sporadically rising across the north and center of India especially. BJP prime minister A. B. Vajpayee held office three times, the longest from 1998 to 2004, but as the head of a loose coalition of parties. In 2014, BJP prime minister Narendra Modi won a decisive victory that has allowed him to lead a unified, largely one-party government.

■ In addition to the Congress and the BJP, there are various smaller parties that have their own platforms. The several communist and other left-leaning political parties have not succeeded in expanding beyond their respective regional bases.

■ There are also small parties that primarily represent particular caste groupings, including the Bahujan Samaj Party, which appeals to Dalits, people historically degraded as untouchables. Even more

marginalized groups have turned to Maoist-style revolution. Up to a third of India's districts, almost all of them rural and heavily forested areas where Adivasis live, are currently the sites of such left-wing insurgency.

PAKISTANI AND BANGLADESHI IDENTITY

- Pakistan was partitioned off in 1947 as a nation for Muslims. It contains the 6th largest population of any country on earth. But debate continues among its citizens about how much being Muslim should matter in their identity.

- Even among practicing Muslims, there are disagreements about how Islamic the government should be. In some parts of Pakistan, Sharia law is already in place. In most of the country, however, it is not.

- As in the Republic of India, strong regional identities have cut across Pakistan's national identity. This occurred most dramatically in 1971, when the eastern wing seceded as independent Bangladesh.

- The issue of Bengali versus Muslim identities is still debated. The party strongly in power at this time, the Awami League, has tended to highlight Bengali identity. The main opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, is currently weaker than it has been for most of its history, as are its frequent Islamist political partners.

- Many of the services that the Bangladesh government has not been adequately providing are made available by nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs. Some are international, but many of the strongest are domestic.

- The two largest Bangladeshi NGOs are the Grameen Bank, started in 1976 by Nobel Prize–winner Muhammad Yunus, and BRAC, started by Sir Fazle Hasan Abed in 1972.

- Between them and other NGOs, nearly all poor Bangladeshi women have access to microcredit. Making small loans to millions of women has enabled them to start to lift their families out of a cycle of debt and thus above poverty. In addition, both BRAC and the Grameen Bank provide an array of other services, including education, communications, and healthcare.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Together, the people of South Asia make up 20 percent of the world's population, yet they live on less than 3 percent of its landmass. About a third of the world's poor live in South Asia.

- South Asia is facing a critical period when water, energy, and other natural resources are overstrained by ever larger populations and increased agricultural and industrial production.

- This rapid growth has resulted in relatively young populations. This could produce a labor pool approaching its peak productivity just at the time when China, Japan, and Europe's workforces are aging. But if these young men and women remain unemployed, their frustration could erupt in social disorder. Hence, each South Asian nation is attempting to reduce the rate of population rise and to grow its economy to make jobs for its youth.

- Yet another issue is gender disparity. Due to the economic and cultural preference for sons rather than daughters, most regions have very imbalanced sex ratios. There are many million fewer women in the population than would be expected statistically.

- Anemia, stunting, and other results of chronic malnutrition affect many women, leading to higher mortality in childbearing. Women in most regions of South Asia have markedly lower literacy rates than men. Since primary education for women is one of the most efficient ways of increasing the quality of life for everyone, this is an area

that each government in South Asia is addressing, although to far different degrees.

■ India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have each had one or more women prime ministers or provincial chief ministers. Indira Gandhi was elected prime minister in 1966 and again in 1980. In Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto was elected in 1988 and again in 1993. And in Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia was elected in 1991 and again in 2001. She alternated with Sheikh Hasina, who was elected in 1996, in 2009, and yet again in 2014.

■ Some of the fieriest regional leaders are single women. In Bengal, Mamata Banerjee leads the Trinamool (or Grassroots) Congress. In Tamil Nadu, Jayalalitha leads the AIADMK. In Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati leads the Bhaujan Samaj Party. Each has been chief minister between one and five times. Significantly, none has married but rather each has risen due to her own political charisma, although Jayalalitha and Mayavati had male mentors who advanced their careers initially.

Commerce and Globalization

■ There is a relatively small but growing commerce among South Asian nations. That commerce is dwarfed by trade with the more prosperous economies elsewhere.

■ Globalization has brought opportunities and benefits to many South Asians, but also threats and costs to others. The globalized production of clothing has created work for semiskilled workers. However, these jobs are low paying and often dangerous.

■ Tens of millions of emigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh and their descendants have been contributing greatly to the countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and elsewhere in Asia where they have settled. They also assist in spreading their cultural heritage worldwide, for instance, their cuisine, yoga, and Bollywood cinema.

■ Many emigres have done very well in business, the computer industry, the medical and educational professions, and in other fields where entrepreneurship can lead to success. Several members of the United States Congress and the governors of Louisiana and South Carolina have been of Indian origin. In Britain, several members of the House of Commons and House of Lords are of South Asian descent.

Future Challenges

■ Many global forces are beyond the power of South Asians to control, like climate change. Rising sea levels flood low-lying coasts, especially during tidal surges. Dire predictions project the permanent flooding of about 15 percent of the entire nation of Bangladesh by the end of this century.

■ South Asia is a tectonic plate that is grinding into Asia. This produces major earthquakes every half-dozen years. Similarly, the 2004 tsunami devastated coastal regions, with some damage still not repaired.

- Much of the "carbon space" in the world's atmosphere has already filled up by European and American emissions over the last two centuries, causing today's climate change. One South Asian demand has been "environmental justice," the right to produce more greenhouse gases until they reach the average per capita output of Westerners.

- Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi politicians also have negotiated billions of dollars for environmental improvements, paid by already developed nations.

- In future, the people of South Asia will continue to emerge as a vital part of humanity. India in particular may replace China as the world's most dynamic developing economy, with Pakistan and Bangladesh substantially increasing their contributions as well.

- Politically, each of these relatively new nations faces challenges, including international terrorism, the threat of nuclear war, and internal social, religious, and sub-national tensions. But the people of each nation have proven themselves resilient.

Suggested Reading

Brass, ed., *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics.*

Ganguly and DeVottla, eds., *South Asia.*

Heath and Mathur, eds., *Communalism and Globalization in South Asia and Its Diaspora.*

Richards, *The Unending Frontier.*

Bibliography

Abu al-Fazl. *Ain-i Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann and H.S. Jarrett, 3 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873–94. Extensive account by Emperor Akbar's closest courtier of how Akbar intended his empire to function.

Agarwal, Ashvini. *Rise and Fall of the Imperial Guptas*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989. Study of the Gupta Empire that sponsored the development of classical Hinduism.

Alam, Muzaffar. *Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India, 1707–1748*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013. Study of the reasons and processes by which the Mughal imperial system fragmented.

Alam, Muzaffar, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discovery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Study of the nature of travel literature in the Asian-Islamic world, with the implications for cultural modernity there.

Arnold, David. *Science, Technology, and Medicine in Colonial India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Study of how the British tried to use science in the service of empire in India.

Asher, Catherine B. *Architecture of Mughal India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Study of how the Mughal emperors and their leading officials expressed their ideology and goals in stone.

Asher, Catherine B. and Cynthia Talbot. *India Before Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Study by an architectural and a cultural historian of the world of India prior to European colonialism.

Babur. *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, tr. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston. New York: Modern Library, 2002. Authoritative

translation of the autobiography of this founder of the Mughal imperial dynasty.

Baṇa. *The Harṣa-carita*, tr. E.B. Cowell and F.W. Thomas. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993. Biography of the Indian Emperor Harsha written by a courtier lauding Harsha's origins and early career.

Bates, Crispin, ed. *Mutiny at the Margins: New Perspectives on the Indian Uprising of 1857,* 3 vols. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2013. Collection of articles about how various people participated in the 1857 conflict, and its continuing implications.

Baviskar, Amita. *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Insightful analysis of how Adivasis regarded both outside organizers and also development.

Bayly, C.A. *Empire and Information: Political Intelligence and Social Communication in North India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Study of the ways that rumors, networks of spies and informers, and other sources of information affected the establishment of the British Empire in India.

Bayly, Susan. *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Scholarly study of the evidence about the origins and development of the practice of caste.

Bayly, Susan. Saints, *Goddesses, and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Study of how Muslim and Christian religious leaders convinced people in Kerala and Tamilnad to convert, and these converts' relations with Europeans.

Beach, Milo. *Mughal and Rajput Painting*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Study of how Mughal imperial and Hindu regional visual artists developed their styles.

Behl, Benoy K. *The Ajanta Caves: Ancient Paintings of Buddhist India*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2005. Illustrated study of one of the major sites for ancient painting by Buddhists.

Bellenoit, Hayden. *Missionary Education and Empire in Late Colonial India, 1860–1920*. Pickering and Chatto, 2007. Study of how the schools run by European religious figures and orders shaped the development of Indian education.

Bhutto, Benazir. *Daughter of the East: An Autobiography*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2007. Account by this two-time president of Pakistan about her youth and early political career.

Bondurant, Joan. *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988. Analysis of Mohandas Gandhi's thinking in the context of other major ideologies.

Bose, Sugata. *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle against Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011. Sympathetic account of the life and times of this important pre-independence Indian political leader who advanced a more violent and radical methodology than did Mohandas Gandhi.

Brass, Paul. *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*. Seattle: University of Washington, 2003. Study of why religiously defined communities have attacked each other with India.

Brass, Paul R., ed. *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Collected studies of the 21st-century political conditions within and relations among the nations of South Asia.

Bryant, Edwin F., and Laurie L. Patton, eds. *The Indo-Aryan Controversy: Evidence and Inference in Indian History*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Series of essays of where and how the Vedic peoples immigrated, and the ongoing implications of these issues and evidence.

Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998. Collected oral histories about men and women who experienced the trauma of the 1947 partition of Pakistan from India.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. Analysis of the concept of "modernity" in the context of European and Indian political economy.

Chamakalakshmi, R. *Religion, Tradition, and Ideology: Pre-colonial South India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Study of the history of the culture in this region of India before the arrival of European colonialism.

Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. Analysis of Indian nationalist thought.

Chester, Lucy P. *Borders and Conflict in South Asia: The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of Punjab*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. History of the process of the partition of Pakistan from India.

Cort, John E. *Framing the Jina: Narratives of Icons and Idols in Jain history*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Study of the uses of visual media by Jains in order to convey their religion and philosophy.

Cort, John E., ed. *Open boundaries: Jain Communities and Culture in Indian History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998. Studies in the history of this important minority religious community.

Coward, Harold, John R. Hinnells, and Raymond Brady Williams, eds. *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States*.

Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000. Collected articles on South Asian emigrant communities across the world today.

Dale, Stephan. *Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and India, 1483–1530*. Leiden: Brill, 2004. Study of the life and times of this founder of the Mughal imperial dynasty.

Dalrymple, William. *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857*. New York: Vintage Books, 2008. Study of the Mughal imperial capital and court as it went from a site of cultural synthesis to one of cultural conflict.

Dalrymple, William. *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-century India*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Study of an historical romance between an Indian princess and a British official, based on archival sources.

Dasgupta, Ashin and M.N. Pearson, eds. *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Study of the Indian Ocean world during the first three centuries after the arrival of Portuguese colonizers.

Deutsch, Eliot. *Advaita Vedanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988. Insightful study of this major monistic philosophy within Hinduism.

Devji, Faisal. *Muslim Zion: Pakistan and a Political Idea*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013. Study of how the concept of Pakistan developed and affected men and women who became its citizens.

Doniger, Wendy, tr. *Hindu Myths: A Sourcebook*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Engaging selection of accounts of Hindu deities.

Dundas, Paul. *The Jains*. London; New York: Routledge, 2002. Survey of this important minority community.

Eaton, Richard and Philip B. Wagoner. *Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested Sites on India's Deccan Plateau, 1300–1600*. New York: Oxford

University Press, 2013. Study of how Hindu and Muslim rulers and people interacted in central India.

Eaton, Richard. *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. Insightful study of the conversion process to Islam as it developed in eastern India.

Eaton, Richard. *A Social History of the Deccan, 1300–1761: Eight Indian Lives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Biographical studies that reveal what life was like in central India during this period.

Faruqui, Munis. *Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504–1719*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Study of the politics of imperial succession and the implications for Mughal imperial political theory.

Fisher, Michael H. *The Travels of Dean Mahomet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. Republication of the first book ever written and published by an Indian in English, with an extensive biography of the author.

Fisher, Michael H. *A Short History of the Mughal Empire*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015. Recent survey of the history of the Mughal Empire, from its founding onward.

Forbes, Geraldine. *Women in Modern India*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Study of how women have lived in India during the recent period.

Forrester, E.M. *A Passage to India*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004. Influential novel about life for Britons and Indians during the colonial period.

Forrester, E.M. *Hill of Devi*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985. Non-fictional account by the author about his own periods of living in India.

Frankel, Francine. *India's Political Economy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Study of the politics of post-independence India, with the implications of the events.

Gadgil, Madhav, and Ramachandra Guha. *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013. Path-breaking study of how the material world and humans interacted over India's long history.

Gandhi, Mohandas. *The Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi*, ed. John Strohmeier. Berkeley: Berkeley Hills Books, 2000. Study of how this major Indian social and political leader used his understanding of this philosophical poem.

Gandhi, Mohandas. *Autobiography: My Experiments with Truth*. Boston: Beacon, 1957. Account by this leading Indian nationalist of his life and efforts to mobilize himself and other Indians toward freedom.

Ganguly, Sumit and Rahul Mukherji. *India Since 1980*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Study of the political history of India during its last four decades.

Ganguly, Sumit and Neal DeVottla, eds. *South Asia*. New York: New York University Press, 2006. Collected essays by leading political scientists on the region during recent times.

Ghosh, Amitav. *In an Antique Land*. New York: Anchor Books, 2005. Novel about a slave owned by a Jewish merchant who traded across the Indian Ocean to ancient Egypt, interspersed with the author's own experiences as an Indian in Egypt.

Ghosh, Amitav. *Sea of Poppies*. London: John Murray, 2008. Novel about Indian indentured laborers as they were recruited and left India.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Shadow Lines*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Novel about Hindus from east Bengal who were forced out when their homeland became part of Pakistan.

Gopal, Sarvepalli. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Study of the life and career of this important Indian leader who became the first and longest serving prime minister of India.

Gordon, Stewart. *Marathas, 1600–1818*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Study of the rise, expansion, and suppression of this major Indian empire.

Green, Nile. *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840–1915*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Study of Muslim religious entrepreneurship in western India and the Indian Ocean during the British colonial period.

Green, Nile. *Islam and the Army in Colonial India: Sepoy Religion in the Service of Empire*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Study of how Muslim Indians interacted with the British, including in the British colonial army.

Green, Nile. *Making Space: Sufis and Settlers in Early Modern India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012. How Muslim holy men interacted with Indian society.

Guha, Ramachandra. *Gandhi Before India*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2014. Scholarly study of the life of this leading Indian nationalist during his early years, especially in South Africa.

Guha, Ramachandra. *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*. New York: HarperPerennial, 2008. Study of the history of India from its origins as an independent republic onward.

Guha, Ranajit, ed. *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986–1995*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Collection of influential articles that study the history of India from the perspective of subordinated Indian people.

Guhathakurta, Meghna, and Willem van Schendel, eds. *The Bangladesh Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. Collection of articles about various aspects of Bangladesh, from its origins onward.

Gulbadan. *The history of Humayun = Humayun-nama*, tr. Annette Beveridge. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1902. Translation of the account by Babur's daughter of his life and that of his heir and the rest of his family.

Habib, Irfan. *Atlas of the Mughal Empire*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982. Authoritative political and economic maps of the Mughal Empire and of India as a whole during this period.

Hanif, Mohammed. *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. London: Random House, 2011. Novel about the regime of General Zia al-Haq and the possible cause of the airplane crash that assassinated him.

Harappa.com. Site where the latest research on the Indus civilization is posted. Contains extensive graphics and images.

Hardiman, David. *Gandhi in His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas*. London: C. Hurst, 2003. Study of the significance of this leading Indian nationalist from his own day onward.

Harrison, Mark. *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India, 1600–1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. Study of how and why Europeans envisioned the physical body in the context of the environment of India.

Heath, Deana, and Chandana Mathur, eds. *Communalism and Globalization in South Asia and Its Diaspora*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Collection of

studies by leading scholars about the interactions between globalization and religious identity across South Asia.

Hosain, Rokeya Sahkhawat. *Sultana's Dream*. New York: Feminist Press, 1994. An influential woman-centered fictional vision of an ideal Indian society, first published by a Muslim educator in 1905.

Internet Indian History Sourcebook. http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/india/indiasbook.asp. An online sourcebook with many available primary texts for all of Indian history.

Iqtidar, Humeira. *Secularizing Islamists?: Jama'at-e-Islami and Jama'at-ud-Da'wa in Urban Pakistan*. Chicago: University of Chicago: 2011. Study of the leading Islamist party and movement in contemporary Pakistan.

Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. Study of this ex-untouchable leader for social and political reform in India.

Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Religion, Caste, and Politics in India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. Study of how caste functions in contemporary India.

Jahangir. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, tr. Alexander Rogers, ed. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1914. Autobiographical journal by this important Mughal emperor.

Jalal, Ayesha. *The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times, and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. Sympathetic study of the career of this important short story writer.

Jalal, Ayesha. *Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Historical study of the developing ideology and negotiation tactics of this leader in the creation of Pakistan.

Jamison, Stephanie W. and Joel P. Brereton, tr. *Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*, 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. An authoritative translation of all of the Rig Vedic sacred poems.

Jataka: or, Stories of the Buddha's Former Births, ed. E.B. Cowell, 3 vols. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1995. Extensive translation of accounts of the lives of the Buddha before his birth as the Enlightened One to be.

Jatakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta, tr. Sarah Shaw. New York: Penguin, 2006. Selective and accessible collection of the lives of the Buddha before his birth as such.

Jodhka, Surinder S. *Caste in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2015. Study of how caste functions in post-independence India.

Katz, Nathan, ed. *Indo-Judaic Studies in the Twenty-first Century: A View from the Margin*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Collection of articles about the Jewish communities in India.

Kauṭilya. *Arthasastra*, translated as *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India*, tr. Patrick Olivelle. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Authoritative translation of this ancient Sanskrit work of political science.

Khan, Feisal. *Islamic Banking in Pakistan: Shariah-Compliant Finance and the Quest to make Pakistan More Islamic*. London: Routledge, 2015. Study of the contested place of Islam in the ideology and government of Pakistan.

Koch, Ebba. *Complete Taj Mahal*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2006. Study of this most iconic of Indian buildings.

Kumar, Aishwary. *Radical Equality: Ambedkar, Gandhi, and the Risk of Democracy*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015. Study of the different goals and methods of two leading Indian political and social reformers, one an ex-untouchable.

Kumar, Sunil. *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, 1192–1286*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007. Study of the origins and early history of the Muslim rulers over north India.

Lahiri, Nayanjot. *The Decline and Fall of the Indus Civilization*. Delhi: Permanent Black; Bangalore: Orient Longman, 2000. Collected essays by leading specialists that outline the issues, hypotheses, and questions raised over the last decades about the history, developments and complexities of the Indus civilization.

Lahiri, Nayanjot. *Finding Forgotten Cities: How the Indus Civilization Was Discovered*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005. History of how British and Indian archaeologists first discovered this long-forgotten civilization, and the implications of their goals and methodologies. Written by a distinguished scholar who specializes in this ancient culture.

Lal, Ruby. *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Study of the role of women in the early Mughal imperial family.

Lal, Ruby. *Nur Nama*. New York: Random House, forthcoming. Study of the life and times of the prominent Mughal empress, Nur Jahan.

Long, Jeffery D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009. Survey of the history and philosophy of this religious community.

Lopez, Donald S. *Buddhism*. New York: Penguin, 2001. Survey of the history of Buddhism, in India and the world.

Lutgendorf, Philip. *The Life of a Text: Performing the Ramcaritmanas of Tulsidas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. Study of how this telling of the Ramayana is enacted in north India.

Malik, Iftikhar H. *The History of Pakistan*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2008. Survey of the origins and development of Pakistan from 1947 onward.

Manto, Saadat Hasan. *Selected Stories*. New York: Penguin, 2007. Collection of powerful short stories by a leading writer who was forced to leave India for Pakistan following partition.

Manu. *The Law Code of Manu*, tr. Patrick Olivelle. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

McDermott, Rachel Fell, et al. eds. *Sources of Indian Traditions*, 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. Extensive collection of primary sources, with an introduction to each, for all of Indian history.

Metcalf, Thomas R. *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*. Berkeley: University of California, 1989. Study of how the British used architecture, and particularly its newly designed imperial capital of New Delhi, in its imperial project.

Michell, George. *Architecture and Art of Southern India: Vijayanagara and the Successor States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. How major south Indian dynasties expressed themselves in stone.

Michell, George and Mark Zebrowski. *Architecture and Art of the Deccan Sultanates*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Study of the cultural history of central India under these Muslim dynasties.

Miller, Roland E. *Mappila Muslim Culture: How a Historic Muslim Community in India Has Blended Tradition and Modernity.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015. Study of this important Muslim community as it lives in the southwest coastal region of India.

Mines, Diane P. *Caste in India*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Association for Asian Studies, 2009. Survey of the origins and practice of caste in South Asia.

Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance: A Novel*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997. Fictional account of life during the Emergency period (1975–1977) of India's history.

Mohanty, Gopinath. *Paraja*, tr. Bikram K. Das. Boston: Faber, 1987. Engaging novel about a forest-dwelling community facing environmental, social, and political challenges. Written by an Indian official posted for much of his career to that region.

Mookerji, Radhakumud. *Asoka*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1962. Study of the life and historical context of the greatest of the early Indian emperors.

Mookerji, Radhakumud. *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966. Study of the life and historical context of the founder of this first Indian empire.

Mukherjee, Rudrangshu. *Mangal Pandey: Brave Martyr or Accidental Hero?* New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Study of the causes of the 1857 conflict, and the later implications of this iconic figure popularly credited with sparking the fighting.

Murthy, U.R. Anantha. *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man*, tr. A.K. Ramanujan. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. Influential novel about life in a Brahmin village when a crisis shatters the faith of one of its leaders.

Nanda, B.R. *The Nehrus: Motilal and Jawaharlal*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008. Historical study of a father and son who emerged as highly influential nationalist leaders.

Narayan, R.K. *The Mahabharata: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Very readable and highly condensed prose narrative of this major Indian epic poem.

Narayan, R.K. *The Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic, Suggested by the Tamil Version of Kamban*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. Very readable and highly condensed prose narrative of this major Indian epic poem.

Narayana Rao, Velcheru, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India.* Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001. Thoughtful analysis of what history meant to people in South India prior to the arrival of European colonialism.

O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger, tr. *The Rig Veda, an Anthology: One Hundred and Eight Hymns*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981. A selective and well-translated collection from the Rig Veda, with an introduction and explanatory notes.

Olivelle, Patrick, ed. *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. Social and political study of the post-Mauryan period of Indian history.

Olivelle, Patrick, Janice Leoshko, and Himanshu Prabha Ray. *Reimagining Asoka: Memory and History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012. Study of how this great emperor's image has continued to affect India.

Pandey, Gyanendra. *Remembering Partition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Study of how Indians have dealt with and represented the partition and its aftermath.

Parpola, Asko. *Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilization*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Study by an leading archaeologist and historical linguist of the historical processes for this time period.

Pearson, M.N. *The Portuguese in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Study of the history of Portuguese colonialism in India, from the beginning onward.

Peers, Douglas M. and Nandini Gooptu, eds. *India and the British Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Collection of articles about the roles that India played in the British Empire.

Pollock, Sheldon. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. Study of the historical use and meaning of the Sanskrit language.

Possehl, Gregory. *The Indus Civilization: A Contemporary Perspective*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2003. Collected articles about the archaeological research into the Indus culture.

Raghavan, Srinath. 1971: *A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013. Study of the causes and events surrounding the successful secession war of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971.

Rahula, Walpola Sri. *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, 1974. Study of the lessons attributed to Siddhartha Buddha from early in the history of his followers.

Rath, Govinda Chandra, ed. *Tribal Development in India: The Contemporary Debate*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006. Selection of articles about the past and present condition of adivasis in light of current conditions.

Richards, John F. *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. Study of the history of environmental change on a global scale.

Richman, Paula, ed. *Many Ramayaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. Study of how various tellings of this epic have emerged in various regions of India, using folklore, drama, and literature.

Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1998. Compelling novel about life in southwest India.

Roy, Haimanti. *Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947–65*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012. Study of the long-term effects of Partition on Indian and Pakistani men and women.

Rushdie, Salman. *Shame*. New York: Random House, 2008. Novel about the history of Pakistan, and particularly the charismatic Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, until his execution in 1979.

Sarkar, Tanika. *Rebels, Wives, Saints: Designing Selves and Nations in Colonial Times*. New York: Seagull Books, 2009. Study of the participation of women in politics during the British colonial period.

Schwartzberg, Joseph. *An Historical Atlas of South Asia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1978. Also available at http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/. An authoritative collection of maps illustrating Indian history, with a narrative providing context.

Sen, Colleen Taylor. *Curry: A Global History*. London: Reaktion Books, 2009. Study of the ways that this Indian-style food has spread around the world.

Shah, Aqil. *The Army and Democracy: Military Politics in Pakistan*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014. Study of the recent history of Pakistan, focusing on the insertion of the army into politics.

Siddiqa, Ayesha. *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*. London: Pluto Press, 2007. Study of the ways that the Pakistan army has extended its control, and ownership, over large parts of the national economy.

Singh, Harleen. *The Rani of Jhansi: Gender, History, and Fable in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Study of the life and continued significance of a famous Indian princess who fought against the British.

Singh, Upinder, and Nayanjot Lahiri, eds. *Ancient India: New Research*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010. Collection of recent studies of this historical period.

Stein, Burton. *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. Scholarly study of the social and political history of this region prior to the arrival of European colonialism.

Stein, Burton. *Vijayanagara*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Study of the history of this important central Indian Hindu kingdom.

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. *Career of Vasco da Gama.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Study of the life and historical context of this Portuguese explorer who discovered how to reach India directly by sea.

Subramanian, Lakshmi. *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011. Cultural history of music in Tamilnad from colonial times to the present.

Talbot, Ian. *Pakistan: A New History*. London: Hurst, 2012. Survey history of Pakistan from its origins onward.

Thapar, Romila. *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012. Study of this great emperor and the later history of his dynasty and empire.

Thapar, Romila. *Early India: From the Origins to 1300*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. Authoritative study of the historical context.

Thapar, Romila. *Sakuntala: Texts, Readings, Histories*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. Analysis of how this one romantic story has appeared in plays and other literature.

Thapar, Romila. *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013. Thoughtful discussion of ancient Indian history and its contemporary implications.

Trautmann, Thomas. *Elephants and Kings: An Environmental History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. Historical study of the role of elephants in Asia, particularly in India.

Uddin, Sufia M. C*onstructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity, and Language in an Islamic Nation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. Analysis of the religious, ethnic, and national identities competing within this new nation.

Valmiki. *The Ramayaṇa of Valmiki: An Epic of Ancient India,* tr. Robert P. Goldman, et al. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. Authoritative complete translation of this epic, with some volumes published and others forthcoming.

Van Schendel, Willem. *A History of Bangladesh*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Study of the history of Bangladesh from its origins onward.

Varshney, Ashutosh. *Ethnic Conflict and Civil Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven: Yale, 2002. Study of the reasons behind religious violence in post-independence India.

Visram, Rozina. *Ayahs, Lascars, and Princes: The Story of Indians in Britain, 1700–1947*. London: Routledge, 2015. Study of the various Indians who emigrated to Britain and their lives there.

Vyasa. *Bhagavadgita in the Mahabharata,* tr. J.A. B. van Buitenen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Authoritative translation of the entire text.

Vyasa. *The Mahabharata*, tr. J. A. B. Van Buitenen, et al. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. Authoritative complete translation of this epic, with some volumes published and others forthcoming.

Wade, Bonnie. *Imaging Sound*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Study of how music was represented in visual images and other products of the pre-colonial period.

Ward, Andrew. *Our Bones are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and the Indian Mutiny of 1857*. New York: H. Holt and Co., 1996. Study of how Europeans experienced the 1857 fighting.

Wink, Andre. *Akbar*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2009. Study of the life and times of this most prominent Mughal Emperor.

Wink, Andre. *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2002. Study of the early attitudes and interactions of Muslims as they encountered India.

Younger, Paul. *New Homelands: Hindu Communities in Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, South Africa Fiji and East Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Study of Indian immigrants to a range of British colonies, and their lives there.

Image Credits

Page 7: © jayakishoresr/iStock/Thinkstock.

Page 15: © Exta Parishad/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0.

Page 23: © Usman.pg/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0.

Page 24: © Saminaleo/iStock/Thinkstock.

Page 32: © Nila Newsom/Shutterstock.

Page 44: © Ravi Varma Press/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain.

Page 47: © Ravi Varma Press/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain.

Page 57: © Ramanarayanadatta astri/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain.

Page 61: © Dedda71/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0.

Page 70: © Coica/iStock/Thinkstock.

Page 74: © Danielrao/iStock Editorial/Thinkstock.

Page 78: © Rybalka/Shutterstock.

Page 82: © saiko3p/Shutterstock.

Page 83: © Charlie/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0.

Page 90: © Blade_kostas/iStock/Thinkstock.

Page 96: © Aapthamithra/iStock/Thinkstock.

Page 99: © Casper1774 Studio/Shutterstock.

Page 110: © Steve Allen/Shutterstock.

Page 145: © Andrey Burmakin/Shutterstock.

Page 152: © Marzolino/Shutterstock.

Page 159: © Muhammad Mahdi Karim/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain.

Page 160: © Manohar/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain.

Page 169: © Walters Art Museum/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain.

Page 171: © Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain.

Page 173: © Banana Republic images/Shutterstock.

Page 183: © Joe Ravi/Shutterstock.