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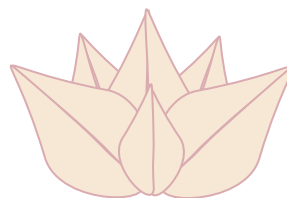
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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Some of you may have noticed that there have been some subtle changes in the leadership of the Centre. Our friend and colleague Dr Francesca Orsini served as the Chair of the Centre from October 2009 until the end of December 2009. On account of a sabbatical during terms 2 and 3, Dr Orsini agreed to enable me to step in as the interim Chair during her absence.

Given her demonstrated leadership talents, Dr Orsini has since been asked to be the Head of Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia, a position that she has agreed to take on starting during the 2010-2011 academic year. On account of this added administrative responsibility, Francesca believed that it would be prudent for her to step down as the Centre's Chair, so she asked me to be the Chair of the Centre on a permanent basis. Chairing the Centre has been a great privilege, so I agreed to remain as its Chair. Dr Whitney Cox, Lecturer in Sanskrit in the Department of Languages and Cultures of South Asia, has agreed to become the Deputy Chair of the Centre.

The 2009-2010 academic year has been filled with South Asia-related activities. The Centre sponsored a large number of seminars, workshops, film screenings, and conferences

during the year. For instance, we hosted an international workshop on the 2009 general election (organised jointly with the Institute of Commonwealth Studies) and another international workshop on the subject of Money and Wealth in South Asian History: Meanings and Practices. A very interesting workshop was organised by the South Asian Anthropologists Group on the subject of genealogies of thought and 'Indian sociology'. We also hosted a workshop on special economic zones (organised jointly with the LSE South Asia Reading Group). We also held an international conference, co-sponsored by the National Portrait Gallery, on portraiture in South Asia. I was the convenor for an international conference on the United Progressive Alliance (organised jointly with the University of Birmingham).

One of the objectives of the Centre has been to widen the appeal of its events to a larger audience. It should also be noted that the Centre deliberately attempts to hold events involving topics and colleagues from the Arts and Humanities than from other faculties. Many of you had the opportunity to enjoy the book reading, by famed author William Dalrymple, of his book entitled *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India*. Maha Aziz, a tutorial fellow in the Department

of Politics, organised two postgraduate student workshops on the theme of building democracy and reducing militancy in Pakistan. In addition, we also held three film screenings and nine seminars on contemporary political, cultural, and social developments in South Asia.

During the past year, we attracted a number of high profile speakers. It was my pleasure that the Centre hosted a Distinguished Lecture by the leading Sankritist Professor Sheldon Pollock. Professor Pollock, now based at Columbia University, was a leading scholar at the University of Chicago whilst I was a PhD student there. He has been, without a doubt, one of the most brilliant and provocative minds I have ever met. Professor Pollock spoke on the possible causes of why the study of historical languages in India is at the point of extinction.

SOAS is an exciting place to be to listen to top South Asia scholars. This year we were honoured to host the eminent historian Professor Ebba Koch (University of Vienna and Austrian Academy of Sciences). Professor Koch delivered the Centre's Annual Lecture on the subject of the Mughal approach to landscape and nature.

As is customary, the Centre hosted a number of international visitors. Dr Lakshmi Arya was the Charles Wallace Indian Fellow for the 2009-2010 academic year. Her sponsor was Dr Rochana Bajpai, Lecturer in the Department of Politics. At the conclusion of her research stay, Dr Arya held a seminar on the topic of normativity, power and politics in post-colonial India.

The end of the academic year is also a time to thank those of us who have decided to move on, either through retirement or to take up new opportunities. On behalf of the Centre, I want to thank Dr Nirmal Kumar. After a brief stay in the History Department at SOAS, he will take up a professorship at Delhi University. Nirmal was an enthusiastic supporter of the Centre and we shall miss him.

Dr Lawrence Saez
Chair, Centre of South Asian Studies, SOAS

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MEMBERS NEWS

Crispin Branfoot, working with the National Portrait Gallery, organised and participated in the international conference, *Portraiture in South Asia* on 21-22 May 2010 (see report on Page 18).

He also co-convened the Indian Art Circle lecture series which held eight events by visiting speakers during the academic year (see link), and organised the series of fifteen presentations for the South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology research seminar (see link).

A small grant from the British Academy enabled him to travel to Tamilnadu in September 2009 to study late nineteenth-century temple architecture.

Crispin is on sabbatical leave during the academic year 2010-11 and, funded by an award from the Leverhulme Trust, he will be affiliated to the School of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi for five months.

During this period he will be developing a new project, *Construction, renovation, conservation: the Hindu temple in Tamil south India 1870-1920*.

www.soas.ac.uk/art/iac/

www.soas.ac.uk/art/events/sasearessem/

Crispin Branfoot



Whitney Cox was on leave for the two teaching terms of the 2009-10 academic session. Along with continuing the rewarding job of convening the South Asian Languages and Cultures Department's two taught MA degrees, Whitney had a busy several months' travelling, researching, lecturing and writing.

In October he was a guest of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient in Paris, where he participated in a seminar reading the oldest extant Tamil version of the Mahābhārata, the Pāratavenpā of Peruntevanār. The following week he was off to the U.S. to present at the annual South Asian Studies conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; the proceedings of his panel there are currently being edited for publication. After a few months back in London (and another trip to the States for the Christmas holidays), Whitney spent most of January and February in India, thanks to a Small Research Grant from the British Academy. While there, he made research visits to Chennai, Mysore, Bangalore, Kolar and Pondicherry, where he collected manuscripts and epigraphic transcripts of unpublished texts in Sanskrit and Tamil, photographed temple remains, and discussed ongoing research with colleagues; having the chance to speak Tamil regularly after several years' hiatus and to devour as much south Indian cuisine as humanly possible was restorative of body and spirit both. Whitney was also delighted to accept invitations to deliver lectures at the Department of Sanskrit, Vivekananda College, Chennai (partly in Tamil) and at the University of Mysore's Department of Ancient History and Archaeology; the latter opportunity came through the kind offices of the Director of Epigraphy of the Archaeological Survey of India.

Since his return, Whitney has been happily at work on his current research project, a reconsideration of the late eleventh century accession of the Colla king Kulottunga I and the subsequent transformation of medieval South Indian politics and culture. While writing up the results of this research, hopefully to be completed as a monograph in 2011, he has also kept busy finishing up other publications: the first of these, an article in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, appeared in April, while three more articles or book chapters are expected by year's end, with several more slated to appear early next year. He is especially proud to have put the final touches on a book of essays, coedited with Lawrence McCrea (Cornell) and Yigal Bronner (Chicago), in honour of his teacher Sheldon Pollock of Columbia University. This volume is currently with the publisher; another joint editorial project, in collaboration with Vincenzo Vergiani (Cambridge), consisting of the papers delivered at a workshop held in May 2009 on the comparative intellectual histories of Sanskrit and Tamil, is in preparation.

Whitney also lectured at Oxford (twice) and Cambridge (twice); but for the unexpected eruption of Eyjafjallajökull, he would also have spoken at the University of Washington and the University of California-Berkeley. Finally, in June, Whitney was very pleased to serve as the judge for the Sanskrit Speech Day competition at the St. James School in Kensington.

Whitney Cox



Peter Flugel



Peter Flugel's most recent publication is entitled *The Jaina Cult of Relic Stūpas*

In standard portraits of the history of Indic religions, Jainism is usually singled out as the only tradition where relic worship is strictly ruled out, both in doctrine and practice. This conception will have to change due to new findings, recently published in *NUMEN* Vol.

57, No. 3-4, 2010: 389-504. It is a common stereotype of textbooks on world religions that Jains never worshipped the remains of the Jinas, and consequently never developed a ritual culture parallel to the cult of relics in Buddhism. In his well-known study *The Jaina Path of Purification*, P. S. Jaini recalls that neither "the Śrāvakācāras," the medieval texts outlining the rules of conduct for the Jaina laity, "nor the practices of Jainism give any indication that a cult of relic-worship once flourished within the tradition. No stūpas housing the remains of Jaina teachers have yet been discovered." This verdict is echoed by K. Bruhn: "There is also the issue of 'actual evidence'. There were Jaina stūpas but they did not survive. As a consequence, the stūpa became a Buddhist monument." Apart from isolated myths and legends in canonical and medieval Jaina (Jain) literature depicting the veneration of the relics of the Tirthankaras by the gods, there is no indication of bone relic worship in early and medieval Jainism to

date. Yet, although Jaina doctrine rejects the worship of lifeless, acitta, material objects, intermittent fieldwork of the author in India between 1997 and 2009 funded by British Academy Research Grant 2001 APN 3/522 and Central Research Fund of the University of London Grant 2002/2003 AR/CRF/A on the hitherto unstudied contemporary Jaina mortuary rituals furnished clear evidence for the ubiquity of bone relic stūpas and relic veneration across the Jaina sectarian spectrum today.

Dr Flugel has been awarded a nine month AHRC Fellowship starting January 2011 for completing his project in form a book on *Jaina Rituals Death* to be published in the Series *Routledge Advances in Jaina Studies*. As part of the project an international conference will be held at SOAS on 18-19 March on *Jaina Narratives*.

Grant No: AH/1002405/1  Arts & Humanities Research Council

Matthew Nelson



Matthew J. Nelson, between 2009 and 2010, was awarded a year-long fellowship from the Walter H. Shorenstein Center Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA. He declined this award, however, in order to accept The Wolfensohn Family Membership in the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ. He also received a Senior Research Fellowship from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS).

In 2010-2011, Dr. Nelson received another year-long fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC.

He was invited to present his work in London at the London Middle East Institute (twice), in Edinburgh at the annual meeting of the UK-based Political Studies Association, in Washington for a group of officials focusing

on contemporary affairs in Pakistan, and in several special lectures at various colleges and universities throughout the US: Bowdoin, Stanford, Princeton, and Yale.

Publications

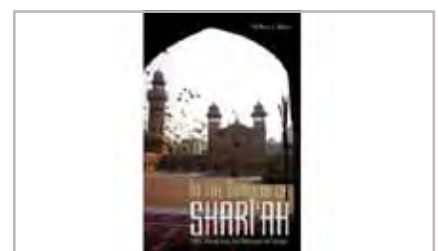
Dr Nelson's book, *In the Shadow of Shari'ah: Islam, Islamic Law, and Democracy in Pakistan*, will be published by Columbia University Press (US) and Hurst and Co. (UK) in June 2010.

He completed four written projects unrelated to his main focus on the study of religious education in South Asia. These included: (a) the page proofs for his first book, to be published later this year by Columbia University Press (US) and Hurst (UK) as *In the Shadow of Shari'ah: Islam, Islamic Law, and Democracy in Pakistan*; (b) a broadly related chapter to be published next year by OUP (India) as 'Inheritance Unbound: The Politics of Personal Law Reform in Pakistan and India' (N.b. This chapter will appear in a volume edited by Sunil Khilnani entitled *Comparative Constitutionalism in South Asia*); (c) an essay for the Oxford-based *Journal of Human Rights Practice* entitled 'Persistent Legal Pluralism and the Challenge of Universal Human Rights' (forthcoming November 2010); and (d) a critical assessment of politics in Pakistan for the Berkeley-based journal *Asian Survey* entitled 'Tackling the Taliban?' (published January 2010).

Focusing, more specifically, on education,

he completed four additional writing projects, including: (a) an article for *Modern Asian Survey* entitled 'Embracing the Ummah: Student Politics Beyond State Power in Pakistan' (N.b. This article benefited enormously from the feedback he received in a special seminar known as the 'Can We' Seminar convened by Joan Scott); (b) a major report for the British High Commission in Dhaka entitled 'Campus Conflict, Party Politics, and the Secular State in Bangladesh'; (c) an article entitled 'Faith and Development in Secular and Religious Schools' for a special symposium edited by Amy Stambach in the journal *Comparative Education Review*; and, finally, (d) a chapter (based on an article published last year) for a volume edited by Michael Merry and Jeff Milligan entitled *Citizenship, Education, and Identity in Muslim Communities* (Palgrave 2010).

In addition he has also busy reviewing book manuscripts for Cambridge University Press (2), articles for *Modern Asian Studies* (2), and PhD theses (2), as well as preparing two of my his students for their 'upgrade' to PhD (ADB) status at SOAS.



MEMBERS NEWS

Francesca Orsini has been on leave since January 2010. In January she gave lectures at the India International Centre, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Jawaharlal Nehru University to launch her book *Print and Pleasure: Commercial Publishing and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black) and the edited volume *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Cultures* (New Delhi: Orient Black Swan). The former explores how a boom in commercial publishing could take place despite very low levels of formal literacy, and how entertainment genres brought into print and multiplied the Hindi-Urdu linguistic and literary hybridity of oral performance genres, bucking the trend in reformist activism and publishing of dividing Hindi from Urdu. *Before the Divide* brings together new research on the many "intermediary genres" that testify to the range of linguistic and literary experimentation before Hindi and Urdu crystallized as print-languages. The book was launched in Delhi with an engrossing *dastan* performance by Mahmud Farooqi.

Francesca Orsini also took part in a conference organized by the Centre for Studies in the Social Sciences in Kolkata on "New Cultural Histories" (January 5-7), where she presented a paper on "How to do multilingual literary history", and to two workshops in Delhi and Newcastle organized by the "Network in Post-colonial Translation: The Case of South Asia", of which she is part. This is an international research network, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, running from 2008 to 2011. It seeks to explore the multicultural and polyglot context of literary production in postcolonial South Asia, and aims to develop an in-depth collaborative study of contemporary writing in Bengali, English, Hindi, Malayalam, and Tamil, in order to identify models of "postcolonial translation" as a way of understanding South Asian literature as a multi-lingual corpus of texts. The network brings together scholars based at Newcastle, SOAS, University of Delhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

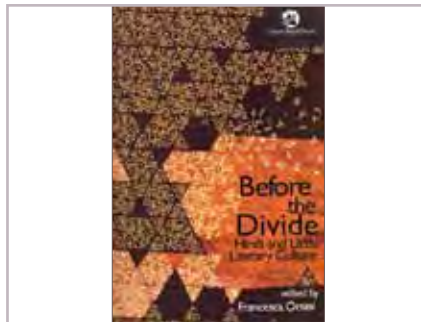
Publications

'*Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture*,' Francesca Orsini (ed.)

Based on a workshop on 'Intermediary Genres in Hindi and Urdu', *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture* is an attempt

to rethink aspects of the literary histories of these two languages.

Today, Hindi and Urdu are considered two separate languages, each with its own script, history, literary canon and cultural orientation. Yet, precolonial India was a deeply multilingual society with multiple traditions of knowledge and of literary production. Historically the divisions between Hindi and Urdu were not as sharp as we imagine them today.



The essays in this volume reassess the definition and identity of language in the light of this. Various literary traditions have been examined keeping the historical, political and cultural developments in mind. The authors look at familiar and not so familiar Hindi and Urdu literary works and narratives and address logics of exclusion and that have gone into the creation of two separate languages (Hindi and Urdu) and the making of the literary canons of each. Issues of script, religious identity, gender are also considered.

This volume is different in that it provides a new body of evidence and new categories that are needed to envisage the literary landscape of north India before the construction of separate 'Hindu-Hindu' and 'Muslim-Urdu' literary traditions.

This collection of essays looking into the rearticulation of language and its identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will be useful for students of modern Indian history, language studies and cultural studies.

'*Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India*,' Francesca Orsini

Francesca Orsini

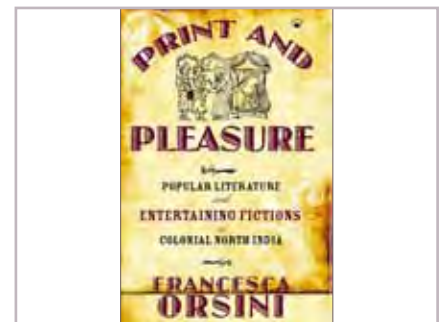


Print and Pleasure tells the story behind the boom in commercial publishing in nineteenth-century North India.

How did the new technology of printing and the enterprise of Indian publishers make the book a familiar object and a necessary part of people's leisure in a largely illiterate society? What genres became popular in print? Who read them and how were they read?

Our perception of North Indian culture in this period has been dominated by the notion of a competition between Hindi and Urdu, and the growth of language nationalism. *Print and Pleasure* argues that many other forces were also at work which, in the pursuit of commercial interests, spread quite different and much more hybrid tastes.

The importance of this major new book lies in showing, moreover, that book history can greatly enrich our understanding of literary and cultural history. Francesca mines a huge and largely untapped archive in order to reveal that popular songbooks, theatre transcripts, meanderingly serialized narratives, flimsily published tales, and forgotten poems are as much a part of colonial history as the elite novels and highbrow journals that are more frequently the subject of historical studies.



Rahul Rao



Rahul Rao's most recent publication is entitled *Third World Protest, Between Home and the World*.

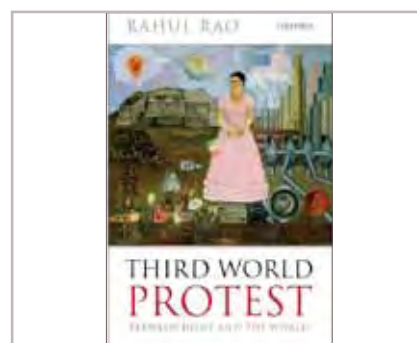
If boundaries protect us from threats, how should we think about the boundaries of states in a world where threats to human rights emanate from both outside the state and the state itself?

Arguing that attitudes towards boundaries are premised on assumptions about the

locus of threats to vital interests, Rahul digs beneath two major normative orientations towards boundaries—cosmopolitanism and nationalism—which structure thinking on questions of public policy and identity. Insofar as the Third World is concerned, hegemonic versions of both orientations are underpinned by simplistic imageries of threat. In the cosmopolitan gaze, political and economic crises in the Third World are attributed mainly to factors internal to the Third World state with the international playing the role of heroic saviour. In Third World nationalist imagery, the international is portrayed as a realm of neo-imperialist predation from which the domestic has to be secured. Both images capture widely held intuitions about the sources of threats to human rights, but each by itself provides a resolutely partial inventory of these threats.

By juxtaposing critical accounts of both discourses, Rao argues that protest sensibilities in the current conjuncture must be critical of hegemonic variants of both cosmopolitanism and nationalism. The second half of the book illustrates what such a

critique might look like. Journeying through the writings of James Joyce, Rabindranath Tagore, Edward Said and Frantz Fanon, the activism of 'anti-globalisation' protesters, and the dilemmas of queer rights activists, Rao demonstrates that important currents of Third World protest have long battled against both the international and the domestic, in a manner that combines nationalist and cosmopolitan sensibilities.



Lawrence Saez



Lawrence Saez is a leading scholar on fiscal federalism in India. He attended the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, held in Toronto, and presented a paper on political variables and subnational debt in India. The paper was well received and was nominated for the Deil Wright Award for best paper on federalism and intergovernmental relations. He was invited to deliver lectures at the University of Göttingen and University College London (UCL).

Dr Saez published a number of articles in 2009-2010, including articles in the *British Journal of Political Science* (BJPS) and the *Journal of Asian Studies* (JAS), both leading international journals on political science and Asian studies respectively. At present he is co-editing a book on the United Progressive Alliance. Moreover, Dr Saez is also writing a book on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The book will be published by Routledge in 2011.

In order to carry out some fieldwork interviews at the SAARC Secretariat based in Kathmandu, Dr Saez had the opportunity to visit Nepal for the first time. Dr Saez's visit to Nepal was far longer and more eventful than anticipated as he was stranded there on account of the Icelandic ash cloud. Nevertheless, as a result of the setback to his schedule, Dr Saez was able to meet a great number of his former SOAS students.

As a political scientist, Dr Saez was also particularly intrigued by Nepal's ongoing constitutional crisis, so he decided to write an editorial for *Republika* (Nepal's

leading newspaper) on the draft plans for a federal solution for Nepal. As usual, Dr Saez has appeared in a number of television interviews, mostly for Al Jazeera, CNN, and the BBC.

Much of Dr Saez's time was devoted to large grant application writing. The work has yielded important successes for SOAS. He is the principal investigator for an UK Energy Research Council (UK ERC) grant on international governance and energy security.

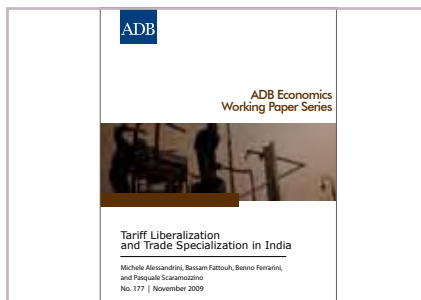
The £500k joint bid by SOAS and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) is a finalist contender. Dr Saez is also the work package leader for an European Commission-funded FP-7 grant (worth 4.7 million euros) on cultures of governance and conflict resolution in Europe and India. SOAS is a consortium partner in this bid and is currently a finalist. Dr Saez is, at present, awaiting the outcome for these two large research bids.

MEMBERS NEWS

Pasquale Scaramozzino has published the following Working Paper of the Asian Development Bank during the academic years of 2009 and 2010.

Publications

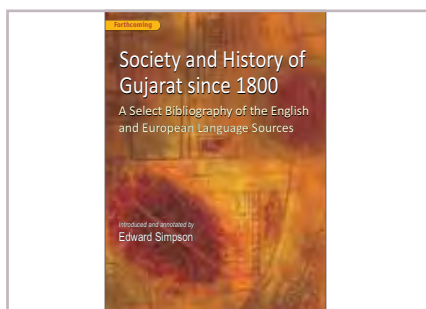
Michele Alessandrini, Bassam Fattouh, Benno Ferrarini and Pasquale Scaramozzino, "Tariff Liberalization and Trade Specialization in India", Asian Development Bank, ADB Economics, Working Paper No. 177, November 2009.



Pasquale Scaramozzino



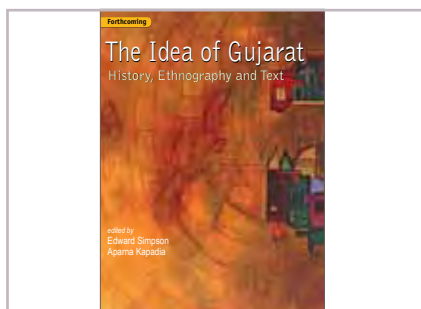
www.adb.org/Documents/Working-Papers/2009/Economics-WP177.pdf



Society and History of Gujarat since 1800. Select Bibliography of the English and European Language Sources

The recent history of Gujarat has been sensational: controversial big dams, polarising political violence and devastating natural disasters. Commentators on these events have often neglected the rich undercurrents of history and culture that have gone into making Gujarat what it is today. This substantial work consolidates scholarship in English and other European languages on the region, drawing together well-known sources as well as the neglected and sometimes surprising. It includes around 6,500 detailed bibliographical references to books, chapters, periodical literature, dissertations, project-reports, miscellaneous memoranda and documents on Gujarat published since 1800.

The material included crosses the disciplinary boundaries of history, political and development studies, literature and the liberal arts, sociology, cultural and social anthropology. Edward Simpson, a reputed researcher on Gujarat, introduces the volume with an extended essay about the sociology of knowledge on the region, and provides extensive annotation in the bibliographic sections. No one with an interest in Gujarat



or wishing to conduct research on the region in the future can afford to neglect this rich resource.

'The idea of Gujarat', History, Ethnography and Text, edited by Edward Simpson & Aparna Kapadia

The chapters of this provocative book critically engage with various well-known historical and sociological ideas about the state of Gujarat in western India. The twentieth century saw public politics in the region shift from those of Gandhi to the party politics of development-led Hindu nationalism. In between, and following a bitter campaign, Gujarat came into existence as a separate political entity in 1960. Regional sentiments had deeper historical antecedents, but attempts at consolidating the fragile identity of the new state proved exclusionary, ignoring both history and swathes of the population.

Exploring the paradoxes and consequences of colonialism, caste, urbanism, language, dress and devotion, the contributors to this book challenge both what and how things are known about Gujarat. This is an important intervention, with chapters by some of the leading anthropologists, historians and political scientists working on the region today.

Edward Simpson



Edward Simpson and Aparna Kapadia (now a post-doctoral fellow of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford), with funding from the British Academy (SG-47894) and SOAS seed funding, hosted a workshop at SOAS on the historical and sociological currents in Gujarat, western India in 2008. The revised proceedings of this event have gone to press as *The idea of Gujarat: History, ethnography and text* with OrientBlackswan, Hyderabad. A related bibliographic volume on the Gujarat colonial, social science and humanities literature will be published simultaneously.

Renate Sohnen Thieme



Renate Sohlen-Thieme presented a paper at the XIV World Sanskrit Conference in Kyoto, Japan on 1-5 Sept 2009 and the Beijing Forum on 5-8 Nov 2009. She has published a number of articles during 2009-2010 including articles in Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism, 'Indra in the Harivaṃśa', in: Epic Undertakings, edited by Robert P. Goldman & Muneo Tokunaga And 'Buddhist tales in the Mahābhārata?' in: Parallels and Comparisons, ed. Petteri Koskikallio.

Hanne-Ruth Thompson



Hanne Ruth Thompson's new book, Bengali: A Comprehensive Grammar, has just been published by Routledge. It is a substantial book of nearly 800 pages and gives a detailed description of Bengali language structures, ranging from sounds and script, morphological features and word-formation to sentence structures, semantic features and idioms.

What makes the book new and different is its synchronic, descriptive approach and the extensive use of real language examples. Throughout, the emphasis is on Bengali as used by present day native speakers. This makes the book interesting to learners of Bengali as well as linguists.

Publications

Bengali: A Comprehensive Grammar is a complete reference guide to Bengali grammar.

It presents a fresh, accessible and thorough description of the language, concentrating on the real patterns of use in modern Bengali. The book moves from the sounds and script through morphology and word classes to a detailed analysis of sentence structures and semantic features such as aspect, tense, negation and reduplication.

The Grammar is an essential reference source for the learner and user of Bengali, irrespective of level. It is ideal for use in schools, colleges, universities and adult classes of all types. With clear and simple explanations this book will remain the standard reference work for years to come for both learners and linguists alike.

The volume is organized to promote a thorough understanding of Bengali grammar. It offers a stimulating analysis of the complexities of the language, and provides full and clear explanations. Throughout, the emphasis is on Bengali as used by present-day native speakers.

An extensive index and numbered paragraphs provide readers with easy access to the information they require.

Features include:

- detailed treatment of the common grammatical structures and parts of speech
- extensive exemplification
- particular attention to areas of confusion and difficulty
- Bengali-English parallels highlighted throughout the book

The book was unofficially launched just before publication at a Bengali Studies Conference in Delhi in February this year. The response by Bengali linguists to this new approach of looking at Bengali language structures was overwhelmingly positive and a translation of the book into Bengali as a joint project is a real possibility for the near future.



ACADEMIC EVENTS: SEP 09 - AUG 2010

AUTUMN TERM

7 October 2009

Book Reading
Organised with the Department of South Asia, SOAS
William Dalrymple
NINE LIVES In Search of the Sacred
in Modern India

20 October 2009

Seminar
Chair, Professor Rachel Dwyer (SOAS), Rinki Bhattacharya, Lord Meghnad Desai, Amit Bose and Anwesha Arya
Bimal Roy: The Man Who Spoke in Pictures

23 October 2009

Seminar
Farahad Zama (Author)
The Many Conditions of Love

30 November 2009

Seminar
Professor Barbara Ramusack (University of Cincinnati)
Indian Princes: Past and Present Images

SPRING TERM

5 February 2010

Pakistan Policy Seminar
Ms Maha Aziz (SOAS)
Building Democracy

10 March 2010

Seminar
Kavita Ramdya (author)
Bollywood Weddings

12 March 2010

Pakistan Policy Seminar
Ms Maha Aziz (SOAS)
Reducing Militancy

24 March 2010

Seminar
Maureen Lines (Author and Field Director of HKCA)
From Disaster To Catastrophe – A Memoir Of
Life In The Kalash Valleys On The Pakistan-
Afghanistan Border

25 March 2010

Seminar
Lakshmi Arya (Charles Wallace Indian Fellow
2009-2010)
Normativity, Power and Politics in Post/
colonial India

Seminar Series

SUMMER TERM

10 May 2010

Seminar
Geeta Patel (University of Virginia)
Reading sexuality in South Asia: wandering
the quilted surface of a story

Maureen Lines with locals in the Kalash Valley



22 September 2009

Workshop
Organised with the SOAS Centre for Migration
and Diaspora Studies
South Asian Anthropologists Group (SAAG)
2009: Genealogies of thought and 'Indian
Sociology'

9-10 October 2009

Workshop
Money and Wealth in South Asian History:
Meanings and Practices
Speakers: Ranabir Chakrabarti (Jawaharlal Nehru
University), Kunal Chakrabarti (JNU), Daud Ali
(SOAS/UPenn), Rajat Datta (JNU), Najaf Haider
(JNU); John Deyell, Shabnum Tejani/Amrita
Shodhan (SOAS), Peter Robb (SOAS) and Rachel
Sturman (Bowdoin College)

26 November 2009

Film Screening
The Sky Below
Sarah Singh (Director)

22 January 2010

Film Screening
Shape of Water
Kum-Kum Bhavnani (Director) and Gita Sahgal
(Head of the Gender Unit, at Amnesty International,
London)

18 March 2010

Film Screening
Sthaniya Sambaad ('spring in the colony', 105
min. 35 mm, EST)
Arjun Gourisaria (Jadavpur University) and
Moinak Biswas (Jadavpur University)

17 May 2010

Lecture
Professor Sheldon Pollock (Columbia University)
Crisis in the Classics

21 – 22 May 2010

Conference
Organised with Art & Archaeology Dept and
the National Portrait Gallery
Portraiture in South Asia
Speakers: Crispin Branfoot (SOAS), Laura
Parodi (University College of Dublin), Ebba Koch
(University of Vienna/Austrian Academy of Sciences);
Stefano Pello (University of Venice), Asok Kumar
Das (Independent Scholar), Susan Stronge (Victoria
& Albert Museum), Rosemary Crill (Victoria & Albert
Museum), Vincent Lefevre (Angence France-
Museums), Crispin Branfoot (SOAS), Catherine
Glynn (PhD, Independent scholar), Molly Aitken
(The City College of New York), Kapil Jariwala
(Independent Curator and Co-Curator of the Indian
Portrait at The National Portrait Gallery), Ainsley
Cameron (University of Oxford/British Museum),
Natasha Eaton (UCL) and Christopher Pinney
(UCL)

Events

27 May 2010

Centre of South Asian Studies Annual Lecture
Professor Ebba Koch (Vienna University and
Austrian Academy of Sciences)
Mughal Gardens and Other Approaches to
Landscape and Nature

Scene shot from Sarah Singh's 'The Sky Below'



EVENT REPORTS

Sociologies

WORKSHOP: SOUTH ASIAN ANTHROPOLOGISTS' GROUP (SAAG) 2009, GENEALOGIES OF THOUGHT AND 'INDIAN SOCIOLOGY

22 September 2010

In the early twentieth century, the study of 'tribes' dominated anthropological research in India. The end of Empire and war in Europe, however, coincided with a new interest in India's villages. Anxious post-war governments invested in research in former colonies; while in India, the village became the instrument of centralised planning. The period also marked the birth of a new discipline in India called 'sociology', in which many now well-known Indian, American and European scholars collaborated. The new 'sociology' (generally known as social anthropology in the UK) is best represented in India by the journal *Contributions to Indian Sociology*.

The journal was founded in 1957 by the French sociologist Louis Dumont and David Pocock. Adrian Mayer, now Emeritus Professor of Asian Anthropology at SOAS edited the journal for a period in the 1970s. Today, it is salutary to note their preoccupation with social change as they

attempted to counter the insipid uni-linear model of 'modernisation', 'westernisation' and 'secularisation', which remained strong in sociological and planning discourse at the time.

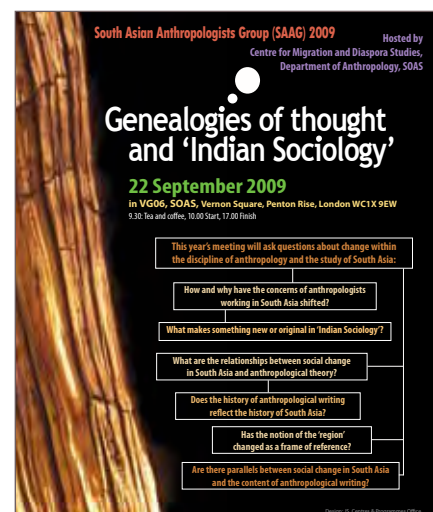
In September 2009, SOAS hosted the annual meeting of the South Asian Anthropologists' Group (with Mayer in attendance). The event started informally in the 1970s at the University of Sussex and has gradually established itself as an important event in the academic calendar. The title of the SOAS meeting was "Genealogies of thought and Indian Sociology", reflecting the pervasive air of nostalgia within the discipline as the voices of the pioneers of the new sociology of the immediate post-colonial years are gradually silenced by the passing of time.

The aim of the meeting was to encourage graduate students and younger scholars to reflect on the genealogies of knowledge and practice that have shaped the modern discipline in which they work, but also to ask new questions of older ideas: How and why have the concerns of anthropologists working in South Asia shifted? What makes something new or original in 'Indian Sociology'? What are the relationships between social change in South Asia and anthropological theory? Does the history of anthropological writing reflect the history of South Asia? Has the notion of the 'region' changed as a frame of

reference? Are there parallels between social change in South Asia and the content of anthropological writing?

The meeting produced animated and cordial discussion on a wide-range of novel topics. However, the day also pressed home some of the problems inherent to disciplinary memory, and the attendant problems of carrying perfectly good ideas forward into new eras of intellectual fashion and language.

Edward Simpson
(who organised SAAG along with
Manuela Ciotti, Dhivya Janarthanan,
Mira Mohsini and Paru Raman)



Wealth

WORKSHOP: MONEY AND WEALTH IN SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY: MEANINGS AND PRACTICES

9-10 October 2009

The South Asia section from the History department organized a workshop entitled: "Money and Wealth in South Asian History: Meanings and Practices" held on 9-10 October 2009.

Money and wealth have been approached from a number of perspectives in South Asian studies—from the numismatist's focus on coins as expressions of dynastic authority to the economic historian's analysis of imperial monetary policy and global precious metal flows, from the anthropologist's analysis of ritualised wealth exchange to the social historian's attention to cycles of debt

among the peasantry and the role of money lenders in rural society. Though much of this scholarship has confronted similar problems and even used similar sources, work has typically been conducted in isolation. This workshop sought to bring scholars working with diverse types of evidence and distinct disciplinary approaches together in a

forum devoted to the relationship between practices and meanings. Presentations were given by historians specializing in ancient, medieval and modern South Asian history who joined us from India, Canada, the United States and the UK. Dr Ed Simpson and Dr Francesca Orsini, SOAS contributed to a round table discussion.

The aim for the workshop is to develop a longer term research project between Dr Amrita Shodhan and Dr Shabnum Tejani in the History Department on the Social History of Money in Gujarat in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We aim to hold a conference developing the same themes in Jawaharlal University in New Delhi at a later date and introduce a speaker series looking at the different approaches to money and wealth from a range of disciplinary perspectives over the next two years.

Shabnum Tejani
Senior Lecturer in the History of
Modern South Asia



EVENT REPORTS

PRESENTATION: ASPECTS OF ASIA: PRESENTATION FOR 6TH FORM STUDENTS

5 November 2009

The Royal Society for Asian Affairs (RSAA) and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) held an annual presentation on Asia for sixth form students on 5th November 2009 at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS.

The day began with an introduction and welcome by Mr. Adrian Steger (RSAA) to the 110 students from 13 schools. He outlined the aim of the meeting, to introduce students to concepts and subjects they may not have previously explored as part of their curriculum, and inspire them to take a closer interest in Asia.

The first speaker, and Chair for the day was Sir David John, Chairman of The Royal Society for Asian Affairs, past vice-Chairman U.K. Trade & Investment, Chairman Premier Oil and Chairman of BSI (National Standards Body for the U.K.). He spoke to the title: Trade & the shift of economic power to Asia.



Sir David John

The emphasis of the talk was on the growth of India and China. This was illustrated by the near equal purchasing power, based on GDP of America and China with India not far behind. The growth rate in the Asian counties was 10% compared to the 1-2% of America. Economic indicators all predicted that China would over take America and the G6 nations by 2050 with India close behind. Over the next 20 years the biggest job market would be in India, then other Asian states then China and all this with the development of globalisation. This was all put into perspective for the audience by comparison with Sir David's varied international career. In the discussion that followed the audience were given valuable career advice possibly unrivalled in expertise.



Learning Arabic with Mr Mohamed Said

The next session was "language tasters", where students had the chance to get a brief introduction to three Asian languages. On this occasion these were: Mr. Mohamed Said (Arabic), Dr Lianyi Song (Mandarin) and Dr Justin Walker (Khmer and Burmese).

This was followed by Professor Michael Hutt, Dean of Languages & Culture at SOAS, previously professor of Nepali and Himalayan studies who spoke about: "Why learn about Asia". He described the development of his enthusiasm for Asia and the Himalayan region and its culture in the course of which he became an academic at SOAS. He stimulated the audience with penetrating questions about their perceptions of Asia. He then described some of the University courses related to Asia available in the U.K. and The wide and varied career possibilities these could lead to.

After lunch Dr. Anne Farrer talked about: Aurel Stein, Central Asian explorer.

The next speaker, (who had kindly agreed to do so at very short notice), was Warren Leaming who spoke about: Business in Asia.

Mr Leaming is Deputy Head of Group Compliance responsible for compliance policy and strategy globally for the HSBC Financial Services Group having previously been Head of Legal and Compliance of HSBC Bank Middle East. He described how very different business and working conditions could be in different countries and the influences of culture, religion, tradition



Adrian Steger (right) with speakers

Sixth Formers

and politics. He discussed the difficulties of legislation made in one country being unrecognised by and inapplicable in another and how a company based in both could be caught in between.

Angus McDowall, a freelance journalist resident in Tehran 2003-7 who travelled extensively in Iran and is a correspondent for Middle East Economic Digest then spoke about: Iran – good, bad or ugly?

The meeting then finished with the Chairman thanking those who had spoken, participated in questions and discussion and the staff of SOAS for their help, in particular Jane Savory.

The following schools and colleges were represented:

- Benenden School
- The Charter School
- Cranbrook School
- Dagenham Park Community School
- Dulwich College
- Kelsey Park Sports College
- Kingsbury School
- Leyton 6th From College
- St. Clare's School
- Sts. Angela's & Bonaventure's 6th Form Centre
- Trinity School
- Westminster School

The Schools day has been running for six years and further details about this years event is available online:

www.soas.ac.uk/centresoffice/events

Adrian Steger
Secretary, The Royal Society for Asian Affairs

Elections

CONFERENCE: UPA IN POWER

17-18 November 2009

Dr Lawrence Saez and Dr Rochana Bajpai won a SOAS Research Committee grant for the purpose of hosting an international conference on new dimensions of India's political system. Funding for the event was also obtained from the University of Birmingham. Leading scholars on Indian politics gathered at SOAS to participate in this conference. Using the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) as an analytical centrepiece, the conference attendees sought to advance our understanding of the relationship between the state and political economy in three critical areas: governance, secularism, and security. In our view, these three features constitute important fault lines between the main national political parties in India. The conference was organised along these three overarching themes.

Three speakers commented on various aspects of the subject of governance. Professor Subrata Kumar Mitra (University of Heidelberg) offered a theoretical overview on the subject of India's governance and national identity. Professor James Manor (Institute of Commonwealth Studies) addressed the question of whether the central government's poverty initiatives help to re-elect it. Professor Harihar Bhattacharya (University of Burdwan) discussed whether the UPA's policy on federalism represented a paradigm shift. Shailaja Fennell (University of Cambridge) spoke on the subject of educational exclusion and inclusive development in India.

The conference attendees also considered important changes to India's policy on secularism. Professor Gurharpal Singh (University of Birmingham) provided an analytical overview of the UPA's policy on secularism. Professor Steve Wilkinson (Yale University) focused his attention on the UPA's policy vis-à-vis Muslims. Dr Rochana Bajpai (SOAS) offered a commentary on the UPA's

rhetoric on social justice and reservations.

The conference attendees also addressed the issue of security and non-traditional security threats. Professor Kanti Bajpai spoke on the UPA's foreign policy (2004-2009). Dr Lawrence Saez (SOAS) presented on the subject of India's energy security during the UPA government. Rahul Roy Chaudhury (International Institute for Strategic Studies, IISS) spoke on India's anti-terrorism and security policy in the first UPA government.

Proceedings from the conference will be made available on book form in 2011. The edited volume, tentatively titled *UPA in Power*, is currently being reviewed by Routledge.



Lawrence Saez
Chair, Centre of
South Asian
Studies

Film Premier

FILM SCREENING AND Q&A: THE SHAPE OF WATER

22 January 2010

What happens when students ask questions could be seen on the 22nd January in Birkbeck College where Kum Kum Bhavnani screened her documentary "The Shape of Water" for the first time in the UK. Originally she only set out to explain to her students what "agency" meant but then the \$5000 project turned out to become a 'real' film with real budget, real camera woman and real editing. This was a challenge not only for Kum Kum who had never made or directed a film before, but also the people she worked with because the budget had to be kept low. Picking four countries, Brazil, India, Israel and Senegal and conflicts which address the issues of economic production, sexuality and reproduction and socialization, the film portrays how women react to these challenges and get organized.

The documentary tries to show that mass movements do have power, that it is possible to fight for own concerns and interests. The story is shaped like water because "Nothing is softer than water" these are the opening lines, and on first sight they seem quite confusing but throughout the documentary it becomes clear that despite obstacles and

resistance, water always finds new routes to flow and despite the water's softness it can never be stopped. And this is the message of the documentary: continued effort always pays off.

The film also shows the gap between local issues and global policy making; it shows how people, and women in particular, deal with policies which have been created by global or supra-national bodies. As Gita Shagal of Amnesty International calls it, policy can be dangerous at this local level. This can be seen in India where the right for patents has driven many farmers into

suicide because big conglomerates create patents for rice types which have been growing in India for thousands of years and for whose crop they are suddenly supposed to pay huge amounts of money. This is why women founded farms at the foot of the Himalayas to promote their independence and biodiversity of the crops. In Senegal, where NGO's fight against female genital mutilation in the name of human rights violations and hygienic reasons, the mindset of many people has not changed. The core of the problem, that is female sexuality and gender issues, has still not been addressed. This is why local women became active to protect their daughters and to promote a change in attitudes.

What makes this film so touching is the enthusiasm and sincere interest of director Kum Kum Bhavnani, which seeps through all scenes, her personal involvement and way of also incorporating critical voices of for instance the Women in Black in Israel. Thus facts and personal life stories blend in together to tell the stories of women who did not give up but started to face challenges actively, they find new ways to deal with difficulties, like water does.



From left to right
Gita Shagal from Amnesty International, Kum Kum
Bhavnani, the director and Susan James, the organiser

Sarah Holz
SOAS

EVENT REPORTS

WORKSHOP: PERSPECTIVES FROM BRITAIN AND NORTH AMERICA

5 December 2009

Perspectives from Britain and North America, a day-long workshop held at London University's Birkbeck College on 5th December 2009, brought together academics and practitioners from both sides of the Atlantic in a continued attempt to map the commonalities that characterise the ways in which Muslims are framed in Europe and North America. Areas of particular emphasis for the day included the production and reception of images of Muslims post-9/11 and questions relating to representation and power, including the way that power elites operate in relation to mainstream media.

Framing Muslims' Principal Investigator Dr Peter Morey opened this final event in the research initiative's three-year AHRC phase with some observations on how the discourse surrounding Muslims has shifted – or failed to shift – during the course of the project's duration. He suggested that although one might have anticipated that a network co-ordinated to interrogate the limitations of various representative modes at a particular historical moment and under a specific regime should, with the end of that era, automatically become defunct, the reality was somewhat different. A change in rhetoric might be identified in the period from Bush to Obama and from Blair to Brown, but the underlying policies – and methods by which Muslims are framed – ultimately remain the same.



In the first panel on 'Muslim Multicultures' Sociologist Haideh Moghissi's paper 'Muslims in Canada: Promises and Pitfalls of Multiculturalism' highlighted how, in Canada's multiethnic society, policies designed to ensure religious communities can practice their faith free from abuse have led in the case of Muslims not so much to a plurality of lifestyles as to segregation and – through the governmental implementation of 'special measures' – to stereotyping and racism. In her ensuing discussion of

'Multiple and Intersecting Identities among British Pakistanis: Negative and Positive Scholarly Frames', Keele academic Pnina Werbner emphasised the importance of 'intersectionality' in promoting a radical pluralist framework for understanding stigmatised social categories. Taking Pakistanis in Manchester as a model, she stressed that – far from remaining true to the types defined by dominant societies – individuals perform multiple identities of 'virtual and moral commitment' to different cultural domains which are creative, dialogical and situational in nature; and argued that policy makers should look to these internal dynamics when formulating their approaches toward different ethnic groups.

The second panel went on to explore the 'Legal Hinterlands' in which Muslims have, of late, found themselves caught. Speaking on "A Culturally Different Enemy" and Other Everyday Expressions of White Supremacy: Reflections on Torture and Muslims, Toronto Professor Sherene Razack, who had been tracking discussions of torture, echoed Peter Morey's sentiments when acknowledging that we might be tempted, four years on from Abu Ghraib, to consider ourselves 'post' torture. However, she argued, in a period when 'Muslim' has become a racial category from which it seems impossible to disaffiliate, it is now possible for all Muslims to be violated without impunity. Continuing with this theme, academic and Attorney at Law Tim Jon Semmerling's memorable paper, 'Extraordinary "Renditions": When Law and Pop Culture Co-Narrate the Bush Administration's Use of Extraordinary Rendition', drew attention to the growth of a dangerous reliance in a postmodern world on the myths of popular culture and on higher or 'legal' truths as a means of 'knowing' the realities of torture, and highlighted the importance of scrutinising such explanatory narratives.

In the afternoon, the third panel turned to the topic of 'Pasts, Presents and Futures'. Nabil Matar's discussion of 'Muslims and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Period' sought to destabilise stereotypes by setting contemporary framings of an Islamic 'Other' against those offered by the fascinating narrative accounts of travellers' journeys in Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth-century. Matar's detailed analysis of these travelogues eloquently illustrated the complexity of Muslim and non-Muslim exchanges and encounters in an earlier period of history. Hishaam Aidi's, 'Moors, Aztecs and Ideologies of Al-Andalus' went on to explore how historical memories of an intrusive Moorish presence haunt contemporary discourses,

Perspectives

debates and policies relating to the migration and integration of North African Moriscos and Latinos, both in Spain and the US. He argued that this was particularly the case in the period post-9/11, following which anxieties about Islam have increasingly been projected onto Hispanic peoples.

'Faith, Race and Belonging' provided the theme of the final panel, which combined a paper on 'Barack Obama, Islam and the Discourses of American Racial Belonging' by the Virginia Tech English Professor, essayist and acerbic critic of the liberal left, Steven Salaita, and an autobiographical talk entitled 'Islam



and Hollywood' by the screenwriter and novelist Kamran Pasha. Salaita examined Obama's handling of the accusations of foreignness and Arab/Muslim alterity lodged against him during the course of his election campaign and his subsequent instalment as President, and highlighted how his assertions of national belonging and normativity in 'post-racial' America rely on a retreat from identification with the 'dark spaces' frequented by Arabs and Muslims today. He suggested that – with time – it might be possible to use such popular outlets to modify stereotypes and imagine alternative and more positive futures for Islam and Muslims in the West.

The day's proceedings drew to a close with a roundtable discussion led by the personal narrative of the Pakistani American journalist Amina H. Saiyid which sparked off a lively and heated discussion from the floor. The summing up of the day's events by the Project co-Director Amina Yaqin highlighted the interdisciplinary dialogue which had taken place throughout the day and its significant contribution toward the overall success of the Framing Muslims network.

Madeline Clements
University of Manchester

www.framingmuslims.org/



Immigrants



A podcast of the lecture is available on the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies website.

www.soas.ac.uk/migration

CENTRE FOR MIGRATION & DIASPORA STUDIES ANNUAL LECTURE 2009-2010: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: IMMIGRANTS IN SPITALFIELDS 1660-2000

23 October 2009

The annual lecture for the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies in 2009-2010 was given by **Dr Anne Kershen**, who founded the Centre for the Study of Migration at Queen Mary in 1995. Whilst centres for the study of migration are now almost ubiquitous on the British academic landscape, the Centre at Queen Mary was one of the first in the UK.

Dr Kershen has long been at the forefront of pushing the boundaries of academic knowledge on migrant populations in Britain, highlighting the long history of migration to this country as well as the complex contributions that migrants have made economically, socially and culturally. Dr Kershen has written extensively on Jewish migrant populations, as well as Bangladeshi and Eastern Europeans, looking at the role

of language, trade union organisation as well as the relationship between food and migration.

In her stimulating and thoughtful talk at SOAS, entitled 'Continuity and Change: immigrants in Spitalfields 1660-2000', Dr Kershen discussed both the similarity and differences between Jewish and Bangladeshi settlers in the east end of London.

Using what she describes as the 'three of the pillars of immigrant life', religion, language and economic activity, Dr Kershen examined the role each played in the processes of integration, and in some cases separation, illustrating that continuity and change in immigrant life has been what has made Spitalfields a place of settlement and transition from the mid-seventeenth century through until today. In so doing, she also spoke more broadly to the fact that Britain is historically an island of migration, providing the context for the more recent changes taking place in Britain's urban centres.

Paru Raman
Chair, Centre for Migration
and Diaspora Studies



Pakistan

PAKISTAN POLICY SEMINAR SERIES: BUILDING DEMOCRACY

5 February 2010

REDUCING MILITANCY

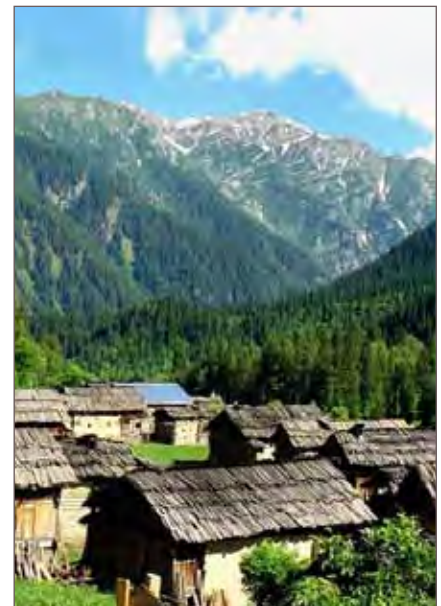
12 March 2010

The Centre of South Asian Studies sponsored its first Pakistan Policy Seminar Series in Term 2 at SOAS. **Maha Hosain Aziz**, Senior Teaching Fellow in South Asian Politics and Asia Insight Columnist for Business Week, delivered a lecture on Pakistan's struggle to achieve democracy (Feb 5), detailing the various local and global factors that have made democratic consolidation an impossibility since 1947. Aziz also delivered a lecture explaining the historical and



contemporary strains of militancy, including ethnic, sectarian and Taliban-related forms of violence in the troubled state (March 12). The second part of both seminars was devoted to discussion; an audience of students, academics and journalists brainstormed policy suggestions for achieving democracy and reducing militancy in Pakistan.

Maha Aziz
Research Associate



EVENT REPORTS

CONFERENCE: PORTRAITURE IN SOUTH ASIA 21-22 May 2010

On 21 and 22 May SOAS and the National Portrait Gallery jointly convened an international conference, with support from the Victoria and Albert Museum, dedicated to the discussion of portraiture in South Asia. The event coincided with the exhibition *The Indian Portrait 1560-1860* at the National Portrait Gallery (11 March-20 June 2010). The thirteen papers delivered by both new and established scholars from India, Europe and the United States examined a variety of themes and issues, demonstrating the richness and variety of traditions of portraiture in South Asia.



The first day at the National Portrait Gallery was dedicated to the Indo-Persian traditions of portraiture at the Mughal court and their contemporaries in the Deccan in the 16th and 17th centuries. Mughal paintings of rulers are the most familiar portraits to a wider audience but new material emerges and innovative perspectives developed. The topics examined included the genesis of Mughal portraiture during Humayun's reign, newly-discovered albums from Jahangir's reign in the Royal Library at Windsor, women in Mughal painting, the idea of the portrait in Indo-Persian literature, the impact of European representations of rulers on full-length portraits of Jahangir, and the diplomatic role of portraits between Bijapur and the Mughals.

The second day at SOAS examined portraiture beyond the Indo-Persian courts of the Mughals. The emphasis on the pictorial record shifted with two papers examining the sculpture and literary conception of portraiture before the 16th century, and the sculpted images of Nayaka rulers in south Indian temples. The rich and varied traditions of Rajput portraiture were the subject of the next papers: the integration of ruler portraits into Rajput *ragamala* paintings in Rajasthan and the Pahari region, the development of

court portraiture as an assertion of political status in early 19th-century Devgarh, and the reformulation of royal portraiture by a Bikaner court artist in the colonial era. The new technologies and functions of portraiture in colonial and modern India were examined in the final papers, focussing on the legal status of the portrait and ideas of physiognomy in early 19th-century Calcutta, and the transformation of portraiture in India as a result of the development of both photography and chromolithography. The list of speakers and the paper abstracts are available at:

www.soas.ac.uk/events/event57887.html

Over eighty people attended the conference contributing to the lively discussion and debate at this very enjoyable and successful event.

Crispin Branfoot
Senior Lecturer in South Asian Art
and Archaeology

**THE
INDIAN
PORTRAIT**
1560-1860

Portraiture

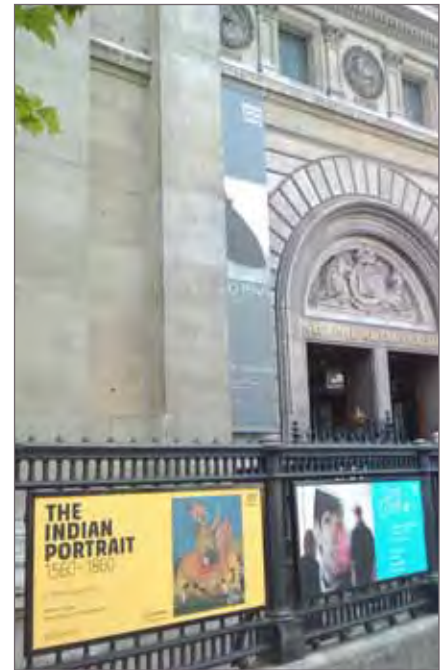


IMAGE: Kunwar Anop Singh of Devgarh riding with a falcon, Devgarh, Mewar, Rajasthan, attributed to Bakhta, c. 1776. Museum Rietberg Zurich. Gift of Dr. Carlo Fleischmann Foundation and acquisition. © Museum Rietberg Zurich. Photo: Wettstein & Kauf

The Classics



Whitney Cox and Sheldon Pollock

LECTURE: SHELDON POLLOCK: CRISIS IN THE CLASSICS

17 May 2010

On the evening of 17 May, the Centre for South Asian Studies was delighted to welcome Sheldon Pollock, William B. Ransford Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Columbia University, for the occasion of a public lecture in the Khalili Lecture Theatre. The lecture, entitled "Crisis in the Classics," was chaired by Professor Paul Webley, SOAS's director and principal. Pollock began on a dark note, detailing the precipitous decline in the knowledge of India's historical languages over the past several decades. Seen from the perspective of classical studies in South Asia, this decline has been near-catastrophic: any of a number of the major languages of literature and scholarship, among them Old Kannada, classical Hindi, and Indo-Persian, risk extinction in the next several decades. Provocatively, Pollock linked this ongoing crisis to the public priorities of independent India, especially the newly materially prosperous India of the post-liberalisation era, as a burgeoning global economic power seemingly intent on a public act of voluntary collective amnesia.

This was only the first movement to Pollock's lecture: instead of just seeking to assign blame, in his second half he laid out a programme of what should be done and why, in his own words, anyone should care. He called for a renewed focus within the global university on the practices of philology as a general meta-discipline for making sense of textual language, his argument for the relevance of which—pitched to an imagined university administrator—was aimed at recovery the widest possible sense of 'the classical.' To know the past as classical is, he concluded, to recover some irreducible part of our own humanity.

Pollock's thoughts occasioned a lively discussion, which continued long after the lecture hall had emptied. The lecture, at once sobering and challenging, spoke to problems and enduring questions of deep significance to the Centre, to the Faculty of Languages and Cultures, and indeed to SOAS in general.

Whitney Cox
Lecturer in Sanskrit

Landscape

CENTRE FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES' ANNUAL LECTURE: EBBA KOCH: MUGHAL GARDENS AND OTHER APPROACHES TO LANDSCAPE AND NATURE

27 May 2010

In this year's annual lecture, Professor Ebba Koch ((Vienna University and Austrian Academy of Sciences) explored the Mughals' garden culture and relationship with India's landscape in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She discussed the use of the carefully ordered and planned gardens – terraced, beside a river or with a mausoleum as the centre-piece such as the Taj Mahal – as the imposition of the new Mughal order in India. But she broadened our understanding of the 'Mughalization of nature' by also considering other forms of their landscape architecture more familiar to earlier Indic tradition, such as rock-cut gardens in Ajmer and Dhoolpur and Jahangir's monolithic elephants on the road to Kashmir.

Dr Ebba Koch is a professor of Asian art at the Institute of Art History, Vienna University and a senior researcher at the Institute of Iranian Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences.



She was visiting professor at Harvard (2008/09) and Oxford (2008). Since 2001 Prof. Koch has been global advisor to the Taj Mahal Conservation Collaborative, and she was Austrian delegate to the Management Committee of the "Network of Comparative Empires" of the European Commission (2005-2009). Her research interests are Mughal art and architecture, the political and symbolic meaning of art, and the artistic connections between the Mughals and their neighbours and Europe. Her publications include Mughal Architecture (1991), Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology (2001) and The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra (2006).



Crispin Branfoot with Ebba Koch

Crispin Branfoot
Senior Lecturer in South Asian Art

EVENT REPORTS

BOOK LAUNCH: VIRGINIA WHILES: 'ART AND POLEMIC IN PAKISTAN'

3 June 2010

On the 3rd of June the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies hosted a book launch for 'Art and Polemic in Pakistan: cultural politics and tradition in contemporary miniature painting' by Dr Virginia Whiles. Professor Chris Pinney from UCL provided a lively and informed introduction to the book, which tells the unlikely story of political subversion through the medium of Mughal miniature painting. Dr Whiles, who completed her PhD at SOAS in the department of anthropology and sociology, is ideally suited to production of such an original piece of scholarship.

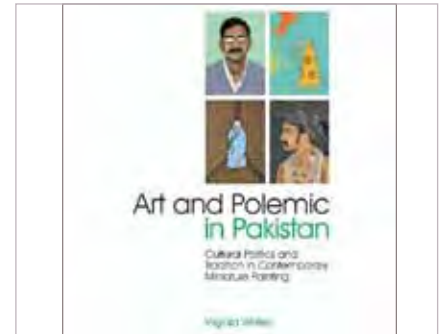
A long time expert on the art world in general and artistic production in Pakistan in particular, she has taught for many years at the University of the Arts, as well as the National College of Art in Lahore. Critic, curator and anthropologist, Dr Whiles has produced a

groundbreaking and informed academic text on the phenomenon of artists in Pakistan who are using the traditional medium of miniature painting to challenge changing politics at home and abroad. She also tackles the questions which are raised when such radical forms of subversion become desirable and fashionable commodities on the global art market.



Paru Raman with Virginia Whiles

Pakistan



Over 60 paintings from artists based at the National College of Art at Lahore are reproduced in the book, illuminating the links between art and cultural politics.

Paru Raman
Chair, Centre for Migration
and Diaspora Studies



From left to right
Rachel Dwyer, Jessica Hines & Anna Morcom

On March 3rd a number of alumni from the South Asia Department gathered in Vijay's, a South Indian restaurant in Queen's Park. The connection was Indian Cinema, or Professor Rachel Dwyer's BA and MA courses as well as PhD students, to be precise.

Old acquaintances and new spent the evening catching up, swapping notes (and contact details) and sharing news on all things filmi. In attendance were most of the current Masters course students,

SOAS ALUMNI GATHERING

and former students including Georgie Carroll, currently working in advertising and writing a book; Fifi Haroun, media advisor, journalist and events organiser amongst many other things; Charlie Henniker, director of sketch comedy group The Unexpected Items and working in Digital Marketing at BBC Worldwide; Jessica Hines, author of 'Looking for the Big B: Bollywood, Bachchan and Me' for Bloomsbury and founder of Inside India; David Lunn, a PhD student and Teaching Fellow at SOAS (allowed to attend as second marker of cinema papers and film enthusiast); Anna Morcom, whose PhD was on Hindi film songs, now Academic Fellow at Royal Holloway College, University of London and author of 'Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema' (2007), Tibetan singer, writer on Bollywood music and dance and Tibetan culture; Shikha Sethi, now working in publishing; and of course Rachel and Michael Dwyer (SOAS alumnus, in African history).

Aside from the delicious food, the impromptu mehfil (songs from Mughal-e Azam to Kal Ho Naa Ho were sung) and the inclusion of Rupee notes (Indian & Pakistani) in the bill total, there was a heartening display of the post-SOAS employment record. All those in attendance were pursuing fulfilling and exciting careers (and sometimes two or more at the same time) and continuing to contribute to a global network of activity, often drawing directly on their study of Hindi cinema and Indian culture.

Further alumni events like this are being planned, and suggestions are welcome – we aim to host a more structured event or evening next time.

Rachel Dwyer
Professor of Indian Cultures and Cinema

CHARLES WALLACE TRUST

REPORT OF CHARLES WALLACE INDIAN FELLOW

2009-2010

I was the Charles Wallace Indian Fellow at SOAS, University of London, for 2009-10. My visit lasted three months, from 25 January to 27 April 2010, during which I worked on the project "Normativity, Power and Politics in Post/colonial India.

In writing this report, this sum-total of reflection on three exciting months, I would of course begin with the obvious: The location in London, which is of utmost benefit to a historian. The British Library yielded much of its promise, and much archival material that was germane to my research. There were, in particular, ethnographies on Mysore, accounts of the origins and customs of jaties, etc that I found particularly useful to my project, part of which is to trace the genealogy of collective identities such as caste, as they formed during the colonial period.

The three months spent at SOAS were also a time away from the everyday demands of my regular job: time that I used to write a paper, which I had been thinking about for a while. I presented this paper at my seminar at SOAS on 25 March, and had an engaged response from the audience. There were other conferences / talks that came as opportunities to travel, meet people and share thoughts. One was the Eighth European Social Science History Conference (EESHG), which was held at Ghent, Belgium between April 1 and 15, 2010. Apart from the diversity of themes covered under the rubric of Social Science History in a European conference, and the sheer numbers of panels and presentations, what stayed from the conference was Ghent itself, a city I found magical, especially by night. I was also invited to speak to the South Asia Studies reading group at the University of Cambridge. Unfortunately, the volcanic ash kept most students and regular members of the reading group stranded at various airports, during the time that my talk was scheduled.

Short visits often pack a great deal of experience within a short space of time: they condense life, as it were. One such experience was meeting very interesting people, whom I would also like to thank in this report. I met Professor James Manor at a meeting of the South Asia Studies reading group at the London School of Economics (LSE). I had stimulating conversations with Professor Manor, given our common interests in Karnataka and its political history. Professor Manor also introduced me to other political

theorists, particularly Professor Niraja Gopal Jayal and Lord Bhikhu Parekh. One of my most memorable experiences in London was meeting Lord Parekh at the House of Lords for tea and a chat about his research and mine. At SOAS, I found Dr Rochana Bajpai, my sponsor, to be a committed interlocutor and a trusted friend. I shared my office at SOAS with Dr Valentina Boretti, in whom I found an ally in dealing with all the minor crises that emerged during the visit. I must also mention Dr Bhukhya Bhangya, British Academy Postdoctoral Visiting Fellow, and other friends who together formed a transient community while I was there. To all these people, I owe many thanks.

Above all, I would like to thank Mr Richard Aford, Secretary, Charles Wallace India Trust, who was extremely supportive during my visit. I was impressed by the interest and investment that Mr Alford shows in every individual Charles Wallace Fellow who visits the UK. I had the pleasure of many warm interactions with Mr. Alford during my visit, and he always looked out for me with care.

Finally, I must say that a three-month stay gives a visitor a sense of the place in a way that short visits do not. The experience that one gains in three months is not the monument-hopping, check-list experience of a three-day tourist town. It is the slower experience in which one learns to ride the public transport, ponder if there is the elusive trait that one calls Britishness, and becomes sensitive to ways of life. My stay at London opened to me the charms of this way of life. In addition to the monuments, the rewarding museum fatigue and the theatre. What I took away from this trip, from London, was to get over my many fears. To go there anyway; for there was adventure not to be missed in the city's streets and paved by-lanes, where reserved people looked out from cosy cafes or warmly lit pubs. London to me became all these things, in addition to a city with a throbbing academic culture, alive with various reading groups, weekly seminars and cultural events.

Dr Lakshmi Arya
2009-2010 Charles Wallace Indian Fellow



Lakshmi Arya with Lord Bhikhu Parekh



Charles Wallace Visiting Fellowships at SOAS

Two three month Visiting Fellowships are awarded annually by the Centre of South Asian Studies, SOAS, one with the Charles Wallace India Trust and the other with the Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust.

The fellowships are awarded to those who have completed a PhD and are ready to make the most of a short period of study and discussion at SOAS. Applicants must be an Indian/Pakistan national and be residing in India/Pakistan at the time the application is submitted.

Applications are encouraged in particular from those scholars who have had no or little opportunity to do research outside India/Pakistan.

The closing date for the 2010/2011 fellowships beginning in the following January-March 2011 was Tuesday, 31 August 2010.

Details of the fellowships, including the candidate criteria, application procedure and the current and past fellows, are available online:

www.soas.ac.uk/southasianstudies/fellowship/

Charles Wallace Trusts

The four Charles Wallace trusts support a number of other fellowship schemes and aid for postgraduate students. You can find further information and guidance by visiting their website which will give you access to information on the individual trusts.

www.wallace-trusts.org.uk/

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

As **Shuja Al-Haq** was submitting his PhD thesis on Sufism and its development in the Punjab at SOAS in 1994, he knew the research project for the years to come, namely, designing a course for the Islamic world.

The Islamic world seems to have lost its script since the rise of modernity and the loss of its political, cultural independence. Even after its freedom from the colonial yoke, it could never bring about a reconciliation between modernity, a new way of thinking brought in by the West, and tradition, or its understanding of its own past. The continued deep ambivalence of the global Islamic community between these two poles of its world propelled me to design a university course that could weave a new synthesis with the help of the range of critical works produced, especially since the scientific revolution of the early twentieth century (1900-1927), in the areas of religion, philosophy, science and art (these being four major *forms* or *languages* of knowledge).

The effort resulted in a two semester postgraduate course called History of Knowledge that begins with a definition of knowledge as a network of concepts and their relations that the human creates in his interaction with nature. This means, firstly, that the history of knowledge, far from beginning in Greece 2600 years ago, must be as long as the human's emergence on the planet as homo sapiens. And, secondly, history of thought or knowledge is a study of the growth, both in size and complexity, of the network through its various phases.

Having written the script he joined Bahauddin Zakariyya University, Multan, Pakistan, last July where he is currently teaching it to the MPhil students of philosophy and sociology. The outline and bibliography of the course and the related papers can be seen on:

worldhok.blogspot.com

onthethirdway.blogspot.com

Shuja Al-Haq



Maha Hosain Aziz is a Senior Teaching Fellow in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). She is co-convenor of the year-long undergraduate course in South Asian politics, lecturing on democracy, development and identity groups in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Afghanistan. She also created the first policy seminar series at SOAS for students, journalists and academics to debate ways to improve democracy and reduce militancy in Pakistan.

Maha is currently researching the link between economics, psychology and militant recruitment. She writes a regular column for the Global and Asia Insight sections of Business Week. She focuses on varied South Asian topics, including ways to improve India-Pakistan ties, strategies for reducing militant recruitment in Pakistan as well as the social and political effects of global terrorism.

She previously taught British politics and democratic institutions at the London School of Economics (LSE). She received two departmental teaching prizes and a teaching excellence award. She was also awarded the C&J Modi/Narayanan Fellowship for her PhD at the LSE. Her doctoral research ex-

plains recurring government breakdown in unconsolidated democracies through the lens of development policy. She has delivered lectures on her research at various institutions, including Georgetown University, SOAS and the LSE.

Maha earned her Bachelors degree in International Relations from Brown University and a Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University. She also received a Masters in Comparative Politics from the LSE, before pursuing her PhD in Political Science. She previously worked in Investment Banking and Media.

Recent Publications

A sample of Maha's Business Week column:

To Fight Terror in Pakistan, Create Jobs

www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/nov2009/gb20091125_996881.htm

Fight Terrorism in Pakistan with Rural Outsourcing

www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/jan2010/gb20100112_786682.htm

Pakistan, Terrorist Recruits and Economic Stress

www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/jun2010/gb2010068_515072.htm

Maha Azia



How to Warm India-Pakistan Ties

www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/apr2010/gb2010044_082450.htm

Pakistan: Still Reeling from Cricket Terrorism

www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/feb2010/gb2010029_465004.htm

All of her columns are available at:

www.businessweek.com/bios/Maha_Hosain_Azia.htm

RESEARCH STUDENTS SEPT 09 - AUG 10

Sanaa ALIMIA

Afghans in Pakistan: Reworking Citizenship and Sources of Political Power, 1978-2009
Supervisor: Dr Matthew NELSON

Val ANDERSON

The Eurasian 'problem' in nineteenth century India
Supervisor: Professor Peter ROBB

Sampachentin APTCHOURAHMAN

Educational rights of the Turkish minority in Greece
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Anwasha ARYA

Tradition and text: Śāstra, statute and the living law of dowry as sadācāra
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

David AZZOPARDI

Buddhism amongst Sri Lanka Diaspora Communities in the UK
Supervisor: Dr Kate CROSBY

Nagasena BHIKKHU

The Significance of the Sima (Monastic Boundary) in Burmese and Bangladeshi Buddhism
Supervisor: Dr Kate CROSBY

Nazmuzzaman BHUIAN

Press freedom in Bangladesh
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Upal CHAKRABARTI

Land and 'improvement' during early British rule: Cuttack Division, 1803-66
Supervisor: Professor Peter ROBB

Rupa CHAKRABORTY

A Syntactic Study of the Dialect of Sylhet with Reference to Standard Colloquial Bengali (draft title)
Supervisor: Dr William RADICE

Mayurika CHAKRAVORTY

Bengali fantasy literature
Supervisor: Dr William RADICE

Biswajit CHANDA

Family law reform in Bangladesh: The need for a culture-specific legal system
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Mona CHETTRI

Identity Politics in the Eastern Himalayan Borderland
Supervisor: Professor Michael HUTT

Phibul CHOOMPOLPAISAL

Conflicting Interpretations of Modern Thai Political Buddhism: Reflections on Sociology, Sources and Academic versus Insider Interpretations
Supervisor: Dr Kate CROSBY

Pragya DHITAL

Paper Chains: An Investigation of Translingual Commerce in North Indian Print Media
Supervisor: Dr Matthew NELSON

Meenu GAUR

Kashmir on Screen: Region, Religion and Secularism in Hindi Cinema (Completed 2010)
Supervisor: Professor Rachel DWYER

Meenu GAUR

The Kashmir of Hindi Cinema (Completed Feb 2010)
Supervisor: TBC

Leon GOLDMAN

The Avestan hymn to Justice
Supervisor: Dr Almut HINTZE

Sambaiah GUNDIMEDA

Title: TBC
Supervisor: Dr Matthew NELSON and Dr Rochana BAJPAI

Syed Asif HAIDER

Muslim modernities in Indian cinema
Supervisor: Professor Rachel DWYER

Louise HARRINGTON

Conflicted places and thirdspaces: the landscape of Partition in South Asian literature and film
Supervisor: Dr Amina YAQIN

Ana JELNIKAR

Towards Universal Man: R. Tagore, W.B. Yeats, and Srečko Kosovel: Identity in difference (Awarded 2009)
Supervisor: TBC

Akhil KATYAL

Same-Sex Intimacy and Ideas of the Self in Modern India
Supervisor: Dr Amina YAQIN

Emir KAYA

Balance of negotiating normativities in legal theory: The Turkish Diyanet's mediation for higher public interest through realist altruism
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Masum KHAN

D. H. Lawrence and the post-Tagore modernist writings in Bengali Literature (draft title)
Supervisor: Dr William RADICE

Sonia KHAN

Caretaker government in Bangladesh: Salvation or a recipe for disaster?
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Lidia LEWANDOWSKA-NAYAR

The place and role of Narottama Dasa Thakura in development of Bengali Vaishnavism (draft title)
Supervisor: Dr William RADICE

David LUNN

Looking for common ground in the Hindu/Urdu controversy
Supervisor: Dr Francesca ORSINI

Zaad MAHMOOD

Determinants of labour reform in India
Supervisor: Dr Lawrence SAEZ

Mara MALAGODI

The Nepalese constitution (Awarded 2009)
Supervisor: Professor Michael HUTT and Professor Werner F MENSKI

Anushay MALIK

Worker activism in Lahore, 1950s-1980s
Provisional title
Supervisor: Professor Peter ROBB

Rastin MEHRI

The Zoroastrians of British Columbia
Supervisor: Dr Almut HINTZE

Leena MITFORD

19th century Urdu literature
Supervisor: Professor Christopher SHACKLE

Nuno MOURATO

Translating Hinduism: Responses in English to Hindu Spiritual Texts (1785-1973) (Completed April 2010)
Supervisor: TBC

Aparajita MUKHOPADHYAY

Railways, journeys and the idea of space in late nineteenth-century North India
Provisional title
Supervisor: Professor Peter ROBB

Faris NASRALLAH

Legal management of internal plurality in Iraq
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Manjita PALIT

Songs of the Body: Embodiments of Sexuality in Bengali Literature and Culture 1880-1920 (Awarded 2009)
Supervisor: TBC

Mridhula PILLAY

Managing law and religion: A comparative study of India and Malaysia
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Shamraiz QAYYUM

Muslim skilled socio-legal navigation in Britain
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Muhammad Mahbubur RAHMAN

Sentencing policy and practice in Bangladesh: A study on the sentencing decisions of the Supreme Court in murder cases
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Rashi ROHATGI

The Mauritian poet Abhimanyu Unnuth 'Shabnam'
Supervisor: Dr Francesca ORSINI

Udeni SAMARASEKARA

Reconstructing the transition from oral to written: the comparative genesis and reception of the Iliad, the Rāmāyaṇa, and the Aeneid
Supervisor: Dr Renate SÖHNEN-THIEME

Soofia SIDDIQUE

Remembering the Revolt of 1857
Supervisor: Dr Francesca ORSINI

Priyadarshini SINGH

Title TBC
Supervisor: Dr Matthew NELSON and Dr Rochana BAJPAI

Federica SONA

In the shadow of uniformity: Muslim marriages in Europe
Supervisor: Professor Werner F MENSKI

Krishna Prasad UPADHYAYA

International Humanitarian Law and Vulnerability: the Tharu experience of Nepal's internal conflict
Supervisor: Professor Michael HUTT

Arash ZEINI

The Pahlavi version of the Yasna Haptanghaiti
Supervisor: Dr Almut HINTZE

SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH (SAR)

South Asia Research is an interdisciplinary area journal for the South Asia region, now published by Sage Publications in London and edited by Werner MENSKI. The topics covered include modern and pre-modern history, politics, economics, anthropology, literary and visual culture, language and literature. Its primary aim is to give rapid access to current research work and to provide opportunities for publication to research students as well as to established scholars. In addition to reports of research in progress and book reviews, review articles



are also welcome. South Asia Research also publishes 'thought pieces' and interpretative essays that address issues and problems arising from new research.

SAR now appears three times a year and is available electronically through SAGE, which has led to a much larger readership for the journal, as access figures demonstrate.

SAR is available online at

<http://sar.sagepub.com/>

Free access to table of contents and abstracts.
Site-wide access to the full texts for members of
subscribing institutions



CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES CELEBRATION OF ENDOWMENT: THE SEIYU KIRIYAMA LECTURESHIP IN BUDDHIST STUDIES

16 June 2010

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Agon Shu's endowment of The Seiyu Kiriya Lectureship in Buddhist Studies and the Centre for Buddhist Studies in the Department of the Study of Religions, the School welcomed the Director for International Affairs of the Agon Shu, Mrs Kazuko Maki, and representative of the London branch of Agon Shu, Mrs Yumiko Mitchell on the 16th of June 2010.

To mark the occasion the founding director of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Dr Tadeusz Skorupski, arranged a magnificent display of Bharat Natyam, Kathak and eastern Tibetan dance performances, the "Aesthetic Vibrations of Buddhist Enlightenment" in the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre. An audience of 300 guests were entertained by the dance groups Kalasagara UK, Treveni Dance Company and Nam-Sa Tashi Theatre Group. This was followed by a

sushi reception in the Brunei Gallery. The School then hosted a dinner at the Pearl restaurant in Holborn in honour of our guests from Agon Shu.

On arrival Mrs Maki was welcomed by Director Prof. Paul Webley and other staff of the School. Dr Lucia Dolce presented Mrs Maki with her latest book in Japanese, published earlier this year. Speeches by Prof. Webley, Prof. Almut Hintze (HoD, SoR), and Dr Kate Crosby thanked the Agon Shu for their generosity – noting that this had enabled SOAS to offer a breadth of teaching and research in Buddhist Studies unparalleled at any university in the world outside of Asia – and expressed their appreciation of Dr. Skorupski's leadership in bringing the endowment to SOAS and starting the Centre. Mrs Maki replied to these speeches with her own vote of thanks and a special message from Seiyu Kiriya,

the founder of Agon Shu. The endowed lectureship has now been named in his honour.

The first holder of the Seiyu Kiriya Lectureship in Buddhist Studies is Dr. Crosby, who will also take over as director of the Centre on Dr Skorupski's retirement later this year. A farewell party and dinner for Dr Skorupski was held on 22 June. He will rejoin us in 2010-2011 as the Visiting Numata Professor in Buddhist Studies, to deliver a lecture series on 'Consciousness in Buddhism.'

Kate Crosby
Senior Lecturer in Buddhist Studies



TAGORE DAYS IN LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

18-20 March 2010

With Rabindranath Tagore's 150th anniversary of his birth coming up, Slovenia, in its capital of Ljubljana, hosted a number of distinguished international scholars to reevaluate the legacy of Tagore's works for the new millennium, as well as probe and promote her enduring creative links with India.

Organized by the Department of Asian and African Studies at the Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana) with support from the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Embassy of India, Prof Malashri Lal from the University of New Delhi, historian Uma Das Gupta from Kolkata and Shantiniketan, Tagore translator and scholar William Radice from SOAS (University of London), bilingual writer, Tagore scholar and translator Ketaki Kushari Dyson ensured a comprehensive treatment of Tagore's legacy, addressing the significance of his literary works, practical achievements in education and rural reconstruction, his philosophy, particularly as it stands in relationship with his creative works, the politics of language and the importance of living tradition.

If this formed the crux of the morning panel of the academic seminar Rabindranath Tagore and His Legacy for the World Today held at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, the afternoon panel moved on to consider Tagore's international impact with respect to China, Central Europe, Croatia and Slovenia. Prof. Jana Rošker shared her expertise on Tagore's trip to China, evaluating its cultural significance, Imre Bangha of the University of Oxford and authority on Tagore's reception in Hungary examined the various metamorphoses of the Indian poet in the reception history of the region, while Indologist Klara Gonc Močanin from the University of Zagreb threw light on Tagore's reception in Croatia and Ana Jelnicar explored the deeper connections between the Slovenian poet Srečko Kosovel and Tagore in the larger context of the Indian poet's reception in Slovenia.

The symposium's coordinators Tamara Ditrich and Ana Jelnicar were pleased with the impressive turnout at the event that gathered area scholars, literature experts, students and Tagore lovers alike. With Prof Jana Rošker, the head of the Department of Asian and African studies, they remain optimistic that the establishment of the Indian Studies Department at the University of Ljubljana planned for the near future will indeed go ahead.



The new publication of Tagore's selected short stories in Slovenian translation, *Izbrane zgodbe* (Cankarjeva založba, tr. by Dušanka Zabukovec, selected and introduced by Ana Jelnicar), in fact the 30th publication of Tagore's translated works to date, testifies to the fact that Tagore's reception amongst Slovenes is a continuous and living tradition.

Tagore Days in Ljubljana catered to a wider, non-specialist audience with the production of Tagore's dance drama *Chandalika* on Friday 19th March at the Cultural Centre Cankarjev dom in Ljubljana, performed by the internationally renowned Mamata Shankar dance troupe from Kolkata. Finally, as it befits one of the great poets of the modern age, the Tagore Days were brought to a close by a literary reading at the Jazz Club Gajo in the heart of Ljubljana on the Saturday night. His poetry was read in many different languages, followed by a reading of the Slovenian writers Iztok Osojnik, Meta Kušar, Andrej Blatnik, Gregor Podlogar and Evald Flisar whose works have been inspired by India. In an intermingling of many languages and poetics, both past and present, in a relaxed and friendly exchange between cultures and individuals, the reading at Gajo was in itself proof of the best legacy Tagore has yet to teach the world.

Ana Jelnicar



Painting by Rabindranath Tagore



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