INDIAN OUT TAKES

Ever have a project in front of you that needs to be finished on deadline? But as you work on it, you keep getting distracted by things that are peripheral to the main subject but nonetheless are so fascinating that you can't help investigating them more fully? Welcome to Indian Out Takes.

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"LEARN FROM YOURSELF THE ANSWER TO THAT":
Alexander the Great Goes to India and Meets the Naked Philosophers (ca. 326 BCE)

One of the earliest Westerners to make the long jaunt to India, way back in 326 BCE, was the Macedonian general Alexander (356-323 BCE). Depending on which historian you're reading, Alexander was either a far-sighted visionary trying to unite the world in one, big, huggy family (with him as the Dad), a bloodthirsty megalomaniac, or Jekyll-and-Hyde-like, alternately one then the other. At the height of his power, he was wealthy beyond Bill Gates' wildest dreams and lorded over something like two million square miles (six times the current size of the US)–an impressive number to be sure, though a distant second to another Indian nemesis, Genghis Khan, who, 1500 years later, sat on more than four million square miles. Still, not bad for someone barely 30, though of course all this loot and land was grabbed at the cost of untold destruction, misery, and death.

Most would-be conquerors of India were looking only to cash in, but in the words of British historian John Keay, Alex's motive was nothing other than "sheer bloody immortality." Certainly memorable was his army's eight-year, 11,000-mile trudge from Greece to the outskirts of India, which meandered through Turkey, Syria and Palestine, parts of North Africa, Persia, and Afghanistan. Keay notes that his greatest accomplishment was not so much invading India, but just "getting there."

With a tag like "the Great," it's no surprise that Alex's reputation preceded him. He was known to let people who meekly surrendered off the hook, while he mercilessly crushed any opposition. Consequently as he approached the Indian border, many (though not all) of the rulers in his path simply handed him the keys to the city without a fuss. One king waved the white flag with the following message:

> To what purpose should we make war upon one another, if the design of your coming into these parts be not to rob us of our water or our necessary food, which are the only things that wise men are indispensably obliged to fight for? As for other riches and possessions, as they are accounted in the eye of the world, if I am better provided of them than you, I am ready to let you share with me; but if fortune has been more liberal to you than me, I have no objection to be obliged to you.

But the Greeks' relatively smooth ride suddenly got bumpy at the Jhelum river (then known as the Hydaspes), a tributary of the Indus in modern-day Pakistan. A seven-foot-tall king by the name of Porus decided not to roll over, and massed an army of perhaps 20,000 to stop Alexander's advance. But in the end, despite their fierce resistance, the Indians were no match for Alexander's superior forces and tactics. Though the welcome mat was bloodied, the door to India was now wide open, and Alexander headed for the Ganges. His final goal, once India was under his thumb, was to reach the all-encompassing Ocean at the end of the world. This, he devoutly believed, would give him dominion over Asia, though as we know today, Alexander's grasp of geography was more than a little shaky.

But his men had a different plan. As they crossed into India they heard rumors of a vast continent stretching before them, populated with powerful kingdoms in no mood to be messed with. Most everybody–except Alexander–decided they'd had enough and only wanted to go on back home to Babylon. Not accustomed to hearing the word "No," Alexander threw a fit. He first tried to revive his soldiers' flagging spirits with a win-one-for-the-Gipper harangue; when that didn't work, he retreated to his tent for a three-day sulk, which didn't change anybody's mind either. And so Alexander reluctantly gave in, and the army turned south for the sea and passage back to Persia.

Along the way, the Greeks reportedly had an otherworldly encounter with a group of men wearing only their birthday suits, who they aptly named the gymnosophists, literally "naked philosophers." Nobody today knows exactly who these guys were, maybe Yogin or Jain ascetics, but whoever they were, they certainly impressed the Greeks, not only with their nudity and other strange (to the Greeks) behavior, but with their perspicacity.

There are at least four surviving versions of what happened when Alexander's West came face-to-face with India's East. All were written between 400 to 800 years after the event, so any historical fact is leavened with a generous helping of the author's over-active imagination. In fact, though each reports on an exchange between Alexander and the ascetics, modern historians pretty much agree that such a meeting never took–and couldn't have taken–place. For one thing it's not likely the most powerful human on the face of the Earth would stoop to the ascetics' level; for another, it's just as unlikely that the ascetics would bother with Alexander.

All the same, it's almost certain that one of the Greeks spoke with at least one ascetic (no doubt through an interpreter or two). The usual suspect is Onesikritos, the chief pilot of Alexander's fleet and a student of the Cynic philosopher Diogenes. Onesikritos wrote a fawning biography of his boss, which survives today only in bits and pieces. In it he recounts his meeting with about 15 ascetics, who he found sitting, standing, or lying unmoving in weird positions (maybe asanas?). Like Alexander's other biographers, Onesikritos isn't so much interested in what the Indians are doing as in using them to grind an axe, as illustrations to either support or criticize a particular Greek philosophy or behavior. He approved of the ascetics not because of their search for self-liberation, but because the were

> prime examples of the recommended Cynic mode of life ... [which] had nothing at all to do with the pursuit of holiness. Cynics investigated human life in order to identify the sources of happiness, which they believed required freeing oneself from dependence upon external events or goods. For this reason they concluded that the happy man was the one who restricted his wants to the barest necessities and suppressed all desires. The Cynics despised popular opinion and everything it valued: i.e. wealth, fame, learning, even ordinary bodily comfort. Quite aside from whatever the Indian ascetics may have told Onesikritos, their life-style in its externals conformed well to the Cynic ideal.

In other words, Onesikritos saw what he wanted, needed, and hoped to see, interpreting–or maybe mis-interpreting–this experience through his own Western filter, much like many of us still do today.

It's probable that Onesikritos's story is the basis for the later Alexander versions, the latter simply replacing the former in the re-tellings. My favorite one, which actually shines a harsh and unflattering light on our hero, comes near the end of the anonymous *Greek Alexander Romance*, a novel-length tale of uncertain date. Here a "romance" isn't one of our modern bodice-rippers, but a long prose narrative of a heroic adventure, often with fantastic characters or events.

The ascetics in this tale don't seem especially ascetical, except for being naked: they live simply but quite comfortably with their wives and children in an Eden-like forest, the streams running with water as "bright as milk," the trees "beautiful to look at" and heavy with "all kinds of fruit." Alexander greets them peaceably and poses a series of questions. They answer each in turn rather cryptically but tamely enough until Alexander asks, "Which is the wickedest of all creatures?" The ascetics pounce on that one: "Man," they reply without hesitation. Alexander bites and asks why. "Learn from yourself the answer to that," is their audacious and–considering who they're talking to–dangerous come-back. "You are a wild beast, and see how many other wild beasts you have with you, to help you tear away the lives of other beasts." Alexander takes this verbal roughing-up in stride, and even seems to egg the gymnosophists on. "What is kingship?" he asks, setting himself up again, and again the reply doesn't pull any punches: "Unjust power used to the disadvantage of others, insolence supported by opportunity."

Maybe thinking he's heard enough, Alexander asks to interview the ascetics' "king." And so the lord of two million square miles, worshiped by many of his subjects as a god, is conducted to Dandamis, who's enthroned on a pile of leaves eating a melon. Still unclear on the concept, Alexander first wonders if Dandamis has any property. Sure, the latter replies casually, "the earth, the fruit trees, the daylight, the sun, the moon, the chorus of stars, and water." What more could you ask for?

What happens next is both amusing and sad. Alexander just can't seem to grasp what the ascetics are all about: he magnanimously offers to give them anything they want. "At once they all burst out," the *Romance* narrator tells us, "'Give us immortality.'" Taken aback, Alexander sheepishly replies, "That is a power I do not have. I too am mortal." But the ascetics aren't quite finished. "Since you are a mortal," they logically point out to Alexander, "why do you make so many wars? When you have seized everything, where will you take it? Surely you will only have to leave it behind for others." Alexander lamely excuses his war-making as "ordained by Providence above," so even though he'd like to retire to some cozy Babylonian cottage on the banks of the Euphrates, the "master of my soul does not allow me." And anyway he concludes, oozing with self-justification, "Everyone takes from everyone, and leaves what he has taken to others: no possession is permanent."

As he's leaving Alexander *still* wants to give Dandamis some gifts. But the old ascetic just laughs at the proffered gold, bread, wine, and olive oil. "These things are useless to us," he says, but just to be nice he accepts the oil. Then, as Alexander watches, Dandamis builds a huge pile of wood, lights it, and pours the oil into the fire.

“FEAR NOT, THOMAS; GO AWAY TO INDIA”:
Apostle Thomas in India (ca. 52 CE)

Before the sixteenth century only a few Roman Catholic missionaries wandered into India without drawing much attention or reaping many new converts. One historically reliable account puts an Italian Franciscan Friar, John of Monte Corvino, (1246-1328), in India around 1291. He stopped there for 13 months, baptizing by his own estimate about 100 souls, before continuing on to China and the court of Kubla Khan (of “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan/A stately pleasure dome decree ...” fame). But if we can accept that a popular legend has some basis in fact, it’s possible that a Christian was preaching and winning converts in India over 1200 years earlier, in the middle of the first century CE.

It’s related in the *Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas* (*Acta Thomae*, possibly written in the early third century) how the apostles of Jesus gathered after this death to “portion out the regions of the world” for their proselytizing missions. In those days, important decisions like this one were often made by casting lots, in the belief that God’s will was revealed through seemingly random chance. Peter got Rome–we all know how *that* turned out–Andrew headed to Turkey and Greece (where he was also martyred), Carthage fell to Philip, and Thomas, of “Doubting” fame, ended up with India.

Despite being the presumed will of God, Thomas quickly and publicly doubted his ability to get to his appointed destination, citing “weakness of the flesh.” But his former teacher appeared in a vision and delivered a little pep talk: “Fear not, Thomas,” Jesus assured his disciple, “go away to India, and proclaim the word; for my grace shall be with thee.” Thus encouraged, Thomas dutifully struck out and reached southern India around 52 CE (in another version of the story he’s sold into slavery and eventually winds up in India).

Over the next 25 years he founded the so-called “Seven-and-a-Half Churches” (*Ezharappallikal*), church at Thiruvithancodu considered “half” because Thomas left the area before the building was complete. Thomas was finally done in by his own success: he converted a certain queen who then refused to “consort” with her pagan husband, a powerful king by the name of Mahadevan. And to make matters worse, he also converted the king’s son, members of his court and household, and an unspecified though apparently impressively large number of the king’s subjects. Incensed, the king ordered Thomas to undo all his hard work–starting with his wife–and turn the brand-new self-righteous Christians back into more agreeable heathens. Not unexpectedly the apostle refused, and when the name of the man you’re refusing means “Great God,” it’s reasonable to expect the response Thomas got: the king had him hauled off to a small hill (today known as Saint Thomas Mount) outside town and executed.

This story of the brave and dedicated apostle hasn’t inspired everyone. In fact, it’s been viciously attacked by Hindu defenders, like Sita Ram Goel in her *History of Christian-Hindu Encounters (AD 304 to 1996)*. She maintains that Thomas-in-India is a fairy tale, fabricated by the Catholic Church essentially as a tool of Western imperialism.

“SPICES AND CHRISTIANS”:
Vasco da Gama Sails to India (1498)

Before 1500, trade between Europe and India was minimal. Overland travel was slow, expensive, risky, and more to the point, Europe had very little to trade that India needed or wanted. But by the early fifteenth century, the times they were a-changing. Driven by the promise of the lucrative Far Eastern spice trade, Europeans began searching in earnest for a way to get to India and beyond more quickly, cheaply, and safely. In other words, they started looking for a sea route. It wasn’t hard to figure out which way to go, since there were only two possible directions.

One way was west, the route taken by an Italian sailor named Cristoforo Columbo (1451?-1506), better known to American school children as Christopher Columbus. Like most Europeans of his time, Columbus knew the earth was round, and so he reasoned that by sailing West across the Atlantic he could eventually reach the East. Theoretically he was right of course, though he misjudged the circumference of the Earth, reckoning it much smaller than it is (possibly on purpose to make his voyage seem less dangerous to his royal sponsors), and he didn’t know about those bothersome continents, nowadays called North and South America, that blocked his way. So in 1492, when he bumped into his first Caribbean island, he thought he was somewhere off the coast of India. As a consequence he optimistically called the curious and unsuspecting natives who surrounded his landing party “Indians” and their sacred chili “red pepper,” a pair of unfortunate misnomers that persist to this very day. (Incidentally, even if the continents hadn’t been in his way, if Columbus had tried to cross the Atlantic *and* Pacific Oceans together in the relatively small ships of his day–they were about 120 feet long (the length of a tennis court) and maybe 30 feet wide–with their limited cargo capacity, he would have run out of supplies long before he reached land).

The other way went south along the west coast of Africa, swung around the continent’s southern tip, then turned north and east across the Indian Ocean. The Portugese were the most ambitious explorers in this direction. They spent a good part of the early to mid-1400s pushing further and further south, stopping here and there along the West African coast, finally crossing the equator in 1473. Along the way they discovered they could make some decent money trafficking in slaves ... writing one of the least glorious chapters in Portugese history.

Finally in 1482, Bartolomeu Diaz (ca. 1450-1500) rounded Africa’s southern tip–which he dubbed the Cape of Storms–and headed north. But like Alexander’s men, Diaz’s sailors dug in their heels and refused to sail any further in uncharted waters, so the ship turned back without venturing to India. The Cape of Storms, by the way, was later re-named the Cape of Good Hope, but that didn’t help Diaz; eighteen years after he became the first European to round it, he died off the Cape ... when his ship sunk in a storm.

The job Diaz started for Portugal was finished ten years later by a hot-headed, ruthless adventurer named Vasco da Gama (b. ca. 1469), whose inaugural trip from Lisbon to Calicut, India took 10 months. Da Gama might have been a stalwart sailor, but he wasn’t a very nice person–on his way to India he took some time out to bombard a city on Mozambique, the island

off the coast of East Africa–and he stunk at business, antagonizing the Indians with his arrogance, bullying behavior, and worse of all, cheap gifts.

When he got back to Portugal after two years, da Gama was treated as a national hero for his groundbreaking voyage to India, even though it was neither financially profitable nor politically successful. Seventy years later, his adventure was glorified by Luis Vaz de Camoes (ca. 1525-1580) in *Os Lusiades* ("The Lusiads," i.e. the Portugese are presented as the descendent of Lusus, mythical founder of Lusitania), which has become the national epic of Portugal.

Da Gama headed for India a second time in 1502. Charged by king Emmanuel I to establish a spice-trade monopoly in the Indian Ocean by "cruel war with fire and sword," da Gama was only too happy to oblige. On the way out, he attacked, looted, and torched a pilgrim ship, the *Meri*, killing most of the 300 passengers. Once back in Calicut his request for trading privileges was denied; apparently for some reason the Portugese had gotten a bad rap and the Indians wanted nothing to do with them. He retaliated by–you guessed it–bombarding the city and elbowing and kneeing his way into the spice business. Da Gama later returned to India for a third go-around, this time as Viceroy, but he died there a short while after arriving in 1524.

After 1500, with the sea route now blazed, the European rush to India was officially on; as one nineteenth-century historian commented:

> The circumstances of this splendid fortune had violently attracted the attention of Europe. The commerce of India, even when confined to those narrow limits which a carriage by land had prescribed, was supposed to have elevated feeble states into great ones ... The discovery therefore of a new channel for this opulent traffic, and the happy experience of the Portuguese, inflamed the cupidity of all the maritime nations of Europe, and set before them the most tempting prospects. [1]

But Europeans weren't interested only in trade. According to da Gama's journal, when asked why he had come to India, he roared, "Spices," then added ominously, "and Christians."

JOHN COMPANY:
The British East India Company (chartered 1600)

The British East India Company may not ring a bell nowadays, but for about a hundred years, between the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, it was a major league player in world commerce and politics. Considered by many to be the world's first multinational corporation, by the time of its dissolution in 1858, it controlled most of India, Burma, Singapore, and Hong Kong, an estimated 20 percent of the world's people. Popularly known as "John Company," it was chartered on the last day of 1599 by Queen Elizabeth I, who gave the fledgling company a monopoly on the potentially lucrative spice trade with the East Indies. For years it struggled against other European powers for a foothold in India, but gradually by the mid-seventeenth century the Company had constructed walled forts in the port cities of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras (now called Chennai), protected by its own private army, stocked mostly with Indian mercenaries.

As the Company expanded its commercial interests, often through underhanded means, it began meddling in local politics, which infuriated Indian rulers. Finally in 1756, the Nawab of Bengal decided to put his foot down and teach the Company a lesson: he attacked and captured Calcutta's Fort William and, according to one eyewitness account, packed nearly 150 English prisoners into an eighteen-by-fourteen-foot holding cell without food or water. After spending a sweltering night in what came to be known as the Black Hole of Calcutta, all but 23 prisoners had died. Just to keep the record straight here, some historians maintain that both the number of prisoners and deaths were greatly exaggerated; there's even a suggestion that the whole incident was concocted to inflame English passions.

Whether true or not, the report of the cruel treatment of English prisoners did indeed rile the English. In response, they re-captured Fort William and further decided that a "regime change" in Bengal would be a good idea. After a lot of Machiavellian behind-the-scenes maneuvering, everything came to a head in 1757 on a large field near the village of Plassey. An EIC force of maybe three thousand soldiers, most of them hired hands, went toe-to-toe with an Indian army estimated at 50,000. Surprisingly, even though outnumbered seven-to-one, the English carried the day, mostly because, it seems, that at least half the Indian combatants had been bribed to play dead. The "Battle" of Plassey wound down in a civilized 10 hours with a minimum loss of life. Nearly two hundred years later, Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, bitterly but accurately ascribed the English victory to "treason and forgery." However the Company pulled it off, Plassey marked the beginning of its century-long political domination of India.

But this was all still a hundred years down the road when Yale arrived. You might ask though (especially if you've had occasion to travel there yourself): Why would anyone go to India for so little money? Apparently even a "little money" went a long way in seventeenth-century India. And as Elihu Yale demonstrates, even low-level clerks, if they had the right stuff and were in the right place at the right time, could make LOTS of money. We have, as another example, lawyer and socialite William Hickey, born a century after Yale. At the age of 20, he was essentially banished to India by his family, to work for the EIC, in the hope that the experience would straighten out his wild and crazy ways. It didn't, but by the time he said good-bye to Bengal he was

> keeping a household of sixty-three servants, had five horses to dispose of, besides "furniture, plate, jewelry, paintings and engravings, books, a billiards table, chamber organ, a stock of the best liqueurs," a buggy "finished in the first style" and a "very elegant chair palankeen," and had accumulated a personal fortune that amounted to one hundred and forty-nine thousand ... rupees.

Believe it or not, the EIC lives on in this country today in one strange but ubiquitous incarnation. The story goes that by the early 1770s the Company was nearly bankrupt. The English government, in an effort to boost the its sales, passed the Tea Act which allowed the Company to sell its enormous stockpiles of tea in the American colonies without worrying about paying the usual taxes. Remember the rallying cry from your high school American history class, "No taxation without representation"? With this legislation, the Company could undersell its colonial competitors, who now faced their own financial ruin.

American colonists, already up in arms over other instances of English high-handedness, did what all good Americans have always done when aroused by injustice–they protested. Most of the tea-carrying English ships were turned away from American ports except one, Boston. Toward the end of 1773, a large shipment was waiting to be unloaded from three ships anchored in the harbor. Calling themselves the "Sons of Liberty," a band of about 150 men–disguised, ironically, as "Indians"–boarded the ships and dumped 45 tons of tea into the drink, an act of civil disobedience celebrated as the Boston Tea Party.

One of the protesters liberated an EIC flag from the ship *Dartmouth*. It consisted of alternating red-and-white horizontal stripes and a St. George's Cross on a blue rectangle in the upper left-hand corner. Sound familiar? According to one legend, this flag served as a model for the first American flag, sewed in 1776 by Betsy Ross, a widowed upholsterer (though nowadays most historians no longer believe that Ross actually was the flag's creator).

"BETTER THAN AN EGYPTIAN PYRAMID":
Cotton Mather, Elihu Yale, and the Tamil New Testament (1721)

Exactly when did Americans first come in contact with India? That depends on how we define "American" and "contact." Technically anyone (of European ancestry) born in the American colonies prior to the Treaty of Paris (1784) was first and foremost a British subject, and only secondarily an American. But for the sake of this story let's just say they were Americans in their heart of hearts; after all, they eventually did stir up all that trouble, just like good Americans are expected to when confronted with an unpopular government, in the 1770s. And let's further agree that "contact" can either mean going to India in person, or having a little piece of India delivered to your doorstep.

With these comfortably loose-fitting definitions of "American" and "contact," we can then find an interesting pair of Indian encounters way back around 1720. Both involved a man by the name of Cotton Mather. Mather is remembered nowadays, if at all, as someone somehow mixed up with the infamous Salem witch trials. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries however, he was an well-known and influential Puritan minister and author, not only in the colonial boondocks but in England as well. While many of us don't have the time or energy to write out our shopping list, Mather in his life authored over 450 books and pamphlets on subjects ranging from witchcraft to theology, from history to astronomy and biology.

Enrolled in Harvard (where his father Increase served two terms as president) at age 12, already conversant in Latin and Greek, Mather graduated at 15, earned his MA at 18, an age when most of us are still struggling to get out of high school. A deeply religious yet tortured soul, given to long self-mortifying fasts and vigils, he was ordained at 21 and ministered at Boston's Old North Church for 44 years, until his death in 1728. Some historians have downplayed or even ignored Mather's role in the witch trials of the 1690s, which resulted in 19 hangings, one gruesome rock-crushing, and hundreds of ruined lives. But the fact is he fanned the hysteria's flames, writing (in *The Wonders of the Invisible World*) that the "witches" were agents of a devilish conspiracy to "*Blow up, and pull down all the Churches in the Country*." After all the damage was done and the madness ended, it seems that Mather had second thoughts, but it was too late to save either the broken lives or his own reputation. More than 200 years after his death, in the 1970s, he was resurrected as the menacing "Hatemonger" in several issues of a popular comic book, his weapon a flame-throwing wooden cross.

One of Mather's pet projects was a struggling college, the Collegiate School of Connecticut, located at Saybrook. He and nine other Puritan ministers, all Harvard grads, established the school in 1701 as a conservative alternative to their increasingly liberal-minded alma mater. There's also a suggestion that the CSC was Mather's way of thumbing his nose at Harvard, miffed because he was passed over for its presidency. But the 10 directors weren't satisfied with the Saybrook campus and decided to move the school to New Haven, after the town, in a bidding war with Hartford, agreed to chip in £2,000 for moving expenses.

Even with that seed money the CSC remained impoverished–its students were boarded with their professors–and needed funds for a new New Haven building. So the Puritans cast about for a benefactor and finally targeted a wealthy Englishman by the name of Elihu Yale.

According to our criterion, Yale was just barely an American. He was born in Boston in 1649 though his family moved to England three years later and he never set foot in this country again. He went out to India in 1672 as a lowly "writer" or clerk for the East India Company. (See Sidelight) Through diligence and hard work, and a very advantageous marriage to a wealthy widow, by 1687 Yale had risen to the office of Governor of Madras. During his years in India he accumulated a sizeable fortune of his own, not a bad thing in itself, but there were and still are lingering questions about how he managed it. Sympathizers credit him with being (like his father) a shrewd businessman who made money trading in diamonds and spices. But there were charges, which historians have never been able to prove conclusively, that he also stuck his hand in the Company cookie jar and that some of his gains were ill-gotten. So depending on who you believe, either he had enemies on the governing Council who undermined his position with Company directors, or those directors wearied of his of his shady wheelings and dealings. Whatever the truth, Yale was kicked out of office in 1692.

Apparently *he* didn't think he did anything wrong. In an attempt to get his job back, he dispatched his younger brother Thomas to London to plead his case to the British government's powerful Privy Council. But Thomas died in 1697 without success, and Yale decided enough was enough. So in 1699 he returned to England, hauling along (according to one report) five tons of spices, precious stones, leather goods, and oriental screens.

Retired in style to his family's homeland in Wales, Yale set out to spend his money. He assembled the largest private art collection in the country, and handed out handouts left and right. Naturally this largesse attracted widespread attention, even in the distant colony which he briefly, a long time past, called home. In 1713 he was approached by a representative of a very small and hard-up college in Connecticut, Mather's CSC, and was talked into donating about 30 books to its library.

Five years later, the Puritans were after something more substantial than 30 books when they hat-in-hand again to Yale. And who better than Mather to write the pitch?

> The Colony of Connecticut [he wrote], having for some years had a College at Saybrook without a collegious way of living for it, have lately begun to erect a large edifice for it in the town of New Haven. The charge of that expensive building is not yet all paid, nor are there yet any funds of revenues for salaries to the Professors and instructors to the society.
>
> Sir, though you have your felicities in your family, which I pray God continue and multiply, yet certainly, if what is ... forming at New Haven might wear the name of YALE COLLEGE, it would be better than *a name of sons and daughters*. And your munificense might easily obtain for you such a commemoration and perpetuation of your valuable name, as would indeed be much better than an Egyptian pyramid.

Mather was offering a tit for a tat: if Yale would donate funds to help complete the construction project, Mather *might* get the college named after him. As a kicker, Mather hinted that since

Yale's only legitimate son had died years before, the college then would perpetuate his "valuable name" not only better than children, but even "better than an Egyptian pyramid."

The idea appealed to Yale, but as a rabid Anglican, he had reservations about propping up a bunch of Puritans. So instead of hard cash Yale donated several bales of textiles, just over 400 books, mostly on religion, and a portrait of King George I, to remind the yokels of "their duties to the king." The books were kept for the library, the cloth was sold for about £560, a heap of money for the day, [FN: by comparison, Yale's starting annual salary with the EIC in India was £10] though considering Yale's net worth, really a drop in the bucket. There's some suspicion that Yale made his contribution with an ulterior motive: to turn the college away from Puritanism to the Church of England. Some of the tutors actually did make the switch, and they were quickly dismissed.

And so the Collegiate School of Connecticut, a clunky-sounding name anyway, became Yale College, its first building financed in large part with money donated by an American-born Englishman who made his fortune, perhaps dishonestly, in India. Fittingly, 125 years after Yale's gift, the university appointed Boston-born and Yale-educated Edward Salisbury to this country's first Sanskrit professorship. Salisbury, who was later in his career credited with being the "Father of Oriental Studies" in this country, played a leading role in the early years of the American Oriental Society (founded in 1843), and twice served as its president (from 1863-66 and from 1873-81).

You might think that, in 1720, one brush with India, however tenuous, would be all that one person could expect in a lifetime, but Mather wasn't your average person. Along with hundreds of books and pamphlets, he penned an estimated 8,000 letters. One of his correspondents was August Francke, a well-known German theologian and professor of Oriental languages. Francke and Mather were both ardent supporters of the Protestant missionary movement, which was just getting off the ground at the start of the eighteenth century, lagging behind the Catholics by a few hundred years. Mather was especially anxious to transform as many infidels as possible into devout Christians, since he believed the Second Coming was right around the corner. Francke put him in contact with one of an Indian missionaries, a German Pietist with the tongue-twisting name of Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg.

Ziegenbalg's story begins in 1706, when the Protestant King of Denmark, Frederick IV, decided to challenge the Catholic missionaries in India. Failing to convince any Danish Protestants to take up the cause, Frederick contacted Francke, who that same year dispatched Ziegenbalg and another German, Heinrich Pluetshau, to the Danish colony in south India.

Even though they were sponsored by the Danish king, the two Germans immediately found themselves *persona non grata* when they arrived in India. The Danish East India Company's officials, whose job it was to make money, feared their proselytizing would touch off a Hindu rebellion that would be bad for business. Moreover the colony's Protestant chaplains (who ministered to Europeans only) took issue with the pair's unorthodox Pietist religious beliefs. The good news, relatively speaking, is that Ziegenbalg became popular with many of the Indian locals, since he made the effort to learn their language, Tamil, and understand their culture and religion, though during one country outing, the two Germans unceremoniously destroyed some

idols at a roadside temple. He also was something of a social activist and supported the locals in their dealings with the autocratic Danish governor ... which on one occasion cost Ziegenbalg a four-month time-out. Irritated by his defense of a wronged widow, the governor decided to teach Mr Z a lesson he'd never forget and tossed him in the slammer to cool his heels.

Ziegenbalg though was serious about what he called his "business in souls." When he was released in March 1709, he went right back to his old tricks. By 1711 he had translated the New Testament into Tamil, the first time this book had been translated into any Indian language, and making it the largest prose text at that time in that language. Then four years later, after setting up the first printing press in India, he whipped up a printed version. And so in 1721 (the same year Yale died), a copy of the Tamil New Testament found its way to Boston and the hands of Cotton Mather, one of the first books (if not *the* first) published in India to reach this country. [jackson]
I wasn't able to discover what in the world Mather did with a Tamil New Testament, though it must have made an interesting conversation piece.

In that same year Mather published an expanded version of two of his letters to Ziegenbalg under the title *India Christiana*, a kind of "Christian Conversion for Dummies" of the time. Its sub-title reads:

> *A Discourse, Delivered unto the Commissioners, for the Propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians, which is Accompanied with several Instruments relating to the Glorious Design of Propagating our Holy Religion, in the Eastern as well as the Western, Indies. An Entertainment which they that are Waiting for the Kingdom of God will receive as Good News from a far Country*.

CALLING ALL ANGELS:
Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772)

Taller than the others, this man
Walked among them, at a distance,
Now and then calling the angels
By their secret names. He would see

That which earthly eyes do not see:
The fierce geometry, the crystal
Labyrinth of God and the sordid
Milling of infernal delights.

He knew that Glory and Hell too
Are in your soul, with all their myths;
He knew, like the Greek, that the days
Of time are Eternity's mirrors.

In dry Latin he went on listing
The unconditional Last things.
-a sonnet by Jorge Luis Borges on Swedenborg

When we look at Swedenborg's life it's tempting to divide it into two phases, which for convenience we'll call the Normal and Oddball. According to this storyline, the Normal Phase spanned the first 57 years of his life, then around 1745 came to a relatively abrupt end. The problem with our two-phase model is that it's misleading, because it suggests a sharp break in Swedenborg's life, that one day he was a scientist, the next a mystic. But the Oddball had been brewing in Swedenborg for virtually his entire life, though he kept it pretty well hidden from public view until after the visit from God. He probably inherited the Oddball "gene" from his father, a Lutheran bishop named Jesper, who not only had Oddball tendencies but a rebellious streak to boot. During the 17th century one of the basic tenets of the Lutheran church was something called "faith alone" (*sola fide*), which held that the believer's "faith alone" in God was enough to earn forgiveness of sins. Jesper, who was an outspoken critic of the church's doctrinal rigidity, expressed sympathy for a group of dissenters that favored heart-felt communion with God over "faith alone." This got him denounced as a heretic, the same label stuck on his son for other reasons a few decades down the road by the same Lutheran church. Of course independent thinking and deviation from the party line doesn't an Oddball make. What was odd about Jesper was that, from a very early age, he believed our world was inhabited by angels, and that he could talk with them and solicit their guidance.

There's no doubt that Jesper's beliefs had a profound effect on Emanuel. We can say that initially Swedenborg was a scientist with a mystical agenda: even while probing the structure of matter (he intuited that matter consisted of infinitely small "natural points," very much like modern atoms), or speculating on the creation of the universe (he was first to propose a nebular theory for the origin of galaxies), he was looking to "trace out the nature of the human soul" and for evidence of God's handiwork in the world. Then, at a certain stage in his life, he simply flip-flopped the roles and became a mystic with a scientist's eye for detail and penchant for formal organization and

HEAVENLY SECRETS: Swedenborg's Writings, 1747 to 1772

Over the 260 or so years since Emanuel's 1745 encounter, many commentators' have tried explain what actually happened to him. Supporters naturally maintain he had a genuine experience of the divine, and was to some degree as a result, enlightened and graced with spiritual "X-ray vision." Squinty-eyed skeptics though see nothing but an eruption of some pre-existing mental imbalance, or maybe a delayed reaction to his father's death, or particularly virulent attack of epilepsy (from which there's some evidence he suffered).

Swedenborg himself was convinced he had received a God-given "calling." Within a couple of years he retreated from his worldly responsibilities to devote himself solely to "unfolding" a new version of life in the universe, which in his estimation had quite a few more dimensions and a much larger, if disembodied population, than commonly thought. He wrote voluminously about what he "saw" and "heard" as he traveled to other worlds and spoke with their inhabitants. In the last 27 years of his life, he produced 19 books, though several titles included two or more volumes. The Mother of all was his first (post-1745, he'd written other books before). Titled *Heavenly Secrets* (*Arcana Coelestia*, 1747-1756), it's considered his magnum opus, if only because of its word count, three million approximately, on 7,000 pages spread over eight volumes. The book does just what God asked him to do, provide detailed commentary on the symbolism of the "Holy Scriptures," or to be more precise, the first two books of the Pentateuch, Genesis and Exodus. In between commentaries, he made forays into a variety of areas, most significantly the correspondences between the mundane and spiritual worlds. His most widely read book was the three-volume *Heaven and its Wonders and Hell From Things Heard and Seen* (*De Coelo et Ejus Mirabilibus, et de Inferno, ex Auditis et Visis*, 1758), a kind of travelogue to these ultimate destinations, infrequently if at all toured by the living. His goal in writing the book was to counter the "infecting and corrupting" influence of "worldly people" who question or, even worse, deny the existence of these post-life venues. So he was granted the opportunity "to be with angels and to talk with them person to person. ... to see what is in heaven and in hell ... [and] allowed therefore to describe what I have heard and seen, in the hopes of shedding light where there is ignorance, and of dispelling skepticism."

You might wonder: What is heaven like? Full of light and singing and rejoicing and stuff like that? Actually, if we take Swedenborg's word for it, heaven is very much like Earth "except everything is more perfect," sort of like Martha Stewart's home. Angels wear clothes like ours, live in houses like ours, participate in angel governments like ... well, they have governments, go to church, write and read books, and so on. And Hell? The surprise is that souls newly arrived in the afterlife are never assigned there by God, who Swedenborg says is the essence of goodness, love, and mercy itself, and wouldn't hurt a fly's soul. When we come knock, knock, knockin' on Heaven's door, the angels offer to coach us on what is "good and true," something like those courses that help high school kids prepare for the SAT. However, Swedenborg continues

> ... if we as spirits are the kind of people who have been familiar with things like this in the world but have denied or rejected them at heart, then after some conversation we want to get away from them and try to leave. When the angels notice this, they leave us. After spending some time with various other people, we

> eventually take up with people who are devloted to similar evils ... When this happens, we are turning away from the Lord and turning our faces toward the hell we were united to in the world, where people live who are engaged in a similar love of evil.

According to Swedenborg then, old habits are *really* hard to break, and some souls actually *choose* to literally “go to Hell.”

The rest of his books pretty much cover all the theological bases: God, the Holy Spirit and Creation, Man, Free Will, Repentance, and the Fall, the Spirit World, Faith and Charity, the Second Coming, Baptism, and Death. There are also accounts of his journeys to other “Earths”–the six other planets known at the time and the Moon–and his talks with their inhabitants. It’s reasonable to assume, with all of this first-hand information on heretofore uncharted worlds that his books would have sold like hot cakes. But no, during his lifetime nobody much read any of his books–they were written in *Latin* for goodness sake, which right away narrowed his popular audience, and it’s widely agreed, except by Swedenborgians, that while his visions might have been in glorious technicolor, his prose was strictly *niger-et-albus*. His books were mostly sold below cost, with Swedenborg absorbing the loss, or given away.

Plainly many of Swedenborg’s visions and resulting conclusions weren’t exactly kosher, and he rightly foresaw that they would rub the orthodox clergy the wrong way. So he wisely published his early books under that popular old pen name, Anonymous. Maddeningly for the Thought Police of the time, they had no one to persecute until, after a few years, somebody let the cat out of the bag. Swedenborg was right. Officials of the Lutheran church, though like everybody else hardly cracked open one of his books, intuited from what little they read that the rest of the material would *probably* be heretical, and went ballistic. The controversy labored on for a few years, snagged a couple of devotees who were charged with heresy for promulgating Swedenborgian ideas, but finally the whole mess was dropped.

FOR AS MAN THINKS SO HE BREATHES: Swedenborg’s Internal Respiration (*respiratio interna*)

What’s most intriguing about Swedenborg for us as Yoga enthusiasts is his lifelong experiments with breathing, and his later experiments in what can only be called Tantric sexuality. Given his family environment and his father’s beliefs, it’s not surprising that, by our standards, Emanuel was an unusual child. He mentions that from his fourth to his tenth years his thoughts were continually on God and salvation, and that his greatest delight was to “converse with the Clergy concerning Faith.” And he recounts how, in order to intensify his bedtime prayers, he spontaneously held his breath for an inordinate length of time. This is of course exactly what Yogis do to stabilize their consciousness in meditation.

While living in London he fell in with followers of Sabbatai Zevi, a notorious Kabbalist who a hundred years earlier had promoted himself as the Jewish Messiah. Some members of this circle clandestinely indulged in “holy sinning,” which involved what was for the time–and maybe still is–some unequivocally forbidden sexual practices. Swedenborg began to study the extremely risky technique of “mystical marriage,” a discipline that involved X-rated visualizations

combined with a subtle form of breathing called “genital breathing.” If successful, the process is supposed to result in the sublimation of sexual energy–precisely the Tantrika’s goal–and the consequent re-integration of the alienated self. But there were no guarantees: one false step and the hapless practitioner could potentially drive himself to madness. It appears that Swedenborg’s process had a few rough patches: one report has him wandering the streets of London naked and raving about being the Messiah, though defenders hotly denied the story as an attempted character assassination. In the end, Swedenborg seems to have pushed all the right buttons, and entered a state he describes as one of “indescribable bliss.”

Was Swedenborg a Tantric Yogi? Evidence is inconclusive, much of what he practiced he discovered on his own or learned from his Kabbalist connections. But there’s also some evidence that he knew about certain East Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan Yogic practices.

What would a Swedenborgian pranayama practice be like? For humans Swedenborg proposes two kinds of breathing. By far the more familiar to us is “natural” or “external” respiration (ER), which is the effortful way most of us breathe most of the time. The other kind of breathing, “spiritual” or “internal” respiration (IR), is very rare and has been for centuries. In contrast to ER, IR is effortless (since God is directly regulating the breath), imperceptible to most humans but always to some degree feeding ER, since if “man were deprived of this influx, he would instantly fall down dead.”

These two breaths though aren’t clear-cut, either/or categories; instead they’re extremes on a breathing “spectrum” that, like the light spectrum, has countless “colors” in between. Your position on the spectrum–where you are on this spectrum–depends on how close you are to God through the “marriage” of love (heart) and wisdom (brain). Once upon a time, in Swedenborg’s version of the Golden Age, all humans breathed internally because we all were still straight arrows. People then communicated with one another “angelically,” as the angels do, or “tacitly” in Swedenborg’s terminology. Our hearing is the result of air waves beating against our ear drums, creating what Swedenborg calls external sound. With IR, the pure exhale itself carries the message, wordlessly, and the recipient soundlessly *inhales the it through her nostrils*! The breath-message then passes along the Eustachian tube (which connects the nasal pharynx to middle ear) to the *inside* of the ear drum, where it’s “heard.”

His rules of conduct

> Often to read and meditate on the Word of God.
> To submit everything to the will of Divine Providence.
> To observe in everything a propriety of behavior, and to keep the conscience clear.
> To discharge with fidelity the functions of my employments, and to make myself in all things useful to society.

In his *Spiritual Diary* he even writes about a vision he had of a band of “Chinese, sitting there, as the Indians are wont to do with the feet crossed; and I was told that angels spoke wisely to them about God and about His marvelous [attributes], and that they were so delighted at this, that the were in the tranquillity of peace.”

Whatever influences he absorbed from the East, Vivekananda would have felt right at home in Swedenborg's breathing universe. In traditional Yoga the universe is created in the outbreath of the Absolute, *brahman*. This means we're essentially an exhalation, waiting patiently for the next inhalation, when we'll all be reabsorbed back into the Source ... don't worry though, another exhale will soon follow. Similarly in Swedenborg all breath–whether human or angelic–emanates from God, so that breath is the thread that unifies every living creature. Though all creatures participate in this Great Breath, each population retains its own breathing identity, as does each individual in those populations.

A MACHINE TO FLY IN THE AIR: Swedenborg's Inventions

Any of these proposals seem familiar? Even in his Normal Phase in the early 18th century, Swedenborg was thinking way outside the box:

The construction of a sort of ship, in which a man can go below the surface of the sea, and do great damage to the fleet of an enemy.

A machine, driven by fire, for pumping water.

A bridge which can be opened and shut.

A new construction of air-guns, by which a thousand balls may be discharged through one tube, in one moment.

A universal musical instrument, by means of which the most inexperienced musician can execute all the kinds of modulations, which are found in notation.

A flying chariot, or the possibility of floating in the air and moving through it. (He later wrote an article on this idea, published anonymously, where he called it a Machine to Fly in the Air. In 1910 the Royal Aeronautical Society deemed it the "first reasonable suggestion to build a heavier-than-air flying machine.").

A method of discovering the desires and affections of the minds of men by analysis.

WE ARE NOT ALONE: Swedenborg on the Inhabitants and Spirits of Other Earths

MERCURY

There are spirits whose sole study is to acquire to themselves knowledges, because they are delighted only with knowledges. Therefore these spirits are permitted to wander about, and even to pass out of this solar system into others, and to procure for themselves knowledges. They have declared that there are earths inhabited by men, not only in this solar system, but also out of it in the starry heaven, to an immense number. These spirits are from the planet Mercury.

JUPITER

... no one ever covets the goods of another; and that it never enters into their minds to desire the possessions of another, still less to obtain them fraudulently, and least of all to break in and plunder. This they consider as a crime against human nature, and regard it as horrible. When I would have told them that on this earth there are wars, depredations, and murders, they then turned away, and were unwilling to hear.

SATURN

They are little solicitous about food and raiment, they feed on the fruits and legumes their earth produces; and they are clothed slightly, being encompassed with a coarse skin or coat ... Moreover, all on that earth know that they will live after death; and that on this account also they make light of their bodies, only so far as regards that life, which they say is to remain and serve the Lord. It is for this reason likewise that they do not bury the bodies of the dead, but cast them forth, and cover them with branches of forest trees.

VENUS

... there are two kinds of men, of dispositions opposite to each other; the first mild and humane, the second savage and almost like wild beasts.

CRAZY STAR:
Americans in India in the Late 18th Century

Most Americans who went to India right before and just after the Revolution were in one way or another in the employ of the EIC. There weren't a lot of job opportunities otherwise. In order to protect the Company's monopoly on trade with the Far East, colonists were forbidden by English law to trade directly with India (although I found a few hints that Americans were doing under-the-counter deals in India with ships flying European flags). But once we gained independence from Britain, it took us about 5 minutes–seriously, less than a month–for our first merchant ship to make waves. On February 22, 1784, the aptly named *Empress of China* (captained by John Green) sailed from New York bound for China. It was a kind of test run, to see if we could feasibly do business in the Far East to extricate ourselves from economic dependence of the 800-pound gorilla, the EIC.

A few Americans actually traveled to India in the late 18th century. One of the earliest names I unearthed was Boston-born David Ochterlony, who in 1777 enlisted as a cadet in the army of the British East India Company (EIC). He distinguished himself in a number of battles and quickly moved up through the ranks, finally ending up as the "resident" or administrative chief of Delhi in 1816. Outwardly he was a hard-working Company man, but in private Ochterlony "went native": he dressed in Indian clothes, smoked a hookah, and each evening went out for a ride on his elephant–trailed by his 13 "wives," each perched on her own pachyderm. It's no wonder he earned the nickname *Loony Akhtar*, or "Crazy Star."

Then there was Massachusetts native John Parker Boyd, who took a slightly different route. In 1786, he packed off to India and set up shop as a soldier of fortune. With English sponsorship, he organized a small army of mercenaries that found plenty of work in the endless dust-ups between Indian rulers. Parker sold his "business" in 1806, returned to the US and joined the regular army as a colonel. In 1811, he saw action under General WH Harrison at the famous battle of Tippecanoe, was promoted to brigadier general in 1812, and eventually was appointed naval officer for the port of Boston, a post he held until his death.

But my favorite early-American-in-India story involves New Yorker William Duane, who trained as a printer in Ireland and went to Calcutta in 1787 to work in the EIC's Revenue Department. In 1791 he began publishing a newspaper, *The Indian World*. Much to the chagrin of his employers, Duane's editorial policy bluntly declared that "all subjects whatever" were fair game for discussion. The EIC, which at that time was for all intents and purposes the government of India, wasn't too keen about the prospect of someone hanging out its dirty laundry for everyone to see. It kept a close eye on Duane, waiting for an excuse to pounce; finally in 1794, he printed something about a local Indian official the Company found shockingly "offensive and injurious." After some legal wrangling, Duane was arrested, his sizeable property confiscated without a trial, and summarily deported to merry old England.

Though he never got back to India and should rightfully pass beyond our radar, I have to finish Duane's story. You might think he learned a valuable lesson from his Indian experience, but no, he was a dyed-in-the-wool rabble-rouser who couldn't stay out of hot water. In 1798 Duane moved to Philadelphia where he signed on with the *Aurora General Advertiser*, run by Benjamin

Franklin Bache, old Ben Franklin's favorite grandson. Though it was indeed chock-full of advertising, the *Aurora* was also one of the most important US political journals of the 1790s. Bache, nicknamed "Lightening Rod Junior," was a militant anti-Federalist who had absolutely nothing nice to say about either of our first two presidents, George Washington and John Adams. His attacks on the latter, who was notoriously foul-tempered, got him arrested for sedition, but he died of yellow fever before he was brought to trial.

The paper passed to Duane–apparently he inherited the business after marrying Bache's widow–and he didn't miss a beat. He continued the print assault on Adams, first accusing him of being a British puppet, then trying to rig the 1800 presidential election. In the proud tradition of his late boss, Duane was also charged with sedition by making "false, scandalous, defamatory, and malicious assertions," and hauled in to face the government's music. The President of the Senate, the Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson, was nice enough to let his political-party mate and editorial mouthpiece Duane go see his lawyer. Whereupon Duane skipped town and hid out until pardoned by the new president, the aforementioned Jefferson.

HENRY PICKERING WANTS A SANSKRIT BIBLE:
American Trade with India (1785)

Colonial America was forbidden by English law to trade directly with India. But once we gained our independence, it didn't take American merchants long to set off for India. In March 1784, just six months after the Treaty of Paris ended the Revolutionary War, the *United States* sailed out of Philadelphia with the *Star Trek*-like directive to "explore the advantages of oriental commerce." Though originally bound for China, the ship changed course and, and after nine months and a day at sea (with stops at the Madeira Islands and Sumatra), dropped anchor in the Bay of Bengal, the first American ship to reach India. The crew stayed six weeks in the French colony of Pondicherry, hosted by its commandant, the Marquis de Bussy, much to the annoyance of their English next-door neighbors.

The return trip was a disaster: the crew ran out of drinking water and many of them died of scurvy. Limping into English-held Barbados for succor, the governor gave the unwelcome Americans 48 hours to get out of town. After 15 months, the *United States* returned to Philadelphia, and despite the voyage's modest financial success the American rush to Indian trade was on. By the end of the eighteenth century we were one of India's biggest trading partners.

Doing business in India was definitely risky, not only for the investors, but also for the sailors. American merchants weren't able to track the rise and fall of Indian markets, so ships' captains and business representatives (called supercargoes) were allowed wide latitude on what to buy and sell, and for how much. American ships were attacked by pirates and seized by European powers like England and France. Sailors, like those on the *United States*, left their families for a year or more at a time, or left and never returned at all, dead from some strange tropical disease, at the hand of some unfriendly native, or scurvy.

But the promise of wealth beckoned to American businessmen. Salem resident and shipowner Elias Hasket Derby

> dying in 1799, bequeathed an estate of a million and a half dollars to his sons. Israel Thorndike ... and Captain Simon Forrester, who came to Salem a poor Irish lad, each left about the same sum. "Billy" Gray ... was reputed to be worth three million dollars, and known to be the greatest individual shipowner in the United States.

And it wasn't just rich merchants who tried their hand at Indian trade. Everyday folks launched small "private adventures." For instance, when the *Caravan* left Salem in 1812 for India (carrying our first Protestant missionaries)

> Captain Augustine Heard took two thousand silver dollars to invest for his father, the same for each brother, and from twenty to one hundred dollars for sundry maiden aunts and retired Ipswich sea-captains. Numerous friends requested him to purchase for their wives red carnelian necklaces, camel's-hair shawls, pieces of cobweb Muslim ... straw carpets, bed coverings, and pots of preserved ginger.

> Henry Pickering wanted a Sanskrit bible, and three children gave him a dollar each to invest in Calcutta.

It's said that the "bible" Pickering received was a copy of the first English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, made in 1785.

A "WAISTCOAT MADE OF THE INTESTINES OF THE SEA LION"

Salem ships brought back not only silk and cotton, indigo, herbs, spices, and tea, and diamonds, but what were called "curiosities" as well, though we'd probably call them souvenirs. In 1799, a group of Salem sea captains and supercargoes, all Far East veterans, formed the East India Marine Society. Its threefold purpose was to gather navigation information, to financially "assist the widows and children of deceased members," and to establish a museum where these curiosities from the ends of the Earth could be displayed for the entertainment and edification of the landlubbing public. Captain Jonathan Carnes, returning from his second pepper voyage to Sumatra, donated the first items: an elephant's tooth, a two-mouthed Batta pipe, and a rhinoceros-horn goblet.

Over the next 20 years the museum accumulated around 2,000 objects, including a "waistcoat made of the intestines of the Sea Lion," a "Malay passport, written on a Palm leaf," a "Model of a Dog, made of shells, by Miss Bell, of Nantucket, when only 6 years old," and "Three thousand yards [more than a mile-and-a-half] of human hair, braided." Salem native Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose father was a member of the society, satirized its bizarre collection in an 1841 story, titled "Avirtuoso's Collection," about a museum that housed Nero's fiddle, Pandora's box and the wolf that ate Little Red Riding Hood.

SEE THE ELEPHANT:
The First Elephant in America (1796)

Touring exhibitions of exotic animals were a popular form of entertainment in the American colonies of the eighteenth century. The first lion arrived here in 1716, the first polar bear in 1733, the first camel in 1740. But the biggest show, so to speak, was yet to come.

On April 18, 1796, the *New York Argus* announced that the ship *America*, recently arrived in New York harbor has "brought home an elephant, from Bengal, in perfect health. It is the first ever seen in America, and is a very great curiosity. It is a female, two years old, and of the species that grows to an enormous size." The *America*'s master, Salem native Jacob Crowninshield (1770-1808), bought her in Calcutta for $450, expecting to sell her back in the colonies for a tidy profit. Crowninshield (later appointed Secretary of the Navy by Thomas Jefferson) could both laugh and brag about his elephantine venture. He wrote to one of his brothers:

> I suppose you will laugh ... but I do not mind that, [I] will turn [an] elephant driver. If it [i.e., his scheme] succeeds I ought to have the whole credit and honor too. Of course, you know it will be a great thing to carry the first elephant to America.

We can only imagine the challenges involved in carrying a six-foot tall elephant on a four-month, 13,000-mile sea voyage in an eighteenth-century sailing ship. Water, for example, was in short supply, so the elephant acquired a taste for dark beer, and reportedly learned how to uncork bottles with her trunk. Within a week of arriving, Crowninshield was exhibiting his elephant in lower Manhattan, at the corner of Beaver Street and Broadway near the Bull's Head Tavern, a favorite hang-out with sailors. The *Argus* noted that, in addition to imbibing "wine and spiritous liquors," the elephant "eats thirty pounds of rice besides hay and straw ... and every kind of vegetable."

Crowninshield didn't keep the unfortunate creature for long. A Mr. Owen, who presumably saw a gold mine rather than an elephant, bought her for $10,000 which, according to one estimate is the equivalent of $200,000 today. Needless to say, Crowninshield profit was considerably more than just "tidy." By August the elephant was on her way south for shows in Baltimore and Charleston, admission 50¢. Come November she was on display in Philadelphia from "eight in the morning until sundown," admission now only 25¢. However much we might sympathize with her captivity, she at least seems to have thrived after a fashion. After a year in the colonies the *Boston Gazette* reported that "she has grown considerably since her arrival." In July Boston's *Columbian Centinel* breathlessly trumpeted that:

> The elephant is just arrived in town and may be seen at Mr. Valentine's, Market Square ... The greatest natural curiosity ever presented to the public. He so far surpassed all description that has ever been given him that we shall not attempt it here. Admittance half a dollar.

While the elephant (who repeatedly is referred to as "he" in the popular press) may have "surpassed all description," it appear that not many Bostonians were willing to cough up 50¢ for a peek. A few days later, Mr Owen halved the ticket price. Over the next two decades the elephant continued to tour up and down the Atlantic Coast, drawing thousands of spectators, including President John Adams. A marvel to one and all, as early as 1835 when someone said they had "seen the elephant," he meant he had "seen everything there is to see."

THE INSTITUTIONS OF MOSES AND THE HINDOOS:
Joseph Priestly and the Beginning of Scholarly Comparative Religion (1799)

Over the last 15 years of the 18th century, the translation of Sanskrit texts into English, German, and French, picked up a head of steam. By the middle of the 19th century many significant Hindu texts had been rendered into at least one of these languages, including: the *Hitopadesha* ("The Book of Wise Counsel," a collection of fables), *Shakuntala* (or *Abhijnana-shakuntalam*, "The Recognition of Shakuntala," the first Indian drama translated into a European language), the *Institutes of Hindu Law, or Ordinances of Manu*, several of the Upanishads, the *Samkhya Karika* ("Verses on Enumeration," the oldest text on Samkhya), the *Vishnu* and *Bhagavata Puranas*, and sections of Hinduism's holiest book, the *Rig Veda*.

A number of European writers and intellectuals were profoundly affected by these translations. Soon after the first translation of the Upanishads appeared in 1801, (See Sidelight) the influential German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer was knocked over by what he called this "incomparable book":

> From every sentence [Schopenhauer wrote] deep, original, and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit....In the whole world there is no study, except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Oupnekhat. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death!

It's reported that Schopenhauer kept an open copy on a table near his bed, and would devotedly read a few passages each night before retiring. So inspired was he that he supposedly named one of his dogs Atman, the Sanskrit word for the Self.

But one unintended side effect of these translations, and the new Eastern religion they exposed to the West, was that they also provided ammunition to Age-of-Reason anti-religionists, an assortment of Deists, agnostics and their fellow travelers, the much reviled atheists. These folks gleefully latched onto Hinduism, which they held up as a shining example of a faith that was older, purer, and closer to the divine source than any form of that bane of Western civilization, Christianity.

Not surprisingly Christians of all stripes were outraged by these attacks and vociferously defended their beliefs. One especially notable response came from Joseph Priestley, an expatriate Englishman living in what was then the wilds of western Pennsylvania.

Priestley is usually remembered as one of the premier English scientists of the 18th century. His experiments with gases were especially significant. He's commonly credited with the discovery of oxygen, though that's not quite accurate: what he did was to *isolate* oxygen, which he called "dephlogisticated air," from "common air." But he did discover "nitrous air"–nitrous oxide, popularly known as "laughing gas"–which in the nineteenth century was used as an anesthetic by dentists and doctors. And he also invented a way to inject "heavy air"–we call it carbon dioxide–into water, thus creating the first soda pop.

But science was actually Priestley's avocation, he had no formal scientific training. In his day job, he was a Unitarian minister with a sweet tooth for radical politics and social reform. Because of his unorthodox, even subversive ideas and pugnacious style, he was often in hot water with the authorities, both of this world and the next. One of his many books on theology, *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (1782), attacked key church doctrines, among them the virgin birth of Jesus and the three-fold nature of God. Though hailed by "freethinkers" and deists (like American Thomas Jefferson), the book was predictably vilified in pulpits across England, and finally burned as heretical in–that year again–1785.

In the political arena, Priestley vociferously supported many hot-button issues of the day. For example, he championed greater civil liberties, even for far-off American colonists, though surprisingly he opposed England's social safety net, called the Poor Laws, sternly reasoning that hunger provided the indigent a necessary impetus for self-improvement. As a result, he earned the enmity of both the government and average citizens, who emphasized their displeasure by doing to his effigy what the Church did to his book.

But his defense of the French Revolution in 1791 was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back. Priestley optimistically wrote that it marked the first step toward an era of "universal peace and goodwill among all nations," when kings would be "servants of the people and accountable to them." Lambasted and lampooned in the press, and already branded an atheist by some, he was now accused of fomenting sedition. One night, an angry Church-and-King mob, possibly fueled by drink, torched his house in Birmingham, reducing everything, including his laboratory and scientific papers, his library, his hand-written sermons, diaries, and letters to a pile of ashes. Three years later at the age of 61, realizing his future in England was bleak at best, Priestley emigrated to the US, finally settling in rural Pennsylvania where he spent the last decade of his life.

Considering what he'd been through and his advanced age, you might think he'd want to avoid any more conflict. But he seemed to attract controversy like a magnet attracts iron. His outspoken Unitarianism antagonized his conservative, Presbyterian country neighbors, who he unkindly portrayed as swinging between "extremes of infidelity and bigoted orthodoxy." His politics too rubbed some high-ranking officials in President John Adams'administration the wrong way, and in 1798 he was accused once again (though wrongly) of sedition and nearly deported.

Priestley was a enormously disturbed by the anti-Christian diatribes of the Deists and their ilk. At first glance, he doesn't strike you as the ideal defender of the Christian faith: In several of his earlier theological books, he went toe-to-toe with cherished church doctrines, but always as a loyal Christian repelled by what he saw as dangerous "corruptions" of the original teaching. But in 1799 he mounted a rousing defense of Christianity, at least his Unitarian version of it, when he published *A Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with Those of the Hindoos and Other Ancient Nations*.

Though his mind was already made up about Christianity's superiority over any other religion, on the plus side Priestley realized he needed to study his adversary before joining the fray. So he

launched himself on an exhaustive study of available reference materials on India and Hinduism–available that is in rural, eighteenth-century Pennsylvania.

Considering the built-in limitations of his time and place, the bibliography at the front of the *Institutions* is quite impressive. Priestley read several first-hand narratives of English travelers to India: *A New Account of the East Indies* (1727) by sea captain named Alexander Hamilton, who made three trips to India in 1707, 1711 and 1719; *Sketches Chiefly Relating to the History, Religion, Learning and Manners of the Hindoos* (1792) by Quintin Crauford, a former EIC employee who made a large fortune in India; and *A Journey Over Land to India* (1796) by another sea captain, Donald Campbell, who was in India in the late 1780s. He also read about seven or eight "studies" of Asian culture in general or Indian culture in particular.

A few of these books have interesting stories in themselves, like *The Agreement of the Customs of the East-Indians, with Those of the Jews, and Other Ancient People (Conformite des coutumes des Indiens orientaux, avec celles des Juifs & des autres peuples de l'antiquite*), published in 1705. Written by a Frenchman named de la Crequiniere, the real story behind this book is that of its English translator, John Toland, who died in 1721. I'm not sure if Priestley knew who this man was, but their lives had a couple of curious parallels. Born in 1670 to a Catholic family in Ireland, Toland converted to Protestantism at 16. At 26 he published his first and most notorious book, *Christianity Not Mysterious*, prudently attributed to that prolific author of controversial positions, Anonymous. In it, he proposed that all the teachings of Christianity are ultimately amenable to human reason, that God would never expect us to believe in anything deemed "mysterious." The orthodox clergy immediately jumped all over this position, taking it as a subtle refutation of the "mystery" of the Trinity. This is much like what would dump our Unitarian friend in hot water 90 years later, when he called the doctrine of the Trinity a "corruption." Toland's book was an immediate best seller, apparently in large part because of the negative publicly given it by defenders of the faith. The Irish parliament branded it heretical, and ordered it publicly toasted–the same fate of Priestley's *Corruptions*–and its author arrested.

When his cover was blown, Toland quickly relocated to London, but his damaged reputation couldn't be repaired. Someone said of him, "This poor man, by his imprudent conduct, has raised against himself so universal a commotion that it was dangerous to be known to have spoken with him even once." Ironically he was the first person ever labeled a "freethinker," and so the spiritual "godfather" of many of those contentious children who were motivating Priestley to write the *Institutions*. It's likely though that Priestley would have agreed with one of Toland's parting shots: "It is better to never command anyone," he wrote in his last book, published in 1720 a year or so before his death, "than to obey someone."

Priestley got his visual information about India from *The Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World* (1722,1728). This nine-volume encyclopedia was illustrated by Frenchman Bernard Picart, one of the most famous engravers of his time. His drawings had an enormous influence on the way eighteenth-century Europeans pictured the religious life of non-Europeans. Unfortunately, while he had access to some rare Indian paintings, Picart never actually went to India. So his drawings of the worshipers of "Ixora" (Ishvara or Shiva) and "Quenavadi" (Ganapati or Ganesha) seem straight out of some

alternative-universe fantasy, and surely left their audience wide-eyed with both wonder and horror.
There were also a couple of very odd birds in Priestley's library. One was titled *A Code of Gentoo Laws* (1777), "gentoo" here being a corruption of the Portuguese *gentio*, that is, a "gentile" or heathen, used to name the Hindus as opposed to the *moros* or "Moors," the Moslems. This book was commissioned in 1772 by the Governor of Bengal, our old friend Warren Hastings. *Gentoo* was an attempt by EIC officials to definitively codify what was, to them, the hodge-podge of local Hindu laws, the better to settle disputes in colonial courts–not incidentally, it's been asserted, to their own advantage. Compiled in Sanskrit by 11 hired Brahmins, it was first translated into Persian and then into English by a young EIC employee named Nathaniel Halhed, the author of the Bengali grammar printed by Charles Wilkins.

But if nothing else Priestly was resilient and dedicated. On the last day of his life he was still making corrections to pamphlets he was writing. It's reported that when he was satisfied with the work at hand, he said to his assistant, "That is right, I have done," and a half-hour later was both figuratively and literally "done."

His published works, spread out across 40-odd years, run to over 150 books and pamphlets on an amazingly wide range of subjects, not only government and theology, but also education and grammar, philosophy, chemistry and electricity, perspective and light ... and what today is called comparative religion.

THE MISSIONARY POSITION:
Protestant Missionaries Go to India to Save Heathen Souls (1812)

A little more than a hundred years after the German Pietists reached Danish India, the first American Protestants joined the missionary fray. They were bit players in a country-wide religious revival, now known as the Second Great Awakening, that began in the late 1790s.

A central theme of this Awakening was called "disinterested benevolence," developed by a Congregationalist minister named Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803). Hopkins believed that the root of all sin is self-love; so he taught that to eradicate sin from our lives we should transform self-love into unconditional love for others. We must act, in other words, for the welfare of our neighbors without concern for our own reward or salvation. This idea spurred a period of fervent social activism and world-wide missionary activity intent on Christianizing heathens everywhere, whether native or foreign.

Our American Protestants' journey began, oddly enough, in a haystack one rainy afternoon in 1806 in western Massachusetts. That's where five male students from Williams College took shelter from the storm and, during an impromptu prayer session, were inspired to dedicate the rest of their lives to the missionary cause. Four years later, after many trials and tribulations, the Haystack Prayer participants were instrumental in organizing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) for the "purpose of devising ways and means, and adopting and prosecuting measures, for promoting the spread of the gospel in Heathen lands."

In 1812, sponsored by the ABCFM, five eager, newly-minted reverends were selected to carry the Good News to the "poor heathen"of India. Since the journey was perilous with storms and pirates, the pioneering party was divided onto two ships heading for Calcutta. Adironam Judson and Samuel Newell would sail with their wives from Salem on the *Caravan*; Samuel Nott and his wife, along with Luther Rice and Gordon Hall, both single, would leave nine days later from Philadelphia on the *Harmony*. While they all reached India safely, their paths after that proved rocky at best, fatal at worst.

Gordon Hall, one of the Haystack men, was the first American missionary in Bombay. In his 12 years there, he established over 20 public schools and produced a Marathi translation of the New Testament. Hall married an English woman and they had two sons, but by the mid-1820s all four were in poor health. So while Hall stayed behind in India to do his "Master's work," his wife and kids sailed for the US for some R & R. Unhappily the older brother died along the way, and not long after, in 1826, Hall died of cholera at the age of 42. His motto was the benevolently indifferent "Duty is ours, consequences God's."

Samuel and Harriet Newell were denied permission by the EIC to settle in India–America and England were at each other's throats again and John Company was in no mood to accommodate American preachers. So they wound up in Mauritius (then known as the Isle of France) where, only a few months after leaving the US, Harriet Newell died at the age of 19, five days after the death of her newborn daughter. Samuel was devastated, as is plain in this heart-breaking letter he wrote to Harriet's parents:

> Come, then, let us mingle our grief and weep together, for she was dear to us both; and now she is gone. Yes, Harriet, your lovely daughter, is gone, and you will see her face no more! My own Harriet–the wife of my youth, and the desire of my eyes, has bid me a last farewell, and left me to mourn and weep alone. Yes, she is gone. I wiped the cold sweat of death from her pale face while we traveled together, down to the entrance of the dark valley. There she passed through and took her upward flight, and ascended to the mansions of the blessed, but I sit weeping here.

Two years after Harriet's death, Newell published her memoirs, *Life and Writings of Mrs. Harriet Newell*, which went through several editions. In 1818, he and Hall authored a pamphlet, *The Conversion of the World, or the Claims of Six Hundred Millions and the Ability and Duty of the Churches Respecting Them*, in which they supported a then-popular belief that the entire world could be Christianized within one generation. They urged churches to "send forth preachers in sufficient numbers to furnish the means of instruction and salvation to the whole world." Newell survived his wife by nine years, succumbing to cholera in Bombay in 1821. His epitaph in part reads:

> He labored with unyielding energy, but without ostentation. All his aims and efforts were subordinated to the sense of Christian duty, and pervaded by habitual piety. In his early removal the church lost a faithful servant, the world a wholehearted philanthropist, a wide circle of friends their hope and joy, and heaven gained a jewel such as earth does not often present to adorn the holy city.

A funny thing happened to the Judsons on their way to India. Like the other members of their party, they were Congregationalists, who practiced (and still do) infant baptism. As you may know, this is different from the Baptists, who limit baptism to adults–believing only adults can understand the import of the sacrament–and baptize not just by sprinkling a few drops of water, but by dunking the whole person in water. The Judsons realized that, because English Baptists were already well established in India, they'd have to convincingly explain and justify to prospective Christians the desirability of Congregationalist baptism over Baptist baptism. So they spent their four months at sea studying what the scriptures had to say about baptism. And lo and behold, after some intense soul-searching, both came to the uncomfortable but unavoidable conclusion that the Baptists were right about baptism, the Congregationalists were wrong.

And so it came to pass that the Judsons, who started their trip as perfectly satisfied Congregationalists, converted into rather apologetic though committed Baptists. While we may shrug at the Judsons' change of heart over baptism, they felt their world had been flipped upside down. Judson's wife Ann wrote to a friend that the couple became Baptists "not because we wished to be, but because truth compelled us to be ... We anticipate the loss of reputation, and of the affection and esteem of many of our American friends," an expectation which proved prescient.

When the Judsons arrived in Calcutta, they quickly cut themselves loose from the Congregationalists and were just as quickly welcomed into the Baptist fold. Unfortunately they weren't equally welcomed in India. Once more the EIC reared its ugly head and kicked the

Judsons out. They eventually landed on their feet in Burma (nowadays known as Myanmar). Adoniram spent most of the next 37 years there, including nearly 18 months between 1824 and 1825 in a brutal Burmese “Death Prison” ... where, malnourished and tortured, he worked surreptitiously on a Burmese translation of the New Testament. Ann, the first American woman to preach in a foreign country, died in 1826 (the same year as Gordon Hall), age 37. Judson died at sea in 1850 at the age of 62.

THE FROZEN-WATER TRADE:
Frederic Tudor, the Ice King

Frederic Tudor (1783-1864) was the son of a prominent, well-to-do Boston lawyer, his older brother William was a co-founder of the *North American Review* and the Boston Atheneum, today one of the oldest libraries and museums in the US. Frederic, interested in business from an early age, dropped out of school at 13 and skipped a Harvard education to focus on making piles of money. Around the age of 21, he came up with a novel idea he figured would help him do just that–ship ice to the tropics. Not surprisingly, everybody thought he was nuts.

Despite the ridicule Tudor went ahead with his plan, and the Tudor Ice Company was born. He soon discovered there were a number of problems to be solved in the ice business, some that were obvious, others that weren't. First of all he had to get permission to harvest the ice from New England ponds (including Walden of Thoreau fame). Then there was the nitty-gritty problem of cutting the ice itself, which at the time he started was done by hand with saws, which limited production and made the ice pricey. The solution arrived in the mid-1820s with the invention of the horse-powered "ice plow." In one fell swoop, Tudor tripled his production, lowered his prices to his customers, and still dramatically increased his revenues.

Next Tudor had to figure out how to store the ice in insulated ice houses before loading it onto ships. Transporting the ice by sea was a huge can of worms. Tudor had to reassure ships' captains worried that the melting ice wouldn't dampen other cargo in their holds or even sink their ships. Ships had to be specially insulated with double hulls, and the ice packed in some effective insulating material. Tudor experimented with rice, wheat chaff, hay, bark, and coal dust, but eventually discovered that pine sawdust is best. Finally he had to help potential consumers realize how badly they needed ice. So he did what many modern start-up businesses do when they want to create a need nobody knows they have: Tudor sold his ice cheaply or just gave it away, and not just to wealthy customers. When his first load of ice went out to Rio de Janeiro, he told his agent:

> If you can make a commencement for introducing the habit of cold drinks at the same price as warm at the ordinary drinking places ... even if you give the ice ... you will do well. ... The shop frequented by the lowest people is the one to be chosen for this purpose."

Tudor's first shipment of 130 tons of ice left Boston in 1806 on a 1,500-mile voyage to Martinique in the West Indies. The *Boston Gazette*, reporting on this momentous event with its tongue wedged in its cheek, sincerely hoped that it wouldn't be a "slippery speculation." Unfortunately it was: much of the cargo melted on the three-week trip, and Tudor lost about $4,500. His Ice Company continued to flounder for the next 15 years, and Tudor even spent a few months of 1812 and again in 1813 in debtor's prison. But he stubbornly persisted, and his yearly exports gradually increased: in 1826 he was exporting 12,000 tons a year, three decades later 150,000 tons yearly.

In 1833 a fellow merchant proposed a bold plan: ship ice to India. Tudor was game. So in May of that year, the *Tuscany* left Boston with 180 tons of ice bound for Calcutta. As the ship

approached the city, a local newspaper reported on its progress. Believing it impossible for ice to survive a four-month, 16,000-mile voyage, the paper suggested that the whole thing was a bad American joke:

> The Yankees are so inventive, and so fond of a joke at the expense of the old country [i.e., England], that we had some misgivings about the reality of brother Jonathan's manifest, and suspected him to be coolly indicting a hoax upon the wonder-loving daughters of Britain.

But miraculously two-thirds of the shipment remained, and ice became a big hit not only in Calcutta but Madras and Bombay as well. Over the next 20 years, India was Tudor's most lucrative market.

“YOU'VE GOT TO BE VERY CAREFUL IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU’RE GOING, BECAUSE YOU MIGHT NOT GET THERE”: Lawrence Peter “Yogi” Berra

Who would you say is the most famous Yogi in US history? Name anyone you like, but I’ll bet no one could top Lawrence Peter Berra (b. 1925), better known as Yogi. Yes, I know, Berra isn’t a *real* Yogi. His claim to fame is his career as the New York Yankees’ catcher and, later in his career, sometime outfielder from 1946 to 1963, and his three American League Most Valuable Player Awards. But still ... say the word “Yogi” and most Americans, especially baseball fans, will respond “Berra.”

The story about how he got this nickname is somewhat foggy, as you might expect with an incident that took place more than 60 years ago. It’s generally agreed that Larry (whose own family called him “Lawdie”) was christened Yogi as a teenager by friend and/or American Legion teammate Bobby Hofman (later a light-hitting infielder for the New York Giants). Hofman saw a movie (or movie clip) about an Indian holy man (Yogi) and/or snake charmer who resembled/walked like/sat like Larry (who liked to sit on the ground while waiting to bat with crossed arms and legs in a Yoga-like position). The nickname did/didn’t catch on at first (Berra was in some accounts known as “Larry” during his early years with the Yankees, the “Yogi” tag only becoming popular later on as his playing career blossomed).

Legend has it that another famous American Yogi, Yogi Bear, was named after Berra, though he talked and acted more like *The Honeymooners*’ Art Carney/Ed Norton (Jackie Gleason/Ralph Kramden was the model for another popular cartoon character, Fred Flintstone). Berra reportedly didn’t much care for the honor, even though the ursine Yogi was, by his own admission, “smarter than the average bear.”

Yogi Bear in turn gave his name to the Yogi Rock. Never heard of it? I’m not surprised, since it’s on Mars. In 1997, the Mars Pathfinder rover, Sojourner, bumped into it and took its picture. An imaginative scientist thought it looked like the head of a bear, and dubbed it accordingly. That’s not all: by an odd coincidence, an analysis of the Yogi Rock shows its composition is similar to rocks found near the Yogi Berra Stadium on the campus of Montclair State University in New Jersey. And don’t worry, the Yogi Rock isn’t up there on Mars hunting for “pick-a-nick baskets” all by itself: the rover also found and photographed a BooBoo Rock.