

What do the Greek, Khmer, Inca, Mayan, and Aztec civilizations have in common? Continue reading to learn about their Indian connection.

I will begin with the Greeks, about whom Henry Sigerist makes some rather astute observations.

“The Greek tribes which in the course of time populated the Balkan peninsula, the islands of the Aegean Sea and the coast of Asia Minor, did not come all at once but in waves.” 1

“Our first impression when we travel in Greece today is that the country is extremely small. Wherever we are along the eastern coast we can see dozens of islands, and Crete is visible from the Peloponnesian Mountains.” 2

“Indeed, the territory of continental Greece in antiquity covered an area of only 25,000 square miles.” 3

“Most ancient Oriental cultural creations, buildings, statues, literary works remained anonymous, while in Greece we almost always have a name attached to a work of art or to a poem or drama. And so great was the desire to grasp the individuality of an artist or writer that, even if the author of a literary work was not known, a name was attached to it, as was the case with the Homeric hymns or the Hippocratic writings.” 4

“The city-states developed along individual lines, Athens and Sparta, so close geographically, were wide apart culturally, in their thought and entire mode of living. Only national emergencies, a common threat such as the Persian invasions, could unite the Greek states for a co-operative effort, and then only temporarily.” 5

“Today most navigation in the Levant is still coastal navigation, and you sail for days without ever losing sight of land. But once the Greeks reached out for the western shores of the Mediterranean and sailed by night, they needed more astronomical knowledge which, in turn, called for mathematics. A seafaring nation gets in touch with many foreign peoples and an exchange, not only of goods but also of technical knowledge and skills, takes place. Herodotus, although perhaps the most famous of the early Greek travellers, was only one of many who visited Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor.” 6

“The territory covered by the Indus civilization, as it is commonly called, was very large, twice as large as that of Egypt, and four times as large as that of Sumer and Akkad. These modern excavations explained findings that had been made in Elam and Mesopotamia, where amulet seals of Indian origin had been unearthed. There could be no doubt of their origin, not only because their style pointed to India, but also because the animals represented – elephant, rhinoceros, and a certain species of crocodile – were Indian. These seals assumed great importance in dating the Indus civilization. Indeed some were found at Djemdet Nasr with objects that could be dated at about 3000 B.C., others were discovered at Tell Asmarin layers of about 2500 B.C. Hence the culture of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa must have flourished in

the third millennium B.C. and thus was contemporary with the Old Kingdom of Egypt, the period of Sumer and Akkad in Mesopotamia. Like the Egyptians and Sumerians, the Indus people had a pictographic script which, however has not been deciphered.”  
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This brings us to the myth of the Aryan invasion of the Indus Valley Civilization.

“In a very recent book Hans Heinrich Hock and Thomas Trautmann conclude after surveying all of the passages formerly quoted in support of the racial interpretation, that there is little reason to interpret terms like Varna, “color”, in terms of skin color, and that references to blackness in enemies has the well-known metaphorical meaning of secrecy or evil. Prof. Hock also points out that many leading Aryans are explicitly described as dark-skinned: Krishna, Draupadi, Arjuna (in spite of his name “pale”), Nahula and Damayanti.” “The Aryan Rama was equally dark-skinned. Other scholars including Asko Parpola had earlier shown that the traditional enemies of the Vedic Aryans. Viz the Dasas, Dasyus and Panis, were principally the Iranian cousins of the Vedic Aryans (all three ethnonyms exist in Iranian, not in the supposedly aboriginal India languages like Dravidian and Munda), who on average were at least as white as the latter.” 8

Moreover in the Mahabharata the opposing sides were related. One side was not a foreign invading force.

Furthermore, if the authors were white why are all the most powerful gods such as Shiva and Krishna so dark their skin was painted blue in all artistic depictions? This isn't just an artistic convention it is an accurate reflection of the society.

Now with respect to the Indo European language family and the Urheimat Question Koenraad Elst writes as follows.

“India satisfied the conditions for making the spectacular expansion of IE possible like Europe in the colonial period, it had a demographic surplus and a technological edge over its neighbors. Food crises and political conflicts must have led to emigrations which were small by Indian standards but sizable for the less populated countries to India's northwest.” “The expansion in western direction continued until the Atlantic Ocean stopped it.” 9

“From the viewpoint of an Indian Urheimat hypothesis, the most important factor explaining the high fragmentation of IE in Europe as compared to its relative homogeneity in North India is the way in which an emigration from India to Europe must be imagined. Tribes left India and mixed with the non-IE speaking tribes of their respective corners of Central Asia and Europe. This happens to be the fastest way of making two dialects of a single language grow apart and develop distinctive new characteristics make them mingle with different foreign languages.” 10

“Indo-Aryan speaking emigrants from India left at the time of the great catastrophe in about 2000 B.C., when the Saraswati river dried up and many of the Harappan cities were abandoned. This catastrophe triggered migrations in all directions: to the

Malabar coast, to India's interior and east, to West Asia by sea (the Kassite dynasty in Babylon ca. 1600 B.C. venerated some of the Vedic gods), and to Central Asia." 11

Now let's look at the Vedic period in more detail and the contributions of the Aryans. The literature on Vedic beliefs and Hinduism is vast so I will only give a brief glimpse as is available on Wikipedia.

"The Rigveda, the oldest of the Vedas, was composed roughly between 1700 and 1100 BCE, referred to as the early Vedic period. The end of the period is commonly estimated to have occurred about 500 BCE."

"The Vedas record the liturgy connected to the rituals performed by the Shrauta priests and purohitas."

"The rishis, the composers of the hymns of the Rigveda, were considered inspired poets and seers."

"The mode of worship was the performance of sacrifices (Yajna) which included the chanting of Rigvedic verses, singing of Samans and mumbling of sacrificial mantras (Yajus)."

"Many of the concepts of Indian philosophy espoused later like Dharma and Karma trace their root to the Vedas."

"Transmission of texts in the Vedic period was by oral tradition alone, and a literary tradition set in only in post-Vedic times."

"Rig Vedic society was relatively egalitarian in the sense that a distinct hierarchy of socio-economic classes or castes were absent."

"Meat eating is mentioned, however, cows are labelled as aghnya (not to be killed)."

"The primary philosophy of the Upanishads is the concept of Brahman – the eternal, self-existent, immanent and transcendent Supreme and Ultimate Reality which is the divine ground of all Being."

"Bhagavad Gita is a syncretism of Samkhya, Yoga, and Upanishadic thought."

What we can see from this overview is that most of the beliefs and religious innovations of the Vedic period are alien to Western civilization and only fully appreciated by religious scholars and philosophers. If a superior white race was responsible for Vedic thought and the foundations of Hinduism why are these same thoughts and beliefs the subject of derision by white supremacists? The caste system is often viewed as a remnant of supremacy. However the rigid caste system of Hinduism was a much later development. Rig Vedic society was rather egalitarian and fluid.

There is a book called "The Timetables of Science" which I really dislike because entire civilizations are reduced to a few words to fit into a timetable and entire

disciplines are attributed to imaginary individuals. However there is one interesting passage in the section entitled “Peppers and a whole lot more”:

“Although archaeological remains in the Americas make it clear that Capsicum (the common green or red pepper) originated there, there are puzzling aspects to how it travelled from the Americas, which it did quite speedily.” 12

“There is good evidence that Capsicum first reached Germany before 1542 from India not the Americas. Thus, in less than 50 years, Capsicum had circled three-quarters of the way around the globe travelling in what would seem to be the wrong direction.” 13

“The Indian connection remains somewhat of a mystery, especially because Capsicum is so much a part of Indian food. It should be noted, also, that traditional cooking from some regions of China is heavily dependent on Capsicum. A further mystery is that Capsicum was being cultivated in Melanesia when the first Europeans arrived. Capsicum quickly settled into Europe, becoming an essential part of the cuisine of Italy.” 14

“The only domesticated plant found in both places before Columbus’s voyages is cotton. How cotton was spread is an even greater mystery than how Capsicum got to India.” 15

In another book (by National Geographic) with a more focused timetable one finds that between 3000 and 2800 B.C. “Earliest cultivation of cotton appears in the Indus Valley – and in Peru” 16

Apparently, some people were doing a lot of sailing. Now let’s go back and look at the migrations that occurred around 2000 B.C.

“Some aboriginal Australians can trace as much as 11% of their genomes to people who reached the island around 4000 years ago from India”

The Rongorongo script of Easter Island shows a remarkable similarity to that of the Indus Valley Civilization as excavated from the seals of Harappa Mohenjo Daro.

Let’s take a look at what was happening to Greek civilization at that time.

“The first palace at Knossos was built around 2000 B.C. over the next 300 years palaces appeared at Phaitos, Mallia and Zakro. The construction of these palaces marks the establishment of the first Cretan states. Later Greek legend suggests that these states were ruled over by royal houses, and suites of rooms thought to have been royal apartments have been found at all four Cretan palaces. The Cretan palaces had several functions, serving as royal households, ceremonial and ritual centers, and the foci of a flourishing redistributive economy.” 17

“Bull-leaping fresco from the east wing of the palace of Knossos. Men are shown in red, women white, an artistic convention borrowed from contemporary Egypt 15th century B.C.” 18

It is interesting how this is viewed simply as an artistic convention. I will take the simplified view that art represents a not perfect but adequate photo album of its respective time period. The reason for the darker skin color is because the men were Indian. Another historical tendency which tends to confuse people is the division of civilizations into "Formative, Pre-Classical, and Classical Periods". They tend to overanalyse and falsely impose an evolutionary process. In actuality most of the empires and civilizations rose and fell in relatively short periods of time. Just because evidence of a violent invasion is not found does not mean that people from another civilization did not arrive. The people of the contemporaneous cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia were related to Indians. Evidence of this can be seen in the Sumerians who referred to themselves as "ug sag gig-ga" literally meaning "the black-headed people". Even to this day Egyptians are darker skinned than other Middle Easterners.

Let's look at what was happening in later Greek civilization and its surrounding areas.

"800-600 B.C. Etruscan civilization flourishes. Greece rises. First Olympic games take place. Homer's Iliad and Odyssey are written down." 19

There is something strange about an epic poem, who would write such a thing? Well there is the Mahabharata which is 10 times the length of the Iliad and Odyssey combined. Then there is the fact that the Iliad and Odyssey were done anonymously. Moreover there are some very Eastern elements to them such as death and rebirth.

"The Greeks believed the Iliad and Odyssey were composed by a single poet whom they named Homer. Nothing is known of his life, though ancient tradition made him a native of Ionia, in the eastern Aegean, and seven Greek cities claimed the honor of his birth. While his date is uncertain as well, most modern scholars now place the composition of the Iliad in the late eighth century B.C." 20

"Athens was, until the 8th century B.C. just such a cluster of small farming villages. A dramatic population explosion during this period – improved farming techniques were probably a contributing factor – was accompanied by the political unification of the independent villages of Attica; Athens, with its steep fortified acropolis rising to 100 metres, became a natural political centre, and in c 750 B.C. there was a sudden increase in the population of Athens itself." 21

"The focus of Athenian city life was the market-place (agora) – with shops, temples, market halls, and law courts; it was also the meeting place for the city council until 500 B.C. The process of ostracism, whereby citizens voted for the expulsion of public figures to prevent political strife, was carried out here; inscribed potsherds (ostraka) with which they voted have been found. The Acropolis on the other hand, was the military and religious centre of the city. Surrounded by a massive wall, it contained many temples and shrines, most of which were dedicated to Athena, goddess of wisdom, the city's patron deity. From 432 B.C., the Acropolis was dominated by the imposing silhouette of the Parthenon, which replaced an earlier Temple of Athena destroyed by the Persians in 480 B.C." 22

“The sack of Athens by the Persians (480 B.C.) was followed by a major program of public building in the 5th century B.C., the age of the great Classical monuments.” 23

“During Athens’ great expansion, increasing numbers of these coins were minted to finance defence; ships were purchased, mercenaries were recruited and massive new building projects were initiated in Piraeus, Athens’ port and naval base. Vast fortifications (the Long Walls) were constructed to ensure secure communications between Athens and its fleet.” 24

The period between the 7th and 5th centuries B.C. is when the superb Greek black figure vases came into existence and flourished, though there are specimens dating as late as the 2nd century B.C. On the black figure vases – the men were black and the women white. Most historians think this was an artistic innovation. However considering the seriousness of the changes going on it is more likely that the art was a representation of reality. The new Greeks were even darker skinned than the Minoans and Egyptians whose art had red figured men.

It is useful to summarize some of the accomplishments from 500 – 400 B.C.

“Athens rises as a power. Golden Age of Pericles sees great works of literature, philosophy, and art and such immortals such as Socrates, Hippocrates, Herodotus, Sophocles. Envy and hostility of other Greek states leads to Peloponnesian Wars.” 25

“Communities around the eastern Mediterranean in the middle of the 4th century B.C. experienced an acceleration in economic growth and the beginning of an era of prosperity that lasted well into the Roman period.” 26

“The founding of new cities was a significant feature of the Hellenistic age. Many of these were settlements of colonists established to strengthen military and political control over recently conquered territories. Economic developments in the eastern Mediterranean led several communities to abandon or reduce their earlier settlement and to build a new city in a location more accessible to trade routes.” 27

“Neighboring non-Greek peoples often used Hellenistic motifs, giving rise to hybrid styles, such as that of the massive funerary statues erected at Nemrut Dag in eastern Asia Minor which betray clear traces of their Hellenistic cultural ancestry. The Hellenistic states in turn borrowed useful oriental features; the war elephant, illustrated on a Graeco-Bactrian silver disk and shown equipped with a fighting tower and soldiers was a military innovation adopted from India.” 28

“The eastern Aegean (which corresponds to Lydia) was the centre of Hellenistic influence... Further east lay the lowlands of Mesopotamia and Susiana, which had been the heart of the Achaemenid empire, and here also major new Hellenistic cities were founded...” 29

“The Indian emperor Chandragupta, founder of the Mauryan dynasty, had reconquered northwestern India upon the death of Alexander the Great around 322 B.C. However contacts were kept with his Greek neighbors in the Seleucid Empire, a dynastic alliance or the recognition of intermarriage between Greeks and Indians

were established (described as an agreement on Epigamis in Ancient sources), and several Greeks such as historian Megasthenes, resided at the Mauryan court. Subsequently, each Mauryan emperor had a Greek ambassador at his court."

The Indo-Greek Kingdom lasting from 180 B.C. to A.D. 10 "was a Hellenistic kingdom covering various parts of the northwest regions of the Indian subcontinent..."

"During the two centuries of their rule the Indo-Greek kings combined the Greek and Indian languages and symbols as seen in their coins, and blended ancient Greek, Hindu and Buddhist religious practices."

Note that "Roman and Greek traders frequented the ancient Tamil country (present day Southern India) and Sri Lanka, securing trade with seafaring Tamil states of the Pandyan, Chola and Chera dynasties and establishing trading settlements which secured trade with India by the Greco-Roman world since the time of the Ptolemaic dynasty a few decades before the start of the Common Era and remained long after the fall of the Western Roman Empire."

"The Ptolemaic dynasty had developed trade with India using the Red Sea ports. With the establishment of Roman Egypt, the Romans took over and further developed the already existing trade using these ports."

"In fact, the first two centuries of the Common Era indicate this increase in trade between western India and Rome. This expansion of trade was due to the comparative peace established by the Roman Empire during the time of Augustus (23 September 63 BC - 19 August AD 14), which allowed for new explorations. Thus archaeologists, with evidence from artifacts and ancient literature, suggest that a significant commercial relationship existed between ancient western India and Rome."

In contrast to the Aryan "Invasion" which was by all accounts peaceful, the Muslim invasions of the Indian subcontinent were in fact a story of death and destruction, looting of its temples, enslavement and religious conversions. Muslim conquests in the Indian subcontinent took place in four phases: from the 8th to 10th , 11th to 13th , 13th to 16th , and 16th to 18th centuries. As 20th century American historian Will Durant wrote about medieval India, "The Islamic conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history."

In European history the medieval period lasted approximately from 500 AD to 1500 AD, separating antiquity from the modern era. The intervening millennium can also be thought of as the Pacific Millennium.

During the Gupta Empire in India from 320 to 550 CE (also known as the Golden Age of India) there were extensive inventions and discoveries in science, technology, engineering, art, dialectic, literature, logic, mathematics, astronomy, religion, and philosophy. As we will later see, there was also increasing activity of Indians in the Pacific and Pacific Rim.

They left a time marker in India to mark this shift.

There is an Iron Pillar at Mehrauli, near Delhi 22 feet high with an average diameter of about 4 and a half feet. "It is a solid shaft of wrought iron with an ornamental top."  
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"Scholars have dated it to the 5th century, and it has become famous because, despite all the years of exposure to wind and rain, it has not rusted." 31

### The Pacific Millennium

"When the Europeans were mired in the Dark Ages the Polynesians were perfecting the art of travelling across the mighty Pacific in small wooden canoes, navigating by the stars, weather, and wildlife."

"The Polynesian triangle is a vast one with each side measuring roughly 4,000 miles long. Using the technique of wayfinding, navigators memorized the motion of specific stars, weather, local wildlife patterns, and the direction of waves in the ocean. They passed this information down orally to new generations of navigators, the secrets closely guarded by these elite families."

"The sweet potato, a native to South America was found widespread throughout the islands of Polynesia when the European travelers first encountered the Polynesian settlements."

"The dating of the settlement of Eastern Polynesia including Hawaii, Easter Island, and New Zealand are not agreed upon in every instance. A date of 500 A.D. has been suggested for Hawaii."

The Polynesians are much darker skinned than pure orientals suggesting they are related to Indians. In fact the darkness of the skin of peoples in the Pacific islands and countries in the Pacific Rim can be taken as an indicator of relation to Indians. However since it was mostly Indian men who traveled such long distances across the oceans only the Y-chromosome DNA haplogroups of men from selected parts of India and South East Asia would most likely match that of these various civilizations. Indian Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) haplogroups may show common direct line female ancestors in South East Asia. Autosomal DNA (atDNA) markers can also be used to determine ancestry though their interpretation is more complicated.

Now let's look in detail at some of the other civilizations that arose in the Pacific and Pacific Rim after 500 A.D.

How does one know they were from India? There are many stylistic motifs from India that show up in the cultures of Mesoamerica including the Incas, Mayas, and Aztecs.

As Sir William Jones said, "Rama is represented as a descendant from the sun, as the husband of Sita, and the son of a princess named Kaushalya. It is very remarkable that Peruvians, whose Incas boasted of the same descent, styled their greatest festival Rama-Sitva; whence we may take it that South America was peopled by the



same race who imported into the farthest parts of Asia the rites and the fabulous history of Rama.” 32

As others have noted, “Both the Hindus and Americans used similar items in their worship and rituals. They both maintained the concept of four Yuga cycles, or cosmological seasons, extending over thousands of years, and conceived of twelve constellations with reference to the sun as indicated by the Incan sun calendar. Royal insignias, systems of government, and practice of religious dance and temple worship all showed remarkable similarities, pointing strongly to the idea that the Americas were strongly influenced by the Aryans.” 33

An extensive list of the Western historians and sociologists who saw a distinct similarity between the cultures of ancient American civilizations and that of the way of life in India can be found in the book “2012 The Real Story.” Some excerpts from that book are given below. Baron Alexander Von Humbolt wrote, “Mexicans worshiped a figure made of man with a head of an elephant. It presents a remarkable and apparently not accidental resemblance with the Hindu Ganesh. The Hindus of India also worshiped Ganesh which had similar figure composition.” 34

Based on the writings of Donald A. Mackenzie, D.K. Hari and D.K. Hema Hari conclude “It could not have been incidental or an accident that though, not native to the land, the Asian elephant has been found featured, sculpted in many of the ancient Central American temples, dressed as though with ritualistic significance just as it happens in India even today.” 35

Gene Matlock in his book “India once ruled the Americas” writes, “The people of India have long known that their ancestors had once sailed and settled in America. They called America ‘Patala’ – the underworld, not because they believed it to be underground, but because the other side of the globe appeared to be straight down.” 36

Miles Poindexter in his book “Arya Incas” said “Columbus was not mistaken when he called the people of the world ‘Indians.’ They were of that and kindred mixed races, and an unbroken line of blood and culture bound together the 2 shores of the Pacific Ocean. Mayan civilization ‘unquestionably Hindu’ came to America by the island chains of Polynesia.” 37

As we have seen, Indians have been frequenting the Americas since at least 2,000 BC. It is difficult to know all the influences they had, however there are numerous technological advances that likely had their imprint.

For example, structures which are difficult to replicate even today are found at Pumapunku, which literally means ‘Gate of the Puma’. It was constructed around AD 536 - 600 in Tiwanaku in what is now western Bolivia. Tiwanaku is significant in Inca traditions because it is believed to be 'the birthplace of mankind'.

“In assembling the walls of Pumapunku, each stone interlocked with the surrounding stones.” The largest stone block is estimated to weigh 131 tonnes. “The blocks were

fit together like a puzzle, forming load bearing joints.” “The precision with which these angles create flush joints is indicative of sophisticated knowledge of stone-cutting and a thorough understanding of descriptive geometry. Many of the joints are so precise, a razor blade cannot fit between the stones.”

Let's take a look at the time frames of some of the civilizations in the Americas.

“Though the Maya lowlands were completely settled as early as 800 B.C. the Maya Peak was in the Classic Period from 250 to 900 A.D. Other civilizations that followed were the Toltec 900s-1100s, Inca 1200-1532, and Aztec 1200s-1400s”

“During the Classic Period the Maya founded their greatest cities and made remarkable achievements in the arts and sciences. Beginning in the 800s the Maya stopped erecting stelae in city after city and they abandoned their major centers in the Guatemala lowlands.

“Civilizations like the Olmec, Maya, Aztec, and Inca all built pyramids to house their deities, as well as bury their kings.”

The similarities between these pyramids and Egyptian pyramids suggests the people who created the Pre-Columbian civilizations were intimately familiar with Egyptian civilization. It is interesting how the similarities between Indian civilization and these other ancient civilizations is given short shrift.

On one extreme “It is unfortunate that some of the traditional anthropologists of the world are still stuck in a colonial mindset, of the world having become civilized only due to colonial influence and of dismissing indigenous legends, sciences and system of records as myths and hearsay.” 38

On the other extreme some scholars invoke aliens from outer space and other ridiculous theories to explain the technological achievements of these civilizations. However Indians aren't without blame. After several hundred years of subjugation by the colonial powers Indians have come to blindly accept the colonial view and failed to offer a compelling alternative. Indians are ignorant of their own history and they have not challenged these interpretations. It is time Indians rigorously research and document these relationships.

I don't have the space here to describe all the civilizations in detail so I will focus only on the Aztecs as a representative example of the sophistication that existed prior to the Europeans.

“From the 13th century, the Valley of Mexico was the heart of Aztec civilization and it dominated large parts of Mesoamerica from the 14th to 16th centuries.”

“The last of the tribes to arrive in the area around Lake Texcoco was the Aztecs, a nomadic people who settled on the only unclaimed land, a swampy island in Lake Texcoco, and founded Tenochtitlan, their capital, in 1345 A.D.” 39

“The Aztecs won many of the cities formerly paying tribute to the defeated enemy, and their subsequent history is one of conquest and reconquest until they occupied both the Gulf and Pacific coasts and controlled territory extending as far south as Guatemala.” 40

“Aztec society was headed by a priest-king, educated, like all the nobility, at the elite seminary in Tenochtitlan, and elected from the members of the royal family by a council of nobles, priests and warriors ...” 41

“The Aztec state was a militaristic regime with a large, well-equipped professional army bent on acquiring territory and, more important, tribute.” 42

“Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec empire, was a stone-built city of up to 200,000 inhabitants, situated on an island and linked to the mainland by causeways. The key to the Aztecs’ rise to power lay partly in their agricultural and hydraulic engineering skills. Extending and improving pre-existing systems of chinampas (reclaimed swampland), they developed the marshy lake shores into one of the most productive agricultural areas of the New World. Several crops of maize, beans, squash, chillies and other staples were harvested annually, and no fallow period was needed. The food surpluses produced from the chinampas fed both the city dwellers and the Aztec army – the bulk of which was made up by conscripts from conquered territory” 43

“Oratorical performance was highly regarded. Rulers and nobles were as proud of composing poems as any other accomplishment ...” 44

“Huehuetlatolli (talk of the elders) are often couched as admonitions and instructions concerning the proper and ideal forms of behaviour and thought.” 45

“The Aztec pantheon was large and confusing. Deities were anthropomorphic and animistic; almost any aspect of nature had a deity associated with it.” 46

“While London still drew its drinking water from the polluted Thames as late as 1854, the Aztecs brought potable water to Tenochtitlan from springs on the mainland by means of an aqueduct built by Nezahualcoyotl between 1466 and 1478. The aqueduct was described in 1520 by Hernan Cortes. “Along one of the causeways to this great city run two aqueducts made of mortar. Each one is two paces wide and some six feet deep, and along one of them a stream of very good fresh water, as wide as a man’s body, flows into the heart of the city and from this they all drink. The other which is empty, is used when they wish to clean the first channel. Where the aqueducts cross the bridges, the water passes along some channels which are as wide as an ox; and so they serve the whole city.” 47

As pointed out in the book "Aztec Medicine, Health and Nutrition" there are many examples of the medical sophistication of the Aztecs.

“They used traction and countertraction to reduce fractures and sprains and splints to immobilize fractures. They also treated complications such as swelling around the break, incising it with an obsidian lancet or applying a mixture of plants as plaster.

For failure of the bone callus to consolidate in fractures “the bone is exposed; a very resinous stick cut; it is inserted within the bone, bound within the incision, covered over with the medicine mentioned.” Viesca Trevino called this a simple and unpretentious description of an intramedullary nail – a technique not used in Western medicine till the twentieth century.” 48

The Americas weren't the only areas of activity around 500 A.D. and later. Let's look at what was happening in Southeast Asia and India. This is key because Indians were active in Southeast Asia contemporaneous with the rise and fall of all the great civilizations in the Americas, and the Americas are only a short hop away from Southeast Asia compared to travel all the way from India.

“Traders and settlers from India and China arrived in Malaysia as early as the 1st century A.D., establishing trading posts and coastal towns in the 2nd and 3rd centuries with the people of the Malay Peninsula adopting the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism.”

“The Kingdom of Langkasuka arose around the 2nd century in the northern area of the Malay Peninsula, lasting until about the 15th century. Between the 7th and 13th centuries, much of the southern Malay Peninsula was part of the maritime Srivijaya empire.”

“The Indonesian archipelago has been an important trade region since at least the 7th century, when Srivijaya and then later Majapahit traded with China and India.”

“From the 7th century, the powerful Srivijaya naval kingdom flourished as a result of trade and influence of Hinduism and Buddhism that were imported with it. Between the 8th and 10th centuries, the agricultural Buddhist Sailendra and Hindu Mataram dynasties thrived and declined in inland Java. The Hindu Majapahit kingdom was founded in eastern Java in the late 13th century, and under Gaja Mada, its influence stretched over much of Indonesia.”

“in Central Java, high in the mountains, in Sukuh and Ceto, there stand well maintained ruins of temples with Mayan signatures. The temples are a blend of Indian, Mayan, Chinese and Japanese styles. Which means that, this Java island was a confluence of all these cultures and had exchange of ideas with all these places by way of navigation.” 49

“From the 800s to the 1400s the Khmer controlled a great Hindu-Buddhist kingdom in Cambodia. Its capital was Angkor. The Khmer built hundreds of beautiful stone temples at Angkor and elsewhere in the empire. They also built hospitals, irrigation canals, reservoirs, and roads. The Khmer empire reached its peak during the 1100s when it took over much of the land that is now Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam.”

Obviously building an empire on the scale of the Khmer required a massive amount of planning and manpower. Thus, in conjunction with maritime Srivijaya empire the Khmer empire most likely served as a hub for all Indian settlement and coordination in the Pacific and Pacific Rim from the 800s to the 1400s.

In India itself "The Chola dynasty was at the height of its power from the latter half of the 9th century until the beginning of the 13th century."

"In the age of the Cholas, the whole of South India was, for the first time ever, brought under a single government."

"The Cholas excelled in foreign trade and maritime activity, extending their influence overseas to China and Southeast Asia."

This was the state of the world before Columbus.

"By 1400 a Latin translation of Ptolemy's Geographia reached Italy coming from Constantinople. The rediscovery of Roman geographical knowledge was a revelation, both for map making and worldview, although reinforcing the idea that the Indian Ocean was landlocked."

"Post-Columbus history of America for 300 years was the story of ruthless destruction. And fanatics like "Bishop Diego da Landa" burnt a huge bonfire of valuable documents. They destroyed huge temples and smashed idols. And others like Hernando Cortez are said to have slaughtered, in less than two hours, six thousand people who had gathered in a temple Patio. Destruction of Aztec cities was so complete that almost everything lay in ruins." 50

In addition to their ruthless tactics it was the introduction of Old World diseases which made the Spanish conquests possible. In 1520 the chance introduction of smallpox from an infected Spanish soldier spread rapidly through the densely populated Aztec empire.

"Cortes would not return to the capital until August 1521. In the meantime smallpox devastated the Aztec population. It killed most of the Aztec army and 25% of the overall population."

"On Cortes's return, he found the Aztec army's chain of command in ruins. The soldiers who still lived were weak from the disease. Cortes then easily defeated the Aztecs and entered Tenochtitlan."

Even before Francisco Pizarro first encountered the Inca empire in 1532 a smallpox epidemic that came via Columbia had already taken a heavy toll on the Incas and plunged them into civil war.

"Within a few years smallpox claimed between 60% and 90% of the Inca population."

In addition to smallpox the Europeans brought other Old World diseases such as measles, influenza, typhus, chickenpox, diphtheria, cholera, bubonic plague, scarlet fever, whooping cough, malaria, and typhoid to which the Native Americans had no immunity. It is estimated that within 100-150 years after the 1492 voyage of Columbus upwards of 80-95 percent of the indigenous population was wiped out by disease.

Bishop Diego de Landa “destroyed the faith, literature, idols and practice of the Maya through torture and the merciless ways of the Spanish Inquisition. He ordered the destruction of all Mayan idols, all their icons, their hieroglyphics and all Mayan books in Yucatan. His ravage of the Mayan civilization in Mani, a small city in Yucatan, in 1561 is one act that has put the world many steps behind in world history. Rare Mayan codices, hand written documents of their beliefs and their history were burnt in Mani. Out of hundreds of codices, only a few codices are known to have survived such as the famous Dresden Codex and the Paris Codex, named after where they are located presently. He thus wiped out thousands of years of Mayan history in one day.” 51

“Pablo Jose de Arriaga came to Peru from Spain as a Jesuit missionary in the late 1500s.” “Over a period of 40 years, until 1620s, Father Pablo Jose de Arriaga went about his task of destroying the local religion very systematically by building reformation schools and ensuring the destruction of all state, royal and temple archives, codes of law, customs records, historical records and the library records of ancient history, medicine, astronomy, science, religion and philosophy.” 52

Due to the scale of destruction the relationship of Indians and the pre-Columbian civilizations is not commonly known.

Finally I would like to discuss the Maya.

“The linguistic similarities had been pointed by the Sthapthi between yogic terminology and Mayan terminology; Text “Chacla” in Mayan refers to force centers of the body similar to the chakras of Hinduism, K’ultaniilni in Mayan refers to the power of God within man which is controlled by the breath, similar in meaning to Kundalini. Mayan Chilambalam refers to a sacred space, as does Indian word Chidambaram. Yok’hah in Mayan means “on top of truth,” similar to yoga in Sanskrit.” 53

The term "Maya" itself is an Indian word meaning illusion. A common explanation of maya is as follows.

“Consider the illusion of a rope being mistaken for a snake in the darkness. This illusion gets destroyed when true knowledge of the rope is perceived. “ “The viewers participate in creating the illusion by misperceiving and drawing false conclusions. When appearances arise and are seen as illusory, that is considered more accurate.”

“The complicated Mayan Long Count calendar which measured time from the start of Mayan civilization (August 12, 3113 B.C.) completed a full cycle on December 21, 2012.”

Predicting the future is difficult, particularly when dealing with thousands of years. Rather than viewing December 21, 2012 as holding the most significance, that date represents roughly 5,000 years of history. Thus, completion of a full cycle of the Mayan Long Count Calendar represents a useful point from which to review

human history for the past 5,000 years. Given the massive changes science and technology are having on humanity and the planet it is a useful point in time for historical reflection to help navigate the future.

As we can see from this overview Indians have played an important role in many of the most important civilizations in history. The extant descendants of these civilizations would appreciate insights into their history that can fill in any gaps. There is an opportunity for a renaissance in relations between India and these countries.

Photo in header of Machu Picchu

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