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BOOK EXCERPT :

When India Eclipses China: Futurist Lawrence H. Taub on the Unexpected 21st Century,
June 2021, Published by Olive Press.

Jan Krikke

The following is extracted from my book *When India Eclipses China: Futurist Lawrence H. Taub on the Unexpected 21st Century*, published in June 2021 by Olive Press. The book is both an explanation and interpretation of Taub's unique macrohistory.

The Last Futurist

Larry Taub belonged to a generation of 20th-century futurists that include the likes of Alvin Toffler, Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukuyama, and Paul Kennedy. Futurists, or macrohistorians, look at deeper currents and fault lines in human history to anticipate probable future scenarios. Alvin Toffler's landmark book *Future Shock* showed that humanity moved from a hunter-gatherer to an agricultural, to an industrial, and finally to a post-industrial society. Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History* argued that Western liberal democracy had won the ideological battle with communism after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* asserted that cultural and religious identities would be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world.

Taub's macrohistory stands out for several reasons. Conventional macrohistory usually relies on one parameter, whether that is politics, economics, technology, or religion. It will tell us what is likely to happen in the future, but it tends to be vague about dates and geographic specifics (time and space). Taub developed a macrohistory that deals not only with economics and politics, but also with gender, culture, spirituality, and consciousness, and he is specific about developments in geographical areas. His Sex Model details the crucial

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role women will play in the near future, the Age Model deals with evolving human maturity, and the Caste Model, Taub's interpretation of the Indian philosophy of history, addresses the evolution of human consciousness.

The catalyst for Taub's macrohistory was India. While visiting the country in the 1970s, he learned about the Varna, the basis for the socio-spiritual organization of ancient Hindu society. The notion of *Varna*, which later degenerated into the much-maligned caste system, shaped India's social structure the way Confucianism shaped China's social structure. Varna has been translated as type, order, and color. Portuguese explorers mispronounced Varna as "casta," and the word was later Anglicized as "caste." While the caste system that developed in later centuries resembles a division of labor and is tied to birth, the original notion of Varna is based on *Karma* and *Guna*. *Karma* means conduct, deeds, occupation, and accomplishments. *Guna* means qualities, attributes, virtues, or character. Varna had no restrictions regarding a person moving from one Varna to another.

The Indian sages identified the four generic Varna types based on their Karma and Guna:

- Spiritual types: those who enlighten others, such as educators and administrators (*Brahman*). They value their mind as their greatest asset and use it to develop spiritual reality, knowledge of science, and to make rules and laws enforced by the warrior. They strive for enlightenment and lead others by furthering religion or spiritual development.

- Warriors: those who thrive on competition, value physical strength, and protect others (*Kshatriya*). They emphasize courage, honor, discipline, and sacrifice. They protect society from danger and chaos by maintaining order. They obey authority and follow orders, and expect others to do the same.

- Merchants: those who value material possessions and excel in efficiency, managing money, administration, and organization (*Vaishya*). They are efficient and can effectively manage others to produce goods and achieve complex tasks, advancing the material well-being of society.

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- Workers: those who take pride in their work and empathize with and nourish others. They value mundane pleasures, safety, security, and reasonable comforts. They leave political and economic decisions to leaders from other castes, but they can bring the system down if their needs are not met.

THE FOUR BASIC CASTES OF THE WORLD

CASTE	RELIGIOUS-SPIRITUAL	WARRIOR	MERCHANT	WORKER
Sanskrit Name	Brahman	Kshatriya	Vaishva	Shudra
World View	God, Enlightenment	Combat, Competition	Money, Material Possessions	Identification with Work, Skill, Job, Sci-Tech Knowledge, Company
Ruling Elite	<u>Pre- and Early History:</u> Shamans, Witches, High Priests and Popes <u>The Future:</u> Top Religious and Spiritual Leaders	Kings, Emperors, Top Nobility and Generals	Top Capitalists, Traders, Industrialists, Financiers and Landowners	Top technocrats and bureaucrats in the top private and public enterprises, government, parties, and labor organizations
Skills, Tools and Institutions	Religious Rituals, Churches, Mosques, Synagogues, Temples, etc.; Spiritual Practices, including Martial Arts	Armies, Strategies, and Weapons	Trade, Finance, Banking, Transportation, Communication, Industry, Sci-Tech, Entrepreneur-run Companies	Agricultural, Blue-collar, and White-collar Jobs, Skills, and Expertise; High Technology; and Bureaucratic organizations. The CEO-run Corporation
Social Ideal	The Religious Leader and the Enlightened Soul	The Hero	The Self-Made Man	The Organization Man/The <i>Sarariman</i>
Source of Power	<u>Pre- and Early History:</u> Religious Knowledge <u>The Future:</u> Self-Knowledge	Land	Capital	Scientific, Technical and Managerial Knowledge
Economic-Political Unit	<u>Pre- and Early History:</u> The Tribe <u>The Future:</u> The Kibbutz, Moshav, Community	The Petty Empire	The Grand Empire	The Economic-Political Bloc

Figure 1 - *The Four Castes of the World*. Note that under Brahman Taub includes past and future.

Figure 1 is Taub's table of the four Varna types. Taub points out that each individual typically has traits of two or more caste types. A worker can also have merchant inclinations, and a warrior type can also have spiritual leanings. But one of the four caste types usually dominates in each individual. To the ancient Indian sages, the four caste types are mutually dependent. All were needed for society to function. Warriors provided protection, merchants delivered the goods, spiritual types offered guidance, and workers did the heavy lifting. [...]

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The Indian caste differs from the European notion of class. The word "class" is etymologically derived from the Latin "classis." Roman census takers used the term *classis* to categorize citizens by wealth to determine military service obligations. In the 16th century, class got an economic connotation to denote the difference between the landed aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and merchants on the one hand, and farmers, laborers, and servants on the other. In the 19th century, Marxism gave class its socioeconomic connotation, and in the 20th century, social scientists in the US used the term to distinguish upper and lower class based on wealth or income.

The notion of caste has its origin in Indian cosmology. The Sanskrit classics outline a "cosmic macrohistory" based on the cyclical notion of time. According to sages, humanity goes through four ages (*yuga*) during which the four castes take turns in "ruling the world." That is to say, one of the four castes is dominant in a given age until it is replaced by another caste. This caste cycle repeats itself eternally. During the first caste age of each cycle, the dominant caste is the Spiritual-Religious caste, followed by the warriors, the merchants, and the workers, after which the cycle starts again with the Spiritual-Religious caste. To make this cycle run smoothly, humans have to fulfill their *dharma* (duty) according to their Varna. Following one's *dharma* is the path to attaining enlightenment and reaching Nirvana, the highest state of being or consciousness a person can achieve.

The Hindu sages used cosmic, rather than human, time frames. A *yuga*, or caste age, is a unit of time consisting of five solar years. Four *yugas* make up the *mahayuga* (great *yuga*) and 2,000 *mahayugas* make up the cosmic cycle, the *kalpa*. Caste ages become successively shorter. According to the Sanskrit scriptures, the first *yuga* (*Krita*, first Spiritual Caste Age), lasted 1,728,000 years. The current *yuga* (*Kali*), began in 3102 BCE and will last for 432,000 years. At the end of the *Kaliyuga*, the world will be destroyed, to be recreated after a period of quiescence before the cycle begins again. Such astronomical cycles may have been intended to impress upon people the incomprehensibility of the cosmic have a beginning nor end in time and space and that there are limits to what we the human mind can comprehend.

Caste Cycles and History

In a remarkable intuitive leap, Taub discarded the cosmic time frames referred to by the Hindu sages. He concluded that the caste cycle can be mapped on actual human history—to specific historical periods (time) and

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specific geographic regions (space). His Caste Model follows the sequence predicted by Sanskrit scriptures—Spiritual Age, Warrior Age, Merchant Age, and Worker Age—but rather than a new cycle starting over again after the destruction of the world (alluded to in Sanskrit scriptures), Taub sees the current *Kaliyuga* as the prelude to a new Spiritual Age, which he calls Spiritual-Religious Age 2.

THE CASTE MODEL

THE FIVE CASTE AGES	SANSKRIT NAME	TIME
(animal)		
1. Spiritual-Religious Age No. 1	Satyayuga I	3 million to 4000/2000 BC
2. Warrior Age	Tretayuga	4000/2000 BC to early 17th Century AD
3. Merchant Age	Dvaparayuga	c. 1650 to c. 1975
4. Worker Age	Kaliyuga	c. 1917 to c. 2030
5. Spiritual-Religious Age No. 2	Satyayuga II	c. 1979 to Superhumanity
(superhuman)		

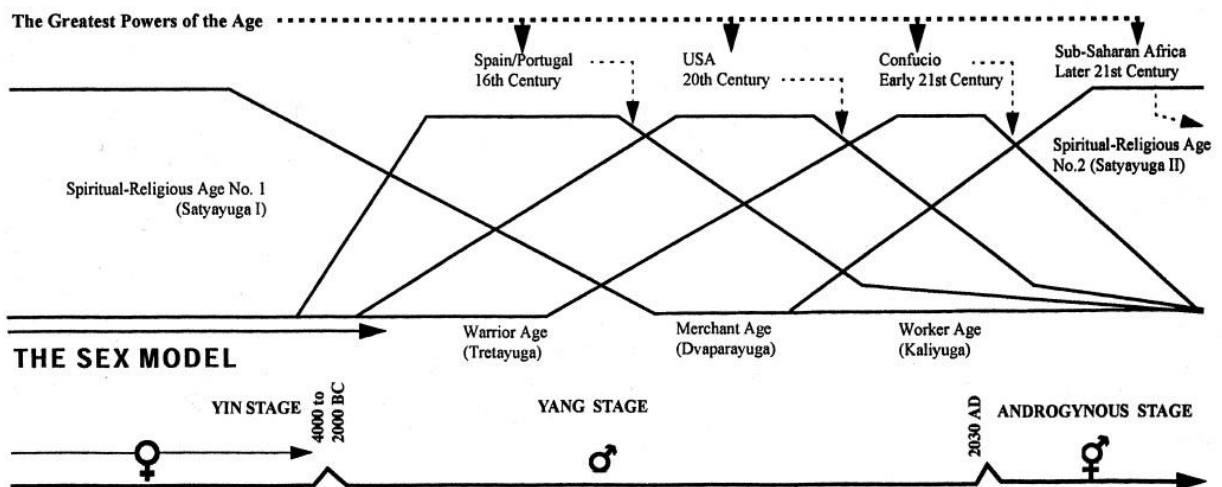


Figure 1 - The Caste Model - Note that the figure has a major omission. It does not include the core of the "religion belt" from the Indian subcontinent to Western Asia at the peak stage of the Spiritual-Religious Age.

The Caste Model in Taub's macrohistory in a nutshell. It is juxtaposed with his Sex Model that buttresses his Caste Model. The upper part of the figure shows the caste cycle in time, and the lower part shows the caste cycle in space. In the Caste Model, prehistory was the first Spiritual Age. Animism was the global "religion" of the world. It

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was a time of shamans, witches, and belief in supernatural powers. Next came the Warrior Age, marked by great warriors like Alexander the Great, Ajatasatru, and Genghis Khan. Central to their life was combat and armies. Their ruling elite were kings, nobility, and generals, their social ideal was the hero, and their source of power was land.

The last great power of the Warrior Age was Spain with its *conquistadors*. They were superseded in the 17th century by the Dutch, the pioneers of the Merchant Age. Merchant Caste trade and exploitation replaced Warrior Caste conquest and plunder. The Dutch developed the prototype for the modern multinational (the East India Company); they opened the world's first stock exchange and had the world's first reserve currency. In Holland and elsewhere, power shifted from combat to money, financiers replaced generals as the ruling elite, and the *Hero* of the Warrior Age was superseded by the *Self-Made Man* of the Merchant Age.

Remnants of the Warrior Age survive today as royalty and military honor guards. Remnants of the lingering Merchant Age survive in the form of capital concentration, tax havens, and corporate monopolies. But most industrialized countries are firmly in the Worker Age. The vast majority of people are working for a wage or a salary, and their identity is closely tied to their work. In the Warrior and Merchant Ages, the family name, land holdings, money, and wealth defined one's status in society. Today, most people are defined by and identify with their work or profession. "What kind of work do you do?" is commonly the first question when people meet for the first time. Even presidents and prime ministers have "job approval" ratings.

Taub's three materialist caste ages are similar to those of Marx: the Warrior Age is feudalism, the Merchant Age is capitalism, and the Worker Age is socialism. Marxism as a political ideology played a key role in the early phase of the Worker Age. While it had enormous political impact and paved the way for "socialist" governments (social democracies), Taub explains why Marxism didn't endure. First, it defined "working class" too narrowly, referring mainly to blue-collar wage labor. In Taub's Caste Model, workers include anyone working for a wage, salary, fee, or "nothing," such as most peasants, professionals, white-collar workers, serfs, and women doing housework and childcare.

Another defect in the Marxist model is its economic determinism—the assumption that economics is the determining factor in all historical periods. Taub notes that the Marxist model shows this bent by naming all of its

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stages of history by their socioeconomic systems: slavery, feudalism, capitalism, etc. This defect led Marx to make faulty predictions because there are deeper determining forces in history aside from economic ones.

"Marx, Engels, and their followers," Taub writes, "lived in one of the two most economically determined and economically focused of the caste ages: the Merchant Age. Moreover, they pioneered the development of the other: the Worker Age. So they easily fell into the trap of thinking that all ages were and must be equally economically determined." He refers to the Iranian Revolution that shocked the Western world. Its force was religious rather than economic.

Caste Struggle

Taub distinguishes two successive economic systems in each caste age. The first predominates during the caste's early revolutionary-evolutionary stage, and the second predominates during its later peak stage.

Spiritual-Religious Age No. 1:

1. Paleolithic: hunting, gathering, fishing, and herding
2. Meso-Neolithic: horticulture, agriculture, and livestock raising

Warrior Age

1. Slavery
2. Feudalism

Merchant Age

1. Commercial-mercantile capitalism: trade, hand-manufacture, early industry
2. Industrial capitalism: machine manufacture, full industrialization

Worker Age

1. Communism, or socialism
2. Social-democratic, multinational corporate capitalism, or Japanese-style worker-caste "teamwork" capitalism

Spiritual-Religious Age No. 2 (the future)

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1. Religious or spiritual capitalism: machines do drudge work (physical and mental); humans do creative work
2. Anarchist, integrated economy: human and machine integrated

[..]The current Worker Age similarly has upsides and downsides. "It is an age of both great spiritual and material development," Taub writes. "It is the first age to reject war and imperialism, to try world government, to deeply embrace equality, to cause science and technology to flower, and to create material wealth and security for the masses. But it is also the notorious *Kaliyuga* [i.e. the last of the four caste ages before the new Spiritual-Religious Caste Age]. It is the most socially alienated, materialistic, spiritually dark and dismal, complicated, disorienting, and dangerous of all caste ages. It is, in short, the best and worst of all possible worlds so far."

In Taub's Caste Model, the West dominated the Merchant Age, because its worldview most closely aligned with Merchant Caste values. Similarly, Confucian East Asia will dominate the peak stage of the Worker Age because its worldview most closely aligns with the Worker Caste. While the US has also moved into the Worker Age, it is the last great power of the Merchant Age. It struggles to rid itself of its ingrained Merchant Caste worldview. It stresses rights and freedom at the expense of responsibility and mutual civil obligation. Donald J. Trump was the last US president to openly espouse a Merchant Caste worldview.

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THE RISE OF THE WORKER CASTE

(The Worker Age)

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENED	WHERE IT HAPPENED	WHEN IT HAPPENED
1. Pioneering Stage	The blue-collar segment of the worker caste organized to resist the merchant caste: utopian socialist communities; socialist, anarchist, and communist movements and political parties; trade unions, and unsuccessful uprisings.	The advanced industrialized countries of the time: Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, etc.	19th and early 20th Centuries
2. Revolutionary-Evolutionary Stage	Socialist-communist revolution replaced 'bourgeois' revolution as the main form of revolution... ...while the worker caste continued to take power – by evolution rather than by revolution – even in the advanced industrialized countries. Results of both revolutionary and evolutionary trends: The upper – white-collar – echelon of the worker caste, the technocratic-bureaucratic 'new class' elite, gained power in all these countries.	Socialist-communist revolutions succeeded in 'backward' countries <i>outside</i> the main centers of world power: Russia, Mongolia, China, Yugoslavia, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Laos, Cambodia, and Nicaragua.	1917 to 1979
3. Peak Stage	Confucio, the cultural-economic-political bloc that most 'belongs' to the worker caste – that is most in tune with its spirit of identification with work, job, technical knowledge, and company – will become the world's greatest power of the age.	Confucio – consisting of Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, North and South Korea – will be the No. 1 World Power.	1979 to c. 2040

Figure 3 - Three Rise of the Worker Caste. The pioneering stage of the Worker Age occurred in the 19th century when the Merchant Age was in its heyday; The pioneering stage of the new Religious-Spiritual Age occurred when the Worker Age was approaching its peak stage.

Caste cycles overlap. While we are in the middle of the Worker age, we still deal with remnants of the Merchant Age while at the same time seeing the emergence of the new Spiritual-Religious Age. Taub predicts that the Worker Age will reach its zenith in East Asia between 2030 and 2040. Confucian East Asia, with its collectivist societies, is most in tune with the values, ideals, and socioeconomic worldview of the Worker type. Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea have different political systems, but their "teamwork capitalism" has put them in the vanguard of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (or Industry 4.0).

East Asia has the additional advantage that it is not held back by strong remnants of the Merchant Age. In many Western countries, Merchant Caste oligarchs have an outsized influence on the government; in China, the government controls the oligarchs. (Note that China under Mao suppressed the Merchant Caste and made little economic progress until Deng Xiaoping allowed the Merchant Caste back into civil society.)

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Rising Spiritual-Religious Caste

The previous Merchant Age and the current Worker Age have one thing in common: materialism. While materialism has a negative connotation, we can distinguish between mindless consumption and an ostentatious display of wealth on the one hand, and the human need for material goods like shelter, food, and sanitation on the other. The Worker Age is well on its way to providing all of humanity with material necessities. China lifted the majority of its 1.3 billion people out of poverty in just a few decades. India, South-East Asia, and Africa are on track to do the same.

Many developing countries use the formula China has applied: central control in combination with (managed) market liberalization. UN agencies and other international bodies hope to eradicate global poverty (living on an income of less than \$2 per day) by 2030. China, as the world's largest producer and main power in the Worker Age, plays a key role in this process. Chinese products, technology, and investment are flowing to developing countries that strive to provide people with basic necessities—if not Western material lifestyles.

The Worker Caste has yet to reach its peak stage in East Asia, which will be around 2040. But the next caste age, Spiritual-Religious Caste Age No. 2, has already made its presence felt. Taub calls it the Spiritual-Religious Caste Age to distinguish between religion and spirituality. Religions tend to focus on beliefs, while spirituality is concerned with "the search within." Interest in spirituality in the West began in the late 19th century when Madame Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society and Vedanta Societies that first sprang up in the US. In Europe, the pioneers of quantum physics explored Eastern spirituality. But the trend reached critical mass in the 1960s. The hippies embraced spirituality, and interest in Eastern thought exploded. A journey to India became a rite of passage for many of the hippie generation.

By the mid-1970s, the movement transformed into the New Age movement, which explored everything from Indian spirituality to Gnosticism. Unbelievers became seekers. Millions of people in industrialized countries started practicing yoga, meditation, and other consciousness-raising techniques. The movement spread through

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all levels of society. By the 1980s, corporate mindfulness training and meditation classes became a growth industry.

The 1960s also saw the birth of new religious movements that split from traditional established religions. Mega churches and TV evangelists attracted millions of people. The Unification Church in Korea had millions of followers around the world. In Japan, *Seichō no Ie* ("House of Growth"), was one of several "New Thought" religions. It emphasized gratitude for nature, family, ancestors, and religious faith in one universal God. China saw the birth of the *Falun Gong* (Dharma Wheel Practice), a mixture of Chinese and Indian thought that combines meditation and qigong exercises.
