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# India



a short cultural history

H. C. RAWLINSON

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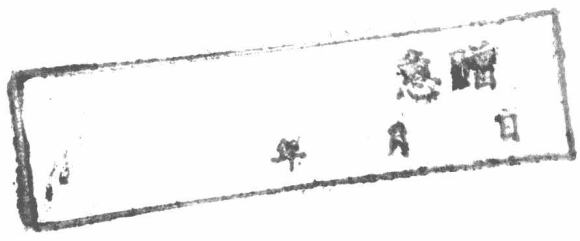
# INDIA

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## A SHORT CULTURAL HISTORY

By H. G. RAWLINSON



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## BOOKS THAT MATTER

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TĀRĀ, CONSORT OF AVALOKITESVARA

## PREFACE

INDIAN HISTORY, declared *The Times* less than half a century ago, has never been made interesting to English readers except by rhetoric. Since then, the devoted work of a generation of scholars has thrown a flood of new light upon the subject, but the results of their investigations have been chiefly intended for the specialist. English people as a whole have been singularly blind to the significance of India's contribution to world-culture; there has even been a positive distaste, born of prejudice and apathy, for Indian spiritual and æsthetic values. To-day, when India is once more emerging, with that persistent vitality which has been her characteristic through the ages, from eclipse, it is more than ever incumbent on us to realise the greatness of her past achievements in religion, politics, art and literature. It is impossible to belittle or ignore a culture which gave the world a religious teacher such as the Buddha, rulers like Asoka and Akbar, Kālidāsa's *Sakuntalā*, the superb plastic masterpieces of Sānchī and Borobudur, the Ajantā frescoes, the South Indian bronzes, the Hindu temples of Orissa and the Muslim mosques and palaces of Hindustan. "If I were to ask myself," wrote Max Müller, after a lifetime devoted to the study of Sanskrit, "from what literature we here in Europe, who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of the Greeks and Romans, and one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more universal—in fact, more human, I should point to India." To write a short book on a vast subject is always a difficult task, involving as it does the inevitable problem of what to select and what to reject. The author's object has been to avoid, as far as possible, a mass of detail and of unfamiliar names, always bewildering to the reader who is not acquainted with the subject already, and confine himself to those aspects especially significant or distinctive. The British period, about which much has been already written, has been only incidentally touched upon; the main theme of the book is the history of the Indian peoples.

It is difficult to express obligations to all who have assisted by giving permission to use copyright passages and illustrations, but

the author wishes especially to convey his gratitude to the following:—The Secretary of State for India; The Council of the Royal Asiatic Society; The Director-General of Archæology, India; The Indian Railways Bureau; The Government of Mysore; The India Society; The Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum; the British Museum; the City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; the Oxford University Press; the Cambridge University Press; Messrs. Macmillan & Co.; Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.; Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, Limited; Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.; The Council of the Young Men's Christian Association, Calcutta; Messrs. Spink & Sons, Limited; and Mr. Arthur Probsthain. The maps and many of the text figures are the work of Mr. C. O. Waterhouse of the British Museum. Miss M. Campbell has prepared the Index. Mr. F. Richter, O.B.E., Secretary of the Royal India Society, and Mr. P. D. Mehta have kindly read the proofs. The author is indebted to Mr. K. de B. Codrington, Keeper of the India Museum, and to Lady Hartog, for their kind help in selecting illustrations. To the late Professor C. G. Seligman, F.R.S., who was the General Editor of the Series, his obligations are not easily expressed in words; Professor Seligman was unwearied in advice and criticism in every stage of the work.

H. G. R.

*London, 1937*

#### PREFACE TO THE FOURTH IMPRESSION

IT MUST be remembered that in this work, which was originally written in 1937, the word India is used to denote the Indian sub-continent, now India and Pākistān. Again I have to express my gratitude to Mr. P. D. Mehta for his unwearying help in revision, and to Mr. John Irwin of the India Museum for assistance over the plates.

H. G. R.

*London, 1951*

## NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

The following hints may be useful for pronouncing Indian names:

a	as in	<i>cup</i>
ā	„ „	<i>father</i>
e	„ „	<i>mate</i>
i	„ „	<i>fit</i>
ī	„ „	<i>feet</i>
o	„ „	<i>mote</i>
u	„ „	<i>foot</i>
ū	„ „	<i>boot</i>
ai	„ „	<i>might</i>
ch	„ „	<i>church</i>
kh	(Persian and Arabic)	as in <i>loch</i>

In aspirated consonants, the *h* is pronounced separately. Thus *ph* is sounded as in *uphill*. There is no sound corresponding to *a* in the English *cat*, and *o* is invariably long. Final *a* is very lightly sounded; *r* is rolled. The following gives the phonetic pronunciation of some familiar words:

Buddha	pronounced	Boodh
Akbar	„	Ukbur
Satī	„	Suttee
Karma	„	Kurrma.

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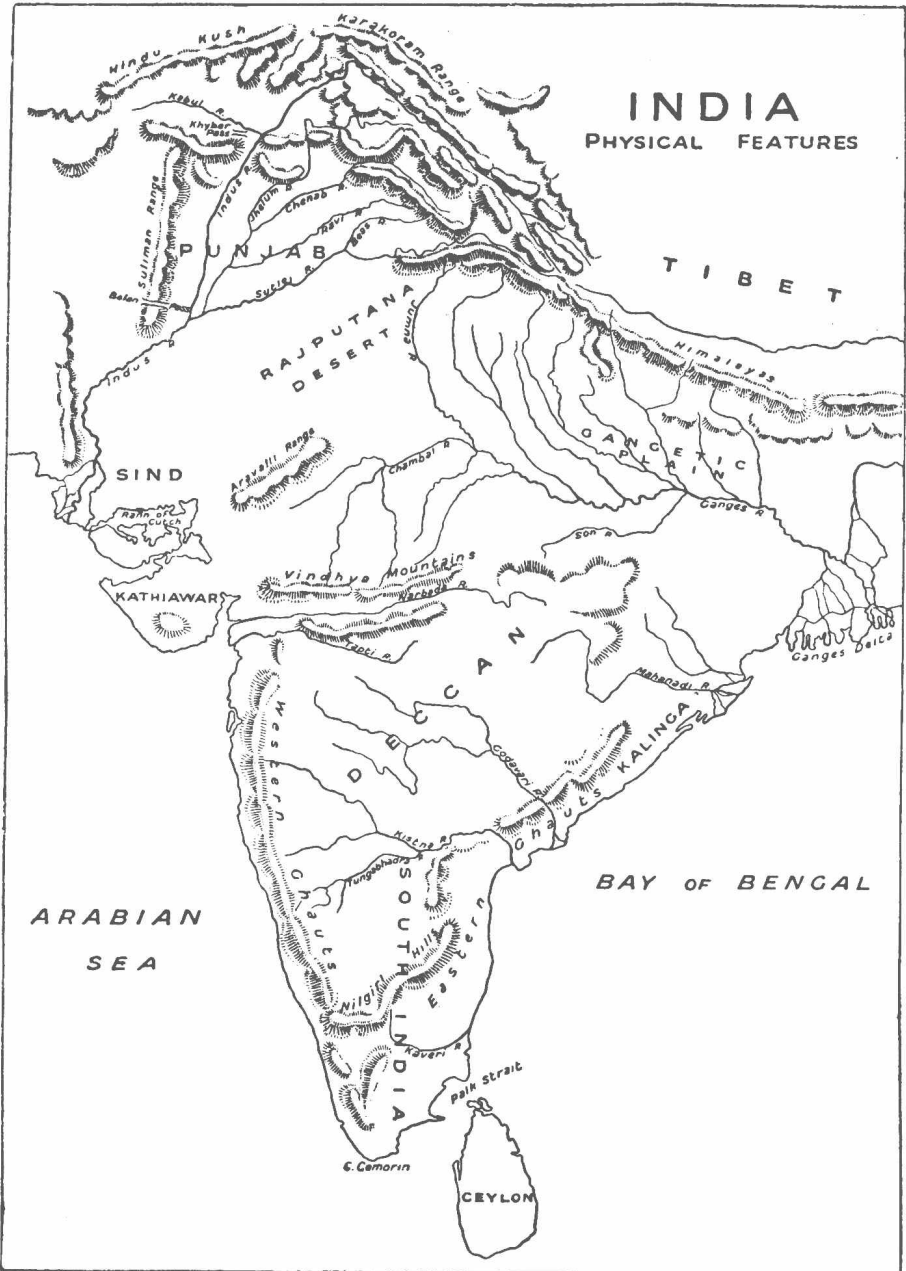
## NOTE

Figs. 1-4 are from Sir J. Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*; Figs. 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 30, 33, 44, from Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*; Figs. 9-14 from Cunningham, *Sānchī and its Remains*; Figs. 22, 24, 26, 37, 38, 39 from Fergusson, *Indian and Eastern Architecture*; Figs. 28, 29, 31, from Rām Rāz, *Hindu Architecture*; and Figs. 32, 34, 35 from Forbes, *Rās Mālā*. Fig. 42 is from a drawing kindly lent by Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy. Figs. 36 and 43 are from the India Museum, South Kensington.

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INDIA



MAP 1. India, Physical Features.



GEOGRAPHY AND PRE-HISTORY

THE sub-continent known to western nations by the name of India is, roughly speaking, a gigantic rhomboid, with an area of about 1,575,000 square miles and a population of over 400 millions. This country is peopled by a large number of ethnic groups in every stage of development, from the aboriginal inhabitants of the central forests to the highly cultured men of letters of its universities, speaking a bewildering number of languages, and differing widely in physical appearance and social customs. It would be inaccurate to apply the term "nation" to ancient India. "The people of Intu," says the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, "call their country by different names, according to the district." Āryāvarta in Sanskrit and Hindustan or Hind in later dialects refer to the Gangetic plain; India was a term originally borrowed by the Greeks from the Persians, who applied it exclusively to the country watered by the Sindhu or Indus river, the inhabitants of which were known as Indians or Hindus. From time to time an Indian Napoleon arose who would temporarily knit this vast congeries of peoples into a coherent whole, and the Mogul Emperors even imposed a single official language, Persian. But it was reserved for her latest conquerors to introduce, not only a common tongue, but common political aspirations, the growth of which had been immensely facilitated by the opening-up of communications, the spread of education and the diffusion of western political ideas. This lack of national consciousness is perhaps the main reason why pre-Muhammadan India had no historians. Her vast literature contains no Herodotus or Thucydides, no Tacitus or Livy; the very memory of her greatest ruler, the Emperor Asoka, was forgotten, until European scholars at the beginning of the 19th century laboriously reconstructed the story by piecing together the fragments which had survived the ravages of time.

And yet through all this apparent diversity there runs an underlying unity. The conception of a national religion, it has been said, is the only germ to be found in ancient times of the