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Development and Its Implications for the Indian Social System: A WV3 case study of Jotirao Phule

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By Nepal's *National Census of 2011* statistics, Hindus (81.3%), Buddhists (9%), Hindu-Buddhist-animists Kirant/Yumaists (3%), and Muslims (4.4%), constitute 97.7% of Nepal. The remaining 2.3% are Christians (1.4%) and Others (.9%).¹ NIRN [National Inter-Religious Network, Nepal] is an umbrella network of faith-based organizations in the country. NIRN wants Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim leaders, representing some 98% of Nepali population, to play a key role in bringing social reform, since they are among the leading religions in the country.

Nepal, the world's only officially Hindu nation until 2008, is addressing a problem which Sangeet Sangrula locates as "social maladies... stemming from religious origin". Sangrula draws attention to efforts of the Government of Nepal and the National Inter-Religious Network, Nepal (NIRN), to diminish "various social evils prevalent in the Nepali society in the name of religious belief, tradition and culture."²

¹ See *National Population and Housing Census 2011 (National Report)* at <http://cbs.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/National%20Report.pdf>.

² S. Sangrula, "War on social evils: Interfaith alliance to take on the ills of society" *Republica* 30 June 2014 at http://www.my.republica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=78090. See

Nepal's NIRN initiative and Sangrula's framing offer a most helpful expression for considering society as a culture tree, and specifically, for discussing development and its implications for India's social system. For, as B. Upreti, director, South Asia Studies Centre, University of Rajasthan, reminds us, "Religion is a major binding factor between India and Nepal" and as a Hindu kingdom, Nepal has been "the farthest place in the north where Hindu culture is dominant. It is on account of reverence towards a Hindu monarch that the king of Nepal had been accorded privileges in India. For instance, in the temple of Puri, other than priests of the temple, the king of Nepal alone had the exclusive right to enter the innermost sanctuary of Lord Jagannath and offer worship."³

In Nepal, "Superstition and harmful social practices in the three religions are widespread. So, the role of the leaders of these religions is really crucial for social transformation," explains Narendra Pandey of NIRN. Identified maladies include child marriage, caste-based discrimination, violence against women, and witchcraft, as well as dowry, marginalization of widows, polygamy, *Chaupadi*, and the traditions of *Deuki*, *Ghumto*, and *Jhuma*.⁴ These beliefs and behaviors are what Edgerton,

also S. Thapliyal, "Perception of the Other – Myths or Realities" 75-101, in M. Mandal (ed.), *Indo-Nepal Relations* (New Delhi: KW Publishers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Ministry of Culture, Government of India 2014); T. Wolf, *Nepal and Switzerland: Thoughts on Different Trains and Birdcages*. (New Delhi: University Institute 2012); E. Roche and N. Mehta, "India falls short of UN's MDG goals" *Live Mint & Wall Street Journal* 17 July 2014 at <http://blog.livemint.com/Politics/9VWB3A0iSrwG3Jrw5zt88J/India-falls-short-on-UNs-MDG-goals.html>; D. Gellner, Nepal towards a Democratic Republic: Caste, Ethnicity and Inequality in Nepal *Economic and Political Weekly* May 19, 2007, 1823-1828 at <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/midea/pdf/darticle2.pdf>; J. Milikan, Nepal's Terai: Constructing an Ethnic Conflict. PRIO South Asia Briefing Paper #1 (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute 2009); P. Upadhyay, Ethnicity, Stereotypes and Ethnic Movements in Nepal *Crossing Borders: International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* (Volume 1, Number 1, 15 December 2013), 65-78; I. Jensen and Z. Mandozai, *The Caste System in Nepal – According to the Youth* (Esbjerg, DK: Syddansk Universitet Esbjerg 2014), 3-96 at http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles/7/6/D/%7B76DA09E2-D87A-4F4A-ABC7-FCD175FE8A2F%7DEksempelel_5%20sem_Nepal_Semesterprojekt.pdf.

³ B. Upreti, "Positioning India and Nepal in Contemporary Context: A Review of the Context, Dynamics and Issues", 8, 1-22, in Mandal, *Indo-Nepal Relations* (2014).

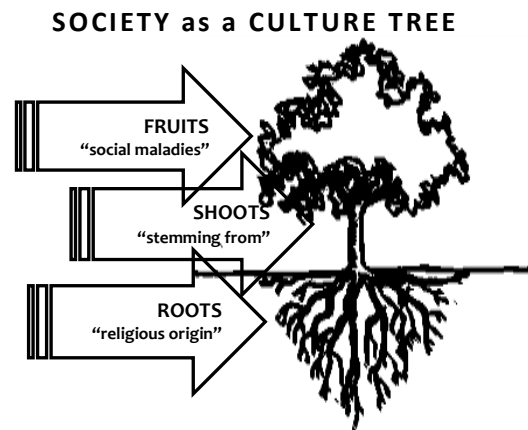
⁴ On *Chaupadi*, see N. Hussain, *Chaupadi pratha: Tradition or torment? Restless Beings* 19 September 2011 at <http://www.restlessbeings.org/human-rights/chaupadi-pratha-tradition-or-torment>; A. Gaestel, Nepal: *Chaupadi culture and violence against women*. Pulitzer Center 5 February 2013 at <http://Pulitzercenter.org/projects/nepal-cultural-practice-women-rights-sexual-violence-chaupadi-migration-WHO>; Bijoyeta Das, Nepal's menstrual exiles; and Al Jazeera 10 February 2014 at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/02/nepal-menstrual-exiles-201423131149488509.html>. In India, J. Kapoor, Cycle of change *Indian Express* 31 July 2014 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/cycle-of-change/>; and see <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/70-cant-afford-sanitary-napkins-revealsstudy/articleshow/7344998.cms>; and <http://www.psmag.com/navigation/health-and-behavior/can-sanitary-pads-made-widely-available-low-income-countries-79902/>.

The *Deuki* and *Jhuma* traditions involved selling and/or dedicating young girls to Hindu temple deities (*Deuki*) or to Buddhist monasteries (*Jhuma*) as a sacrifice to recover health, bear a son, or other accomplishments. See S. Basnet, *Deuki and Jhuma system* 20 January 2012 at <http://www.humanrights.asia/opinions/columns/AHRC-ETC-056-2011>; Custom and tradition of Nepal. National Discovery Channel 6 February 2013 at <http://www.nationaldiscoverychannel.com/2013/01/custom-and-tradition-of-nepal.html>. Also see S. Paudel, Nepal: Witchcraft as a superstition and a form

Martin-Gorski, Afshari, Sutton, Edgell, and others call “maladaptive practices” (entrenched practices which harm a society’s members).⁵

How can we intellectually frame and practically approach development in a social system in order to mobilize change? My proposal is to see societies as “cultural trees”.⁶

A Culture Tree is a *cultural matrix*, a *lifezone system of Roots (worldvoice), Shoots (worldview), and Fruits (worldvenue)*. I will draw on the vision and vocabulary of Mahatma Phule to explore India as a Culture Tree, a social space, a geo lifezone of identifiable and system-distinctive Roots (worldvoice), Shoots (worldview), and Fruits (worldvenue).



Cultural Mentorship: Ambedkar, Marx, Gandhi and Phule Proposals

Dr. Ambedkar (d.1956), with Marx (d.1883), Gandhi (d.1948), and Phule (d.1890), form a wide window of Indian world-class leaders of the crucial hundred-years womb-window of modern India (1848-1948). They grappled with the core issue of development and its implications for India’s social system: the persistently progress-resistant and religiously-sanctioned traditions that comprehensively shaped their India.

K. Ilaiyah informs us, that it was especially Ambedkar who conceptualised a comprehensive program of liberation for India – a development schemata that

of violence against women in Nepal. Asian Human Rights Commission 2011 at <http://www.humanrights.asia/opinions/columns/AHRC-ETC-056-2011>.

On *Ghumtoprada* (face covering by women) and other culturally embedded practices, see R. Mahto, *Research Report on Socio-cultural Status of Other Backward Communities of Saptari and Siraha District*. Submitted to SIRF Secretariat, SNV Nepal 2012 at http://www.socialinclusion.org.np/new/files/Ram%20Narayan%20Mahato_1365494079dWhX.pdf.

⁵R. Edgerton, *Sick Societies: Challenging the Myth of Primitive Harmony* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 144, 65-74, 101-104, and 202-209; and *The Balance of Human Kindness and Cruelty: Why We Are the Way We Are* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen 2005); D. Martin-Gorski, “Sick Societies and Islamic Nations” *PHI 579 Religion, Revolt, Terrorism, & War* (Buffalo, NY: State University of New York at Buffalo 2002); R. Afshari, *Human Rights In Iran: An Abuse Of Cultural Relativism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania 2001); P. Sutton, “Rage, reason, and the honourable cause: A reply to Cowlshaw” *Australian Aboriginal Studie*: 35-43; and A. Edgell, “Globalization and Cultural Encounters” *International Third World Studies Journal* (Volume XIV 2013) at <http://www.unomaha.edu/itwsjr/thirdXIV/Edgell.Globalization.14.htm>.

⁶ See T. Wolf, *Social Change and Development: A Research Template* (New Delhi: University Institute 2012), 17-29.

included the political, economic, social, and spiritual. In comparing Ambedkar, Marx, and Gandhi, Ilaiah clarifies that “Karl Marx thought of only social, economic and political liberation but left the question of spiritual liberation untouched. Gandhi thought of social, political and spiritual liberation but completely ignored the problem of economic liberation of the people.”⁷ Ilaiah also keenly observes that, in contrast to Marx and Gandhi, only Ambedkar “worked out a comprehensive scheme of liberation – social, political, economic and spiritual.” Ilaiah’s conclusion: “Only Ambedkar thought about all the four processes of liberation. Therein lies his greatness.”⁸

Therein also is the greatness of Ambedkar’s intellectual and social mentor, Jotirao Phule. Phule was the only person other-than-and-before Ambedkar who so fully thought through the needed changes for Indian developmental transformation in the inclusive dimensions of the political, economic, social, and spiritual. Therefore, what K. Rao writes about Ambedkar can equally be said of Phule: “He advocates a religious revolution as an essential prelude to a social revolution, which, in its turn, is a prelude to a political revolution.”⁹

On the other hand, P. Mehta provides a Phule-Ambedkar opposite, a formula for an incomplete revolution. Mehta suggests that “India was one of the few societies where a political revolution preceded a social one”, leaving a classic “society of inequality” intact. As a result, “in all our social and political relationships, procedures, habits of thought, patterns of conduct,” Mehta regretfully records that “the influences of inequality is palpable,” embedded with the four characteristics of “inegalitarian societies”.

Those four characteristics Mehta identifies as:

1. fierce competition for dominance
2. abject servility
3. volatile violence (to announce one’s power and worth) and
4. routine humiliating discrimination.¹⁰

⁷ K. Ilaiah, *Buffalo Nationalism: A Critique of Spiritual Fascism* (Kolkata: Samya, 2004), 38; and see K. Rao, *Babasaheb Ambedkar* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1993), 17-33.

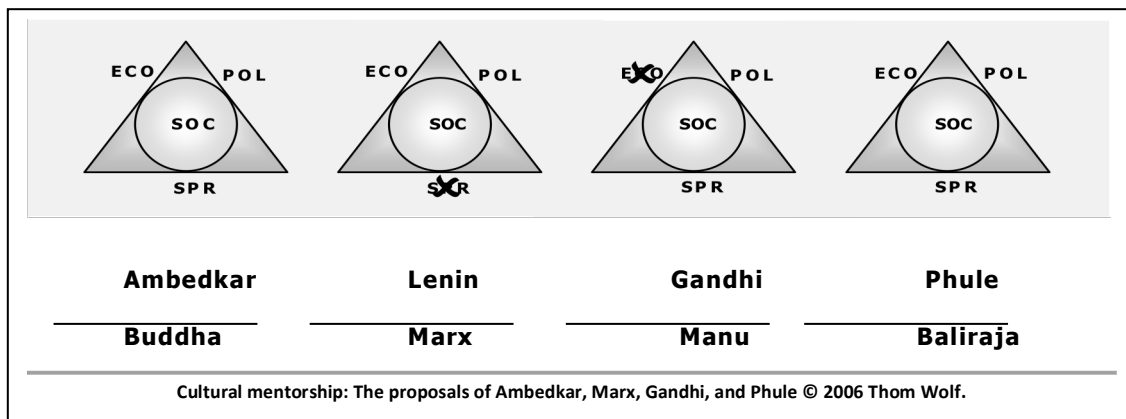
⁸ See his larger discussion, Ilaiah 2004, 1-39; and J. Massey, *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: A Study in Just Society* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003).

⁹ K. Rao *Babasaheb Ambedkar* (1993), 26; and B. Ambedkar, *Who Were the Shudras* (1946) at [http://164.100.47.134/plibrary/ebooks/Jagjivan%20Ram/\(sno%207\)jagjivan%20ram%201.pdf](http://164.100.47.134/plibrary/ebooks/Jagjivan%20Ram/(sno%207)jagjivan%20ram%201.pdf).

See the Ambedkarian critique in B. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*. Edited and annotated by S. Anand. Introduced with the essay ‘The Doctor and the Saint’ by A. Roy (New Delhi: Navayana 2013); S. Rege, *Against the Madness of Manu: B. R. Ambedkar’s Writings on Brahmanical Patriarchy* (New Delhi: Navayana 2013); G. Omvedt, *Understanding Caste: From Buddha to Ambedkar and Beyond* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan 2012); E. Zelliott, *Ambedkar’s World: The Making of Babasahjeb and the Dalit Movement* (New Delhi: Navayana 2013).

¹⁰ P. Mehta, *The Burden of Democracy* (New Delhi: Penguin 2003), 51, and 35-57; J. Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin and the Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind* (1755) at www.isn.ethz.ch.

Cultural Mentorship: The Proposals of Ambedkar, Lenin, Gandhi, and Phule



Along with (but before) Ambedkar and Gandhi, Phule fully understood the life lesson that India's future would always include, and even be based on, a spiritual solution. That is what Boettke, Berger, Harrison, Inglehart, Welzel, Yale University's 'Spiritual Capital Initiative', and others refer to as "cultural capital" or "spiritual capital".¹¹

For Phule, however, the cultural base for a transformed India lay neither in Gandhi's Brahmanism nor in Ambedkar's Buddhism.¹² Instead, Phule saw the future of a progress-prone India flourishing only in the cultural mentorship of Baliraja, whose "great teaching is, 'Do to others what you would have them do to you'." That root teaching, Phule argued, would uproot the caste tree and grow a society where "the code of proper conduct" would be "judge others as you would judge yourself".¹³ Thus Jotirao Phule (who described India from Pune in the middle of the generation of

¹¹ P. Boettke, "Spiritual Capital and Economic Development: An Overview" 29-39; L. Harrison, "Do Some Religions Do Better Than Others?" 15-28; P. Berger, "Introduction: Spiritual, Social, Human, and Financial Capital" 1-14, in P. Berger and G. Redding (eds.), *The Hidden Form of Capital: Spiritual Influences in Societal Progress* (London: Anthem 2011); L. Harrison, *Jews, Confucians, and Protetants: Cultural Capital and the End of Multiculturalism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman& Littlefield 2013); R. Inglehart and C. Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005); Spiritual Capital Initiative at the Yale Center for Faith & Culture at <http://spiritualcapital.yale.edu/>.

¹² T. Wolf, "Gandhi and Phule: A Glimpse into Manu-Mentored and Baliraja-Mentored Worldviews." *Oikos Worldview Bulletin* 7 (Spring 2007); Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi: A Very Brief Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Prasenjit Chowdhury, "Blinkered Pastiche of a Cliché." *Hardnews*(November 2006).

¹³ Phule, *The Book of True Faith* [1889] 2002, 236 and 232. Trace Phule's own words on "Baliraja" and "the followers of Baliraja": Phule, *Slavery Part X-XII, XVI* 2002, 73-83, 97-99; *Book of the True Faith* 2002, 235-236. Also, see G. P. Despande, for 35 years professor of Chinese Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, on the identity and significance of "Baliraja" for Phule. Despande 2002, 9-11.

Then, give attention to Despande's extended discussion of Baliraja-Jesus in *The World of Ideas in Modern Marathi* (New Delhi: Tulika 2009), 32, 48-68, 74-77, 83-84. Despande (2009, 54) is clear: Phule often "returned to this [Baliraja-Vamana] myth which, in his view, was central to all subsequent history. If that terminology were available to him, he may almost have said that all recorded history is the history of the Vamana-Baliraja struggle. Indeed he did describe Jesus as Baliraja."

Karl Marx, Abraham Lincoln, Charles Darwin, and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan¹⁴) stands as a breathtaking conceptualizer for a new kind of India even today.

WV3: A Worldvoice|Worldview|Worldvenue Cultural Matrix

Jotirao Phule (1827-1890) was one of India's first systematic theorists of caste.¹⁵ While remembered in Maharashtra, Phule's voice has been more muted beyond Maharashtra. Internationally, the writings of O'Hanlon, Omvedt, Jaffrelot, and others, led the way for the rehabilitation of Phule's contemporary voice.¹⁶

Nationally, perhaps no one has projected Phule into the public eye in a physical way more than Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister Mayawati, through her grand "statues drama" of enormous monuments, statues, and memorial parks chocked with elephant overlords of carvings of Buddha, Kanshi Ram (and herself), Dr. Ambedkar, and Phule. According to sociologist Shiv Visvanathan, Mayawati's clear intent was "to create an alternate idea of history – one that cannot be easily erased."¹⁷

I credit my prolonged exposure to Phule to be the activating vector for what I have called the WV3 cultural matrixes of the major geographical lifezones of the planet.¹⁸ The various WV3 cultural matrixes or social systems common to human life

¹⁴ From the vast literature, see J. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press 2009); R. Blackburn and R. Dunaevskaya, *Marx and Lincoln: An Unfinished Revolution* (London: Verso 2011); R. Baum, *Doctors of Modernity: Darwin, Marx, and Freud* (Peru, IL: Sherwood Sugden 1988); C. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* ([Karachi: Oxford University Press 1979] New Delhi: University Institute 2013); T. Hasan, *The Aligarh Movement and the Making of the Indian Muslim World* (New Delhi: Rupa 2006); J. Barzun, *Darwin, Marx, Wagner: Critique of a Heritage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1981).

¹⁵ See J. Phule, *Slavery*. Collected Works of Mahatma Jotirao Phule. Volume 1. Translated by P. G. Patil (Mumbai: Education Department Government of Maharashtra 1991); L. Phule, *Selections*. Collected Works of Mahatma Jotirao Phule. Volume 2. Translated by P. G. Patil (Mumbai: Education Department Government of Maharashtra 1991); J. Phule, *Cultivator's Whipcord*. Collected works of Mahatma Phule. Volume 3. Translated by Asha Mundlay (Mumbai: Education Department Government of Maharashtra 2002).

¹⁶ R. O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Jotirao Phule and Lower Caste Protest in Nineteenth Century Maharashtra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [1985] 2002); G. Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non Brahman Movement in Western India 1873-1930* (Bombay: Scientific Socialist Education Trust 1976); G. Omvedt, *Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anticaste Intellectuals* (New Delhi: Navayana 2008); and C. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press 1996).

See also D. Keer, *Mahatma Jotirao Phule: Father of Indian Social Revolution* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan 1974); T. Joshi, *Jotirao Phule*. National Biography (New Delhi: National Book Trust 1991); G. Deshpande, (ed), *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule* (New Delhi: LeftWord Books 2002); and N. Gupta, *Mahatma Jotiba Phule: An Educational Philosopher* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications 2002).

¹⁷ O. Ahmad, Bronze Age Booming *Outlook* (October 7 2008), 90-92; A. Sharma, Mayawati's statues of liberty *Business Standard* (November 5, 2011), at http://www.business-standard.com/article/beyond-business/mayawati-s-statues-of-liberty-111110500008_1.html.

¹⁸ See T. Wolf, *Phule in His Own Words* (New Delhi: University Institute 2008); *Phule: Apne Hi Shabdon Mein* (New Delhi: Aspire Prakashan 2010); T. Wolf, "Phule's Fire" *Forward Press* (May

on our planet are systems characterized by three dynamic, but not disconnected, dimensions. Those cultural system dynamics I am designating as “WV3”: *worldvoice*, *worldview*, and *worldvenue*.¹⁹

- *Worldvoice* is the *virtuous person*, the paradigm or model person of the culture.
- *Worldview* is the set of *intellectual precepts*, the comprehensive way of perceiving reality that flows from the prototype person.
- *Worldvenue* is the daily set of *social pathways*, the social life system of everyday customs and behaviors which flow from the worldvoice person and the worldview precepts.

Thus a cultural matrix is recognized by its distinctive dimensions of origination, incubation, and manifestation of its particular WV3: worldvoice *adoration*, worldview *analysis*, and worldvenue *avenues*. In everyday discourse, the three dimensions of a society’s WV3 can be highlighted by asking three questions: Who? How? What?

- For the WV3 worldvoice: Who do you listen to?
- For the WV3 worldview: How do you look at things?
- For the WV3 worldvenue: What do you leave off or lift up?

A society’s worldvoice is its mentor, the *luminary authority*. A society’s worldview is its mindset, the *lens of analysis*. And a society’s worldvenue is its mazeway, the *lifestyle of attitudes-actions*.²⁰

2010), 22-24; T. Wolf, “Nagpur, the Buddha and Kathi Rolls” *Forward Press* (May 2010), 57-60; “Phule’s Baliraja Proposal” *Forward Press* (November 2011), 58-62; “Two Different Trains, Two Different Bird Cages” *Forward Press* (December 2011), 56-60; “Nepal and Switzerland: Two Different Trains, Two Different Bird Cages” *Forward Press* (January 2012), 58-62.

¹⁹ T. Wolf, “WV3: Worldvoice, Worldview, Worldvenue” *Oikos Worldviews Bulletin* 12 (1), 13-23; and T. Wolf, “Shivalinga: A WV3 Case Study”. In *India: WV3 Voices, Views, and Venues* (New Delhi: University Institute and Azusa Pacific University 2012), 22-24. For a South Asian conversation on WV3 I and lifespace, see A. Silveira, *Lived Heritage, Shared Space: The Courtyard House of Goa* (New Delhi: Yoda 2008).

²⁰ See the insightful discussion by S. Amin, *Global History: A View from the South* (Cape Town: Pambazuka 2011), 12-49, on tributary societies in parallel existence, each with its own peculiar nature and particular trajectories; and each identifiable from its own distinctive universal ideology – a religion based on universal values, an intellectual incubation, and a recognizable communal crystallization. Also, H. Kung, *Christianity and the World Religions: Paths to Dialogue* (New York: Doubleday 1996). See also K. Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1953); G. Graham, *The Shape of the Past: A Philosophical Approach to History* (New York: Oxford University Press 1997); P. Nemo, *What is the West* (Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University Press 2005; and P. Nolan & G. Lenski, *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology* 2010).

WV3 Tree: A Culture Tree of Roots|Shoots|Fruits

For a clarifying metaphor, think of a cultural matrix as a WV3 Tree. When you see a culture as a tree, it becomes clear that every WV3 Tree produces its own lifezone in character with its internally generated roots, shoots, and fruits. In other words, each cultural tree produces its own worldvenue fruits, *its mazeway practices*, social behaviors. But those fruits grow from that society's supporting cultural worldview shoots, *its mindset perspective*. And those systemic beliefs are organically related to the underlying worldvoice roots, *the model person*, that culture's spiritual benchmark person.

If a society's model luminary is corrupt, it generates a corruption-justifying mindset lens, which in turn feeds and sanctions a lifestyle mazeway of corrupt practices. Take for example India and the 15% factor.

By corruption, 85% of India Government designated funds for the poor do not reach the poor. S. Bhalla concludes that from Food Subsidy Bill 2011-12, of the Rs73,000 crore dispersed via the Public Distribution System (PDS), 50% reached government shops; and from PDS shops, 40% of the poor received no subsidy. The net effect: of every Rs100, only Rs15 reached the poor.

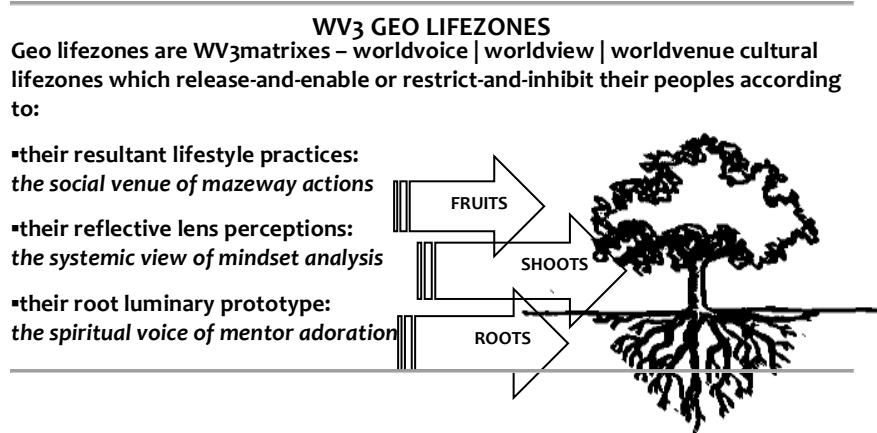
To Bhalla, the "social malady" or "maladaptive behavior" centers not on crops, calories, cash, or compassion, but on corruption, so that "poverty elimination" must "maximize governance and reduce corruption."²¹ Of such a situation, Chetan Bhagat asserts, "Corruption is a way of life in India. Our society respects power, not excellence or integrity. Sure, such societies can function. However, they don't progress much."²² And so, each culture tree's particular cultural matrix either

In regard to WV3 the luminary | lens | lifestyle culture tree, see the treatments of T. Madan, *India's Religions: Perspectives from Sociology and History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2004); M. Srinivas, *India: Social Structure* (New Delhi: Government of India 1969); G. Madan, *Western Sociologists on Indian Society: Marx, Spencer, Weber, Durkheim, Pareto* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1979); D. Jha, *The Myth of the Holy Cow* (London: Verso 2004); G. Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press 1998); R. Stern, *Changing India* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press 2003).

²¹ S. Bhalla, "1960s thinking on poverty, only in India" *Indian Express* 18 July 2014 at <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/1960s-thinking-on-poverty-only-in-india/99>. For a justification of corruption, S. Visvanathan, "The Necessity of Corruption" (2012) at https://www.academia.edu/4022863/The_Necessity_of_Corruption; and V. Mehta, "Mr. Modi, time to play fast and loos" *Times of India* 20 July 2014, 14 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/stoi/deep-focus/Mr-Modi-time-to-play-fast-and-loos/articleshow/38713223.cms>.

²² *What young India wants: Selected essays and columns* (New Delhi: Rupa 2012), vii-xxvi.

releases-and-enables or restricts-and-inhibits its people. The WV3 culture paradigm can be graphed:



In some ways, the fact that geo lifezones locate the cultural WV3various and varying earth orchards – those ways of life planted in history and still living parallel lives around the planet – is nothing new. G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) saw world history as the unfolding of “three main principles” or “patterns”: the Asian (including Chinese and Indian), the Middle Eastern (Islamic monotheism “coupled with unrestrained arbitrariness”), and the Western European (“the Christian... the highest principle of all”). Hegel observed that those “patterns... which are spiritual forms, are also natural entities. Accordingly, the various patterns they assume appear to coexist indifferently in space, i.e., to exist perennially.”²³

Researchers from different disciplines have identified six-to-nine-or-so geo lifezones in pre-modern and modern times. For example, J. Abu-Lughod analyzed eight intense circular overlapping zones in the pre-modern world-system; Samuel Huntington suggested six or seven cultures entering the 21st century; Samir Amin, seven or eight; Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel’s 2005-2008 *World Value Survey Cultural Map* clusters the world by nine cultural (not geographical) neighbors; and Freedman and McClymond map five historical cultural river basins. While I see eight global WV3 cultural trees, most can rather readily recognize and largely agree on a fairly basic handful of the major lifeways on our planet. Designated by their root

²³ W. Hegel quoted in R. Guha, *History at the Limit of World-History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2002), 32.

luminaries, the eight geo lifezones are the WV3 culture trees of Shaman, Confucius, Shiva, Buddha, Jesus, Pope, Mohammad, and Self²⁴

Jotirao Phule's endurance and exceptional significance is that he addressed the issue of India as a whole, as a cultural system, a WV3 matrix. G. P. Deshpande explains, "Phule's canvas was broad, his sweep majestic. He identified and theorized the most important questions of his time – religion, the varna system, ritualism, language, literature, British rule, mythology, the gender question, the conditions of production in agriculture, the lot of the peasantry" and "no other Indian figure of the 19th century comes to mind who displayed this sort of range."²⁵

But it must be emphasized that Phule was an activist, not an academic. His personal engagement is obvious, his vocabulary was bold, and his comments were blunt, at times belligerent. Even Phule's close associates Lokhande and Bhalerao reacted to *Farmer's Whipcord* as too "kadak" (too hard, vitriolic). Lokhande himself said it was "overstated beyond necessity" (*vazvipeksha phajil*).²⁶

Perhaps Lokhande and Bhalerao had a point. But certainly no one ever mistook Phule's pathos-filled voice for the poor, oppressed, and humiliated; his public opposition to the matrix of misery from the hegemonic culture; or his piercing intellectual analysis of causes and effects. I say this in advance, for the documentation I present here is, to say the least, not expressed in the tone or the voice regularly encountered in academic dialogues. Nevertheless, such is the actual framing of Phule, and (probably) such is the reason for his original and continuing impact.

²⁴ J. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System ad 1250-1350* (New York: Oxford University Press 1989); S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster 1996); S. Amin, *Global History: A View from the South* (Cape Town: Pambazuka 2011), expressive of the thinking of the school of thought around the "gang of four", Andre Gunder Frank, Giovanni Arrighi, Immanuel Wallerstein and Amin; R. Ingehart and C. Welzel, http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54 (2010), R. Ingehart and C. Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); D. Freedman and M. McClymond, *The Rivers of Paradise: Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus and Muhammad as Religious Founders* (Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans 2001).

On the voices of the eight global "root luminaries", see T. Wolf, *Global history: The Oikonomia of God in World History* (Bonn, Germany: Kim School of Intercultural Studies and University Institute 1999); T. Wolf, *The Geo Zones*. Lecture 2, Swallen Lectures (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University 2012); and T. Wolf, *Eight Contending Options*. Lecture 3, Swallen Lectures (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University 2012).

²⁵ Quoted in Jotirao Phule, *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*. Edited, with Annotations and Introduction by G. Deshpande (New Delhi: LeftWord 2002), 20.

²⁶ Phule, *Selected Writings*, 11.

For example, Phule's own picture-of-choice for India's traditional social system was that of a "prison", "the age-old prison house", "this slavery system"²⁷, not of a Culture Tree as employed here. Using Phule's picture for a moment, think of the world's life houses as constructed by the craft of a virtuous few – and they do not build their life neighborhoods the same. Phule observed and commented on both pleasant houses and prison houses.

In that metaphor, like the nursery rhyme "This is the house that Jack built", each geographical region's lifespace has its own distinctive pattern of spiritual meaning, systemic mindset, and social maze. As a result, living in the pagoda patterns of Buddha is a distinctly different life experience from the mosque modes of Muhammad.²⁸ Or, the South Asian Indian caste house of Brahma mythology, Vishnu jurisprudence, and Shiva linga spirituality stands a world apart from the Socrates rationality, Caesar jurisprudence, and Jesus spirituality of the Western Euro-American church house.²⁹

And of course there is the 20th century house-of-horrors that Karl built: That toxic spiritual-intellectual-social matrix cocktail of the Marx master prototype, the Communist worldview, and the Gulag prison house, which created the same oppressive life-neighborhood everywhere it spread.³⁰ But everywhere, "This is the house that _____ built" is obvious to ordinary people on the street, and those obvious differences drive global immigration toward cultural pleasant house nations.

²⁷ Phule *Slavery, Whipcord, and Book of the True Faith* quotations below are from Despande (2002), referenced in footnote 21. See "prison", "prisons of the Brahmins" and "prison house" in Phule, *Slavery* (2002), 44, 98-99; and "slavery system".

²⁸ A. Berzin, *Historical, Cultural, and Comparative Studies: Buddhism and Islam* (2014) at http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/x/nav/n.html_1867868580.html; C. Goucher, C. LeGuin, and L. Walton, *Religion and State: Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam* in *In the Balance: Themes in World History* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 1-18 at http://www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/support/reading_7_1.pdf; "Fears of a new [Buddhist-Muslim] religious strife" *The Economist* 27 July 2013 at <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21582321-fuelled-dangerous-brew-faith-ethnicity-and-politics-tit-tat-conflict-escalating>.

²⁹ Cf. S. Kakar and K. Kakar, *The Indians: Portrait of a People* (New Delhi: Penguin 2007); and a summary of Max Weber on Indian civilization by Lucknow University sociologist, G. Madan, *Western Sociologists on Indian Society: Marx, Spencer, Weber, Durkheim, Pareto* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1979), 64-251.; L. Stevenson and D. Haberman, *Twelve Theories of Human Nature* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2012); S. Thakur, *Christian and Hindu Ethics* (London: Unwin 1969); A. Braanthal, *Salvation and the Perfect Society: The Eternal Quest* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press 1979); E. Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2010); B. Shain, *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1996).

³⁰ See T. Wolf, *Social Change and Development: A Research Template* (New Delhi: University Institute 2012), 17-29; and Stephanie Courtois (ed.), *The Communist Black Book: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1999).

Here, I will integrate Phule's prison-house|slavery-system image with that of the WV3 Culture Tree. Using the WV3 framework, Mahatma Phule's themes are clear.

ROOTS: The Worldvoice Mentor of Phule's India

Taittiriya Brahmana II.8.9.6 (ca. 450 BCE) says, "The Brahman was the wood: Brahman the tree from which they shaped heaven and earth."³¹ The root, the worldvoice luminary of South Asia's WV3 was accurately located by Phule in the "earthborn gods, the Brahmins... certain groups of individuals who are called super-sacred and indeed are worshipped as gods on earth". As the worldvoice mentor, their collective voice has directed the India cultural system "for many centuries past" – for "probably more than 3,000 years". That root-voice Phule describes with precision: "The Brahmin is styled the Lord of the Universe, even equal to the God himself. He is to be worshipped, served and respected by all. A Brahmin can do no wrong."³²

In Phule's systemic thinking, then, what India is, she owes to the prototype person, the person of cultural virtù, the Brahmin. The Brahman is the root, the spiritual luminary, of the WV3 Chaturvarna lifezone spread geographically across South Asia.

SHOOTS: The Worldvoice Mindset of Phule's India

The worldview lens by which those of India "generally view men and things" are "Brahmin spectacles". The character of those "spectacles" Phule delineated in detail. It is not a neutral description, but it is Phule's own voice; phrase upon phrase he piled up. It is a litany of distain, a distaste born from what Phule discerned was the intent of that mentored way of seeing things: "Innumerable Bhut writers, with the selfsame objects as those of Manu and others of his class, added from time to time to the existing mass of legends, the idle phantasies of their own brain, and palmed them

³¹ See *Taittiriya Brahmana* at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/sbe48/sbe48167.htm>; [http://ancientindians.wordpress.com/2011/06/02/links-yajurveda-taittiriya-samhita-brahmana-aranyaka-etc](http://ancientindians.wordpress.com/2011/06/02/links-yajurveda-taittiriya-samhita-brahmana-aranyaka-etc;); and <http://www.sanskritweb.net/yajurveda/tb-2-08.pdf>.

³² Phule, *Slavery*, 28 and 230, 31, 27, and 29. On civilizational formation, see S. Eisenstadt, S. (ed.) 1986. *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*. New York: State University of New York Press; and S. Amin, *Global History: A View from the South* (Cape Town: Pambazuka 2011).

off upon the ignorant masses as of Divine inspiration, or as the acts of the Deity himself.”³³

The goal of the Brahmin hegemony, Phule wrote, was “domination”. “To achieve this devious goal,” he argues, “they created the fraudulent rigmarole of the caste system and wrote several books to legitimize the caste system.” In fact, to Phule’s thinking, “Their main object in fabricating these falsehoods was to dupe the minds of the ignorant and to rivet firmly on them the chains of perpetual bondage and slavery which their selfishness and cunning had forged.”³⁴ Thus the spectacles’ power grew over time, magnifying misery to the Shudra and Atishudra masses. To Phule, it was “a mass of specious fiction”, so that the masses themselves “still remain ignorant and captive in the mental slavery which the Brahmans have perpetuated through their books”³⁵ – ignorant of basic human rights, captive to brahmanic hierarchical rites.

Finally, Phule often piled up multiple descriptors around the triad of “magic” | “mantras” | “Manu”, with a special place reserved for Manu-related literature. To Phule, the lens of the Earthborn Gods produced a comprehensive view, a systemic mindset perspective. A sampling from *Slavery* reveals that prevailing mindset as one of “magic”, “black magic”, or “Brahman black magic”; often described by Phule as “all manner of ghosts and creatures and... mumbo-jumbo and magic”. He assigns an entire section of *Slavery* to the exposure of what he calls Vedic magical incantations, the power of magic, being possessed by spirits, and “telling the beads” (rosary beads and the recitation of sacred words).³⁶

³³*Slavery*, 31-32. Myth-history issue: Tripathi, “Faith Versus History” *Mint & Wall Street Journal* 17 July 2014 at <http://blog.livemint.com/Opinion/RD4bqdtgK8reRILh1sspVO/Faith-versus-history.html>.

³⁴*Slavery*, 29, 45, and 30.

³⁵*Slavery*, 30 and 45. An “essential outsider” is a person from outside the local culture, with a different set of beliefs and behaviors: D. Chiro, *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press 1997).

For Phule, “essential outsiders” reset his inner moral compass and activated his WV3 transformation: “Kind-hearted Europeans and American were deeply aggrieved by our misery. So they entered our prisons and asked us, ‘Folks, you are human beings just like us. Our Creator [*Nirmik*] and Sustainer are one and the same. You are entitled to have all the rights that we have. Then why do you obey the dictates of these crafty *bhats*?’ All these sacred ideas awakened me to my real rights. Then I kicked the crafty brahman prison gates open and fervently thanked the Creator for this deliverance” (*Slavery*, 98).

After some twenty years of maturity, Phule would write: “The Creator is merciful and would want all human beings to enjoy all human privileges and rights” (*Book of the True Faith*, 229 and see further, 229-233).

³⁶*Slavery, Part IX*, 71-73. On magic at the cultural worldview core, see representative texts from the *Arthra-veda*, the fourth Veda, at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/av.htm>. Phule was aware of the *Arthra-veda*’s *shatkarmas* | the six magic mantra formulas: *Shanthi* |to subside, for healing or banishing negative things; *Vashya* |to attract, a love spell; *Sthambhana* |to stop, a hex; *Vidhveshana* |to separate, freezing objects and people, *Ucchata* |to send away, making two people enemies, and

All told, Phule considered such a package to be a cohesive unit. Those intellectual shoots, to Phule, conveyed the worldvoice which instructed all the castes and was responsible for what he said were “poisoning their minds against each other”, compiled from “books such as *smrutis*, *shastras*, *puranas*, *samhitas*”.³⁷

For Phule, then, those “Brahman spectacles” (the “mass of incredible fiction...found in the books of the Brahmins”) were the cultural lens of analysis, the worldview shoots, which grew vigorously from the roots of Manu and *Manusmriti*. With very non-neutral terms, Phule described the “fraudulent tales from the Bhagawata and rigmarole of the Vedic incantations”, a wide and number assembly of “spurious religious books of the bhats”, which he summarized as “fraudulent make-believe stories concocted by the Brahmans”.

To Phule’s thinking, then, those worldview “arguments” formed the shoots of India’s WV3: the stories and interlocking-and-reinforcing ways of viewing everything from people to plants to planets; from cosmos to conception to caste to cremation³⁸ – a thick grove of mantras, magic, myths, and manipulations. It was precisely those “arguments” which were firmly “imprinted” and “implanted” in the secluded minds and social mazeways of the illiterate and uneducated Shudra and Atishudra masses.³⁹

FRUITS: The Worldvenue Mazeway of Phule’s India

What were the fruits, the results, and reinforcements of such roots and shoots? “Thralldom” was Phule’s one-word definition, a “system of slavery”. And Phule allowed no one to mistake his evaluation about that “age-old prison house” social system: “To this system of selfish superstition and bigotry, we are to attribute the stagnation and all the evils under which India has been groaning for many centuries past.”⁴⁰

Maarana|to destroy, for killing – all without anybody being able to diagnose or identify how it happened – which formed the sap of the culture tree. On the rejection of magic, see K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1971), 3-173, 631-668; and C. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986).

³⁷ Compare *Slavery*(2002), 71-73; with *Slavery* (1991), 32-35.

³⁸ See J. Parry, “Death and Cosmogony in Kashi” 79-106. In T. Madan (ed.), *India’s Religions: Perspectives from Sociology and History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2004), with Phule, *Slavery*, 127, with 123-130 for Phule’s (“Now I will explain a little...”) 30 WV3examples.

³⁹ Phule, *Slavery*, 32, 28, 74, and 38; *Whipcord*, 119.

⁴⁰ *Whipcord*, 31, 31, 99, and 31.

“This system”, Phule profiled at one point by some eight recognizable worldvenue attributes of lifestyle attitudes-actions: (1) “they do not know they are human”, (2) they do not know “what their rights are”, (3) “they have worshipped stone and metal idols, cows, and snakes, and plants, and treated them as gods”, (4) “the farmers do not have the power of balanced thought”, (5) they “believe in all manner of ghosts and creatures”, (6) they “practice all manner of mumbo-jumbo and magic”, (7) they “waste their own money”, (8) “they lose their lives, too, because they do not believe in medicine, but turn to shamans and magicians.”⁴¹

The fruits of the system had been cultivated and continued by perpetual isolation and by prohibitive exclusion. “From the prisons of the Brahmins,” by Phule’s reckoning, the Shudras “were like a prisoner who has been imprisoned for a long time and desperately looks forward to the day when he will be set free...because 1/10 of the total population, the Brahmins, had deprived 9/10 of the people of strength, intelligence, knowledge, skill and courage in matters of religion and state [worldvenue], hiding behind their scheming religion [worldvoice] and on the strength of their pens [worldview].”

In other words, the everyday social lifestyle attitudes-actions of such a WV3 matrix – the fruits eaten by Phule’s generation – had been (1) perfected over an extended period of time, which allowed the system to remain and increase, and was (2) adamant about the prohibition of education to 90% of the population.⁴² Of this social worldvenue profile, Phule concludes that “they are tethered from all sides.”⁴³

Phule felt that he himself was fair. Certainly he was insightful. First, he said, “Anyone who will consider well the whole history of Brahmin domination in India, and the thralldom under which it has been retained the people even up to the present day, will agree with us...[it is the] tyranny by which India has been so long governed.”⁴⁴

Second, Phule repeated the question of how such a WV3 matrix with obvious maladaptive metrics could be maintained. The question: How could the farmers be exploited for so long? Phule’s answer: By the strict prohibition of education. At his street-fighter best, in *Cultivator’s Whipcord*, Phule puts it like this: “How is it that the

⁴¹*Whipcord*, 170-171.

⁴²*Slavery*, 44 and 151.

⁴³*Whipcord*, 170-171.

⁴⁴*Slavery*, 31.

farmers continue to be ignorant and are looted till today? My reply is that in the ancient times, the moment Arya bhat brahmanas began to rule this country, they totally prohibited education for their subject Shudra farmers and for thousands of years, they looted them as they willed.”⁴⁵

Third, completing the picture of his Maharashtra WV3 culture tree, Phule in *Slavery* concludes: “They strictly prohibited education of the Shudras and made strict rules about their books like the *Manusamhita*.” To Phule, this strict prohibition of education had a built-in benefit: “Keeping the Shudras illiterate also enabled them to make whatever changes in their books they wanted to suit their interests.” And to make sure every reader felt the sting that all this was not simply by benign neglect, in *Whipcord* Phule emphasized that the cultural non-education motif was not a shriveled but a full fruit: “This knowledge and education the ancestors of the Brahmins shut tight by prohibiting it in their selfish books.”

For Phule had come to clearly see that, while some societies had been passive towards, and others neglectful of, education of the masses, the Brahmin worldvoice and its caste worldview had a prominent and mandated worldvenue cultural distinctive: “they totally prohibited education.” “And now, even though they speak sweetly to all the farmers,” Phule concluded that still “they avoid educating the farmer”⁴⁶, a tree without shade for the poor. But Jotirao and Savitribai provided just such a shade for the children of Pune under the Baliraja Tree, founding in 1848, the first-ever Indian-originated school to educate Shudras and Atishudra children, including the girl child:

The key social benefit was the practice of learning for all, a concept unthinkable and forbidden in the Brahmin system. There, learning was only for forward caste persons, specifically for Brahmin caste males. But Baliraja radically reached to teach and share all learning with all persons: backward caste, those without caste, and even – if it could be conceived – for females.

In Baliraja, Savitribai found a luminary with a liberating voice, a person of virtue unimaginable... an uncommon educational worldvenue where education [was] universally available, child sensitive, intellectually critical, and socially reforming.⁴⁷

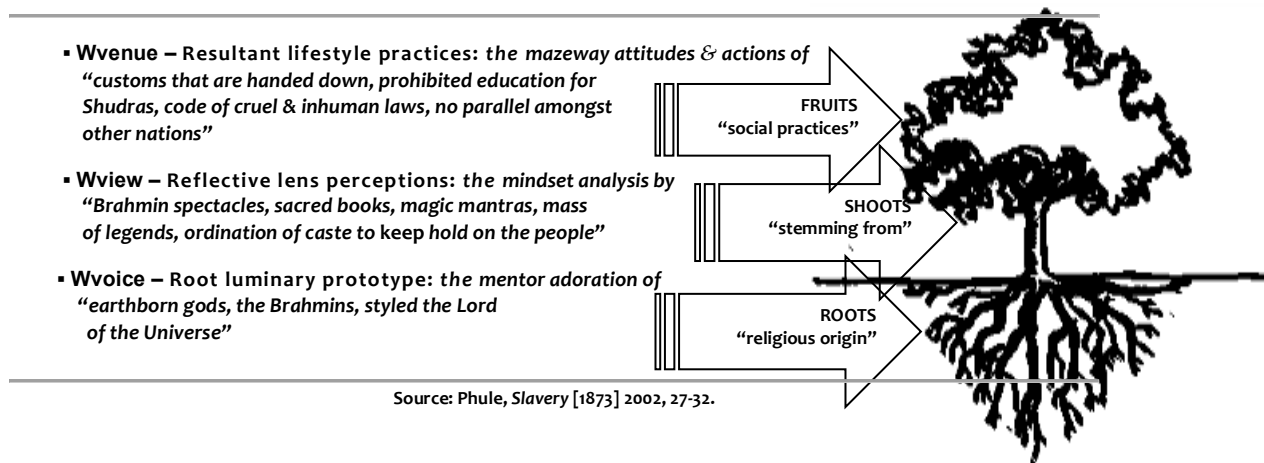
⁴⁵*Whipcord*, 128.

⁴⁶*Slavery*, 73, 73; *Whipcord*, 175 and 169.

⁴⁷ On the Father of European and global education and the Mother of Indian education, see T. Wolf, “Changing Education: The Changing education: The ‘unusual and unique’ worldvoice, worldview, and worldvenue of Jan Comenius and Savitribai Phule” *Journal of ACL5* (2), 78-104; and *Whipcord*, 128.

With the above in mind, then, from Phule’s writings his WV3 Culture Tree of India might be constructed as follows:

PHULE’S SOUTH ASIAN WV3 GEO LIFEZONE
WV3matrix of the Brahmin worldvoice | Manusmriti worldview | Caste code worldvenue



Conclusion

In WV3 terms, Phule saw his India as a whole. In his indigenous 19th century vocabulary, Phule:

- *located the worldvoice* in the Brahmins (“mythological legends” by “earthborn gods”),
- *found the worldview* to be consistently Manu-compatible (“Brahmin spectacles”, “books to legitimize the caste system”), and
- *surveyed the worldvenue* as everywhere an everyday experience of a caste-coded-and-conducted geo lifezone (“a prison house”, “this system... under which India has been groaning for many centuries past”, “the chains of slavery... many customs traditionally handed down to us”).

Phule concluded that such a “system of despotism and priestcraft” “can never create social unity,” and “till a true unity is established, there will be no progress in this country.”⁴⁸

Thus, the WV3 matrix, viewing a society as a WV3 culture tree, has presented a metaphor and a theoretical model for cross-disciplinary exploration. Initial dialogues in India and South Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf States, Europe, the USA, Canada, and South America have demonstrated international interest. Also, the picture of Roots|Shoots|Fruits, paired with the perspective of worldvoice|worldview|

⁴⁸Whipcord, 176 and 178.

worldvenue appears to form a good and fruitful meeting ground for persons of widely different backgrounds and life experiences. It is hoped that further consideration, critique, and collaboration will correct weaknesses and errors, strengthen the core insights, and open new explorations in different disciplines.

Persistent issues being addressed by South Asian nations, illustrated here from Nepal and India, have provided case study examples. Historically, Mahatma Jotirao Phule's has provided a 19th century comparative sociology reading of his own indigenous ground realities. Phule's writings might also be engaged for his WV3 prescriptions: how to change the current reigning cultural matrix. For Phule wanted not just to change his geo life system, but even to exchange that system. As G. P. Despande, Jawaharlal Nehru University, concludes, Phule argues for "a monotheistic, humane, and benevolent system. That we as a people have not yet succeeded in doing this, demonstrates the relevance of Phule."⁴⁹

Surely then, the current concern of Nepal and others throughout South Asia over "social maladies stemming from religious origin" and the compassionate and compelling voice of Phule regarding India's geo lifezone, offer all of us rich starting points to benefit in practical ways from the conversation on development and its implications for the Indian social system. ■

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⁴⁹ G. Deshpande, Introduction, From *The Book of Truth*. Preface 1 April 1889. In J. Phule, *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*. Editor and Translator, G. P. Despande (New Delhi: LeftWord 2002), 226.

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