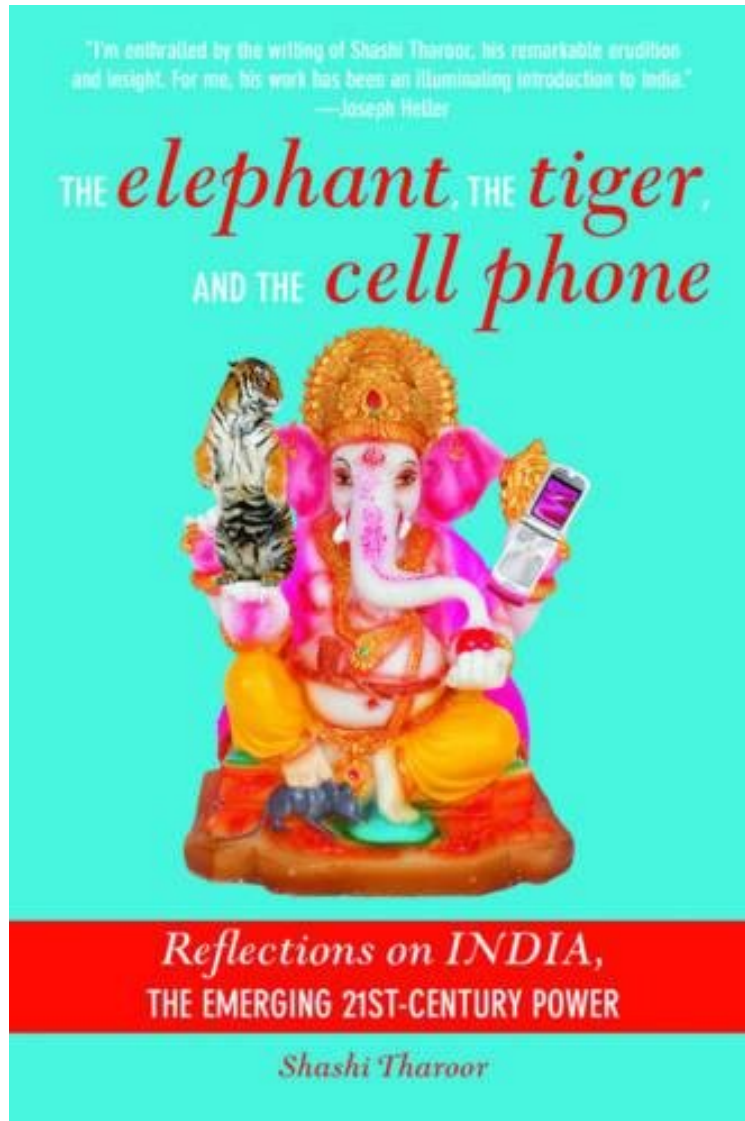


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# The Elephant, The Tiger, and the Cellphone: India, the Emerging 21st-Century Power

Shashi Tharoor

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**Shashi Tharoor : The Elephant, The Tiger, and the Cellphone: India, the Emerging 21st-Century Power** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Elephant, The Tiger, and the Cellphone: India, the Emerging 21st-Century Power:

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helpful. Excellent book on Modern Day India By Indian Literature Fan I thoroughly enjoyed reading Shashi Tharoor's well-rounded analysis of various issues in Modern India. A must-read for non-resident as well as resident Indians !!! 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Mandatory reading if you want to understand India By Vijay K. Gurbani The Elephant, the Tiger, and the Cell Phone, The: The Emerging 21st-Century Power, Shashi Tharoor - We Indians are often so starved for some metric -- any metric, really -- of validation that we blindly embrace Indians of all stripes residing outside India. What else could explain our head-long rush to claim Bobby Jindal as one of our own while demonstrating obvious restraint for Mr. Shashi Tharoor? (For those readers who may not know Mr. Jindal, he is the Indian-American governor of the US state of Louisiana.) Unarguably, and just as unfortunately, present the names of Mr. Jindal and Mr. Tharoor to any Indian in the US and the chances are better than even that they have pride in Mr. Jindal while drawing blanks when Mr. Tharoor's name is mentioned. This is an egregious sin, for Mr. Tharoor revels in being an Indian as much as Mr. Jindal repudiates it. This revelry in all things Indian is evident in Mr. Tharoor's latest book. He staunchly believes and defends the Indian notion of secularism, which he maintains is not the absence of any religion, but the proliferation of many religions, all equally protected under the constitution (a point he makes in other books as well, most notably in *India: from midnight to the millennium*). Going further, he makes the point that where else can you find a political landscape so diverse that in the 2004 Indian elections, a Sikh (Manmohan Singh), representing a Congress party headed by a Catholic (Sonia Gandhi), was sworn in as prime minister by a Muslim president (A.P.J. Abdul Kalam)! It is certainly hard to argue against that now, isn't it? The book is great reading. Besides the weighty issues of politics, religion, constitution, and culture, Mr. Tharoor also makes detours to cover the light-hearted issues of ever-changing city names in India (Bombay becomes Mumbai, etc.), and the desire to add extra consonants and vowels in soap operas because the producers believe that this extra letter will certainly and undoubtedly lend an air of success to the endeavor! Oh, did I mention the fascination that Indians have with cricket? Any student of modern India -- be it in the political arena or cultural one -- can ill afford to eschew the ruminations of Mr. Tharoor. My advice: if you are Indian and really want to be proud of it, read Mr. Tharoor and leave Mr. Jindal to his devices.

Interest in India has never been greater. Here Shashi Tharoor, one of the subcontinent's most respected writers and diplomats, offers precious insights into this complex, multifaceted land, which despite its dazzling diversity of languages, customs, and cultures remains more than sixty years after its founding the world's largest democracy. He describes the vast changes that have transformed this once sleeping giant into a world leader in science and technology, a nation once poverty-stricken that now boasts a middle class of over 300 million people as large as the entire population of the United States. Artfully combining hard facts and statistics with opinion and observation, Tharoor discusses the strengths and weaknesses of his rapidly evolving homeland in five areas: politics, economics, culture, society, and sports and takes a fresh look at the world's oldest civilizations and most populous countries.

From Publishers Weekly Bewildering diversity is the very essence of India, observes novelist and columnist Tharoor (*The Great Indian Novel*) in this engaging collection of essays, which tries to reconcile the country's clashing traditions with progress and liberalism. Hinduism's promiscuous openness to other beliefs and cultures makes it a model of secular tolerance, he argues, though Hindu fundamentalist bigotry is his favorite target. Tharoor also insists that ancient Indian science anticipated quantum mechanics, and praises his home state of Kerala for raising female literacy rates. (In a rare nostalgic note, he mourns the demise of the sari, then fences with a backlash of critical e-mail responses from pants-wearing women.) Most of all, he celebrates India's compatibility with the global economy, a stance that occasionally shades into business boosterism. Many pieces are drawn from Tharoor's columns and feature quick, sketchy takes on Indian cultural touchstones, from political corruption to Bollywood to cricket; his themes tend to be repeated rather than developed. But Tharoor's ready wit--an Indian without a horoscope is like an American without a credit card--and sympathetic insight combine in a fascinating portrait of Indian society. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Im enthralled by the writing of Shashi Tharoor, his remarkable erudition and insight. For me, his work has been an illuminating introduction to India. (Joseph Heller) About the Author Shashi Tharoor was born in London and brought up in Bombay and Calcutta. He has written for the New York Times, the Washington Post, the International Herald Tribune, the Times of India, and Foreign Affairs. A human rights activist and winner of a Commonwealth Writers Prize, he is currently a member of the Indian Parliament and lives in New Delhi, India.