

India - an introduction

Stanley Wolpert

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Wolpert, the author, first visited India at the time of its independence in 1947 and fell in love. Thus he is an old hand, who has been watching and writing about the country for half a century. It is a pleasantly written book, that systematically introduces the reader to the basics of India. Its environment and geograohy, its religion and philosophy, the peculiarities of its society, its achievements in the Arts and Sciences, and finally its contemporary history and foreign policy.

The presentation is impeccable, well-balanced and scrupulously fair, but so bland that one month later one remembers very little of what one read. Who is to blame? Maybe it is unfair to point the finger at the author, after all many a distinguished character has defered to the authority of Wolpert on the back blurbs, so whom am I to criticise. The author has read carefully relevant sources, even in mathematics, and I was impressed by his knowledgability ababout Ramanujam, without being able not to notice the kind of blunders an uninitiated inevitably will perform when writing about mathematics.

February 8, 2004 **Ulf Persson:** *Prof.em, Chalmers U.of Tech., Göteborg Sweden* ulfp@chalmers.se