



## TRIBE AND STATE IN ASIA THROUGH TWENTY-FIVE CENTURIES

BY SUMIT GUHA — ASIA SHORTS BOOK SERIES

### SUGGESTED COURSES:

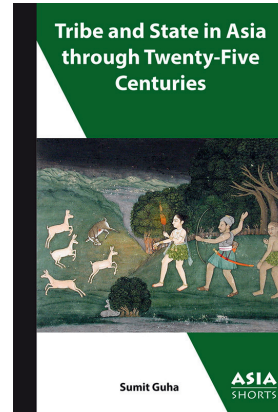
- History - Asia
- Anthropology
- Geography
- International Relations

### KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS:

- Empires and tribes
- Empires founded by tribes
- Tribes that emerged from the breakdown of empires
- Nomadism and tribalism
- History of the word 'tribe'
- Social evolutionism and category of 'tribe'
- Communist Analysis in China and the USSR
- Contemporary popular usage of 'tribe'
- Analysis of tribal terms in modern military strategy
- Modern states and tribes
- Tribes in democratic polities
- Tribes and the Electoral System

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How did Western classical social anthropology conceive of the range of human social organizations? Where did 'tribe' fit in it?
2. Did Asians have concepts equivalent to 'tribe'?
3. Did Asian societies conceive of 'tribal attitudes' in their social analysis?
4. Did Western societies ever possess tribal organization within them?
5. When was the term tribe popularized in English? Where did it come from?
6. Has the English word 'tribe' always possessed the same meaning or referred to the same entity?
7. What were the racial undertones of the colonial category 'aboriginal tribe'?
8. How did 'tribe' become a legal and social category in the Republic of India?
9. Why did some communities in India demand to be labeled 'tribe'?
10. Is the Indian case analogous to the People's Republic of China's classification of non-Han populations? Or is it quite different? Explain your answer.
11. How does the PRC's analysis fit in a Marxist frame of thought?



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## 2. HOW THE “TRIBE” CAME TO ASIA

## 3. THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF TRIBAL LIFE

## 4. TRIBES, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

*“If a single, compact survey of a large and complex issue were adduced to justify the Association of Asian Studies’s invention of its series of ‘Shorts,’ scholars need look no further than Sumit Guha’s volume on Tribes and State in Asia. It is an astute and wide-ranging guide to the term tribe in all its permutations...”*

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— JEREMI SURI, University of Texas at Austin

*“‘Tribe’ and ‘state’ have long been contested, frequently politically loaded terms in historical, social science and popular literature. Sumit Guha in this thoughtful, meticulously researched book has provided a succinct, lively, and highly accessible analysis of these often multipurposed terms in Asia and in the study of Asia over two and a half millennia. The novice and the specialist will benefit from Guha’s superb study.”*

— PETER B. GOLDEN, Rutgers University

*“An outstanding, accessible, survey of a vast subject. Tribe and State in Asia through Twenty-Five Centuries not only illuminates the wide range of peoples who have been labelled “tribes” and the varied conditions of their emergence, persistence, and disappearances, down to today; it is also an excellent guide to the shifting intellectual and political currents governing the use of that category, and its consequences.”*

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