

A History of Asia

Rhoads Murphey



A HISTORY OF ASIA

Rhoads Murphey
University of Michigan



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*To my lifelong teacher and friend, John Fairbank, who died on
September 14, 1991, before I had the chance to present him
with this book, so much of which stems from his inspiration
and example*

PREFACE

There has long been a need for a history of Asia, but that need has become more pressing as courses dealing with it, and enrollments in them, have multiplied. This book is designed primarily for courses in Asian history, but courses in world history or non-Western history will also find it useful. To most people, "Asia" means primarily the areas and cultures east of Persia (Iran) and south of the Soviet Union, which are the focus of this book. This vast and varied part of the world, containing roughly half the world's people since about 3000 B.C. until the present, is sometimes called "Monsoon Asia," the generally warm and wet parts of the continent, sharply distinct from the desert landscape of the Middle East or the cold areas of the Soviet Union. Its permissive climate is, of course, responsible for the size and density of its population, in contrast with the far emptier areas of western and northern Asia. So defined, it stretches from the Khyber Pass on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, through India, mainland and island Southeast Asia, to China, Korea, and Japan.

Each of these separate regions has long contained distinctively different peoples and cultures, but all achieved a high level of sophistication 2,000 years ago or more. Given the great age of these Asian civilizations and the size of their populations from early times, more people have lived in Asia than in the rest of the world put together. Together they thus represent the largest, richest, and most varied chapter in the history of the human experience. Any attempt to deal with world history must make a major place for Asia, but the history of Asia is important and rewarding in itself.

A One-Volume Introduction to Major Asian Civilizations

This book is designed to stand alone, or to be supplemented by readings, from those listed at the end of each chapter or from primary materials (in addition to those quoted in the text). Chapters are of approximately equal length. The book itself can thus serve as the text for a one-semester course, two quarters, or a full year, or can be integrated into a larger world course. An Introduction sets the scene and makes the case for treating the history of Asia in a single volume, including the insights obtainable through comparative analysis but stressing also features common to all Asian societies. Successive chapters present the history of each major culture area or civilization: India, Southeast Asia, China, Korea, and Japan, with an additional section on the history of Central Asia, neglected in almost all other textbooks. Chapter 9 offers another unique feature, a comparative analysis of traditional Asian societies including some comparisons with the Western tradition. With Chapter 10, the modern West begins to impinge on the great Asian traditions, and in subsequent chapters Western pressures and Asian responses play an increasing role, from colonialism, semi-colonialism, and wars of conquest to the second world war and the coming of Asian independence and revolution. A final chapter considers major themes in Asian development at the close of the twentieth century, including its unprecedentedly high economic growth rates, the reasons for this, and the rise of Asia to a position of leadership in the contemporary world.

Nearly all texts in Asian history concentrate on one of the four major civilizations, although a few cover the closely interrelated histories of China and Japan,

sometimes including minor coverage of Korea, which in this book is given relatively greater attention, as is often-neglected Vietnam. Each of the four major Asian civilizations has its own corps of specialists and most of them rarely stray far from their center of expertise. But there is a strong argument for studying Asian history as a whole, perhaps especially on the part of undergraduates, but to the benefit of specialists as well. This book is explicitly comparative, as well as offering a balanced history of each major tradition from its beginnings to the present day. Chapter 19 returns to the theme of Asian universals and cross-cultural comparisons. The book as a whole draws on the most recent scholarship, and reflects the author's professional involvement with Asia and its history over more than 40 years, including long periods of research, observation, and residence there. It is written for beginning students with no previous background in Asian history, introducing them to its major features in clear, simple language.

Focus on Social and Cultural History

A major development in the writing of history during the past 20 years or more has been the increased attention to social and cultural history, and the effort to re-create as much as possible of the lives of ordinary people. This book is especially strong in its attention to such matters, although for the early periods in Asia, as elsewhere, we have only a little to draw on. Nevertheless, every chapter includes as much as can be derived about social and cultural trends and about the everyday life of the common people, in addition to major political and economic events and developments. A further feature is the coverage of all the major Asian religions (Chapter 4) and its consideration of how each religious tradition fit in with and reflected the societies where it flourished. The emphasis on sociocultural developments is especially clearly brought out in the book's wealth of photographic illustrations. Maps in nearly every chapter further illustrate the stage on which the events described took place. An additional feature of this book is its recurrent emphasis on the geographic basis of each Asian civilization, and the role of the environment in the evolution of each. Finally, particular attention is paid in every chapter to the changing role of women, both individually in the case of women who rose to prominence in various fields, and collectively in terms of the changing status of women in each Asian society.

Features and Primary Source Materials

To add vividness, but also to pursue many of the points mentioned above, most chapters also include an urban portrait, of a city during the time of the chapter's coverage, with special attention to the lives of ordinary people, and a biographical portrait with the same objectives; many of the latter are of prominent women, but all help to make history come alive. Nearly every chapter includes five or more boxed quotations from relevant primary sources which further contribute to putting the reader into the scene in a participatory way, as well as providing a sample of the kinds of documents with which historians work. Finally, at the end of every chapter except the last is an extensive set of suggestions for further readings, selected mainly from the most recent scholarship on each chapter's subject but including also classical or standard works, and usually providing a range of differing interpretations.

The writing of history, like that in any discipline, is continually changing, as our own perceptions of the past change and as each new generation looks for

different things in the past. This book reflects those changes, and presents the history of Asia as most professionals in the field view it today. Its currency, and its coverage of recent events well into 1991, is a strong asset. Asian history is a rapidly growing field, and it is time for a text that covers it for beginning students, as a whole rather than as the history of individual countries, as we have long had for Western history. It is at least as rich, as old or older, and as important in the global scene, by any combination of measures. The world of the twenty-first century seems likely to be dominated by Asia, even more than in its traditional and glorious past. We need to understand far more about it, and the best way to achieve that, including an understanding of the present and future, is to study its history.

Acknowledgments

No one really writes alone, and I have been enabled to undertake this doubtless presumptuous task by a host of other scholars, some my friends and colleagues at Michigan and elsewhere, many others whom I have known only through what they have written. My debt to all of these people is incalculable, and I can never hope to repay it. Without in any way regarding it as adequate, I want nevertheless to thank specifically a few of my colleagues and friends who have taken the trouble to read parts, and in a few cases most, of the book in manuscript, have shared their comments with me, and have saved me from many errors: Professors Dilip Basu, Michael Cullinane, Roger Hackett, Karl Hutterer, Victor Lieberman, Thomas Trautmann, and Philip Woodruff. James Chan read the entire manuscript and provided valuable comments and corrections. I am also grateful to the readers to whom the publisher sent the manuscript for their most helpful comments: Howard Didsbury, Kean College of New Jersey; Ron Edgerton, University of Northern Colorado; Jeff Hanes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Justin Libby, Indiana University/Purdue University; and C. K. Yoon, James Madison University. It should go without saying that errors, infelicities, or imbalances which remain are entirely my own responsibility.

Equally important, I am indebted to all of my fellow Asianists at many universities and colleges in this country and abroad from whom I have learned so much over many years through association and interchange as well as through reading their work. They have been and remain my teachers, but I also owe a special debt to my original teachers: John Fairbank, Edwin Reischauer, Daniel Ingalls, Rupert Emerson, and Norman Brown, each of whom began my apprenticeship in the most exciting ways and from whom I am still learning. To that list of teachers I would add the kind, cheerful, helpful, understanding, wonderful people of China, India, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia, among whom I have lived and worked at various times for many years all told, and without whom I could never have attempted such a book or a career in Asian studies at all. They have been my first and greatest teachers, and they have also given me a love for them and their world which is what brought me to Asian studies to begin with and which has continued to sustain me. One cannot begin to understand without sympathy, and that they have given me in overflowing measure.

All of these, my teachers and friends, have not only inspired me in this over-ambitious endeavor but have made it, quite honestly, a pleasure. My wife Eleanor has also helped to make it so with her encouragement, her often insightful critical readings of what I wrote, and her cheerful support throughout. I can never dis-

charge my debt to all those who have helped me, but I will be richly rewarded if they, and the readers of this book, find it acceptable, and for those new to the field, an invitation to a further voyage of discovery, to find at least some of the excitement my many teachers around the world have given me in the riches of Asia.

Rhoads Murphey

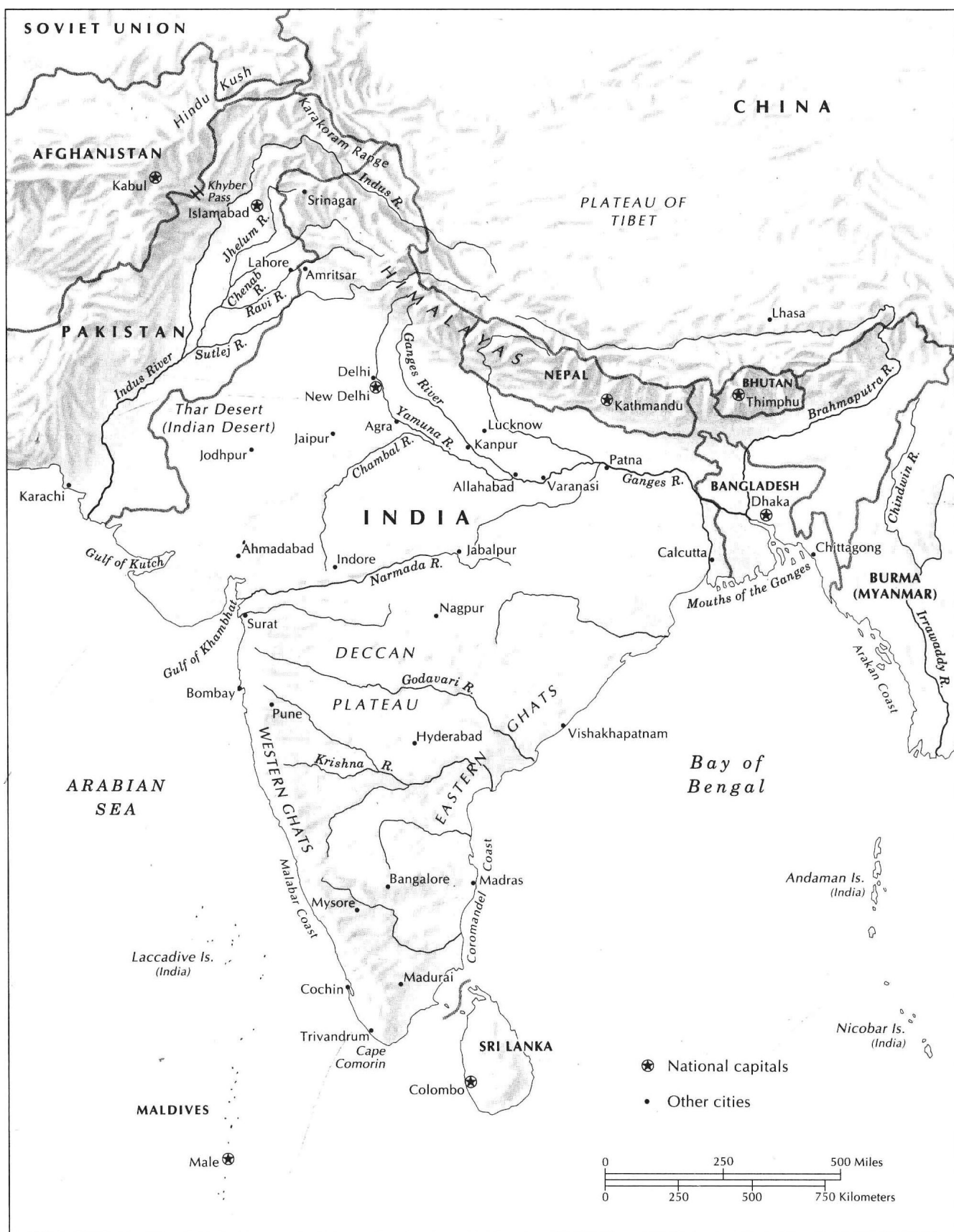
AUTHOR'S NOTE TO THE READER

No single-volume attempt to write the history of Asia can be more than the briefest introduction. I hope that all who read it will take it as an invitation to explore further. Space limits have made it necessary to foreshorten the treatment of every major aspect of Asian history, and to do less than justice to all of them. I have nevertheless tried within these constraints to apportion space more or less in relation to the size, populousness, and level of development of each culture or country at each period. It has been necessary to adjust to the additional consideration that, especially for the earlier periods, we do not have adequate sources for many areas, by comparison with others which are consequently somewhat more fully treated. Thus, for example, Japan before about 1500, Korea before about 1850, and most of Southeast Asia before about 1800 are not treated here as extensively as India and, especially, China, where we have so much more material and many more centuries of literate development to draw on. It is perhaps some consolation that none of these areas contained more than a small fraction of India's or China's population, and that what development took place there owed a great deal to the Chinese and/or Indian models and their diffusion. All of these considerations, except perhaps the last, are even more relevant for Central Asia.

Periodization is a perennial problem for all historians, and the same is true for period labels. I have had to be both sweeping and arbitrary in this book, given its temporal and areal scope. "Medieval" is a European term and has many connotations for European history. It does not carry those associations for Asia, but one must use some term in so general a treatment to cover the period between "ancient" or "classical" and "modern." "Medieval" means simply "middle era" or "middle period," and I have used it here strictly in that sense, as being simpler and clearer than any alternatives but without implying that European patterns or preconceptions are intended. When one writes about anything beyond the recent past, there is another and more vital problem: We know far too little of the lives of most people, especially the nonliterate who were the great majority everywhere until recently and who thus have left us only indirect evidence about themselves. For much of the past we have records primarily of the lives and doings of the elites and the rise and fall of states and kingdoms, monuments and battles, kings and conquests. Here and there we can catch a glimpse of the lives of ordinary people, and I have tried to draw on some of this material where possible, including what popular literature has survived, festivals, folk religion, and guesses about mass welfare, but I am well aware that I can give only an incomplete picture. The record of major events is important too, and given the limitations of any one-volume treatment, they necessarily take up most of these pages.

About the Author

RHOADS MURPHEY Born in Philadelphia, Rhoads Murphey, a specialist in Chinese history and in geography, received the Ph.D. degree from Harvard University in 1950. Before joining the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1964, he taught at the University of Washington; he has also been a visiting professor at Taiwan University and Tokyo University. From 1954 to 1956 he was the director of the Conference of Diplomats in Asia. The University of Michigan granted him a Distinguished Service Award in 1974. Formerly president of the Association for Asian Studies, Murphey has served as editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies* and *Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies*. The Social Science Research Council, the Ford Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Council of Learned Societies have awarded him fellowships. A prolific author, Murphey's books include *Shanghai: Key to Modern China* (1953), *An Introduction to Geography* (4th ed., 1978), *A New China Policy* (with others, 1965), *Approaches to Modern Chinese History* (with others, 1967), *The Scope of Geography* (3rd ed., 1982), *The Treaty Ports and China's Modernization* (1970), *China Meets the West: The Treaty Ports* (1975), and *The Fading of the Maoist Vision* (1980). *The Outsiders: Westerners in India and China* (1977) won the Best-Book-of-the-Year award from the University of Michigan Press.





Time Chart

	India	China	Korea-Japan	Southeast Asia	Other Civilizations
3000 B.C.	Indus Culture	Yang Shao Lung Shan	Jomon culture in Japan to c. 300 B.C.	Early bronze and agriculture	Sumer and Egypt
2000 B.C.	Aryan Migrations	Hsia (?) Shang	Chinese civilization spreads to Korea	Javanese (?) sailors to Africa	Hammurabi's Code, 1750 B.C. Hyksos invasion of Egypt Trojan War
1000 B.C.	Vedic Culture The Buddha Magadha Maurya 322-180 B.C. Ashoka, r. 269-232 B.C.	Chou conquest, 1027 B.C. Confucius Warring States Ch'in conquest, 221 B.C.	Yayoi culture in Japan, c. 300 B.C.-A.D. 250	Nam Viet	Homer, Socrates, Plato Greek city-states Aristotle, Alexander Rise of Roman power Julius Caesar
A.D.	Kushans c. 100 B.C.-200 A.D. Guptas, c. 320-c. 550 Harsha, 606-648 Southern kingdoms: Chola, Pandya, Pallava Tamils Invade Ceylon Arabs in Sindh	Han dynasty, 206 B.C.-A.D. 220 Northern Wei and "Six Dynasties"; Spread of Buddhism Sui, 581-617 T'ang, 618-907 Northern Sung, 960-1127 S. Sung, 1127-1279 Su Shih, Chu Hsi	Paekche, Koguryo, and Silla in Korea Tomb Period, A.D. 250-A.D. 550 in Japan Yamato State c. 550-c. 710 Nara Period 710-784 Heian 794-1185 Lady Murasaki Koryo in Korea, 935-1200	China conquers Nam Viet Early states: Funan, Champa Northern Vietnam free from China T'ang retake N. Vietnam, Sung let it go Pagan kingdom in Burma, 850-1280s	Jesus Christ Roman Empire-Mediterranean and Western Europe Fall of Rome by 410 Muhammed 570-632 Abbasid Caliphate Byzantine Empire Charlemagne, 768-814
1000	Mahmud of Ghazni and Muslim invaders in N. Delhi Sultanate, 1206-1526 Ala-ud-din, r. 1296-1316 Tughluks and Lodis Vijayanagar 1336-1565	Mongol conquest, Yuan dynasty, 1279-1368 Ming, 1368-1644 Cheng Ho's fleets Water Margins, Golden Lotus	Mongol conquest of Korea; Yi, 1392-1910 Kamakura in Japan 1185-1333 Ashikaga 1336-1580 Nobunaga and Hideyoshi	Ankor Thom and Wat, c. 900-c. 1200: Khmer glory and decline Rise of Thai state Borobudur, Sri Vijaya, Majapahit, 800-1400	Mayas in Central America Aztecs in Mexico Crusades, 1096-1204 Tamerlane 1136-1405 Incas in Peru Ottoman Empire-Suleiman 1495-1566 W. Renaissance 14th-16th centuries Copernicus, Galileo, Michelangelo

Babur; Mughals,
1526-1707 (1858)
Akbar, 1556-1605
Shah Jahan, 1628-1658
Aurangzeb, 1658-1707

Hideyoshi's invasion of
Korea
Tokugawa, 1600-1868
Expulsion of foreigners
Rise of Edo and merchant
culture

Southward expansion of
Vietnamese
Portuguese trade and
bases
Rise of Dutch power
Spanish Philippines,
1521(1565)-1898 and
Spanish America

Rise of the English state
Elizabeth I d. 1603
Shakespeare 1564-1616
Louis XIV r. 1669-1715
Peter the Great of
Russia, 1672-1725

Calcutta, 1690
Plassey, 1757
Rise of Company power
British in Ceylon
Cornwallis and Wellesley

Nagasaki as "window on
the world"
Daimyo hostages at and
visits to Edo
Further rise of merchants

New Toungoo state in
Burma, 1635-1732
Chakrit dynasty in Siam,
from 1782
Dutch control Java
Vietnamese control the
South

J. S. Bach, d. 1750
American Revolution
Mozart, d. 1791
French Revolution and
Napoleon

British defeat Marathas
1st Afghan war
British takeovers
British add Punjab
Revolt of 1857
Railway building
Rise of colonial ports
Suez open 1869
Congress 1885
Rising nationalism
Curzon 1899-1905

Tokugawa system under
threat
Perry to Tokyo Bay, 1853
Meiji Restoration, 1868;
rise of Tokyo
Japanese industrialization
and imperialism in
Korea and Taiwan
Korea a "protectorate"
"Unequal Treaties" end

Penang founded
Singapore founded
1st Burmese war
"Culture System" in Java
2nd Burmese war
"Unequal Treaties" in
Siam
French take South
Vietnam in 1862, and
North in 1885
3rd Burmese war; Dutch
take Sumatra and Bali
U.S. takes the Philippines

U.S. War of 1812.
Waterloo, 1815
Reform Bills in England
Abortive revolutions of
1848 in Europe
Latin American
independence
The West enters Africa;
U.S. Civil War;
German and Italian
unification

India at war
Amritsar 1919
Gandhi and satyagraha
World War II
Independence and
Partition
Nehru dies 1964
Bangladesh 1971

Defeat of Russia 1905
Shantung and 21
Demands
Rule of Korea and
Manchuria; the "China
Incident"
The Dark Valley and
Pearl Harbor, 1941
Defeat and regrowth

U.S. crushes Philippine
"rebels"
Rise of nationalism in
Burma, Vietnam,
Indonesia; Philippine
collaboration
Ho Chih Minh, Sukarno,
Manuel Quezon
Japanese conquest
Independence

Boer War
World War I
Russian Revolution
World depression
World War II
Korea independent, and
at war
The Cold War
Vietnam War

Ithaka

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.
Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.
Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.
Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.
And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

C. P. Cavafy

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