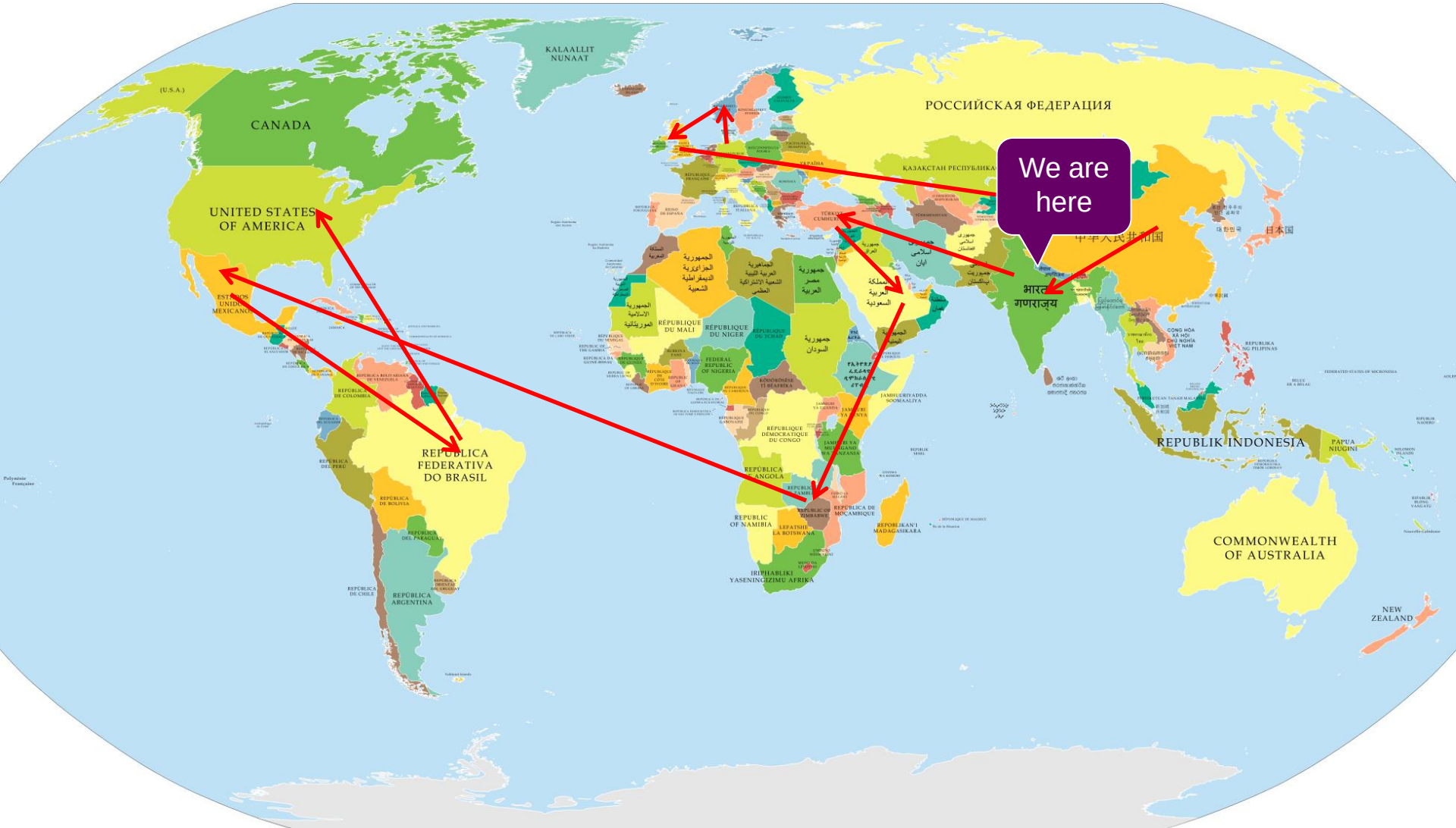
India

Osher Course, January 2021

John Hooker

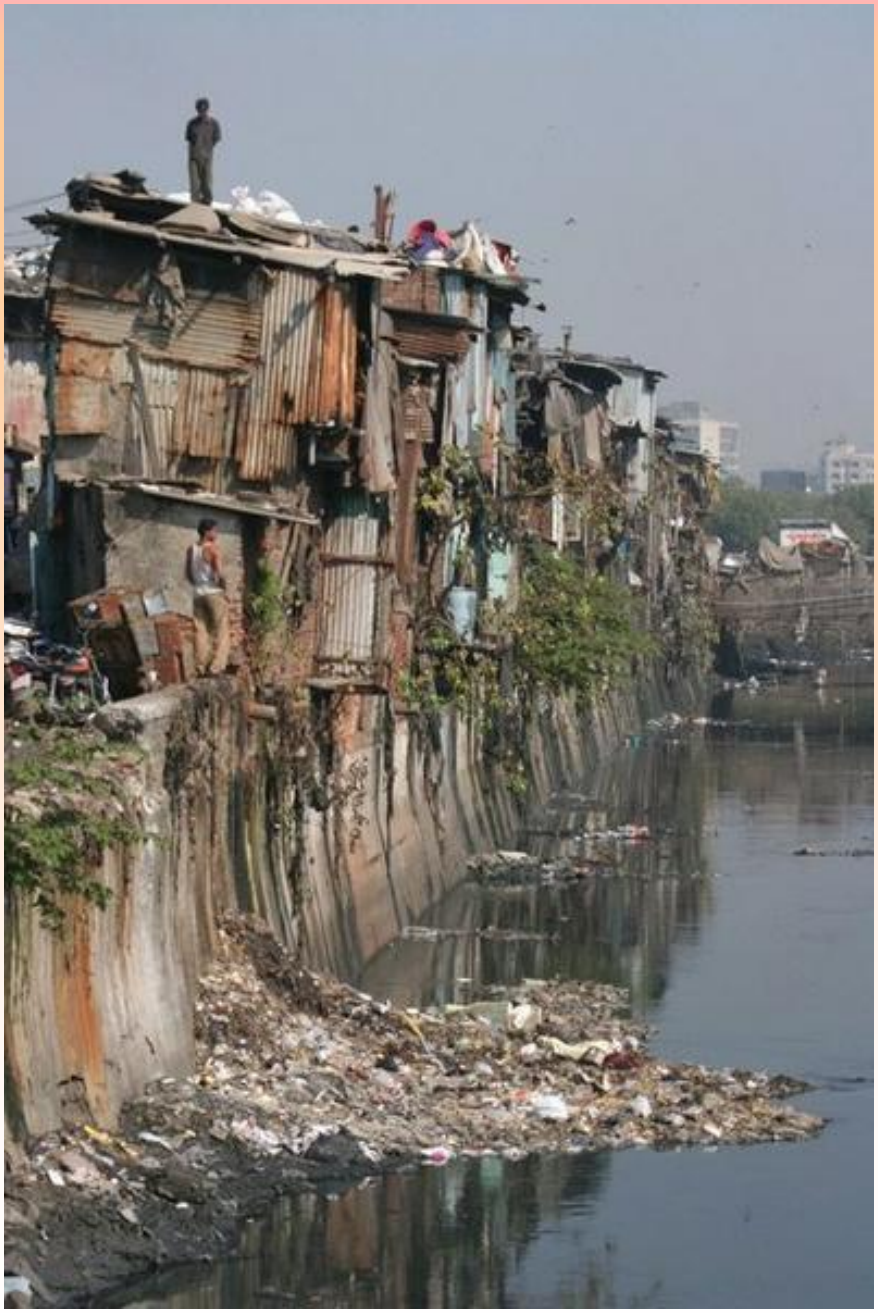
Travel Plan


We are here
CANADA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
РОССИЙСКАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ
REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL
REPUBLIK INDONESIA
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND

AFG.
PAKISTAN
Indian claim
Line of Actual Control
CHINA
0 200 400 km
0 200 400 mi
Srinagar
Amritsar
Indus
HIMALAYAS
Brahmaputra
Kanchenjunga
NEPAL
BHUTAN
NEW DELHI
Āgra
Kānpur
Ganges
Imphāl
Kāndla
Ahmadābad
Bhopāl
Kolkata (Calcutta)
BANGLADESH
BURMA
Haldia
Mumbai (Bombay)
Nāgpur
DECCAN
Arabian Sea
Hyderābād
Vishākhapatnam
Panaji
Marmagao
Bay of Bengal
Chennai (Madras)
Bangalore
ANDAMAN ISLANDS
Pondicherry
Calicut
Port Blair
Cochin
Madurai
Laccadive Sea
Tuticorin
SRI LANKA
NICOBAR ISLANDS
70
80
90
30
20
10

The new Mumbai

The new Mumbai



Dharavi slum, Mumbai

Featured in the film *Slumdog Millionaire*

About 60% of the Mumbai population lives in slums

Electronics City, near Bangalore
200 companies

Elevated highway to Electronics City

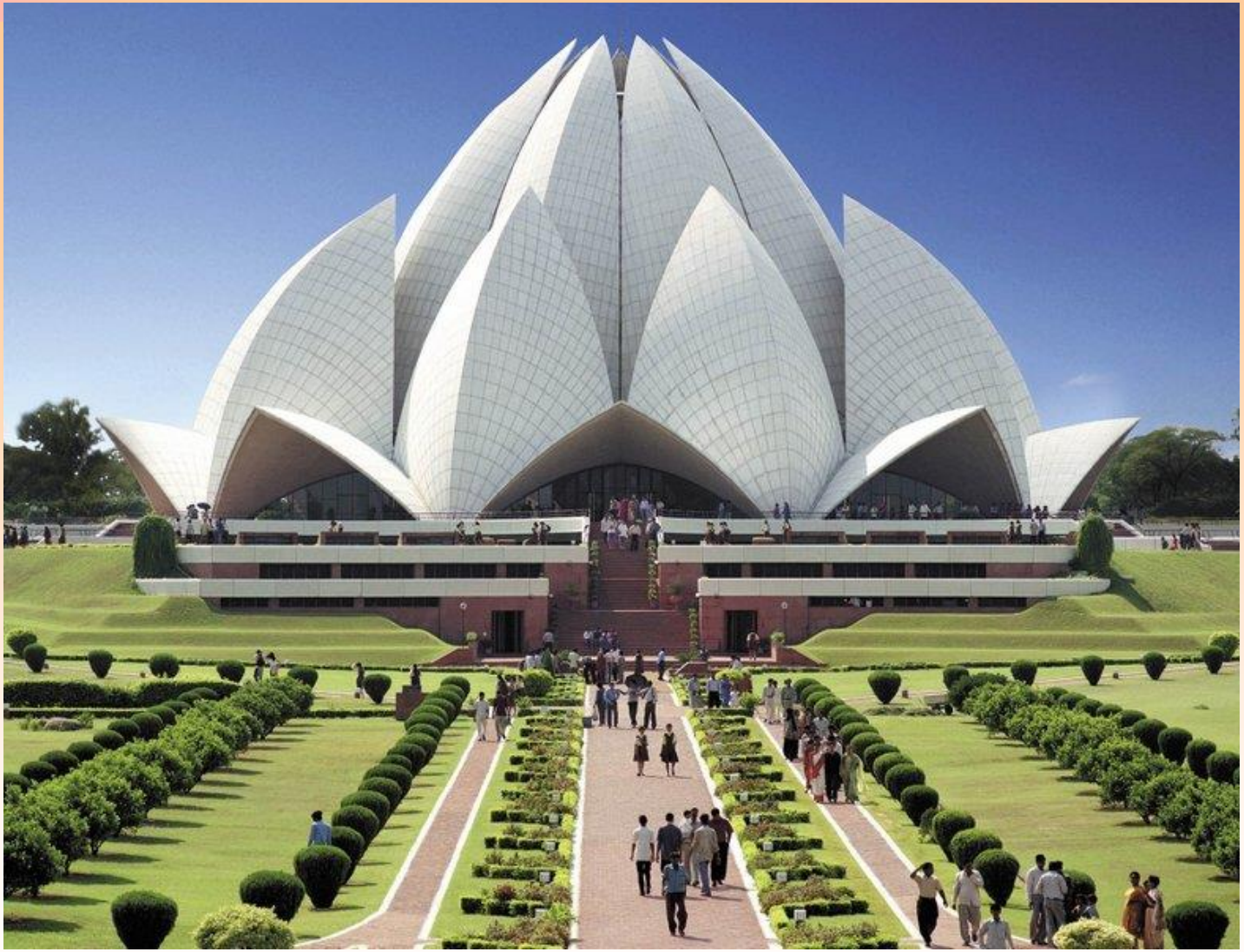
Kohlkata in monsoon season

Women in saris at Red Fort, New Delhi

Taj Mahal, Agra

Street scenes

Parliament Building, New Delhi

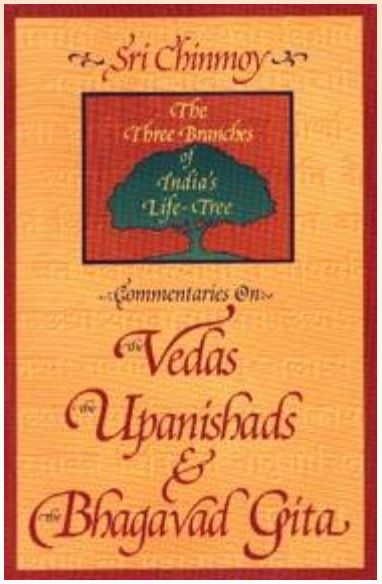


Lotus Temple (Bahá'í faith), Delhi

Bride & groom at wedding ceremony

Two civilizations

- Harappan (Indus Valley) Civilization (3000 bce)
- Aryans (1500 bce)
  - Vedic literature, Sanskrit language.
  - Hindu religion, caste system.

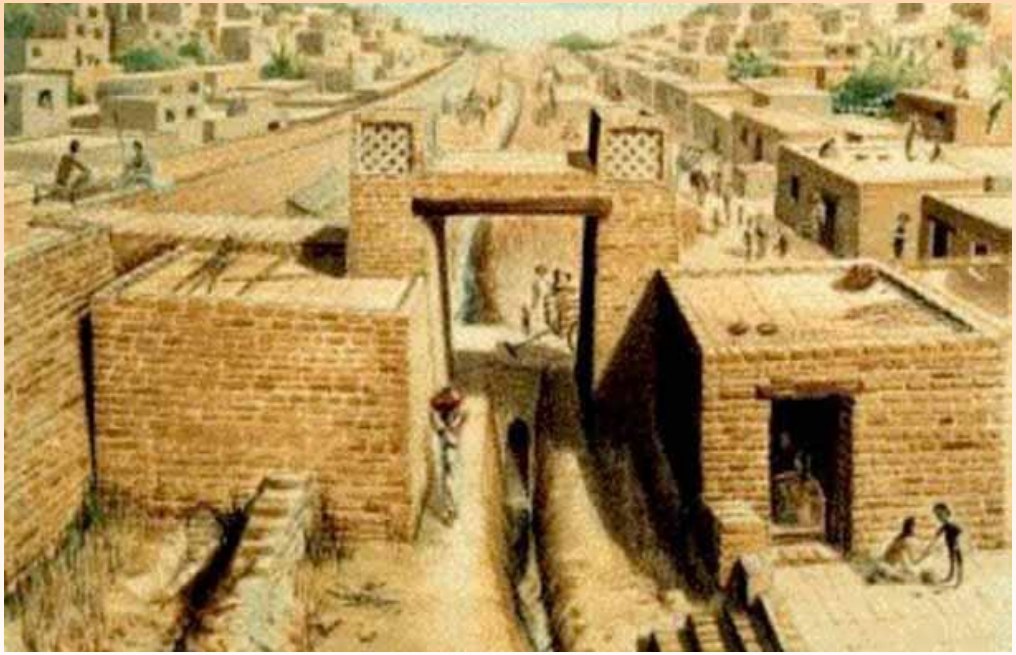


Two civilizations

- Harappan (Indus Valley) Civilization (3000 bce)
  - Rediscovered in 1920s.
  - 100s of cities.
  - Script remains undeciphered.

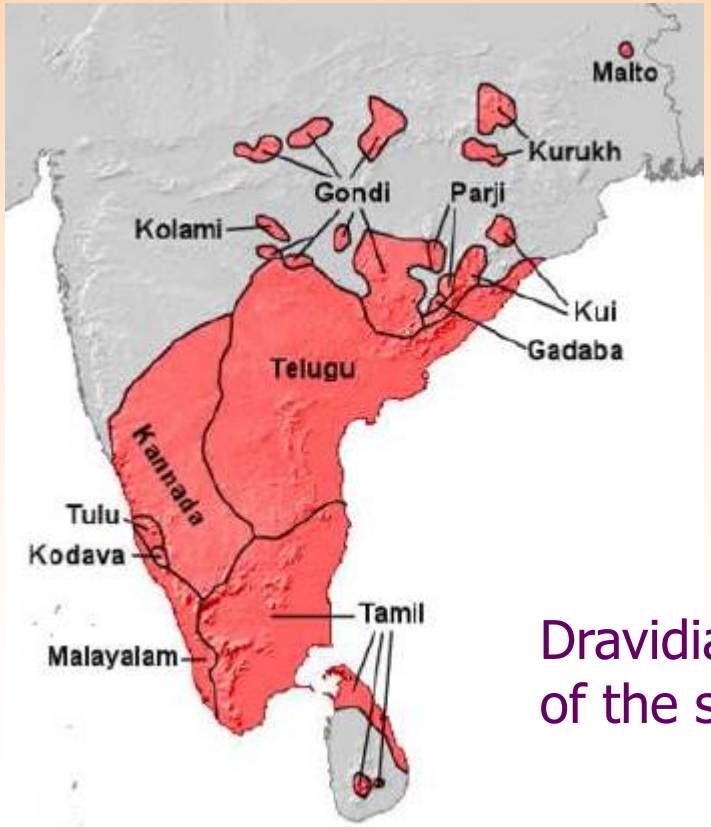
Two civilizations

- Harappan culture thrived for 1500 years.
  - Indoor plumbing.
  - No weapons.

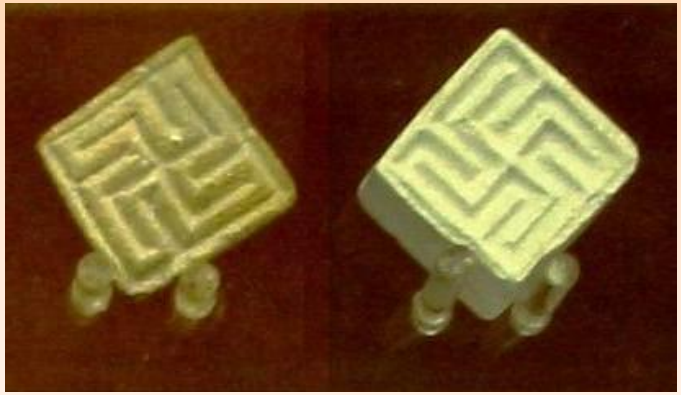


Two civilizations

- Traces of Indus Valley culture persist.



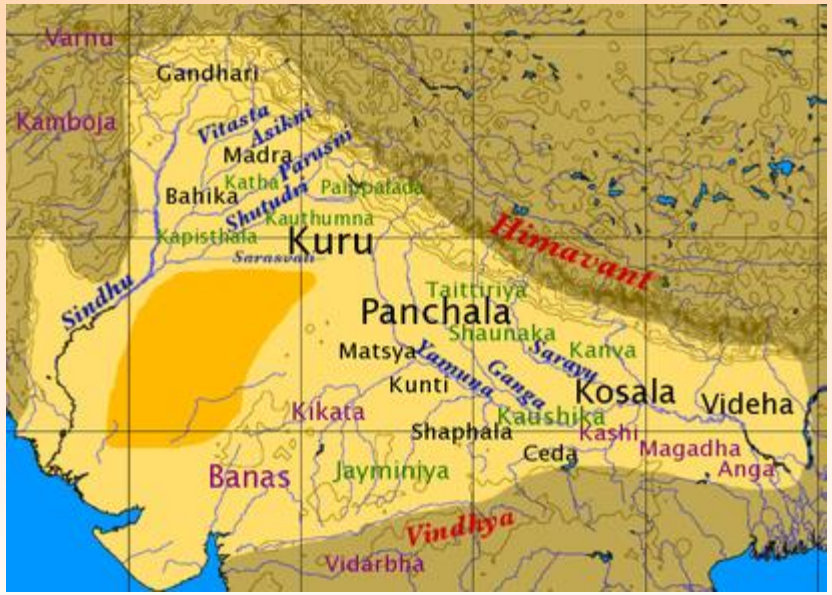
Dravidian languages of the south



Swastika

Two civilizations

- Rise of Aryan culture, 1500 bce.
  - From what is now Iran
    - Aryan = noble people
    - Iran = Aryan = Ireland
  - Nomadic, pastoral people.
    - Warlike, chariot-riding.



A bit of history

- Common roots with the West.
  - India seems alien to Westerners, but it is culturally closer than most of Asia.
  - Indo-European language.
  - Emphasis on rationality.
    - Greek/Hindu philosophy.
    - Aristotelian/Jainist logic.
    - Eleatic/Indian mathematics.

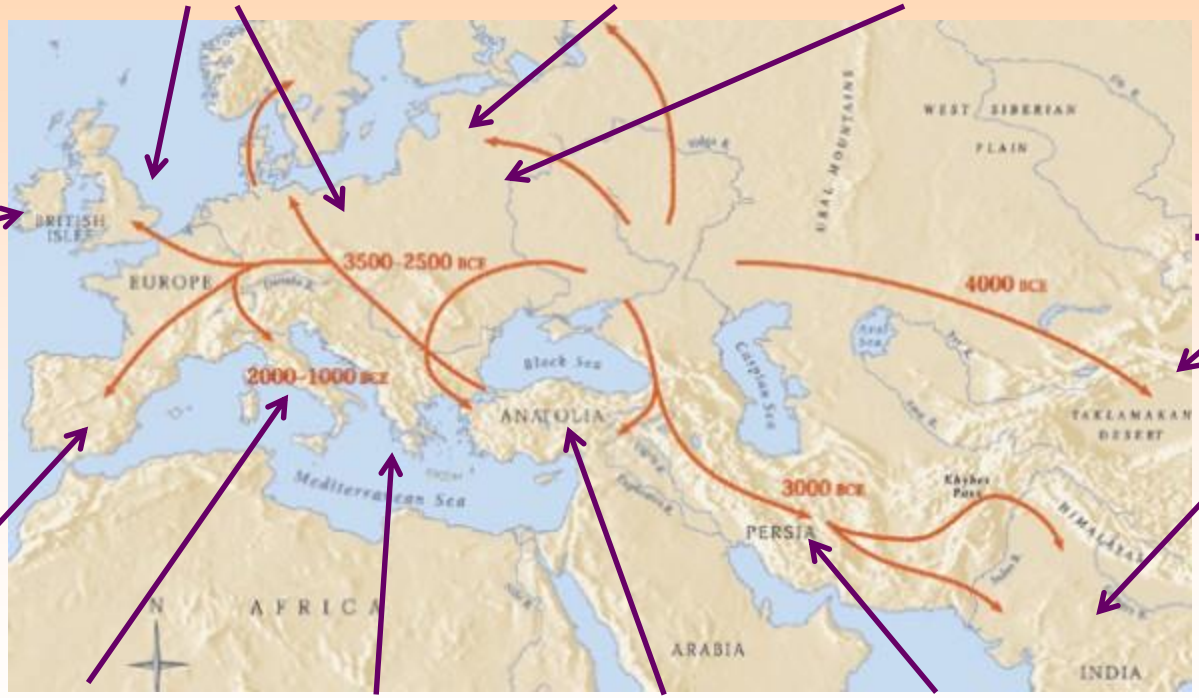
A bit of history

- Indo-European migration

Germanic
German, English, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Icelandic

Baltic
Latvian, Lithuanian

Slavic
Russian, Polish, Czech, etc.



Celtic
Gaelic
Irish
Welsh
Breton

Spanish
French
Catalan

Tocharian

Sanskrit
Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali

Latin
Italian

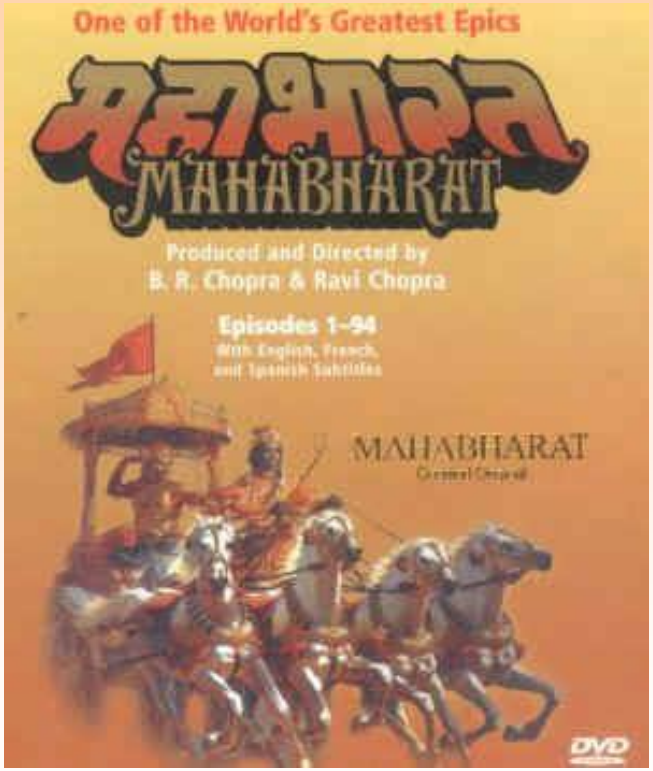
Greek

Hittite

Persian
Farsi, Kurdish, Pashto

A bit of history

- Hindu literature (written in Sanskrit)
  - Vedas
    - Rigveda, etc.
  - Upanishads
  - Puranas
  - Mahabharata
    - Bhagavad Gita
  - Ramayana



DVD for TV dramatization of the *Mahabharata*

A bit of history

- Muslim invasions (1200 ce)
  - Mughals (1600 ce)
  - Today's Hindu/Muslim conflict is a legacy of this period.

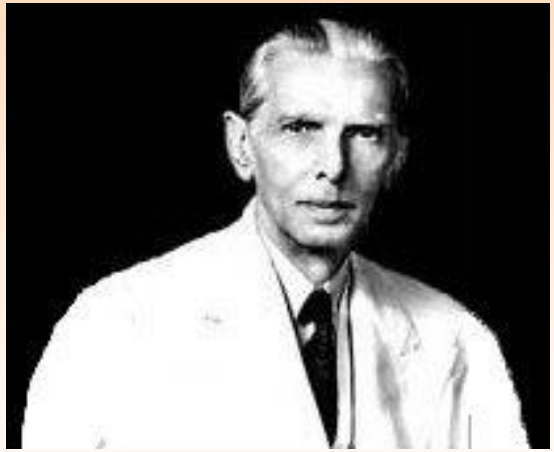
A bit of history

- British Raj (ca 1760)
- Independence (1947)
  - Mohandas Gandhi

  - Jawaharlal Nehru, 1st prime minister

A bit of history

- Creation of Pakistan (1947)
- Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah



- Creation of Bangladesh (1971).

A bit of history

- Partition of India set stage for today's tension.
  - Ethnic cleansing
  - 25 million migrated
  - Half a million died in "communal" violence.

South Asia today

A bit of history

- Congress Party Dynasty
  - Jawaharlal Nehru
  - Indira Gandhi (Nehru's daughter)
  - Rajiv Gandhi (Indira's son)
  - Sonia Gandhi (Rajiv's widow)

A bit of history

- Economic Reform
  - Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, 1991-1996.
  - Congress Party
  - 180º turn in the economy

A bit of history

- Rise of BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)
  - A. B. Vajpayee (BJP), 1998-2004.
    - Rajiv's secretary.
  - Hindu nationalism.
    - Corruption in Congress Party
    - Ayodhya incident.

A bit of history

- Return of Congress Party
  - Manmohan Singh, 2004-2014.
    - Intellectual with PhD (Oxford)
    - Oversaw economic reform under Narasimha Rao.

A bit of history

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 2014-
  - BJP
    - Business-friendly policies.
    - Criticized for handling of 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat.
    - Part of a trend toward "populist" strongmen?

Demographics

- Population (est. July 2020): 1.38 billion
- Annual growth rate (2020): 1.0%
- Will overtake China before 2030?

Economic Background

- Strong on intellectual capital.
  - Not expected to overtake China in GDP, but:
  - Strong in information technology and software.
    - Top-flight universities (e.g., IITs).
    - 6% admitted to Harvard, 7% to Stanford, 9% to MIT – 2% to IITs.

Economic Background

- Poverty remains a problem.
  - But the top 10% (= population of France) are affluent, sophisticated and exercise considerable purchasing power.

Economic Background

- The strength of the economy is the reservoir of highly trained workers.
  - Important high-tech centers are Bangalore and near Mumbai.

Training center at Electronics City, near Bangalore

Cultural Background

- India is a high-context society.
  - Rely on Indians for advice and assistance both in business and everyday life.

Cultural Background

- Indians are the world's consummate networkers.
  - Work through family and friends.

Cultural Background

- Some factors make it a little easier for foreigners.
  - The affluent class is highly globalized.
  - English spoken.
  - Rationality-based decisions.
  - Tradition of hospitality

Cultural Background

- Everyone has a place.
  - "Caste" is from Sanskrit for "color."
    - Traditional castes: *Brahmins* (priests), *Kshatriyas* (soldiers), *Vaisyas* (merchants and farmers), *Sudras* (laborers and servants), outcastes.
  - Some 4635 *jatis* (occupations, ethnic/linguistic groups, religious sects).
    - 134 *jatis* consist of *dalits* (untouchables)

Cultural Background

- Government quotas for “scheduled” castes & classes (less privileged).

Dalits (untouchables) in Varanasi

Cultural Background

- The Indian movie industry ("Bollywood"), perhaps the world's largest
  - Emphasizes importance of family.
  - Stories of family conflict and resolution.
  - Religious epics (e.g. from *Mahabharata*).

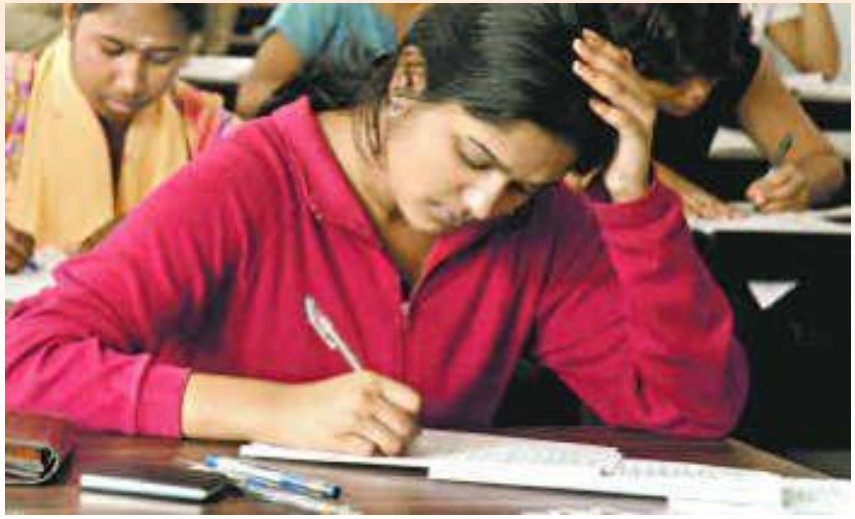
Cultural Background

- Underlying philosophy has practical consequences.
  - Mysticism: underlying, unified reality (Brahman).
  - Mystical ≠ supernatural
  - Yoga = mental training

The syllable Aum (Om) symbolizes Brahman

Cultural Background

- Cope by mental discipline.
- Rather than by engineering the environment.
  - Today, yoga = studying for the exam



Taking college entrance exam

Cultural Background

- High-end technology can be adapted to Indian society
  - Mobile phones, etc.
- But no Western-style organized environment
  - It takes time to get things done.

Cultural Background

- Indians are comfortable with travel and relocation.
  - They don't require a supportive or familiar external environment.

Religions in India

- Major religions:
  - Hindu (80%)
  - Muslim (13%)
  - Christian (2.3%)
  - Sikh (1.8%) - blend of Hindu & Muslim
  - Buddhist (0.8%) - exported to rest of Asia
  - Jains (0.4%) - pioneers in math & logic

Hindus

- **Hindu** faith defines the basic worldview of Indian culture.
  - Shaped by Vedic tradition.
  - It is adapted to all levels of understanding.

Swaminarayan Akshardham temple, New Delhi
World's largest Hindu temple (2005)

Hindus

- 330 million gods (according to scripture)
  - They are **avatars** of underlying reality.
  - Gods may be avatars of other gods.

Temple relief sculpture

Hindus

Vishnu, the Creator

Shiva, the Destroyer

Hindus

Ganesha, Overcomer of Obstacles

Rama, Hero of Ramayana
7th avatar of Vishnu

Hindus

Indra, War God

Krishna, the Playboy

Hindus

Taxi shrine
Sai Baba of Shirdi, Ganesha

Hindus

Shop shrine

Hindus

- Basic ceremony is the *puja*.
  - Takes place in temple or at home.
  - May involve *mantra* (recitation), *mandala* (symbols), music, flowers, fruits, offerings.

Puja thali (*puja* tray)

Hindus

India's largest pilgrimage, to Sabarimala Temple, Kerala State.
Attracts 5 crore (50 million) a year to worship Ayyappan.
Pilgrims wear bags containing ghee and other offerings

Hindus

- *Samsara* (wandering) is the endless cycle of death and rebirth (reincarnation).
  - First clearly appears in Upanishads.
  - We don't know why.
    - Also occurs in writings of Plato, among some native Americans, Trobriand Islanders, etc.

Hindus

- *Karma* = action
  - What goes around comes around.
  - Karma is **not** fate or luck.
  - Our destiny is a result of our actions.
    - In particular, our form in the next incarnation.

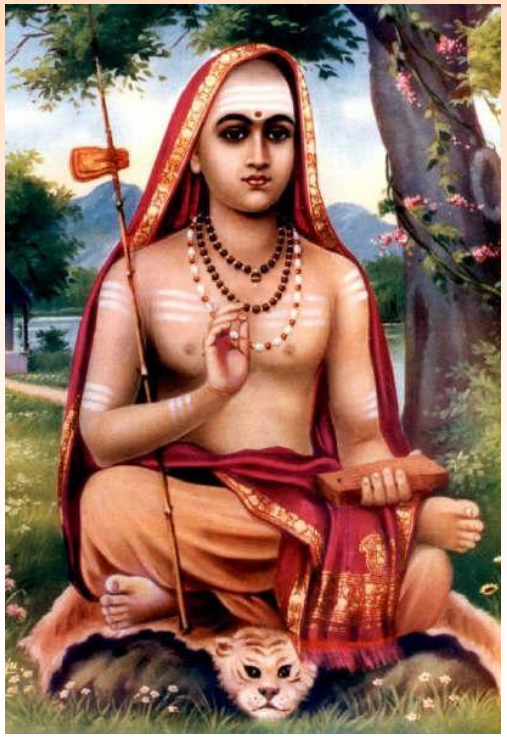
Hindus

- *Moksha* (liberation) through asceticism.
  - Practice persists today
  - The s*adhu* and *yogi*.

Sadhus

Hindus

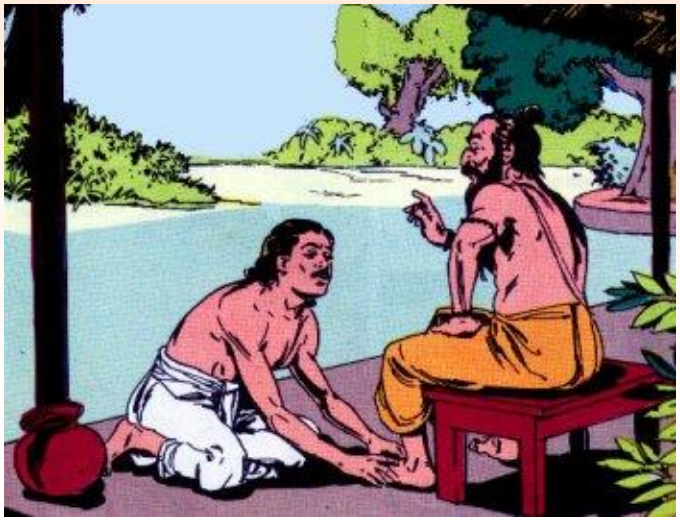
- Mysticism = underlying unity
  - What we see is *maya* (illusion).
    - Confusion is due to confused thought.
    - The reality underneath makes sense.
    - Reflected in Plato, modern science.



Adi Shankara
exponent of Vedanta

Hindus

- Brahman-Atman.
  - *Brahman--Tat Tvam Asi*
    - तत् त्वम् असि (“you are it.”)
- From dialog between Uddalaka and his son in Upanishads.



Jains

- **Jains** have profound respect for life.
  - May drink or breathe through filters, avoid farming.
  - Pioneers in formal logic and mathematics.
  - About 3 or 4 million in India.
  - Founded by Mahavira.

Jains

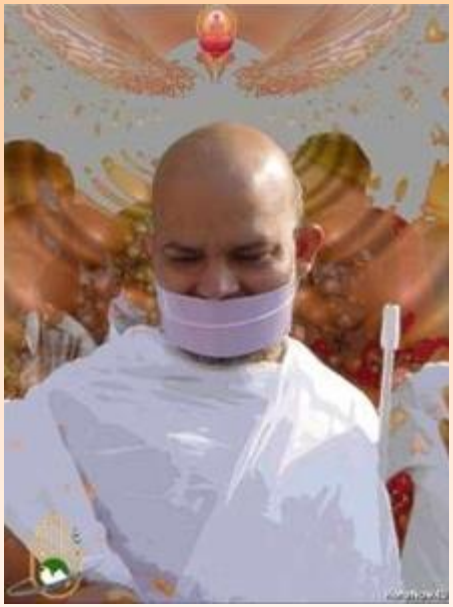
- Two lifestyles
  - Monastic.
    - Aiming for salvation after this life.
    - Strict observance
      - Extreme nonviolence and respect for life, truthfulness, no stealing, celibacy, no possessions (no clothes in Digambara order).

Jains

- Two lifestyles
  - Household.
    - More practical observance.
      - Nonviolence (pacifist, vegan), truthfulness, honest labor, chastity,

Jain family

Jains



Jain monks, Shvetambara Order

Jains

Sky clad monks at Jain festival in Kundalpur, 2006,
to celebrate 50 women becoming Jain nuns.
These nuns pulled out their own hair.

Jains

- Jain householders
  - Honest in business.
  - Non-exploitive occupations.
  - No farmers.
  - Pacifists.

Jains praying for peace

Jains

Jain meal

Strictly vegetarian

No roots, tubers (potatoes, turnips, squash, carrots, mushrooms, onions, garlic)

Perhaps no foods with many seeds (figs, pomegranates, tomatoes)

Jains

- Small in number, but large in influence.
  - Origin of vegetarianism in India.
  - Inspiration for Mohandas Gandhi's nonviolent resistance.

Sikhs

- **Sihks** strive to reconcile Hinduism and Islam.
  - Founded in 15-16th century by Guru Nanak in Punjab.
  - "God is neither Hindu nor Muslim."
  - Teachings of 10 gurus are collected in *Guru Granth Sahib.*

Sikhs

- Sikh men often wear turban, steel bracelet (*kara*). May carry small sword (*kirpan)*

Sikh family

Sikhs

Guru Granth Sahib inside a *gurdwara* (gateway to the guru)

Worshipers remove shoes and cover head

Sikhs

- Sikh men often adopt *Khalsa* (baptismal) name **Singh** (= lion)
- Women may use name **Kaur** (= princess)
- Monotheistic
- Reject caste and gender inequality
- Avoid alcohol (some avoid beef, pork, or all meat)

Manmohar Singh,
Previous Indian prime minister

Parsis

- **Zoroastrianism** is ancient religion of Persia.
  - Survives among a few **Parsis** in India.
  - Tata family is Parsi.
    - India's most prominent business family.
    - Reputation for social responsibility.

Tata Auto plant

Muslims

- **Muslims** came to north India as Moghul invaders, to south as traders.
  - About 13% of population (almost as many as in Pakistan).
  - Communal strife between Hindu and Muslim is a basic fact of life.

Pearl Mosque

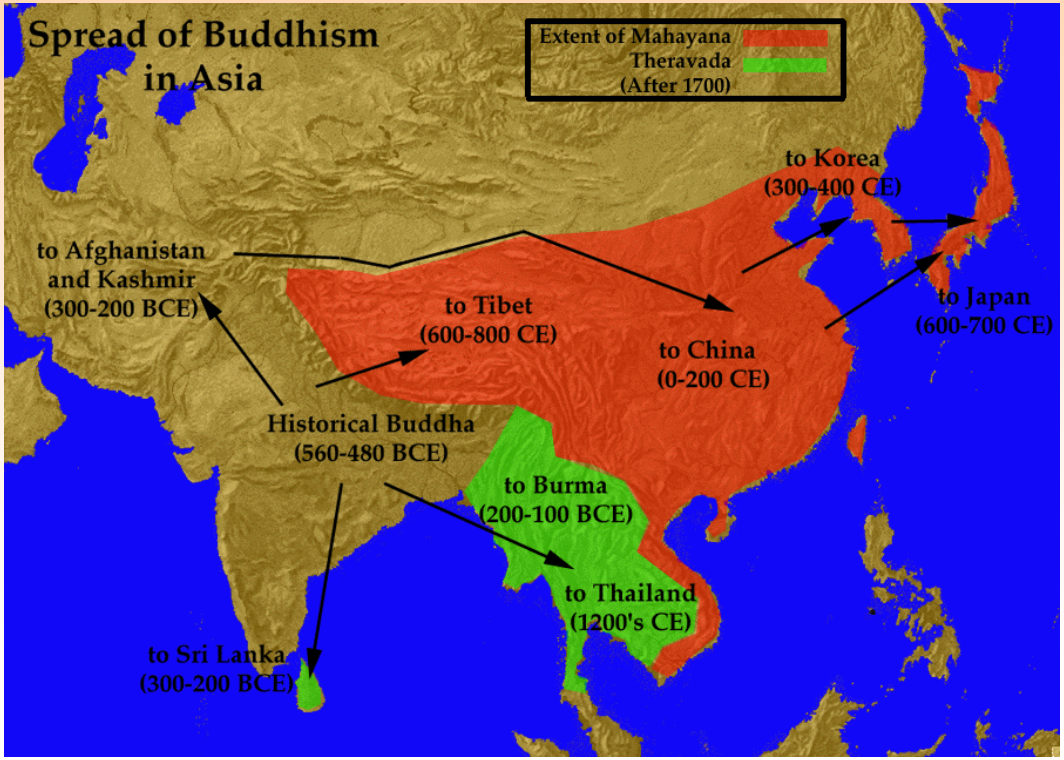
Christians

- **Christians** have lived in India since the earliest days of the faith.
  - 2-3% of population, 1/4 of Kerala, 1/3 of Goa.
  - Roman Catholic schools.

St. Thomas Basilica

Buddhists

- **Buddhism** is India's main contribution to world spirituality.
  - Rarely practiced in India today.
    - Except among followers of B. R. Ambedkar.



Cultural Background

- The society is highly polychronic.
  - Organizations move slowly.
  - Like watching a tree grow.
  - The key tools are *patience* and *persistence.*

Cultural Background

- Massive polychronic bureaucracy.
  - The country is run by network of family and other relationships.
  - To get something done, call on a family member or friend.
  - This provides stability.

Attire

- Men:
  - Business attire is often long-sleeved shirt and (perhaps) tie, but may vary.
  - More formal in government or high-level meetings.
- Women:
  - Dress in conservative Western manner.
- The weather can be HOT.

Respect

- Important to respect elders.
  - Many use *Namaste*
  - Or touch parent's feet.

Names

- Indian names can be long and complex.
  - People are often addressed by a nickname.
  - Titles may be prefixed to given name.
  - When in doubt about what name to use, just ask.

M. Vidyasagar
(short for Mathukumalli Vidyasagar)
Addressed as:
Dr. Vidyasagar,
Dr. Sagar, Sagar

Money

- Indian have their own terms for numbers.
  - *Lakh* is 100,000
  - *Crore* is 10,000,000.

Social life

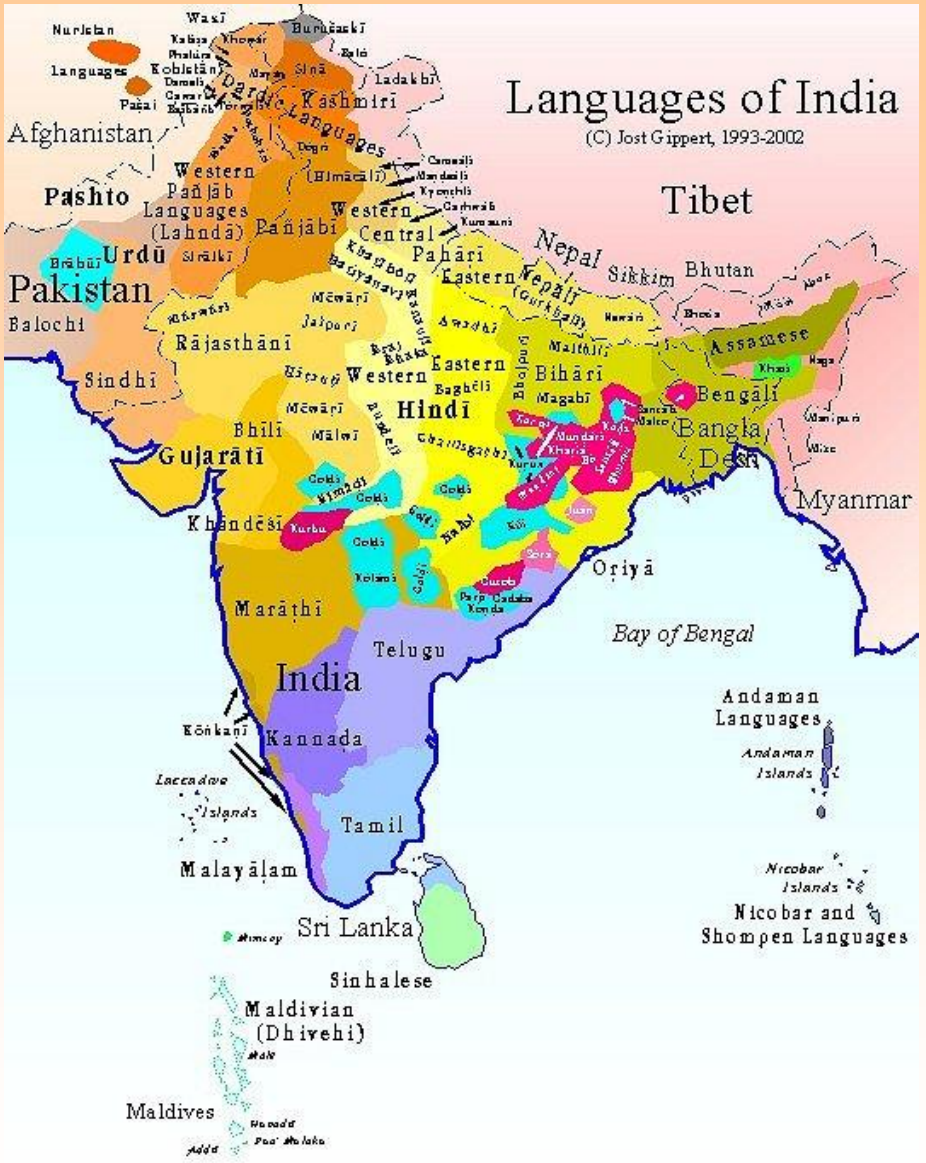
- If invited to a private home, arrive late.
  - Dinner tends to be last, maybe 10-11 pm.
  - It is unnecessary but acceptable to bring a small gift.
  - Servants and family members will keep offering you servings.

Social life

- Indians tend to be well-informed and conversant on many topics.
  - Enjoy it.
  - They may speak critically of their own country; don't join in.

Social life

- Editorial comment: South Indian vegetarian *thali* – don't miss it.

Language

- Indians speak English, "Hindish," and local languages.
  - 24 languages, each spoken by over 1 million people.