



INDIA: Rising Ambitions, Challenges at Home February 16-18, 2024

Suggested Nonfiction Readings for the 37th Annual Camden Conference

* Indicates books authored by Conference Speakers

[Basham, A. L. *The Wonder That Was India*. Picador, 2014.](#)

A great book on ancient Indian history, covering its geography, religion, governance, philosophy, and literature to science.

[Chhibber, Ajay and Salman Soz. *Unshackling India: Hard Truths and Clear Choices*. Harper Collins, 2021.](#)

A look at human capital, technology, agriculture, finance, trade, public service and more and the limitations of the Indian state.

[Dubash, Navroz K. *India in a Warming World: Integrating Climate Change and Development*. Oxford University press, 2020.](#)

A look at the challenges of addressing climate change compounded by a sense of injustice—we did not cause the problem—and the immediate challenges of poverty and development.

[Ghosh, Amitav. *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis*. University of Chicago Press, 2022](#)

A powerful work of history, essay, testimony and polemic, stating that the origins of our contemporary climate crisis is in Western colonialism's violent exploitation of human life and the natural environment.

[Guha, Ramchandra. *India After Gandhi Revised and Updated Edition: History of the World's Largest Democracy*. Ecco, 2019.](#)

Understanding post-independence, from 1947-2017, Economist and Wall Street Journal Book of the Year. 2017.

[Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy*. Princeton University Press, 2021.](#)

How a popularly elected leader has steered the largest democracy toward authoritarianism and intolerance.

[Jaishankar, S. *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World*. HarperCollins, 2022.](#)

An intelligent analysis of world events and the evolution of India's foreign policy since independence.

[Jeffrey, Craig. *Modern India: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2018.](#)

Changes in the economic, social, political and cultural changes unfolding in India today.

[Kant, Amitabh. *Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise*. Rupa Publications, 2023.](#)

Multi-faceted survey of the nation's business heritage and culture-now one of the largest economies in the world.

[Karnad, Bharat. *Why India is not a Great Power \(Yet\)*. Oxford University Press, 2015](#)

The deficits in hard power; the country's military capacities and the "software" related to hard power-absence of political vision and will, insensitivity to strategic geography, and unimaginative foreign and military-the shortfalls that prevent the country from achieving great power status.

*[Madan, Tanvi. *Fateful Triangle: How China Shaped U.S.-India Relations During the Cold War*. Brookings Institution Press. 2020.](#)

A long view of the three-party relationship and its future prospects.

[Madhusudan, Harsh and Rajeev Mantri. *A New Idea of India: The Civilizational Republic*. Viking, 2023.](#)

An analysis of the socio-political past from the Mughal era to the current government in power.

*[Markey, Daniel. *China's Western Horizon: Beijing and the New Geopolitics of Eurasia*. Oxford University Press. 2021.](#)

How China's policy initiatives will be shaped and redefined as they confront the ground realities of local and regional politics outside China.

[Menon, Shivshankar. *India and Asian Geopolitics: The Past, Present*. Brookings Institution Press, 2021.](#)

A clear-eyed look at modern India's role in Asia, including its response to the rise in China and the broader world

[Mody, Ashoka. *India is Broken: A People Betrayed, Independence to Today*. Stanford University Press, 2023.](#)

A provocative new account of how India moved relentlessly from its hope-filled founding in 1947 to the dramatic economic and democratic breakdowns of today.

[Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Discovery of India*. Penguin Random House, 2004.](#)

An introduction to Indian history by a brilliant writer during India's struggle against the British Empire.

*[Rao, Nirupama. *The Fractured Himalaya: India Tibet China 1949-62*. India Viking Press. 2022.](#)

India-China relations and the strategic dilemma posed by Tibet in this relationship.

[Rukmini, S. *Whole Numbers and Half Truths: What Data Can and Cannot Tell Us about Modern India*. Context, 2022.](#)

Self-evident.

[Saran, Shyam, *How China Sees India and the World*. Juggernaut, 2022.](#)

An authoritative account of the India-China relationship and how China perceives the other country.

[Saran, Shyam, *How India Sees the World*. Juggernaut Publication, 2017.](#)

A ringside view of the most critical events and shifts in Indian foreign policy in the new millennium, including the epochal India-US nuclear deal.

[Sen, Amartya. *The Argumentative Indian: Writings in Indian History, Culture and Identity*. Picador, 2006.](#)

The idea and identity of India, written by a renowned economist and a Nobel laureate.

[*Singh, Prerna. *How Solidarity Works for Welfare: Subnationalism and Social Development*. Cambridge University Press. 2016.](#)

An argument for the power of a collective identity as an impetus for state prioritization of social welfare.

[Tharoor, Shashi. *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*. Aleph Book Company, 2016.](#)

The impact of two hundred years of British rule. A winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award.

[*Varshney, Ashutosh. *Battles Half Won: India's Improbable Democracy*. Penguin Global Press. 2014.](#)

Essays related to the deepening of the Indian democracy since 1947 and the challenges this has created for the forging and consolidation of India's improbable democracy.

[*Varshney, Ashutosh. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*. Yale University Press. 2003.](#)

A presentation of how civic ties between different ethnic communities can contain or even prevent ethnic violence.

[Zubrzycki, John. *The Shortest History of India: From the World's Oldest Civilization to Its Largest Democracy--A Retelling for Our Times*. Experiment, 2023.](#)

5,000 years of history--from the Bhagavad Gitā to Bollywood--fill this masterful portrait of the world's most populous nation and a rising global power. The Shortest History books deliver thousands of years of history in one riveting, fast-paced read.

Suggested Fiction and Memoirs/Biographies for the 37th Annual Camden Conference

[Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss*. Grove Press, 2006 .](#)

A book about characters who face choices that illuminate the consequences of colonialism as it collides with the modern world.

[Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand and Mahatma Gandhi. *Mohandas K. Gandhi Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Dover Publications, 1983.](#)

Satyagraha, Gandhi's nonviolent protest movement (satya=true, agraha=firminess) came to stand, like its creator, as a moral principle and a rallying cry; the principle was truth and the cry freedom.

[Gawande, Atul. *Being Mortal*. Metropolitan Books, 2017.](#)

The challenge of his profession: how medicine can not only improve life but also the process of its ending. Best Book of the Year by the Washington Post, the New York Times Book Review, NPR and Chicago Tribune.

[Ghosh, Amitav. *Sea of Poppies: A Novel \(The first of three novels in The Ibis Trilogy\)*. Picador, 2009.](#)

The first in an epic trilogy about a tumultuous voyage across the Indian Ocean shortly before the outbreak of the Opium Wars in China.

[Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies*. Mariner Books Classics, 2019.](#)

This collection flawlessly charts the emotional journeys of characters seeking love beyond the barriers of nations and generations.

[Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance*. Vintage, 1997.](#)

This novel captures all the cruelty, corruption, dignity and heroism of India.

[Roberts, Gregory David. *Shantaram: A Novel*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2005](#)

An escaped convict flees Australia for the teeming streets of Bombay seeking in this remarkable place what they cannot find elsewhere. This novel has the world of human experience in its reach and a passionate love for India at its heart.

[Roy, Arundhati. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Knopf, 2017 .](#)

An intimate journey of many years across the Indian subcontinent- from the cramped neighborhood of Old Delhi and the roads of the new city to the mountains and valleys of Kashmir and beyond, where war is peace and peace is war.

[Vergheze, Abraham. *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story*. Vintage, 1995.](#)

An account of the (AIDS) plague years in the American heartland. National Books Critics Circle Award Finalist

[Vergheze, Abraham. *The Covenant of Water*. Grove Press. 2023 .](#)

A novel set in Kerala, South India, following three generations of a family seeking the answers to a strange secret. A shimmering evocation of a bygone India.