



FROM:

Hindupedia, the online Encyclopedia for Hinduism
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TO:

Instructional Quality Commission
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814

May 17, 2016

Re: Endorsement of letter from Scholars for People to IQC re. Representation of Ancient India and Hinduism in California textbooks

We welcome the decision of the IQC to review all proposed edits and revisit previous decisions. The review on March 24th gave undue weight to the "South Asia Faculty Group" and ignored the Oberoi Foundation's submissions, HEF submissions and almost all of the public commentary. There were many times when the members of the IQC and the publisher teams were unclear and gave undue deference to the scholars of the "South Asia Faculty Group" and ignored the scholars of the Oberoi Foundation and individual submissions.

We are writing this letter to support the submission by the 'Scholars for People' group dated 10 May 2016 (also available online at <http://scholarsforpeople.org/scholars-people-writes-cde/>). Their team of scholars includes more than 50 notable archaeologists and scholars of several other disciplines of research.¹ Coupled with the fact that their online petition has generated 25,000 signatures, it should be obvious that 'Scholars for People' enjoys an extremely broad and deep support from scholars, as well as from the parents and students – who are the final users of the contents of our textbooks.

We wish to reiterate the following:

1. The edits submitted by the South Asia Faculty Group (SAFG) make the untenable claim that their views represent scholarly consensus. In fact, consistent with the letter signed by other academicians (led by Professor Barbara McGraw) on 5 May 2016, we emphasize that *SAFG opinions are often archaic, and represent minority viewpoints.*

¹ For a current list of scholars supporting us, please visit <http://scholarsforpeople.org/full-list-supporters/>

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2. South Asia Faculty Group (SAFG) has a track record presenting their scholarship as the only scholarship any given topic and calling any opposing point of view as fringe or unsubstantiated. We provide one example to illustrate this behavior (a book could be written on the number of times they have done this within the current framework revision process). In their letter to the SBE dated May 17th, they argue that

There is no established connection between Hinduism and the Indus Civilization. The Rg Veda contains numerous mentions of horses and chariots but there is no conclusive material or fossil evidence for either at any Indus valley archeological site.

They ignore an enormous amount of research and contrary findings of which we present a small portion in Appendix 1.

3. There is a concerted effort by SAFG and supporting fringe activists (scholars or otherwise) to demonize the Indian American and Hindu American communities as ‘right-wing Hindus’ and the like, using distorted versions, illogical comparisons with US history and interpretations of their edits. *We urge the IQC officials to reject these politically motivated and hateful campaigns, and pay attention instead to what scholarship and the larger community has to say in this controversy.*

To summarize our academic position on the major points of controversy:

1. **‘Anything but India’**: The SAFG and their supporters argue that India did not exist prior to 1947 and therefore, all pre-1947 references to India should be replaced by ‘South Asia’ and numerous other alternatives. We wish to argue just the opposite – that **using India for all references pre-1947 emphasizes the shared cultural, historical and civilizational heritage of all communities and countries of the region**. However, for post 1947 era, it would be proper to use the names of individual countries of the region (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh etc.). In this regard, we point you to the letter in *The New York Times* by Dr. Nathan Glazer, Sociologist and Professor Emeritus, Harvard University, who suggests the same (See http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/13/opinion/call-it-india.html?_r=1) specifically with reference to the present controversy in California. This view was supported by other prominent news papers as well. We reproduce these letters in the Appendix 2 of the present note. We urge the IQC to not single out India for the discriminatory treatment inherent in SAFG edits, vis-à-vis the coverage of other ancient civilizations like China, Greece, Persia, Rome and so on. ***Erasing India to replace it with eight other names is like asking students to change their ethnic identity. We urge IQC to reject ALL edits by SAFG that replace India with ‘Islamic Empires’, ‘Islamic Civilization’, ‘South Asia’, ‘Indian Subcontinent’ etc.***
2. **‘Anything but Hinduism’**: The current Framework already singles out Hinduism for a negative treatment and an outsider perspective. All other faiths are treated primarily through an insider viewpoint, and much more positively and sympathetically. It seems that the guidelines for curriculum are being violated only while dealing with Hinduism. There are many positive things to learn from the Hindu heritage, and we fail to understand the emphasis in the current framework on caste. The SAFG and their supporters worsen this already inequitable situation by proposing only Hinduphobic, and ahistorical edits to the sections of the Framework dealing with Hinduism. The hearts of our sixth grade children are not the battlefield on which Hinduphobic activists should wage their divisive ideological

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battles. In particular, SAFG and their activist supporters must not bring in overseas political battles to American textbooks. We reject their assertion that it is improper to use the word ‘Hinduism’ for pre-modern periods. **We are urging IQC to reject all SAFG edits that denies the right of 1 billion Hindus in this world to call themselves the followers of ‘Hinduism.’**

3. **The Caste System- A Historically Accurate Narrative:** We wish to emphasize that the 6th grade textbooks, that discuss the varna and jati systems, deal with a period of 4000 BCE to 500 CE. Except for the last few centuries during this period, endogamy was still not a norm and boundaries between jatis and varnas were relatively fluid. Ironically, **adult** activists (most of whom are **not** members of the relevant communities, and are often non-Hindus), want to change the framework to narrate a singular tale of victimhood and oppression, forgetting the harmful impact it could have on their own children in their classrooms if they are told that they are merely ‘broken people,’ whose ancestors had no agency, no contributions, and no glorious past to look up to. The current text recognizes two great Sages from humble backgrounds, and there are flourishing communities in India and Pakistan even today tracing their lineage from Valmiki. And yet, **SAFG erases this glorious heritage** (Edit 2482) by claiming falsely that Vyasa and Valmiki were Brahmins. These two sages are the authors of the texts 1 billion Hindus consider sacred. They are the authors of the Vedas (and Srimad Bhagawatam) and the Ramayana respectively. These texts are studied daily by hundreds of millions of people. We want to point out to the IQC that Hinduism must not be singled out by the Framework for a negative treatment. The Bible too regards Gentiles or non-believers as inferior, and the Koran too contains negative attitudes against the infidels. If the textbooks do not emphasize these facts and the ensuing social and religious discrimination in traditional Christian and Islamic societies based on religion, then why is Hinduism being singled out? The Bible and the Koran permit slavery and the latter has also been used to allow enslavement of infidels as war booty. It is therefore discriminatory to implicate Hinduism for caste inequities if Islam and Christianity are not being implicated for slavery and slave trade. We believe that elementary and middle school textbooks are not the right place to demonize the faiths in which children are raised. However, at the same time, we are aware that in later times (especially after 1000 CE), the varna-jati systems became more rigid and birth became the main criterion for membership. **Therefore, rather than accepting the SAFG edits, we recommend accepting Edit 2510 from the Uberoi Foundation and then add a comment: “In later times, the varna and jati systems became more rigid and hierarchical, and birth became the main criterion for membership.”** We also urge you to accept several edits by the Uberoi Foundation (eg. Edit 2515) in addition to 2510.

Edit #2511 and #2532 from SAFG is also factually incorrect. The first states that caste is mainly determined by birth and the second compares it to any unchanging social structure like slavery. One counter example (of many that could be given) is that the founder of the International Society of Krishan Consciousness, His Holiness Srila Prabhupada provided an age-old, sanctified process through which members of any caste (properly Varna & Jati) could become a Brahmin. This process has been passed down from Guru to disciple through an unbroken lineage that is thousands of years old. Thousands of members of this movement have become Brahmins (with all the rights and limitations) regardless of the Varna and Jati they were born in including people from Christian backgrounds in the US & Europe. Many more are doing so every day.

We have attached a brief primer on Caste, Varna and Jati in Appendix 3.

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4. **Status of Women:** Patriarchy is the norm in all religions and in all ancient cultures. Once again, Hinduism is singled out among all religions, and is perceived through a negative, outsider and sociological lens to emphasize the unequal rights that women held in ancient Hindu societies. On the other hand, SAFG and IQC erase the glorious contributions that Queens, women sages, saints and scholars have made to the Indian civilization over the ages. We advocate that the IQC reject the Hinduphobic edits proposed by SAFG and accept instead accept several edits from HEF and Uberoi Foundation (e.g. Edit 2547, 2734) to rectify the discriminatory situation even in the current text of the Framework. On this point, we are in complete agreement with the letter signed by 40 Professors of Social Sciences and Religion, dated 05 May 2016.

Edit #2545 from the SAFG states that women participated in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations, though not as equals [in a negative way]. This is also factually incorrect. One example (and by no means the only one) is from the International Society of Krishna Consciousness where many women serve as priests and officiates for religious ceremonies and celebrations in our temple. In fact, the Rig Veda is the only scripture in the world where divine truths were revealed to women and those truths find a prominent position in the text itself. There are more than 30 such women authors of the Rig Veda (ref. "Women as Rishikas in the Vedas", Hindupedia the online Encyclopedia of Hinduism, [http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Women as Rishikas in the Vedas](http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Women_as_Rishikas_in_the_Vedas) reproduced in Appendix 4)

5. **Erasing History:** Several SAFG edits are untenable and unacceptable to informed historians and archaeologists. In particular, their erasure of the Sarasvati River is at best, a minority viewpoint and a revisionist one at that. SAFG supporters are unfortunately presenting the reinstatement of the role of the Sarasvati River as an attempt to erase the heritage of Dravidian language speaking Indians etc. In our view, these allegations are plain demagoguery and are not informed by the current and best scholarly consensus or data from archaeology and other disciplines of research. In fact, numerous edits of HEF and the Uberoi Foundation have highlighted the flowering of literature in the Tamil, Telugu and Kannada languages, but all of these have been inexplicably rejected by the IQC.

We are requesting the IQC to take a closer look at our reasonable and academically supported analyses, the widespread community support that we enjoy, and ignore divisive politics and activism of fringe groups that rely on prevarications and false propaganda for their own survival. We owe to our children, to our communities and to scholarship to reject divisive and hate-filled rhetoric in lieu of good and empathetic scholarship. SAFG and the so called Activists advocating divisive agendas, narratives of victimhood, and Hinduphobia do not represent the groups of marginalized Indian communities as they claim to. They are trying to wage their hate-filled ideological battles against the idea of India, and against the faith of Hindu Americans using the façade of academic scholarship, and inclusivism!

We wish to remind you of the testimonies of dozens of Indian American and Hindu American school children who experienced bullying at schools due to their heritage. Recently, the Hindu American Foundation has also released a survey that objectively presents the magnitude of this problem.² We urge the IQC and CDE to remember its own guidelines regarding how different cultures and religions are presented in the textbooks –

² <http://www.hafsite.org/whats-new/haf-releases-bullying-report>

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with equal respect, with empathy and to instill in students a pride in their identity. SAFG and the Activist edits and letters go against these fundamental guidelines, and also violate the legally mandated SOLs (Standards of Learning). Therefore, IQC/CDE must reject the interventions of SAFG and its Activist supporters and instead accept edits from the Uberoi Foundation, the Hindu Education Foundation, Scholars for People, and the Social Science and Religion Faculty to develop a Framework that is truly academically rigorous and represents scholarly consensus, rather than the fringe viewpoints of activists.

Best Regards,

The Hindupedia Team:

- Krishna Maheshwari, founder
- Shankara Bharadwaj Kandavelli, co-founder, resident scholar
- Vishal Agarwal, resident scholar
- Dr. Namyata Pathak, resident scholar
- Niraj Mohanka, resident scholar
- Vishal Mehta, editor
- Anant Saraswat, attorney

The India Heritage Research Foundation (which among other things, published the Encyclopedia of Hinduism):

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Alex Hankey
Distinguished Professor of Yoga
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APPENDIX 1: Horses

Lack of Horse Bones does not mean that horses were not present:

ZARINS [1976:185-192] provides abundant evidence to the effect that the domestic horse was known in Iran, Levant, Caucasus and Turkey in early 3rd millennium BCE, although it is not attested in osteological remains in Mesopotamia as such. He reviews all the claims of horse remains from sites excavated in Mesopotamia and shows that there is not conclusive evidence of the presence of horse bones in even one of them. However, the arrival of horse into Mesopotamia via Zagros Mountains in Iran and via Eastern Turkey is attested from artistic and cuneiform evidence [pp.199].

Some scholars point to horse remains in Pirak around 1700 BCE as proof for arrival of Aryans. However, the excavator of Pirak himself does not attribute the arrival of horse at the site with any accompanying cultural revolution. He states [JARRIGE 1997:16-17] –

“The sudden arrival of horse riders in the Kachi/Bolan region, evidenced by the recovery of horse bones, terracotta figurines of horses and those of horse riders from Pirak, could have been the clue to our understanding of the Pirak culture. Horsemen coming from the steppe region of Central Asia would have brought an entirely new form of culture and economy. But the horse riders of Pirak did nothing to fit the traditional model attributed to the invaders from the steppes. This probably explains why, in spite of the rather spectacular figurines showing them and their horses, they have never attracted much attention among the specialists. Unaware of what would become of some of the prevailing archaeological models used by those studying these regions, they forgot to bring with them ceramics offering some similarities with the Andronovo pottery, and instead of disrupting the agricultural economy in favour of a pastoral way of life, they in fact benefited by an agricultural system much more developed than it had ever been the case before, with the addition of new summer crops such as rice, sorghum, and millet none of them with a steppe origin. They lived at Pirak in a substantial settlement divided into blocks of mud brick buildings with a carefully built canal belonging to Period IA on its Western side...”

Horse in Prehistoric India

In this section, we have compiled extracts from archaeological reports which claim to have unearthed horse remains before 1200 BCE. This cut-off date is chosen as it is often reported as the date of the oldest Rigvedic hymns in Indological literature.

The extracts are divided into the following 4 sections for convenience –

- Pre – Early Harappan i.e., before 3100 BCE
- Early Harappan i.e., 3100 BCE – 2400 BCE
- Mature Harappan i.e., 2400 BCE to 1900 BCE

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- Late Harappan i.e., 1900 BCE to 1500 BCE
- Early Vedic i.e., 1500 BCE to 1000 BCE

There is considerable controversy surrounding the actual identification of some bones, or their correct antiquity. A brief idea of the associated controversies is also included in the relevant subsections.

In addition to horse bones, it is claimed that terracotta figurines and other representations of horse are also found at several sites dated before 1200 BCE. These claims are also mentioned below.

Pre – Early Harappan i.e., before 3100 BCE

Mahagara

In the description of Neolithic sites (5-7th millennia BCE) of Mahagara and Koldihawa in the eastern Gangetic basin (see reference at the end), SHARIF and THAPAR [1992:151] state -

"The subsistence economy of these people was based upon both hunting and farming, as attested by the occurrence of both wild and domesticated cattle, sheep, goat and horse, and rice."

The same dates for the presence of domesticated horse at these sites are given by THAPAR [1984] and G. R. SHARMA *et al* [1980]. GHOSH [1985:4] also confirms-

"In India, the earliest evidence for the domesticated horse occurs in c. 4500 B.C. at Bagor."

Even a Marxist scholar D. Mandal [1997:168] acknowledges the domestication of the horse by Neolithic inhabitants of Mahagara. He says:

"A large number of animal bones have been recovered from Mahagara and Koldihwa. About 85% of the specimens are semi-fossilized. The species of animals have been identified by Alur as cattle (*Bos indicus* Bovidae) including sheep/goat, horse, deer, wild boar, tortoise, fish and birds....

....a number of bones of cattle, sheep/goat, horse, deer, wild boar, tortoise, fish and birds have been obtained. The animals were procured largely by close herding and partly by hunting. Besides cattle, sheep/goat and horse which the Neolithic people domesticated, they also hunted wild animals for their food supply. Selective hunting is clearly indicated by the fact that among the bones of wild fauna mainly two species, i.e., deer and boar are represented."

The above evidence might be dismissed on two grounds – that the bones excavated actually belonged to the onager. Or that they were dated inaccurately and belong to a much later date in reality.

There is indeed considerable controversy over the validity of the C-14 dates obtained from the sites. The question of the correctness of dates becomes quite relevant, because the discovery of horse bones in humid Gangetic plains in such an ancient period is highly anomalous, and unexpected. CHAKRABARTI [1981-82:113] also accepts this high chronology of the Mahagara site.

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The presence of the onager so far east in India, in such a hot and humid climate would be rather surprising. Nevertheless, GHOSH [1985:308] does confirm that onager is attested in this region. He lists equus onager khur as one of the species whose remains were unearthed at Seoti and Belan valleys. Clearly then, the Onager extended right into middle Gangetic plains.

Early Harappan i.e., 3100 – 2400 BCE:

Rana Ghundai

A pre-Harappan site where horse remains were unearthed is Rana Ghundai. In recent years however, the scholarly consensus seems to be that the remains are those of the onager, and not the true horse. AZZAROLI [1985:24] summarizes this consensus -

“An old opinion, according to which the horse came from India, is untenable for biogeographical reasons (see Hancar 1956). The idea was based on few isolated teeth from Rana Ghundai in the Indus valley dated to about 3000 B. C. They presumably belong to hemiones (hemiones were actually recorded from the same level at Rana Ghundai) and, in spite of some optimistic statements to the contrary, it is sometimes impossible to distinguish horses from hemiones on isolated teeth alone.”

PIGGOTT [1950: 123] went a step further to propose that the findings, from level RG1, indicated that nomadic, horse-riding herdsmen used the site as a camping ground.

Periano Ghundai

PIGGOTT [1950: 128] notes that a horse figurine was unearthed from this site, at levels corresponding to RG III phase (RG = Rana Ghundai). This level is early Harappan. Piggott's account is derived from FAIRSERVIS, who in turn relied on the excavation report by Sir Aurel STEIN [1929]. A look at this original report indicates that Stein does identify the coarse terracotta figurine as that of horse, the picture of this object being given as fig. 6 on Plate VI of the report, and reproduced by Fairservis as well.

At the most, what one can reasonably conclude from the picture is that it represents an equid, because it has a long curved neck with a ridge at the top which possibly represents the mane. It is unclear if the figurine represents a horse or if it represents an onager, which doubtlessly lived in that region in ancient times.

In general however, one does not find figurines of wild animals at the site, only those of domestic animals, and so chances that it is a horse are quite high. In historic times at least, the adjacent region of Waziristan was famous for its indigenous breeds of horses [STEIN 1929: 29].

Kunal

BISHT et al [2000:49] reveal –

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“The pre-Harappan pottery of Kunal is notable for its fanciful shapes and designs. The pots are in different shades of red and buff, beautifully painted with black and white colours. Painted designs are mainly geometrical but a few sherds with animal and bird motifs such as bull, deer, horse, peacock, crane, etc., and natural designs like peepal and other leaves, flowers, etc., are also available...”

Mature Harappan i.e., 2400 – 1900 BCE

Mohenjo-daro

The first major report on the excavations in Mohenjo-daro was by Sir John MARSHALL [1931]. In volume two of this report, chapter XXXI comprising pp. 649-673 of volume II concerns faunal remains unearthed from the site. The chapter is authored by Colonel R. B. Seymour Sewell and B. S. Guha. The authors do note that no large bone escaped the vagaries of time intact, and only their fragments had survived. They were in a very poor state of preservation, with their organic matter all gone, owing to the chemical composition of the soil. In general, their condition resembled the faunal remains unearthed at Anau, and studied by Duerst [MARSHALL 1931:649].

The remains comprised of a large fragment of the right half of the mandible, containing the premolar and molar teeth, and a second fragment containing the same teeth of the left side. They were found at a depth of 1 feet and 10 inches from area DM 293 [ibid:653]. Sewell duly notes that the dimensions of the remains correspond exactly with those of a modern, country bred horse, in the collection of the Zoological Survey of India. He compares the dimensions of these teeth with those of the Anau horse and of the country bred horse and concludes [pp. 653-654] –

“...there is a considerable degree of similarity between these various examples and it is probable that the Anau horse, the Mohenj-daro horse, and the example of *Equus Caballus* of the Zoological Survey of India are all of the type of the Indian “country-bred”, a small breed of horse, the Anau horse being slightly smaller than the others.”

The prominent reference to the Anau ‘horse’ in reports by MARSHALL and in the report on Harappa (see below) owes to the fact that it was perhaps the only published detailed report on ancient faunal remains from this part of the world.

Reproduced below is the table prepared by Col. Sewell [ibid:654]:

		Mohenjo Daro horse		Anau Horse		Countrybred Horse	
		R	L	R	L	R	L
		mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm
Premolar 2	Length	34.5	32.5	32.0	-	33.5	32.0

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Premolar 3	Breadth	18.0	20.0	15.0	-	19.0	19.0
	Length	28.0	29.0	27.0	26.0	27.0	26.0
Premolar 4	Breadth	21.0	21.0	17.5	20.0	22.0	21.0
	Length	27.0	27.0	-	25.0	27.0	26.0
Molar 1	Breadth	21.0	21.0	-	14.0	21.5	22.0
	Length	25.0	25.0	-	23.0	25.0	24.5
Molar 2	Breadth	18.5	19.0	-	16.0	19.5	19.5
	Length	25.0	25.0	-	24.0	26.0	25.0
Molar 3	Breadth	17.5	18.0	-	14.0	19.0	19.0
	Length	30.5	30.5	-	-	31.5	31.5
	Breadth	16.0	15.5	-	-	15.5	16.0

Col. Sewell [MARSHALL 1931:667-668] notes that although excavations were carried to the depth of 17 feet, animal remains decrease progressively as we go down depth. This is attributed to the presence of high concentrations of saltpeter in the soil of the region, which tends to corrode the bones very aggressively. Since the horse remains are found only at the outermost levels, at a depth of barely 2 feet, the authors conclude that the horse was domesticated in Mohenjo-daro “only at a late date”.

Plate CLXIII of Volume III of the report contains a picture of the right jaw found at the site.

NATH [1963a:4] clearly states that the horse remains from Mohenjo-daro are from the strata corresponding to later period. He dates the city within the limits 2500 – 1500 BCE, which as we know, is incorrect. By the later periods therefore, we should envisage a date closer to 1900 BCE.

The lack of stratigraphic records from Mohenjo-daro is problematic, no doubt, but the situation is not so hopeless. FRANKE-VOGT [1993:90] argues, for instance –

“The lack of stratigraphic records from Mohenjo-Daro is the major problem for a study of change through time. Although a stratified sequence cannot be substituted by artificial analytical units, the comparison of deliberately defined inventories seems the only means for a contemporary reevaluation of the old data. Despite the fact that the results cannot be expected to have definitive character, recent studies concerned with this subject that such an attempt is worthwhile...”

So we must rest our judgment at this time.

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Harappa

Animal remains were collected by numerous archaeologists from different areas of Harappa in excavations conducted over several seasons between the years 1925-1931. An examination of these remains was conducted by Bani PRASHAD [1936]. The author laments that he was unable to obtain any detailed plans indicating the exact areas where these bones were collected respectively [PARSHAD 1936:1]. Further, as he was able to examine the bones only after they had been preserved with shellac, he was unable to determine their relative antiquity. However, their appearance and condition made him conclude that they were belonged to the same period as the bones from Mohenjo-daro that were studied by Col. R. B. Seymour Sewell [ibid:2].

In terms their appearance, they were extremely fragmentary and resembled those of the collections made at Anau and Mohenjo-Daro [ibid:2-3]. The faunal collection from Anu was described by DUERST [1908]. PRASHAD [p. 4] makes a significant statement in his report, while comparing the faunal remains obtained from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa–

“Several of the species of the two collections are identical, while some like the elephant, the horse, the shrew, a number of species of stags and deer are not represented in the collection from Harappa. On the other hand, the monitor lizard, the cat, the jackal, the wolf, the domestic ass, the rhinoceros, and the goat, remains of which have been found at Harappa, were not represented in the Mohenjo-daro collection.”

Thus, PRASHAD did not find any horse bones in the collections from Harappa that he had examined.

Coming to the Ass, PRASHAD [pp. 28-29] does note that in none of the skulls of the equids unearthed were the cranial or complete facial parts preserved. Limb bones were obtained, but were very fragmentary and incomplete and hence their account was excluded. Only a teeth could be studied by him in detail, and he includes the dimensions of the same in a table in the report. With the material available, PRASHAD was unable to study the equid remains in any scientific manner, but concluded nevertheless that they were those of the common domestic Indian ass because their dimensions compared favorably with the tooth dimensions of assess published by a Russian specialist [pp. 29-30].

Bhola Nath cannot be accused of being a Hindutva fanatic. In fact, he seemed to subscribe to the paradigms of violent Aryan invasions. For instance, he mentions the find of horse remains at Harappa in the following words [NATH 1963a:5] –

“Recently, Nath (1962) has reported on the remains of the horse (*Equus Caballus L.*) and the Indian Elephant (*Elephas maximus L.*) from the prehistoric site of Harappa, found in the unworked collections from the Zoological Survey of India. This is the first record of the true horse and the Indian elephant from the region. The horse remains were obtained from Area H (Harappa) at the end of the Harappa civilization when alien invaders overran this prehistoric city and destroyed it (Piggott 1950, p. 230).”

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Nath's reference to Piggott's work as an authority is clear testimony to the fact that he subscribed to the Aryan invasion paradigms. Recent archaeological excavations and interpretations however have rejected the invasion hypothesis, and even the 'Cemetery H' people are now regarded as indigenous by Rafique Mughal and Kenoyer. Therefore, it would be more accurate to qualify Nath's statement to the effect that residents of late period in Harappa were perhaps acquainted with the horse.

MEADOW [1991] does not report any bones of the onager or of the horse from recent excavations at Harappa, carried out in the years 1986-1990.

Kanewal

Horse bones have also been reported from the Harappan site of Kanewal in Gujarat [SHAH 1980: 74].

Kuntasi

The excavations at Kuntasi yielded almost 150,000 bone fragments [THOMAS et al 1996: 297]. These archaeologists also note that [ibid: 298-300]

"Horse and donkey were reported from the Mature and Late Harappan periods. The presence of these beasts of burden probably accelerated the mobility of the people and helped the inhabitants in trade as well as in transport.....However, the bones of horse and donkey were very few as compared to those of wild ass."

The presence of horse bones at some Harappan sites, and their absence at others is explained in the report [ibid: 305] in the following words-

"...the representation of horse and ass in the Harappan sites, probably indicates that some of these sites were industrial and/or trade centers, as these animals can accelerate the mobility of the people. On the other hand, at least a few of the other contemporary sites where horse has not been represented were primarily agro-pastoral settlements catering to the food requirements of the industrial/commercial centers."

In certain cases, bones that were earlier analyzed to be that of a horse, were later found to belong to the onager. However, the opposite has also happened – bones earlier thought to belong to the onager have now been analyzed as those of a horse. This has happened in the case of equid bones unearthed from Kuntasi, as reported in the newspaper 'The Indian Express' (December 10, 1995) –

Title: Aryan civilisation may become 'bone' of contention

"An innocuous animal bone, found at the Harappan site of Kuntasi, seven km from the Gulf of Kutch, may destroy the firmly held beliefs about the Harappan and Aryan civilisations, according to archeologists here.

The bone in contention, which was earlier believed to be that of the 'onagar' or wild ass, commonly found in the area, has turned out to be that of a domesticated horse after tests conducted by the archeozoologists at the Deccan College, Pune. It was discovered during excavations carried out between 1978 and 1990. The archeozoologists of the College, who assisted the State's Department of Archeology in the

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digging, confirmed after the tests that the bone, though similar in structure, belonged to the domesticated horse family, the 'equs caballus'.

So far it was believed that the Aryans, who allegedly destroyed the Harappan civilization, brought the horses to this continent and that they did not exist during the Harappan civilization.

The discovery of a horse's remains at the excavation site in Malia taluka may very well question the identity of the Aryans, according to Dr A M Chitalwala, Superintending Archeologist, Western region, based at Rajkot. "We may have to ask whether Aryans, whose exact identity is yet to be proved despite excavations in central Asia. could have been Harappans themselves - a hypothesis unexplored so far."

The radio carbon' dates of the bones put the period at 2300 BC. Similar bones found at Surkotada in Rapar district, now analysed, have also been proven to be that of a domesticated horse. Though a deeper study of the findings would now have to be carried out to examine the new hypothesis, Dr Chitalwala says, "We don't have to believe in the imports theory any more". The reference is to the earlier theories, first moulded by John Marshall after the excavations of Mohen-jo-Daro in the 1920's who gave the idea that a sudden outburst of urbanisation in the Sind like that existed in West Asia earlier, must have come from outside."

The presence of horse bones at Kuntasi had been accepted by the noted archaeologist M. K. DHAVALIKAR [1995:116-117] even before the publication of the excavation report for the site -

"It must be stated that a thorough study of faunal remains from Kuntasi has been made by Dr. P. K. Thomas, Y. Matsushima and Arti Deshpande of Deccan College. Every bit of animal bone from the excavation was collected for study. Over 90 000 bone fragments were recovered from the excavation. Among them are cattle (65%), buffalo (5%), sheep/goat (11%), pig (wild and domestic 37%), nilgai, antelope and gazelle (8%), sambar and chital (1.20%), aquatic and avian fauna (5%). There are a few bones of langur and horse, domestic and wild as well.....Horse and donkey bones which are very few, belong to three different species: Equus caballus, Equus asinus and Equus hemionus. They come from period I and II both and corroborate the evidence from Surkotda..."

Malvan

ALLCHIN and JOSHI [1995:95] report the presence of horse remains at Malvan, a Harappan site in Saurashtra –

"Specimen no. 63 and 25 (pl. XIX; fig. 22c) are the bodies of the lumbar vertebrae of horse. Their transverse processes are cut off at the base. The point of identification is the thickness of this base which is thin in case of cattle. "The medial part of the sixth process is thick, the lateral part thinner narrow and curved forward. The medial part of the fifth is also somewhat thickened horse." This has provided a clue to the identification of the presence of horse on the location. The character present is a diagnostic point. Even amongst the bones only 2 segments are identified to be that of the horse. The reason for the find of so few segments is a question, still to be answered."

[The para has a footnote at the bottom of the page, point to the fact that while most Indian villages do not have a single horse, many have just 1 or two horses. The horse has always been a scarce animal in India.]

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The presence of terracotta horse figurines in IVC sites is acknowledged by THAPAR and MUGHAL [1994:259]

“Among the animal figurines, which again were hand modeled, the humped bull predominates, other animals represented being the buffalo, elephant, dog, sheep, rhinoceros, pig, monkey, turtle and the horse.”

Shikarpur

The site, locally known as Valamiya Timbo, is located in the Bhachau taluka of the Kutch district of Gujarat. It was excavated in 1987-1990 by the Gujarat State Department of Archaeology, under the aegis of M. H. Raval.

At this site, 9 bones of the true horse constituting 0.13% of the faunal remains, have been unearthed from Mature Harappan levels. These are in addition to an additional 9 bones of the onager obtained from the same site and the same levels [THOMAS et al 1995]. The author(s) state the following with regard to this discovery [pp.39] –

“In recent years, the presence of the horse in the Harappan context has been a matter of controversy (Gupta 1991; Parpola 1991; Sharma 1993; Joglekar in press) because, although it has been identified from a large number of Harappan sites such as Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Rupar, Lothal, Kuntasi, Surkotda and Malvan (Thomas and Joglekar 1994), other contemporary sites – Rangpur, Khanpur, Kalibangan, Nageshwar, Prabhas Patan – provide no evidence of horse bones. We are of the opinion that sites with horse bones were perhaps industrial and/or trade centers, where the horse would have enhanced the mobility of the Harappans. On the other hand, those sites where horse bones have not been reported were perhaps agro-pastoral settlements catering to the food requirements of the trade centers (Thomas et al, in press).”

Rangapur

NATH [1963a:6] mentions that remains of domestic ass (*equus asinus L.*) have been found at this site in Gujarat. The horse however, is absent.

Late Harappan i.e., 1900 BCE to 1500 BCE

Pirak

Attempts have been made to trace the entry path of horses into India archaeologically. In such schemes, the discovery of two skeletons of horses in the Gandharan Grave culture, and the attestation of the horse at Pirak at levels dated to around 1700 BCE is taken to denote the recent entry of the Vedic Aryans. Subsequent attestation of the horse at the site of Bhagawanpura (where the Harappan and PGW cultures overlap) and at PGW sites like Hastinapur is taken as a proof of the ‘Vedic’ nature of these inhabitations.

The presence of horse remains at Pirak, together with terracotta images of horse-riders from levels 1700 BCE, is taken as the oldest definite attestation of the horse in the Indian subcontinent. Those who believe in AMT/AIT

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uses this evidence to date the arrival of Aryans into India, and also corroborate their hypothesis that the Indus Valley Culture had no knowledge of horses. According to these scholars, the possession of horses by the Aryans, and their effective use in warfare enabled them to overcome the inhabitants of the Indus valley, triggering a way of 'Aryanization' that eventually swept 80% of the Indian subcontinent.

However, the excavator himself does not accord such an important role to the horse in this hypothetical process of Aryanization. He clearly states [JARRIGE 1997:16-17] –

“The sudden arrival of horse riders in the Kachi/Bolan region, evidenced by the recovery of horse bones, terracotta figurines of horses and those of horse riders from Pirak, could have been the clue to our understanding of the Pirak culture. Horsemen coming from the steppe region of Central Asia would have brought an entirely new form of culture and economy. But the horse riders of Pirak did nothing to fit the traditional model attributed to the invaders from the steppes. This probably explains why, in spite of the rather spectacular figurines showing them and their horses, they have never attracted much attention among the specialists. Unaware of what would become of some of the prevailing archaeological models used by those studying these regions, they forgot to bring with them ceramics offering some similarities with the Andronovo pottery, and instead of disrupting the agricultural economy in favour of a pastoral way of life, they in fact benefited by an agricultural system much more developed than it had ever been the case before, with the addition of new summer crops such as rice, sorghum, and millet none of them with a steppe origin. They lived at Pirak in a substantial settlement divided into blocks of mud brick buildings with a carefully built canal belonging to Period IA on its Western side...”

Not only were the horsemen from Central Asia unable to effect any significant change in the environs of Pirak itself, they were actually assimilated in the local culture before long. In fact, one need not even attribute the new cultural artifacts seen at Pirak at this time as an indication of some new influence from Central Asia. JARRIGE [ibid:30] would rather interpret these new features as a resurgence of pre-Harappan elements subsequent to the demise of the Mature Harappan Civilization. This is a phenomenon that is replicated across dozens of IVC sites from Baluchistan to Haryana – local cultural patterns which had earlier been subsumed in the Mature Harappan Cultural traditions are now seen to resurge at this time in several sites.

Gandharan Grave Culture

With regard to the horse skeletons unearthed in the Gandharan Grave culture, AZZAROLI [1985:94] reveals that only two horse skeletons have been found in the Gandhara grave burials, and even these are supposed to have been riding horses. The fact that these horses were used for riding is evident from the bit related wear in their lower teeth. In contrast, the Rigveda does not give any indication that the horses were used for riding – all accounts referring to their role in pulling chariots alone.

The excavation report by STACUL [1987] takes an unabashedly Aryan invasionist position. In discussing the methodology that the author used for interpreting his data, he remarks –

“The earliest periods, which are recorded mainly on the basis of industries, take us back to the horizons of the late prehistory, since the sources of information in this respect are mostly archaeological. The later period, on the other hand, which underwent the influence of an Indus post-urban culture and which links up to the earliest Vedic sources, has allowed a far more

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articulated study, with the application of a research method which may be defined as “protohistoric”

In this respect, the appearance of the name *Suvastu* among the Indian rivers mentioned in the *Rigveda* (VIII, 19, 37), represents a new important source of information in addition to the archaeological data. *Suvastu* means ‘having good dwelling’, a name which very probably refers not merely to the natural landscape but also to the works of man.

The scholar’s problem of course is collocating this situation in the chronological and cultural context, determined by the typology of the finds and the radiometric datings. In this respect, generally speaking, it seems significant to us that the walled houses at the ground level, the cultivation of different plants and metallurgy too arose in the Swat Valley roughly at the same time. The earliest evidence of the horse, to which the Vedic sources refer to at length, dates back to the same period, as does the pottery with symbolic scenes, whose meaning may shed some light on the same sources of the earliest Indian tradition.” [ibid: 23]

The fact that Stacul takes the Aryan invasion theory post IVC as a ‘given’ right in the beginning of his report should be sufficient to dispel the use of the same as a ‘proof’ of the AIT. The peepal leaf is the most common floral subject on potsherds [STACUL 1987: 103] found in the Swat Valley. So, the argument that IVC is Dravidian because of the Peepul leaf motif should be extended to the Gandhara grave culture as well!

STACUL [ibid: 108-109] sees horses on some potsherds –

“Two scenes of aggression or conflict between animals are of special interest. We refer firstly to the representation of a “horse” attacked by a sort of bird of prey or fantastic animal (fig. 46h; pl. XLIVa).

In this respect, it is worthy of note that various references to the sacrifice of the horse (*asvamedha*) occur in the earliest sources of the Indian tradition (*Rigveda*, I, 162, 163). According to some scholars, among the Rigvedic Indo-Aryans ‘the institution of horse-sacrifice appears to have put into shade the bull-complex’...

As is known, there is no evidence of painted or modeled “horses” in the sub-continent before the mid 2nd millennium. Consequently the “horse” from Bir-kot-ghwandai deserves special attention. Moreover, the discovery of bone fragments belonging to the *Equus caballus* in the corresponding layers of the same site (see Appendix A), supports the hypothesis that the animal depicted really was a horse.it seems significant that, in addition to the above-mentioned painted figure, the earliest “horsemen” figurines made of terracotta in association with terracotta “horses” were found at Pirak (Kachi Plain) in layers dated from the mid 2nd millennium....”

Stacul (pp. 123-124) makes much out of the horse bones, and links them with the arrival of Indo-Aryans. In doing so, he mentions the views of Parpola, Burrow, Ghurye and also cites older works of Allchins, Mortimer Wheeler, Stuart Piggot – all of which are brazenly invasionist. Therefore, it is difficult to understand how Indologists can use the Stacul’s report to prove the Aryan Invasion Theory, when he actually uses this theory to retrofit the

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available data, in the most general manner. Can 2 or 3 potsherds, and some 175 horse bones in a remote, isolated and an outlying region such as the Swat Valley, explain the Aryanization of 80% of the Indian subcontinent? It should be noted that of all that of the three sites from which faunal remains have been tabulated by the author (p. 134), one yielded no horse bone, the second (Leobanr – 3) yielded 5 bones and the third, i.e., Bir-kot-ghwandai yielded 158 bones. So it is clear that their spatial distribution across the Swat Valley is very erratic and uneven.

The general paucity of horse bones in the overall archaeological record of India is acknowledged even by Romila THAPAR [2000:1130-1131]. However, she uses the available data to buttress the argument 'No Horse at Harappa' rather unjustifiably-

“The use of the horse and of bovine in ritual, especially the ritual of sacrifice, is not identical. The sacrifice of a bovine carries less status than that of a horse. In the *dana-stuti* hymns of the Rgveda in which the poets list the wealth they request from their patrons, the number of horses is far fewer than of cattle⁵⁷. Excavated animal bones from Hastinapur in the first millennium BC when the use of the horse was more frequent, indicate that horse bones make up only a very small percentage of the bones, the largest amount being those of the *bos indicus*, the humped cattle⁵⁸. The horse being more valuable, its association was with more spectacular sacrifices such as the *Asvamedha*. The eating of cattle flesh was limited to occasions when the animal had been sacrificed or on special occasions. It was not eaten routinely. This is a common feature among cattle pastoralists who thus preserve quality stock⁵⁹. The horse sacrifice is mentioned in the Vedas and the number of horses said to have been sacrificed are sometimes excessive. Exaggerated figures may have been intended to suggest power and wealth and need not be taken literally. There is no evidence of the sacrifice of a horse from Harappan sites and even what is interpreted by some as evidence of the sacrifice of an animal is extremely limited.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Romila Thapar, 'Dana and Dakṣiṇa and Forms of Exchange', in *Ancient Social History: Some Interpretations*, New Delhi, 1978, 105-121

⁵⁸ B. B. Lal, 'Excavations at Hastinapur...', *Ancient India*, 1954 and 1955, 10 and 11, pp. 109ff.

⁵⁹ E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 82-3. B. Lincoln, *Priests, Warriors, Cattle*, Berkeley, 1982, 43ff.

⁶⁰ S. R. Rao, Lothal, 218. B. K. Thapar, 'Kalibangan', *Expedition*, Winter, 1975, pp. 19-32

Lothal

NATH [1963a:6] reports that remains of the domestic horse have been found at later Harappan levels at Lothal. Surprisingly, Nath dates the site at 2000-1200 BC.

Rupar

A brief, secondary report on the excavations at Rupar was published by DUTTA [1984]. The author of the report is not the excavator of the site (who was Y. D. Sharma) and was prompted to publish his work because Sharma did not publish a detailed excavation report for several decades. Dutta had to base his own reports on whatever

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material he had at his own disposal – surface findings, and examinations of burials in situ, and clearly acknowledges the limitations of his endeavor. He notes that bones of the horse are not reported from Rupar before the layers dated to 600-200 B.C.E.

Nath gives 2000-900 BCE as the time frame of this site and states that remains of the domestic ass and the true horse are both found in the late Harappan periods [NATH 1963a: 5]

Early Vedic i.e., 1500 BCE to 1000 BCE

Bhagawanpura

No terracotta figures of horse have been found at Bhagawanpura [JOSHI et al 1993:127-129]. Horse bones were encountered in the levels associated with Sub-Period IB. [ibid:20] This level is dated between 1400 – 1000 B.C. [ibid: 21].

No horse bones were found in the Late Harappan period (1700-1300 B.C.) while they constituted a mere 1.5% of the faunal remains for period IB which represents PGW period overlapping with Late Harappan period. [ibid:144]

The bones of horse unearthed at Bhagawanpura were very few and were very distinctive ones – metatarsals and phalanges. Even JOSHI et al [ibid:147] explain this as the relative paucity of horses in India, so much so that many villages do not report even a single bone belonging to this animal. The report on faunal remains at Bhagawanpura was written by A. K. Sharma. The total number of bones unearthed was 202 and 1.5% of this number is a mere 3 bones, which are shown in plate LIA in the excavation report. No detailed information on the size and weight of these bones is given in the report.

Horse in Historic India – Archaeological and Literary Evidence

NATH [1963a] has summarized the faunal record of 17 pre-historic and historic sites in India and Pakistan. If the horse were introduced into India by the Aryans, it would follow naturally that all the historic sites should show up horse remains, and none of the pre-historic sites should show up any horse remains at all. The archaeological record however is not so straightforward.

Prehistoric IVC sites like Mohenjodaro (late period), Harappa (late period), Rupar (late period), Lothal (late Harappan period), Hastinapur (1100 BC to 3rd cent. CE), Brahmagiri in Karnataka (Early Stone Age ~1000 BCE), Atranjikhhera in Uttar Pradesh have yielded bones of the domestic ass and the true horse.

On the other hand, pre-Historic and/or historic sites like Nashik (1500-500 BCE), Nagda in Madhya Pradesh (1500 – 200BCE), Sarnath (12th cent. CE), Arikamedu in Tamil Nadu (20-50 CE), Brahmagiri (Megalithic to Historic i.e., 200 BCE to 300 CE), Nagajunakonda in Andhra Pradesh (pre 50 CE), have not turned up any remains of the domestic ass or the true horse.

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Hastinapur

NATH [1963a:8-9] reports horse bones recovered from PGW levels. He states, without further elaboration, that the horse played an important role in the everyday lives of the people of that town. Strangely, the same scholars who accept Nath's identification of faunal remains at Hastinapur, dismiss his identification of the horse remains at other sites. The reasons for this rejection are not stated by the scholars and the sole guiding ideology in such cases seems to be –“How can we have horse bones so early in the other sites when the Aryans had not arrived yet. Nath's identifications for these other sites must therefore be rejected”.

Brahmagiri

The site of Brahmagiri [NATH 1963b] in the Chitradurga district of Karnataka on the other hand, has pre-historic as well as historic levels. Both these levels obviously post-date the supposed arrival of Aryans and their horses into India. The Levels are

Stone Age: 1000 BCE to 200 BCE

Megalithic Culture: 200 BCE to 50 CE

Andhra Culture: 50 AD to 3rd cent. AD

The Stone Age culture is further subdivided into 'Earlier Stone Age' and the 'Late Stone Age'. Significantly, NATH [ibid, p. 66, 68], a single bone has been identified as that of a wild ass in the 'Earlier Stone Age' culture. No subsequent period shows any bones of the horse or the ass (domestic or wild).

Jaugada (400 BCE to 200 CE) in Orissa

Domestic ass has been found at the earliest levels but the horse is absent.

Taxila in Pakistan (50 BCE to 2nd cent. CE), both the true horse and the domestic ass are attested.

Maski in Karnataka (1000 BCE to 100 CE), the domestic ass is attested but the horse is absent.

Nagajunakonda

The Historical period (2nd cent. CE to 1200 CE) has yielded bones of the true horse and the domestic ass at Nagajunakonda, in the early historic period. Very significantly, the remains of a sacrificed pony have been found at the Asvamedha site in that area. The Iksavaku kings had performed the Asvamedha rite at Nagajunakonda [NATH 1963a:10]. Ujjain (750 BCE to 1400 CE) has yielded bones of both the domestic ass and the true horse. The exact archaeological strata from which these were recovered are however unknown.

Sonpur

The authors of the excavation report say that the site can be dated to 1000 BC and therefore belongs to the epic-Pauranic age [SINHA and VERMA 1977:4].

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Horse terracotta figurines are reported by the authors for period III [ibid:10-11], which lasted from 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E. [ibid:13].

From period II (650 – 200 B.C.E.), a red terracotta neck of a horse is reported [ibid:119]. According to the authors, the hem of the horse is indicated by incised oblique lines. However, when the photograph of the object (Plate xxxii, no. 7) is seen, one cannot even distinguish a mane clearly. The object is so fragmentary that it is impossible to make out which animal is actually represented.

In addition, the mouth of a horse, of red terracotta has also been unearthed from levels corresponding to Period III [ibid:120]. From the image of this object is shown in Plate xxxiv, no. 10, it is quite impossible to make out if it represents a horse or some other animal.

The skepticism shown by me above is not meant to deny the knowledge of the horse to the residents of Sonpur. Rather, I would like to argue that if we start applying the same stringent criteria for detecting the presence of horses to Sonpur, as we apply to IVC sites, then we would have to conclude that Sonpur (and many other sites of the same or even later periods) did not have horses.

Horse Breeding/Training Manuals – Hittite and Indian

If horses were introduced into India in an already domesticated condition by the Aryan migrants, one would presume that horse rearing traditions in India should be derived from those prevalent in Central Asia. For instance, Paul Kekai Manansala points out (post dt. 21 January 01 on the Indian Civilization List) the following recommendations of these Sanskrit texts that indicate a more native Indian milieu for the horse-rearing practices –

- Horses are kept with monkeys as this is said to prevent diseases in the former
- Horses are cremated with monkey fat
- Horses are linked to the Peepal tree
- Horse trainers and authors of the manuals are called Sages.

Several texts in Sanskrit deal with the art and science of horse rearing- Ashvashastra of Nakula, It is observed clearly that the recommendations of these texts are quite different from the practices in Central Asia. Admittedly, these texts are undateable and appear to be quite recent. But nevertheless, the antiquity of an Indian tradition of horse rearing can be demonstrated very easily from the extant literature.

AKURGAL [1994:219] points out-

“All the Mitanni sovereigns bear Indian names, showing that the Hurrians were dominated by an aristocracy of Indo-Aryan origins. The members of this noble lineage, apparently a very small minority, were charioteers and horsemen. They were called the Marianni and it was undoubtedly through them that the breaking-in of horses and the use of war chariots spread to western Asia.”

There have been four positions taken on the Mittani that we are aware of:

1) They were the whole group of Indo-Ar's en route to India (a possibility not presently considered by most scholars)

2) They were a group of Indo-Ar's who peeled off from the main body en route to India (generally accepted by most scholars)

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3) they were the I-A's who reached India and somehow decided to retrace their steps back (suggested by Sten Konow a century ago)

4) They are Indo-Aryans indigenous to the subcontinent who left for greener pastures bringing their gods with them (as held by the Indig. Aryan school).

Some evidence has been put forward to support the latter case. S.S. Misra has analyzed the language and found linguistic features common to MIA (Middle Indo-Aryan) and even NIA. For example, he notes dissimilar plosives have been assimilated (sapta>satta); anaptyxis (Indra>Indara); Initial v>b (virya>birya) and other features which I won't burden the list with. Kenneth Norman noted the same thing (I will dig out these refs, if required). A German archaeologist, Brentjes, has also suggested the Mittani came from India based on the peacock motif in Mittani art which can only be Indian, and on the absence of any central Asian (Andronovo etc.) motifs therein.

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Appendix 2

The Opinion Pages | LETTER

Call It India

MAY 12, 2016

To the Editor:

Re “[Debate Erupts in California Over How Curriculum Should Portray India](#)” (news article, May 6):

In the debate over how to portray ancient India, and the use of the term “India,” current scholars of India, in particular political scientists, have intervened, preferring to use the term “South Asia,” which is also used at Harvard as the name for the academic unit that deals with the Indian subcontinent.

Even those preferring this clumsy alternative do not shy away from the term “Indian” for the subcontinent — even your headline writer cannot evade the term “India.”

For ancient India, as known to the classical Greeks and to Alexander, and to Greek and Roman geographers, to Portuguese adventurers, to 17th- and 18th-century British, French and Dutch merchants, to British imperialists, what other term, or some equivalent, would serve?

They could not conceive of it as “South Asia.” They knew it as a distinctive civilization, stretching from the Indus to the Ganges, from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean (and should we change that name, too?), with its own ancient languages, and classic texts, and religions descended from them.

“South Asia” is in vogue to avoid offending Pakistan and Bangladesh, but for history before 1947 no other term will serve.

NATHAN GLAZER

Cambridge, Mass.

The writer, the sociologist, is professor emeritus at Harvard.

A version of this letter appears in print on May 13, 2016, on page A26 of the New York edition with the headline: Call It India. [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

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Against South Asia

- Why India matters

Mukul Kesavan



The controversy about renaming the history of the subcontinent in school syllabuses in California features some Indian intellectuals, both resident and non-resident, leading the charge against the academic denaturing of the civilization/ beloved-country/ subcontinent that defines them. This is understandable. People can't feel nostalgic about 'South Asia' any more than *filmi* heroes can fall in love with generic females. They need a name they can put a face to and South Asia feels like a well-intentioned void, an area of darkness east of Iran, south of China and west of all those countries that gave authoritarian capitalism a good name.

I'm not South Asian. The problem isn't geography. I'm located in South Asia in the same way as citizens of the United States are North American and Brazil's people are South American, but notice how this air

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of spatial detachment is disrupted by a competing term, Latin America. 'Latin' here does a lot of work: it gathers Portuguese Brazil and its Spanish neighbours into root language unity and it helps detach Mexico from its gringo neighbours and assimilate it to the Hispanic south. History matters and geography isn't destiny. So is 'South Asia', a latitudinal conspiracy hatched by the Western academy to leach the Indian subcontinent of its Indian-ness.

Why would the Western academy do this and what might this Indian-ness be?

The benign answer to the first question is political correctness. Given that nearly all the nation states that occupy the Indian subcontinent aren't called India it must seem unreasonable to brand their history as Indian. This mightn't have been a problem if India's Constituent Assembly hadn't insisted on two-naming the new republic. If Bharat hadn't also been India, the nation states that succeeded the dead *raj* might have been okay with being seen as part of a collective unity historically called India. But thanks to Nehru's political genius, the republic, in one nominal stroke, staked its claim to being the true inheritor of British India which left Pakistan auditioning for the role of wild-eyed breakaway. Once Nehru & Bros decided that they were the sole proprietors of the idea of India, South Asia as an academic term of art became inevitable.

The malign answer to the same question might be that 'South Asia' is Britain's revenge for being flung out of India. The first Centre for South Asian Studies was established in Cambridge in 1964. It promoted the study of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Burma. Not satisfied with partitioning the *Indian* subcontinent politically, the Brits were now vivisectioning its history and culture under this neutral-seeming, but sinister, rubric. Can it be mere coincidence that the year the Centre was founded was also the year that Nehru died? We shall never know.

For these speculations to be worthwhile, we need a working definition of the Indian-ness that underwrites the anti-South Asia argument. Nathan Glazer, the Harvard sociologist, argued in a recent letter to the *New York Times* that 'South Asia' was a bad term that pandered to Pakistani and Bangladeshi sensibilities. His solution was to study the subcontinent as India before 1947 and, by implication, as South Asia thereafter. India, for him, was the only sensible name for the sub-continent before 1947 because foreigners, ancient, medieval and early modern saw the subcontinent as a distinctive civilization with "...its own ancient languages, and classic texts, and religions descended from them" and called it India. By Glazer's definition, India is defined by Sanskrit, Pali and Tamil, by the Vedas, the Puranas and the epics, by Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. You can see why Bangladeshis and Pakistanis and assorted desi Muslims might feel a little left out.

Not that they should. Indic intellectuals used to be keen to assure the subcontinent's Muslims (and Christians) that their bedrock Hindu-ness was unaltered by their current beliefs which were, in the end, epiphenomenal, a kind of false consciousness that kept them from recognizing their true selves. Ardent Hindu nationalists even dreamt of a future federation which would undo Partition and restore an *akhand Bharat*. There is much less enthusiasm for that transcendent union now, partly because it's a crackpot idea given the mutual loathing that characterizes bilateral relations between all South Asian countries but mainly because the subcontinent is home now to a billion Hindus and half a billion Muslims and prudent Hindu nationalists don't want any more Muslims than absolutely necessary crowding into their very particular idea of India.

So Glazer's suggestion seems like a plan; it allows patriotic intellectuals to appropriate the

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subcontinent's past expansively from the Hindu (!) Kush to the hereafter and then, after 1947, to strategically contract out the densely Muslim parts of undivided India to South Asia. It also has the merit of being an intellectually consistent position. Since their argument for 'India' (as opposed to 'South Asia') rests on the essential Hindu-ness of the subcontinent, they could argue that the systematic purging of Hindus from Pakistan and Bangladesh and the violent Islamification of these countries has deracinated their populations and rendered them alien, incapable of communing with their original Hindu selves.

But there is a problem with Glazer's prescription. A *longue durée* view of India like his can't be cut down to fit one event in the subcontinent's history, however traumatic, unless Partition and the rise of nation states makes the civilizational history by which he sets such store, irrelevant.

I have an alternative suggestion. I want the history of India's past to be called Indian history because it sounds better than South Asian history and also because books with titles like Mortimer Wheeler's *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan* make me want to giggle. Style and plausibility and usage ought to be factored into the business of naming. After 1947, I want the story of the republic to continue to be told as the history of India. I don't want it to be assimilated into the history of South Asia. I don't mind how Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka choose to name themselves for disciplinary purposes - South Asia is as good a name as any - so long as they don't expect Indian academics to identify with that self-description.

The reason Indian studies should remain distinct has nothing to do with the ineffable Hindu-ness of the subcontinent. The idea of India, to coin a phrase, is a modern idea that rhetorically invokes the diversity of the subcontinent as an argument for political pluralism. Its progenitor is the Indian National Congress of blessed colonial memory. Its monument is the Indian Constitution. This is a claim to Indian exceptionalism because India's neighbours were either built on the wretched idea that nations are owned by religious communities or later succumbed to it.

It is a claim that can only be sustained if India remains a pluralist and secular democracy. Ironically for the Hindu Americans incensed by the disciplinary erasure of India in California's school system, if the BJP were to become the republic's natural party of government, India would become a properly South Asian country: a Hindu *rashtra* ideologically indistinguishable from this neighbouring Islamic state or that adjacent Buddhist republic. The one thing that our neighbours share (apart from borders with us) is majoritarianism. Should they become pluralist republics, there could be no objection to South Asia. Till that secular kingdom comes, however, India matters.

A version of this letter appears in print on May 16, 2016.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160516/jsp/opinion/story_85817.jsp#.VzvolOTqcfh

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US scholars decry plan to change India to South Asia in books

[PTI](#)

May 17, 2016 | UPDATED 22:35 IST

From Lalit K Jha

Washington, May 17 (PTI) A group of 41 prominent scholars, including several Indian-Americans from across the US have written to the California Department of Education opposing proposals to change "India" to "South Asia" in the state text books.

Signed by distinguished academics such as Barbara McGraw of Saint Marys College of California, Diana Eck of Harvard University and Gerald James Larson of Indiana University, the letter called for a "representation of India and Hinduism that is consistent with the manner in which other cultures and religions are portrayed, and one which avoids Eurocentric biases".

In the letter dated May 5, this group of academicians under the name Social Science and Religion Faculty Group (SSRFG) termed the recommendations to use "South Asia" in place of ancient India "anachronistic" and "not historical".

A copy of the letter accompanied a statement.

The group argued that the term "South Asia" is a post World War II geopolitical designation to account for the breakup of British India.

The academics pointed out that textbook narrative "refers to all other ancient geographical areas by their ancestral terms China, Japan, Egypt, Greece, etc". Only "India" is recommended for a change".

Earlier this year, the California Department of Educations (CDE) Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) had proposed to accept several changes to the textbook framework suggested by another group of academics named South Asia Faculty Group (SAFG), the statement said.

The suggestions included replacing references to India before 1947 with "South Asia" and "Hinduism" with "ancient Indian religions.

The group was led by academics Kamala Visweswaran of University of California, San Diego, and Robert Goldman of University of California, Berkeley, it added.

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In its seven-page letter, SSRFG questioned these edits and said that SAFGs views did not constitute scholarly consensus as claimed by the latter.

The academics of SSRFG while welcoming "robust academic debate about the politics of India" in the academia cautioned that the debate is not "appropriately addressed in a K-12 textbook Framework narrative in California".

Calling into question the suggestion to replace the word "Hinduism" with "ancient Indian religions" the letter said "if anyone were to argue that Hinduism did not exist then as what we today refer to as "Hinduism", that would be an unfounded erasure of history on the grounds of semantics," said a statement issued on behalf of SSRFG.

Meanwhile, Harvard scholar Nathan Glazer has also called for using the term "India" for ancient Indian civilisation. MORE PTI LKJ UZM

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/us-scholars-decry-plan-to-change-india-to-south-asia-in-books/1/670722.html>

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"They knew it as a distinctive civilisation, stretching from the Indus to the Ganges, from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean (and should we change that name, too?), with its own ancient languages, and classic texts, and religions descended from them," Glazer wrote.

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The California Department of Education (CDE)'s Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) will be hearing the matter on May 19th where it would finalise its framework narrative for its school textbooks.

The narrative would be submitted to the State Board of Education (SBE) for its approval later this year, the press statement said.

<http://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/us-scholars-decry-plan-to-change-india-to-south-asia-in-books/940395>

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Appendix 3

Brief primer on Caste,
Varna & Jati

What is caste?

- one of the hereditary social classes in Hinduism that **restrict the occupation** of their members and their **association with the members of other castes**
- a division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation, or **Counter example: Vaishya's and Sudra's intermingle to run commercial enterprises**
- a system of rigid social stratification, endogamy, and social barriers sanctioned by custom, law, or religion
- a specialized form (as the worker of an ant or bee) of a polymorphic social insect that carries out a particular function in the colony

Merriam-Webster dictionary

What is caste?

- one of the hereditary social classes in Hinduism that restrict the occupation of their members and their association with the members of other castes
- a **division of society** based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, **profession, occupation,** or race
- a system of rigid social stratification characterized by hereditary status, endogamy, and social barriers
- a specialized form (as the worker or an ant or bee) of a polymorphic social insect that carries out a particular function in the colony

Doesn't that happen in the US? Why would this be a defining factor for Hinduism?

Merriam-Webster dictionary

What is caste?

- Counter examples:
 - Shivaji, the Maratha King
 - K. R. Narayanan 10th president of India
 - Natha Ram, Chairman of Steelmont Pvt Ltd (\$150M 2011 revenue)

profession, occupation

- a **system of rigid social stratification** characterized by hereditary status, endogamy, and social barriers sanctioned by custom, law, or religion
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Merriam-Webster dictionary

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Merriam-Webster dictionary



What is caste?

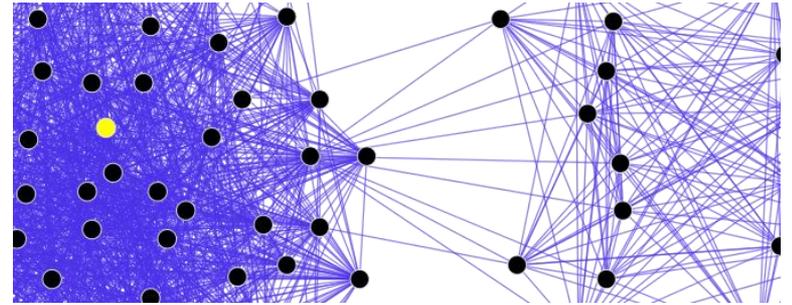
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- a system of rigid social stratification characterized by hereditary status, endogamy, and social barriers sanctioned by custom, law, or religion
- a specialized form (as the worker of an ant or bee) of a polymorphic social insect that carries out a particular function in the colony

Caste is a term created by a confused person that amalgamated several different things and is now used to brow beat Hindus ...but also now in common usage to refer to Varna & Jati

General principles

We are discussing social structure

Social structure is the patterned social arrangements in **society** that are both **emergent** from and **determinant** of the **actions of the individuals**



What is social mobility?

Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, households, or other categories of people within or between **social strata** in a society.
(*Wealth / income*)

3 capital types enable social mobility

- 1. Economic capital** includes economic resources such as cash, credit, and other material assets
- 2. Social capital** includes resources one achieves based on group membership, networks of influence, relationships and support from others
- 3. Cultural capital** is any advantage a person has that gives them a higher status in society, such as education, skills, or any other form of knowledge

Today's (Western) society

Goal

Macro goal: Allocate scarce resources

Individual goal: Satisfy unlimited wants

How: Continuously jockey for greater positions of wealth

Today's (Western) society

Goal

Macro goal: Allocate scarce resources

Individual goal: Satisfy unlimited wants

How: Continuously jockey for greater positions of wealth

Consequences

- 99% vs the 1%
- Constant competition for economic success and looking over shoulder
- Social isolation resulting from success
- Allocation of scarce economic resources to the exclusion of non-economic resources

...as compared to Vedic society

Goal

Macro goal: Moksha for everyone while meeting physical needs

Individual goal: Self-improvement to attain moksha

How: Path varies person-to-person but requires social harmony and sufficient resources to meet needs

...as compared to Vedic society

Goal

Macro goal: Moksha for everyone while meeting physical needs

Individual goal: Self-improvement to attain moksha

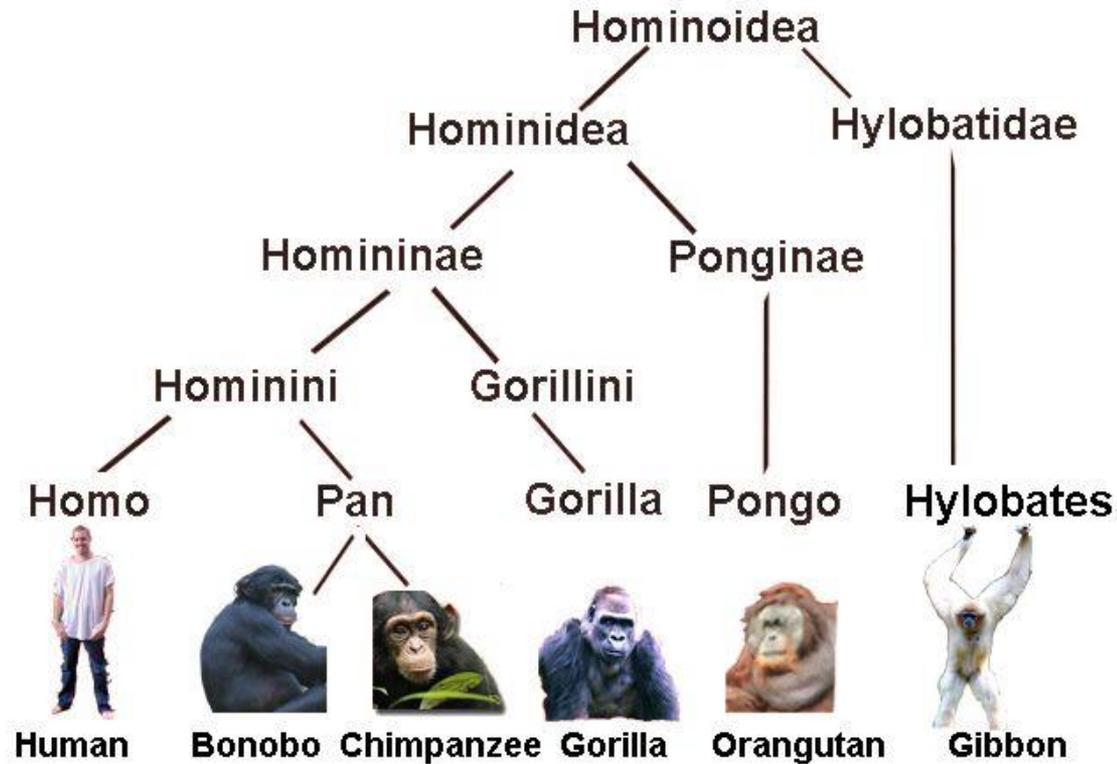
How: Path varies person-to-person but requires social harmony and sufficient resources to meet needs

Consequences

- Self-imposed limitation of “desires”
- Optimized allocation of available resources
- Competition vs self
- More social groups yet increased social cohesion
- Value of social connections as a way to achieve moksha

Varna

What is Varna?



Varna is a statement of how society is arranged

Sub-division: Brahmana

↗ High → Medium ↘ Low

Occupation



Mobility

Capital
Economic:
Social:
Cultural:



Expectations
Lifestyle:
Social service:
Knowledge:
Power:
Purity:

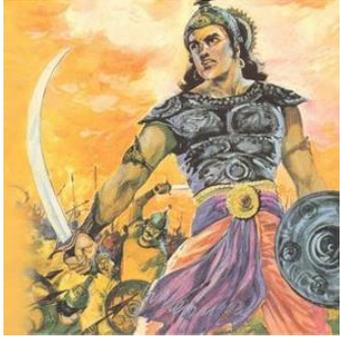


Those whose purpose is to learn, share and preserve knowledge

Sub-division: Kshatriya

↗ High → Medium ↘ Low

Occupation



We're from the Government...
And we're here to help...

Mobility

Capital

Economic:



Social:



Cultural:



Expectations

Lifestyle:

role dep.

Social service:



Knowledge:



Power:



Purity:



Those whose
function is to
rule, administer
and protect
society

Sub-division: Vaisya

↗ High → Medium ↘ Low

Occupation



Mobility

Capital
Economic:
Social:
Cultural:



Expectations
Lifestyle:
Social service:
Knowledge:
Power:
Purity:

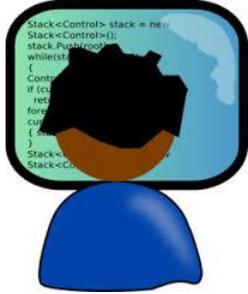


Those whose function is to generate wealth in society e.g., trading and business

Sub-division: Sudra

↗ High → Medium ↘ Low

Occupation



Mobility

Capital

Economic:

Social:

Cultural:



Expectations

Lifestyle:

Social service:

Knowledge:

Power:

Purity:

n/a
n/a
→
→
n/a

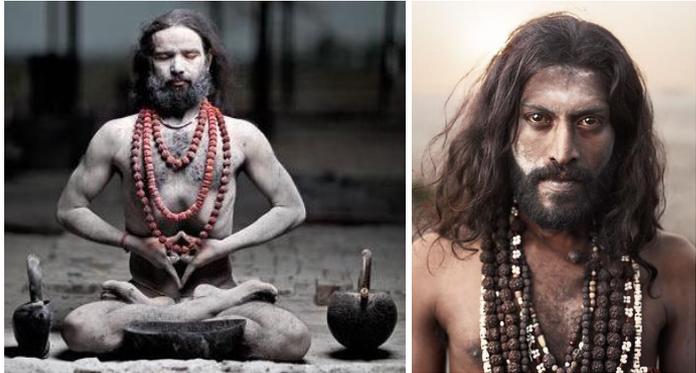
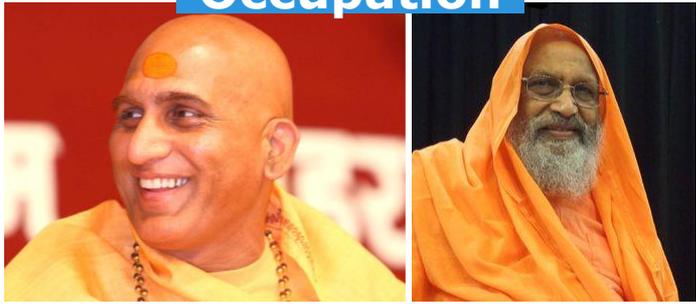
Those whose function is to provide services

Includes most occupations and the majority of the population

Non-members: Sanyasi

↗ High → Medium ↘ Low

Occupation



Mobility

Capital

Economic:

Social:

Cultural:



Expectations

Lifestyle:

Social service: *limited*

Knowledge:

Power:

Purity:



n/a

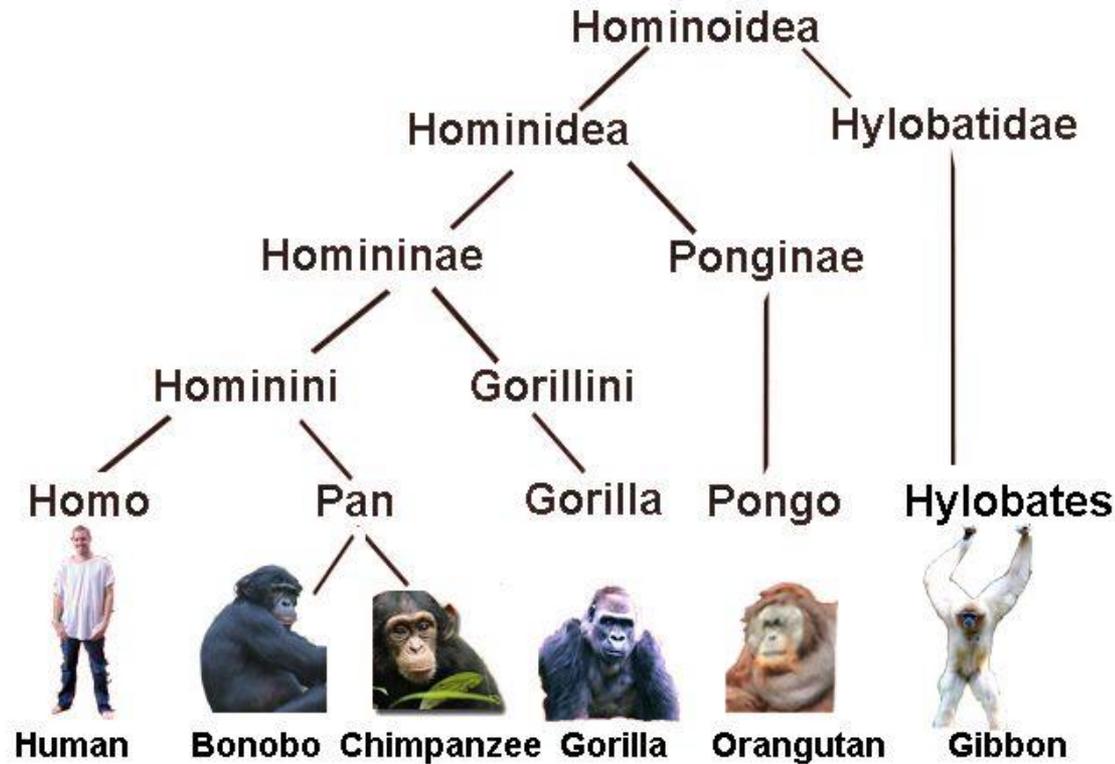
Outside of society
Have no obligations to Vedic society and may choose to interact or not to interact

Non-members: Protected tribes



Typically, have their own social structure, community, expectations and mobility structures

Do Varna descriptions impact daily life?



Our description of a Gorilla's behavior does not impact the Gorilla's behavior

Do Varna descriptions impact daily life?

What is the
difference
between a



and



...but it does impact
emergent behavior

What is its origin?

*cāturvarṇyaṃ mayā sṛṣṭaṃ
guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ*

The four-fold grouping (of people), a division based on duties (karma) and qualities (guna), was created by Me

- **God**, Bhagavad Gita, 4-13

- Varna is a universal law that describes human dispensation
- Like gravity, it exists regardless of belief or labels

Jati

Jati is an emergent organizational principle for society

Jati is a social grouping

- Common vocation
- Common traditions & celebrations
- Common cultural values
- Preference for marriage
- Specific judiciary & laws
- Common (and sometimes specific) temple / worship

Provides a sense of
"belonging-to"

Over time, a Jati can

- Change its common attributes
- Change its Varna
- Become extinct

Jati enables achievement of social goals

Vedic societies goals

Macro goal: Moksha for everyone while meeting physical needs

Individual goal: Self-improvement to attain moksha

How: Path varies person-to-person but requires social harmony and sufficient resources to meet needs

Enabled by Jati

- Focus on excellence vs wealth
- Competition intra-Jati, not extra-Jati
- Tight social bonds reduce isolation and enable focus on internal suddhi
- Reduced reasons for stress
- Greater outlets for stress

Jati facilitates social mobility

Jati represents a single unit of society that supports collective development of economic, social and cultural capital

- **Economic:** Reduced risk supports greater flow of money intra-Jati
- **Social:** Intra-jati leverage enables collective gain vs just individual gain
- **Cultural:** Support (monetary, time, etc) to others within Jati

Fastest economic gains seen by Jati's vs individuals (Patel-s in US, specific Jati's in India)

Jati facilitates social mobility

Jati represents a single unit of society that supports collective

- **Economic**

- **Social**
gain

- **Cultural**

Remember, social mobility is measured as economic gain

tra-Jati

dividual

ti

Fastest economic gains seen by Jatis vs individuals (Patels in US, specific Jati's in India)

Jati is sometimes hierarchical

<u>Predominant Varna</u>	<u>Hierarchical</u>	<u>Heterarchical</u>
Brahmin	X	✓
Kshatriya	X	✓
Vaishya	X	✓
Sudra	✓	✓
Others	✓	✓

Jati & Varna are interleaved yet distinct

<u>Predominant Varna</u>	<u>Hierarchical</u>	<u>Heterarchical</u>
Brahmin	✗	✓
Kshatriya		
Vaishya	✗	✓
Sudra		
Others	✓	✓

One Brahmin jati's members are predominantly cooks (a typical sudra vocation)

Sudra jati's temple will have priests from within the Jati (a typical brahmin vocation)

Jati hierarchy is confusing

<u>Predominant Varna</u>	<u>Hierarchical</u>	<u>Heterarchical</u>
Brahmin	X	
Kshatriya	X	
Vaishya	X	
Sudra	✓	✓
Others	✓	✓

Heterarchical jati's typically help hierarchical jati's out of sympathy

We don't live in an ideal world

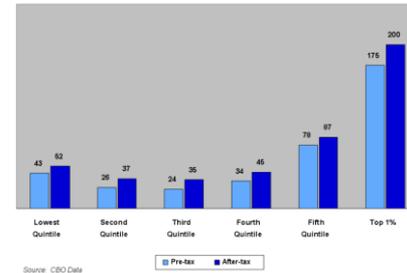


Shivaji had to find a pundit willing to accept him as a kshatriya based on his actions not his birth as a sudra



Arjun insulted **Karna** due to the latter being a suta despite his actions as a Kshatriya

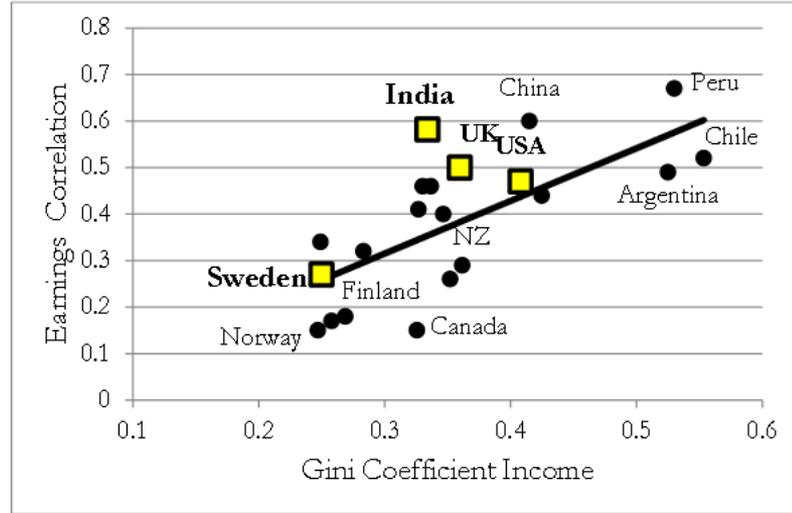
U.S. Income: Percent Change from 1979 to 2011 by Income Group



Discrimination exists in every society

Social mobility in US not that different

Figure 2: Intergenerational Earnings Elasticities and Inequality



Intergeneration income elasticity rates

India: 0.58

UK: 0.5

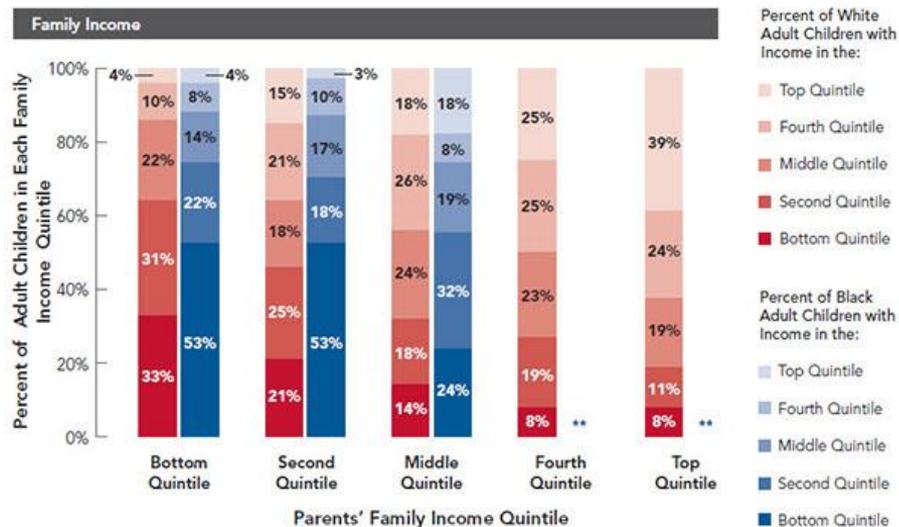
US: 0.47

Source: Corak, 2012, Figure 2 (coefficient for Canada, personal communication from Miles Corak). Income elasticity for India from Hnatkovska et al, 2012, table S12. Gini for India from the World Bank.

Social mobility in US not that different

Blacks Are More Likely to Stay in the Bottom and Fall from the Middle

Chances of moving up or down the family income ladder, by race and parents' quintile



Note: Income is adjusted for family size.

** Too few observations to report estimates.

What is the hierarchy in Purusha Sukta?

Brâhmana was his mouth,
Râjanya of both his arms was the made.
Vaishya His thighs
Sûdra his feet
Sun (from his eye),
Moon (from his mind),
Sky (from his head),
Air (from his navel),
...

- *Purusha Sukta in the Rig-Veda 10:90*

Rig Veda is not making a statement about hierarchy..otherwise, why discuss the Sun, Moon, Sky, Air, etc in the same stanza?

Appendix 4: Women in the Rig Veda

Women as Rishikas in the Vedas

From Hindupedia, the Hindu Encyclopedia

([http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Women as Rishikas in the Vedas](http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Women_as_Rishikas_in_the_Vedas))

The [Rig Veda](#) is the only scripture in which the Divine Truths are revealed to [women](#) sages and in which hymns describing these revelations, like those by the woman sage *Vak Ambrini* find [a](#) prominent place in the Rig [Veda](#) Samhita ^[1]. There are more than thirty women sages in RV with specific hymns associated with them.

There are numerous hymns in the Rig Veda indicating the high status given to women in vedic society. The Rig Veda states that the lady should her choose her own husband^[2] and the marriage hymn states that the daughter-in-law should be treated as [a](#) queen, *samrajni*, by all the family members especially the mother-in-law, husband, father-in-law^[3]. The bride was exhorted to address the assembly:

10.85.26: Become the house-hold's mistress; Ruler of the home, you will address the religious assembly.

To be asked to address the assembly was regarded as an honor by most sages.

Contents

- [1 Epithets for women in the Vedas](#)
- [2 Similarly woman are designated as:](#)
- [3 Women rshis \(rshika\) in the Rig Veda Samhita](#)
- [4 Notes](#)
- [5 References](#)

Epithets for women in the [Vedas](#)

It is noteworthy that in the Vedic literature although a woman's prime role is portrayed as a wife only, yet several other aspects of feminine form are also suggested by various names and epithets used to denote a woman. It is quite interesting to derive the exact meaning of these words because it may help in giving a better idea of different roles of woman in home and in society. For instance, a woman as wife is denoted by three words; *jaya*, *jani* and *patni*. Of these, *jaya* is the woman who gives birth to one's progeny, *jani* is the mother of children and *patni* is the co-partner in the religious duties.

Similarly woman are designated as:

[Aditi](#)

न हि जनेन स्दृशं पवित्रमिह विधते ।

na hi jñānēna sadṛśaṅ pavitramiha vidyatē

In this world, there is no purifier equivalent to knowledge

Bhagavad Gita 4.38

because she is not dependent ^[4]
 Aghnya
 for she is not to be hurt ^[5]
 Brhati
 for she is large hearted ^[6]
 Chandra
 because she is happy ^[7]
 Devakama
 since she is pious. ^[8]
 Devi
 since she is divine ^{[9][10]}
Dhruva
 for she is firm ^[11]
 Havya
 because she is worthy of invocation ^[12]
 Ida
 for she is worshippable ^[13]
 Jyota
 because she is illuminating : bright ^[14]
 Kamyā
 because she is lovable ^[15]
 Kshama
 for she is tolerant, indulgent, patient ^[16]
 Mahi
 since she is great ^[17]
 Mena
 because she deserves respect ^[18]
 Nari
 for she is not inimical to anyone ^[19]
 Purandhih
 for she is munificent, liberal ^[20]
 Ranta
 because she is lovely ^[21]
 rtavari
 rtachit, for she is the preserver, forester of truth ^[22]
 Sanjaya
 since she is victorious ^[23]
 Sarasvati
 since she is scholarly ^[24]
 Simhi
 since she is courageous ^[25]
Shiva
 for she is benevolent ^[26]
 Shivatama
 since she is the noblest ^[27]
 Stri
 since she is modest ^{[28] [29]},

न हि जनेन स्दृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
 na hi jñānēna sadṛśaṅ pavitramiha vidyatē
 In this world, there is no purifier equivalent to knowledge
Bhagavad Gita 4.38

Subhaga	because she is fortunate ^[30]
Subhdha	for she is knowledgeable ^[31]
Sumangali	since she is auspicious ^[32]
Susheva	for she is pleasant ^[33]
Suvarcha	since she is splendid ^[34]
Suyama	since she is self - disciplined. ^[35]
Syona	for she is noble ^[36]
Virini	since she is mother of brave sons ^[37]
Vishruta	since she is learned ^[38]
Yashasvati	for she is glorious ^[39]
Yosha	because she is intermingled with man, she is not separate ^[40]

Women rshis (rshika) in the Rig Veda Samhita

(one or more [mantra](#) was revealed to each rshika)

<u>Verse</u>	<u>Rishika</u>
4.18	Aditi
10.72	Aditirdakshayani
8.91	Apala atreyi
10.86	Indrani
10.85	Urvashi
10.134	Godha
10.39, 10.40	Gosha Kakshivati
10.109	Juhurbramhajaya
10.184	Tvashta Garbhakarta
10.107	Dakshina Prajapatya
10.154	Yami
10.10	Yami Vaivasvati
10.127	Ratrirbharadvaji
1.171	Lopamudra
10.28	Vasukrapatni
10.125	Vagambhrni

न हि जनेन स्दृशं पवित्रमिह विधते ।

na hi jñānēna sadṛśaṅ pavitramiha vidyatē

In this world, there is no purifier equivalent to knowledge

Bhagavad Gita 4.38

5.28	Vishvavara Atreyi
8.1	Sashvatyangirasi
10.151	Shradhda Kamayani
10.159	Shachi Paulomi
10.189	Sarparajni
9.86	Sikata Nivavari
10.85	Surya Savitri
1.126	Romasha
10.108	Sarama Devashuni
9.104	Shikhandinyava Psarasau Kashyapan
10.142	Jarita Sharngah
8.71	Suditirangirasah
10.153	Indra Mataro

(The list is not exhaustive)

Notes

1. Indian Feminism in Vedic perspective, by Shashi Prabha Kumar Reader, Univ. of Delhi, Delhi 110007; Journal of Indian studies, Vol. 1, 1998
2. Most of this article was taken from "Vedah.com"

References

1. Rig Veda, 10.125
2. Rig Veda, 10.27.12
3. Rig Veda 10.85
4. Nirukta, 4.22
5. Yajur [Veda](#), 8.43
6. Yajur Veda, 11.64
7. Yajur Veda, 8.43
8. [Atharva](#) Veda, 14.1.47
9. Atharva Veda, 14.1.45
10. Yajur Veda, 4.23
11. Yajur Veda, 11.64
12. Yajur Veda, 8.43
13. Yajur Veda, 8.43
14. Yajur Veda, 8.43
15. Yajur Veda, 8.43
16. Atharva Veda, 12.1.29
17. Yajur Veda, 8.43
18. Nirukta, 3.21.2
19. Atharva Veda, 14.1.59

न हि जनेन स्दृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

na hi jñānēna sadṛśaṅ pavitramiha vidyatē

In this world, there is no purifier equivalent to knowledge

Bhagavad Gita 4.38

20. Yajur Veda, 22.22
21. Yajur Veda, 8.43
22. Rig Veda, 2.41.18
23. Rig Veda, 10.159.3
24. Yajur Veda, 20.84
25. Yajur Veda, 5.12
26. Atharva Veda, 14.1.64
27. Rig Veda, 10.85.37
28. Rig Veda, 8.33.9
29. Nirukta 3.21.2
30. Yajur Veda, 8.43
31. Atharva Veda, 14.2.75
32. Atharva Veda, 14.2.26
33. Atharva Veda, 14.2.26
34. Atharva Veda, 14.4.47
35. Atharva Veda, 14.2.18
36. Atharva Veda, 14.2.27
37. Rig Veda, 10.86.9, 10.86.10
38. Yajur Veda, 8.43
39. Rig Veda, 1.79.1
40. Nirukta 3.15.1

न हि जनेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

na hi jñānēna sadṛśaṅ pavitramiha vidyatē

In this world, there is no purifier equivalent to knowledge

Bhagavad Gita 4.38