Two Memorials to Dr Meera Kosambi

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Two memorials of Dr Meera Kosambi

April 24, 1939 - February 26, 2015

On Thursday, February 26, 2015, Dr. Meera Kosambi passed away in Pune, India.

Meera studied sociology and received her PhD from the University of Stockholm. She served as a professor at, and later director of, the Research Centre for Women’s Studies at the Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thaersey (SNDT) Women’s University in Mumbai. As part of an illustrious family of scholars (her father was D.D. Kosambi, and her grandfather Dharmananda Kosambi) Meera inherited high expectations, to which she rose.

Meera was a prolific author and speaker. Meera’s subjects ranged from feminism and urban studies to literature and theatre. She composed definitive works on Pandita Ramabai, including a collection of Ramabai’s selected writings.

Meera was well known to all South Asianists, but in particular, she was a strong intellectual presence in the academic and literary world of Pune, and around her circulated a moveable salon of scholars, artists, and writers. I first met Meera in 2001 through a mutual friend who also died too soon, Raja Vora of Pune University. Over the years since that first meeting, Meera became a friend with whom I would have long conversations about everything and anything. She graciously read my work and could be trusted to never hold back her deeply insightful critique, but to always offer it in a playful and jovial spirit. I had the pleasure of introducing Meera to junior scholars making their way in our field, both in Pune, and also during a visit to the US in the Spring of 2004.

For many of us for whom Pune is a home, Meera was a key part of the life there, especially in and around the Deccan Gymkhana neighborhood. She routinely invited people into her home and drew them into the intellectual life of the city. I will miss her presence among us and am thankful for the work she has left behind for all of us.

Christian Lee Novetzke, University of Washington

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Memories of Meera Kosambi

I became aware of Dr Meera Kosambi’s early work on urban centers in Western India in the 1990s. I subsequently profited greatly from her published research on women’s writing in Maharashtra and especially her extensive translations from the works of Pandita Ramabai. She was author or editor of many books (an incomplete list follows). We were able to host her on a short visit to Rutgers University in 2004 and I subsequently met her when I was on a research visit to Pune. As Dr Novetzke has mentioned, she was always helpful and I still remember her guiding me unerringly to a bookstore that stocked the rare multi-volume edition of the History of Marathi Literature. I could not have found it without her help!

Her passing is a loss to historians everywhere, but especially to all who study the cultural, social and intellectual life of the Marathi-speaking world.

**Partial Bibliography of the major writings of Meera Kosambi**

1. *At the intersection of gender reform and religious belief* / Meera Kosambi.
   Bombay : Research Centre for Women’s Studies, S.N.D.T. Women’s University, 1993.

2. *Crossing thresholds : feminist essays in social history* / Meera Kosambi.


Ranikhet : Permanent Black ; Bangalore : Distributed by Orient Blackswan, c2010.

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