



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

6th June 2018

Endorsement of the South Asia Research and Information Institute (SARII)

Since 2006, when it was founded, SARII has organized and hosted a series of most interesting and productive conferences and seminars on a range of topics each of which explored a range of important topics related to the cultural and religious history of South Asia that, as the same, were contextually linked to questions of contemporary significance. These day-long events have addressed such issues as religious pluralism in South India and the interplay of various institutions with reference to how cultures and religions of India, as manifest in universities and temples, influence and are influenced by political processes, whether local, national, or international.

Truly memorable seminars sponsored by SARII that have made important contributions to our knowledge addressed such themes as “The Bhakti Movement”, “Alternative Rāmāyanas”, “Muslim Cultures, Cities, Courts, and Saints”, “Christianity in South India,” and “Transformations of Temples in South India.” Among many distinguished scholars who have made contributions are such renowned figures as Indira Viswanathan Peterson, Velcheru Narayana Rao, Paul Richman, Richard Eaton, Barbara Daly Metcalf, Francis X. Clooney, Rupa Viswanathan, Sanal Mohan, and Vasudha Narayanan. All of these events occurred under the able leadership and direction of S. Palaniappan, founder of SARII, and Steven Lindquist of Southern Methodist University, Dallas Texas. It was my honour, in this connection, to participate in the 2013 seminar on “Conversion, Caste, and Coexistence: Christianity in South India”. Research papers at this event were truly of path-breaking originality, as also were the critical discussions that these inspired.

The significance of SARII lies in its various inter-disciplinary research efforts, and also in various institutional collaborations that have grown around it, not only in this country but also in India. At its core is an approach to issues in the socio-cultural-religious history South Asia that is remarkably interdisciplinary while also relevant to contemporary developments and current affairs. Also important to SARII’s significance is its capacity to draw upon and engage leading senior scholars while, at the same, time serving as a magnet for the development of junior scholars.

Such being the case, I strongly support efforts to raise funds sufficient to provide for a permanent endowment sufficient to enable SARII to continue its goals and programs. In making this recommendation, it is especially important to emphasize the extreme complexity of the various multicultural contexts which are addressed when dealing with the history of peoples of South Asia.

It has been my privilege to work in the socio-political and socio-cultural-religious history of South Asia for over sixty years. Born and reared in India, trained in America and Britain (History Ph.D.,

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London [SOAS], 1961), I joined Wisconsin's History Department in 1962; founded SAMP (South Asia Microfilm Project) in 1963: served as Chair, Department of South Asian Studies and Director of South Asia Studies Center from 1970 to 1973; founded annual Wisconsin Conference on South Asian Studies in 1972, an international event that attracts over five-hundred participants; as directed a Pew Research Advancement Project (1996-1999). As visiting fellow of All Soul's, I delivered the Radhakrishnan Memorial Lectures at Oxford University for 1998: "India's Raj: Indigenous Ingredients in the Construction of the Imperial System" and Murdoch University Lectures for 2009: "History of Christianities in Asia".

My publications have included:

- *Christianity in India: Beginnings to the Present* (OUP, 2008).
- *Pandita Ramabai's America: A Translation from Marathi of her "Conditions of Life in the United States, 1889"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), with Philip Engblom & Shitija Gomes.
- *Tirunelveli's Evangelical Christians: Two Centuries of Family Vamsâvali Traditions* (Bangalore: SAIACS, 2003), with D. & S Packiamuthu and Chris Barrigar.
- *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500* (London: RoutledgeCurzon; and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
- *Christians, Cultural Interactions and India's Religious Traditions* (London: RoutledgeCurzon; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), with Judith M. Brown.
- *History and Belief: The Foundations of Historical Understanding* (Eerdmans, 1996).
- *Delhi through the Ages* (New Delhi, Oxford 1986, 1993).
- *Land Tenure and Peasant in South Asia* (Madison, New Delhi: 1977, 1981).
- *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History* (Madison 1969; New Delhi 1978).
- *Guntur District, 1788-1848: A History of Local Influence and Central Authority* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

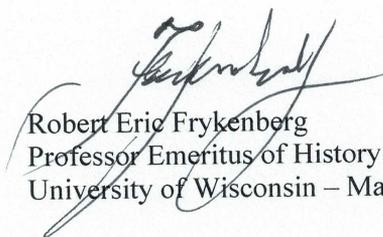
Among over sixty articles, chapters, and essays are items pertaining to the history of Christianity, Hinduism and various on socio-political and socio-religious history of India, such as:

- "On Roads and Riots in Tinnevely: Radical Change and Ideology in Madras Presidency during the 19th Century," *South Asia*, IV, 2 (December, 1982), 34-52.
- "Modern Education in South India, 1784-1854: Its Roots and Its Role as a Vehicle of Integration under Company Raj", *The American Historical Review* 91, 1 (February, 1986), 37-65.
- "The Concept of 'Majority' as a Devilish Force in the Politics of Modern India," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, XXV: 3 (November, 1987), 267-274.
- "The Emergence of Modern 'Hinduism' As a Concept and As an Institution: A Reappraisal with Special Reference to South India," *Hinduism Reconsidered* (Heidelberg: 1989), 1-29, edited by Gunther Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke (reissued in New Delhi: Manohar Books, 1997), 82-107.
- "Constructions of Hinduism at the Nexus of History and Religion," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XXIII: 3 (Winter 1993), 523-550.
- "Hindu Fundamentalism and the Structural Stability of India," *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: 1993), 233-55; and "Fundamentalisms in South Asia: Ideologies and Institutions in Historical Perspective," *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago: 1994), 589-614, edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby.
- "Christian Missions and the Raj," *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), edited by Norman Etherington.

- “Christians and Religious Traditions under the Indian Empire, 1815-1914,’ *Cambridge History of Christianity*, Vol 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), edited by Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley.
- “The Sacred in Modern Hindu Politics: Historical Processes Underlying Hinduism and Hindutva,” *Hinduism in India: Vol. 2. Modern and Contemporary Movements* (Delhi, London, :Sage Publications, 2016), edited by Will Sweetman and Aditya Malik. (Series Editor, Geoffrey A. Oddie). 95-122.
- “Secularism, Statecraft and the State in India: An Historical and Interpretive Overview,” *In Quest of the Historian’s Craft: Essays in Honour of Professor B. B. Chaudhuri. Volume II: The Polity, Society, and Culture* (Delhi: Manohar, 1917 [ISBN: 978-93-5098-179-5], Part II, Ch. 19, pp. 515-41. Edited by Arun Bandopadhyay and Sanjukta Das Gupta.

This information is submitted to show how deeply I have involved myself in research and scholarship of direct relevance to the ongoing commitments and concerns of SARII.

Respectfully,



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