

Romila Thapar

Professor Emerita

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Research Interests:

My research into early Indian history has been part of the shift from treating ancient history as Indology to establishing it as a Social Science. The two themes on which I have worked are: the social and cultural history of early India which involved asking new questions of textual data and integrating some archaeological sources as well, in attempting to understand the correlation of society, economy, and religion; the second theme has been historiography, both the modern perspective of writing the history of early India, as well as the manner in which history was recorded in the early past.

Profile:

Positions Held

Professor Emerita, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1993
Professor of Ancient Indian History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1970-91
Reader in Ancient Indian History, Delhi University, 1963-1970
Reader in Ancient Indian History, Kurukshetra University, 1961-62

Fellowships, Grants, and Honours

Honorary Doctorate from Brown University (USA), 2010
Keynote Address at the 14th World Sanskrit Conference at Kyoto, 2009
Elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2009
[Kluger Prize](#) (the American Nobel) for Lifetime Achievement in the field of History, 2008 (PDF)
Honorary Doctorate in Social Science, Edinburgh University, 2004
Honorary D.Litt. University of Oxford, 1997
Honorary D.Litt. University of Calcutta, 1997
Elected Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, 1997
Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, University of Chicago, 1993
Honorary D.Litt. Peradeniya University, Sri Lanka, 1992
Honorary Fellow, SOAS, University of London, 1992
Honorary Fellow, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, 1986
General President, Indian History Congress, 1983

Distinguished Visiting Professor, Cornell University, 1979
Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship, New Delhi, 1976-77

Publications

Books

The Past before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India, Permanent Black, Ranikhet /Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., 2013
The Aryan: Recasting Constructs, Three Essays, Delhi 2008
Somanatha: the Many Voices of a History, Penguin Delhi, Verso London, 2004, 2008
Early India, Penguin Books, London / Delhi / California University Press, 2002
Cultural Pasts, Essays in Early Indian History, OUP Delhi, 2000
History and Beyond, OUP Delhi, 2000
Śakuntalā: Texts, Readings, Histories, Kali for Women, Delhi/Anthem, London, 1999
From Lineage to State, OUP Delhi, 1984, sq., 2006
Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations, OL Delhi, 1978, 2010
The Past and Prejudice (Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures), NBT Delhi, 1975, sq., 2010
Ancient India, *Medieval India*, NCERT Textbooks, Delhi, 1966, 1968 sq.
A History of India, Vol.1, Penguin Books, London / Delhi, 1966
Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas, Oxford / Delhi, 1961, sq., 2012

Important Articles

Most of my articles up to 2000 are included in the collection published as *Cultural Pasts*, OUP Delhi, 2000.

A few subsequent ones are:

“Was there Historical Writing in Early India? “, in C. Talbot (ed.), *Knowing India*, Delhi 2011
“The Puranas: Heresy and the *Vamsanucarita*”, in I. Banerjee-Dube and S. Dube (eds.), *Ancient to Modern: Religion, Power and Community in India*, Delhi 2009
“Raya Asoko from Kanaganahalli: Some Thoughts”, in *Airavati*, Chennai 2008
“Role of the Army in the Exercise of Power”, in A. Chaniotis and P. Ducrey (eds.), *Army and Power in the Ancient World*, Stuttgart 2002
“Perceiving the Forest: Early India”, *Studies in History*, 2001, 17, 1, 1-16