

Articles **【研究論著】**

Scottish Discussions of Indian Effeminacy in the  
Eighteenth Century

**十八世紀蘇格蘭關於印度教徒羸弱的討論**

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## Abstract

The controversy over virtue and luxury preoccupied many of the most eminent writers of eighteenth-century Britain. Extending far beyond morality, the subject involved government, law, the army and other topics dear to civic humanists. It became a paradigmatic issue in the broader concerns about national character and the rise and decline of civilizations. In this paper, the author presents a complex picture of how the Scottish discourses on Indian societies in the second half of the century were interwoven with ideas of luxury and virtue. Enlightenment thinkers viewed luxury as central to Asian despotism and to civilization itself. But the controversy over virtue and luxury changed many minds: effeminate Asia ceased to be viewed as worthy of a European partner. With the coming of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the terms of the debate were more hotly contested than ever. As this paper will illustrate, they became the indices according to which many Scottish writers distinguished Islamic from Hindu civilizations in the early nineteenth century.

## 摘要

十八世紀裡，許多蘇格蘭重要作家相當關注德性與奢華的辯論。辯論之旨早不限囿於道德議題，而擴及統治、法律、軍事等等與公民人文主義親近的課題。在民族性與文明興衰等更大的議題層面上，此辯論也成為關鍵議題。在此文中，作者試圖提供一幅複雜的論述圖像，說明十八世紀下半葉蘇格蘭對印度社會的看法，與德性／奢華的辯論極為相關。啟蒙思想家們認為奢華造成亞洲專制主義，是亞洲文明的核心。此辯論後來的發展，轉變了許多作家對印度的態度，不再認為印度足以與歐洲攜手創造有價值的文明。隨著法國大革命與拿破崙戰爭的爆發，此辯論更形白熱化。根據作者的論證，辯論關照的議題後來成為十九世紀，蘇格蘭公共意見將依斯蘭文明與印度文明區隔而觀的重要線索與依據。

This paper describes the emergence of a heated debate over virtue and luxury in eighteenth-century Scotland, focusing on the intersections between that debate and Scottish discussions of British India. Prior to the French Revolution, the British discourse on India fastened on the effeminacy of the Hindus as the trait rendering India suitable to a place in the British Empire. British writers stated that it was because of this effeminacy that the Hindus were able to produce luxury for the Europeans. Such a cultural ideological justification for British colonization of India both marginalized Islam and provoked in Britain a domestic controversy over the corrupting influence of luxury. In any case, the elevation of Hindu India to the great brotherhood of civilizations did not last long: the advance of imperialist sentiments engendered by French social upheavals and military adventures swept it away. As martial values surged to a position of dominance, the identification of Muslim culture with masculinity sharply contrasted with Hindu femininity. I hope to show that the British shift from venerating Hinduism to Islam was conditioned by the Scottish Enlightenment debate on virtue and luxury.

### **Hindu-centrism and the Idea of Luxury in Britain**

The eighteenth century was both an age of improvement and a time of great national self-consciousness. The former was implicated in the English culture of consumption, and the latter was prompted by a series of wars fought over colonial interests, religious factions and monarchical successions. But were these phenomena compatible? To the writers who emerged from Britain's polite culture, such as David Hume and Adam Smith, war and consumption seemed to be at odds, even contradictory. But the proof that they could be reconciled occupied a large part of the world map: British colonial India.

The British Empire in India was founded on military force. In the 1760s Robert Clive led the British defeat of the Mughal Empire, and in 1765 India agreed

to grant Britain *diwani*, the authority of administering land tax, effectively yielding sovereignty to the invader.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the British viewed the great cultural achievements of Indian civilization as fundamentally Hindu. William Jones, the greatest Orientalist of the day, appreciated the contributions to South Asia made by Persians and Arabs, but he emphasized Hinduism because its apparent antiquity could serve as an axial reference point for a universal history. He believed that if only the Christian scholar patiently deciphered its ancient monuments and written records, Hinduism could shed light on all of human antiquity, even the history of the one true god.<sup>1</sup> Jonesian Hindu-centrism appears nowhere more nakedly than in his famed contributions to the theory of the Indo-European language family.<sup>2</sup> Just as important to the British Hinduization of India was an economic theory strongly indebted to Montesquieu's theory of national character.

More than any other work, *De l'Esprit des lois* is responsible for the eighteenth-century image of India or, more accurately speaking, Asia, as a land of luxury and wealth. Whereas Marco Polo and Samuel Purchase had presented testimony of a prosperous, luxurious Orient, Montesquieu rationally accounted for the connection between natural wealth, luxury and the corruption of manners. And his equation of natural fertility, that is, the luxury of the earth, with political

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1 William Jones, "On Asiatick History, Civil and Natural," "On the Philosophy of the Asiatick" and "On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India," in *The Collected Works of Sir William Jones*, vol. 3 (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993, c1807), pp. 205-23, 224-52 and 349 ff.

2 It is worth noting that Jones's appreciation for Hinduism also underscored a nationalist sentiment. Jones told his fellows at the Asiatick Society of Calcutta that while the French, such as Du Halde, had given the Chinese to the Europeans, the time had come for the British to present the Hindus. For studies of Jones's contribution to British Orientalism, see Alexander Murray, *Sir William Jones 1746-94: A Commemoration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Garland Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones: Sir William Jones, the Father of Modern Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), esp. chaps. 1-3; David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969). Said's influential and controversial interpretation of Jones's role in British Orientalism is too well known to be discussed here. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978).

effeminacy established a crucial trope in how the Orient was to be depicted by subsequent writers.

One of Montesquieu's grand themes is that luxury was the bedeviled concubine of despotism, while virtue could defy such an undesirable union.<sup>3</sup> He explained the collapse of the Syrian Empire not through foreign aggression but through internal corruption, the inevitable result of luxury. The great empire of the Romans had fallen for the same reason:

Luxury, vanity, and effeminacy, which had prevailed through all ages in the Asiatic courts, triumphed more particularly in that of Syria: the evil infected the common people and the soldiers, and the very Romans themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Beware the lairs of luxury! In the British eighteenth-century mind, it was not the Levant or Marco Polo's China that epitomized affluence and richly adorned ease: it was India. Where there was trade there was affluence, as Adam Smith wrote. Although Montesquieu's ideas about the impact of physical factors such as terrain and weather on national character were contested by David Hume, his ideas about luxury appear to have convinced all of Scotland's leading thinkers. Many of these men were drawn to Montesquieu's thesis on national character because of their conviction that manners were no less consequential than laws and wealth in shaping the social orders and strengthening national defense. As trade with India filled

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3 Roberto Romani, *National Character and Public Spirit in Britain and France, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). On the origins of the European concept of Oriental despotism, see *The Birth of the Despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). For a detailed and genealogical study of the concept of Oriental despotism in French literature, see Alain Grosrichard, *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East* (London: Verso, 1998). For a critique of the West's misinterpretation of Oriental politics and urban civilization, see Patricia Springborg, "The Contractual State: Reflections on Orientalism and Despotism," *History of Political Thought*, 8, 3 (winter, 1987), pp. 395-433.

4 Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *Consideration of the Fall of the Roman Empire, The Complete Works of M. de Montesquieu*, vol. 3 (London, 1777), pp. 36-37.

British homes with exotic luxury items, many British moralists fretted about the sinister consequences of international commerce.

Montesquieu's contention that commercial society was inherently effeminate and that the universal practice of slavery had left the Orient a virtual eunuch provoked a series of debates among Scottish political writers.<sup>5</sup> Alexander Dow, an acclaimed historian of India, reworked many of Montesquieu's images, presenting the effeminate Hindu as indolent: so fertile was his land that only rarely did sweat drip from his laboring brow. This led to other weaknesses, since "other motives of passive obedience join issue with the love of ease."<sup>6</sup> In contrast with Arabs, who remained "unconquered by arms, by luxury, by corruption," the Indians were easy prey for any foreign group tempted by their great wealth.

The Hindoos, or the followers of the Brahmin faith, are in the number far superior to the Mahommedans in Hindostan. . . . . Mild, humane, obedient, and industrious, they are of all nations on earth the most easily conquered and governed. Their government, like that of all the inhabitants of Asia, is despotic; it is, in such a manner, tempered by the virtuous principles inculcated by their religion, that it seems milder than the most limited monarchy in Europe. . . . . Revolution and change are things unknown; and assassinations and conspiracies never exist. Industrious and frugal, they possess wealth which they never use. Those countries, governed by native princes, which lay behind the devastations of the Mahommedans, are rich, and cultivated to the highest degree. Their governors encourage industry and commerce; and it is to the ingenuity of the Hindoos, we owe all the fine

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5 Montesquieu's contention was aimed at criticizing French society itself, however. His self-reflexive critique compares the heavily luxury-consumption of French court with that of the Turks, and figures the potential political slavery in France as Oriental eunuchs. Sarah Colvin, *The Rhetorical Feminine: Gender and orient on the German Stage, 1647-1742* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

6 Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindostan: From the Death of Akbar to the Complete Settlement of the Empire under Aurungzebe* (London, 1772), p. viii.

manufactures in the East. During the empire of the Moguls, the trade of India was carried on by the followers of Brahma.<sup>7</sup>

Dow's description of discrepancy between the Mohammedans and Hindus was commonly accepted by the British public. So was the theory that the Hindu's contribution to English trade resulted directly from his natural obedience and effeminacy. In the age of mercantilism, it was the "humane, obedient, and industrious" followers of Hinduism, not vigorous and warlike Muslims, who were considered friends of British society. As we shall see, the Napoleonic wars inspired Scottish writers to cast the British merchant as the protector of the effeminate and industrious Hindus, who were threatened by the valiant but destructive Muslims.

## **Hinduization in Scottish Historical Theory**

Montesquieu's influence on Scottish ideas about commerce and luxury was by no means hegemonic. In the famous essay "Of Refinement in the Arts," in which he also took on Rousseau, Hume rejected Montesquieu's explanation for the decline of the Roman Empire. To Montesquieu's assertions that the disorders in the late Roman republic arose thanks to the accumulation of Asian luxuries, Hume replied that riches were available at all times and to all men. If luxury were judged guilty of corrupting Rome, it would have to be held responsible for every empire that had suffered the same fate: Montesquieu's argument had no etiological value.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Hume assured his readers, luxury did not sap martial spirit, as many had suggested. "Those who would ascribe this effeminacy of the Italians to their luxury, or politeness, or application to the arts, need but consider the French and English, whose bravery is as uncontestable, as their love for the arts, and their

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxxv-xxvi.

<sup>8</sup> Though Hume here quoted from Sallust, he must have had in mind Montesquieu's recently published work on the decline of Roman Empire.

assiduity in commerce." <sup>9</sup> Indeed, England stood more staunchly against encroachments on liberty than any "uncivilized" nation, for where "luxury nourishes commerce and industry, and peasants become rich and independent," public liberty was better protected by "that middling rank of men."<sup>10</sup>

Besides, Enlightenment Scots viewed the alignment of commerce and femininity as one of the four stages in historical progress. Many Scots theorists argued that human society assumed different forms as modes of subsistence shifted from hunting and gathering, to pastoral life, farming and then a manufacturing economy. With the development of the economy, social manners and institutions were qualitatively transformed, a government was founded and, over time, feuds and private forces were banned. Such innovations contrasted sharply with feudal society, in which military values dominated civil refinements.

Some of Hume's acquaintances, among them celebrated writers and intellectuals, inadvertently campaigned for commercial society because of their commitment to this model of progress. Among them, Adam Smith was easily the most broad-ranging and sophisticated. He believed that moral sentiments always corresponded to social patterns. As society went through the transformation from feudal or agricultural society to commercial society, its ethical complexion shifted from noble generosity to a general humanity. When society guaranteed that individual needs were satisfied through a fair and independent mechanism of exchange, "The most humane actions require no self-denial, no self-commend, no great exertion of the sense of propriety." The elaborate moral structure of the past disappeared and "humane actions" came to amount to "doing what this exquisite sympathy would of its own accord prompt us to do." For Smith, this moral change had an obviously gendered quality: "Humanity is the virtue of a woman, generosity

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9 David Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts," in *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary* (London : Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 275.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 277.



of a man. The fair-sex, who have commonly much more tenderness than ours, have seldom so much generosity."<sup>11</sup>

Smith's celebrated pupil at Glasgow, John Millar (1735-1801), fully integrated this gendered change into the four stage theory of history. Millar pointed out that, from the hindsight of history, "the disuse of the feudal militia was an immediate consequence of the progress of people in arts and manufactures."<sup>12</sup> And he also pointed out that the progress of civilization kept strict pace with women's increased participation in society and improved virtue. From Millar's liberal point of view, civilization, commerce and feminization ran a parallel course. This theoretical grounding would not have presented any principled complaints about Hindu effeminacy, but one suspects that theory and principle worked far better when grappling with distant realities than when an effeminate culture threatened the nearer neighborhood.

In fact, many British writers approached polite culture with some misgivings. Gibbon, who liked to describe himself as half Scots, worried that women's increased power in the dominion of manners would inevitably lead to "softness of the mind."<sup>13</sup> Adam Ferguson (1723-1816), a highland Scots and stout exponent of civic virtue, initiated the reaction against the too submissive character of the Hindu nation. The subject came up in one of his discussions of the national militia, a favorite topic. Ferguson believed that the republican virtues inculcated by service in the militia could serve as antidote for the corrupting influence of commercial luxury. He followed closely Montesquieu's theory of the union of effeminacy and despotism. More importantly, India, Hinduism, indeed, was exemplified as an archetypical model of the kind.

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11 Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 190-191.

12 John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks: An Inquiry into the Circumstances which Give Rise to Influence and Authority in the Different Members of Society* (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1990, c1806), p. 224.

13 John G. A. Pocock, "The Mobility of Property and the Rise of Eighteenth-Century Sociology," in *Virtue, Commerce and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 118.

The Mexican, like the Asiatic of India, being addicted to pleasure, was sunk in effeminacy; and in the neighbourhood of the wild and the free, had suffered to be raised of his weakness, a domineering superstition, and a permanent fabric of despotical government.<sup>14</sup>

Ferguson expressed fears that if India replaced Montesquieu's Levant as Britain's main source of luxury goods, the influence of the Hindus might feminize British virtue.

Ferguson discovered an antidote that would make society immune to the venomous effects of femininity, namely, the virile British mind and will. His belief in the will led him to consider national *spirit* as the primary, if not exclusive, component of national *character*. Those endowed with high spirits would be constantly alert to the dangers that might befall their nation: at the slightest hint of peril they would leap into action. "Virtue," Ferguson maintained, "is a necessary constituent of national strength: capacity, and a vigorous understanding, are no less necessary to sustain the fortune of state."<sup>15</sup>

Dow concluded that Hindu civilization had made the greatest contribution to English wealth. But to Ferguson, what Asian history was worthy of a historical lesson was not Hindu industry, let alone effeminacy, but Arabian virtue of fortitude and virility: even Dow had to admit that the Arabs had escaped the dangers of luxury.<sup>16</sup> Ferguson's anxiety was eminently consonant with the censure leveled by popular moralists of the day against English nabobs, who were said to have succumbed to "oriental luxury, wild extravagance and incredible vice, of pomp and power."<sup>17</sup> But far more worrisome to the British moralists than the corruption of the

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14 Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on History of Civil Society*, edited by Fania Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 113-114.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 213.

16 Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindostan*, p. ix.

17 Thomas G. P. Spear, *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, c1932), p. 43.

manners of the English in India was the thought that their vices would infect English society when those nabobs returned home. Thus, Henry Home (Lord Kames), a great patron for David Hume in Scotland and an advocate for polite culture, believed that trade was contributing to the marked decline in Britain's valiant spirit.

Thus, by accumulating wealth, a manufacturing and commercial people become a tempting object for conquest; and by effeminacy become an easy conquest. The military spirit seems to be at a low ebb in Britain: will no phantom appear, even in a dream, to disturb our downy rest?<sup>18</sup>

Ferguson's apprehensions about the threat to the national spirit convinced neither Hume nor William Robertson (1723-94), a close friend of Ferguson and a famed historian devoted to the . Robertson questioned his friend's allegations about the superiority of Arabian national character. Robertson praised Muslims in general and the Mughal emperor Akbar (1542-1605) in particular for his encouragement of commerce. In a display of religious toleration characteristic of the age, Robertson praised Muslims for combining "commercial ideas and objects" with "devotion."<sup>19</sup> As Dow had before him, however, Robertson contrasted the roughness of Muslims with the softness of Hindus: this was in the Hindus' favor since gentleness was considered congenial to commerce.

Thanks to a temperate national character, Indian commerce, like India itself, was eternal, unchanging. Robertson stated that India, when first colonized by the Hindus, has been long a great commercial society.<sup>20</sup> When the Europeans revived

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18 Henry Home, *Sketches of the History of Man*, vol. 3 (1778; repr., Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1993), p. 8.

19 William Robertson, *An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients had of India: and the Progress of Trade with that Country Prior to the Discovery of the Passage to it by the Cape of Good Hope* (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1997), p. 187. To be sure, Robertson did criticize Islam as "illiberal fanaticism" (p. 235).

20 *Ibid.*, p. 236.

from the collapse of Roman civilization, progressing from "the original simplicity of their pastoral manners" to refinement, "they began to acquire a relish for some of the luxuries of India."<sup>21</sup> As a true Presbyterian moderate and fervent advocate of commerce, Robertson emphatically urged his readers to pay due respect to Hindu civilization. They should do no less than Akbar, who had been called "The Guardian of Mankind" because of his willingness to inquire into Hindus' manners and his determination that they were "no less entitled to protection and favour than his other subjects," in spite of their "colour [.....], their effeminate appearance, their unwarlike spirit, the wild extravagance of their religious tenets and ceremonies."<sup>22</sup> Like Akbar, the British state had a role to play in a country so dangerously "effeminate" and "unwarlike."

## **Hindu Effeminacy and the Justification of the Napoleonic Wars**

Robertson's comments had been prompted by French agitation in India. The revolutionary aftermath extended well beyond the European continent and one encounters many echoes of the Robertsonian imperialist sentiment in works that chronicled or were sparked by the Napoleonic wars. Several Frenchmen who had returned from waging war in India wrote histories of the country imbued with vivid descriptions of the differences between Muslim and Hindus—differences brought to the fore in wartime.

The imperialist struggle over India ramified along religious lines, as the British allied themselves with Hindus and the French with Muslims. For example, Bengal, the great seat of the British Empire in India, was primarily inhabited by Hindus. Quite concerned that the local people existed in a childlike state of dependence, the

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21 *Ibid.*, p. 203.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 332-333.

Scots soldier and historian of Persia and India John Malcolme observed that Hinduism was "calculated to preserve a vast community in tranquility and obedience to its rulers."<sup>23</sup> He firmly believed that Britain had to protect its subjects, the majority of which were Hindus, against the warlike Muslims. In wars of "self-preservation," such as the much publicized war against Tippo Sultan, the British defended the effeminate and defenseless Hindus against the threat of virile and vigorous Muslims.<sup>24</sup>

Little attention was paid to Ferguson's emphasis on the primacy of national vitality until James Mill published his unorthodox views on imperialism. Mill admired Muslim civilization and despised Hinduism, finding in the national character and cultural performance of the Muslims the qualities that corresponded to strong minds and bodies in his Fergusonian theory of the advancement of civilization.<sup>25</sup> Mill flouted common opinion about South Asian societies, which originally derived from mercantilist propaganda. According to the mercantilist line, Hindu nations were more civilized and sophisticated than their conquerors, the Muslims. In addition to the perceived mildness of Hindu religious doctrines and social practices, Western explorers generally agreed that the indigenous inhabitants of India, the Hindustanis, had accumulated their tremendous wealth thanks to great skill in commerce. But in his *History of British India* (1818), Mill boldly refuted this truism, arguing that the Muslim nation was more vigorous than the Hindu in both mind and body. He contrasted the "extravagance" and inaccuracy of Hindu chronology with the great care taken in Muslim historiography.<sup>26</sup> Mental habits

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23 Quoted in Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780-1830* (Akron: University of Akron Press, 2001), p. 150.

24 John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History in India* (London, 1811), p. 4.

25 Duncan Forbes labeled Ferguson's ideas "vitalism." A recent study of Adam Smith highlights the correspondences between his economic theory and the contemporaneous physiological studies of vitalism so enthusiastically discussed in Edinburgh from the 1730s to the 1750s. More work needs to be done in this area. See Catherine Packham, "The Physiology of Political Economy: Vitalism and Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations,'" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 63, 3 (2002), pp. 465-481.

26 The equation of historiographical accomplishment and mental advancement was first made by William Robertson in his *The History of Scotland: During the Reigns of Queen Mary and King James VI, till His Accession to the Crown of England* (London: 1759).

influenced every aspect of one's life, including one's favorite spectacles: "A fondness for those surprising feasts of bodily agility and dexterity which form the arts of the tumbler and the juggler, is a feature in the character of the Hindu. It is a passive enjoyment which corresponds with the passiveness of his temper."<sup>27</sup> This prompted Mill to offer a comparison.

In point of address and temper, the Mahomedan is less soft, less smooth and winning than the Hindu. Of course, he is not so well liked by his lord and master the Englishman; who desires to have nothing more to do with him, than to receive his obedience. In truth, the Hindu, like the Eunuch, excels in the qualities of a slave. The indolence, the security, the pride of the despot, political or domestic, find less to hurt them in the obedience of the Hindu, than in that of almost any other portion of the species. But if less soft, the Mahomedan is more manly, more vigorous. He more nearly resembles our own half-civilized ancestors; who though more rough, were not more gross; though less supple in behaviour, were still more susceptible of increased civilization, than a people in the state of the Hindus.<sup>28</sup>

To Mill, as to Ferguson, civic virtue and vigor were the antidote against despotism, which made the Hindus obedient and even slaves.<sup>29</sup> Like Ferguson, Mill turned to the idea of despotism as a counterpoint to the civic virtues he saw embodied in Indian Muslims and his fellow countrymen. Ferguson had relied on Montesquieu's critique of despotism to prescribe republican ideals.

But if a rigorous policy, applied to enslave, not to restrain from crimes, has an actual tendency to corrupt the manners, and to extinguish the spirit of

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27 James Mill, *History of British India* (London, 1840), vol. 1, pp. 335.

28 Mill, *History of British India*, vol. 2, pp. 365-366.

29 "..... the Hindus, in mind and body, the most enslaved portion of the human race." Mill, *History of British India*, vol. 2, p. 132.

nations; if its severity be applied to terminate the agitations of a free people, not to remedy their corruptions; if forms be often applauded as salutary, because they tend merely to silence the voice of mankind, or be condemned as pernicious, because they allow this voice to be heard; we may expect that many of the boasted improvements of civil society, will be mere devices to lay the political spirit at rest, and will chain up the active virtues more than the restless disorders of men.<sup>30</sup>

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, few British clung to the illusory belief that India was a land of riches. Victorian philanthropists discovered that the country harbored a limitless number of starving and ignorant wretches, and Walter Scott was only one of the most famous promoters of primary education in India. But as the great mountains of gold and silver melted away from the popular image, India became no more manly. Effeminacy and virtue no longer stood in mutual opposition. Mountstuart Elphinstone, a former governor of Bombay who had consistently displayed a deep sympathy for the people he governed, would ever think of the Hindu as less than manly. Resolutely striking out against the unanimously held opinion that Indian history had not changed in two millennia, Elphinstone nonetheless remained committed to another European stereotype.<sup>31</sup> Geography and climate determined character, he explained: "The inhabitants of the dry countries in the north, which in winter are cold, are comparatively manly and active [.....] while the Bengalese, with their climate and their double crops of rice, where the coconut tree and the bamboo furnish all the materials for construction unwrought, are more effeminate than any other people in India." Although few Indians were as slothful as the Bengalese, "love of repose, though not sufficient to

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30 Ferguson, *History of Civil Society*, p. 210.

31 Mountstuart Elphinstone, *History of India*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1841), p. 102.

extinguish industry or repress occasional exertion, may be taken as a characteristic of the whole people."<sup>32</sup>

The jeremiads of James Mill and Mountstuart Elphinstone on the topic of Hindu character resonated before the appearance of the heroic male culture driven by Macaulay, Bentinck, and, of course, Kipling. But already the hosannas to Indian culture had subsided: the great fashioners of costly luxuries would no longer escape censure. This was not a tolerant society, since everyone now knew that the widow of a Brahmin must perish on his funeral pyre. For the time being, none spoke of splitting Hinduism off from Islam: Indian society could be individualized to a certain degree, as sexual right replaced national character. It was now the femininity and the very lives of Hindu women that needed to be protected. But a certain continuity could not be extinguished: the Hindu remained the other of British society, a partner with whom consummation would forever be postponed, a partner whose commercial cunning could infect, a partner whose love of luxury and of a life of ease threatened the people of Britain.♦

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32 Ibid., pp. 370-371.

♦ 責任編輯：林沛熙。



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