



## NOTE ON THE AUTHORS

**Rajiv Gurung** is a PhD Scholar and a University Grants Commission-Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Economics at Sikkim University, India. His current research is concerned with Agricultural Economics. He has published articles in reputed journals.

**Vimal Khawas** is Associate Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University. He headed the department in 2018-20. He holds an MPlan (Urban and Regional Planning) from CEPT University, Ahmedabad, and PhD (Political Geography) from the Political Geography Division, Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament (CIPOD), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He specializes and works around issues of regional development & planning, disaster management, and environmental security. He is a founding member of the newly established Sikkim Central University and has significantly contributed towards its growth and development. His major edited books are: Sakarama Somayaji and Vimal Khawas, eds (2012), *Environment, Development and Social Change in the Himalayan Region* (New Delhi: Aakangsha Publication); and Bhaswati Das and Vimal Khawas, eds (2009), *Gender Issues in Development: Concerns for the 21st Century* (Jaipur: Rawat Publication). Some of his articles have been

published in the *Journal of Development Management and Communication*, *The Himalayan Miscellany*, and *Social Change*.

**Joanne Lin** is the Lead Researcher in Political-Security Affairs at the ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore since November 2021. She has previously served at the ASEAN Secretariat from 2015 to 2021, and was the Assistant Director and Head of External Relations Division under the ASEAN Political-Security Community Department. Joanne holds a Master of Political Science in Global Governance at the Graduate Institute of Peace Studies, Kyung Hee University in South Korea, and a Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) in Economics and Management at the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London. Her current research includes ASEAN institutions, ASEAN external relations, and political-security developments in ASEAN. She is one of the authors of the *State of Southeast Asia 2022 Survey Report*, and the production editor for *ASEAN Focus* (a biennial publication providing concise analyses and perspectives on ASEAN matters). She has written over 20 articles and commentaries for *ISEAS Perspective*, *Fulcrum* (analysis on Southeast Asia), and several regional news media.

**Harish C. Mehta** holds a PhD from McMaster University in Canada in the history of American foreign relations and Southeast Asia. He did his graduate studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the author of *Cambodia Silenced: The Press Under Six Regimes* (White Lotus, Bangkok and Cheney, 1997); *Warrior Prince: Norodom Ranariddh, Son of King Sihanouk of Cambodia* (Graham Brash, Singapore, 2001); *Strongman: The Extraordinary Life of Hun Sen* (Marshall Cavendish, Singapore, 2013); and *People's Diplomacy of Vietnam: Soft Power in the Resistance War, 1965-1972* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle

upon Tyne, 2019). His articles on Vietnamese diplomacy have appeared in the academic journals such as *International History Review*, *Diplomatic History*, *Peace and Change*, *The Historian*, and *History Compass*, and his review articles have appeared in H-Diplo. He has taught history at McMaster, the University of Toronto, and Trent University. He has twice won the Samuel Flagg Bemis research award from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

**Julie Banerjee Mehta** holds M.A. and PhD degrees in English Literature and South Asian Studies from the University of Toronto. She conceptualized and taught the Chancellor Emerita Vivienne Poy-endowed course on Asian Literatures and Cultures in Asia at the Department of English, University of Toronto. Her translation of Tagore's play *Dak Ghar/Post Office* was performed by the Pleiades Theatre, Toronto in 2010 to critical acclaim. She is the author of *Dance of Life: The Mythology, History, and Politics of Cambodian Culture*, and co-author of a biography of Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen. Her recent major publications are "Toronto's Multicultured Tongues: Stories of South Asian Cuisines," in *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History* (University of Toronto Press, 2012). Her other book chapters are published in *Narrating Race: Asia, (Trans)Nationalism, Social Change* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2011); and in *Writing Asia: The Literatures in Englishes, Volume 1: From the Inside* (Singapore: Ethos Books, 2007).

**Milan Narzary** grew up in Bongaigaon a small town in Assam. When the state got embroiled in violent uprisings, he went to a boarding school in Rajasthan. He then obtained a Bachelors' Degree in English Literature at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. He holds an M.A. in Comparative Literature from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He worked

for the Centre for Translation of Indian Literature, Jadavpur, as a Translator and Resource Person, translating Bodo short stories into English and Bengali. Recently, he completed a second Masters in Cognitive and Neural Sciences from University of Hyderabad. He has presented a research paper on a comparative study of indigenous communities in Canada (Inuit) and India (Bodo) at an International Conference at the Centre for Canadian Studies, Jadavpur. His research article, “An Aversion to ‘Savage’ Culture: Rectifying Popular Misinterpretations of the Bodoland Movement,” appeared in *Rising Asia Journal* (vol. 1, no. 1, January 2021). At present, he is working on his own short stories and preparing to enter a doctoral degree program.

**Vinod Kumar Pillai** is an independent scholar with interest in literary fiction, development studies and popular science. He regularly reviews books for *Rising Asia Journal*. He is a consultant trainer for over eight years, training employees in the banking and financial services sector. He delivers training, designs and develops training content and contributes as a domain expert in developing content for e-learning and bank manuals. He graduated in Agricultural Sciences, and worked for over thirty years in banking, specializing in industrial credit, training, behavioral science and counseling. Besides literary fiction, development studies, popular science and training, he also devotes time to cinema, jyotish, podcasting and stock photography. He is an occasional cook and lives in Hyderabad, India, with his wife and son.

**Kabindra Sharma** is a PhD Scholar in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management at Sikkim University, and holds an MPhil from the same department. At present, he is engaged as a Junior Project Fellow in a project funded by the National Mission on Himalayan Studies. He completed his postgraduate studies in

International Relations from Pondicherry University. Kabindra's research revolves around issues of security, development, and geopolitics of South Asia. His latest work includes a chapter titled "The Trajectory from Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council to Gorkhaland Territorial Administration," in an edited volume published by Routledge.

**Gurjit Singh** retired as the Indian ambassador to Germany. A 1980 batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service, he has served as ambassador to Indonesia, ASEAN, Timor-Leste, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. He is an Honorary Professor of International Relations Studies at the Indian Institute of Technology, Indore. He holds a Bachelors' degree in politics from St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, and a post-graduate degree from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Ambassador Singh has authored five books, *The Abalone Factor* on India-Japan business relations; *The Injera and the Paratha* on India and Ethiopia; *Masala Bumbu* and a comic book, *Travels through Time*, both on the India-Indonesia relationship; and *Opportunity Beckons: Adding Momentum to the Indo-German Partnership. The Harambee Factor* on India and Africa development cooperation was released recently. He is the Consulting Editor of *Rising Asia Journal* and a member of the Rising Asia Foundation's advisory board.

**Nicole Smith** completed her M.A. in Sociology with a double degree from Bielefeld University in Bielefeld, Germany, and Bologna University in Bologna, Italy in September 2021, and a B.A. from McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada in 2013. Her background is in mental health and addiction. She is interested primarily in interpersonal relationships as well as social inequality and social justice. She has written papers on migrant ethics of care in home healthcare,

consequences of misperceptions of social inequality, as well as the potential role of genetics in addressing educational inequality and pedagogical advancement. Her Master's thesis explored the use of trauma-informed care by social services assisting people experiencing homelessness during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the future she plans on pursuing her PhD potentially in Anthropology with a keen interest on executing an ethnography on culture-based interventions employed in addiction treatment for Indigenous populations in Canada.

**Toh Han Shih** holds a B.S. in Physics from the California Institute of Technology, and a doctorate in Physics from Oxford University. He also has a Master's in Southeast Asian Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and has completed a part-time Master's in Economics at Hong Kong University. Han Shih is a Singapore-born writer resident in Hong Kong with twenty years of experience reporting on business and economics related to China, including ten years as a reporter with the *South China Morning Post*. In December 2016, he published the book, *Is China an Empire?* From 2007 to 2008, he worked at Kroll, and in the late 1990s, he was a reporter at the *Business Times* in Singapore. He was also a senior correspondent of MLEX, a regulatory risk news agency, and senior reporter of *Finance Asia*, a financial trade publication. He is currently chief analyst of Headland Intelligence, a Hong Kong risk consultancy.