

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY

PROF. DR. SAMARENDRA SARAF

EX-FELLOW

July 13, 1993



Dear Shri Awaradi:

Although we have not thus far met each other, your young assistant, Bisweswar Das, has told me about your anthropological research interests and, presumably, he might have talked about me as his one-time teacher and presently his research supervisor. I am delighted to learn as to how an administrator colleague has been sensitized to anthropological research and how not only fruitful research is being carried out under your Directorship but some master plan is also being hatched out with a view to giving a fillip to the process of transformation, planned and directed, among the autochthones of the islands. May I welcome you as a distinguished, self-schooled colleague into the fraternity of anthropologists and may I compliment you for your research endeavours, imaginative planning, dynamic leadership and sustained interest in field anthropology.

On June 19 I returned from Shimla after my short-term assignment there: I had to wind up my post-doctoral work on Tantric Ritual Idiom: Perspective and Orientations (a scripture-based study that seeks to re-examine the Tantric Great Tradition in a diachronic perspective, invoking the insights offered by such sophisticated disciplines as Indology, Structural Anthropology and Ethno-Methodology). Dog-tired due to sustained work, I had thought I would snatch a brief spell of respite after the submission of my neatly produced 400plus-page typescript. But, to my great amazement, I found Bisweswar Das standing before me one fine morning. Bidding adieu to my desire of full rest sans any work, the tired steedsman in me was back once again in the saddle for his maiden adventures amid the luxuriant forests of the Little Andaman Island. Tearing myself away from the obsessive hangover of the Tantric studies, I was once again back to my native self as an ethnographer or 'a professional stranger', to wit; and I was delighted to acquaint myself with the material Bisweswar Das had brought from his field — the Onge settlements of Dugong Creek and South Bay. The background information of

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