



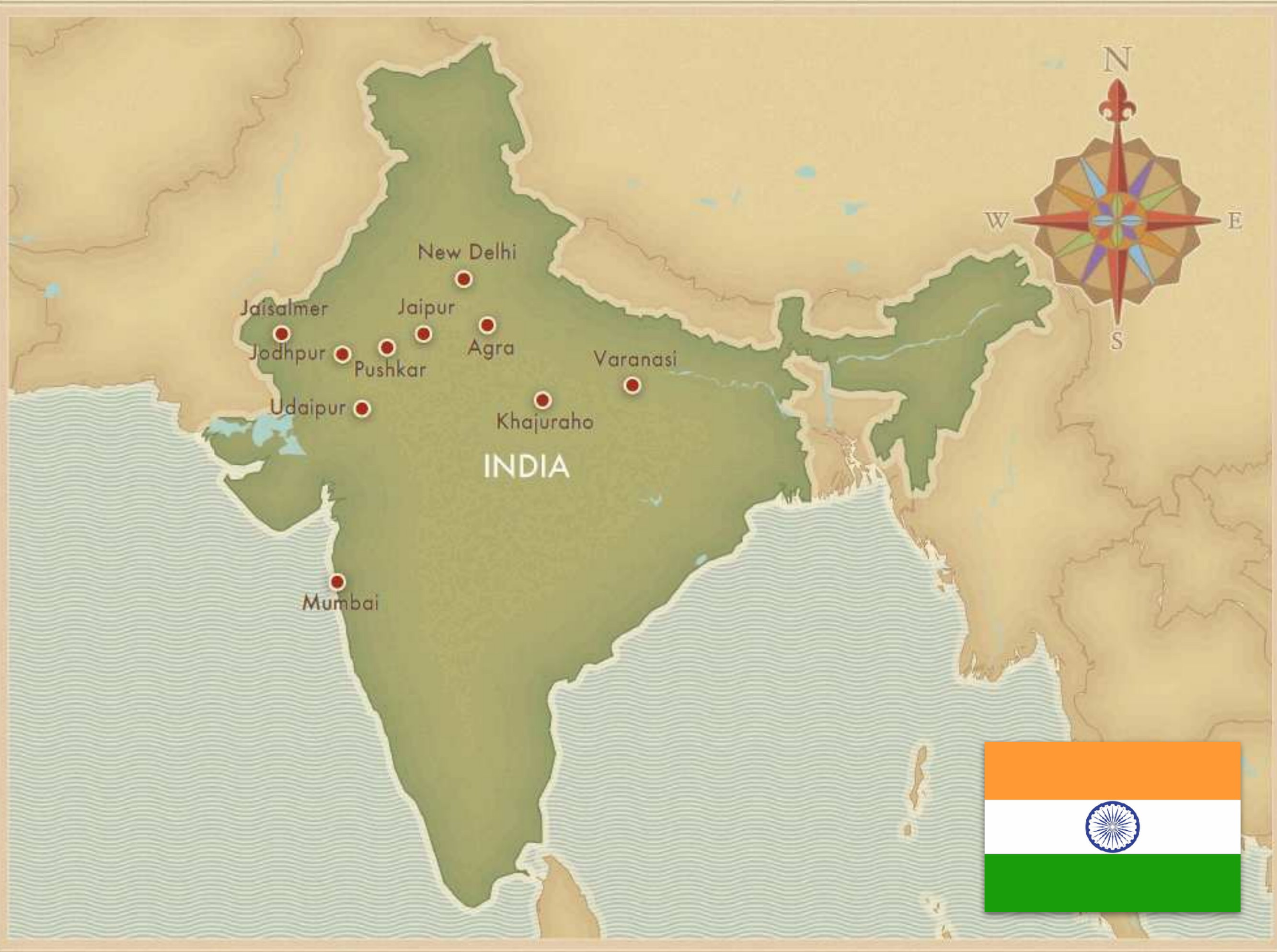
# A Photo Journey through India

Giancarlo Bisone

# A Photo Journey through India

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- ❖ I have been interested in India's history and culture for many years. I am glad that I had the opportunity to travel to India twice (in 2004 and 2016).
- ❖ I would like to share with you some of my personal impressions of this fascinating country/sub continent
- ❖ My travels to India have been mostly limited to the northern part of the Country (Rajasthan, Delhi, Agra, Varanasi).
- ❖ The main difference I noticed between the two trips, was the number of people using cell phones. India has more than 1B cell phones.



New Delhi

Jaisalmer

Jaipur

Agra

Varanasi

Khajuraho

INDIA

Udaipur

Pushkar

Mumbai



# Traveling to India is not easy

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- ❖ Traveling through India is quite a tough experience due to the lack of infrastructure and the environment.
- ❖ A traveler is required to have a lot of immunizations since almost every known infectious disease (malaria, polio, hepatitis, etc.) is present in the country.
- ❖ The environmental conditions are tough:
  - ▶ lack of western-standard potable water
  - ▶ air pollution
  - ▶ sound pollution
  - ▶ traffic conditions are the worst I ever experienced
  - ▶ dirt and filth are everywhere and unavoidable
  - ▶ poverty and despair are quite visible even in “upscale” areas

# Why travel to India as a tourist?

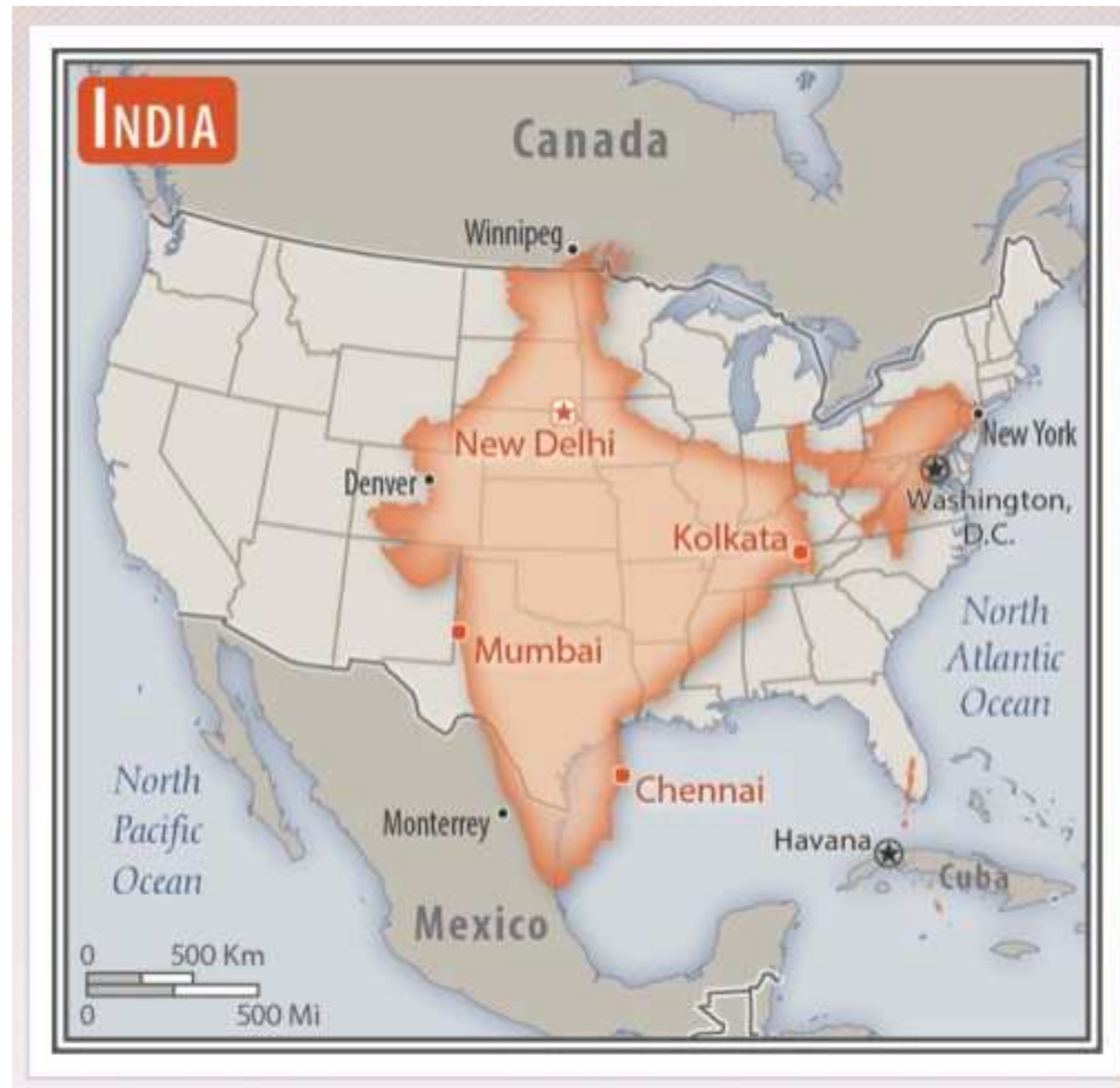
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- ❖ The most exotic place I have visited, a place that throws a Westerner well out of his/hers comfort zone at every level.
- ❖ A land of incredible contrasts and variety.
- ❖ A land with thousand of years of history.
- ❖ A land with very nice people.
- ❖ A photographer's paradise (colors, people, landscape, monuments, markets, wildlife, etc.).

The “India” bug gets under your skin

# Facts about India

- ❖ India has an area slightly more than one-third the size of the US



# Facts about India

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- ❖ India has a population of 1.3B people and it is expected to become the most populated country of the world by 2028. Unlike China, there are no measures in place to limit the population growth.
- ❖ India has 16 official languages: English is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication while Hindi is the most widely spoken language and primary tongue of 41% of the people.
- ❖ India is the largest Democracy of the world and there are around 990 registered parties, although not all are functional.

# Facts about India

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- ❖ The religions of the population in India are:
  - ▶ Hindu 80%
  - ▶ Muslim 14%
  - ▶ Christian 2.3%
  - ▶ Sikh 1.7%
  - ▶ Other and unspecified 2%
- ❖ Religion was the driving force behind the creation of India (*with a Hindu majority*) and Pakistan (*predominantly Muslim*) when Great Britain relinquished the control of the Indian Subcontinent in 1947.
- ❖ Pakistan itself was divided into East (now Bangladesh) and West.



# India vs. Pakistan

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- ❖ The division in 1947 led immediately to riots, the migration of millions of people to the 'correct' side of the border, and hundreds of thousands of murders.
- ❖ Moreover, India and Pakistan continued to bicker over the control of the formerly independent territory of Kashmir (under the partition plan provided by the Indian Independence Act of 1947, Kashmir was free to accede to India or Pakistan). The local ruler chose India even if the majority of the population was Muslim.
- ❖ This translated into three wars (1947, 1965 and 1971) and the development of nuclear weapons by both countries.
- ❖ The relations between the two countries are still frigid, following repeated acts of cross-border terrorism (the most famous of which is the 2008 Mumbai attacks).

# India's most popular sports

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- ❖ Cricket is by far the most popular sport in India. Cricket is played everywhere and not only in stadiums. Galli Cricket (“street cricket”) can be seen in every city and village.
- ❖ Badminton is the second most played sport in India.
- ❖ Field Hockey is the national Olympics sport of India. India is one of the most successful countries when it comes to men's field hockey. India has won more Olympics medals than any other team in the world.

# India land of contrasts

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- ❖ Wealth in India is extremely unequally distributed. The difference in the wealth share held by India's poorest and richest is enormous. India's richest top 10% own 76.3% of national wealth, whilst its poorer portion hustles for a mere 4.1%. This divide keeps increasing.
- ❖ There's no other place that showcases this inequality quite like India's commercial capital, Mumbai. Mumbai has long been home to some of the richest people on the subcontinent and it also happens to have the third-largest slum in the world, home to between roughly 700,000 to about 1 million people, right in its center.

# Antilia

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- ❖ Antilia in Mumbai is the world's most expensive single family home; the 400,000-square foot 27-story residential skyscraper cost \$1 billion to build.
- ❖ The house is owned by Mukesh Ambani, the wealthiest man in India with an estimated net worth of \$22 billion.
- ❖ Antilia contains a multi-story garage with space for 168 cars. It also features three helipads on the roof, a lobby with nine elevators, a spa, terraced gardens, 50 seat theater and a temple where the family prays regularly.



Antilia

# The story behind the photos

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# Dhobi Ghat

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- ❖ The Dhobi Ghat is the largest open air laundromat in Mumbai, India.  
The washers, locally known as Dhobis, work in the open in concrete wash pens, each fitted with its own flogging stone.
- ❖ This laundromat serves Mumbai's hotels and hospitals.











# Rural Life

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- ❖ People living in India's rural areas make up around 70% of the population.  
Regardless the economic growth of the last decades, rural life is still quite hard due to lack of infrastructure and job opportunities.
- ❖ For example, it is not uncommon to have only one water well in a village of 15,000 people.
- ❖ Most of the harder jobs are handled by women.
- ❖ Wood and Dung cakes are the main source of fuel for home cooking and heating.  
Dung cakes are made by hand by village women and are traditionally made from cow or buffalo dung.  
The energy produced by one dung cake of an average size gives the equivalent of that of 0.15 lbs of coal





स्फाई का फूल खिलाए!  
आओ निर्मल गांव बनाए!!

ग्रामसेवा

ग्रामसेवा  
पा.जा.  
स्फाई  
सुइसा  
दोसा











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# The Traffic

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- ❖ Driving and simply walking in India can be a harrowing experience.
- ❖ Every road (including freeways) is shared by animals, pedestrians, bicycles, tuk-tuks, cars, trucks.
- ❖ It is quite common to see trucks and buses driving on the wrong side of the roads as they take a shortcut.
- ❖ While driving, everyone has the hand on the horn so the noise level can be deafening.
- ❖ While crossing the road one has to commit; the best way to be hit is to stop and hesitate.

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वक्त सै पहले मसीबरे ज्यादा कभी नहीं मिलता

SPEED 40K.M

MATAR KHAN

WAIT FOR SIDE

SABIR KHAN

मासा भाजा

रंगीला राजस्थान













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अर्जुन सिंह तलवार स  
हमारे यहाँ नई व पुरानी तलवार रिपेयरिंग को

# The Taj Mahal

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- ❖ An immense mausoleum of white marble, built in Agra between 1631 and 1648 by order of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his favorite wife, the Taj Mahal is the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world.
- ❖ Today, some 3 million people a year (or around 45,000 a day during peak tourist season) visit the Taj Mahal.











# Khajuraho Temples

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- ❖ The Khajuraho Temples in Madhya Pradesh are amongst the most beautiful medieval monuments in India. Originally a group of 85, they are the largest group of Hindu and Jain temples in the world, although only about 25 of them remain today.
- ❖ The Khajuraho Temples were built by the Chandella rulers between AD 900 and 1130, during the golden period of the Chandela dynasty.  
It is presumed that every Chandella ruler built at least one temple in his lifetime.
- ❖ They have awed generations of people with their architectural brilliance, intricate carvings and, most famously, their erotic sculptures (essentially the whole Kama Sutra in stone).







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WT/H7



WT/H7

WT/H8



WT/G 2

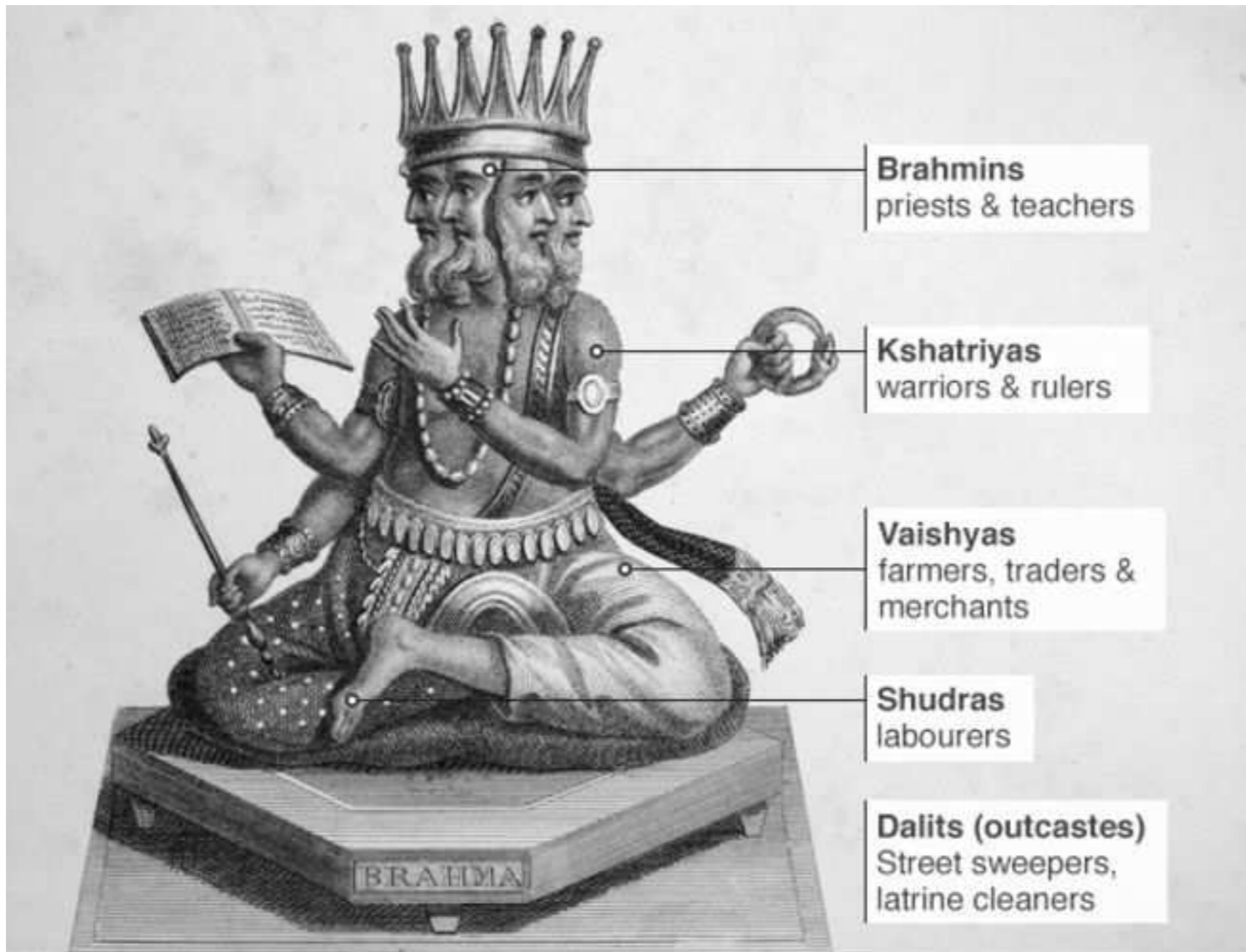


# The caste system

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- ❖ India's caste system is among the world's oldest forms of surviving social stratification.
- ❖ The system which divides Hindus into rigid hierarchical groups based on their karma (work) and dharma (duty) is generally accepted to be more than 3,000 years old.
- ❖ Many believe that the groups originated from Brahma, the Hindu God of creation.
- ❖ Independent India's constitution banned discrimination on the basis of caste, and, authorities announced quotas in government jobs and educational institutions for lower castes.
- ❖ In recent decades, with the spread of secular education and growing urbanization, the influence of caste has somewhat declined.
- ❖ Last names are very often associated to a caste.

# The caste system



# The caste system - The Untouchable

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- ❖ Traditionally, the groups characterized as untouchable were those whose occupations and habits of life involved “polluting” activities like:
  - ▶ taking life for a living (e.g. fishermen)
  - ▶ killing or disposing of dead cattle or working with their hides for a living
  - ▶ pursuing activities that brought the participant into contact with emissions of the human body, such as feces, urine, etc. (e.g. sweepers and washermen)
  - ▶ eating the flesh of cattle or of domestic pigs and chickens, a category into which most of the indigenous tribes of India fell.

# Varanasi

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- ❖ Varanasi is India's oldest city, and one of the oldest continuously populated cities on Earth (more than 5,000 years). Hindus believe that Lord Shiva and his wife, Parvati, walked through Varanasi at the beginning of time after he released the Ganges from a knot in his hair.
- ❖ The old name of the city, "Kashi" means "site of spiritual luminance". For centuries Varanasi has been the center of Indian philosophy, spiritualism, Ayurveda (mind-body connection), Yoga and mysticism.
- ❖ Every devout Hindu hopes to visit the city at least once in a lifetime, to take a holy dip at the Ghats!of the Ganga (steps leading down to the water) and to die and be cremated there.
- ❖ Varanasi is also revered by Buddhists as the site where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon.

# Varanasi - Ganges

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- ❖ In Hinduism, the river Ganges is considered sacred and is personified as a goddess Ganga. She is worshiped by Hindus who believe that bathing in the river causes the remission of sins and facilitates Moksha (liberation from the cycle of life and death).
- ❖ For Hindus in India, the Ganges is not just a river but a mother, a goddess, a tradition, a culture.
- ❖ Unfortunately, the Ganges is the sixth most polluted river in the world. Experts estimate that more than 800 million gallons of untreated sewage from towns along the Ganges are pumped into the river every day.  
By the time it reaches Varanasi, the river becomes a sewer.

# Varanasi - Ganges

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- ❖ Every evening at sunset, the Ganga Aarti ceremony (“Putting the river to sleep”) takes place on the banks of the Ganges. This is a devotional ritual that uses fire as an offering to goddess Ganga.
- ❖ A simpler ceremony is held every morning to wake up the river.



॥ कर्मवैतना ॥  
श्री गणेशाय नमः

श्री गणेशाय नमः

श्री अनुप जायसवाल 8899999045  
वाराणसी, उत्तर प्रदेश, भारत

















# Varanasi - Cremation

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- ❖ Varanasi is most famous as a place of pilgrimage for the dying. Hindus believe that dying in this sacred place will free them from reincarnation, the endless cycle of life, death and rebirth. Having your body cremated in Varanasi and your ashes scattered in the holy Ganges completes the sacred ritual, and allows you to reach moksha, a state of blissful liberation beyond this human existence.
- ❖ The idea of the “Hospice” (i.e. place to die) started in Varanasi as many Hindus travel to Varanasi at the twilight hour of their life.
- ❖ Varanasi’s famous cremation ghat, runs 24/7, burning hundreds of bodies a day in plain sight.
- ❖ A high-end cremation can cost up to \$800.

# Varanasi - Cremation

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- ❖ Cremation is performed by Doms members of the untouchable caste.
- ❖ All burning pyres are lit by the sacred flame on the Manikarnika ghat (According to the Hindu belief, the flame was lit 3,500 years ago by Lord Shiva).
- ❖ Traditionally, that flame is controlled by the Dom Raja “the lord of the dead”.  
He rules over the doms and is one of the richest people in town (despite his low caste). If you want to use the flame to cremate a loved one, you have to negotiate with him.  
As with royalty, the position is hereditary.



# Varanasi - Cremation

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- ❖ The demand for wood, particularly hard wood, taxes Himalayan forests. Burning one large body can require up to 1,100 pounds of logs. 50 to 60 million trees are consumed annually for cremation pyres.  
Electric or gas-fired crematoriums have been built but most still prefer traditional methods.
- ❖ Not everyone can afford the cost of funeral pyres  
Even the cheapest wood is beyond the reach for much of the poor. Many bodies are discarded into the Ganges partially cremated or not at all. Estimates say 100,000 bodies at various cremation levels are tossed into the Ganges each year.









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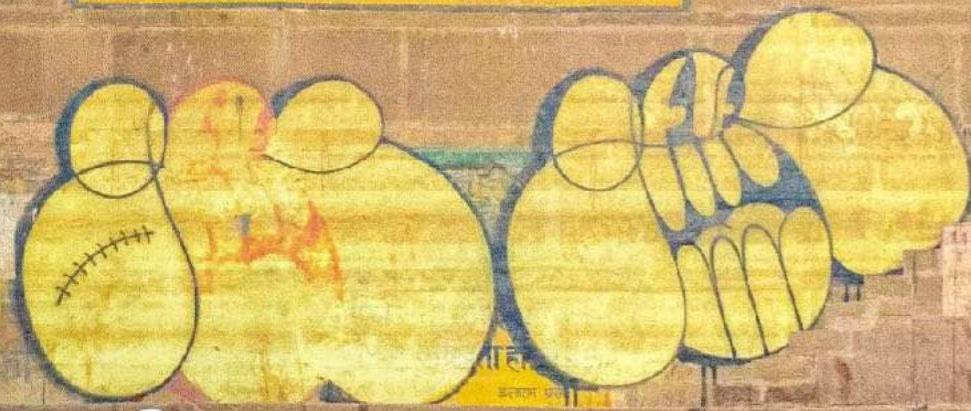
श्री श्री  
काशी समाश्रम

सोना राम दास आकार नाथ

दिगपतिया घाट  
DIGPATIYA GHAT

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सोहरा  
सुलभा हाटरोपताल सोशल सर्विस थारोवर्हेराल



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BRAND LIFE BAKERY RESTAURANT  
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# Conclusion

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- ❖ A trip to India definitely will leave you with life lasting memories.
- ❖ If you have the possibility to visit this country, just do it.

# Slideshow



View slideshow at  
[https://youtu.be/-09vZeO\\_GK4](https://youtu.be/-09vZeO_GK4)

# Thank You

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