What Does It Mean To Be Great?:
India's Century-Long Quest to Find Its Place in the International System

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Abstract
As its economic power, military strength and cultural influence expands, India draws ever closer to becoming a leading player in world politics. Yet relatively little is known about what Indians take to be the nature of international politics, and correspondingly, how their power and influence should be used. A survey of Indian political thought reveals sharp disagreements. I focus in particular on the contrast between the ideas of Tagore on the one hand and Aurobindo and Savarkar on the other. At the core of the dispute, I shall argue, is over the primacy of the political, i.e. whether social or political interests should set the agenda for world politics.

About the Speaker
Rahul Sagar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Politics at Princeton University. His primary research interests are the field of political theory and include topics in ancient and modern political theory including executive power, moderation, tyranny, and political realism. He is also deeply interested in the politics and society of India, especially twentieth century Indian political thought. His first book, Secrets and Leaks: The Dilemma of State Secrecy will be published by Princeton University Press in 2013. He has recently started work on a second book, co-authored with Devesh Kapur, entitled Between Desire and Destiny: India's Place in the World Order, which examines Indian attitudes and ideas about India's role in international relations. His work has been published in a number of edited volumes and journals including the Journal of Political Philosophy, The Journal of Politics, International Affairs, and Polity. He has a PhD in Government from Harvard University (2007) and a BA in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics from Balliol College, University of Oxford (2000).

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