

#TKAK <https://syntalk.wordpress.com/episodes/turn-three/tkak/>

#TKAK (<https://soundcloud.com/syntalk/tkak-the-kith-and-kin-syntalk>) (The Kith And Kin, June 24, 2017):

Why don't you help all your relatives? Why do people marry? Do you know your pedigree? Can relatedness be measured or recognized with precision? Are close relatives the best organ donors? Who guarantees your loans? Who *can* the closest relative be? Do four first cousins *equal* one sibling? Would altruism evolve in the absence of kinship? Does the environment impact the benefit/cost of helping? Can organisms self reproduce? Is it possible for males to have neither a father nor a son? Do all off-springs have mothers? Do plants have relatives? Is incest prohibition *the* Universal Law of Kinship? Is there an elementary unit of kinship? Is outbreeding a 'superior' natural selection method? Does a certain kind of exchange economy and an idea of 'difference' emerge with marriage? Do phases of a-/sexual reproduction (equivalent to in-/outbreeding?) alternate in certain cultures and species? *What* is a joint family? Are identical twins clones? Could we clone ourselves in the future? Does marriage have a great future? Would kinship stay relevant in the long run? If yes, where would it begin? In the petri dish...? SynTalk thinks about these & more questions using concepts from sociobiology & ecology (Prof. Raghavendra Gadagkar, IISc, Bangalore), statistical genetics (Prof. Partha Pratim Majumder, ISI, Kolkata), & social anthropology (Prof. Deepak Mehta, Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida).

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SynTalk is pleased and privileged to have hosted the following SynTalkrs (*in alphabetical order*) on its #TKAK show.

Prof. Raghavendra Gadagkar (sociobiology, ecology) is currently the Year of Science Chair Professor at the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore. He also holds the positions of Chairman at Centre for Contemporary Studies (IISc), Honorary Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR, Bangalore) & Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER, Mohali), and Non-Resident Permanent Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg (Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin). Prof. Gadagkar obtained B.Sc. (Hons.) and M.Sc. in Zoology from Bangalore University and Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from IISc. His research focus has been in the areas of animal behaviour, ecology and evolution. The origin and evolution of cooperation in animals, especially in social insects, such as ants, bees and wasps, is a major goal of his research. By identifying and utilizing crucial elements in India's biodiversity, he has added a special Indian flavour to his research. His book, 'Survival Strategies' (Harvard University Press, 1997 & Universities Press, Hyderabad, 1998), explains recent advances in behavioural ecology and sociobiology to a general audience. His second book, 'The Social Biology of Ropalidia' (Harvard University Press, 2001) summarizes over 20 years of his research aimed at understanding the evolution of eusociality. He has published over 250 research papers & delivered over 500 invited lectures both in India and overseas. He has also received multiple awards including Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (2015), the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize (1993), B.M.Birla Science Prize, & the Homi Bhabha Fellowship. He is an elected Fellow of Indian Academy

of Sciences (IAS, Secretary, 1995-2000), the Indian National Science Academy (INSA, President, 2014-2016), & the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI). Also, he is or has been on the editorial boards of several leading journals including *Science*.

Prof. Partha Pratim Majumder (statistical genetics) is the founder and Distinguished Professor of the National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG), Kalyani, and concurrently a Professor of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata. Prior to this, he has held positions at IISER (Kolkata), JNCASR (Bangalore), & TCG-ISI Centre for Population Genomics (Kolkata). He also worked at University of Pittsburgh as Genetics Consultant (1990-1996) and a visiting Assistant Professor (1987-1989). Prof. Majumder received his B.Sc. (1974), M.Sc. (1975) & Ph.D. (1982) in Statistics from ISI, Kolkata. His thesis was titled, 'ABO Blood-Group Gene Frequencies on the Indian Sub-continent: A Statistical Study of Patterns of Variation'. His key research areas are human and population genetics, ranging from structure and evolution of human populations to genomics of diseases and development of statistical methods for genomic analyses. He has published more than 100 research papers & delivered more than 40 public lectures.. He is an elected Fellow of Indian Academy of Sciences (IAS, 1998), the Indian National Science Academy (INSA, 2001), the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI, 2006), The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS, 2011), & International Statistical Institute, The Hague, The Netherlands (2014). He is a recipient of many awards and medals, such as, the TWAS Biology Prize, G.D. Birla Award for Scientific Research, Ranbaxy Research Award in Applied Medical Sciences, & the New Millennium Science Medal, Government of India. He has also been awarded the Sir J. C. Bose National Fellowship (2015). Prof. Majumder is also the Indian National Co-ordinator on the International Cancer Genome Consortium. He has also served several national and international organizations over the years in matters relating to genomics and to promote international cooperation in science. He is or has been on the editorial boards of several leading journals including *Genome Biology and Evolution* (2014-present).

Prof. Deepak Mehta (social anthropology) is currently Professor, Department of Sociology, Shiv Nadar University (SNU), Greater Noida, UP, India. Prior to SNU, he has held positions at Department of Sociology (University of Delhi, DU), & has been a visiting professor at Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University (USA). Prof. Mehta received his B.A. (1979), M.A. (1981), M.Phil. (1983), & Ph.D. (1991) in Sociology from DU. His Ph.D. thesis was titled, 'A Sociological Study of Gandhian Institutions: Work, Weavers and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission'. His current research work is concerned with the dynamics of un-orchestrated crowds. His other key research areas have been sociology of muslim groups & Islam in India, material culture, anthropology of violence, & law and society. His most recent published work deals with the legal career of the Ayodhya case. Prof. Mehta has also published a book, titled, 'Work, Ritual, Biography: A Muslim Community in North India' (OUP, 1997), and co-authored two books, titled, 'Living With Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life' (Routledge, 2007) & 'Riot Discourses' (Colombo, 2007). Prof. Mehta received the Charles Wallace Fellowship (with Department of Anthropology, Queens University, Belfast, U.K (1998)), & has also been the Principal Investigator for a project funded by Volkswagen Foundation, Germany (1996-1998). He has also been the Project Director (2003-2006) for 'Mapping City Spaces: Communal Violence, Social Reconciliation and Documentary Practices of the State'. This project aimed to develop a comparative frame for understanding the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, the 1992-93 Hindu-Muslim violence in Mumbai, and the 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat. In the past, he has also carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Mumbai, and been the Editor of the Journal: 'Contributions to Indian Sociology' (2011-2016).

Note: Any & all errors in the brief profiles above are *SynTalk's own*.

#TKAK mentions: Peter Kropotkin, Bronisław Malinowski, J. B. S. Haldane, Richard Feynman, Claude Lévi Strauss, W. D. Hamilton, & Sewall Wright, among others.