

Notes on contributors

Mikael Aktor is an Associate Professor in the Study of Religions at the Department of History, University of Southern Denmark. His previous studies have mainly been in the field of classical *dharmaśāstra* with a special focus on caste and rules of untouchability. His present research deals broadly with material religion and more specifically with the Śiva liṅga and other aniconic representations of Hindu gods and goddesses.

Mathieu Claveyrolas is an anthropologist at CNRS (Centre d'Études de l'Inde), Paris. His research deals primarily with the construction of religiosity. While his initial fieldwork focused on various temples in Banāras, in his ongoing work he studies Hinduism in Mauritius through the ethnography of temples, practices and individual life histories.

Vasudha Dalmia is Chandrika and Ranjan Tandon Professor of Hindu Studies at Yale University. She has researched and published widely on Hinduism, modern Hindi literature, and medieval Hindu religiosity. She has authored books on Bharatendu Harishchandra in Banāras, on European knowledge formation on India, and on the politics of modern Indian theatre. One of her current projects focuses on the waves of modernization in Hinduism from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

Irina Glushkova is a senior research scholar in the Center for Indian Studies, the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. Her fields of interest include Indian culture and history, the dynamics of cultural integration, and politics of identity. Her latest research deals with various forms of pilgrimage in Maharashtra. Her current work is related to ideas of spatial movement and power, and the culture of emotions.

Savitri Jalais is an architect who teaches at the School of Architecture, Paris-Belleville. Her fields of research include urban studies, water architecture and the correlation between built forms and landscapes. She is affiliated to the research lab l'IPRAUS (*Institut Parisien de Recherche: Architecture Urbanistique Société*).

Mark Katz has taught at the Department of Religious Studies, Karlstad University, Sweden. He has been engaged in Indological studies and research in Banāras and Uttar Pradesh since 1968. His research, including three award-winning documentary films distributed by the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin, focuses on the importance of inclusive traditions.

István Keul is Professor in the Study of Religions at the University of Bergen, Norway. His areas of research include various aspects of the history and sociology of South Asian religions. He is presently engaged in the study of complex rituals and in comparative work on modern religious movements in South and East Asia.

Mari Korpela is a post-doctoral research fellow in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities in the University of Tampere, Finland. Her PhD dissertation (2009) in social anthropology is an ethnographic research investigating Westerners in Banāras. She is currently conducting research on Western lifestyle migrant children and families in Goa, India.

Nita Kumar is a historian and anthropologist of urbanism, modernity, education, family, and culture. She holds the Brown Family Chair in Modern South Asian History at Claremont McKenna College, California. She has authored books on the artisans of Banaras, urban fieldwork, the history of education in Banāras, and South Asian women. She is currently completing a book titled 'An Indian Education for Indian Children: Managing a School in India.'

Hillary Rodrigues is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Lethbridge, Canada, where he has been honored with the Distinguished Teaching Medal. He has written monographs on Krishnamurti and goddess worship, and an introduction to Hinduism. He is the editor of the series *Studying Religions in Practice* (Routledge), designed specifically for undergraduates.

Reinhold Schein has taught German language and literature in colleges in Germany, at the University of Poona and at Banaras Hindu University. He translates contemporary fictional and non-fictional Indian literature from English and Hindi into German and offers regularly lectures on the cultural history of India at various institutions in Germany.

Rana P. B. Singh is Professor of Cultural Geography and Head of the Department of Geography at Banaras Hindu University. He has done extensive research in the Vārānasī region and has been involved in studying and promoting heritage planning and spiritual tourism for the last four decades. He has published numerous books on pilgrimage and the sacred geography of Banāras.

Travis L. Smith is an Assistant Professor at the University of Florida, Department of Religion. He is a pilgrim, student and ardent devotee of Vārānasī since his first trip in 1994. His main area of research is Sanskrit literature, with a focus on the Epics, Purāṇas and Tantras. His forthcoming book explores the literary construction of Vārānasī as a sacred place.

Heinz Werner Wessler is Visiting Professor of Indology at Uppsala University, Sweden. His main research interests are modern Hindi literature, classical North Indian Bhakti literature, modern religion, and society and politics in South Asia. He is presently conducting research projects on Hindi Dalit literature and Indian Jewish literature.

Annette Wilke is Professor for the Study of Religion and Head of the department at the University of Münster, Germany. Besides systematic studies in religion, her major fields of research are Hindu traditions (devotional, Tantric and Vedantic), goddess worship, and Tamil Hindu temples in Germany. Her current research includes the Sri Lankan diaspora, global Hinduism in the Chinmaya Mission, mysticism, religious imagination, and aesthetics of religions.

Paul Younger studied at Banaras Hindu University and Princeton University. Since 1964 he has taught at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, where he is now Professor Emeritus. Among his recent publications are monographs on temple traditions in Cidambaram, festivals in South India, and diaspora Hinduism. His current research interest is in the Hindu communities formed in Canada.

Xenia Zeiler is Assistant Professor for South Asian Studies at the University of Helsinki. Her research interests include Ethno-Indology, Hinduism in recent urban settings, and Hinduism and modern mass media. In her PhD dissertation she analysed the goddess Dhūmāvati's transformations from Sanskrit Tantric texts to contextual recent representations and ritual practices in Banāras. Her current research focuses on mediatization processes in recent Hinduism.

