

INDIA
January, 1992

"Of the gladdest moments in human life, methinks, is the departure upon a distant journey into unknown lands. Shaking off with one mighty effort the feathers of Habit, the leaden weight of Routine, the cloak of many Cares, man feels once more happy. The blood flows with the fast circulation of childhood. Afresh dawns the morn of life...."

Richard Burton
Journal Entry
December 2, 1856

Why India? Many ask. Especially after two earlier visits, in 1956 with Anne across the North (Calcutta, Benares, Delhi, Agra, Nepal and Kashmir), and in 1965 to Delhi on a TIME CEO News Tour.

Is it perhaps its 850 million people, the world's second mass of humanity? Is it perhaps its cultural resilience to emerge undiluted into the 21st century while other great civilizations (Egypt, Greece, Rome) bear no resemblance to their pasts? Is it perhaps its multiculturalism, its religious diversity, its caste structure, its historic antagonisms, its multilingualism? Is it perhaps its valiant attempts, as the world's largest democracy, to govern extraordinary diversity that goes far beyond that of our nation? Is it perhaps the enormity of the governance problem, when your country is poor and vastly overpopulated? Is it perhaps the remarkable legacy left by the Brits who were only here 100 years? Is it perhaps her army, the world's second largest, with atomic capability, exchanging fire with Pakistan almost daily, with three Indo-Paki wars since Independence. Or is it simply that India is large, colorful and different? That suffices to prompt my return to see more of India: Rajasthan and The South.

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It takes 24 hours (19 in the air) to fly United's non-stop to Hong Kong, connect to BA's Delhi hop and transfer to Indian Air Lines over to Jaipur (35 minutes). This daily four-stop Delhi-Bombay flight leaves at 5:40 a.m. Across the Pacific my Filipina seatmate reacted to my stated destination (India) by asking, bewildered, "is that near Fiji?" I figured there wasn't much to talk about, so read Chasing the Monsoon.

JAIPUR. In the pre-dawn from Jaipur's airport one's first sight is of homeless families clustered in small communities along the roadside, camels pulling carts of goods to market, Jaipur, the Pink City, was constructed from blocks of pink sandstone which at dawn and

sunset have a pink-orange glow. It is a planned city: a famous maharajah, soldier, leader and accomplished astronomer, Jai Singh, designed this new capital in 1727. Jaipur remains encircled by fortified, crenelated walls with seven gates, spacious boulevards lined with pink buildings, lattice abutments and domed minarets.

I first walked to the railway/bus terminal -- always a good place to start. A pool of station porters in bright red turbans and jackets, women (many veiled) in flowing robes of red, orange, yellow...mascara-eyed infants...donkey carts, camels, "rickshaws" (as the three-wheeled, open, motor taxis are called)...and waves of sacred cows...occasional elephants with brightly painted forehead and trunk. The air is marvelous: in January early mornings are in the 40s, rapidly rising to the 60s, warmer in the full sun. It was the first of what would prove to be 21 days without even a cloud. And in the south the weather in winter is absolutely perfect: a range of 65-75 day and night, crystal clear skies with constant soft breezes, and long sunsets. I never perspired the entire trip, despite walking about 50 miles, mostly in full sun. Dehydration, yes...four liters of water daily, at least.

Lunched on oranges and bananas...toured the Haveli mansion with panoramic view over rooftop terraces...through the mob scene to the Tripola Bazaar...to Jai Singh's remarkable Observatory where the world's largest sundial displays the time to two-second accuracy...to the City Palace with its adjoining Palace of Harems where lived his 1600 concubines...Jai Singh sent scholars to Europe and Arabia to study observatories, built prototypes in Delhi and Benares, and then his masterpiece in Jaipur. Covering several acres, its yellow sandstone sculptures each have a specific astronomical function. The palaces are a blend of Mogul and Hindu architecture...the museum displays beautiful carpets from Herat and Lahore dating to the 1600s...two enormous silver cauldrons ("world's largest silver items") which used to contain Ganges water. The Maharajah wouldn't drink anything else, even took a cauldron to England on his state visit... Palace is interlaced with 356 fountains, always tinkling water when summer reaches over 120 degrees regularly...also photos and actual clothing of Jai Singh II, nicknamed 4x7 (4' wide, 7' tall, weight: 600 pounds)...to the Palace of Winds. Where the boulevards intersect are produce markets and the inevitable congregation of cows dazed in the swirling traffic.

Afternoon at Amber Palace on a hilltop six miles out, the best preserved of many hilltop forts. Amber dates from the 11th century, then capital of the region. For the ride up the ancient stone road leading through the gates one mounts a richly painted elephant. Inside the Palace are well preserved frescoes, mosaics, carved marble, mirrors and glasswork...highlight is the Chamber of Mirrors, the Maharajah's bedroom: the arched ceiling is a glitter of tin mirrors that reflect a lighted match into a spectacular galaxy of stars twinkling in a black sky. Fantastic!

Back to the Jai Mahal for a dinner with tortuous music, the screeching was so terrible that many of us could not refrain from laughing. But the food was OK. The next day I would transfer to the Rambagh Palace Hotel where Beethoven graced breakfast.

The Rambagh is now surrounded by the ugly sprawl of new Jaipur, but sheltered by high walls. An 18th century palace of picturesque cupolas and screens and a grand entrance way, it is set in flat gardens and spacious lawns, with indoor swimming pool (under repair), tennis, golf, polo, squash, horseback riding -- everything a proper Englishman might want.

The Rambagh features a spectacular welcoming ceremony for tour groups in late afternoon (but not for me, arriving alone with a knapsack). It was a French group today. A richly painted elephant guards the entrance. Four camels form a passageway, turbinned-uniformed attendants with trumpets combine with a group of drummers and horns on the balcony to create a terrible din. The elephant tries to drown it all out with his trumpeting. Good show!

Dinner in Rampagh's superb Suvarna Mahal restaurant, with Rajasthani music and dancing. Lives up to all its advance hoopla.

The next morning is clear with some frost on the grass...visited Alfred Hall, once a striking marble mansion with splendid turrets, converted to a museum by Mr. Alfred as his life's work. Now a shambles. Sad.

On to the zoo boasting tigers, but only had African lions...toured around by pedicab which the pedalers call "Indian Helicopter"...mix with the homeless, cheery in misery and dignified in rags and dirt. Visited new white marble Hindu temple paid for by Birla family...watched daughters take the lice out of mother's hair, like monkeys (a nationwide custom, I later observed)...women fetching water from communal pumps, hoisting great silver and bronze pots on their heads for the precarious walk home...everyone very friendly.

Afternoon spent with car and driver to see farm villages outside of Jaipur...amazing affluence compared to 35 years ago. Most clay/thatched roof hovels have been replaced with brick and tile...cost about \$2000...spacious fields of wheat, mustard, peas...people well-dressed...boys playing cricket...I joined them for a wicket, blasted a ball through left center, and promptly retired...even a tennis court...camels and donkeys...cooperatives for transportation and marketing...visited my driver's village...very warm reception except for one terrified 2 year old ("she thinks you're going to kidnap her")....

Late afternoon with gypsies in Jaipur, various groups of dozen or so scattered around the city with their distinctive carry-all wagons with 7' wheels. They've been living in India for centuries, living their own brand of homeless existence.

Evening plane for Jodhpur...first experience with airport officials stripping radios and cameras of batteries which must be placed in checked luggage. Of course I had no checked luggage. It was all terribly confusing to the security guards, but no exceptions are made. For the rest of the trip I carefully removed the batteries, concealed and disguised them in my medical kit so that the x-ray wouldn't detect them -- and was able to display battery-free cameras and radio.

JODHPUR. Jodhpur's Umaid Bhawan is an enormous palace ("world's largest privately owned home") converted partially into a luxury hotel. The Maharajah lives in the southern wing, and another portion is a museum. I recall the construction dimly from teenage: with famine driving away Jodhpur's residents in the 1940s, the Maharajah decided to put his money to use: employ 6000 workers for 10 years to construct a hilltop palace to rival the city's historic hilltop palace across the plain. It is truly regal: great dining hall 300' long with 100' richly carved ceilings, hallways domed like a cathedral, cool stone corridors with huge doric and corinthian pillars...SILENCE...cozy paneled libraries and Trophy Bar...the Smoking Room and Billiard Room...and gardens featuring pruned bougainvillea bushes of all hues. Only heated rooms are the bar, the dining room and shops...small electric heater in my room...no, it's not hot in northern India in the winter.

Out at dawn in 35 degrees to Jalori Gate for the walk up the ancient main drag (15 foot wide, two lanes) to the Palace entrance...jammed with people, bicycles...rickshaws...shops and homes above in shades of green and blue and red limestone...dirt...cows...puppies and babies loose in the street, dodging instant death...colorful bazaar...joined a Hindu musical group outside a small shrine for tea and a recital....

Through the massive gates into the Fort and the long climb to the actual palace and museum at the top...reputed to be the best display of opulence, ostentation and craftsmanship in India...antiquities galore situated in rooms whose walls drop off hundreds of feet down the cliff...a display baby carriages in gold gilt...the women's opportunity to watch the proceedings in the courtyard belong through mirrors strategically placed to provide a reflection (they weren't even allowed to look through grill latticework)...the Maharajah's bedroom with beds for sleeping and other activities, with giant fans on ropes pulled by servants on the other side of the walls...50 wives, 400 concubines (how did he get any time to rule?)...great views out over Jodhpur...one residential section solid blue walls and roofs, vivid against the desert beyond....

Buffet lunch back at the Umaid Bhawan...indoor swimming pool also under repair...great hotel! Superb service. It is the King's birthday...the greensward is being set up with couches and buffets and soft bars, and regal red carpet. Guests arrive, some in turbans and dhoti, women all brightly colored, carrying leis of marigolds to give the King.

King himself in white military uniform...the band, in uniform, plays such favorites as Jingle Bells, Bella Roma, When You Are In Love It's the Loveliest Night of the Year, a tango...young Japanese tourists are with me...King gives speech in Hindi. I go inside to listen to the BBC (every night from 6:30 to 7:30 -- India maintains its ridiculous half hour variation...is 13 1/2 hours ahead of San Francisco). King happens by in the grand hallway and stops for a chat...loves San Francisco...terribly British-sounding...so pleased I like their home...was headed to his private movie theatre for selected birthday guests. Aside: Jaipur's maharajah is called "Bubbles" after the champagne that was served at his birth...he has his country home in the United Kingdom.

A sampling from the Museum's Library: Jubilee Book of Cricket...Tiger Shooting...English Sport Trophies...Polo Coaching...Century of English Fox Hunting...also a room of old jodhpurs as worn so elegantly by Nehru...and a room of old porcelain pitchers and wash basins (no running water). The doormen all look like C. Aubrey Smith, great walrus moustaches, red uniforms, jodhpurs and turbans.

JAISALMER. The night train leaves at 10. India Rail is very helpful. Each major station has an International Tourist Room which serves as a facilitator to assign carriage and berth, a social center, a western bathroom, a shower, and often a Retiring Room with beds. Arriving at 9, I find no bed rolls are left...facing a frigid night, I go across the plaza and buy three blankets (total \$24). Roommates include two Indians and one aged Brit who lives half Rome, half Tahiti. Indians bolt door, chain their suitcases, but say not to worry. I don't. The conductor warns us not to ingest anything from anybody. While out vomiting, all your belongings will be stolen. We curl up to sleep promptly, well before departure. Amazingly I get plenty of shuteye with help of sleeping pill. It's only 180 miles, but takes nine hours. Breakfast: omelettes and oranges at the Kalinga restaurant outside of Jaisalmer station.

Jaisalmer is indeed a jewel from the 12th century, a walled city sitting on a hill on the edge of the Thar desert, claimed to be the world's second largest. The citadel is well-preserved. Elinor sent the New York Times piece that appeared while I was actually in Jaisalmer. Excerpts: "Deserts and their mirages have long inspired poets; the pitiless sun reflected by the burning sand, the golden city shimmering on the hill are compelling images, as are the long lines of swaying camels. Occasionally, however, the fantasy proves to be real. That is the case of Jaisalmer, once a major stop for the caravans that crossed the Indian state of Rajasthan, and now a magically beautiful survivor of the past. Great walls and crenelated towers are set against the vast empty sky. Here is a well-girded medieval city untouched by time...."

It's dry. Rarely does the monsoon get this far...water and cows and people were fast disappearing. But water is now piped in and has reversed the trend. Today the population is 20,000. It is the gateway to the Thar, to camel trekking...Rajasthan is promoting these "safari."

The yellow sandstone battlements and fortified walls were built to last. Lining the upper walls are hundreds of stones about one foot in diameter which the defenders rolled down upon invaders. Four gates, each on a road curved for defensive purposes, must be traversed to get inside. The temples and palace contain a wealth of intricate stone carvings, preserved by the dry desert aid.

The aura lies in contemplating Jaisalmer's history, the feel of antiquity, the narrow cobblestone alleyways, the strategic position on the camel train routes between India and Turkey/Egypt/Persia/Arabia which brought it great wealth, and the merchants, mostly Jains, built beautiful Jain temples.

Around 1300, when Jaisalmer could no longer hold out against Moslems who had taken most of Northern India, women put on their bridal dresses and with their children mounted funeral pyres -- all 24,000 of them. And men donned saffron robes over their armor, opened the gates and fought to the death. The event is called the Johar, which later degenerated into sati.

Ocean shipping trade ruined Jaisalmer. Camel caravans across the desert were no longer needed. But recently the Indo-Pak wars (1965 and 1971) raised its strategic importance. The border is just 90 miles away across the desert. Air and army bases are nearby.

Afternoon spent visiting the old Haveli mansions, the cenotaph where royalty are cremated (also an American 25-year old drunk-dope addict died two weeks ago, and the body, unclaimed, was cremated nearby). Out for a camel ride at sunset about a mile from the walls. Glorious!

The British later found Jaisalmer's soil fine for opium poppies -- grown and exported for the lucrative China market. Many Indian fortunes were made on opium trade -- and the most beautiful Haveli mansion in Jaisalmer was built on opium-derived riches.

Indian veggies for dinner at the Skylark...sparkling 8 year old, banjo-eyed kid played drums, sang, danced, told stories -- all of us were mesmerized. Real talent.

Back on the train at 9. Roommates were two Indian engineers from Kerala working the city's water supply, and a young Canadian girl, good-looking, self-sufficient, in the fourth month of a half year Indian journey, recent grad of McGill, hoping for graduate study somewhere overseas -- anywhere. Her father is a baker, has never left Ontario.

Again, slept well on the 9-hour return. Back in Jodhpur my first job was to give away the three blankets to homeless families, one at a time, in different locations to avoid a riot. My rickshaw driver got swept up in the spirit of the enterprise...real outpouring of gratitude, and one patriarch insisted on singing a song to me while playing a stringed instrument.

Relaxed back at the Umaid Bhawan -- one of the world's great hotels -- before taking the evening plane to Udaipur (one hour) and the 18-mile drive through hills on bumpy road to the dock where one takes the shuttle boat to the Lake Palace Hotel. Most have been photos of the shimmering white marble palace built in the middle of the central lake. I have a perfect room with view back to the shore lined with large palaces. They glisten a soft yellow in the sunset. Udaipur's maharajah lost his pension in 1971 and was the first to convert his palace to a hotel.

Vija, my rickshaw driver the next morning, stayed with me most of the day. The bazaars of Bapu and Chetak Circle, music museum, cultural center, palace, puppet show (Udaipur's specialty). And in the afternoon I walked the back alleys. Miles of shops with batik wall hangings, paintings on silk, sarees, wooden toys, jewelry, bone and ivory carvings. Played cards with the boys, also a version of horseshoes, squirmed by cows in narrow passages, laughed with the inevitably giggling girls, enjoyed the pastel white-washes that enlivened the always (soft blue, green, pink), dodged the dung, the goats, the puppies (no cats in Rajasthan but plenty in Goa, left by the Portuguese). Most girls have a gold nose ring, often ear rings as well, and ankle bracelets...all ages are in bright colors, except for schoolgirls in their uniforms. Women do most of the heavy work: basket loads of dirt, bricks, rocks, cement are lifted to their heads, all supervised by a lazy man.

Sunset a cruise around the Lake, stopping at the impressive ruins of the Jag Mandir island palace where Shah Jahan spent three teenage years and from which came his inspiration for the Taj Mahal in Agra. Surviving are beautiful marble inlays of flowers and vases so similar to the Taj. Of more recent fame was its use in 007s Octopussy. The last sun turns the shore palaces and the lake itself into coppery-yellow. At the Lake Palace perhaps a thousand raucous black birds congregate in the courtyard with a deafening chorus for perhaps 20 minutes before settling down for the night. Good show. Daily. Right out of Hitchcock's *The Birds*.

Early Bombay flight, one stop Aurangabad to let off a large English tour group. I point out to them that in addition to the famous Ellora Caves at Aurangabad there is Grisheshwar, a Shiva temple housing 12 antique stone phalluses. If you want to see them you must strip. A sign reads: "Visitors wishing to achieve dharvana with the deity must take off their clothes."

So goodbye to Rajasthan, home of the Rajputs, the warrior clans who controlled this part of India for 1000 years with, my guide book says, "a code of chivalry and honor akin to medieval European knights." They fought each other, fight invaders, build forts on hilltops everywhere, massive forts with luxurious palaces. The people are one big splash of color, male and female, from turban to leggings, with considerable jewelry. In fact, jewelry is today a passion for some tourists. The selection is broad, the price right, I'm told. As an ignoramus in such matters, I looked but didn't touch.

The misery of much of Bombay is visible on landing and take off -- tiny shacks jammed together and flooding every square foot of land around the airport. In the far distance are the skyscrapers of downtown Bombay. Since WWII it has mushroomed from a coastal port of 500,000 to an industrial megalopolis of almost 100 million. City proper has 12 million...6000 new families arrive daily, seeing Bombay as an irresistible land of opportunity, but most end up living on the streets. Six of the 12 million are in terrible slums, one million are homeless. Appalling, squalid slums surrounding a modern business capital of gleaming plateglass skyscrapers. To really see Bombay would have taken several days, days that I thought could be better spent in The South. So on to Goa. (Peter Bennett told me two weeks later that he once had taken his Readers Digest boss, Walter Hitesman, to Bombay for business calls, and on the way to the airport Hitesman said, "Please, Peter, promise me you will never take me here again.")

GOA. In 1510 the Portuguese began building a city in Goa to rival Lisbon itself. Over the next 300 years they built cathedrals, convents, palaces in the capital of its eastern empire, which included the Chinese opium port of Macao adjacent to Hong Kong, the sandalwood island of Timor (where domination by Indonesia is still being resisted today), and the two other port cities of India, Diu and Daman.

Goa is large: four hours drive top to bottom, two hours east to west. It is prosperous in comparison to Rajasthan. One notices immediately that services cost twice as much, although my hotel, second best in the capital city of Panjim, runs \$12 and an omelette/creme caramel dinner is \$1.

The Portuguese left in 1961, but Goa had been separated from India for 350 years. They have more schools, more doctors, a freer press, their own language and considerable pride. Every Goan I spoke to said something like: don't you love this place? Isn't it wonderful? Yet there are large communities of Goans in the UK and Canada.

Spent the afternoon in Old Goa, the original Portuguese town of the early 1500s which actually had been a thriving Muslim city with walls, towers, moat, mosques. Only the arched entrance to the old city remains. But Portuguese cathedrals are plentiful. Plague

ended the Old Goa in 1635 and a treaty with the English in the 1700s prevented the Dutch from adding it to their empire. So Portuguese Goa muddled along until 1961.

Archaeologists are reconstructing old Portuguese landmarks. A team of four women hoist big blocks to one woman's head under male direction. I plunged in to carry a few pieces solo, much to everyone's amusement.

Old Goa is blessed with great trees, a riverfront, a gigantic cathedral (1562) where, apart from worship, Portuguese caskets were stored awaiting passage home. And the Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, with beautiful carved and gilded woodwork, and murals of St. Francis' life. Franciscan friars came in 1517, built a chapel, leading to the present church in 1661. Here lies St. Francis Xavier, who arrived in Goa in 1542, spread the faith up and down the Malabar Coast, went onto the Moluccas and then to Japan. He died in China on his return. Well embalmed, Xavier was brought to Goa where his remains are on display. As we were taught in school, he was the first missionary to Japan.

Old Goa is virtually deserted. The plague killed it off forever. Panjim is only six miles away, the current capital. The streets have an old Portuguese flavor, but badly run down. On the Altino (hill) above the city are the old mansions, now homes for "the ministers"...call it Government Hill. All this is on a spacious river which becomes the bay which is one of many inlets. It was obviously an ideal base for the seafaring Portuguese.

Dinner with a Dane and his Bombay wife (honeymooners after a Bombay marriage), both doctors in Stockholm. Outstanding couple. As the Dane said, his wife has achieved the dream of most Indians; escape the country.

Restaurant has Veg Cutlets, Veg Burgers, Baked Veg, Veg Steak.

Today the beaches. The hippies discovered Goa in the 60s and 70s which in turn led to tourism. I go south one hour to Colva and Benaullim beaches where the hard white sand stretches straight for 25 miles. Nothing there...perhaps some hippies hidden away. Perfect for bicycling, horseback, or moped along the beach. Sacred women bring you fresh fruits on the beach. In the afternoon, school kids come to the beach to play ball. Boys dip but don't swim. Girls stand in clusters watching, but some get up the courage to get their clothes wet to the knees. Further down the beach I see a romantic couple in the water. She is fully clothed. Nearby are western women practically naked.

The road from Panjim curves around inlets and over hills. On the flatlands are coconut plantations, and the peninsulas are tipped by local churches -- as many as a dozen can be seen from one hillside. I return to the Oberoi Bolgamo Beach Hotel near the airport, a first rate resort housing mainly Germans. Delicious

fresh fish dinner on the beach. Climate unbelievably perfect. Sun all the time. Never hot, never cold, constant breeze. Also, no cows. And this is leading outsiders to buying up Goa's best land. It is a real concern to the locals. Goa has rice, vegetable, cashews, and coconuts. It also sells booze (none in Rajasthan). Aristocrat and Highlander whisky. Undrinkable! Also a tendency for copywriters to lift a line for a different product, as in the pastry billboards. "Pastelria: Don't Go Home Without It -- Butter is the Major Part of It." Or the tour notice: "Five minutes for tea and urine." Or the driving instructions: "when approaching a corner, get horny."

Flying south from Goa over arid land one is reminded of the terrible deforestation of India. Trees help make rain. Monsoons used to be dependable. India was once a sylvan country. My book says Alexander found canopied forests. But slash and burn through both private and public greed -- and public indifference -- seems to be making India another Ethiopia. Forest trap and keep rainfall, are great natural reservoirs. Now 80% of the monsoon goes out to sea. The country has only 10% cover now, and they say that ecological stability requires 33%. One new hydroelectric project, the newspaper reported today, will consume another one million acres of forests. There is little reason for optimism.

THE SOUTH. Morning flight to Cochin with connecting flight to Trivandrum. But no connecting flight: cancelled because construction on the airport is scheduled to begin 10 minutes before takeoff! Typical! What's that line? "Indians can create chaos when no problem exists." But what impressed me was the Manager's helpfulness. He outlined the alternatives: get a refund and take the train or bus -- or he would arrange taxis at his cost. We (12) decided on taxis -- only four hours. And see the countryside. My seatmates were a German couple with five year old, a restorer of temples on assignment in Katmandu. By his description, it seems that Katmandu and the temples are ruined: rush hour traffic, smog over the city. Sad. It was so picturesque in 1956 when we were among the first tourists.

Stopped for oranges and bananas and pineapples somewhere between Kottayam and Quilon. Then on to Trivandrum, a picturesque, tree-covered old town with the usual temple, palace, zoo and botanical garden -- about a hour's tour. On to Kovalum, the real attraction of Trivandrum for westerners, the famous beach, which the hippies claim is better than Goa's. The sand is whiter, the expanse uncluttered with people, but the ocean is again unexciting. No real surf, and no peaceful blue-green stretches. In India, it seems that the beach is the attraction, not the ocean.

Backtracked by bus to Quilon where I had planned to stay at the Government Guest House on the river two klics out. What a disaster. Great mansion, visible old world charm, but hopelessly run down. Also no room at the inn. But a young Belgium couple were thrilled: "first quiet place we've found" and were resting

up for a few days. I was happy to take the best hotel that Quilon could offer, the Sudarman in the center of town, for \$10 a night. It was the kind of place to have another omelette dinner off the old coal black tables with a bottle of unappealing Indian beer.

Quilon is the gateway to Kerala's beautiful backwaters. In the West, we have long thought of Kerala as that commie State of southern India, those hopeless Marxists. Sure enough, you see hammer and sickle, slogans, posters of Marx, Mao and Stalin and Lenin -- all this refuse from the recent past, still alive in an atmosphere of rampant small scale capitalism.

It takes a little imagination to visualize Quilon as it was: an ancient commercial center, used by Phoenicians, Persians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs -- and the first established as a trading post by the Chinese in the 5th century. The Quilon name dates from 825. From 1500 on, it coped with the trading interests of the Portuguese, Dutch and English. Now it is a sleepy market town, exporting copra, cardamon, ginger, and creating some spice millionaires with the yachts upriver. The Romans discovered that the monsoon could blow their galleys out to India in one season, and back home the next. Rome went wild over the goodies: craze for spices, pearls, ivory, silks, jewels, rice. Nero wore silks, gems, decorated his palace with ivory. The Senators looked like maharajahs.

One reason Kerala is so prosperous is that the maharajah instituted land distribution in a far-sighted program 100 years ago. It is the most equitable of all in India, leading to intense cultivation, leveling of income, also the highest literary rate (60%) and the best medical healthcare. And with its beaches and wild game parks, tourism is rising rapidly. I saw a half dozen, but all "travelers," not tourists.

My afternoon wanderings had led me to a Hindu festival honoring Shiva's son Durga. A procession, led by drums and fife and bearded holy man and entourage of a hundred, all ages and all in red and yellow costumes, went from store to store selectively to collect money. The holy man, with thin sword run through his cheeks, dispensed ashes. He instantly picked on me, as I pressed my palms together over my heart in a "namaste" (the Indian greeting and farewell), and he poured ashes into my palm, which in turn I tossed over my head. The crowd seemed pleased -- and amused. A spirited group. Kerala is 25% Christian, 25% Moslem and many Hindus non-practicing. So they solicited selectively. It was like a UJA event. Ultimately, at sunset, the procession returned to the temple for some religious dancing...heavy on the rhythms. This music has an interesting double syncopation, though I know I'm not using the proper words.

Now we should catch up on the outdoor advertising

Marquesie de Pampadour (champagne)
Calypso: for the Carefree Spirit of Jamaica
Black Horse (whiskey) endorsed by Peter Ustinov
I Drink Lesce Because I Like It
Go Bonkers (ice cream)
Directors Special (whiskey) - Happiness Happens
Diplomat (whiskey) Good Mornings After Great Evenings
Thumbs Up (cola)
Pepsi-Choice of a New Generation
Panama (cigarettes) Nothing Comes Between You and the
Flavour
Old Monk (whiskey) Honoured the World Over
McDowells (whiskey) Unmistakable Number One

And popular Indian phrases

I am Knowing
Goodness Gracious
Vigorous
They are calling this
Chock-a-Block
He is not being in
Chitty (as opposed to _____)

THE KUTTANDU WATERWAYS. This morning's ferry for Alleppy, an 8 hour cruise through the backwaters of Kuttandu, left at 10. Earlier I watched the pupils assemble next door at a large school that seemed to cover kindergarten through high school. Girls in blue skirts, white blouse, red tie and red bows in their braided hair arriving by school bus. School doesn't begin until almost 10, giving time for kids to help out on the boat. 20 cents for the trip of 8 hours. The fresh water canals paralleled the Coast. From time to time you can see the white sand and wave tops. But it is a different world, world of coconut plantations, cashew trees and mangoes and bananas, and pineapples. A world of religious diversity: one village with a church, the next a mosque, the next a temple. Our boat stopped at a church so that the rope man could pray. A world of fishing -- little dugouts, or men standing in shallow water up to their necks, fishing and clamming. A world without roads: everything transported by boat, and all the boats designed the same, long, slim, shallow, in all sizes, up to 150 feet. A world without motors; ours was the only motor all day. But the larger dugouts often hoisted a square sail, patches of cloth sewn together. Large loads of stone, of gravel, of cement, of bricks, being poled along the canals with only a few inches above the water -- moving slowly and laboriously. No roads, no bridges.

Little boats would ferry people and bicycles across. Large dugouts being pushed and pulled along the canal, as most canals have stone walls to prevent erosion. Also walls are often dikes, holding water as much as six feet over the level of the rice paddies.

On the dock when we set off were a flock of nuns belonging to the Order of Holy Cross. The American came from Newport and their college is next door to the Vanderbilt Breakers. Several of the Indian nuns had gone to school there. They were headed up the waterways to various missions. She said, "of course you know our Holy Cross in San Francisco." We stopped halfway at a coconut covered village where a couple of westerners sat on the dock. Two women, two children and a man disembarked -- a "family." I had been admiring them from a distance for their interaction as a family and with the Indians. Suddenly they are gone -- to their Ashram! Raising children in the Kerala waterways three hours boat ride from Quilon. Whatever will become of them?

No chickens or pigs in the villages. All vegetarians. At sunset we pull into Alleppy, after passing a horribly polluted zone by a chemical plant, by the graveyard for old ferry boats, 16 of them half sunk in the mud, vines slowly taking over...and African weed (so-called water lilies) taking over the canals. Alleppy seemed a frenetic, jammed market town with filthy canals -- and one decent hotel, the Prince (\$15, clean, quiet). Dinner of Chinese soup, veggies and pistachio ice cream -- and the usual creme caramel.

Alleppy is famous for its annual snake boat races, when the 100-foot plus dugouts race amid colorful festival atmosphere. The boats are richly carved and decorated in multi-colors.

Pedicabbed to the jetty at 6 a.m., an hour before departure of the ferry to Kottayam. The city is going full tilt. Tea, tangerines and a sort of pound cake for breakfast while waiting for the ferry and mingling with the crowd. Tea is always equal amounts of buffalo milk, sugar and tea. The ferry is jammed, perhaps 400 --but as a foreigner, I am allowed on the roof with the pilot. Westerners quickly learn to pretend that you are important and you can get special treatment. Well-dressed, well-intentioned Indians tried to climb up on the roof also, since it was standing room only below, but the two deckhands, waiting on my every desire and refusing tips, threw them back below. Too bad. They'd point at me... and I would have enjoyed their company. But no. If it were allowed, a hundred more would want to come. And then we would have tipped over.

Pulling out of town, past the ferry graveyard, a hot rodder zooms by. He has a new western kayak, and sports clean white shirt and pants. The filthy waters of Alleppy are filling with kundus, the water weed rapidly choking the canals and lakes and rivers of the tropics. From Africa, says the pilot. Water lilies, he calls them. The root vines entwine the propeller. Frequently we stop. A deckhand strips, dives and somehow clears the

machinery in the murky waters. Three hours to go 18 miles. But 3 hours with about 30 stops. It is the local bus and the school bus. Kids in uniform spend up to 75 minutes each way. Canals spread out in all directions. Often our canal is upheld by dikes, as much as 6 feet above the rice paddies that stretch to the horizon. Every mile or so great pumps send surplus water from the paddies up to the canals. If one needs to relieve oneself on these long trips, there is a screened overhang at the stern. One can even toss a pot, pull up some water to clean oneself. There is generally no toilet paper in India.

KOTTAYAM. Clearly a prosperous commercial town, Kottayam produces rubber, tea, pepper and cardamon. The English missionaries developed it as an education center -- and they say that St. Thomas patronized it in the first century. Wealthy Brahmins built old churches, and then came the Syrian Christians around 1000. Kottayam has gentle hills, spreading tamarind trees and a more spacious feeling than the flat, jammed towns so common. A motor rickshaw took me all around the town for an hour's tour before heading for the railway station for the train to Cochin. One cannot buy an "upper class ticket" so close to departure, so I had to fight my way into Second Class car of this 30 car train for 90 minutes of standing. The car was posted for 42 passengers. I counted 200. As many as four squeezed flat on a baggage rack that might accommodate me. An army contingent -- some looked 12 years old -- brought some humor to the occasion, but most passengers simply faced the journey with resignation. The train was headed for Bombay, about 52 hours away. Very few got off at Cochin; most remained standing. One woman hawker edged through selling tea, tangerines and mango juice. There is no deference to women: they stood, even those carrying babies. The next stop was Calicut, 3 hours on.

COCHIN. I had arrived in Cochin a day earlier than planned. In Kottayam I considered taking a two day side trip to the Periyar (Thekkady) Game Park, but the chances of seeing tiger seemed too remote, and the feature was elephants and water buffalo, of which I had seen plenty in Africa. So I headed off from the rail station to Fort Cochin and checked into the L'Elite (El'Light) hotel which had 8 tiny rooms on a narrow side street with ceiling fan, and a guest contingent of young Europeans under 30. The fish here is sensational -- fried to perfection, but the restaurant was the usual black-with-age small tables, concrete floor, wash basin on the wall.

I had an instant affection for Cochin. The configuration is like San Francisco Bay. The "Golden Gate" is lined on both sides with Chinese fishing nets, the "San Francisco peninsula" containing Old Fort Cochin and Mantancherry -- and the "Bay" is Kerala's most beautiful lagoon, full of islands and peninsulas. Ferries, bridges, islands (Willingdon, Bolgatty, Gundu and Vypeen). Great natural harbor surrounded by palm groves, inland lakes, backwater canals -- the economy is coconut, rubber, seafood, pepper and especially transshipment.

Cochin has a long history: Arabs first, then the Chinese in the Fifth century, who brought the large net-on-tree-trunk fishing techniques and influenced art and dance as seen on the temple walls...then the Dutch, the British, the Portuguese. And of particular note, the Jews. First the Black Jews in 500 BC when Nebuchadnezzar overran Jerusalem, then the white Jews in around 900 established a strong community here. Vasco de Gamma came in 1502 and died there in 1524, establishing the first European settlement in India, lured by spices and ivory. The Dutch came in 1602, Portuguese in 1663, Brits in 1795 to stay -- all in that little "San Francisco peninsula" of Fort Cochin. The old walls are there, also the St. Francis Church, the Mantancherry Palace for the local maharajah.

An interesting mix of Dutch and Keralan architecture, with a coronation hall featuring well preserved frescoes and murals of the Ramayama. One shows Shiva with 8 arms busily at work on 8 beaming and grateful handmaidens, almost naked. Particularly interesting is the Jews Synagogue on Jew Road in Jew Town, built in 1568. The beautiful floor tiles came from Canton, the chandeliers from Belgium. The ladies galley is behind exquisite carved latticework, and it boasts some scrolls from the Old Testament. On Jew Road is "Cohens Tax Planning."

Actually the community died off briefly about 20 years ago. But today migration from Israel has resulted in seven families and 25 people, more expected. The center of Jew Town by the synagogue is the Spice and Pepper Association, the cooperative that bags the spices and directs them to the right ships. The aroma is delightful.

The St. Francis Church (1503) contains Vasco de Gamma's grave. The church was converted to Catholic by the Portuguese, Protestant by the Dutch, Anglican by the British. The frescoes are the original -- beautiful vegetable dye colors. Around the adjacent village, green are homes strongly influenced by the Dutch period (like Stellenbosch), and on the green, the inevitable cricket is being played.

In the harbor one sees familiar containers from Genstar and Matson. On the streets of the modern city of Ernakulum (the "Oakland" side) is rampant commercialism, shops, streets, jammed, the usual wild colors, good ice cream to keep me going, walls plastered with hammer and sickle, Marx and Stalin...past the "House of Commons" veggie restaurant, the truck named "Stalin" next to the truck named "St. Mary," the drivers chatting away together...and stores with such names as Mummy & Me, Gypsy Rose, Park Avenue Retail, Glory & Co. Checked into the great Malabar Hotel on Willingdon Island, and watched the sunset scene, the fishing boats returning from the Arabian Sea through the golden gate, the dugouts with stones and brick and produce being poled around the Malabar point. And listened to the BBC.

Kerala's classic dance is a special occasion. Called Ka-thal-a-ky, with accent on the "thal" it is pantomime dance drama, over 2000 years old, with themes from the Ramayama and Mahabarata epics.

We arrive an hour early, around 6, to watch the painting of the actors, as a master deaf dumb painter layers on coating of vegetable dyes on the faces of the two performers. We are on a rooftop down a small alley, and about 50 show up. It takes 12 years of training for the actors. The old master director explains the dance: 24 gestures of hand and fingers, and the facial expression. It is all in gestures of eyes, face, arms, hands and fingers. He demonstrates first the facial emotions (love compassion, anger, fear, serenity, revulsion, wonder, etc.), then the fingers (a 100 meanings), and arms and feet. The actors' faces are totally painted, greens and blue connoting the good guy, red and black the bad. A musical group plays drums, finger cymbals and flute and strings and two sing in steady chant the story now acted by the two men with their eye motions, their cheek and lip motions, their arm, hand and finger motions. Costumes are large hoop skirts, brightly colored, and covered with jewelry.

Returning to the hotel, I get my first CNN and Prime Sports, which included a live basketball game from Louisville, and highlights of college hockey, including a great save by the Yale goalie against Colgate. But for the most part, TV has cricket and soccer from around the world -- and tennis. They're crazy about tennis; the Australian open is featured. McEnroe seems still to be the favorite.

MADURAI. No planes fly to from Cochin to Madurai any more. So it was by bus. And to make sure of a seat I went straight to the Manager one hour in advance, also hired two kids to sit in a seat -- the only way to reserve one -- and successfully bought a bunch of bananas and tangerines to compliment my box of orange cream cookies. Off we went for the nine-hour run to Madurai. The 90 minutes to Kottayam, runs through a continual megalopolis of low-scale commerce. Another frantic bus change with the enlisting (bribing) of various self-appointed managers and kids, I got a seat again. The road is surprisingly good...bus stops wherever a passenger wants to get off or on. Hawkers keep one supplied with fruit...I have a canteen of water...reading City of Joy again...inspiring...and also Cheever's Short Stories.... But I am a sight to the natives -- few westerners seem to take this bus. The change in scenery.

After another hour we rose through the tea country at 2000-3000 feet, very similar to Sri Lanka and that glorious ride up to Kandy and on to Nureyalia. Colorful women tending the tea bushes and the frequent processing plants. Then through the "ghats," the hill country and down to the Vaigai River and its lush rice fields. Checked into the Pandyan on Race Course Road -- and set out for an hour orientation walk around the town. Afterall, I would have only about two hours of daylight the next morning before flying on to Madras. The

main attraction is the Sri Meenakshi Temple, enormous...300 yards long -- three football fields and almost just as wide. All built in the 1600s. The temple area is filled with bazaars, exotic stalls selling bright clothes, jewelry, and the usual colorful spices. As usual, no shoes are allowed in temples...miraculously, the shoes always are returned, even though my birkenstocks are seemingly so valued. Second attraction is the river cremation area, commonly called the Golden Lily Tank where the holy take their sacred dips in the muddy water. In some respects, Madurai is like a small Benares.

MADRAS. Finally here. Plans for Madras go back to the mid-1950s when Anne and I had a three-week adventure to Rangoon, Calcutta, Nepal, Benares, Delhi, Agra (Taj Mahal) and Kashmir. I wanted to see Madras then, but it is over 1000 south -- and there were no jets then.

Landed in mid-afternoon...nearly one hour in heavy traffic to the Connemara, the venerable old hotel in the center of the city -- well, sort of...there is no center, come to think of it. With the sun setting, I settled for a swim in the Olympic pool, had the buffet dinner surrounded by big-spending Japanese. For French table wine: \$40 a bottle. Dewars Scotch \$100. A pleasant piano trio played show tunes from the 1930s and 40s.

January 26. NATIONAL DAY. Celebrations of India's 42nd anniversary of freedom start early. I'm out at 7, motor-rickshawed the 2 klics to Miramar Beach and the coastal boulevard where the parades will take place. The access roads from the City are a fast moving mass of all ages, dressed in holiday finery. Children with mascaraed eyes, girls and often mothers with ocher painted faces (yellow is supposed to make them beautiful, but unfortunately gives a ghostly yellow pallor) setting off the mascara eyes and black hair...gold threads glistening in the dawn sun -- out of the slums (stench terrible) of palm and mud lean-tos come families remarkably clean and well-clothed.

Speeches are already underway under the Gandhiji monument, with diplomat corps in traditional white suits. The military show starts. To me the people are the show, and I wade through the arriving crowds and edge northward on side streets to the University where the parades will end. In the second hour come the school groups -- each in classical dress -- presenting folk dances and songs. And finally the floats: business, government agencies, surrounding towns -- also one proclaiming Preventing Pollution Pays.

The University of Madras has splendid architecture, mix of Muslim and Hindu and West, with minarets and large domes. It is only a long block from another stinking river, black, oily, mud -- nothing alive -- and on a nearby shore is a large deserted building with big letters: Swimming Club. Moved on to the Law School, again minarets and domes -- and smart kids. Here are obviously the sons and daughters of the elite, speaking fluent English

and asking me detailed questions about the world. The first intelligent questions I had heard in India regarding the USA came from 8-10 year olds. Down to the beach from the parade grounds. Horse rentals available. Merry go rounds, women wading tenuously, little shops set up on the beach, many selling drinking water by the glass, sea shells, fried veggies, and the inevitable scarves and sarees.

The beach is about 300 yards wide, and 20 miles long -- perhaps longer, for the entire coastline for hundreds of miles is purely beach. Proceeding north to Fort George, the original British settlement in 1680. Most of the complex of government buildings and homes remains intact, including St. Mary's Church, built entirely of stone and designed by a sailor. Here Cornwallis was married. Also Elihu Yale, who went from America to head the East Asiatic Company in Madras, which also made him Governor. He was married here in St. Mary's, and many tributes to his accomplishments in adding territory for the British are inscribed in the Museum. (From Madras he retired to Wrexham, Wales and sent his money and books to start Yale. I presume I am one of a small handful of Yale Alumni who have visited Elihu Yale in both Madras and Wales.) The Museum contains large portraits of all the maharajahs and British kings and queens, and Governors. Madras is different. It is the home of the ancient Dravidian civilization, hardly touched by invasions from the north. Pure Indian is what they say. It has wide green airy parks and gardens, esplanades by the sea. Captures of contact with the outside world appears in the names of the streets (Armenia, China bazaar, Port Church Street). It was the first English settlement in India, and produced silks and fabrics. It has also been the first Portuguese settled earlier. It's economy was textile based, but now has added cars, trucks, film, cigarettes, high technology.

It is a hodge-podge. Turn left or right off a swish elegant boulevard, and you're in with the homeless or palm shack strips beside the stinking rivers which are in truth virtually dried up. Once they had a busy river life. Nothing now. Lacking are the crowds, the cows, the pressure of the north, but it seems just as noisy...all ages squatting and defecating, emaciated mothers in black rags, coal-dust babies. But rarely begging. Dung drying on the walls and open spaces. Unfortunately I had missed the Pongol Festival by one week. The City paints itself and its cows in bright colors, sing, dance and party all day for several days until midnight.

Lunched on eggdrop soup, and spinach...toured around the city with Steven...an Indian who expects his USA visa next month, with an electrical engineering degree, good looks, charm, Lotus 1-2-3 and a friend in Los Angeles, he is escaping India and will settle in Southern California.

And now some more billboards

Turn Black Money into White Money
Scissors - A Marlboro type gangster
We Won't Tax You
Venture Capital Equals No Tax
Toothpaste - Put Calcium Back in Your Teeth

And on a street bookstore -- bookstores are sort of 6 foot squares on the dirt displaying paperback books, and in the middle, the only hardcover book, is Larry Collins MAZE. Larry's name must have some magic, for his Freedom at Midnight book in paperback is all over the country, as is his partner Dominique LaPierre's City of Joy, that 1985 number one USA best seller on the slums of Calcutta.

Two nights I went to the Music Academy. The first was meant to be for classic drama and dancing but turned out to be the Sambo Orchestra playing modern Indian rhythms with male and female vocalists. The rhythms were infectious, the vocals forgettable, but most interesting were the performers. It is as if they have been told they were forbidden to have eye contact with the audience, they were forbidden to move a muscle, were forbidden to bow and acknowledge applause or even smile. Also, the high stretch of the women is hardly appealing. Outside there were preliminaries: a small group of French horn, coronet, clarinet and no less than four different drums. The music reminded me of bands of drunken performers outside Mexican cathedrals. And all that rhythm and no dancing. The audiences didn't move a muscle either. Liza Minelli could have gotten them worked up quickly. Across the street were two USA movies, Home Alone and Ghost. But not many US films and certainly no sex scenes.

Next day was temple time. Off to Kanchipuram and Mahabilipuram, both about two hours from Madras, in a perfect triangle. But bus or train would have meant a two day trip. So I was forced to go in luxury with car and driver. \$20 for the full day. Nazar (driver) picked me up at 7:30 in his Ambassador (seems that 90% of all Indian cars are Ambassadors), passed the "1000 Lights" restaurant, the billboards "You Won't Be Taxed," the finance ads ("150 times your money by retirement"), and "HIT Cockroaches No Cockroaches" and Berkeley Cigarettes: "Nothing Breaks the Bond." Out of the city the soil is poor and red, but the old villages are pleasantly tree-covered. Bullock horns are all painted various colors, some with designs, some with one horn red, another green, perhaps for Christmas.

Through Poonmalee (I like the sound of it) where the old British complex remains, now converted into local schools and offices. Past "Village Resorts" with "largest pool in India." Also one named "Happy Lands" and then the "Jesus Saves - Behold I am Coming" billboards.

We stopped outside Sri Perabat at an open field. Here Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. I walked the 100 feet to a small shrine, as large picture of Rajiv, freshly planted palm trees, but rather messy and inelegant. But still moving. And now Prianka, his daughter, appeared in yesterday's paper, having been launched in the Congress Party even though she is still a student overseas. The Congress Party hopes she will embark promptly on a political career. Father, grandmother both assassinated. Gandhi assassinated. Only Nehru had a peaceful end. She must wonder what her destiny is.

Kanchipuram is one of the oldest of India's towns, dating back 4000 years. One of its most sacred cities. 400 temples. Great wealth back in the AD 400-600 period. The wealth attracted the best talents in architecture, carving, silk weaving, temple building and music and dance. It was the center of art and learning. Today I found it a noisy, dusty place, flat, but quite friendly. The main temple, the Kailasanathar, is sensational. Over 1000 pillars all carved from single stones 15 feet high. Sort of a small version of Karnak, but much more elaborate carvings. Bright frescos in the inner courtyards. Hundreds of Shiva symbols, with women and men tossing flowers and water on the most sacred (but no one stripping!). Here are plenty of sacred cows also...temple towers, soaring stone leviathans dripping with tiny dancing and prancing deities and animals. Truly dramatic. And yet in the inner sanctums, where no westerners are allowed, you peek through to lighted torches and it seems like the black temples of Gunga Din.

Four temples later, all very interesting, one with a lot of Chinese depicted as diplomats, musicians and dancers. Plenty of cripples around -- sad. One just keeps handing out money, Indians included.

Two hour drive over to Mahabilipuram on the Coast. Here were the famous seven seashore temples from the AD 700s. But only one survives today. Here are the best beaches I've seen in India, clean, blue-green water, endless miles of open shoreline. No one swims - except me. The temple is surrounded by about a hundred guardian bulls (Nandis). And then in the town itself are the famous rock cave temples with striking bas-relief portraying episodes from Hindu mythology. This is a vast half-square mile of smooth rock and boulders that contained the city. Steps carved in the stone lead nowhere now, but you can picture an entire city. It is distinctive and one can let his imagination run wild. Also here is the famous Mamilla or Great Wrestler, after which the town is named. It is a massive rock split down the middle with the whole face covered with relief sculptures. Over 100 feet long and 30 feet high, it faces out to sea and depicts over 1000 deities and animals...finished the afternoon with a touristy mongoose-cobra fight, the outcome never in doubt.

Mahabilipuram is becoming a favorite of the new-age hippies or travellers looking for a very cheap, nice place to stay. Certainly \$5 a day can keep one in style here, with perfect climate, fresh fish, fruits and veggies, and bottled water.

Driving up the coastline to Madras we see more of the rice harvest, a colorful Christian cemetery: colored crosses, tombstones configured like small church fronts. Lots of blue and green -- no red or black.

More and more plantations, and then about 15 miles south of Madras, the new shoreline developments for the wealthy. Such names as Sunrise Beach, Golden Beach, and in the middle of one is a large

Ferris Wheel. Here the streets are clean, the garbage collected. Reminds me of Whitney Young who used to say of Park Avenue: "Curious, isn't it, how all the garbage is above 96th Street and none below."

That night CNN came on for the first time at the Connemara -- and there were highlights of the Super Bowl.

Next day was for museums, art galleries, nature center. All old buildings are red brick, the deep red of Madras soil. Then walked down Pantheon Road to the Railway Station and the handsome Southern Railway Office, probably the largest building complex in southern India, and on to the slums, the stench, the communal pumps, but the smiling children and friendly elders. Amazing cheerfulness in all the misery. And the homeless simply leave their belongings on the street rolled up in a bundle, as they head off to the dumps or elsewhere, trying to earn a rupee. ...Little police stations are "outposts"...pedicabs are all uniformly yellow with blue seats....

Afternoon with a Tamil refugee who brought his wife and teenage daughters from Sri Lanka, fearing rape and death. Trained chemical engineer...career and family life ruined. Says that the young Tamil woman who assassinated Rajiv Gandhi had been raped by Indian "peace-keeping" soldiers in Sri Lanka.

Evening classic danced. It starts with the curtain down and a ghastly moaning coming from behind. Like someone about to vomit, plus the aftermath groans, sort of why me, why now, why again? But then the curtain rises, and a female dancer in glistening garb dances almost continuously for 90 minutes while the trio of drums, clarinet and finger cymbals and two singers wail away. She is using all those gestures: eyes, face, arms, hands, fingers, feet, to tell the story that the singer is singing. The rhythms make it a success. The dancer could have benefit from some Right Guard. She was, in a sense, the temple carvings come

alive, except the temples they are bared breasted, virtually naked. The music builds to double syncopation. The precision, the coordination is remarkable. She is covered in jewels, flowers, bells on her ankles.

The newspaper today tells us that Prince Charles will play polo at Jaipur, at the Rambagh Palace, February 13...also that a lesbian ring has been uncovered...the girls were called the Martina Navratilovas....

DELHI. Up at 4 for the 6 a.m. flight to Hyderabad and on to Delhi. Check into the airport hotel and grabbed a taxi in town. First time in Delhi since 1965, and not really since 1955 when Anne and I had several days. The New Delhi has grown immensely, broad boulevards, canopied, with recessed buildings, spacious parks, no cows, no shanties, plenty of empty land...cricket players in white trousers and white shirts.... But Connaught Place is a mess, rundown, more hawkers than I ever remember. In fact, from Connaught to Old Delhi seems to have merged into massive deterioration. It was sad to return to the Grand Mosque, The Red Fort. But there was something new: The International Doll Museum.

And there were more billboards and shops:

The Healing Touch -- Massage
Capital Surgical -- (get your own operating table
displayed in the window)
President's Shirts and Trousers
Nose & Ear Piercing
Tiffin Ready
Speed Thrills but Kills
This Box is Easy to Get in but Tough to Get Out (drugs)
Smoking is Hazardous to Your Health
Heads You Lose (crash helmets)
Put a Beast Under Your Bonnet (battery)
Take Your Clothes Off in Style (health club)

And out by the airport is the Railway Museum -- old cars and accoutrement. That's really rubbing it in, putting it by the airport.

Early dinner at 5, bed at 7, up at 2 for the 4:45 flight. I was told to be there three hours early, but settled for 90 minutes. Landed in Hong Kong at 1300, visited the office, went home with Peter and Tomoko Bennett, had a marvelous evening with them, and after an hour or so walk the next morning, boarded United for San Francisco, an 11 hour hop.

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So what are some of the lessons from several weeks in India:

1. That cows eat paper. Quite a sight to see the creatures methodically ingesting the daily newspaper.
2. That curry and red peppers for breakfast-lunch-dinner is simply not doable.
3. India may end up as a nation with 50 million bachelors in ten years if sonograms are allowed and parents permitted to abort female fetuses. Seemingly a serious problem. Same is true in China, one hears.
4. On National Day the TIMES editorialized about India's "Flabby 42" ... "Middle-aged balking republic, with wasted limbs, bloated middle cause by gross imbalance in diet. In cricket terms, which is all our decision-making governing classes understand, it is not enough to cling on to the wicket -- are we making runs to win the game?"
5. "Market Economy" is the new buzzword. "Entrepreneurism"... "Capital Gains"... "Venture Capital".... But there are powerful interest groups. The bureaucrats who deal out the licenses in a socialist system are threatened (they will lose their "programs") and perhaps their job. And the businessmen who formerly got their programs/projects from the politicians, who had monopolies like the cement monopoly, fear the effects of competition. And the fear of multinational corporations, fear that it will mean neo-colonialism. In short, there is a sentimental fondness for socialism. A new generation of entrepreneurial cadre will be needed.
6. Much attention is spent on what we would call States Rights, decentralized decision-making. Central control seems to have gone way beyond the provisions of the Constitution. Socialism emphasized centralization. Wars with China and Pakistan forced centralization. The endless Kashmir War emphasizes centralization. But strong forces are now pushing it back, gradually.
7. The Congress Party will stay on in power. The Party is actually a coalition of factions who groped around individuals. India is not issue-oriented, it is personality-oriented. Access to the power of individuals in government is much more important in India than in the U.S. Politicians don't directly influence U.S. business; in India it is primary.

8. I was amazed by how little Indians seemed to know of the outside world. The daily English-language newspapers have virtually no international news. Perhaps mention of China or Pakistan. Ignored Yugoslavia. Even the breakup in the Soviet Union. No mention that's going on now. And I'm told that the Hindu papers have even less. Same is true on radio and TV.

Indians are inner-directed. Schooling has no international content. There is a pre-occupation with India's internal problems. News is personalized, not issue-oriented. The press is totally free, perhaps freer than the USA. Newspapers are loaded with opinion pieces and columns -- very informative. But no international.

In part this inward thinking stems from pride -- pride in their ancient culture, and a consequent defensiveness. They simply don't want to hear about the outside, about those who might consider themselves better. Some in Rajasthan, with cows milling around the streets, and filth everywhere, said to me: "It's just like the USA, yes?" Said jovially, and well-meaning, yet from pure ignorance.

9. While it is inconceivable to us that India and Pakistan, the former with proven atomic bomb capability, the second on the threshold, frantically trying to match it, each fearful of the other, each armed to the teeth. With Kashmir the constant sore point. This week Washington transferred Ambassador Pickering, one of our best, to Delhi. There is a new opening. The first American military mission is discussing joint communication/information programs with the Indian army. Pakistan has lost the U.S. as an arms supplier. India has lost Russia as their supplier. Lockheed and Northrup are trying to peddle C150s and fighters. Eastern Europe and the CIS will try to peddle old equipment. But the escalation must be curbed.
10. Sounds glib, but the poor have dignity, have an enviable sense of values, seem surprisingly cheerful. For an understanding of this, read City of Joy.
11. America continues to be perceived as imperialist whenever they deign to acknowledge its existence. One editorial: "America will in 1990s see the first signs of organized hostility in world capitols after remarkable successes of the 1980s, as nations begin to believe that their love of human rights and democracy and World Bank-IMF-controlled economic policy translates into one thing: a world order in which orders are given by the White House incumbent."
12. One is bombarded daily by polytheism...thousand of gods, and still proliferating. If something goes wrong in life, it is always some god doing it to you. And so the gods must be placated - each one of them.

13. Perhaps the day will come when the Red Dot that all Hindus wear on their foreheads will help. The red dot is "the third eye that sees the truth beyond appearances."