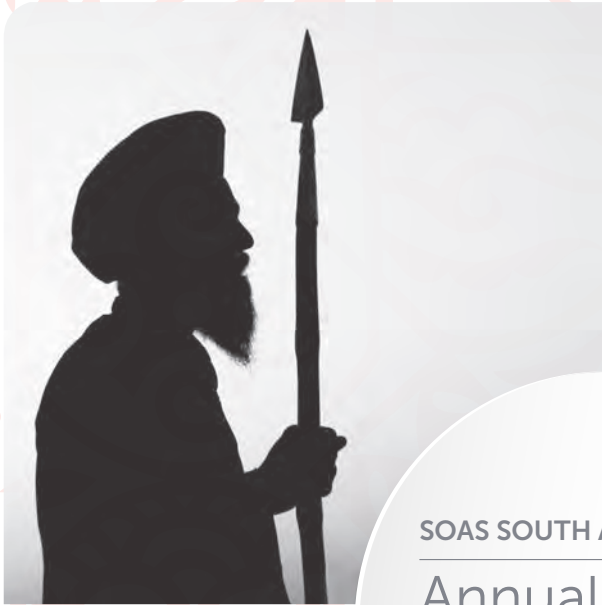




**SOUTH ASIA  
INSTITUTE**

SOAS University of London



SOAS SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE

Annual Review  
2013 - 2014  
and Academic Directory





## Contents

## About SOAS, University of London

SOAS, University of London is the only Higher Education institution in Europe specialising in the study of Asia, Africa and the Near and Middle East.

SOAS is a remarkable institution. Uniquely combining language scholarship, disciplinary expertise and regional focus, it has the largest concentration in Europe of academic staff concerned with Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

On the one hand, this means that SOAS scholars grapple with pressing issues - democracy, development, human rights, identity, legal systems, poverty, religion, social change - confronting two-thirds of humankind while at the same time remaining guardians of specialised knowledge in languages and periods and regions not available anywhere else in the UK.

This makes SOAS synonymous with intellectual enquiry and achievement. It is a global academic base and a crucial resource for London. We live in a world of shrinking borders and of economic and technological simultaneity. Yet it is also a world in which difference and regionalism present themselves acutely. It is a world that SOAS is distinctively positioned to analyse, understand and explain.

Our academic focus on the languages, cultures and societies of Africa, Asia and the Middle East makes us an indispensable interpreter in a complex world.

Teaching and learning programmes at SOAS are distinctive, and students can pursue courses combining languages, disciplines and regional studies unavailable elsewhere.

SOAS continues to rely heavily, at undergraduate and postgraduate level, on small group teaching and the cultivation of independent, critical thought by its students.

71% of SOAS degrees earn first or upper second class passes, a performance that has seen the School rank in the top ten nationally for the past five years.

Students pursue courses in law and the social sciences (46%), in the humanities (36%) and in language, literature and linguistic studies (24%).

SOAS has a diverse and cosmopolitan student body. There are more than 6,000 students, 45% of whom are postgraduates.

In 2013-14 SOAS received 867 applications from students in South Asia.

SOAS teaching has consistently been awarded high grades by the Quality Assessment Agency and our student/staff ratio remains one of the best in the country.

SOAS offers over 350 undergraduate Bachelors degree combinations, close to 200 taught Master's degrees, and MPhil/PhD research degree programmes are available in every academic department.

We also offer a wide range of non-degree programmes, including Foundation courses, Language courses, JYA, Exchange and Erasmus programmes.

Welcome from the Director, Professor Michael Hutt	2
Introducing the Team	4
Academic Directory	5
News Bulletin	26
Reports from our Research Fellows	30
Dr Mari Miyamoto	30
Dr Ramesh Bairy	32
MA Intensive South Asian Studies	34
Events	36
Some Highlights	36
Events Listing 2013-2014	46
Centre for the Study of Pakistan	50
Muslim South Asia Research Forum (MUSA)	52
Research Students	54
Current PhDs	54
Completed PhDs	58
Journal: South Asia Research	61
South Asia in the SOAS Library	62
SOAS Alumni in South Asia	63
Khuda Hafiz Emeritus Professor Menski!	64
Join the SOAS South Asia Institute	Back cover



## Welcome from the Director, Professor Michael Hutt

Welcome to the first Annual Review of the SOAS South Asia Institute. The Institute – the 'SSAI' – replaced SOAS' Centre of South Asian Studies in January 2014 and is an important part of SOAS's renewed investment in regional studies as it approaches its centenary year.



Photography: Noor Naina



The study of Indian and South Asian societies, languages and cultures has been a central part of the SOAS mission throughout its first century of existence, and SOAS now has the largest multi-disciplinary community of scholars working exclusively on South Asia of any university in Europe. Some sixty academics in thirteen different departments offer more than 100 courses on the anthropology, art, culture, development, economics, films, history, law, literature, music, politics and religions of South Asia. Uniquely in the UK, they also teach five South Asian languages at degree level: Bengali, Hindi, Nepali, Sanskrit and Urdu. This review contains a full profile of each and every SOAS academic member of the South Asia Institute, and a listing of all of the students working here on doctoral theses relating to South Asia. I am grateful to Sana Shah, the SSAI's Executive Officer, for the hard work that went into compiling this valuable directory.

During the academic year 2013-14 we hosted and organized more than forty talks, seminars and other events. These included conferences and workshops on the general elections in India, the constituent assembly elections in Nepal, Panchayats in South Asia, and the work and scholarly legacy of the late Dr Simon Digby; half a dozen film screenings followed by Q&A sessions with the films' directors; the annual lectures of the South Asia Institute and the Centre for the Study of Pakistan, delivered by Professor Yasmin Saikia and Professor Kamran Ali respectively; a graduate student workshop on 'crossing borders in South Asia'; and celebrations of a much-loved film ('Bhaji on the Beach') and a monument of world literature (Tagore's Gitanjali), organised in collaboration with UK-based arts and charity organisations.

We also welcomed several distinguished visitors, including the Nepali ambassador to UK and Ireland, Dr Suresh Chalise, in February, the Indian Minister for External Affairs, Shri Salman Khurshid, in March, and the Indian film star Sharmila Tagore, in June. Each of them addressed very well attended gatherings.

Brief reports on many of these events may be found in the following pages. Unless otherwise stated, all of our evening events are open to the public, and they attract an external audience of people from many different walks of life.

In March we were joined by Dr Mari Miyamoto, who will be with us as a Newton International Research Fellow for a period of two years. Dr Miyamoto is working on plural interpretations of secularism and religious integration in Bhutan. We were also very happy to host the 2013-14 Charles Wallace Trust India fellow, Dr Ramesh Bairy, for three months. We thank the CWIT for its continued sponsorship of this fellowship scheme, because it offers us a valuable opportunity to interact with and learn from rising scholars from India.

The SSAI is strengthening existing relationships and forging new ones with institutions of higher learning in India and the other countries of South Asia. To this end I have paid visits to leading universities and research institutes in Kolkata (in December) and Delhi and Kathmandu (in July) and held very positive and fruitful discussions on student exchange and research collaboration.

Over the next three years the SSAI will prioritise research work in the following thematic areas and develop innovative new projects on these themes, often in collaboration with our partners in the region:

- Resources under pressure
- Citizenship, rights and inequality
- The politics of culture and religion
- Interactions and interventions in the Arts
- Lineages of knowledge and power
- Prospects for the Indian economy

The SSAI is also introducing new postgraduate courses and programmes that draw on the unique breadth and depth of SOAS expertise. October 2014 sees the launch of our new two-year Masters programme in Intensive South Asian Studies, which involves compulsory language training and a period of study in South Asia. Three of the students accepted onto the programme in its first year have been awarded studentships provided by HEFCE's Postgraduate Support Scheme.

As a South Asianist who is very much a product of SOAS, I am honoured to serve as the South Asia Institute's first Director. It is also my great good fortune to find myself working with Dr Navtej Purewal, who joined us as Deputy Director in August, Ms Sana Shah, the SSAI's Executive Officer, and Jane Savory of the Centres and Programmes Office. Finally, I must also record my thanks to the many academic members of the SSAI, from almost every department in the School, who have supported and involved themselves in our initiatives and activities to date.



## Introducing the Team



From left:  
Navtej, Michael and Sana

### Contact

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email: [ssai@soas.ac.uk](mailto:ssai@soas.ac.uk)

SOAS has appointed an outstanding leadership team to drive the activities of the SSAI forward.

Professor Michael Hutt, the SSAI's Director, completed a four-year BA in South Asian Studies at SOAS, majoring in Hindi language and literature, in 1980, followed by a Ph.D. on the history of the Nepali language and its literature in 1984. He has published extensively on modern and contemporary Nepali literature and on political and cultural change in the Himalayan region. A fluent speaker of Nepali and Hindi, he has already occupied several leadership roles, including six years as a Dean at SOAS. It was under his leadership that the Faculty of Languages and Cultures won a HEFCE-funded Centre of Excellence for Teaching and Learning for 'Languages of the Wider World' in 2005 and the Queen's Anniversary Prize for its language teaching in 2008. In 2014 he was appointed as the chair of the British Academy's South Asia area panel.

Dr Navtej Purewal is Deputy Director of the SSAI and Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Contemporary Indian Studies. She studied Political Science for her BA at Vassar College, South Asian Studies at SOAS for her Masters, and Development Studies at Lancaster University for her PhD. She taught first Development Studies and then Sociology at the University of Manchester before joining SOAS. Navtej was the Principal Investigator for a large project under the Religion and Society programme (AHRC/ESRC) on popular religious practices in South Asia, focusing specifically on Punjab in both India and Pakistan, where she conducted extensive field research. Her research interests include social processes and contexts of marginality, inequality, power/subversion, and social change and she has an ongoing interest in gender in South Asia, feminist scholarship and activism. As Deputy Director of the SSAI, Navtej is returning to her Alma Mater and is excited to be contributing to making the SSAI an international platform for research, pedagogical and policy reflections and discussions on South Asia.

Ms. Sana Shah joined the SOAS South Asia Institute on the day of its inception in January 2014. Sana studied Political Science and International Development to Masters level at the University of Vienna and has spent time at the Université de Montréal and Columbia University. She founded and chaired the Austrian South Asia researchers' platform 'Talaash' in 2008 and worked for the British Pakistan Foundation as an Outreach Coordinator prior to joining the Institute. As the SSAI's Executive Officer, Sana is eager to push the agenda of the Institute forward and enjoys organising its diverse programme of events, as well as building up the back office. Working with South Asia experts at SOAS is an exciting opportunity for her to deepen her knowledge of the region, as well as growing professionally in her role.

## Academic Directory

### Anthropology and Sociology



Dr Stephen P HUGHES

Stephen Hughes (Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology, Department of Anthropology and Sociology) completed a BA in Anthropology (Hons) and Philosophy at Bates College, Lewiston, Maine, US in 1985 and followed this with an MA and PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology at The University of Chicago, completed in 1996. His dissertation was an anthropological history of film audiences and film going in south India. He joined SOAS in 1997, and his teaching and research here have focused on media history, visual anthropology and religion in Tamil-speaking south India. He was a Research Fellow on the NWO Pioneer Program 'Modern Mass Media, Religion and the Imagination of Communities: Different Postcolonial Trajectories in West Africa, India, Brazil and the Caribbean' at the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam from 2003-2005. At SOAS he has served as the director of studies for the MA programme in Anthropology of Media and as Editorial Advisor and Contributing Editor to the journal *Bioscope: South Asia Screen Studies*. Hughes' research and publications have broadly covered the social and cultural history of cinema, drama and music, and the interface of religion, politics and mass media in Tamil speaking south India. The International Association of Media History (IAMHIST) recognised 'The "Music Boom" in Tamil South India: gramophone, radio and the making of mass culture' as the most outstanding article to appear in the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* in 2002. Hughes has served on the Royal Anthropology Institute (RAI) Film Committee since 2007.



Professor David MOSSE

David Mosse (Professor of Social Anthropology, Department of Anthropology and Sociology) studied social anthropology at Oxford University, where he received a DPhil, and joined the Anthropology Department at SOAS in 1997. He has published extensively on the anthropology of religion, environment and development. He is a Fellow of the British Academy, and on the editorial boards of *World Development*, *American Ethnologist* and *Journal of Development Studies*. He has worked for Oxfam as Representative for South India, and for other international development agencies as a social development adviser.



Dr Caroline OSELLA

Caroline Osella is Reader in Anthropology with reference to South Asia in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology.



Dr Tina OTTEN

Tina Otten (Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology and Sociology) graduated from the Freie Universitaet Berlin in 1998 in Social Anthropology and continued with a PhD at the same University, focusing on concepts of illness, healing rituals and social change among the Rona people of Orissa. Since 2011 she has been working as a researcher in an ESRC-funded project on 'Rural change and anthropological knowledge in postcolonial India' with Edward Simpson (SOAS) and Patricia Jefferey (Edinburgh). She has teaching experience in various universities, including Freie Univerisitaet Berlin, Ruhr-Universitaet Bochum and the Westfaelische Wilhelms Universitaet, Muenster.

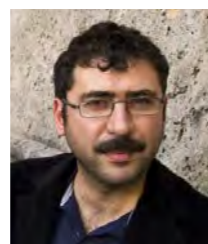
For further information on each member of the SSAI, including full lists of their publications, please visit the 'people' page on our website at [www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/)



**Dr Parvathi RAMAN**

Parvathi Raman (Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology, Department of Anthropology and Sociology) is an anthropologist and historian who researches the emergence of diasporic consciousness and forms of political subjectivity amongst diverse South Asian migrant populations, primarily in South Africa and postwar Britain. Having studied the South Asian community in South Africa, in particular their role in the South African Communist Party, she is currently working on a project on cricket and the South Asian community in Britain, in relation to ideas of citizenship, belonging and concepts of home. Raman joined the Anthropology department at SOAS in the early 1990s. There she teaches courses covering theoretical and philosophical issues in anthropology and approaches to migration and diaspora studies. She is director of the MA in Migration and Diaspora Studies at SOAS, which she developed and launched in 2003, and is the founder and chair of the SOAS Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies, which coordinates migration-related research and teaching across the school, organises seminars and lectures, and builds national and international collaborative networks. This Centre has over 60 members from all faculties and all disciplines.

In 2011 the Centre was a part of a successful bid for a highly competitive and prestigious EU ITN award. Raman coordinates this Marie Curie Initial Training Network research project, 'CoHaB, Diasporic Constructions of Home and Belonging' with the Centre's partners, Compas (Oxford), Stockholm, Mumbai and Munster.



**Dr Tommaso SBRICCOLI**

Tommaso Sbriccoli (Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology and Sociology) completed his MA in 2004 and PhD in Anthropology in 2009, both at the University of Siena. He has been doing field research in Northern India since 2003, working mainly on rural and pastoral communities in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. He has been part of many international research projects based in Italy, France and the UK. His main fields of interest have been those related to institutions, governmentality and traditional justice, and he has focused his attention on the relations between traditional legal systems, state law, institutions, and conceptions of the person. In 2008 he began fieldwork research in Italy on refugees and the Italian process of claiming asylum, developing together with Stefano Jacoviello, a semiotician, an interdisciplinary methodological framework of text and discourse analysis. From 2011 to 2014 he has been working as a Post-Doctoral Research Assistant at SOAS in a project coordinated by Edward Simpson entitled 'Rural change and anthropological knowledge in post-colonial India: A comparative "restudy" of F.G. Bailey, Adrian C. Mayer and David Pocock'. He restudied the village in Madhya Pradesh studied in the 1950s by Prof Adrian Mayer, focusing on issues related to social change, political landscapes and research methodology. Besides his research work, Sbriccoli has been teaching in various European universities and Summer Schools. He writes for Italian newspapers, magazines and cultural blogs and has served as a consultant for various documentary movies on pastoralism.



**Professor Edward SIMPSON**

Edward Simpson (Professor of Social Anthropology, Department of Anthropology and Sociology) received his BSc in Social Anthropology from the University of Manchester and his PhD from the London School of Economics in 2001, for a thesis on Muslim seafarers in the Indian Ocean. He continued his academic journey with a post-doctoral award from the Economic and Social Research Council and a Nuffield Foundation New Career Development Fellowship. He was appointed as Lecturer in Social Anthropology at Goldsmiths College in 2005 and joined SOAS in 2007. Conducting his research mainly in Gujarat, and particularly in Kutch and Saurashtra, Simpson's interests lie in the anthropology of boats, villages and roads in South Asia. He has also written widely on the anthropology of history, religion and mobility and takes an interest in past, memory and nostalgia. He recently completed the project 'Rural change and anthropological knowledge in post-colonial India: A comparative "restudy" of F.G. Bailey, Adrian C. Mayer and David F. Pocock' funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (see: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-062-23-3052/read>) and is now embarking on a major study of roads in India, funded by the European Research Council.

## Development Studies



**Professor Jonathan GOODHAND**

Jonathan Goodhand (Professor in Conflict and Development Studies, Department of Development Studies) studied at the Universities of Birmingham and Manchester, obtaining qualifications in education and development, culminating in a PhD from Manchester. He worked for some years managing humanitarian and development programmes in conflict situations in Afghanistan/Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and has extensive experience as a researcher and advisor in South and Central Asia for a range of NGOs and aid agencies, including DFID, SDC, ILO and UNDP. His research interests include the political economy of aid and conflict, NGOs and peacebuilding and 'post conflict' reconstruction.



**Dr Jens LERCHE**

Jens Lerche (Reader in Agrarian and Labour Studies in the Department of Development Studies) holds an MA and PhD in Geography from the Centre for Development Research in Copenhagen, but sees himself more as a sociologist than a geographer. His research interests include labour and the ILO, and labour, agrarian relations and caste in India; he has researched extensively in northern India. Recent publications include articles on work hierarchies and social mobilisation and on agrarian transition and agrarian crisis in an Indian context, and analysis of tensions in the social protection agenda. He is editor of the *Journal of Agrarian Change*. His present research is on labour conditions and the working poor in India and China, funded by the ESRC and DFID.





**Dr Alessandra MEZZADRI**

Alessandra Mezzadri (Lecturer in Development Studies, Department of Development Studies) holds a Laurea degree in Economics from Università La Sapienza, Rome, and an MSc and PhD in Development Studies from SOAS. Her PhD thesis focused on the production of cheap labour in the Indian export-oriented garment industry. Mezzadri has done extensive fieldwork in India, where she has explored different regional labour regimes and informalisation modalities in the garment industry. Her work highlights the different ways in which Indian garment sweatshops are formed and reproduced in both factories and home-based settings, and what this means for processes of class formation, working conditions, labour standards, and social reproduction. Her work on garment exports also contributes to debates on the impact of processes of globalisation in India. Mezzadri teaches courses on global commodity chains and production networks; informality and informalisation; labour standards and CSR; inequality, gender and globalisation; and reproductive labour. She is a member of the Neoliberalism, Globalisation, and States and the Labour, Movements and Development research clusters in the department of Development Studies, and of the Centre for Gender Centre Studies; co-investigator for the project 'Labour standards and the working Poor in China and India', and sole investigator for the British Academy project 'The global village? Homeworking in the global economy'.



**Dr Paolo NOVAK**

Paolo Novak (Lecturer in Development Studies, Department for Development Studies) holds degrees in Business and International Finance (Bocconi University, Milan) and Development Studies (SOAS) and has worked for brokerage firms, investment banks, NGOs and UNHCR. His PhD field research was conducted in Pakistan, where he studied processes of institutional change in the protection and assistance regime for Afghan refugees. His current research focuses on the notion of transnationality, with particular emphasis on migration, refugee regime, borders and NGOs.



**Dr Nigel POOLE**

Nigel Poole (Senior Lecturer, Centre for Development, Environment and Policy) originally trained in natural sciences with a BSc from the University of Nottingham and MScs in agricultural extension and agricultural economics from the University of Reading and Wye College, University of London. He obtained his PhD from Wye College, working on 'Vertical Coordination in the Spanish Citrus Industry'. From 2004 he taught both at Wye College, University of London and Imperial College London, and joined SOAS in 2008. His research interests are in agrifood systems organisation and performance, principally in developing economies in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Recent projects have focused on the development of the cassava value chain in Zambia, and the utilization of non-timber forest products by complex rural households in Burkina Faso, both with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and diverse local stakeholders.

He is currently researching agrifood health and nutrition value chain linkages with the DFID-funded multi-institutional LANSAs research programme in South Asia, covering Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan ([www.lansasouthasia.org/](http://www.lansasouthasia.org/)), for which he is leading the Afghanistan Working Group. Poole is a member of the Board of Directors, CATIE (Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza/Centre for Tropical Agricultural Research and Teaching), Costa Rica, a member of the Programmes Policy Group, TREE AID, and chairman of the Wye and Brook India Trust, a small charity supporting schooling in Delhi.



**Professor Peter Mollinga**

Peter Mollinga (Professor of Development Studies, Department of Development Studies) completed a BSc and MSc in Tropical Land and Water Engineering in 1984 and a PhD on the political economy of water distribution in South India in 1998, both at Wageningen University, the Netherlands. In 2009 he completed a Habilitation in Development Sociology at the University of Bonn, Germany. He was employed as a lecturer and researcher at Wageningen University (1988-2003), the Centre for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn (2004-2010), and has been based in the Development Studies department at SOAS since September 2010. He initiated and is presently director of SOAS's Centre for Water and Development ([www.soas.ac.uk/water](http://www.soas.ac.uk/water)). He is one of the founding editors of the open access e-journal *Water Alternatives* (<http://www.water-alternatives.org/>). Mollinga's research focuses on the politics of water resource governance, management and use; the cultural political economy of agrarian change and farming; and inter/transdisciplinarity and boundary work in natural resources management. Mollinga has consistently sought to put his academic knowledge to work in capacity building and policy support activities at the global as well as regional, particularly South Asian, level.



**Dr Navtej PUREWAL**

Navtej Purewal (Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Contemporary Indian Studies) completed a BA in Political Science in 1991 from Vassar College after which she came to SOAS where she did the MA South Asian Area

Studies in 1992. She went on to do her doctoral studies in Development Studies from Lancaster University where she completed her doctoral studies in 1998. Purewal's interests fall within two areas, both with a distinctive Punjab (India and Pakistan) focus. The first is on feminist scholarship and gender in South Asia, including female feticide and routes and barriers to girls' education. The second area is the sociology of religion. Purewal was the principal investigator on a large project under the Religion and Society programme (AHRC and ESRC) on popular religious practices and contemporary transgressions of religious boundaries in South Asia focusing specifically on the region of Punjab across India and Pakistan.



**Professor Bhavani SHANKAR**

Bhavani Shankar (Professor of International Food, Agriculture and Health, Centre for Development, Environment and Policy (CEDEP)) holds a BA in Economics from Madras University, an MA in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, and a PhD in Agricultural Economics from the University of Illinois. He held appointments at the University of Reading and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Bangkok regional office) before joining SOAS in 2011. He is attached to the Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research in Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH), an externally-funded cross-college research initiative. Shankar is an applied economist working on research areas at the intersection of agriculture, food, nutrition and health, in developing as well as developed countries. His current research interests include the analysis of economic drivers of over- and under-nutrition, nutrition transition, dietary policy evaluation and the role of agriculture in enabling better nutrition and health. His ongoing and forthcoming research projects include LANSAs (Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia) and POSHE (Palm Oil: Sustainability, Health and Economics.) He is managing editor of *Food Policy*, a multidisciplinary Elsevier journal.



**Dr Subir SINHA**

Subir Sinha (Senior Lecturer in Institutions and Development, Department of Development Studies) studied History at the University of Delhi (BA) and Political Science at Northwestern University (MS, PhD), and has

taught at Northwestern University and the University of Vermont. His research interests are institutional change, sustainable development, social movements, state-society relations in development, and South Asian politics, with a current focus on decentralised development in India, early postcolonial planning, and on the global fishworkers' movement.

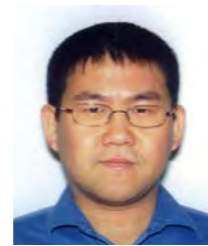


## Economics



**Professor Mushtaq KHAN**

Mushtaq Khan (Professor of Economics, Department of Economics) received his BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford in 1981 and then won a King's College Cambridge scholarship to do his PhD in Economics, which was awarded in 1989, for a thesis entitled 'Clientelism, Corruption and Capitalist Development: An Analysis of State Intervention with special reference to Bangladesh'. He was awarded a Junior Research Fellowship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford in 1988 and subsequently became a Fellow in Economics at Sidney Sussex College and Assistant Director of Development Studies at Cambridge University in 1990, before taking up his position at SOAS in 1996. He has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Dhaka and at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. Khan has been a member of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at the United Nations since 2010. Khan's research interests are in institutional economics, where he has worked on social transformations, rents and rent seeking, political settlements, corruption, democratization, property rights and land reform, industrial and technology policy, technology absorption strategies in developing countries, 'good governance' versus 'developmental governance' and other related issues. He has worked extensively on India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Tanzania, Palestine and South Africa and has a broader interest in South Korea, Pakistan and Malaysia.



**Mr Satoshi MIYAMURA**

Satoshi Miyamura (Lecturer in the Economy of Japan in the Department of Economics) completed a BA in Language and Regional Cultural Studies in 1995 at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, and an MA in Comparative Economics and Regional Development at the Graduate School of Economics, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, in 1997. It was during his student days at Hitotsubashi that he became interested in the Indian economy and had his first experience of fieldwork-based research in Gujarat and the Delhi-NCR industrial area. At SOAS, he studied for an MSc in Development Economics with special emphasis on the economy of India and went on to obtain a PhD in Economics in 2010, focusing on labour market institutions in Indian industry, based on fieldwork at Mumbai and Kolkata. In the Department of Economics at SOAS he has taught courses on the economic development of Japan and South Asia; quantitative and research methods; development economics and economic theories. His research interests are in the political economy of development in India and Japan; economics of labour and institutions; economic history and history of economic thought. He is currently engaged in research on patterns of labour market institutions and industrial restructuring in India.



**Dr Pallavi ROY**

Pallavi Roy (Lecturer in International Economics, Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy) has professional experience which includes political economy research on South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh) using the political settlements approach as well as qualitative risk analysis, the latter while working for a London-based business and political risk consultancy. Previously she was a senior financial journalist based in Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata, with ten years of experience covering policy, infrastructure and metallic commodities as well as some of the recent landmark political movements against land acquisition for mining and industry in eastern India. She has worked on the areas of the political economy of growth and liberalization in developing countries, Institutional Economics, financing and capability development, corruption, mining and metallic commodities markets, and modern South Asian History. Her specific areas of expertise in South Asia are economic growth and development challenges in India and Pakistan in the years after 1991; Indo-Pak relations in the context of recent history including the partition of the sub-continent; and gender, religion, ethnicity and popular culture in India.

## Financial and Management Studies



**Professor Pasquale SCARAMOZZINO**

Pasquale Scaramozzino (Professor of Economics, Department of Financial and Management Studies (DEFIMS)) received a Laurea in Statistics and Economics from Università di Roma La Sapienza, and an MSc in Econometrics and Mathematical Economics and a PhD in Economics from the London School of Economics. Before joining SOAS he taught at the University of Bristol, University College London, and Università di Roma Tor Vergata. He is currently serving as the Academic Director of the MSc in Finance (major: Quantitative Finance) at the Centre of Financial and Management Studies. His main areas of interest are applied econometrics and financial economics. He has published on macroeconomics, fiscal policy, corporate finance, public finance, labour economics, international trade, comparative economic systems, environmental economics, and medical statistics. In his empirical work he has looked at various aspects of the economy of the European Union, the UK, and India.





## History



**Dr Michael CHARNEY**

Michael Charney (Reader in South East Asian and Imperial History, Department of History) received his PhD from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor in 1999. His dissertation examined the historical roots of religious communalism on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal up through Chittagong in the early modern period. Before joining SOAS he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Advanced Studies, National University of Singapore (1999-2001). From 2012-2014, Dr Charney was Project Professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo. His current work focuses on the history of technology and empire, railways in South and Southeast Asia and Africa in the colonial period, and warfare and culture in the early modern world.



**Dr Eleanor NEWBIGIN**

Eleanor Newbigin (Lecturer in the History of Modern South Asia, Department of History) received her BA and PhD in history from the University of Cambridge. From 2007-2010 she was a Junior Research Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, and a visiting fellow at NYU History Department for a semester in 2010, just before joining SOAS. Her research interests focus on the end of imperial rule in South Asia and India's transition to democratic self-government. She is particularly interested in the role of gender in this process and her work focuses on the Indian family, as a legal entity and in terms of lived experiences. Her current research looks at the relationship between consumption, domestic economy and citizenship in Nehruvian India.



**Dr Roy FISCHEL**

Roy Fischel (Lecturer in the History of South Asia, Department of History) obtained his BA and MA from the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and continued his education at the University of Chicago, where he obtained a PhD from the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations and Department of History in 2012. He was awarded a Century Fellowship as well as the Mellon Foundation-University of Chicago Dissertation Year Fellowship during his PhD studies. Fischel has taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2003-2006) and the University of Chicago (2009-2011) before joining SOAS, where he teaches courses on Mughal India, Islam in South Asia and the history of South Asia. His research interests lie in the Deccan Sultanates and the history of the Mughal era, as well as gender issues in Palestine, on which he has published widely.



**Dr Amrita SHODHAN**

Amrita Shodhan (Senior Teaching Fellow, Department of History) received her B.A degree from St. Xavier's College in Bombay and graduated from Deccan College Puna with an MA in Archaeology and Ancient India. She received her PhD from the Department for South Asian Languages and Civilisations at the University of Chicago for a thesis entitled 'Legal Representations of Khojas and Pushtimarga Vaishnava Politics as Communities: The Aga Khan Case and the Maharaj Libel Case in Mid-Nineteenth Century Bombay.' Before joining SOAS Shodhan taught at various universities and colleges in India, including St. Xavier's College and the SNDT University, and at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her research focuses primarily on issues of identity, colonial legal and judicial systems, caste and panchayats as well as on gender and partitions as governance strategies.



**Dr Shabnum TEJANI**

Shabnum Tejani (Senior Lecturer in the History of Modern South Asia, Department of History) received her BA in Politics from Oberlin College in 1992 and her PhD in History from Columbia University in 2002. Her research interests include the history of political ideas, in particular nationalism, communalism and secularism in the context of India in the early twentieth century and she has written extensively on the role of caste and minorities in the making of Indian democracy. Her current work is a cultural history of wealth which focuses on Bombay's merchant communities in the early twentieth century. Tejani has supervised doctoral dissertations on a range of topics in modern south Asian history including an urban history of post-Mutiny Delhi; tribal identities and state formation in late nineteenth-century Afghanistan; and Ahmadis and colonial law in early twentieth century Punjab.

## History of Art and Archaeology



**Dr Crispin BRANFOOT**

Crispin Branfoot (Senior Lecturer in South Asian Art and Archeology, Department of the History of Art and Archeology) studied Ancient History and Archaeology at Manchester University (BA), and Art & Archaeology at SOAS (MA, PhD). He has worked in the Departments of Eastern Art at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum in London. Before joining SOAS in 2006 he taught South Asian art at De Montfort University, the University of Oxford, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and Sothebys Institute and from 2000 to 2005 he was Senior Research Fellow in South Asian Art and Architecture at De Montfort University. Branfoot's research focuses on religion and temple architecture in the Bay of Bengal and South India, particularly Tamilnadu, as well as on colonial archaeology and photography, especially between 1350-1750.



**Dr Heather ELGOOD MBE**

Heather Elgood (Department of the History of Art and Archeology) has been the course director and convener of the Indian and Islamic Art modules of the SOAS Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art since 2007. Before this she served as Deputy Director of the SOAS/Sotheby's Asian Arts course 1988-1997, Academic Director of the SOAS and Christie's 'Arts of Asia and Africa Programme' 1997-2000 and Course Director of the British Museum Diploma in Asian Art 2000-2007. For her first degree she studied fine art at St Martin's School of Art, London, after which she studied for an MA Area Studies (Near and Middle East) at SOAS, and was awarded a PhD by SOAS for her analysis of sixteenth century Mughal miniatures in 1981. She is a specialist in Persian, Jain, Sultanate and Mughal manuscript painting as well as the ritual arts of India.



## Languages and Cultures



**Ms Sahana BAJPAIE**

Sahana Bajpaie is a Teaching Fellow in Bengali at the South Asia Department.



**Dr James CARON**

James Caron (Lecturer in Islamicate South Asia, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) holds a doctorate in South Asia Studies from the University of Pennsylvania, where he also taught courses in the interregional cultural history of the South Asia, Central Asia, and Indian Ocean arenas. At SOAS he teaches courses on the politics of culture in South Asia, and in Pakistan in particular. While Caron is known for his work on the history and politics of Pashto literatures in Afghanistan, he also works with materials in Persian, Hindi-Urdu and Punjabi. His research focuses on non-elite histories through popular literature and informal media, and on these media as social forces in South Asia and the Persianate world. He is currently finishing his first monograph: a transregional social history of Pashto literature, it is also a dialogue between history as a discipline and non-linear poetic debates on empire and the individual from 1550 to the present. His longer-term research interests include the ways in which grassroots piety, local forms of autonomism, reformist theology and transnational leftism intersected in the making of 20th century South Asian movements for social justice, particularly in politically peripheral regions. He is active in efforts to document marginalized histories, particularly by developing the SOAS South Asia Institute's partnership with the South Asia Resource and Research Centre in Islamabad.



**Professor Rachel M J DWYER**

Rachel Dwyer (Professor of Indian Cultures and Cinema, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) took her BA in Sanskrit at SOAS, followed by an MPhil in General Linguistics and Comparative Philology at the University of Oxford. She earned her doctorate at SOAS in 1995 for a thesis on 'The Gujarati lyrics of Kavi Dayarambhai (1777-1852)'. Dwyer has taught Gujarati and Indian Studies as well as Indian Cultures and Cinemas. She has published ten books, including several on Indian cinema. Her research interests currently revolve around the Asian elephant in India. Dwyer makes regular contributions to the media with interviews, podcasts and commentary provided for organisations including the BBC and the Financial Times, and has participated in numerous international festivals on South Asian film and literature.



**Dr Amal GUNASENA**

Amal Gunasena (Teaching Fellow, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) studied Oriental languages and Archaeology for his honours degree at the University of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) Peradeniya and was appointed as lecturer in the Department of Sinhala soon after his graduation (1968). He was awarded a scholarship in 1970 by the Ford Foundation to embark on his research studies in Linguistics, first at the University of York, then at SOAS, where he obtained his Ph.D. on 'Linguistic Purism' in 1976.

Gunasena has served as senior lecturer at the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya and as a post-doctoral fellow and lecturer at the University of York. He has taught Sinhala language at undergraduate and postgraduate at SOAS since 2004. He is the senior assessor for the Cambridge International Examination Board for Sinhala, Principal Examiner for Sinhala for the Edexcel Examination Authority in England and Principal Examiner for Sinhala Language and Literature for the International Baccalaureate.

Gunasena has published several articles on Sri Lanka, both in English and Sinhala, and is currently engaged in a research project on the monumental Pali grammar 'Namamala' with Prof. Kate Crosby (King's College), Dr Andrew Skilton (Oxford) and Dr. Alastair Gornall (University of Singapore) for the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.



**Professor Michael HUTT**

Michael Hutt (Professor of Nepali and Himalayan Studies, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) completed a BA in South Asian Studies, majoring in Hindi literature, in 1980 and a PhD. on the history of the Nepali language and its literature in 1984, both at SOAS. In 1987 he returned to SOAS as a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, and has been engaged in teaching and research relating to Nepal and the Himalaya here ever since. He was Head of the South Asia Department from 1995-9, and has served as both Associate Dean (2002-4) and Dean (2004-10) of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures. He has been a member of the executive committee of the Britain-Nepal Academic Council ([www.bnac.ac.uk](http://www.bnac.ac.uk)) ever since its foundation in 2000, and its chairman 2010-14; he has also served two terms as editor of the *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*. The study of modern and contemporary Nepali literature is Hutt's home ground, and he is well known as a translator. He has also published on Nepali and Bhutanese politics, the Nepali diaspora in India, Nepali art and architecture, and the Bhutanese refugee issue. Between 2010 and 2013 Hutt was the co-director of a British Academy-funded International Partnership project on the construction of public meaning in contemporary Nepal, working with colleagues at Martin Chautari in Kathmandu. In 2011 he was awarded the Nai-Derukha International Prize 'for his continuous dedication to promoting the study of Nepali literature in the international arena' (see <http://www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem68698.html>). Hutt is the chair of the British Academy's South Asia area panel from 2014-17.



**Dr Stefanie LOTTER**

Stefanie Lotter (Teaching Fellow, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) is an anthropologist and curator. She studied social anthropology at SOAS (MA) and the University of Heidelberg (PhD), also training in museum studies at the University of Leicester (PgDip). Her research in Nepal, India and South Africa focused on upward and downward social mobility and on the visual and material culture of transnationals.

Her PhD is a study of declining elites, focusing on the Ranas in Kathmandu. She worked in Nepal for the University of Heidelberg as the resident representative of the South Asia Institute in Kathmandu. In 2006 she moved to South Africa as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand, where she worked with Robert Thornton on the concept of loss and lived and conducted fieldwork in Lenasia, formerly known as the Indian township of Johannesburg. Returning to London, she has more recently worked as community curator at the Horniman Museum, contributing to the 2012 exhibition 'The Body Adorned: Dressing London'.



**Dr James MALLINSON**

James Mallinson (Lecturer in Sanskrit and Classical and Indian Studies, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) took his BA in Sanskrit and Old Iranian at the University of Oxford, followed by an MA in Area Studies (South Asia), with Ethnography as his main subject, at SOAS. His doctoral thesis, submitted to the University of Oxford, was a critical edition and annotated translation of the *Khēcārīvidyā*, an early text of hathayoga. Mallinson has published eight books, all of which are editions and translations of Sanskrit yoga texts, epic tales and poetry. His most recent work used philological study of Sanskrit texts, ethnography and art history to explore the history of yoga and yogis. He is currently working on a monograph entitled *Yoga and Yogis: the Texts, Techniques and Practitioners of Early Hathayoga*.



**Mr Rakesh NAUTIYAL**

Rakesh Nautiyal (Senior Lecturer in Hindi, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) taught Hindi for many years at the Landour Language School in Mussoorie, Uttaranchal, and countless South Asianists and others from the USA and the rest of the world have benefited from his teaching. As well as contributing to the Hindi programmes in the South Asia Department, Rakesh also leads the team of teachers offering Hindi courses in the School's Language Centre. He also works on the grammar of Himalayan dialects, particularly those of Garhwal and Kumaon.



**Professor Francesca ORSINI**

Francesca Orsini (Professor of Hindi and South Asian Literature, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) completed her undergraduate degree in Hindi at the University of Venice and was awarded her PhD by SOAS for a thesis on the Hindi public sphere of the 1920's and 1930s. She began her teaching career at the University of Cambridge but rejoined SOAS in 2006 to teach courses on Hindi language, literature and the literary history of South Asia as well as the contemporary politics of culture in South Asia. In 2013-2014 she was a Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University.

Her research interests range across modern and contemporary Hindi literature, popular literature in Hindi and Urdu, women writers and women's journals, book history and 19th century commercial publishing in Hindi and Urdu, and the multilingual history of literature in early modern North India. Between 2006 and 2009 she ran an AHRC-funded research project on 'North Indian Literary Culture and History, 1450-1650'. Currently she is involved in two projects: a project in collaboration with SARAI/CSDS on Hinglish and a second project on the multilingual history of Awadh.



**Mr Krishna PRADHAN**

Krishna Pradhan (Senior Lecturer in Nepali, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) graduated with two BA degrees in History and Economics from Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu and went on to earn an M.A in Sociology from the same university. He has teaching experience as a High School Teacher as well as a language and cross-cultural trainer in different institutions in Nepal. He has taught Nepali language for the Cornell Nepal Study Programme, including two summer programmes at Cornell University in New York. He has also taught Nepali to diplomats at the American mission in Nepal, as well as to Fulbright scholars and researchers. Between 1997 and 2004 he was the Founder and Managing Director of the Centre for Language Learning (CLL) in Kathmandu. Since 2004 he has been teaching undergraduate, postgraduate and evening courses in Nepali language at SOAS.



**Mr Naresh SHARMA**

Naresh Sharma (Senior Lecturer in Urdu and Hindi, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) completed his BA and then MA in South Asian Languages and Literatures, majoring in Hindi, at SOAS. He went on to work within the IT sector as a software analyst, working on projects in India and Europe. While employed in IT he pursued his interest in teaching Hindi and Urdu in his spare time, which led him to undertake a PGCE from the Institute of Education. He then returned to SOAS full-time in 2008 to take up his current post. Apart from teaching Hindi and Urdu, Sharma's interests lie in Braj and Awadhi devotional literature, Urdu ghazals, translation studies, and applied linguistics. His most recent publication is *The Routledge Intermediate Hindi Reader*.



**Dr John STEVENS**

John Stevens (Leverhulme Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) gained his PhD in History from UCL in 2011. The main focus of his research is historical, utilising source materials in Bengali and English in order to promote an understanding of the histories of India and Britain which places them in regional, imperial and global contexts. His PhD focused on the ideas and activities of the Bengali Brahmo religious and social reformer Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) and his interaction with a range of British intellectual, political and cultural figures. He is currently working on two books: the first is a study of political theology in India and Britain in the nineteenth century; the second is a biography of Keshab Chandra Sen. His research interests include the interconnected histories of modern West Bengal, Bangladesh and Britain; comparative religion and political theology in India and Britain; postcolonial theory; the historical construction of gender, race, class and nation; social, cultural and transnational history. He is a regular visitor to India and Bangladesh for research purposes.



**Dr Amina YAQIN**

Amina Yaqin (Senior Lecturer in Urdu and South Asian literature Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia) completed her first undergraduate degree in English at Kinnaird College, Lahore and her second in English at the University of Sussex. She received her PhD from SOAS for a thesis on the intertextuality of women in Urdu literature. Her research charted the rise of postcolonial feminist poetry in Urdu and underlined a thematic concern with gender, sexualities and a critique of the national. Yaqin's publications on twentieth century Urdu literary trends include a special issue of the journal *Pakistaniaat* (2013) on the celebrated Pakistani poet, Faiz Ahmad Faiz; she has published numerous articles on the Urdu poets Kishwar Naheed and Fahmida Riaz, Urdu fiction and autobiography and the contexts and intertexts of Urdu in English fiction and is also known as a translator of Urdu literature. Yaqin is currently working on a book entitled *Twentieth Century Women's Poetry from Pakistan: feminist resistance and gendered subjectivities* and is also Project Partner for 'Muslims, Trust and Cultural Dialogue', an intercultural research project funded by the RCUK.

## Law



**Professor Philippe CULLET**

Philippe Cullet (Professor of International and Environmental Law, School of Law) studied law and development studies at Geneva University and London (King's College and SOAS) and obtained his PhD from the Stanford Law School. Cullet's research is centred around environmental law, natural resources, human rights and the socio-economic aspects of intellectual property in India and at the international level. This includes water law and governance with a focus on groundwater, drinking water, sanitation and institutional reforms in India; equity in environmental law; biodiversity; and justice, in particular environmental and water rights. Cullet oversees the two postgraduate degrees in environmental law in the School of Law at SOAS: the LLM in Environmental Law and the MA in Environmental Law and Sustainable Development. He also convenes the Law, Environment and Development Centre (LEDC) and is the Editor of the *Law, Environment and Development Journal* (LEAD Journal). Beyond SOAS, Cullet is a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi. He has been closely involved in policymaking and was, for instance, the Convenor of the Sub-group on Legal Issues Related to Groundwater Management and Regulation of the Planning Commission of India that prepared the draft Model Bill for the Conservation, Protection and Regulation of Groundwater, 2011.





**Mr Alexander FISCHER**

Alexander Fischer (Lecturer in Law, School of Law) teaches comparative constitutional law with special reference to India. Before joining SOAS in 2007, he was a lecturer at the South Asia Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Heidelberg. He is visiting faculty at the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS), New Delhi; he was visiting scholar at the Global Legal Studies Center (GLS), University of Wisconsin Law School (2012) and visiting fellow at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University (2004-2005, with research grants from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the German Academic Exchange Service). Fischer holds a BA degree in Anthropology & Law (1999) as well as LLM (2007) from the LSE, and an MA Political Science of South Asia from the University of Heidelberg (2002). He was Assistant Series Editor (2007-2011) for 'Constitutional Systems of the World' (Hart Publishing), and Deputy Editor (from 2002 to 2006) of the Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics.



**Dr Vanja HAMZIC**

Vanja Hamzic (Lecturer in Law, School of Law) holds two degrees from the University of Sarajevo, an LLM in Human Rights Law from the University of Nottingham, and a PhD in Law from King's College London. He has worked as an activist and researcher with various international and civil society organisations in South Asia, South East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and South Africa. Before coming to SOAS, Hamzic held posts at King's College London and City University London. His legal, anthropological and historical research primarily revolves around human subjectivity formation and insurrectionary vernacular knowledge, and his principal fieldwork sites are in Pakistan, Indonesia and Egypt. He also specialises in the Islamic legal tradition(s), with a focus on Seljuk, Mamluk, Ottoman and Mughal laws and social norms. His other interests include legal and social theory, European legal traditions, tort, family law, human rights, postcolonial studies, feminist legal theory, global law/governance studies, anthropology, criminology and philosophy. Hamzic is a member of several SOAS research centres, a Docent at the Institute for Global Law and Policy at Harvard Law School and a Researcher at the International State Crime Initiative, based at King's College London.



**Professor Martin W LAU**

Martin Lau (Professor of South Asian Law, School of Law) studied Law and South Asian History at the University of Heidelberg, completed both his MA in Area Studies (South Asia) and his PhD at SOAS, and became a Barrister at Law in 1996. His work as an academic started in 1989, when he worked as a research assistant at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg. He joined SOAS in 1991, first as a Training Fellow in South Asian Law and subsequently as a full-time academic, specializing in contemporary South Asian and Islamic law. Lau was the Head of the Law Department from 2002 to 2005 and is currently the Deputy Head of the SOAS Law School. His work experience includes visiting appointments at Harvard Law School and Nagoya University, legal assistance and advice, as well as international fact finding missions, for example to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Somalia. Lau was the Director of the Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law from 1997 until 2001 and edits the *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law*, now in its seventeenth volume. The role of Islamic law in modern legal systems has been a focal point of his research and he has published extensively on the legal system of Pakistan.

## Library and Information Services Media



**Ms Helen PORTER**

Helen Porter (South Asia Subject Librarian, SOAS Library) completed her undergraduate studies in Southeast Asian History at SOAS in 2000, followed by an MA in Library and Information Studies at UCL, completed in 2006. Her interest in South Asia developed during her work with the collections of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, where she worked as Assistant Librarian from 2011 until she joined SOAS. She is a member of the steering committee of the South Asia Archive and Library Group (SAALG) and currently serves as Chair. In her work with the group, which provides a forum for cooperation, discussion and promotion of library and archives for South Asian studies in the UK, she has helped to organize several SAALG conferences including: 'The Mughals' British Library February, 2013; 'South Asian Arts and Crafts', Norwich, July 2013; 'South Asia Archives' University of Cambridge Library, February 2014.



**Dr Somnath BATABYAL**

Somnath Batabyal (Lecturer in Media and Development, Centre for Media Studies) works on digital cultures in South Asia with a special focus on India. As an undergraduate, Somnath studied English literature at the University of Delhi. After this he worked for nine years as a journalist for several leading Indian newspapers, and then as Bureau Chief of West Bengal for New Delhi Television. He came to SOAS to study for a Masters in the Anthropology of the Media in 2003 and stayed on to conduct research for a PhD, which he completed in 2009. He then held postdoctoral research fellowships at Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, the University of Heidelberg, and SOAS. His research interests include transnational news spheres with a special focus on India; development discourses in India and their articulation in mainstream and alternate news forums; and environmental politics.

## Music



**Mr Burzine WAGHMAR**

Burzine Waghmar (Senior Teaching Fellow, Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia and Senior Library Assistant, SOAS Library) researches Middle Iranian diplomacies. He has co-organised two conferences on 'The South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein' (in conjunction with De Montfort University Leicester, 2004); and the 'Centenary of Sir Muhammad Iqbal in Europe' (with the Iqbal Academy U.K., 2007) and was academic researcher for the exhibition on 'The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History, Art and Imagination' (2013). He is a regular consultant and commentator on the history, religions, bi-lateral relations and counter-terrorism of South and Central Asia, particularly Pakistan and Iran.



**Professor Richard WIDDESS**

Richard Widdess (Professor of Musicology, Department of Music) holds a B.A in Music and Mus.B in Composition, Paleography and Criticism from the University of Cambridge, an M.A in South Asian Area Studies from SOAS and a PhD in Music from the University of Cambridge, awarded in 1981. Since then he has held several academic positions at SOAS and the University of Cambridge. His research and teaching focus on the classical and religious musical traditions of South Asia, with reference to history, theory, ethnography, analysis and cognition. Widdess has directed research projects on 'Musical Traditions of Northern India and Nepal', 'The Khyāl Song Repertoire of North Indian Art Music', and 'Improvisation in South Indian Ritual Music'; and PhD theses on topics including Hindi film song, Hindustani music in the time of Aurangzeb, music and Islamisation in Bengal, devotional singing in Rārh, the analysis of thumrī, and rāg in Rājasthānī folk music.

## Politics



**Dr Rochana BAJPAI**

Rochana Bajpai (Senior Lecturer in Politics, Department of Politics and International Relations) studied at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and holds an MPhil and DPhil from the University of Oxford. Prior to joining SOAS, she held research fellowships at Wolfson College, St. Anne's College and Balliol College, University of Oxford. She has published extensively on comparative political thought, liberalism and political ideologies, and policies of multiculturalism and affirmative action in India. Her current research focuses on comparative affirmative action and political representation, with particular reference to minority representation in India. Together with colleagues, Dr Bajpai is a founding member of the Centre for Comparative Political Thought and the London Comparative Political Thought network.



**Dr Matthew J NELSON**

Matthew Nelson (Reader in Politics, Department of Politics and International Studies) works on the comparative and international politics of South Asia, with a special emphasis on comparative political thought, the politics of Islamic institutions, and democracy. Nelson received his PhD in Political Science from Columbia University and before coming to SOAS he taught at UC Santa Cruz, Bates College, and Yale University. Nelson has spent several years conducting archival, ethnographic, and survey-based research in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. His current research concerns the politics of sectarian and doctrinal diversity in the context of Islamic law and education. Nelson is a founding member of the Centre for Comparative Political Thought, the Centre for Pakistan Studies, and the Centre for the International Politics of Conflict, Rights, and Justice at SOAS. In 2009-2010 he was the Wolfensohn Family Member at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton; in 2011 he was a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.



**Dr Rahul RAO**

Rahul Rao (Senior Lecturer in Politics, Department of Politics and International Studies) has a law degree from the National Law School of India, and read for a doctorate in international relations at Balliol College, Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He was a Term Fellow in Politics at University College, Oxford. He has research interests in international relations theory, the international relations of South Asia, comparative political thought, and gender and sexuality. He is currently working on a book on queer postcolonial temporality.



**Professor Lawrence SAEZ**

Lawrence Saez (Professor in the Political Economy of Asia, Department of Politics and International Relations) holds a BA in political science from UC Berkeley; an M.A.L.D. in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; and a PhD. in political science from the University of Chicago. Prior to living in the UK, Saez was an assistant research political scientist at the Institute of East Asian Studies and visiting scholar at the Center for South Asia Studies, UC Berkeley and the associate editor for South Asia at Asian Survey. His recent research has focused on comparative political economy, particularly as it pertains to the challenges of economic reform across different industry sectors in emerging markets. Saez is the Chair of the Standing Group on Third World Politics of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), a member of the World Economic Forum's India Agenda Council, co-director of the Centre on the Politics of Energy Security and a visiting professor at SciencesPo, Paris.

## Study of Religions



**Dr Simona VITTORINI**

Simona Vittorini (Senior Teaching Fellow, Department of Politics and International Studies) has a range of interdisciplinary research interests, spanning politics, anthropology and communication studies, grounded in the politics of South Asia, in particular of India. Vittorini obtained a degree in Oriental History from the University of Bologna, where she took Sanskrit as her major as well as courses in Social Anthropology and South Asian history and politics. There she developed an interest in the aesthetic and performative aspects of politics, and wrote her thesis on the Ashvamedha, an important religious sacrifice and powerful political ritual of Vedic India. She then came to SOAS to study for a Masters and stayed on to conduct a PhD on the rituals and symbols of Nehruvian India. Issues of globalisation, economic development, international relations and renewed South-South relations frame her current research interests. With David Harris she has published several articles and chapters in edited volumes on India as an emerging power and India-Africa relations. Her interest in the aesthetics of politics and the representation of collective identities has now grown in other directions, including a study of New Delhi's public diplomacy and India's global image makeover for outside (and domestic) consumption.



**Dr Peter FLÜGEL**

Peter Flügel (Reader in the Study of Religions, Department of the Study of Religions) studied anthropology, sociology, geography and philosophy at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität in Mainz (1977-1985). He was awarded a four year Doctoral Fellowship, spent a research year at the Department of Anthropology at University College London, and in 1994 completed his PhD at the University of Mainz with a thesis on the Terāpanth Śvetāmbara Jaina mendicants in India. Before joining SOAS in 1999 he worked as a researcher in London and taught anthropology and sociology at University College, Goldsmiths College and City University. In 2004 he became the founding chair of the SOAS Centre of Jaina Studies, which hosts the international Annual Jaina Studies Workshop. He is also the editor of the *International Journal of Jain Studies*. Flügel has published extensively on the history, anthropology and sociology of contemporary Jain schools and sects, Jain relic stūpas, Jaina-Vaisnava syncretism, and on the socio-political and legal history of the Jain tradition. He is also working on questions of comparative philosophy, pluralism and non-violence. The Jaina community awarded Flügel with the Ācārya Tulsī Anekānt Sāmmān (1999), the International Pravartini Pārvaṭī Jain Award (2010) and the Jewel of the Jain World Award (2012).





**Dr Jan-Peter HARTUNG**

Jan-Peter Hartung (Reader in the Study of Islam, Department of the Study of Religions) obtained an MA in Indology, Philosophy and Central Asian Studies from the University of Leipzig, Germany. His PhD in the Study of Religions was awarded by the Max Weber Centre for Cultural and Social Studies at the University of Erfurt, Germany, for a dissertation on a contemporary Indo-Muslim scholar; this was subsequently published in 2004. In 2011 Hartung received his Habilitation (Senior Doctorate) in the Study of Islam from the University of Bonn, Germany, for a dissertation on the genesis of Islamist ideology in South Asia. Since 2007, he has taught the Study of Islam in the Department for the Study of Religions at SOAS. He is currently involved in a number of ongoing research projects on various aspects of the intellectual history of Islam in the subcontinent and the wider Persianate world, from early modern to contemporary times. These projects include an investigation into philosophical and theological tradition-building processes in the region between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, an extensive contribution to a major international History of Philosophy on nineteenth and twentieth century Indo-Muslim philosophy, a participation in a History of Concepts in South Asia initiative, and research into theological and legal thought among militants in the Afghan-Pakistan borderlands.



**Dr Sian HAWTHORNE**

Sian Hawthorne (Lecturer in Critical Theory and the Study of Religions, Department of the Study of Religions) attended boarding schools in Udhamandalam (Ootacamund), Tamil Nadu, and Mussoorie, Uttar Pradesh. Her BA degree was in Comparative Religion and Hindi and her PhD from SOAS focused on colonialist and anti-Semitic currents in nineteenth-century German nationalist mythography. Her research interests lie in four main and overlapping areas: Religion and Gender; Postcolonial theory (with particular reference to South Asia) and the Study of Religions; Method and Theory in the Study of Religions; Intellectual History in the Study of Religions. The majority of her published research has been in the field of Religion and Gender but she is currently researching the relationship between secularisms, postsecularism, and postcoloniality. She is the convenor of the MA Religion in Global Politics and a founding member of the Centre for Gender Studies at SOAS as well as a member of the Centre for Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies and the Centre for Media Studies.



**Professor Almut HINTZE**

Almut Hintze (Professor of Zoroastrianism, Department of the Study of Religions) studied Indo-European philology at the Universities of Heidelberg and Oxford and received her PhD in Indo-Iranian Studies from the University of Erlangen. After her Habilitation in Berlin for a study of the semantics of 'reward' in Ancient Iranian (Avestan) and Vedic Sanskrit texts, she spent a term at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Subsequently she became a Research Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge and was appointed to the Zartoshty Brothers post at SOAS in 2001.



**Dr Ulrich PAGEL**

Ulrich Pagel (Reader in Languages and Religions of Tibet and Central Asia, Department of the Study of Religions) obtained his PhD at SOAS in 1992. After that, he held positions in Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at the British Library (1991-7) and the University of Washington (Seattle) (1997-9). He currently serves as General Secretary of the International Association of Buddhist Studies and Editor-in-Chief of the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.



**Dr Theodore PROFERES**

Theodore Proferes (Senior Lecturer in Ancient Indian Religions, Department of the Study of Religions) holds an MA and PhD in Sanskrit from Harvard University, and taught at Harvard and the University of Texas at Austin before coming to SOAS. He has published extensively on ancient Indian texts, ritual and religious history and is currently preparing a study of the contested hermeneutic strategies deployed in the brahmical apologetics of the post-Vedic period.



**Professor Gurharpal SINGH**

Gurharpal Singh (Professor in Inter-Religious Relations and Development, Department of the Study of Religions, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities) is a political scientist who completed his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at the LSE. Previously, he was the Deputy Director of the Religions and Development Research Programme (DFID) and held the Nadir Dinshaw Chair in the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham. He has also occupied the C.R.Parekh Chair in Indian politics at the University of Hull. Professor Singh is a member of the RAE 2014 (sub-panel 27, Area Studies) and the Commissioning Panel of the AHRC and ESRC Religion and Society Research Programme. He was a member of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (2002 -07) and the RAE 2008 (sub-panel 49, Asian Studies).



**Dr Sarah STEWART**

Sarah Stewart (Lecturer in Zoroastrianism, Department of the Study of Religions) studied Asian Civilisations for her BA at ANU and completed a PGCE in London and an MA and a PhD in religions at SOAS. Formerly Deputy Director of the London Middle East Institute (LMEI) at SOAS, she joined the Department of the Study of Religions full-time in 2014 as a lecturer in Zoroastrianism, where she also convenes a course on Islam in Britain. She is co-convenor, with Sussan Babaie (previously with Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis), of the annual 'Idea of Iran' series of symposia, established in 2006, and co-editor of the proceedings published by IB Tauris. She is a member of the Editorial Board of the Middle East in London magazine published by the LMEI, a member of the Advisory Committee of the Centre for Iranian Studies, SOAS, the Advisory Council of the British Institute for Persian Studies (BIPS), and the Academic Council of the Iran Heritage Foundation. In 2013 she was the lead curator of the exhibition 'Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination' at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, and co-editor of the accompanying publication with curators Ursula Sims-Williams, Firoza Punthakay Mistry, Almut Hintze and Pheroza Godrej. Currently she is working on a tour of the exhibition to Delhi in December 2015. Her research interests and publications to date are on the oral history and living traditions of Zoroastrianism in Iran, India and the wider diaspora.





**Dr Vincent TOURNIER**

Vincent Tournier (Lecturer in Buddhist Studies, Department of the Study of Religions) studied History and Anthropology at the University of Strasbourg, where he completed two BAs and an MA. He then joined the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris for his doctoral training. In 2008, he was granted a Fellowship by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, for a research attachment to the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology (Tokyo), and in 2009 he obtained a Gonda Fellowship at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden. In 2012, Tournier defended his doctoral thesis on 'The formation of the Mahāvastu and the development of the conceptions pertaining to the bodhisattva and his career' (in French). He thereafter worked as a postdoctoral researcher at Leiden University as a member of a project on Buddhism and Social Justice sponsored by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). He taught Sanskrit in Leiden and, in 2013/2014, was visiting lecturer at the École Pratique des Hautes Études.



**Dr Cosimo ZENE**

Cosimo Zene is Reader in the Study of Religions in the Department of the Study of Religions.

“  
**The South Asia Institute  
 embodies all of the  
 different strands of South  
 Asia expertise at SOAS,  
 which has the largest  
 and, in disciplinary terms,  
 the most diverse body of  
 academics and students  
 teaching, researching and  
 studying South Asia of any  
 university in the UK.**”



## News Bulletin



**Rochana Bajpai** was on research leave during 2013-14, funded by a Leverhulme Research Fellowship. She spent several months in India

conducting research for her new project on minority representation in the Indian Parliament, interviewing MPs and following the 2014 election campaign. During the year, she delivered several invited talks and seminars, including 'Variants of liberal thought in India' (Nottingham), 'Rethinking Hegemony through the Indian Constituent Assembly debates' (Princeton), 'Challenges of Multiculturalism: Indian trajectories' (Berkeley), 'From Exception to Norm: Constitutional group rights in the India' (Stanford), and 'Minority representation in a majoritarian democracy: Notes from the 2014 election campaign' (Nottingham). Rochana organized a panel titled 'Beyond Subaltern Studies: New approaches to the study of ideas' at the annual South Asia conference at Madison, Wisconsin, and at the European Social

Science and History Conference in Vienna. Featuring papers that offered critiques of subaltern scholarship and postcolonial approaches, the panel attracted considerable interest. Rochana also presented her work on comparative political thought as interpretive social science at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting at Chicago, and the Association of Political Theory meeting at Vanderbilt University, Nashville. Together with Leigh Jenco at LSE and Humeira Iqtidar at King's College, Rochana co-convened the London Comparative Political Thought Group, which met twice a term to discuss papers in progress and held a conference *Difference and Tolerance: A South-South Conversation* (March 2014). With colleagues in the Politics department, she co-organised a two day workshop and an annual lecture by Professor Thomas Blom Hansen (Stanford) 'On the historicity of space and urban imagination' that marked the establishment of the SOAS Centre for Comparative Political Thought (June 2014).



In April, **Crispin Branfoot** delivered two invited lectures in Toronto: 'Imperial Designs: the Tamil temple and the Vijayanagara Empire' at the University of Toronto and 'Heavens on Earth: Madurai and the south Indian temple-city' at the Royal Ontario Museum. He has co-authored the catalogue with Roger Taylor for an exhibition on Linnaeus Tripe (1822-1902), one of the first photographers in south India and Burma in the 1850s. The exhibition opens at the National Gallery of Art in

Washington DC in September 2014 and moves on to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and Victoria & Albert Museum, London in 2015.

[www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/exhibitions/2014/captain-linnaeus-tripe.html](http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/exhibitions/2014/captain-linnaeus-tripe.html)

**Philippe Cullet** has forged a new partnership between SOAS and National Law University Delhi (2013-2015) and convened its first workshop, 'Climate Change and Groundwater: Comparative and International Law and Policy Dimensions – Lessons for India' in January 2014

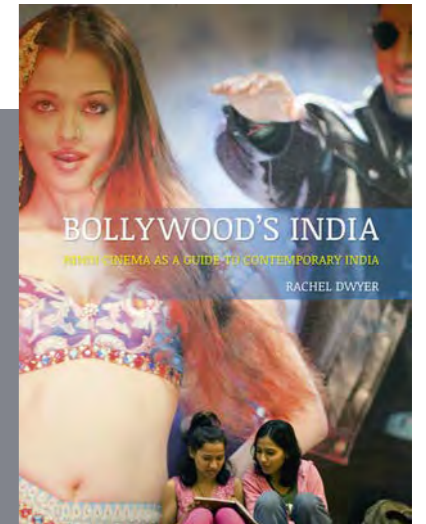
[www.soas.ac.uk/ledc/events/groundwaterworkshop2014](http://www.soas.ac.uk/ledc/events/groundwaterworkshop2014)



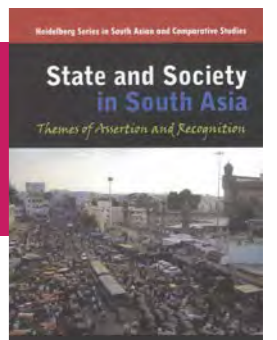
**Rachel Dwyer** held the 2014 South Asian Religions Distinguished Lectureship, McGill University, Montreal; the 2013 India-Canada Association Lecturer, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto; and was Visiting Professor of South Asian Culture, University of St Gallen, Switzerland.

She gave invited talks at Columbia University; McGill University; King's College London; Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi; University of Westminster. She also spoke at the Jaipur Literary Festival, Southbank; at 'Pakistan: What else you need to know', Southbank; the Lahore Literary Festival; the Times Literary Carnival, Mumbai; the Reset-Civilizations, Venice-Delhi seminars 2013.

Rachel also published her latest book, *Bollywood's India: Hindi cinema as a guide to contemporary India* (Reaktion, 2014) which will be launched at the Institute in December 2014.



**Alexander Fischer** co-edited the book *State and Society in South Asia: Themes of Assertion and Recognition* (2014, Samskriti, New Delhi).



**Peter Flügel**, Chair of the Centre of Jaina Studies at SOAS, organised the 16th Annual Jaina Studies Workshop at SOAS on Jaina Hagiography and Biography and the Annual Jaina Lecture at SOAS, delivered by Dr Saryu Doshi (Mumbai) on 'The Lives of the Tirthankaras in Illustrated Jaina Manuscripts'. He also chaired the Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 2014 by

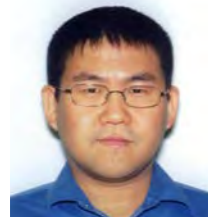
Prof Michael Witzel (Harvard University) on 'Historical Comparative Mythology: A New Approach, Its Predecessors and Its Critics'. His recent publications include: the third print edition of the International Journal of Jaina Studies, Vol. 7-9, Mumbai: Hindi Granth Karyalay, 2014 and a research article related to his current Leverhulme Trust funded research project on Johannes Klatt's Jaina Onomasticon: "Historical Sources on the Lonkägaccha- and Sthānakavāsi-Traditions in Johannes Klatt's Jaina-Onomasticon" in: *Indian and Buddhist Studies in Honor of President Dr. Shouou (Kiyooki) Okuda*, edited by Toshihiko Kimura, pp. 314-333 (Osaka: Kosei Publishing, 2014; and several articles in *Jaina Studies - Newsletter of the Centre of Jaina Studies* ([www.soas.ac.uk/jainastudies/newsletter](http://www.soas.ac.uk/jainastudies/newsletter)).

**Michael Hutt** gave invited lectures at MAKIAS in Kolkata in December and at the Südasiens Institut in Heidelberg in June, and chaired a panel at the annual international conference on Nepal and Himalayan Studies in Kathmandu in July. A book chapter, 'The last Himalayan monarchies' appeared in *Facing Globalization in the Himalayas: Belonging and the politics of the self*, edited by Gérard Toffin and Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2014) and an article entitled 'The disappearance and reappearance of Yogmaya: recovering a Nepali revolutionary icon' appeared in *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 21, No. 4.





The two and a half year research project 'Labour Conditions of the Working Poor in China and India', funded by ESRC-DFID, of which **Jens Lerche** is Principal Investigator, is now drawing to a close. A final international dissemination workshop was held at SOAS 30 March to 1 April 2014 and a series of publications are under preparation. He will be spending half of his time over the next three years working on a new three year research project, 'the Underbelly of the Indian Boom: Adivasis and Dalits', funded by the ERC and the ESRC, which started in January 2014. This is based at the LSE, led by Dr Alpa Shah, and involves several academics at the LSE and Oxford.



During his sabbatical in 2013-14, **Satoshi Miyamura** visited India for the latest round of his fieldwork, studying the dynamics and diversity of labour-management relations in West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and the Delhi-NCR in a wide range of manufacturing sectors, including jute and cotton textiles, engineering and pharmaceuticals.



**David Mosse's** book *The Saint in the Banyan Tree: Christianity and Caste Society in India* was awarded Best Book in Hindu-Christian Studies (History/Ethnography) 2009-2013 by the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies.

He co-led a research project for the Equalities & Human Rights Commission on 'Caste in Britain', resulting in two reports contributing to the formulation of legislation against caste discrimination in the UK [www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/caste](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/caste).



**Nigel Poole** has been supporting the development of agrihealth value chain analyses by colleagues in the region for the LANSAs project in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, and also preparing the groundwork for expanding LANSAs work in Afghanistan. He visited Kabul in June 2014.



**Navtej Purewal's** Navtej Purewal co-produced a second audio CD coming out of her AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society project on religious boundaries in Punjab. The CD is a recording of kirtan performed by Bhai Ghulam Muhammed Chand, a renowned hereditary Muslim performer of Sikh sacred hymns whose ancestors performed at the Golden Temple and other historical gurdwaras before the partition. The CD is available from the SOAS Bookshop.



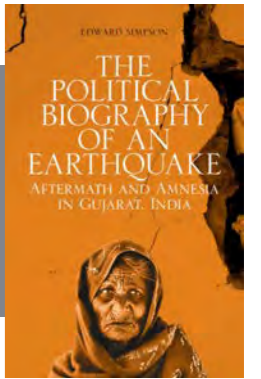
**Rahul Rao** delivered a keynote lecture entitled 'Postcolonialism versus Marxism?' at the 3rd Annual Graduate Conference in Political Theory, at the University of Oxford, in April 2014. He was also invited to deliver a public lecture entitled 'Re-membering Mwanga: same-sex intimacy, memory and belonging in postcolonial Uganda' at Carl von Ossietzky University, Oldenburg, in November 2013. He has been invited to join the editorial boards of *South Asia Research*, and the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*.



In November 2013, **Lawrence Saez** attended the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Summit in Abu Dhabi as an elected member of the WEF's India regional council. In March 2014, he was a keynote speaker at an event about the general election in India at SciencesPo, Paris. In April 2014, he travelled to Sydney (Australia) to identify areas of research collaboration and to negotiate a memorandum of understanding with the Electoral Integrity Project.



**Edward Simpson** was awarded an ERC Consolidator Grant to the value of 2 Million Euro for the five-year project 'Roads and the politics of thought: Ethnographic approaches to infrastructure development in South Asia', which will provide the first ethnographic account of the culture of road builders, their knowledge practices, interrelations and motivations. In 2013 he published his book *The Political Biography of an Earthquake: Aftermath and amnesia in Gujarat, India* (London: Hurst).



In April **Gurharpal Singh** delivered his inaugural lecture on 'Democracy and religious minorities in India: a long-term view'. Following the Lok Sabha elections, he organised an international roundtable on 'The Indian elections and after' for the SSAI, contributed to a workshop on 'India votes', organised by the Asia-Pacific Institute, University of Nottingham, and co-organised a panel on 'elections and democratic transition in South Asia', at the European conference on South Asian Studies, Zurich.



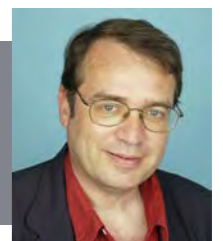
As newly appointed lecturer and chair of the Centre of Buddhist Studies, **Vincent Tournier** has, in collaboration with his colleagues, revived The Buddhist Forum, a long-standing and well reputed lecture series allowing prominent international scholars to present their latest research to a community bound by common interests in Buddhism.



**Simona Vittorini** travelled to India during the 16th Lok Sabha election. During that time, she was commissioned to do eight short weekly programmes on India's elections for Radio Popolare, an Italian national radio station, each covering a particular issue: the rise of Aam Aadmi; women and the election; BJP and the Muslim vote; the crisis of the Congress, the role of media, etc. Simona also contributed to the station's daily news bulletins from New Delhi and to a special programme that was aired after the election results had been released. In the UK, Dr Vittorini was interviewed by NBC News and Channel 4 news and appeared twice on 'Analysis' - a current affair programme on Islam Channel TV discussing the Indian election campaign and results. She was also invited to participate to Aaj Tak's Chai Chat to discuss the results of the elections with London-based NRIs.



**Richard Widdess** published his book *Dāphā: Sacred Singing in a South Asian City. Music, Performance and Meaning in Bhaktapur, Nepal* this year. His book was launched at the SSAI, as we have reported elsewhere in this review.



**Burzine Waghmar** was the academic researcher for the exhibition, 'The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination', at SOAS's Brunei Gallery, October-December 14, 2013. He was invited to the 110th Session of the Human Rights Committee at the United Nations in Geneva, where he delivered a paper on the on-going Baloch insurgency. He served as Hindi examiner for the Ministry of Defence Examination Languages Board (MODLEB); and translator-proofreader for BBC Radio Drama on their upcoming radio play about Indian troops in the Great War. Burzine was interviewed by BBC World and Bloomberg News (Altaf Hussain, Karachi airport attack); EU-Asia Centre (Baloch nationalism and Pak. army abuses); and Press TV (historical significance of Noruz).





## Reports from our Research Fellows

### Dr Mari Miyamoto

Newton International Fellow 2014-2016

Dr Mari Miyamoto joined the South Asia Institute in March 2014 as a Newton International Research Fellow, funded by the British Academy and the Royal Society.

Mari Miyamoto obtained her Ph.D from Kyoto University in the field of political anthropology for a thesis on the cultural politics of environmentalism in contemporary Bhutan. After the completion of her PhD, she worked as a postdoctoral fellow at Kyoto University (2009), Hokkaido University (2009-2011) and at the National Museum of Ethnology (2011-2014). She also taught at Tsukuba University (2011), Kobe University (2012), Osaka University (2012-13) and Ritsumeikan University (2012-2014). In her writings she has analysed diverse processes of cultural interpretations of global political issues such as "democracy" as well as "environmental conservation" in people's everyday lives. Her current interest lies in plural interpretations of "secularism" and religious integration in Bhutan as a multireligious society in the Himalaya. Miyamoto received an award from the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies (JASAS) for her article "Cultural politics of forest grazing and cattle slaughtering: environment policy and pastoralists in a national park of Bhutan".

Dr Miyamoto's research project is on "Democracy and Religion in Contemporary Bhutan" and she has already presented her work at several conferences. She attended the British Association for South Asian Studies annual conference at Royal Holloway College, discussing the stigma of *makeb* (animal slaughterers) in the (re-)Buddhisizing societies of the contemporary Himalaya.

In June she showcased her research at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology at the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment (UWICE) in Bhutan and in collaboration with UWICE she presented on changes in the cultural uses of plants in Bhutan. This covered the recent transformation and decline in certain local healing rituals and offering practices in Bhutan due to the reinforcement of a more orthodox Buddhist regime in the country.

In July, she presented a paper examining the cultural politics of *tsetra* (the release of living things kept in captivity) practices in contemporary Bhutan at the 23<sup>rd</sup> EASAS (European Association for South Asian Studies) conference at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

At SOAS Dr Miyamoto has been enjoying the opportunity to expand her academic contacts with UK scholars, as well as non-UK scholars visiting SOAS. She participated as a discussant in the SSAI's graduate student workshops for young scholars and found the experience of interacting with early career scholars from the UK and abroad very inspiring. She finds the academic atmosphere at SSAI very open and welcoming, and looks forward to developing her research through open and interdisciplinary discussions with leading scholars at SOAS.

The Newton International Fellowship scheme selects the very best early stage post-doctoral researchers from all over the world, and offers support for two years at UK research institutions. Further info: [www.newtonfellowships.org/the-fellowships](http://www.newtonfellowships.org/the-fellowships)



“  
The knowledge and enthusiasm regarding South Asia at SOAS made me proud of belonging to the region, as well as embarrassed by how little I knew about it.”

Mohini Gupta  
MA Cultural Studies, 2013-14





## Reports from our Research Fellows

### Dr Ramesh Bairy

Charles Wallace India Trust Fellow 2014



I spent three months from March to early June at SOAS. Trained in sociology but forever drawn to the question of the histories of the contemporary, the plan was to spend most of the time at the British Library (BL) foraging and scavenging for material on the *matha*-s (Hindu 'monastic' institutions?) of the Kannada speaking region of south India.

When Michael Hutt and Jane Savory informed me that I had been selected for the CW Fellowship, I reacted to it both with a sense of anticipation and anxiety. Given the condition of postcoloniality, one grows up knowing London all along, without ever having to go there. Perhaps then being in London is simply an experience of reaffirming one's pre-judice?

Hutt's first mail itself gave me the sense that SOAS will not be a stiff and stuffy place. While Jane found me an office space as soon as I presented myself, in spite of my unannounced arrival, her insistent, supposedly very-Indian *jugaad* attempts to get a duplicate key made from her neighbourhood shop was as insistently put down (by the rule-bound administration that held that the key can only come from Sweden. Jane then generously offered me space in her own office. But given that I had by then found the treasure-hunt that BL was, I hope I was not very intrusive. Thanks are also due to Jane, and Sana Shah and Rebecca Trautwein for all the help, and for simply being there to say hello. The day I arrived at SOAS, the cleaning staff were on strike. The strikingly similar modes in which the 'neo-liberal' regime functions to the detriment of the 'working class' and the ways in which the academia has begun to participate in these 'reforms' hit home as soon as I began listening to and reading their protest. Listening to their – pretty good – music, witnessing their efforts to engage the passers-by, eating the carrot cake that they sold – a warm, happy beginning it was.

On one of those early days, Werner Menski introduced me to the world of London pubs. The warmth he showered made that cold, shivery evening very enjoyable. The beer helped too. Richard Alford of the Charles Wallace Trust was warm, affectionate and generous all along, which went a long way toward keeping me feeling secure.

To begin with, SOAS was overwhelming. Simply the number of seminars taking place was a bit like being forced to choose from among the choicest of single malts! The first two weeks, every evening coming back from BL I had to choose between at least three talks that I thought I must attend, leaving me feeling jealous of the colleagues there. Yet, I increasingly began to think that there is some problem with such an overload of information and/or knowledge, and clearly if one has to attend a seminar almost every work-day, then the choice perhaps increasingly issues from non-academic considerations. All the same, I met Shabnum Tejani in some of those events, and the (unfinished) conversations I had with her were happy occasions.

The British Library was incredibly well-organised. It may hold 'well over 150 million items', but that one quirky, esoteric indulgence that you have chosen will be on your table well within the 70 minutes they ask for. David Mosse, when we initially met, had said that the India Office Records are a matter of serendipity. That, in fact, proved to be beneficial. While I read extensively on the material on the *mathas*, which wasn't much, I went berserk reading up on anything about the region that the archive threw at me, leading me to inventorise many possible lines of inquiry.

Regarding the *matha* question, I was able to posit a couple of exciting hunches that I wish to think with, particularly the one that begs a comparative study of the Madras Presidency and the Mysore princely state. In thinking of the *matha* problem in terms of a comparison and of the significance of such comparative work, Mosse's nudges during a dinner at his place have been important. In some convoluted ways, the central fault-line of the 'Brahmin-non-Brahmin' question appears to bear heavily on the ways in which the State in Madras Presidency goes about reining in the "Hindu religious institutions" of which the very powerful *mathas* were important representatives. The peripheral and much delayed presence of this fault-line in the Mysore Princely State seems to have had some central role in making the *mathas* in contemporary Karnataka what they are, allowing, again in some paradoxical ways, the non-Brahmin Lingayat *matha* to embark on its most fascinating journey through the 20th century.

And yes, I so loved London – to be sure, more as the weeks went by and the day of coming away grew closer. While there is a longer dossier I am writing about my affair with the city, here are the highlights.

The one big thing that I did in my first month was saying 'laal salaam' to comrade Marx at the Highgate Cemetery on the occasion of the Annual Grave Oration that the Marx Memorial Library organised. It remains the only occasion when I happily and without anxiety spent money during my time in London, when I contributed to the funds that the Library was collecting. As we moved towards the hero's grave, I had an uncontrollable shudder. I have a (bad) photograph to commemorate my visit.

I wish I had discovered London's buses sooner. Yes, it takes longer than the Tube but a) it's cheaper; b) you get to know the city better; c) you get to see the city much better; and d) the bus-ers are much more interesting and quirkier than the tube-rs. And I walked. And walked. Which was another joy that this place gives you even as the diesel fumes ominously hang about (much more threateningly than in our Mumbai). The art galleries remain unfinished – the third floor of Tate, the many rooms in the National Gallery, and the myriad interesting exhibitions one read about in Time Out but could not go or afford to go. There is much, much more to write about London but perhaps that is for another occasion.

Edinburgh happened too! Just thinking about that place makes me all misty-eyed, the way the city was when I got out of the train. It was so magical and yet, in some inexplicable ways, more like home. I must thank D. Karthikeyan, Crispin Bates, Hugo Gorringer for taking me there, and for going out of their way to make one more trip happen when my longing could not be contained.

I am unable to bring a coherent end to this. I have too many fond memories, too many acts of affection and generosity that I received, too many half-baked reflections (and/or renewed prejudices) about the West, the Empire, the modern. So let them be.

One fellowship is awarded annually by the SOAS South Asia Institute (SSAI) and the Charles Wallace India Trust to a scholar who has had no, or little opportunity, to conduct research outside India. The 3 month placement at SOAS, University of London should be taken predominantly during term-time (January–May).

How to apply and more information:  
[www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/fellowship/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/fellowship/)



## MA Intensive South Asian Studies

The Institutes two-year MA Intensive South Asian Studies, which is running for the first time from September 2014, offers comprehensive language-based training across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

Students on the programme take four taught courses at SOAS during their first year, of which a course at an appropriate level in Bengali, Hindi, Nepali or Urdu and the course 'The Politics of Culture in Contemporary South Asia' are core. In addition to the two core courses, students must choose courses to the value of 90 credits from the list of options advertised for the MA South Asian Area Studies. The disciplines available include Anthropology, Art and Archaeology, Cinema, Cultural and Regional Studies, Economics, History, Law, Literature, Music, Politics, and Study of Religions.

In their second year, students undertake an extended period of study attached to Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, Lahore University of Management Sciences or the Nepa School of Humanities and Social Sciences in Kathmandu (the location depending on their choice of language), where they will further develop their language proficiency and conduct research for an extended dissertation. The second half of the second year will be taken up with the writing of the dissertation under close supervision back in London.

The programme is aimed at students pursuing careers in the academic world, business, government and the media that require a skill set which encompasses disciplinary rigour, comprehensive area knowledge and cultural and linguistic fluencies. No prior knowledge of a South Asian language is required but applicants should provide evidence of their language-learning ability, and the language element of the training will be tailored to meet the needs of students with existing language skills.

### Course Structure

Students take 'The Politics of Culture in Contemporary South Asia' [15PSAC314] and a course in Bengali, Hindi, Nepali or Urdu in their first year, plus further courses to the value of two full units (90 credits). These courses are chosen in close consultation with the programme convenor. Students spend the first half of their second year studying at one of our partner institutions in South Asia, before returning to work on their 20,000-word dissertation.

The most popular (non-language) course choices are listed below. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list and that all courses are subject to availability in a given year:

Culture and Society of South Asia	15PANC087
The Indian Temple	15PARC034
Indian Cinema: Its History and Social Context	15PSAH001
Indian Cinema: Key Issues	15PSAH002
Modern Bengal: the Evolution of Bengali Culture and Society from 1690 to the Present Day (MA)	15PSAC289
Contemporary Punjab: Society and Culture across Borders	15PAIC001
Culture and Conflict in the Himalaya	15PSAC291
The Politics of Culture in Contemporary South Asia	15PSAC314
Islam in South Asia	15PHIC042
Gender, law and the family in the history of modern South Asia	15PHIH030
Colonialism and Nationalism in South Asia	15PHIC071
Law and society in South Asia (MA/LLM)	15PLAC129
Literatures of South Asia	15PSAC284
Directed Readings in the Literature of a Modern South Asian Language	15PSAC016
Literature & Colonialism in North India (Masters)	15PSAH005
Sacred Sound in South Asia	15PMUH021
Government and politics of modern South Asia	15PPOC003
Modern Muslim Thinkers from South Asia	15PSRC169
History and Doctrines of Indian Buddhism	15PSRC059
Jainism: History, Doctrine and the Contemporary World	15PSRC024
Buddhist Meditation in India and Tibet	15PSRC172
The Origins and Development of Yoga in Ancient India	15PSRC173

### Lectures and Seminars

Most courses require students to attend two or three hours of classes each week. This time will be spent in lectures, seminars, tutorial discussions and student presentations: the exact mixture of activities varies somewhat from course to course. At Masters level there is a particular emphasis on students' contributions and presentations, and students are also expected to read extensively and prepare for each class in advance.

Language courses typically involve more hours of contact time, especially at elementary level, and regular homework.

The assessment on most courses consists of two or three coursework essay assignments and an unseen written examination, sat in April or May. However, some courses (notably, The Politics of Culture in Contemporary South Asia [15PSAC314]) are assessed purely on the basis of coursework, including essays and reaction papers.

### Dissertation

A 20,000-word dissertation will be written by each student on this programme after his/her return from South Asia, for submission in September of the second year. The dissertation will be on an approved topic linked with one of the taught courses.

### How to Apply Section

Apply for admission to the MA Intensive South Asian Studies by using the on-line application form for Taught Masters programmes at [www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/howtoapply](http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/howtoapply)





## Events

### Some Highlights

#### Ideologies and Institutions

##### A conference to celebrate the career and works of Professor Peter Robb

A conference to celebrate the career and work of Peter Robb, Professor of Indian History at SOAS (retired 2013), was held on 19-20 September 2013. Entitled 'Ideologies and Institutions' after a volume of essays Peter Robb edited twenty years earlier, the conference was attended by colleagues and students from all parts of his career. Panels also reflected the range of topics that Peter wrote on, from agrarian histories, to race, education, the British empire and Bengal. The event was over subscribed and while participants spoke warmly of Peter's work and their experience of him as a colleague or supervisor, the two days seemed to reflect SOAS's substantial contribution to the field of South Asian history more broadly. It was, all agreed, a very happy occasion.

#### White Van Stories

##### Film Screening and Discussion with Director Leena Manimekalai

Director Leena Manimekalai visited SOAS on 13 November 2013 to screen her latest documentary 'White Van Stories'. This film revisits the horrors of Sri Lanka's civil war through first-person accounts of people whose fathers, brothers, sisters and daughters were taken away by security forces and then disappeared without trace. Shooting with a team with hidden cameras, Manimekalai interviewed survivors in refugee camps and at their homes across the country. The stories narrate a familiar pattern of events: a knock on the door in the night from police or army representatives, family members being taken away in white vans for questioning, and then silence. In this documentary Manimekalai showcases the bravery and public protests of these families, who hold on to their hope and speak out to find their loved ones. The event attracted a large turnout at SOAS and prompted a lively discussion of the larger socio-political context of Sri Lanka's civil war. The audience was deeply moved by these emotional stories and responded with questions and added personal accounts and experiences, which enriched the screening and contributed to a very successful event.



#### 'The Magic Ring of Memory and Forgetfulness in South Asian Literature and Folklore'

##### A lecture by Wendy Doniger

Wendy Doniger returned to speak to a packed room at SOAS on 21 November 2013 on the subject of jewellery, notably the ring, and its relationship to themes of sex and identity in South Asian literature and folklore. Precious gems are embedded in the aesthetic language of forms of Indian literature from Sanskrit court poetry to narrative Hindu devotional texts, as metaphors for fertility and signs of royal status. The story of Ratnavali or 'The Lady of the Jewelled Necklace' was used to introduce the audience to the role of jewellery in tales of masquerade among the elite. The ring however was shown to possess above all else a particularly powerful and unique significance as symbol and motif in a number of celebrated Indian stories, pertaining to secret sexual liaisons and the ensuing problems of rejected and unknown wives and heirs. When lost, as a symbol of chastity, the ring becomes a sign of the 'woman's adultery', or, worse still, robs her of her power and identity. Only when the ring is found does the reality of a husband's infidelity become clear, and the woman's (and her son's) rightful position and honour restored.

Through tellings of Shakuntala, the tale of Maludeva from the Kathasaritsagara, and a village myth of Shiva and Parvati, Wendy Doniger made plain in her fascinating discussion the extent to which matters of guilt, innocence and identity are embodied in and decided by means of possession of a gold ring. An open conversation with the audience drew comparisons with texts from outside of India, from Shakespeare to 'Sita Sings the Blues'.

The truth, it would seem, can only be proven by an apparently oracular object, given power over and above that of human speech. The author and audience's belief in the ring as a device for truth-telling begs bigger questions about our understanding of human (and particularly 'female') nature, conversations that will no doubt unfold in Professor Doniger's forthcoming book, which has the working title 'The Magic Ring of Memory and Forgetfulness in South Asian Literature and Folklore'.



Wendy Doniger (left) with Rachel Dwyer (right)

#### Reflections of thirty years of research in Nepal: the politics of subjects, researchers and audiences

##### A lecture by Piers Blaikie (University of East Anglia)

We were pleased to host the 2013 annual lecture of the Britain-Nepal Academic Council, which was delivered by Professor Piers Blaikie to a large audience in the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre on 28 November 2013. Professor Blaikie argued that an abundance of donor funding and a scarcity of domestic funding have meant that the specific development issues which interest bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors have dominated research output in and on Nepal; that in reaction to this there has been a 'swadeshi' movement that encourages a more symmetrical co-production of research, with more Nepali nationals framing their own research issues; but that there continues to be an "underdevelopment" of independent research undertaken by Nepali scholars, NGOs, activists and local organisations. This has led to a widespread disconnect between policy-relevant research and policy making at the national level. Professor Blaikie, whose research on development issues in Nepal stretches back for over 30 years, was introduced by Dr Ben Campbell of Durham University, and the lecture was followed by a lively discussion and a reception.

#### Roundtable discussion on Nepal Elections 2013: what next?

Nepal's first Constituent Assembly (CA) was elected in April 2008, and was one of the principal outcomes of the People's Movement of 2006, which brought the ten-year armed struggle between the Nepali state and the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) to its official end. Unfortunately, the 601-seat CA failed to produce a constitution for the new secular federal republic of Nepal even after three extensions of its term of office, and was eventually dissolved in May 2012, leaving Nepal in a state of suspended transition. Eventually, at least 65% of the Nepali electorate voted on 19 November 2013 to elect a new Constituent Assembly. The results were dramatic: the total number of seats won by the Maoists fell to a mere 80 (compared with 220 in 2008) and the largest share of the vote (196 seats) was secured by the Nepali Congress, a centrist party. The NCP (Unified Marxist-Leninist) came a close second with 175 seats. We hosted a roundtable discussion of the outcome of these elections, organised by the Britain-Nepal Academic Council, on 6 December 2013. The event began with presentations from David Gellner (University of Oxford), Mara Malagodi (LSE) and Surya Subedi (University of Leeds), followed by comments from CK Lal, one of Nepal's best-known political commentators. The discussion was then opened to the floor, and a number of attendees shared their thoughts on the election process, the results, and what they mean for the future of Nepal.



## Workshop on 'Rough and Ready Justice: Panchayats and Community Arbitration in South Asia'

This one-day workshop, held on 10 January 2014, was funded by the South Asia Institute and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at SOAS. Our object was to analyze and discuss the forms and functions of panchayats and other community fora employed for the purposes of arbitration, mediation and access to justice. Contributors were asked to examine the historical experience of panchayats and to examine the conflicts in legal paradigms when these fora are regularized in modern judicial and legal situations. Thus specifically we wanted to see:

- Where and how was the panchayat used during the colonial period?
- In what forms did local arbitration survive in the postcolonial period?
- How have panchayats dispensed 'justice' in grassroots situations in independent India and Pakistan?
- In what ways could community governance be brought in line with humanitarian and human rights law?

The first session set the historical parameters of the discussion by framing the two diachronic ends of the praxis of panchayats/ community arbitration forums. Prof. Jim Jaffe opened the workshop discussion with a review of ideas of the panchayat in the 'long nineteenth century', examining the various European political and social ideologies that informed early panchayats administered by the colonial judicial establishment. These judicial panchayats eventually failed, but the term 'panchayat' resurfaced as a local administrative ideal during the late nineteenth century. He examined some of the confusion regarding the form and function of these bodies as lying between the paradigms of boards of arbitration, juries and an ancient system of local self-government. Prof. Galanter followed by exploring the current judicial situation in India as a 'great pyramid', from a broad informal base to a narrow formal court system. He examined the plural legal situation at the bottom of this pyramid, demonstrating an 'uneven ecology' of multiple judicial forums. He raised the question of access to justice in this plural situation.

The second session looked at the historical record to examine two different ways in which the colonial government sought to incorporate 'local society' in judicial administration. Amrita Shodhan examined the experience of early colonial Gauhati (Assam) where, until their supersession by magistrates and adalats, British administrators employed panchayats as juries in administering criminal as well as civil justice. Matthew Nelson examined the *longue duree* political economy of customary law in Punjab. He analysed this history to question the linking of panchayat and local democracy.

The third session examined the contemporary practice of caste and village and religious community arbitration in different locations. What was emphasized was the difference in the politics and practices of these locales even as they all look like 'community arbitration'.

Subir Sinha analysed the politics and practice of Khap Panchayats in villages of Haryana and eastern Uttar Pradesh. He observed the practice of dominance and majoritarian rule of these khaps and their intersections with democracy, majoritarianism, populism and new ways of political mobilization. Zoe Headley's examination of caste judicial assemblies in Tamil Nadu exposed the long history of caste panchayats amongst the Kullars, based on copper plate and paper records held in personal collections. She discussed the discovery and preservation of these extensive private records, which indicated that caste panchayats functioned across districts and villages and that they increasingly tried cases of members of different castes. Headley also examined how these panchayats have recently come into judicial disrepute due to their association with northern khap panchayats in public discourse. Samia Bano looked at Muslim arbitration tribunals in English law and the consequences these might have for British Muslim women. She raised the concern that the privatization of law may undermine conceptions of justice, 'equality before the law' and 'common citizenship'. She examined these concerns against the critique of these tribunals by women adjudicators who used these tribunals.

The workshop ended with a brief discussion on how to take the debate forward. It was agreed that scholars working on panchayats felt isolated and it was encouraging that there was a larger community of people working on the subject. However, there was confusion in the field regarding the multiple referents to the word panchayat and community arbitration. There was a need to create a glossary of terms used to refer to the different types of fora based in 'communities'. There was also a need to place this subject in a broader comparative perspective. For example, no African scholars were represented at the workshop although there is a long history of studying community-based law there.

It was agreed that there was a great need for future work on these issues and that an e-list of concerned scholars would be set up to share ideas and studies. Moreover, it was agreed that the contributions to this workshop should be published as a special journal issue and that a larger conference should be organized. In particular, while we seem to have some idea of the form of civil and judicial panchayats under British administration in the nineteenth century, we have only a hazy outline of their functioning as a caste organization. It was noted as well that there is very little information on this forum in the pre-colonial period. Finally, the need to document the nature of panchayat justice in the post-colonial period was also highlighted. The liberal paradigm of the rights-based individual, it was agreed, was complicated by the presence of the communitarian individual. The study of panchayats, therefore, may provide an unique perspective from which to recognize and locate the complicated history of the individual and community.

## Nepal's Political Transition: challenges ahead

Lecture by Dr Suresh Chalise, the Nepali Ambassador to the UK and Ireland



SOAS Director Paul Webley hosts an afternoon tea for Nepali Ambassador HE Dr Suresh Chalise in his office. SSAI Director Michael Hutt (left), SOAS Director Paul Webley (middle) and HE Dr Suresh Chalise (right).

Dr Chalise kindly agreed to speak on this topic on 5 February 2014, shortly before his term of office as ambassador came to its end. First he described the dynamics of the political transition from a monarchy to a secular republic from a historical perspective, then went on to explain that the changed political situation and the composition of the second Constituent Assembly would be helpful in drafting a new constitution for Nepal, despite the existence of considerable challenges ahead.



SSAI Director Michael Hutt (middle) with HE Dr Suresh Chalise (right) and Prof Surya Subedi (left) in the SOAS Khalili Lecture Theatre.

## Even the Crows: A Divided Gujarat

The SSAI hosted the first screening of this film, which was made and directed by Sheena and Sonum Sumaria, on 26 February 2014. 'Even the Crows' explores the way in which Hindu nationalist ideology has polarised Gujarat along religious lines and marginalised the Muslim minority population. The film accuses Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat, of complicity in the 2002 riots and presents the testimonies of some of the riots' victims and survivors. The sensitive and controversial nature of the film's subject matter ensured an extremely lively Q&A session after the screening.



The sisters and directors Sheena and Sonum Sumaria with SSAI Director Michael Hutt.

## Bhaji on the Beach

International Women's Day was marked on 10 March 2014 with a special twentieth-anniversary screening of the classic film *Bhaji on the Beach*. The event was co-organised with the annual Asian film festival Tongues on Fire and Asian Circle, a network of professional women who work with Oxfam to support vulnerable women in South Asia, and saw the reassembling of many members of the original cast.



Film screening and Panel Discussion on "Bhaji on the beach".



The director Gurinder Chadha introduced her film and after the screening participated in a panel discussion of the film and the wider issue of violence against women in South Asian communities. The other members of the panel were the actors Shaheen Khan and Tanveer Ghani and Shan Khan, the director of the new film Honour and the debate was facilitated by journalist Radha Bedi.

Meera Syal, who wrote the script for *Bhaji on the Beach*, was unable to attend but sent a message, which was read out to the audience. She wrote, 'we wanted to break the silence and bring into the open all the stuff that was happening in so many of our lives that was ignored or hidden and we wanted to do it with humour and honesty, to kick start the debate by creating Asian female characters who were as complex and flawed and funny as real women are. It's honest and unapologetic and unafraid to highlight issues that are still affecting many women today, a sober reminder that though we have come so far, we still have so much to do.'

### Challenges of Democracy in India

#### A public lecture by India's External Affairs Minister, Salman Khurshid

On 12 March 2014, the SSAI hosted a public lecture by India's External Affairs minister, Hon. Shri Salman Khurshid. A former academic, Law Minister and writer, Mr Khurshid visited SOAS during a brief visit to the UK, in the midst of a hotly contested election campaign in India. Calling his account a practitioner's attempt to explain what is going on in Indian democracy, Minister Khurshid noted that the sustenance of democratic institutions in India, under difficult circumstances, deserved accolades. Nevertheless, Indian democracy also faced several challenges.



Hon'ble External Affairs Minister of India Shri Salman Khurshid speaking about challenges of democracy in India.

To begin with, the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system, based on the British model, had thrown up several problems. This included the tendency to identify democracy with majority rule. In a liberal democracy, a majority had the right to prevail up to a point, but not beyond the point set by constitutional rights and human rights. Another problem of FPTP was that performance did not matter enough for winning elections. Its main advantage was delivering stable government, but in the recent past this had not been the case in India; as such, it was time to reconsider FPTP. A proportional list system would exclude people who had less than 3-5% of the vote, with pockets of influence, but lacking broad acceptability in society. A second challenge, partly a result of the problems of FPTP, was that the Supreme Court, which was not elected by or accountable to the people, was increasingly making executive decisions. Courts were taking a view on issues that were for Parliament or government to decide, such as billboards and fossil fuels. The Indian Supreme Court had 31 judges (in contrast to 543 representatives in Parliament) with small benches of two judges commonly deciding on what politicians and people should say and do.

A third set of problems facing democratic governance in India derived from its time tested, complex federal structure. These included the difficulties of auditing state spending, the tension between the demands of 'backward' states that sought additional resources and those that contributed revenue, and the carving up of small states that needed special economic assistance in a context of scarce resources. A fourth challenge was that posed by India's tribal belts, rich in mineral wealth and also home to violent Left wing movements. The government's legislation on the rights of forest dwellers sought to empower them to preserve their way of life, access produce from their lands and to be consulted if their land was to be given over to large projects. A fifth challenge, that of terrorism, mercifully showed a downward graph, but vigilance was still required. In addition to dealing with terrorism, there also needed to be a political process.

A final set of problems that the minister discussed related to censure of the political class. A highly respected Election Commission had done yeoman service in cleaning up the election process. However, some of its instructions to politicians on the words they could use and the promises they could make during campaigning were problematic, given that it was a three-person body, whose decisions had no appeal. The political class did need to be questioned, but the manner of recent criticisms, such as those made by the leaders of the Aam Aadmi party, posed a challenge to democracy.

Professor Michael Hutt chaired the event; Dr Rochana Bapai offered a brief introduction to the speaker; and Professor Gurharpal Singh proposed the vote of thanks.

### Unruly Subjects and Freedom Imagining: Transborder Connections in Colonial India

#### A lecture by Professor Yasmin Saikia

The SSAI's first annual lecture was delivered by Dr. Yasmin Saikia, who is the Hardt-Nickachos Chair in Peace Studies and Professor of History at the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at Arizona State University, on 7 May 2014. Dr. Saikia's lecture engaged with the Algerian theorist Malek Bennabi's concept of 'uncolonializability' and focused its attention on three "middle actors" of the colonial period: Fazal Illahi (a revolutionary mullah), Obaidullah Sindhi (a Deobandi-Bolshevik), and Iqbal Shedia (a self-styled middle class rebel). Dr Saikia probed the connections between Muslim India and popular politics in Central Asia, Japan, Russia, Germany and Italy in the period between the two world wars. She described how dialogues crisscrossing the transborder regions between present day Pakistan and Afghanistan with India and Nepal gave rise to a freedom narrative that imagined a Hukumat Illahi or 'Republic of God': disparate groups of oppressed subjects imagined a kind of governance that was at once good and just, a place of freedom beyond British colonialism. Through her ongoing investigation of this development Dr Saikia aims to increase our knowledge of the agency of transborder peoples and take it a step further by engaging with dialogues on the concepts of freedom and utopia among colonized peoples who have sourced their ideas in a South Asian Muslim context. This was an exceptionally fine lecture, delivered with great fluency and clarity. Those who were not able to attend are invited to listen to the audio recording of it posted on the 'past events' section of the SSAI website.



Yasmin Saikia giving the SSAI's annual lecture.

### SSAI Graduate Workshop on 'Crossing Borders in South Asia'

The SOAS South Asia Institute hosted its first PhD Graduate Workshop on the theme "Crossing Borders of South Asia" on 7th May 2014. Participants and contributors were asked to take a critical attitude to the methodological nationalism of many studies of society and culture in postcolonial South Asia and to focus on cross-border relationships and interactions at a level below that of the state.



Participants of the PhD Graduate Workshop "Crossing Borders in South Asia" held at the SSAI in May 2014.

Papers were presented by doctoral students from SOAS, Edinburgh, Southampton, Cambridge, Heidelberg and Vienna, and SOAS students and postdocs served as paper discussants. The workshop was organised in four panels: "Cultural Production" chaired by Navtej Purewal, "Ideologies and Governance" chaired by Kamran Ali, "Centres, borders and movement: the Himalaya" chaired by Michael Hutt, and "Centres, borders and movement: Bengal and Bangladesh" chaired by Yasmin Saikia.

Participants welcomed the opportunity to engage in intellectual exchanges with other early-career scholars on matters of common interest and to share each other's work (all papers have now been posted on a password-protected webpage). The workshop was timed to coincide with the annual lecture of the Centre for the Study of Pakistan and the SSAI's own annual lecture, which were delivered by Kamran Ali and Yasmin Saikia respectively. Two days of a rich learning experience ended with an informal reception. In the light of the success of this initiative, the SSAI intends to make a themed graduate workshop a fixture in its annual calendar of events.



## Simon Digby Memorial conference



Participants of the 2014 Simon Digby Conference.

The late Simon Everard Digby (1932-2010) was a renowned scholar of South Asia with extraordinarily diverse interests, though he was always able to draw out from a bewildering array of primary sources the hidden stories and complex patterns that enliven the realm of ideas, objects, beliefs, words, and personalities. His attentiveness to social patterning famously informed his pioneering studies of Sufis, Jogis, and soldiers, whose lives and activities he situated in the concrete political arrangements of their day.

Generously funded by the Simon Digby Memorial Charity, and organized by Saqib Baburi (Simon Digby Postdoctoral Fellow) and Francesca Orsini (Dept. of Languages and Cultures of South Asia), the Simon Digby Memorial Conference on 9-11 June 2014 brought together over twenty speakers from India, USA, Europe and the UK belonging to several generations of scholars of the religious, political, economic, art and music, and literary history of pre-modern South Asia. The conference sought to cover as many of Simon Digby's areas of interests as possible—from coins (J. Deyell) to paintings (R. Skelton, J. Seyller, B. Schmitz, S. Baburi), from Sufi works (S. Kumar) to historiography (R. Fischel) and language (W. Hakala), from architecture (E. Koch) to precious stones (B. Wannell) to photography (B. Metcalf), from ethical literature (S. Kugle, F. Mir) to tales of wonder (C. Shackle, F. Orsini) and philosophical poetry (Bishop M. Nazir-Ali), from Yogis (J. Mallinson) to magic (K. Schofield), and from Kashmir to travel and travellers (R. Llewellyn-Jones, A. Welch). Speakers were encouraged to take a single work, object, building, motif, concept, or genre, situate it within a larger historical context, and relate it to intellectual and social patterns in much the same way that Simon Digby would do in his own writings.

Several speakers had known Simon well and opened their presentations with personal memories, but the conference also included a special session of reminiscences led by Richard Blurton (British Museum) and Francis Robinson (Royal Holloway), a lively session to which many audience members contributed. The concluding discussion sought to identify the key features of "Simon's method": the way in which he built his own archive using diverse sources and materials and acquired detailed specialist knowledge of each and every one of them—several speakers recalled his extraordinary riffs at conferences on the most diverse and obscure topics; his juxtaposition of these diverse sources so that he could present wide-ranging, synthetic surveys that were nonetheless rooted in detailed material evidence; his sense of historical continuity and of lived history, so that material objects were for him rooted in social and cultural history (and nostalgia only when he felt that cultural continuity had been lost); and his unique ability to work across languages and media—texts into paintings, into music, across languages. Andrew Topsfield spoke of Simon Digby as a collector of manuscripts and showed examples of his collection, which includes many books in popular styles, and collecting objects, holding them, describing them, and living with them, was an integral part of Simon Digby's "method". Together, these elements made Simon Digby an extraordinary, and extraordinarily original, scholar of Sultanate and Mughal India, whose insights and writings remain unsurpassed and inspirational. The papers will be collected into a memorial volume.

## Workshop on the Indian General Elections

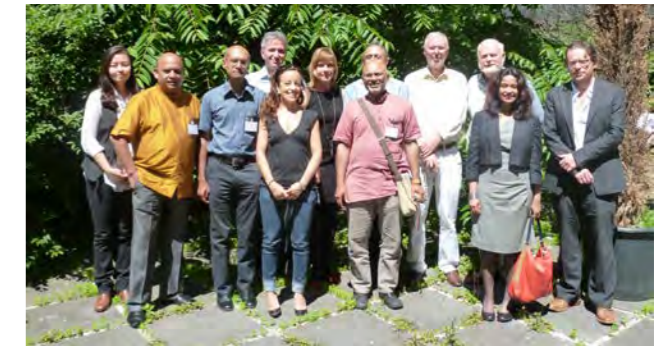
On 10 June 2014, the SOAS South Asia Institute hosted an international roundtable on the 16th Lok Sabha elections in India. Organised by Prof. Gurharpal Singh, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and Heewon Kim, a research student at SOAS, the roundtable brought together some of the most distinguished experts working on Indian politics from India, the United States, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to reflect on the general election results and the implications for Indian democracy.

The contributors to the roundtable included Prof. James Manor, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Prof. Sandeep Shastri, National Coordinator of Lokniti Network, Jain University at Bangalore, Prof. Christophe Jaffrelet, CNRS and King's College India Institute, Prof. Uday S. Mehta, CUNY, Dr. Carolien van Ham, University of Twente, Prof. Gurharpal Singh, SOAS, Prof. Lawrence Saez, SOAS, Dr. Subir Sinha, SOAS, Dr. James Chiriyankandath, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, International Institute for Strategic Studies and Dr. Simona Vittorini, SOAS.

The roundtable was organised in four sessions. The first session considered the results and performance of the national parties. Prof. Manor and Prof. Shastri provided detailed insights into the pre- and post-election polling data, with particular reference to how the BJP's and the Congress' leadership influenced voter choice. The regional performance of the national parties in the South and the north-west was examined by Dr. Chiriyankandath and Prof. Singh, while Dr. Sinha explored the dilemmas of the development agenda central to the BJP's campaign.



The Indian Election Workshop was sponsored and organised by Dean Gurharpal Singh, Phd Student Heewon Kim and the SSAl.



Group photo of the participating SSAl members and organizers of the workshop.

After lunch the focus of the discussion changed to the challenges facing the new government and issues relating to the conduct of the elections. Prof. Jaffrelet outlined the BJP's rise to power and Roy-Chaudhury suggested the possible direction of change in foreign policy and managing security. Prof. Mehta in his presentation drew attention to the challenges of managing a complex and contradictory vision of the social and the political at the heart of the new government's election agenda. In the last session, Prof. Saez and Dr. van Ham presented details of a new research programme on measuring election integrity in India and Dr. Vittorini drew attention to the voter campaign led by the Indian Election Commission.

Owing to limitations of space, attendance at the roundtable was by invitation only. The day witnessed lively contributions from the audience comprising of media, professional, government, academic specialists, and staff and students from SOAS.



## Launching new books on South Asian music

Two recent publications from the SOAS Music Department on important repertoires of South Asian vocal music were introduced at a launch in the Khalili Lecture Theatre on 18 June 2014, hosted jointly by the Music Department and the SOAS South Asia Institute. SOAS Pro-Director Professor Richard Black opened proceedings with a short introduction to the work of the SSAI. The event was then chaired by Dr Katherine Schofield, lecturer in Music at King's College London, who introduced the authors, Prof. Richard Widdess and Dr Nicolas Magriel.

Richard Widdess introduced his book *Dāphā: sacred singing in a South Asian city. Music, performance and meaning in Bhaktapur, Nepal* (Ashgate: SOAS Musicology Series, 2013), the first study of a genre of sacred singing practised in the temples and neighbourhoods of towns and villages in the Kathmandu Valley. His study of this genre focuses on the historical transmission of texts and music from the palaces to the farming community, the relationship of music to the daily life, social interactions and religious practices of its present performers, and the relevance of musical structure, repertoire and performance to Newar culture and history.

Nicolas Magriel gave a short recital of the North Indian classical vocal genre *khayāl*, accompanied on *tabla* by Sarathi Korwar, before talking about his book *The Songs of Khayāl* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2013). While much has been written about the history, style and performers of *khayāl*, this is the first publication to focus on its songs, analysing both their musical and textual components. 492 songs are transcribed from classic recorded performances of the leading singers from the beginning of the 20th century to the advent of cassette recording in the 1970's. Dr Magriel's presentation discussed the texts as being an undervalued literary genre that vividly conveys many aspects of pre-modern Indian life as well as encompassing a wide range of mythological, religious and philosophical concerns. His talk illustrated the rich diversity of its subject matter as revealed by his co-author Lalita Du Perron's translations.



SSAI Director Michael Hutt, Prof. Rachel Dwyer and actress Sharmila Tagore.

## Gitanjali 100

The Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre was filled on Thursday 26 June 2014, as London-based arts organization Baithak UK took to the stage to celebrate the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore's great work *Gitanjali*. Events marking the centenary of the Nobel Prize for Literature being awarded to *Gitanjali* had been taking place across the country, and members of SOAS's South Asia Institute were delighted to participate in the celebrations.



Sangeeta Datta organized and orchestrated this evening with Sharmila Tagore.

The production, entitled *Gitanjali 100*, was written and directed by Sangeeta Datta, and utilised poetry-recital, dance, music and film to explore *Gitanjali*'s journey from Tagore's notebook (famously mislaid on the London underground) to the world literature stage. SOAS was honoured to welcome the legendary actress (and great grand niece of Rabindranath) Sharmila Tagore, who recited poems from *Gitanjali* in Bengali, English and Hindi - the latter the result of new translations by Javed Akhtar.

Professor Michael Hutt, Professor Rachel Dwyer and Dr John Stevens spoke to introduce the event, each emphasizing the important role that the study of Bengali language, culture and history continues to play at SOAS. It was well known to the largely Bengali audience that the work of former Senior Lecturer Dr William Radice has been instrumental in bringing Tagore's work (including *Gitanjali*) to a new international readership.

Baithak UK's production was received enthusiastically, and the evening concluded with a Q&A session with Sharmila Tagore, who was quizzed by a series of SOAS students, many of whom appeared decidedly star-struck. The South Asia Institute hopes that the success of this event will serve to strengthen connections between SOAS and the Bengali community in London, and will lead to further events and collaborations in the future.

## The South Asian History Seminar

The South Asian History Seminar, one of the longest running seminars of its kind in the United Kingdom, continues to be an important platform for discussion and the exchange of knowledge related to the history of the Indian subcontinent within regional and global contexts. Organised by the South Asian section in the Department of History at SOAS, the seminar meets for about twenty annual sessions and provides a major venue for scholars to present and discuss their current work on the various sub-fields of South Asian history to a specialised audience. This year we welcomed prominent as well as young scholars from a variety of leading institutions in the United Kingdom, including the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, King's College London, Manchester, Oxford, SOAS, Sussex, UCL, and York, in addition to speakers from international institutions in India, Israel, Switzerland, and the United States. The seminars included papers that focused on the period from the early modern era to our times, and discussed both all-South Asian topics and region-based issues, covering the entire subcontinent, from the Himalaya to Kerala and from the Punjab to Bengal. Among the main sub-fields presented in the seminars we can name political histories (colonial, post-colonial, and contemporary), both within the subcontinent and on a global level; education, missionaries, and cultural history; historiography and memory; history of the sciences, health, and mental health; legal and judicial histories and approaches; domestic relations and food security; and labour history. Together, the seminar presented a rich and varied picture of current trends in the study of the history of South Asia.



## Events

### Events Listing 2013-2014

19-20 September 2013

#### Conference

##### Ideologies and Institutions: a conference to celebrate the career and works of Professor Peter Robb

Ian Brown, William Pinch, Daud Ali, David Arnold, Anand Yang, Nitin Sinha, Bindeshwar Ram, Sanjoy Bhattacharya, Sanjukta Ghosh, Valerie Anderson, James Chiriyankandath, Projit Bihari Mukharji, Peter Robb, Upal Chakrabarti, Ezra Rashkow, Peter Marshall, Andrew Grout, Avril Powell, Alison Safadi, Vijay Pinch, Clive Dewey, Ravi Ahuja, Aditya Sarkar, Shabnum Tejani

7 October 2013

#### Literature of the Indian Subcontinent Book Talk Series

##### Rohinton Mistry's 'A Fine Balance' (1996)

Kavita Ramdya

23 October 2013

#### Seminar

##### Contours of Participatory Urban Governance in Indian Cities: Potentials and Challenges

Soumyadip Chattopadhyay

4 November 2013

#### Literature of the Indian Subcontinent Book Talk Series

##### Kiran Desai's 'The Inheritance of Loss'

Kavita Ramdya

13 November 2013

#### Film screening and discussion with director

##### White Van Stories

Leena Manimekalai

21 November 2013

#### Lecture

##### The Magic Ring of Memory and Forgetfulness in South Asian Literature and Folklore

Wendy Doniger (O'Flaherty)

26 November 2013

#### Lecture

##### From Kutch to Tashkent: The Indo-Pakistan War of 1965

Farooq Bajwa

28 November 2013

#### Britain-Nepal Academic Council Annual Lecture

##### Reflections on thirty years of research in Nepal: the politics of subjects, researchers and audiences

Piers Blaikie

6 December 2013

#### Round Table

##### Nepal Elections 2013 - What Next?

David Gellner, CK Lal, Mara Malagodi, Surya Subedi

9 December 2013

#### Literature of the Indian Subcontinent Book Talk Series

##### Ed Husain's 'The Islamist' (2007)

Kavita Ramdya

10 January 2014

#### Workshop

##### Rough and Ready Justice? International Workshop on Panchayat and Community Arbitration in South Asia

Jim Jaffe (U of Madison, Whitewater) Marc Galanter (U of Madison, Wisconsin) Amrita Shodhan (SOAS) Matthew Nelson (SOAS) Subir Sinha (SOAS)

Zoé Headley (IFP, Pondicherry) Samia Bano (SOAS) Shabnum Tejani (SOAS)

13 January 2014

#### Literature of the Indian Subcontinent Book Talk Series

##### Rishi Reddi's 'Karma and Other Stories' (2007)

Kavita Ramdya

15 January 2014

#### Seminar

##### Hobson-Jobson: the trading lexicon

Kate Teltscher

24 January 2014

#### MUSA 'Big Star Rising Star' seminar

##### Muslim Trajectories of Exclusion and Militancy

Faisal Devji and Adeel Hussain

29 January 2014

#### Lecture

##### Placing Trust Well

Professor Onora O'Neill (Baroness O'Neill of Bengarve CBE FBA Hon FRS F Med Sci)

3 February 2014

#### Literature of the Indian Subcontinent Book Talk Series

##### Aravind Adiga's 'The White Tiger' (2008)

Kavita Ramdya

5 February 2014

#### Lecture

##### Nepal's Political Transition: challenges ahead

HE Dr Suresh Chalise, the Nepali Ambassador to the UK and Ireland

20 February 2014

#### MUSA 'Big Star Rising Star' seminar

##### Muslims in South Asian Cities - Trajectories of Marginalisation

Christophe Jaffrelot and Sanaa Alimia

26 February 2014

#### Film screening and discussion with directors

##### Even the Crows: A Divided Gujarat

Sheena Sumaria and Sonum Sumaria

3 March 2014

#### Literature of the Indian Subcontinent Book Talk Series

##### Jhumpa Lahiri's 'Unaccustomed Earth' (2008)

Kavita Ramdya

5 March 2014

#### Seminar

##### Reimagining Baloch relationships to the Pakistani nation state in contemporary art and English-language fiction

Madeline Clements

10 March 2014

#### Film Screening and Discussion

##### Bhaji on the Beach

Pushpinder Chowdhry, Santosh Bhanot, Gurinder Chadha, Radha Bedi, Shaheen Khan, Shan Khan, Tanveer Ghani

12 March 2014

#### Lecture

##### Challenges of Democracy in India

Hon'ble External Affairs Minister of India Shri Salman Khurshid

19 March 2014

#### Film screening and discussion with director

##### The Politics of Desire: Reading Rituparno Ghosh as a Cultural Producer

Sangeeta Datta, Rachel Dwyer

23 March 2014

#### Presentation

##### Pakistan Day Musheira,

Ata ul Haq Qasmi, James Caron and many others

7 April 2014

#### Literature of the Indian Subcontinent Book Talk Series

##### Jeet Thayil's 'Narcopolis' (2012)

Kavita Ramdya

6 May 2014

#### Centre for the Study of Pakistan Annual Lecture

##### Karachi and 1960s Cinema: Cultural Wounds and the Production of Sameness

Kamran Asdar Ali

7 May 2014

#### PhD Graduate Workshop

##### Crossing borders in South Asia

Priyanka Basu, Emily Rose Stevenson, Eleanor Halsall, Rosalind Parr, Michael Duffy, Tamina M Chowdhury, Christoph Bergmann, Hans-Juergen David, Zsoka Gelle, Camelia Dewan, Anvesha Sengupta, Bryony Whitmarsh, Navtej Purewal, Kamran Ali, Yasmin Saikia



7 May 2014

**SOAS South Asia Institute Annual Lecture****Unruly Subjects and Freedom Imagining: Transborder Connections in Colonial India**

Yasmin Saikia

13 May 2014

**Film screenings and roundtable****VisionMix Short Cuts**

Stephen Hughes, Lucia King

21 May 2014

**Seminar****Jaanta Nahin Mera Baap Kaun Hain?! Knowing 'our' fathers, knowing 'their' fathers**

Ramesh Bairy

22 May 2014

**MUSA 'Big Star, Rising Star' seminar****Enmeshed socio-economic legalities: women and Islam in South Asia**

Werner Menski and Gopika Solanki

27 May 2014

**CSP Book launch****The Prisoner**

Omar Shahid Hamid in conversation with Owen Bennett-Jones

28 May 2014

**Seminar****An Indian Education for Indian Children: the family-school relationship and Indian modernity**

Nita Kumar

7-8 June 2014

**Conference****Beyond Islamophobia**

Chris Allen, Houria Boutledja, Shenaz Bunglawala, Madeline Clements, Peter Gottschalk, Nathan Lean, Maleiha Malik, Peter Morey, Fiyaz Mughal, Geoffrey Nash, Sherene Razack, Stephen Sheehi, Asmaa Soliman, Sarah Soyey, Abdoolkarim Vakil, Amina Yaqin

9-11 June 2014

**Conference****Simon Digby Memorial Conference**

Ali Anooshahr, Sâqib Bâburî, John Deyell, Roy Fischel, Walter Hakala, Ebba Koch, Scott Kugle, Sunil Kumar, Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, James Mallinson, Barbara Metcalf, Farina Mir, Azfar Moin, Michael Nazir-Ali, Francesca Orsini, Barbara Schmitz, Katherine Schofield, John Seyller, Christopher Shackle, Robert Skelton, Andrew Topsfield, Bruce Wannell, Anthony Welch, Simon Digby Memorial Charity

10 June 2014

**Workshop****The Indian General Elections and After**

Gurharpal Singh, James Manor, Sandeep Shastri, Subir Sinha, James Chiriyankandath, Christophe Jaffrelot, Rahul Roy-Choudhury, Uday S Mehta, Lawrence Saez, Simona Vittorini

13 June 2014

**MUSA 'Big Star, Rising Star' seminar****Religious Reform in India: Personalities in the Ahl-i-Hadis and Ahl-i-Quran Movements**

Barbara Metcalf and Ali Usman Qasmi

18 June 2014

**Book launch****Dapha: Sacred Singing in a South Asian City and The Songs of Khayal**

Richard Widdess and Nicolas Magriel

26 June 2014

**Poetry and music performance****Gitanjali 100**

Bairathak UK, Sangeeta Datta, Sharmila Tagore

21 July 2014

**Film screening and discussion with director****Fandry (Pig)**

Nagraj Manjule, Meena Varma, David Mosse

The Institute hosts a comprehensive programme of high quality activities including the weekly public seminar series, international conferences, workshops, briefings and networking events. For the full listing visit: [www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-](http://www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-)

“As India and its neighbours become an increasingly powerful economic and cultural force in our world, it is all the more important for us to understand and explain South Asia in the world-renowned SOAS way—across the full range of humanities and social sciences disciplines; with a solid grounding in the regional languages; and in close collaboration with our partners there.”

Professor Michael Hutt,  
Director, SOAS South Asia Institute.



## Centre for the Study of Pakistan

### Report from Dr Amina Yaqin, Centre Chair

Our programme of events for this year highlighted Pakistan's geopolitical diversity, rich cultural heritage and the significance of interdisciplinary research that contributes to our understanding of an interrelated and complex society deeply embedded in global histories of migration. Members of the Centre for the Study of Pakistan have contributed to the rich mix of seminars, lectures and a conference.

The CSP continued its seminar series with many different contributors from academia, arts, politics as well as the charity sector. From public lectures, film screenings to a major international conference, the CSP catered to a large audience this year.

The highlights of the year were the CSP Annual lecture that was generously supported by the SSAI and organised in conjunction with the Institute's Annual Lecture. We were delighted to host Dr Kamran Asdar Ali, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of the South Asia Institute at the University of Texas, Austin.



From left to right: SSAI Deputy Director Navtej Purewal, SSAI Director Michael Hutt, CSP Chair Amina Yaqin and Kamran Ali.

Professor Ali spoke on Pakistani cinema, tracing its development in the 1960s in Karachi to present an alternative history of Pakistan in that period through film. One of his case studies, Behen Bhai [Sister and Brother, 1968] shows how nationalism became linked to modern urban life during an era of developmental politics. It is contrasted with the rural, which remains the space of tradition, feudal oppression and superstition. Urban life symbolizes the dream of being modern in 1960s Pakistan, with its promise of 'emancipated' lifestyles and bourgeois pleasures (cars, night life, marriage by choice). Professor Ali argued that the film in its image and narrative structure represents the possibilities of a tranquil Karachi of the 1960s, where an emergent post-partition mostly mohajir middle class considers the 'pleasure' of co-existence with other ethnicities.

We were also pleased to welcome a presentation by our Research Associate, Professor Imran Ali from Karachi School for Business and Leadership, who spoke on 'The Continuum of Counter-Revolution: Rethinking the Origins of Pakistan and Beyond'.

In the field of arts the CSP organised events ranging from literature and independent documentary film screenings to Urdu poetry, thus showcasing a wide variety of Pakistani culture. In honour of Pakistan Day, the Centre for the Study of Pakistan, the SOAS South Asia Institute and the World Congress of Overseas Pakistanis organised an Urdu Mushaira. The mushaira was opened by a ghazal recited in tarannum by Durdana Ansari (OBE) of the BBC. The event was presided over by veteran poet, diplomat, columnist, and professor of Urdu literature, Ata ul Haq Qasmi, and involved notable poets from Pakistan and the diaspora. Many enthusiastic (British) Pakistanis recited poems and enjoyed listening to the famous poet Qasmi. In his talk he shared stories about growing up in Lahore and the difficulties of finding public spaces in which to express himself.

CSP, together with the Citizen's Foundation hosted screenings of film clippings by successful documentary makers on Pakistan. The documentary film makers Aatif Nawaaz, nominated for the Cannes International Film Festival 2013, and Anca Dimofte were present to answer audience questions and to discuss cultural and socio-political issues in Pakistan.

Another highlight was an author event with Omar Shahid Hamid, who was in conversation about his debut novel *The Prisoner*, which takes the reader into the underworld of jihadis, corrupt police officers and bloodthirsty political henchmen in the streets of Karachi. This critically acclaimed book draws upon the author's twelve years' experience in the Karachi police force. Hamid was joined in conversation about the book, and the politics of policing Karachi, by the award-winning BBC journalist Owen Bennett-Jones, himself a regular commentator on Pakistani politics and society, and author of a book on the subject. The audience, which filled the Khalili Lecture Theatre to capacity, included members of the general public, the academic community, and even a number of Karachi and London-based police officers; while Hamid, Jones, and the novel itself stimulated one of the year's most lively conversations on the politics of law, order, and everyday life in Pakistan.

The CSP continued its on-going research collaboration with the Muslims, Trust and Cultural Dialogue (MTCD) project hosted at the University of East London. Within the project framework, CSP hosted a public lecture on 'Placing Trust Well' by Professor Onora O'Neill, Chair of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. Our distinguished guest speaker gave an insight into an ethical and practical perspective on trust that can help individuals in their decisions about trusting others, and she elaborated on various examples from real life situations.



CSP Chair Member Dr. Amina Yaqin, Prof. Onora O'Neill and Prof. Peter Morey

Following on from Professor O'Neill's lecture, CSP and MTCD conducted an interview session with the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, in Cambridge, to discuss issues of trust. He reflected on theological and ethical questions of trust, discussing them in relation to racism, discrimination and violence against Muslims in different societies.



CSP Chair Member Amina Yaqin with Dr. Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury.

Following on from last year's jointly hosted conference with MTCD on 'Muslims, Multiculturalism and Trust: New Directions', this year's conference theme in June 2014 was 'Beyond Islamophobia'. This conference brought together academics and practitioners to review the rise of mainstream Islamophobia in recent years, while also situating it in its much longer historical context. The objective of the conference was to explore how Islamophobia manifests itself and to what extent it can be understood as a psychological self-defence reflex against a supposedly antithetical Other; the most recent instance of popular moral panic; the logic of neo-imperial foreign policies; or a manifestation of the unequal results of globalization. Conference participants suggested and argued for possible paths beyond the current impasse, emphasizing what is needed for Islam and Muslims to gain greater acceptance in civil society, how understanding can emerge, and how trust can replace mistrust in intercultural relations. The keynote address was delivered to a full house by Professor John L Esposito of Georgetown University, who spoke on 'Islam, Islamophobia and the Role of Media in America'. There was also an associated small art exhibition held in the foyer of the Khalili Lecture Theatre, 'Second Glance/Double Take', showcasing the work of Lahore and London based Pakistani artists connecting and responding to the conference theme.

The CSP also collaborated with the Muslims, Trust and Cultural Dialogue project in a major new research initiative led by the renowned scholar and diplomat Professor Akbar S. Ahmad. Following on from his successful 'Journey into America' project, Professor Ahmed and his team are conducting research on Muslims in contemporary Europe. This work, provisionally titled "Journey into Europe, Islam, Immigration and Empire" will provide an overview of intercultural relationships in countries such as Spain, Germany and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Researchers from CSP and MTCD took part in the extensive British leg of the 'journey', conducting structured interviews with participants from London, Birmingham, Bradford, Edinburgh, Belfast and Dublin. We launched the initiative at the House of Lords, in an invitee-only event chaired by Professor Bhikhu Parekh. In August Professor Ahmed and his team returned to present their initial findings to a full house in the Djam Lecture Theatre at SOAS. The findings will form the basis of a monograph with Brookings and a documentary film by Professor Ahmed.

All in all, the CSP has had an exciting year of events, art-themed evenings and research collaborations. The Centre would like to take this opportunity to thank the Centres and Programmes Office at SOAS and in particular Rebecca Trautwein for her supportive and administrative work for the CSP.

### Contact Details

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facebook: [www.facebook.com/Pakistan.SOAS](https://www.facebook.com/Pakistan.SOAS)



## Muslim South Asia Research Forum (MUSA)



### MUSA annual report 2013-14

The Muslim South Asia Research Forum, founded in March 2013, has quickly built a profile as one of the most active and engaging initiatives at SOAS. With a growing following on social media, and a series of well attended events, MUSA has made its mark in a short period of time.



The MUSA team with Professor Mike Hutt of SSAI, Dr Faisal Devji, Adeel Hussain, and Sana Shah

MUSA was formed by Francesca Fuoli (PhD candidate History), Johann Chacko (PhD candidate Politics) and Najia Mukhtar (PhD candidate Politics). It has added two members to its working committee – Maria Rashid and Sameen Mohsin Ali, both PhD candidates in Politics. MUSA serves as a platform to connect graduate students, researchers and academics, exchange ideas, and pool resources and energies into facilitating and promoting research on Muslim South Asia, broadly defined.

After a successful launch event and networking session in May 2013, MUSA held its first Annual Graduate Conference in October 2013. The panels showcased the work of students working on a range of topics and included presentations by two graduate students from South Asia for whom MUSA funded travel and provided accommodation, in line with its commitment to engaging with the region. A selection of the papers presented is available on MUSA's website.



Dr Matthew Nelson chairing a panel at MUSA's First Annual Graduate Conference



Dr James Caron chairing a panel at MUSA's First Annual Graduate Conference



Professor Francis Robinson delivering the keynote address on the direction of research on Muslim South Asia.

Following the success of the Graduate Conference, MUSA initiated a speaker series in January 2014 – the 'Big Star / Rising Star Speaker Series'. The concept behind the series is to bring together established academics (Big Stars) in conversation with early career researchers (Rising Stars) in a workshop-lecture where both present thematically linked components of their work. In line with MUSA's objectives of promoting collaboration and innovation in the study of Muslim societies in South Asia, the aim is to create a shared platform for early career researchers to engage with and present their work alongside more senior academics. The sessions are structured so as to prompt speakers to share their experiences and challenges in carrying out their respective research.



Dr Sanaa Alimia speaking at the second Big Star/ Rising Star event

In all, four Big Star / Rising Star events have been held thus far. In the first event in January, Muslim Trajectories of Exclusion and Militancy, Dr Faisal Devji (University of Oxford) was in conversation with Adeel Hussain (PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge). The second event, titled Muslims in South Asian Cities - Trajectories of Marginalisation, had Professor Christophe Jaffrelot (KCL) as the Big Star, and Dr Sanaa Alimia (SOAS) as the Rising Star. Professor Werner Menski (SOAS) was in conversation with Dr Gopika Solanki (Carleton University) in the third event, Enmeshed Socio-Economic Legalities - Women and Islam in South Asia.

The fourth Big Star / Rising Star event, the last of the academic year, was titled Religious Reform in India: Personalities in the Ahl-i-Hadis and Ahl-i-Quran Movements.



The Big Star was Professor Barbara Metcalf (UC Davis) and the Rising Star was Dr Ali Usman Qasmi (Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan). Podcasts for all the Big Star / Rising Star events are available on MUSA's website.

L-R: Professor Barbara Metcalf, Dr Jan-Peter Hartung, and Dr Ali Usman Qasmi

One of MUSA's long term projects is the development of a searchable directory of academics, researchers, and graduate students working on Muslim South Asia. They are currently working on getting the directory online. If you are interested in adding your details to the directory, please email MUSA at [musa@soas.ac.uk](mailto:musa@soas.ac.uk) to request a form.

MUSA is planning to hold its second Annual Graduate Conference in November 2014. A call for papers will be posted on their website and social media pages in the coming weeks.

MUSA's events and activities during the 2013-2014 academic year have been generously sponsored by the SOAS South Asia Institute, the Centre for Ethnic Minority Studies, the Doctoral School, and the LSS, A&H and L&C faculties. MUSA was also delighted to receive a Research Student Grant from the SOAS Department of Politics and International Studies. MUSA would especially like to thank Professor Mike Hutt, Professor Werner Menski, Dr James Caron, and Jane Savory and Rebecca Trautwein of the Centres and Programmes Office for all their help and support.

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# Research Students

## Current PhDs

### Anthropology

#### Keren Bhujel:

tba

#### Brendan Donegan

Spaces for negotiation and mass action: an anthropological study of Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (People's Health Movement), the National Rural Health Mission and the right to health movement in India

#### Jamila Dorner

Enskilment in a South Indian classical dance form: knowledge transmission and improvisation skills in Bharatanatyam

#### Zoe Nima Goodman

Food, politics and cosmopolitanism amongst a Gujarati-speaking Shia sect in Mombasa, Kenya

#### Dhivya Janarthanan

Anthropology of space and dominance in South India

#### Taha Kazi

Pious entertainment – changing forms and notions of piety in Pakistan

#### Amit Kisku

State, forest and people: the changing relationship and its impact on the modern forests of India

#### Mabiala Mak's

tba

#### Ayaz Qureshi

Bureaucrats, business and the (bio)politics of HIV in Pakistan

#### Sunari Senaratne

The post tsunami dynamic: 'reconstruction' in coastal Sri Lanka

#### Murali Shanmogavelan

Everyday communicative practices of an Arunthathiyar community in Tamil Nadu, India

#### Jacquelyn P. Strey

Queer moments, queer imaginings: the everyday activism of queer women in India

#### Thomas van der Molen

Navigating sovereignties: social navigation among young undocumented Tibetans in Nepal

#### Sahil Khan Warsi

Cultivating hambastagi and hamdardi: personhood and relatedness among Afghans in India (working title)

### Art and Archaeology

#### Eva Bentcheva

Escaping the na(rr)ative: Influences and framing of Asian iconography in performance art in Britain, 1960-90.

#### Julian Brown

The art of ancient Champa: a twentieth century creation

#### Anais de Fonseca

Contemporary lives of Cherial painting from Telangana

#### Tara Desjardins

Studies on Mughal glass.

#### Preeti Khosla

A study of the visual language of the indigenous styles of book painting in North India during the Sultanate period (1414-1525 AD).

### Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies

#### Simon Leese

Producing and reproducing Arabic literature in early 19th century North India (working title)

#### Gunaseelan Poonkulaly

'Breaking taboos (?)': representations of rape in post 1970s Indian-English literature

### Development Studies

#### Manpreet Kaur Gill

Higher education, globalisation, and internationalisation: a study of contemporary shifts in higher education in Punjab, India'

#### Aziz Ahmad Hakimi

Between assumptions and practices: negotiating statehood in contemporary Afghanistan

#### Mohammad Jahirul Hoque

Cultural, political and economic mechanisms in the concurrent processes of environmental degradation and decline of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh (working title)

#### Sarajuddin Isar

Taxation and state-building in Afghanistan, a political economy framework

#### Neha Kagal

The impact of collectivization of informal economy workers on intra-household gender relations and masculinities

#### Jayanthi Lingham

tba

#### David Mansfield

Drug eradication and opium cultivation in Afghanistan

#### Shiuna Mariyam

Working Title: Urban violence and disillusionment with democracy in the Maldives

#### Patrick Meehan

tba

#### Lorenza Monaco

Global production and industrial restructuring in India: capital strategies and labour practices within a booming automotive sector (working title)

#### Nithya Natarajan

Globally-directed and locally experienced: the impact of global health governance upon Indian tobacco farms

#### Orzala Ashraf Nemat

The changing nature of local power dynamics and governance at the community level in Afghanistan

#### Aruna Pandey

Institutional models to resolve conflicts over natural resource governance: role of community enterprises and solidarity economy

#### Marion Pechayre

International NGOs' politics of impartiality in disasters and conflict settings, with particular reference to Pakistan.

#### Shalini Sharma

Relationship between news media and new social movements in India in an age of neoliberal globalisation.

#### Patricia Sauthoff

Open secrets and the retention of power in Kashmir Saivism

#### Sruthi Herbert

Citizenship at the intersections: caste, gender, and class in India

#### Farooq Sulehria

Representations of sexuality, consumerism and crime as objects of fear in the Indian mass media

#### Misha Velthuis

The impact of private voluntary standards on the degree and form of commodification in Indian agriculture.

#### Jahangir Zulkarin

Complexity through mobile phone led 'networking'; exploring financial benefits of rural residents in Bangladesh.

### Economics

#### Sandhya Balasubrahmanyam

Driving growth in post-liberalization India – the role of the state

#### Nina Kaysser

Economic growth and Hindu-Muslim violence

#### Usman Qadir

The political economy of technology acquisition in Pakistan: policy and constraints in the automobile industry

#### Rashed Al Mahnud Titumir

(Working Title) Land transactions and capitalist transitions in rural Bangladesh

### Financial and Management Studies

#### Srivastan Lakshminarayan

Topics in the economics of organization and industry

#### Syed Mohammed Ali

The fertility transition in Bangladesh: explaining regional variations in fertility and the effects on family welfare (working title)

### History

#### Francesca Fuoli

Changing state-society relations in late nineteenth century Afghanistan: state-building and group identities reconsidered through the categories of British colonial knowledge

#### Naina Majrekar

Discontent and decolonisation after World War II: the case of the Royal Indian Navy mutiny

### Languages and Cultures

#### Helen Ashton

Listening to Indian accented English in Film (1960-2013)

#### Saleema F. Burney

Belief and benevolence: a case study of Muslim women activists in London

#### Priyanka Basu

Cockfight in tune: reading nations, communities and performance in the 'Bengali' Kobigaan

#### Georgie Carroll

Fish kings and fishy maidens: accounting for fish, fish-like creatures and watery symbolism in Indian epic traditions - (working title).

#### Charusmita

Exploring Hindi cinema as a tool for fostering pro-social dialogue in rural India.

#### Timothy Green

Issues of Identity for first-generation Christians in Pakistan

#### Ambra Guarnieri

The native informant: the (im)possible perspective in postcolonial travel narratives



**Eleanor Halsall**

The Indo-German beginnings of Bombay Talkies, 1925-1939

**Zebunnisa Hamid**

Imaginations and industries of new emerging Pakistani cinema and television

**Maddalena Italia**

The erotic untranslatable: the modern reception of Sanskrit love poetry in the West and in India

**Guanchen Lai**

Hindi literary representations of Indian rural areas in the post-liberalisation era

**Jonathan Daniel Luther**

Queering normativity: the potential of queer sub-cultures in transforming societal and cultural norms of heteronormative India.

**Fatima Rajina**

The ethno-religious identity of British Bangladeshi Muslims

**Chinmay Sharma**

The Mahabharata re-constructed for Hindi and English publics: modernity and the 'national epic'

**Farrah Sheikh**

The evolving relationship between religion and ethnicity among British Muslims

**Bryony Whitmarsh**

The Narayanhi Palace Museum: memory, power and national identity

**Law****Mohammed Abdul Aziz**

tba

**Biswajit Chanda**

Family law reform in Bangladesh: the need for a culture-specific legal system

**Jean-Philippe Dequen**

Inherent conflict within Muslim succession personal law in India

**Noryati Haji Ibrahim**

Divorce related issues: a study of the financial settlement under Muslim family law in Brunei.

**Hanns Bjoern Kendel**

The role of procedure in shaping outcomes: anti-terrorism trials under Indian Law.

**Adeeba Khan**

Democracy in the context of clientelism: the role of electoral laws in Bangladesh

**Sonia Zaman Khan**

tba

**Huang Kuan-Chuan**

tba

**Preet Kaur Virdi**

Accessing justice when families break down: divorcing South Asian women in Ontario, Canada

**Vishal Vora**

The legal implications of unregistered marriages in Britain amongst second generation South Asians

**Linguistics****Jon Archer**

Information structure in Muwé-ke, Nepal

**Thomas Owen-Smith**

Grammatical relations in Tamang

**Media****Matti Pohjonen**

In Medias Res: The cultural translation of international news in Mumbai, India

**Politics****Sameen Ali**

Politicians and bureaucrats in Pakistan - a special relationship: power and patronage in comparative perspective (Working Title)

**Johann Chacko**

Redefining Pakistan: mapping Deobandi institutional responses to nationalism and the nation-state from Zia to Musharraf.

**Heewon Kim**

The UPA, communalism and post-conflict responses (2004-2009).

**Priya Kumar**

Wireless platforms and borderless grievance: an analysis of transnational diaspora linkages and mobilization outcomes (preliminary title)

**Najia Mukhtar**

Discourses of resistance? Examining spaces of religious tolerance in contemporary Pakistani society.

**Sruthi Muraleedharan**

Symbolic encounters: identarian performativity and political subjectivity [Tentative]

**Jutla Prabhjap Singh**

Hindutva and the construction of Sikh identity: a political and intellectual history, c. 1877-2004.

**Lucas Robinson**

New cities, new phones, new politics: accounting for political legitimacy among transnational Afghans and Somalis

**Study of Religions****Hannah Bartos**

Organizing transnational yoga in the UK and India: institutionalization, globalization & complexity.

**Adam Benkato**

The Manichaeon-Sogdian Parable Book: text edition and literary analysis.

**Graham Burns**

Neti neti - the search for the ultimate principle in the Vedic Upanisads

**Jacqueline Daukes**

Women in the Varkari Sampradaya

**Filippi Federico**

The ontological positions of the Buddha in the discourses of the Pali Nikayas

**Karim Javan**

Resurrection and the end of Sharīa in Nizārī Ismāīlism: "asan II and the proclamation of qiyāma"

**Malgorzata Kruszewka**

Sarasvati – Indian goddess of articulation. A textual and fieldwork study.

**Jennifer Loh**

Exploring the construction of 'political' identity among the Kinnars of Madhya Pradesh, India.

**Farah Mihlar**

Fundamentalisms amongst the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

**Bhikkhu Nagasena**

The significance of the Sima (Buddhist Monastic Boundary) in Burmese Theravada: authority and practice

**Sayam Patthranuprawat**

Sub-stories in the Mahābhārata: significance and narrative functions

**Samani Pratibha Pragya**

Preksā Dhyāna: history and practice

**Zara Ramsey**

Religion, gender and development: women's empowerment in South India

**Susan Roach**

tba

**Asmaa Soliman**

tba

**Viola Di Grado**

tba



## Research Students Completed PhDs

### Art and Archeology



#### Emma Martin

**Charles Bell's collection of 'curios': negotiating Tibetan material culture on the Anglo-Tibetan borderlands (1900-1945)**

Charles Bell (1870-1945) the diplomat, Tibetologist and writer, continues to be one of the most recognizable names from the Anglo-Tibetan encounter that played out in the Himalayan borderlands of the early twentieth century. Not only did he write a series of authoritative books on Tibet, but he considered himself a personal friend of the thirteenth Dalai Lama. Less well known are his collecting activities. Therefore this thesis, for the most part, steps away from his diplomatic achievements, focusing instead on a rethinking of Bell, his 'curios' and the spaces that they occupied. A new material perspective is presented that questions not only how Charles Bell became knowledgeable about Tibet, but also what agencies and agendas informed his collecting practices. Further, it describes the politicisation of Tibetan objects during a turbulent period in modern Tibetan history. Emma Martin is Head of Ethnology and Curator of Asia collections at National Museums Liverpool and her research focuses on the internationally significant Tibet collections held at Liverpool.

### Economics



#### Pallavi Roy

**The Political Economy of Growth under Clientelism: An Analysis of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Pakistan**

The thesis is an institutional analysis of governance and industrial development, using case studies of different parts of the Indian subcontinent. It uses the framework of 'political settlements' that emerge when the interaction of institutions and organizations achieves a sustainable level of political and economic viability. The analysis focuses on how the distribution of organizational power at the relevant level of a polity described by a political settlement can be an important determinant of economic policies and institutions. This approach contrasts with the dominant 'good governance' analysis where a standard set of institutions and governance capabilities are identified as necessary for all developing countries. Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Pakistan after 1980 are examples of different configurations of organizational power. Gujarat has sometimes been described as a sub-national developmental state. However, Gujarat's political settlement is significantly different from East Asian developmental states. It has achieved high rates of industrial growth but without using the conditional rent strategies characteristic of East Asia.

Tamil Nadu has intense clientelist competition and has yet managed high rates of industrial growth. The analysis sheds light on its success and identifies some of its vulnerabilities as its two-party system threatens to fragment further. Pakistan is an extreme case where there has been sustained violence and poor economic development in this period despite attempts at good governance reforms and liberalization. The analysis suggests that institutional and policy evolution has been dominated by a crisis of legitimacy of its ruling coalitions and weak economic organizations inherited from the populist 1970s. Liberalization in this context produced adverse results. The analysis offers an alternative framework for understanding differences in industrial performance and for evaluating future policy responses.

### Languages and Cultures



#### Syed Asif Haider

**Muslim modernities on the Hindi screen**

This thesis begins with a reinterpretation of the category of modernity. It argues that instead of seeing it as something to be encountered, modernity is the product of one's experience of the present. As such, modernity is always being shaped by the present and every era and culture produces its own modernity. This reinterpretation is followed through an analysis of Hindi cinema. Muslim representation and the narrative treatment of Islam in Hindi films is presented as a way to read Muslim modernities in contemporary India. 'Muslim modernities' therefore does not mean the different ways in which Muslims are being 'modern' in Hindi films, for that would require a definition of 'modernness' in relation to some normative standard (western/European for example). Instead, to speak of Muslim modernities on the Hindi screen is to address the different ways in which Muslims are imagined in Hindi cinema presently—the challenges Muslim characters face and the opportunities available to them. It also relates to the ways in which Islam takes on new and various signifying processes within Hindi films, so that under a political frame Islam and Muslims struggle to maintain positive associations, while a certain Islamicate aesthetic offers opportunities for a more harmonious cogitation on the place of Muslims and Islam in the Indian imagination. The political and the aesthetic are explored as two spaces where two distinct Muslim modernities coexist. When taken together, they highlight points of contention and concurrence for Muslims as a minority in a nation that is seen as a rising superpower.



#### Mona Chettri

**Ethnic Politics in the Nepali Public Sphere: Three Cases from the Eastern Himalaya**

Based on qualitative data gathered in Sikkim, east Nepal and Darjeeling, the thesis is a comparative analysis of the nexus between ethnicity and politics on the Himalayan borders of South Asia. The thesis demonstrates the interaction between structures, processes and ethnic groups that promote the ethnic framework in the articulation of socio-economic grievances leading to variations in the manifestation of politics within a single ethnic group. The thesis contests the narrow, parochial and limited frameworks that have been used to study the region and highlights the instrumental use of Nepali ethnic identity as a political resource and the various structures and institutions that facilitate it. The thesis posits that ethnic politics is a culmination of interaction between the state and ethnic groups, primarily over control and access to economic and political resources. This has led to the emergence of new forms of political capital and to a change in the bases of political contention in the rapidly globalizing countries of South Asia.

### Law

#### Frederica Sona

**In the shadow of uniformity: Islamic and Muslim marriages in contemporary Europe**

The thesis examines Islamic and Muslim marriages in two European countries: Italy and the UK. Critically reconsidering the theories of eminent scholars, this work suggests an original frame of thought to approach the study of the socio-legal field, describing the legal arena as viewed from the inside out by legal characters. Nuptial unions are analysed from the complementary viewpoints of European Muslims (being migrants, citizens with foreign origins, or European nationals), and the UK and Italian legal systems. Adopting a comparative legal pluralist perspective and relying upon social science research methods, the core chapters investigate internally plural value-based legal systems, where the dichotomies of European countries versus Islam(s) are verified. Official domestic laws on marriages are unfolded to discover an inner dynamic plurality of competing official, religious, customary legal sources. At the same time, the European Muslims' legal arena is disclosed as a complex geometrical shape resulting from the superimposition of European national laws, sharia-compliant legislation, Islamic and Muslim provisions. The multilayered analysis unveils the manifold typologies of nuptial paths that can be followed by European Muslims, in the shadow of official national laws. The typologies and the reasons justifying European Muslims' legal behaviours are disentangled and explored, whilst disproving the oversimplified assumption of a European homogeneity versus a monolithic Islam.

### Media



#### Angad Chowdhury

**Representations of consumerism, sexuality and crime as objects of fear for the Indian Middle Class by the Indian English-language media: A study of practices and commentary**

The existing literature on representations of fear in the mass media does not account for the practices and commentary of producers involved in the creation of such representations. Central to this thesis are three questions. How is fear articulated with various aspects of contemporary India by producers and regulators of content? What do they claim are the purposes of such articulations? To whom do they address such articulations? Three points of intersection between the discourse on fear, mass media and class are chosen for this investigation. The first looks at the moments when subjects are imagined as consumers by advertising regulators and producers. The second investigates the representations of their private lives by the print media and independent camera phone clips. The third investigates the moments when their lives are interrupted by crime and the role print journalists play in this interruption.

### Study of Religions



#### Rastin Mehri

**The Zoroastrian Community in British Columbia**

My thesis offers an in-depth analysis of the Zoroastrian community's historical background prior to, and following their migration and settlement in British Columbia, Canada. It also examines the ways in which Zoroastrians define their ethnic and religious identity in the increasingly secular and multi-cultural society of the province. The thesis relies on both quantitative and qualitative data collected in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond between 2006 and 2010. It shows the extent to which British Columbian Zoroastrians continue to identify with the cultural and religious (Zoroastrian) heritage of their homelands in Iran and India. But it also shows how the experience of exclusion and racialization in British Columbian society has had a transformative impact on their traditional patterns of belief and behaviour, particularly amongst the youth, in areas such as religious worship, interpersonal relationships, the definition of identity, and the position of the younger members of the community.





### Niranjana Saha

**Philosophy of Advaita Vedanta according to Madhusudana Sarasvati's Gudharthadipika (a commentary on the Bhagavadgita)**

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (ca. 16th century CE), one of the seminal figures in post-Śāṅkara (Śāṅkara-ca. 8th century CE) Advaita Vedānta, authored various works, including the Advaitasiddhi (the Vindication of Advaita), a polemic of the highest kind against theistic dualism, and considered to be one of the influential works of the Advaita Vedānta (i.e. non-dualism) school of Śāṅkara. Building on his Bhaktirasāyana (the Elixir of Devotion) where a remarkable attempt to accommodate two apparently incompatible concepts, viz. non-dualism and devotion is made, Madhusūdana has given a running commentary on the Bhagavadgītā (400 BCE-400 CE), viz. the Gūdhārthadīpikā (the Illumination of Hidden Meaning), in which the doctrine of Advaita is expounded but a special emphasis is laid on bhakti. In this work, occasionally, he disagrees with Śāṅkara's interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā. He also treats some rival views that developed in post-Śāṅkara Vedānta (e.g. whether the individual-self is one or many) as viable alternatives within Advaita Vedānta. While the Gūdhārthadīpikā is considered to be an original and independent commentary on the Bhagavadgītā written from the Advaita point of view, some of the later commentators belonging to the same school did not accept it in toto. They even expressed the view that as compared to the Gūdhārthadīpikā, Śāṅkara's commentary exhibits better the true import of the Bhagavadgītā. Ironically, a few later commentators (18th century CE) belonging to the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava school (who are generally opposed to Advaita) have found the Gūdhārthadīpikā impressive. My dissertation attempts to establish that the Gūdhārthadīpikā succeeds to a considerable extent in accommodating devotion as an aid to the means of attaining liberation, a fact that has been overlooked in some contemporary works on Madhusūdan.



### Arash Zeini

**The Pahlavi version of the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti**

Arash's dissertation contains at its core an edition of the Middle Persian (MP) translation, or the zand, of the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti (YH), a ritual text composed in Old Avestan and commonly dated to the middle of the second millennium BCE. The YH comprises seven chapters and is embedded in the Yasna, a text that forms part of the Avesta, a collection of religious compositions commonly regarded as the Zoroastrians' scripture. The thesis is extended by introductory chapters and commentaries, challenging the view that considers the study of the MP translations an auxiliary science to Avestan studies, framing the text instead within the exegetical and historical context from which it emerged. In the treatment of the zand of the YH as a text in its own right the so-called glosses are considered for the first time as an integral part of the text. Contrary to commonly accepted editorial practices in Iranian Studies, no attempts have been made to critically reconstruct one version of the text based on variant readings. Much like a diplomatic or a non-eclectic edition, the text of the present edition is based for the first time on one manuscript, while the apparatus records variants as in a variorum edition. In a broad investigation of the MP literature it is argued that Zoroastrian exegesis shares the common traits of Cabezon's decontextualized scholasticism, a cross-cultural category abstracted from Medieval European scholasticism. It is also proposed that the ritual fire's development in Zoroastrian texts from their oldest layers through to the MP literature exemplifies correlative structures, which often emerge in manuscript traditions.

## Journal: South Asia Research

### Contents of Recent Issues

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 <http://sar.sagepub.com>

Editor: Werner Menski (SOAS)

#### VOL 33 No 3 (November 2013)

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##### SHABNUM TEJANI

Between Inequality and Identity: The Indian Constituent Assembly and Religious Difference, 1946-50

##### M. CHRISTHU DOSS

Missionary Insurgency and Marginality of Modernity in Colonial South India

##### PALLABI CHAKRAVORTY

Intercultural Synthesis, Radical Humanism and Rabindranritya: Re-evaluation of Tagore's Dance Legacy

#### VOL 34 No 1 (February 2014)

##### DEBASREE DE

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##### MAURICE SAID

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##### SAMTA P. PANDYA

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##### ROSINA NASIR

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##### MOAZZEM HOSSAIN

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##### JOHN MATTAUSCH

Gandhi's Prescription: Health and Hygiene in the Unfinished Struggle for Swaraj



## South Asia in the SOAS Library

### Helen Porter, SOAS South Asian Subject Librarian

SOAS Library has developed substantial research collections relating to present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka as well as South Asia as a whole and the Indian Ocean region.

It holds material in a range of South Asian languages, both ancient and modern, and beyond what is taught or researched at the School, including Sanskrit and Pali, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Punjabi, Sinhala, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. The collections reflect teaching and research at SOAS across the languages and cultures, arts and humanities and law and social sciences of South Asia.

The Library has particular strengths within the collection, including South Asian Law, for which SOAS has responsibility within the University of London. Also noteworthy is the large collection of original English-language literature (novels, short stories, poetry and dramatic works) published in South Asia and among the diaspora communities, particularly South Asian diaspora writers in the UK, North America and Australasia. The Library has especially strong collections of films from India, built up to support the growing interest, at both teaching and research level, in the South Asia Languages and Cultures Department and the Centres for Media and Film Studies.

Digital resources for South Asia include the Times of India for the years 1838-2003, which includes digitized versions of The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce, The Bombay Times and Standard and the Times of India. The photographic archive of Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (1909-1995) held in the Library's Archives and Special collections has been digitized and is being incorporated into the new SOAS Digital Library which is in its early development. The Digital Library will provide a platform for the further digitization of items relating to South Asia from the SOAS collections in the coming year.

SOAS library staff responsible for the South Asia collections are actively involved in the South Asia Archive and Library Group (SAALG) which is a UK network for the promotion of and cooperation between institutions which collect library and archival materials relating to South Asia. SAALG organizes two conferences each year and the 2014 meeting explored collaborative projects between UK and South Asian collections.

If you would like more information, either on the collections or this guide please contact the Subject Librarian for South Asia: [www.soas.ac.uk/library/subjects/southasia/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/subjects/southasia/)



## SOAS Alumni in South Asia

### Introduction

SOAS has strong and vibrant alumni representation in the South Asia region, with over 1,200 alumni across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. The SOAS Development and Alumni Relations team provides a continuing link between former students and the School, and endeavours to make alumni connections with SOAS exciting, lifelong and one of mutual benefit.

### Events and activities

Our Alumni Contacts work closely with the SOAS Alumni Relations team to host a range of events, both on campus and in the region, including social meetups, talks with visiting academics, and supporting our student recruitment initiatives. Over the past year, there have been several networking evenings in Mumbai and Delhi, with events held exclusively for SOAS alumni, as well as joint events with alumni from other UK universities.

In May 2014, SOAS alumni were involved in a range of engagement activities with alumni in Pakistan to inspire the next generation of students. Representatives from the Alumni Relations and Marketing and Student Recruitment teams joined over 70 alumni across Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, who shared their memories and subsequent career paths with prospective SOAS students.



Zeba Salman (standing) with alumna Ghinwa Bhutto, MA Anthropology of Food 2012 (seated, middle) and friends.

A range of alumni showcased their profiles, including Sheharyar Khan (MSc Development Economics 2012), currently based in Islamabad and working on a DFID funded-project focusing on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (KP and FATA). The project aims to help build free, transparent and accountable and inclusive political systems, to strengthen security and justice, and build the capacity of local populations to resolve the conflicts that affect them.

Sheharyar is now one of our key alumni contacts in Pakistan; during his time at SOAS he was an active member of the student body and president of the SOAS Pakistan Society.



SOAS alumni in Islamabad meet for discussions on developing the 400-strong alumni network in Pakistan.

With over 15,000 alumni based on our doorstep in London, alumni have also returned to campus for School-wide events and regionally focused events organised by the SOAS South Asia Institute. This included a reunion gathering in June 2014, with Dr Navtej Purewal, the newly appointed Deputy Director of the South Asia Institute, inviting her former classmates to SOAS. The group of alumni, who graduated from SOAS in 1992/93, had the opportunity to re-engage with SOAS, tour the campus and explore the Library archives and special collections.



SSAI Deputy Director Navtej Purewal with fellows from the MA Class of 1992 of South Asia Studies at SOAS Reunion 2014.

### Get in touch

For more information on alumni activity in the South Asia region, please contact the SOAS Alumni Relations team at [alumni@soas.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@soas.ac.uk) or call +44 (0)20 7898 4041.

SOAS alumni form a global network of over 58,000 alumni around the world.

You can also view photos on the alumni Flickr page ([www.flickr.com/photos/soasalumni/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/soasalumni/)), and join the alumni Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Soas.Leavers](http://www.facebook.com/Soas.Leavers).



## Khuda Hafiz Emeritus Professor Menski!



Werner Menski at his retirement party at SOAS.

Werner Menski took retirement in the summer of 2014, marking the end of a long academic career at SOAS. He will henceforth be Professor Emeritus of South Asian Laws at SOAS, and we are delighted to welcome him as a Research Associate of the SSAI. He is also continuing to serve as the Editor of the SOAS-based journal *South Asia Research*.

Werner Menski first joined SOAS in the early 1980s (the accompanying photograph is of the Law Department in 1983, with Menski at back left), when he recalls that he was the only South Asia lawyer on the staff, 'facing the impossible challenge of covering a massive continent's jurisdictions'. Since that time two former students of his, Martin Lau and Alex Fischer, have become well-recognised experts on specific areas of South Asian legal studies, 'but the challenge of massiveness of South Asian laws remains acute for all of us.' In 2000, Menski told the story of how he came to SOAS 'as a German indologist-cum-social scientist with no professional knowledge of law, and then embarked on teaching law students to pass exams and excel in the process.'<sup>1</sup> More recently, he kindly sent us the following reflections on his time at SOAS and on the importance of maintaining the tradition of studying South Asian laws here:

"When I was brought in, at first unpaid and expected to learn by osmosis, I soon encountered the colonial roots of motivations to study South Asian laws and the blatant othering of South Asian Muslims and their laws, both by Hindu-dominated Indic legal studies and by Middle Eastern law specialists. My own academic trajectory, following a fieldwork-based MA dissertation in the mid-1970s on Asian business structures in Leicester and their spatial implications, had directed me towards building on participant observation among post-colonial members of the South Asian diaspora and their reconstruction, largely on their own terms, of the British legal landscape. Trained in Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu, comparative religious studies, and quite a bit else, I developed sensitivities for pluralist law-related reconstructions. These came out as *angrezi shariat* and *angrezi dharma*, to the consternation of my legal colleagues, and the delight of many students, who often lived that experience and taught me more about what it meant for them in daily practice.

Rather than just teaching South Asian laws, I began to offer a course on South Asians and the Law (1988), from 1991 renamed 'Ethnic Minorities and the Law', all along focusing on South Asian experiences, but building in comparative material from other cultural contexts. Inevitably, the core law course on Legal Systems of Asia and Africa that I had inherited in 1981 became a fertile testing ground for comparative legal theory. This soon developed into intricate pluralist navigation that turned many SOAS law students into a globally prized brand of highly skilled kite-flyers, as we call them today<sup>2</sup>. They can handle the most complex intercultural communication issues while constructing commercial deals or assisting people with their more private law-related struggles.

That this led to ideological conflicts and tensions over 'the right law' and 'good law' was inevitable in a place like SOAS, where law is clearly not just a Western construct or transplant.

Today's focus on human rights and international law sometimes prevents intense engagement with national jurisdictions in Asia and Africa and their cultural/religious rootedness. However, at a time when India has again elected a Hindu nationalist government, and key topics like family law reforms become burning issues; when Pakistan and Bangladesh, too, struggle with the relationship of law and religion, and some individuals turn towards self-destructive terrorism, SOAS urgently needs fresh blood to interrogate the crucial opportunities and risks that South Asia offers the world. My retirement offers a chance for a new beginning. Recently, SOAS has clearly indicated a renewed focus on regional studies with the establishment of the SSAI, and I hope the School will remain a guiding light in South Asian legal studies."



Professor Werner Menski with Law Department colleagues at SOAS in 1983. Back row: Werner Menski, Ian Edge, Andrew Huxley, Jane Connors, James Read, Peter Slinn, Paul Harrison and Philip Baker. Front row: Valerie Hoare, Antony Allot, Paul Chen, Noel Coulson, Simon Coldham, Jill Barrett

"There may not be anyone at SOAS who is more committed to our academic focus on South Asia than Professor Werner Menski. A whole generation of students (and maybe even two) have been guided and inspired by him. We are not going to miss him, because we are confident that he will remain involved with the work of the new South Asia Institute for many years to come."

Michael Hutt,  
SSAI Director

"Being a Student on the PgDip Law and Community Leadership Programme was one of the most empowering and insightful intellectual experiences I have had. The richness and empowering nature of the course was inspired and contributed to heavily by Professor Menski and his large corpus of work. Learning about legal pluralism and its crucial role in understanding ourselves and the multiple realities people live in, was an eye-opening perspective. It was an absolute pleasure to be a student of Professor Menski's and also to receive his support and advice in relation to my intellectual and personal development. He truly is a paradigm shifting intellectual and someone who has undoubtedly illuminated the perspective of many students."

Javayria Masood,  
PGDip Law and Community Leadership

"Professor Menski has been an absolute inspiration for MUSA since its inception. He was the keynote speaker at MUSA's launch event and has been extremely generous in his advice, support and enthusiasm. He will be dearly missed .... but we have every intention of staying in touch with him!"

MUSA Team

<sup>1</sup> Menski, W. (2000) 'From Imperial domination to "Bhaji on the Beach": Fifty years of South Asian laws at SOAS'. In Ian Edge (ed.) *Comparative law in global perspective*. Ardsley, NY: Transnational, pp. 121-44.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Menski, W. (2011) 'Flying kites in a global sky: New models of jurisprudence'. *Socio-Legal Review*, 7 (2011) (Bangalore), pp. 1-22.



# Join the SOAS South Asia Institute



**SOUTH ASIA  
INSTITUTE**

SOAS University of London

The SOAS South Asia Institute welcomes people with an interest in South Asia who would like to get involved with our activities. Our offices are located on the 4th floor of the Brunei Gallery and we welcome visitors by appointment.

There are many ways of getting involved with the SSAI:

- **Study at SOAS:** The SSAI has developed a new Masters programme in Intensive South Asian Studies. This two-year programme offers comprehensive language-based training across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. All of the Institute's teaching programmes will provide students with valuable skills that are rarely available elsewhere. These include interdisciplinary understandings of South Asian society that are theoretically sophisticated and based on deep empirical foundations and advanced proficiency in languages such as Bengali, Hindi, Nepali, Sanskrit and Urdu.
- **Outreach:** Our free seminar series, which is held regularly on a weekly or fortnightly basis is open to the wider public. Our events often host high-level politicians, local and foreign academics and many more.
- **Research:** Scholars, practitioners and the wider research community are invited to participate, exchange ideas and network in our regular workshops, lectures and conferences.

#### Connect with Us:

Email: Receive regular updates from us about events and activities by writing to [ssai@soas.ac.uk](mailto:ssai@soas.ac.uk)

 Like us on Facebook and join our vibrant community: [www.facebook.com/SouthAsia.SOAS](http://www.facebook.com/SouthAsia.SOAS)

 Follow and interact with us on Twitter: [@soas\\_sai](https://twitter.com/soas_sai)

Check our web pages for details about all our activities: [www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/)

Join in the discussion through the Institute's new blog, South Asia Notes: <http://blogs.soas.ac.uk/ssai-notes/>

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