



South Asia Newsletter

Centre of South Asian Studies
www.soas.ac.uk/csas/



No 66

April 2007

I would like to thank all who organised and attended the two mini-series hosted by the Centre the previous term on Gender and Politics in South Asia, and the Tongues on Fire Film Festival. This includes Dr Sumi Madhok of the Department of Politics, Jane Savory of the Centres Office, and the Tongues on Fire collective for having brought very interesting speakers and films to SOAS. The Gender series continues into Term 3.

We also have a set of new events this term. Early in May we host a discussion on multiculturalism in Britain, co-organised with the Awaaz collective. In June, we commemorate the life and work of Ralph Russell, the legendary SOAS teacher of Urdu language and literature, whose fame and influence reach well beyond the UK to South Asia, where he has received numerous awards and has been associated with literary movements. I would like to thanks Dr Talat Ahmed of the Department of History for organising this event. In addition, in collaboration with the University of Reading, we will host, in late-June a conference on the legacy and uses of Alexander in South Asian culture, politics and scholarship. We hope also to put some seminars over the summer.

Best wishes,

Subir Sinha
Chair, Centre for South Asian Studies

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Ghulam Murshid

STAFF NEWS

Edward Simpson

I am delighted to be joining the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at SOAS.

I have a background in anthropology with degrees from the University of Manchester and the London School of Economics.

My principal research interests are: (i) the anthropology of the Indian Ocean, with particular reference to understanding contemporary India and the ethnography of Islam and, (ii) the ethnography of life and death in the aftermath of catastrophic natural disasters. My research has mostly been conducted in Gujarat, western India, and has been both theoretical and ethnographic; my field methods evolving over the last decade with my changing understanding of the epistemological strengths, weaknesses and, indeed, consequences of anthropological research.

My first project examined contemporary networks of trade, politics and religion among the seafaring Muslims of Kachchh District (also spelt Kutch and Cutch). This work has led to a number of journal articles and book chapters on the anthropology of the Indian Ocean, popular Islam in South Asia, and contemporary politics in Gujarat, as well the monograph *Muslim Society and the Western Indian Ocean: The Seafarers of Kachchh*.

My second, and now parallel, project has been on the ethnography of post-disaster reconstruction following the major earthquake in Gujarat in January 2001. In this work, I have taken the perspective on the disaster of those most affected by it rather than the more conventional approaches to aid, relief and reconstruction offered by development studies and disaster mitigation. Over the last six years, I have documented various aspects of the reconstruction process; most notably, waxing and waning forms of political protest, manifestations of grief, memory, and nostalgia, as well as more technical explorations of peoples' understanding of governmental, legislative and bureaucratic interventions, especially in relation to idea of rights, corruption and privilege.

Through this project I have become interested in what happens when social and physical landscapes are destroyed; how the living re-inhabit the world in the absence of familiar people and places; how the living negotiate their peace with the dead; what things and ideas people cling to, and, conversely, what they let, willingly or otherwise, slip from their grasp; and how sometimes unlikely coalitions of people come together in the name of regional or political protest after natural disasters in new spaces formed by changing relations between people and states.

Recently, I have started comparative research in Sri Lanka and Pakistan on these issues in relation to post-disaster reconstruction.

I look forward to developing these interests further in both teaching and research at SOAS.



Edward Simpson

Magnus Marsden

Magnus Marsden will be joining the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at SOAS.

Since 1995 I have been conducting ethnographic research in Chitral – a large and mountainous region in Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province, which shares a very long border with Afghanistan, and, in places, is only separated by 25 miles of Afghan territory from Tajikistan. Chitral is largely populated by Khwar-speaking Chitralis who identify themselves as being Sunni or Shi’a Ismai’li Muslims. My ethnographic work in Chitral focuses on the ways in which village and small town Muslims have responded to the growing influence of reform-minded forms of Islam, including those associated with the Taliban, in their region. Analytically, my book, *Living Islam: Muslim religious experience in Pakistan’s North-West Frontier* (Cambridge, 2005), and other publications, focus on the role played by combined intellectual and emotional processes in religious experience, everyday life, the nature of moral debate in rural settings, sectarian violence, personhood, gender, the politicization of religion, music and performance, and travel.

During the years that I have been visiting in Chitral, the village in which I stay has also been home to men from Afghanistan and Tajikistan who were refugees, agricultural labourers, builders, and owned bakery and butcher shops in the region. In the wake of the events of September 11th, many of these men and their families have returned to their ‘home’ countries – sometimes after having been born and lived for as long as three decades in Chitral’s villages. Over the past eighteen months, I’ve made several trips to the regions of Tajikistan and Afghanistan from where these men came, as well as to the cities in which many of them are now living (Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, Kunduz and Dushanbe). I’ve met many people I knew in Chitral as refugees and found that they continue to live mobile lives - often making return visits to Chitral where they have family and business interests but also rich networks of Chitrali friends and sometimes kin. Through extensive interviews, developing networks, and embarking on long-distance journeys with these men and their families, I’ve started to build up a sense of the complicated trajectories that their lives have taken over the past thirty years. I’m interested in the types of insights these trajectories provide into understanding the tactics people deploy in order to move between starkly discontinuous yet nevertheless connected trans-regional settings. Besides contributing to the understanding of Muslim life in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, I also hope to contribute to wider anthropological debates and theories about colonialism, transnational mobility, cosmopolitanism, and subjectivity.



Magnus Marsden

Caroline Osella

April-May 2007: Undertaking fieldwork in India and UAE

21-23 May 07: Presenting a paper at a workshop: “Shifting the meaning: time, space, connectivity and its challenges in the Western Indian Ocean” at the Centre of Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin.

May 24/25 07: heading a panel at the (AHRC-Migration and Diaspora Cultural Studies Network) sponsored workshop on ‘Queer Diasporas’.

Amina Yaqin

31 January-5 February 07: To deliver a paper on ‘Honour killings, cosmopolitan locations and transnational communities’ at a conference on film and literature at Florida State University.

Savita Apte

Fourth Year PhD Student, Department of Art and Archaeology, SOAS

PhD Title: Progressive Artists’ Groups of Bombay

Abstract of Paper which will be published in ‘Art Histories: Global Local Mediations’ Cambridge Scholars

The Progressive Artists’ Group: Negotiating a National Aesthetic within an International Framework

The Progressive Artists’ Group were the first group of artists to emerge on the post colonial Indian scene. With their deliberately aggressive manifesto, written and conceived by F. N. Souza, the Bombay Progressives, as they were also known, heralded a new movement in Indian art. Negotiating a new national aesthetic within the larger framework of international modernism, the Bombay Progressives set themselves up to be the vanguard of Indian Modernism. In trying to formulate an identity that would be simultaneously Indian and Modern, the group stood poised between indegenism which necessarily contextualised their works and Modernism which provided the international language that facilitated participation in the global artistic dialogue. Like several other modernist groups at the time, the Bombay Progressives exemplified the tension between the local and the global. Despite the fact that there was necessarily a measure of appropriation of the modernist idiom, there was also in their works a powerful critique of the forms supplied by the West. Their national or anti colonial definitions of modernity aspired to be both particularly Indian as well as universal.

South Asia Research (SAR)

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

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

SAR Vol. 27. 1 [February 2007] is ready and contains:

BEYOND THE SILVER SCREEN: BOLLYWOOD AND FILMI DANCE IN THE UK
Ann R. David

GURU OR TEACHER? SHISHYA OR STUDENT? PEDAGOGIC SHIFTS IN SOUTH ASIAN DANCE TRAINING IN INDIA AND BRITAIN
Stacey Prickett

POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND SOUTH ASIAN DANCE: THE CASE OF MALLIKA SARABHAI
Andrée Grau

WHO SHOT THE MAHATMA? REPRESENTING GANDHIAN POLITICS IN INDIAN COMIC BOOKS
Karlina McLain

LIVELIHOOD PATTERN OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL INDIA: EVIDENCE FROM ORISSA
Sushanta Mahapatra

DEVOLUTION OF FINANCIAL POWER TO LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS: THE 'FEASIBILITY FRONTIER' IN WEST BENGAL
Polly Datta

South Asia Research 27.2 (July 2007) is being typeset and will contain the following articles:

STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITIONAL INTAKE FROM LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS IN INDIA
Jabir Ali

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS OF TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS IN AGRICULTURE, SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIAN CENTRAL HIMALAYA
Prasanna K. Samal and Pitamber P. Dhyani

A MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSOR FOR MALAYALAM LANGUAGE
Sumam Mary Idicula and Peter S. David

THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE REVOLUTION: GENDER, VIOLENCE AND MEMORY
Srija Roy

WOMEN, WORK AND FISHING: AN EXAMINATION OF THE LIVES OF FISHERWOMEN IN KERALA
Lina Samuel

REVIEW ARTICLE:

SEARCHING FOR HISTORY
Romila Thapar: Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History.
Nilanjan Sarkar

**SAR is available on line at
<http://sar.sagepub.com/>**

SEMINARS

Tuesday 24 April 2007

5.00pm Venue: Room B203

Department of History

South Asia history seminar series

Naming and social exclusion in early India' Aloka Parasher-Sen, University of Hyderabad

Email: dm24@soas.ac.uk

Tuesday 24 April 2007

5.00pm Venue: Room B111

Centre of South Asian Studies

Seminar

'Autonomy, coercion and constraint: issues of gender and culture' Professor Anne Phillips (Professor of Political and Gender Theory LSE Gender Institute and Department of Government)

Email: js64@soas.ac.uk

Wednesday 25 April 2007

4.00pm Venue: Room B102

Seminar

'The consequences of Tamilness and colonial warfare compared' Madura Rasaratnam

Email: mn6@soas.ac.uk

Thursday 26 April 2007

5.00pm Venue: Room G51

Centre of South East Asian Studies

Seminar

'Highland frontiers from hot to cold war: the China-Burma-India conflicts 1939-1960' Robert Anderson, Simon Fraser University, Canada

Email: js64@soas.ac.uk

Thursday 26 April 2007

5.00pm Venue: Room G3

Department of Study of Religions

Seminar

'The sublime animal: rereading the Sikh Mystical Body' Dr Balbinder Singh Bhogal, York University, Canada

Email: bb@soas.ac.uk

Friday 11 May 2007

5.30pm Venue: Room G60

Department of Study of Religions

Circle of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies

'Himalayan manuscript and blockprint traditions' Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Munich University

Email: up1@soas.ac.uk

Wednesday 16 May 2007

5.00pm Venue: Room B111

Centre of South Asian Studies

Seminar

'The "other" global city: Intimations of cosmopolitan being in Asia' Prof. Shail Mayaram (Professor and Senior Fellow, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies University of Delhi)

Email: js64@soas.ac.uk

CONFERENCE



Greece, Rome, and Colonial India

The aim of the conference is to draw attention to the double anniversary marked by the year 2007 -- the 150th year since the Indian 'Mutiny' of 1857 and the 60th since Indian Independence in 1947 -- by disseminating the results of mutually illuminating research conducted by an international team of scholars (but as yet unpublished) into India's interactions with the (received and perceived) past of European antiquity. The event will bring together scholars from Classics, Drama, Cinema, History, Post-colonial Studies, Literature in Indian languages, English, and Italian in order to reflect on the connected histories of Europe and the Indian subcontinent. The intention is to open up fresh international and interdisciplinary perspectives on the past and continuing global cultural presence of Mediterranean antiquity, thus enriching knowledge both of the culture of (post)colonial India and the reception of Greco-Roman Classics. The speakers will address topics extending chronologically from the turn of the 19th century until the 21st, and cover diverse cultural media. Their objective is to look, through South Asian, European, and American eyes, at the role played by the 'Western' Classics in the construction of India in the Raj and the era of decolonization.

For more information, please write to:
Phiroze Vasunia at p.vasunia@reading.ac.uk

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/classics/grci/>

CONVENORS

Edith Hall (Royal Holloway, University of London)
and
Phiroze Vasunia (University of Reading)

SPONSORS

Royal Holloway, University of London;
School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London;
University of Reading;
the British Academy;
and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies

DATE Friday, 29 June 2007

LOCATION

Room G60, School of Oriental and African Studies
(SOAS), University of London, Russell Square, London
WC1H 0XG

Registration: £12.50

Students: £10 (students may apply to the conference for bursaries)

Please register by 15 May 2007

Programme

[The programme is subject to change without notice.]

9.30 a.m.
"Introduction"
Edith Hall and Phiroze Vasunia

9.45 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Session I
Chair, Edith Hall, Royal Holloway, University of London

"Italian Orientalism and Colonial India"
Fabrizio De Donno, University of Cambridge

"The 'Indian Mutiny' and the 'Gallic Revolt' "
James Thorne, University of Manchester

11 a.m. to 11.15 a.m.
TEA AND COFFEE

11.15 to 12.30 p.m.
Session II
Chair, Subir Sinha, SOAS, University of London

"Kipling and Sutcliff"
Deborah Roberts, Haverford College

"Alexander Sikandar"
Phiroze Vasunia, University of Reading:

12.30 p.m. to 2 p.m.
LUNCH

2 p.m. to 3.15 p.m.
Session III
Chair, Phiroze Vasunia, University of Reading

"The Valmiki of Europe: Homer through Bengali eyes"
Alex Riddiford, University of Oxford

"Representations of Greece and Rome in Nehru and Indian Muslim Writers"
Javed Majeed, Queen Mary, University of London

3.15 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.
TEA AND COFFEE

3.30 p.m. to 4.45 p.m.
Session IV
Chair, Rashmi Varma, University of Warwick

"Radicalising the ancient Greek canon in postcolonial Indian theatre and cinema"
Erin Mee, Swarthmore College

"The Ramayana Odyssey: eastern and western classics in (post)colonial drama"
Jatinder Verma, Artistic Director of Tara Arts theatre company and Associate Professor, Department of Drama, Royal Holloway, University of London

4.45 p.m.
"Round-Table Discussion"
Moderators, Edith Hall and Phiroze Vasunia



SACREDMEDIACOW
and the Centre for Media and Film Studies (SOAS)
presents:
INDIAN MASS MEDIA
AND THE POLITICS OF CHANGE

One-day conference for Postgraduates & Early Career Researchers,
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)

Saturday, 19 October, 2007

Keynote Speaker: Dr John Hutnyk (Goldsmiths, University of London)

Advisors:

Prof Annabelle Sreberny (Centre for Media and Film Studies, SOAS)

Dr Mark Hobart ((Centre for Media and Film Studies, SOAS)

Dr Rachel Dwyer (Dept of Languages and Cultures of South Asia, SOAS)

Call for Papers,

India has been the focus of much attention in the international media in the recent years. Rhetoric concerning its rapid economic growth, spearheaded by its IT industry and its burgeoning middle classes, suggest that something new and significant is taking place. Something is changing, we are told: India is shining; the elephant is rising; the 21st century will be an Indian century. Even a recent election campaign was debated around this image. India was/was not shining, with disastrous results for the leading political party in power.

What unites many of the debates concerning such re-imaginings of India is the notion of change and its different ramifications. Elections, commentators, drawing room debates and activists all cut their teeth around this complex notion. Who, it is debated, benefits from change? Who is left out from these fantasies of progress and economic growth? Do such re-imaginings really reflect the complex economic reality of large parts of Indian populations 'somewhere out there'? In any case, what is certain is that 'change' has now become the new articulating principle par excellence when we speak about India and its contested future.

One of the crucial sites where such debates take place is the Indian mass media: its newspapers, TV channels, advertisements and burgeoning online communities. It is also the loci, we argue, where the politics of change are most visibly played out and that needs to be carefully looked at in order to understand the complex reality of India today. It is important to note here that we believe the nation state is one of categories that needs to be critically investigated when we look at India and change and therefore include the wider Indian diaspora into our definition of what contemporary India is. With this in mind, **The Politics of Change** conference aims to bring together researchers looking at Indian films and media and interested in the question of change. We therefore now welcome abstract for papers and presentations of 20 minutes each from post-

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP

graduate and early career researchers. Specifically, we are inviting papers that would broadly address the following questions:

- How is change imagined in different forms of Indian media? How are the press, television, film and online communities involved in this imagining? How do different media differ in how they imagine change?
- What kind of day-to-day practices are deployed to articulate these imaginings of change? What kind of verbal and visual images is used towards such imaginings and how do they differ between the media? What are the differences between the English-speaking and the vernacular media? What about the diasporic media?
- What are the politics of such imaginings? Who are such articulations thought to benefit? Who in turn do they disarticulate? What is the political economy of imagining change?
- How have these articulations changed historically? Can we trace historical precedents to such current imaginings? What are the similarities? What are the differences?
- Is there something distinctive about how this change is imagined in (India as opposed to other rapidly-developing countries such as China)? What do these similarities and differences tell us about Indian media and society?

Abstracts, including a brief biography, should be emailed to papers@sacredmediacow.com no later than May 15, 2007. These will then be discussed with our advisors and team, and we will get back to you by the 15th of June. Please do let us know in advance if you would like us to organize projectors, or any other special requirements you might have.

The conference is jointly organized by SACREDMEDIACOW, an independent student-led research centre on Indian media and the Centre for Media and Film Studies at the School Of Oriental and African Studies. Having said that, SACREDMEDIACOW is not really a centre for India media research (perhaps a periphery of Indian media research would be a more appropriate title), but more of a Collective. Either way, being both practitioners as well as academics interested in the India media, one of our key aims is to build bridges between academics and media practitioners globally. Therefore, a significant portion of the activities around the conference will also take place on our website <http://www.sacredmediacow.com>. Our aim is to include the people we talk about when we research Indian media as much as possible in the dialogue and debates through the possibilities allowed by new technologies: by distributing conference material online, by creating an online platform where the questions raised can be debated during the conference and by allowing distance participation as much as possible through teleconferencing, video broadcast and other such means. Please also visit our working space for the conference at <http://www.sacredmediacow.com/wikindia> where many of these ideas will be collectively worked out.

For further information, please email the SACREDMEDIACOW collective:

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**Workshop
28 June 2007**

at the School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London

'A Tribute to Ralph Russell'

Further details will be available in due course from Talat Ahmed ta6@soas.ac.uk

THE BRUNEI GALLERY • SOAS

PRESS RELEASE



FROM SOHO ROAD TO THE PUNJAB

50 YEARS OF BHANGRA, MUSIC, CULTURE & STYLE

17 JULY – 22 SEPTEMBER 2007



Presented with **PUNCH** as part of their 10 years celebrations the exhibition **From Soho Road to the Punjab** will explore the traditions and heritage of Bhangra, and the impact it has had on the growth and development of popular music culture to this day. In addition, there will be a series of complementary education workshops relating to the exhibition in order to encourage the preservation and celebration of Bhangra.

The exhibition will consist of archive materials featuring bands, musicians, and producers, from the 1970s, 80s, and 90s; who have played a major role in the Bhangra music industry. A great deal of these materials will be centred on the UK's cosmopolitan cities including London, Birmingham and Manchester.

This exhibition aims to illustrate the origins of Bhangra from the Punjab in India; to its empowering status in British Asian society today; through images, articles, publications and music, collected and archived over last 30 years tracing Bhangra culture and influence both within and outside the Asian community in the U.K over the past 50 years. Showcasing previously unseen photographs and club flyers, rare albums, authentic instruments, awards and costumes, 'Soho Road to the Punjab' gives you backstage access to the unstoppable world journey of UK Bhangra music.

Accompanying the exhibition will be **free music workshops** on **Saturday 21st July, 4th Aug, 25th Aug and 8th Sept** led by the artist **Gurshuran Channa** (limited places so please book) and a **one day conference on the topic of the exhibition** (ticket priced £5 in advance) on **Saturday 15th September Chaired by Anita Bhalla, BBC** at SOAS. These events were made possible by funding from the **Arts Council for England**.

Part of the Greater London Authority **INDIA NOW** Season.

BRUNEI GALLERY, SOAS
THORNTON STREET
RUSSELL SQUARE
LONDON
WC1H 0XG

OPEN: Tuesday – Saturday 10.30 – 17.00
CLOSED: Sunday and Monday
ADMISSION FREE
T. 020 7898 4046 (recorded information)
F. 020 7898 4259
E. gallery@soas.ac.uk



For further details of the exhibition and events please visit www.soas.ac.uk/gallery

**Forthcoming exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS
Soho Road to the Punjab
Summer of 2007**

Working in partnership with PUNCH SOAS are presenting Soho Road to the Punjab an exhibition to be held at the Brunei gallery, SOAS in the summer of 2007 to participate in the GLA initiative INDIA NOW cultural programme and will explore the traditions and heritage of Bhangra, and the impact it has had on the growth and development of popular music culture to this day. In addition, SOAS will deliver a series of complementary education workshops relating to the exhibition in order to encourage the preservation and celebration of Bhangra.

The exhibition will consist of archive materials featuring bands, musicians, and producers, from the 70s, 80s, and 90s; who have played a major role in the Bhangra music industry. A great deal of these materials will be centred on the UK's cosmopolitan cities including London, Birmingham and Manchester. This exhibition aims to illustrate the origins of Bhangra from the Punjab in India; to its empowering status in British Asian society today; through images, articles, publications and music, collected and archived over last 30 years tracing Bhangra culture and influence both within and outside the Asian community in the U.K over the past 50 years.

The proposed series of education workshops will be led by artist Gurshuran Channa and the accompanying conference which is to be organised by Dr Rajinder Dudrah, University of Manchester is to coincide with the exhibition as a means to educate people about the history of Bhangra, it's presence in the U.K. and its journey to the present day Asian music movement. It is planned to hold four one day workshops for up to 15 people to take part in each over the duration of the exhibition and a conference with artists and experts in the field making presentations and discussing the subjects covered and raised by the exhibition with a wider audience.

The people taking part in the workshops will create a CD depicting their own version of the Bhangra scene today, by interviewing people from and working with the participants and artists from the Asian community, and by creating their own music influenced by Bhangra. In effect this will be a research project on Bhangra. Participants will explore its traditions and customs; identify and engage with communities who are strongly involved in the traditional practises of Bhangra music and dance; and begin to compare and identify similarities and changes within the movement. The conference will allow the subject to be explored by the Asian and wider community in an accessible academic dialogue.

This is a key part to our continuing mission of increasing understanding through the studying, research, discussion, presentation, participation and promotion of art and culture from the regions studied by SOAS to a wider audience.

The programme will be managed and overseen by John Hollingworth, Exhibitions Manager for Brunei Gallery, SOAS with Ammo Talwar, Director, PUNCH.

Artists to be involved in the workshops will be:

- Gurcharan Mall musician and dhol player who was founder member of the most successful traditional Bhangra band in the 1980's, 'Apna Sangeet'. He runs Bhangra classes all over the U.K. Midlands.
- Jags, Nachda Sansar, Bhangra Choreographer and dancer
- Sanj Sanj Bhangra DJ – London based legendary roadshow dj and compare
- Shin from DCS, Bhangra vocalist and international stalwart of the scene

**Further details will be available on the Brunei Gallery, SOAS website
in due course: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/home.html>**



For the fifth year running, SOAS is proud to offer an exciting summer school of world music. And in 2007 we offer a more varied programme than ever: Intensive and inspiring courses taught by master musicians. Practical workshops, master classes and performances for students of all backgrounds, beginners to advanced, amateur and professional. Take your pick!



For detailed info, teacher biographies & course schedules check WWW.SOAS.AC.UK/SUMMERMUSICSSCHOOL

Beijing Opera: Music & Movement (Beginners)

Dates: 25 July – 4 August, Wed-Fri & Mon-Fri 6-9pm, Saturdays 2-5pm

course fee £180 (concs £150) – includes hire of costumes/instruments + course pack

Beijing (Jingju) opera has long been one of the most fascinating facets of Chinese culture. Try your hands on a range of opera percussion instruments. Work with acclaimed musicians and performers in the UK. Experience the fascinating interaction between the musicians and the actors on stage.

With members of the London Jing Kun Opera Association

Iranian Music Masterclasses (Advanced Only)

Tar with Farhang Sharif & Tombak with Siamack Bana'i

Dates: 16-21 July, Mon-Thu 5-7pm, Sat 2-4pm

course fee £120 (concs £79)

Farhang Sharif is a veteran master and great living virtuoso of the tar, the Iranian string instrument, with an illustrious career that goes back to the early 50s. Siamack Bana'i has been a leading teacher of the Persian goblet drum, tombak, for the last 2 decades. These master classes will offer a unique opportunity to advanced players to deepen their knowledge and technique of the rich tradition of Persian music.

Supported by the Iran Heritage Foundation.

PLUS! FREE Evening Concert with Farhang Sharif & Siamack Bana'i, Fri 20 July, 7pm, BGLT



South Indian Violin & Vocals

Dates: 2-12 July, Mon-Thu, 5-7pm

course fee £120 (concs £79)

This two week intensive course is designed to give experienced violinists & vocalist of any style the opportunity to discover & explore the foundations of South Indian classical music (Carnatic music). The two main musical components of Carnatic music are raga (modal system) and tala (metrical system). The course will introduce concepts, exercises and representative compositions in a variety of forms. With Nandini Muthuswamy.

Korean Samulnori Percussion

Dates: 16-20 July, Mon-Fri, 6-9pm

course fee £75 (concs £55)

Samulnori is the contemporary form of a rural percussion tradition stretching back into antiquity. Today, Samulnori is the most popular style in the Korean traditional music scene, equally at home in the countryside or on urban stages. The rhythms are said to create balance in the cosmos, combining yin and yang. Instruments will be provided. With members of the Dulsori Ensemble.

Cuban Music: The Big Band

Dates: 9-13 July, Mon-Fri 6-9pm

course fee £80 (concs £59)

Whatever your instrument, here's a chance to play some classic Cuban styles: Cha Cha Cha, Son, Mambo, Latin Jazz... The course will look at rhythms, structure & improvisation within those musical forms and lead towards a performance at the end of the course. All levels & instruments welcome.

With Sara McGuinness & Jimmy Martinez.

Japanese Kabuki Dance

Dates: 12-14 July, Thu-Fri 7-9pm, Sat 11am-5pm
course fee £70 (concs £49)

The marvellous Kabuki, a populist theatre born in 17th-century Japan and now famous worldwide, still features only male actors, but its dances are performed on the concert stage by both men and women. Tomoko Katsumi will introduce both male and female dance styles. Open to all levels and genders.

Iraqi Music Week

Dates: 25-29 June, Mon-Fri, 6-9pm
course fee £50 (concs £35)

Iraq's music represents an ancient, highly developed and multi-faceted culture, marked by its diverse peoples, cultures & civilizations. Iraqi music week combines a range of workshops, lectures and concerts covering different aspects of Iraqi musical culture, inviting you to discover and enjoy this rich and ancient tradition. Supported by RASIT. With Ahmed Mukhtar & invited teachers.

PLUS! FREE Evening Concert, Fri 22 June, 7pm, BGLT

Afro-Brazilian Percussion: Samba de Roda

Dates: 25-29 June, Mon-Fri 7-9pm
course fee £75 (concs £55)

Samba de Roda is an Afro-Brazilian percussion style, encouraging everybody to participate with singing, dancing and drumming. The workshop will focus on various Afro-Brazilian percussion instruments as well as basic dance steps and traditional a call-and-response songs. With Adriano Adewale.

Didgeridoo

Dates: 23-27 July, Mon-Fri 5-7pm (Beginners) / Mon-Fri 7-9pm (Advanced)
course fee: beginners: £80 (concs £45) / advanced £90 (concs £59)

Thought to be one of the oldest wind instruments known and made from eucalyptus branches naturally hollowed by termites, didgeridoos play an important role in the Australian Aborigine's rich spiritual culture. As a drone instrument the didgeridoo cannot produce melodies but is capable of an astonishing variety of sounds and percussive rhythms. Instruments will be provided. With Jonathan Cope.

Mouth Harps

Dates: 26-27 July, Thu-Fri 5-6pm
course fee £45 (concs £30)

An ancient instrument, the mouth or jaw harp exists in many forms across nearly every continent. Often disregarded as a less 'serious' instrument the jaw harp is capable of extreme subtlety and a wide repertoire of sounds and melodies. Open to all levels - all can play! With Jonathan Cope.

Mongolian Overtone Singing

Dates: 16-20 July, Mon-Fri 7-9pm
course fee £60 (concs £39)

Khöömii is an amazing style of overtone/harmonic singing where one person sings two or more distinct pitches at the same time. It originates among the nomads of Central Asia, particularly the mountain regions of Mongolia and Tuva. Listen to your own overtones as you discover the unknown depths and heights of your voice through these enchanting sounds. With Michael Ormiston & Candida Valentino.

Tibetan Singing Bowls

Date: Sat 14 July, 10am - 5pm
course fee £50 (concs £35)

Tibetan singing bowls ring with an ancient power that is a mystery to most of us. This introductory workshop will be an experiential journey through the sounds of the bowls, their history and use in meditation and deep listening practices. You will learn the various techniques of making the bowls sing in a relaxed and friendly environment. With Michael Ormiston & Candida Valentino.

Bulgarian Singing

Dates: 25-29 June, Mon-Fri 7-9pm

course fee £60 (concs £39)

Bulgarian singing has a unique style and a vocal technique giving power to the voice and voice to the heart. In this workshop we will plunge into this living tradition by learning songs in two- and three-part harmony and the specific vocal technique used in them. With Dessislava Stefanova (London Bulgarian Choir)

PLUS! Advanced Class: Sat 30 June, 11am-5pm

course fee £45 (concs £32)

In this course we will focus on more complex songs and harmonies. For people with previous experience, or those who completed the first course. With Dessislava Stefanova.

Orisha Music Around the Atlantic

Dates: 9-13 July, Mon-Fri 7-9pm

course fee £60 (concs £39)

This workshop will look at the links that connect sacred musical repertoires of orisha worship in the Americas and Nigeria. Along with elements of performance practice it will explore 'tune families' and how these are related to context-specific texts: divination, medicinal incantations, initiations and more. With Michael Marcuzzi.

Maori Music: Poi & Haka

Dates: 2-4 July, Mon-Wed, 6-9pm

course fee £50 (concs £35)

Maori kapa haka (performing arts) are fascinating and unique, yet their deeper meaning is still a mystery to most of us. This is an opportunity for hands-on discovery: Learn to make and use the poi (body percussion) to accompany traditional waiata (songs) and haka (warrior dance) movements. Suitable for all, no experience necessary. With members of the group WAI.

Japanese Music: Shamisen & Koto

Dates: 2-4 August, Thu 4-7.30pm, Fri-Sat 10am-7.30pm

course fee £80 (concs £59)

Originating in the Edo period (1600-1868), this genre of Japanese music has been handed down mainly by blind musicians who refined this lyrical music throughout its history. Ms Kasumi Hattori, a Great Master from the Miyagi School will visit the UK specifically for this course, along with her disciples. Students of any level are welcome as this course will be split in groups.

Sound Recording: Introduction

Dates: 9-13 July, Mon-Fri 10am-4pm

course fee £150 (concs £110)

Learn the basics of studio recording using professional equipment at the SOAS recording studio. Hands-on introduction to sound technology, microphones, set-up options, both for studio & live recording situations. Limited places only. With Sara McGuinness.

Black Voices: Vocal Power!

Dates: Sat 21 July, 10am-5pm

course fee £60 (concs £39)

Black Voices are a collective of powerful women's voices, born and nurtured in the black church and grounded in the music of an international black community. Their acclaimed workshops enable and empower through vocal work, in a fun, challenging and inspiring way. No formal music experience is necessary, except love of your voice! With Celia Wickham-Anderson from Black Voices.

CONTACT

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The SOAS World Music Summer School is run by the Department of Music at SOAS.

LECTURE NOTES

Celebrating Language

– past and future

Dr Hanne-Ruth Thompson

(for the SOAS Bangladesh Society,

21 February 2007)

I've been to quite a few Ekushey events and on those occasions I consider myself an honorary Bangladeshi. The purpose of these events is to celebrate, to remember, to create a community spirit and to come away with a warm, happy feeling of pride in the past and purpose for the future. I have tried to include these elements in my talk, but Ekushey is also an opportunity to think about language, not just about Bangla, but about the relationship between language and history, between language and critical thinking and between language and purpose.

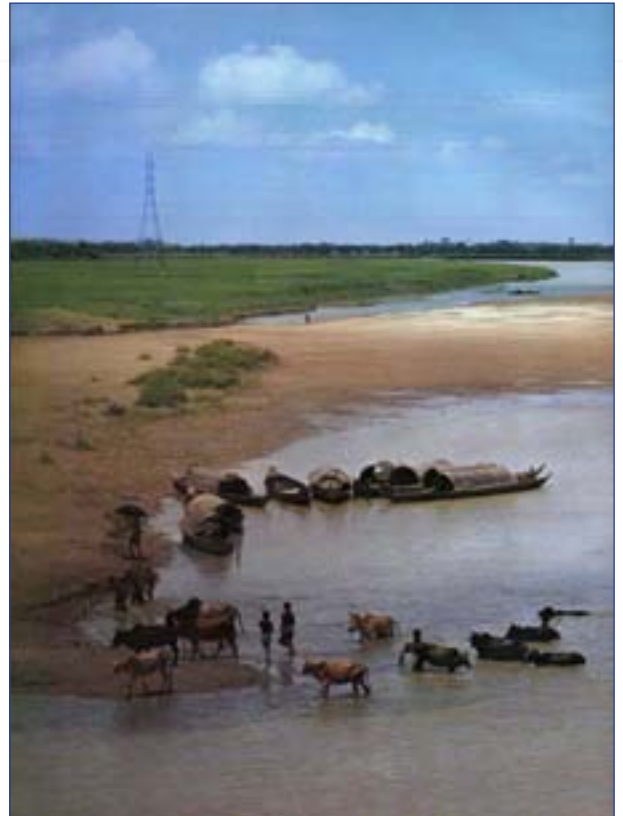
I want to divide this talk into two parts, the first part about the historical events and the second part about what they mean for us today. That's why I have called it 'Celebrating Language, past and future'.

When I asked one of my Bangladeshi students recently how much she actually knew about the history of Ekushey, the Language Movement and Bangladeshi Independence, it was all a bit of a muddle adding up to a vague impression of heroism, struggle and triumph.

Two years ago I wrote an article on Language and National Identity in Bangladesh and for me as a linguist it was quite a revelation to see – many of you will know this – that history is not just an accumulation of events, and re-telling history is not an objective reconstruction of truth but a way of interpretation. We all know this from our own lives. We can share an experience with others: a festival, a meal, a conference, a film, even an intimate heart-to-heart with someone and the likelihood is that we will come away from these experiences with different impressions, that one person's experience will be different from another's. I don't know if any of you watched 'The Verdict' on BBC 2 last week, where a bunch of celebrities had to judge a fictitious rape case. Each of these jurors brought their own chequered life-history, their own agenda to the case and it was a real struggle to arrive at some collective measure of objectivity. Each of these jurors would tell a different story. And the same is true for historians.

The further away in time we move from a particular event the more perceptions will vary, the more our personal agendas and interpretations will come in. My retelling of the history of Bangladesh here today also has an agenda and a purpose, some of which is quite deliberate and directed but there will undoubtedly be subjective aspects of which I am less aware and you can take me up on these. We will have time for a discussion at the end.

When India became independent in 1947 it was split into two states, based on religious prevalence: India was predominantly Hindu and Pakistan predominantly Muslim. The intention behind this was to avoid religious conflict and to allow Muslims, who had always been in the minority in India, to have their own state and develop their own national identity, linked to their religion. In principle this seemed



like a good idea but problems within the new country of Pakistan started almost immediately. East Pakistan (what is now Bangladesh) was geographically separated from West Pakistan by the whole of India and its culture and language were Bengali. In terms of numbers of native speakers the languages of Pakistan were divided as follows:

- Bangla 57%
- Punjabi 29%
- Sindhi 5.5%
- Poshtu 3.5%
- Urdu 3.5%
- Baluchi 1 %
- English 0.05 %

It made sense therefore for the East Pakistan contingent to demand that Bangla should be one of the official languages of the new country. But the West Pakistan government and in particular the Governor General of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah was not one for compromises. He said to a large assembly of people in Dhaka in 1948:

Let me tell you very clearly that the state language of Pakistan will be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one state language no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function. Look at the history of other countries. Therefore, so far as the state language is concerned, Pakistan's language shall be Urdu.'

We see here an inflexible belief in the need for one language in order to create a national unity and we sense Jinnah's fear that this national unity was in fact rather fragile. There are plenty of countries in the world where two or more languages do not pose a threat to national unity.

But this situation was different. The people of East Pakistan were pleased to be part of a Muslim State but they were not prepared to give up their own identity as Bengali Muslims and they were prepared to fight for this identity. I should add here, as an interesting aside, that Jinnah made this announcement in English as he didn't speak Urdu any more than his Bengali audience. But let me also say what this State Language status actually meant. There was no question at all of changing over to Urdu in everyday life. People spoke Bangla, school teaching was done in Bangla, court hearings etc were all done in Bangla. What it meant was that passports, official forms etc were in Urdu, money and stamps were in Urdu and when someone wanted to apply for a government job he had to do it in Urdu. East Pakistani members of parliament were not allowed to speak Bangla in parliament but would normally speak in English since not many of them knew Urdu. That means that monolingual Bengalis were at a disadvantage and they didn't accept it. The language issue was accompanied by a large number of smaller economic grievances and perceptions of injustice which added to the feeling among Bengalis of being unfairly treated by the central government of Pakistan.

After the first wave of protests in 1948 was suppressed by the government, the Pakistan Government introduced Language Planning. A committee for the East Pakistan Language was set up which had the task of bringing Bangla in line with the other Pakistani languages, 'in order that we may make the linguistic, social, political and cultural bonds between the two wings of Pakistan closer and deeper' (from their report).

Their suggestions were quite ambitious. Here are a few of them:

- (1) start writing Bangla in Arabic script
- (2) avoid Sanskrit structures, phraseology and vocabulary
- (3) bring Bengali Muslim writing in line with 'the Islamic ideology'
- (4) separate Bangla grammar from Sanskrit grammar [I am very much in agreement with this!]
- (5) substitute the unintelligible technical terms of Sanskrit grammar with the simple non-technical terms of Bangla [good thinking]
- (6) cut out Hindu words and substitute them with Muslim words

The aim of all of these suggestions was to make Bangla a suitably Muslim Language and, not surprisingly, every single one of them was a flop and only served to incite the people of East Pakistan further.

I would say, and this is my personal opinion, that a deliberate manipulation of language, however and wherever it may occur (Nazi-Germany, Communist propaganda in the Soviet Union or American military language) in the interest of politics or religion is a sign of something going badly wrong. I will come back to this in the second half of my talk.

Feelings in East Pakistan were running high and resentment against the Pakistan Central Government was growing stronger and stronger. In particular the students and

professors of Dhaka University voiced their protests but after the Prime Minister of Pakistan paid a visit to Dhaka in January 1952 and delivered the same uncompromising message about Urdu being the only State Language, the new Nationalist Party of East Pakistan, the Awami League stepped in. They decided that these issues were too important to be left to the intellectual elite and declared a general strike on 21 February. On that day the East Pakistan Assembly had an important budget meeting and in order to ensure the smooth running of this meeting a ban on all non-government meetings was issued for this day. The strike went ahead anyway, thousands of people gathered at Dhaka University, the police arrived and five people were shot dead, four of them students of Dhaka University. The news of the deaths did not cause the government to break off its budget meeting, but the rest of the country was in uproar. The five young men were declared national heroes and the country came to a standstill. Only a few days after the shooting a Shahid Minar ('Tower of Witness') was built overnight near Dhaka Medical College to commemorate those who had died. This monument was destroyed by the army but later rebuilt and it has become the national symbol for the Bengali Language Movement. Bangla was finally recognised in 1954, and the first Pakistan Constitution in 1956 declared both Urdu and Bangla the state languages of Pakistan. But that it was by no means plain sailing from here. There was a military coup in 1958 and the new ruler, General Ayub Khan, was not only keen to minimise the differences between Urdu and Bangla, he also did not have a very high opinion of Bengalis. In his autobiography he said:

Ayub Khan 1967

East Bengalis. . . probably belong to the very original Indian races. It would be no exaggeration to say that up to the creation of Pakistan, they had not known any real freedom or sovereignty [. . .] As such they have all the inhibitions of downtrodden races and have not yet found it possible to adjust psychologically to the requirements of newborn freedom.' (Khan, 1967, p 187)

The uneasy relationship between East and West Pakistan came to a head in early 1971 when in a general election the Awami League under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won the greatest overall number of seats of any party in the country's National Assembly. The democratic consequence should have been to invite the Awami League to form the Central Pakistan government and transfer power from the army to civilian rule. However, the military rulers of Pakistan disregarded the vote and handed East Pakistan over to the military. Following widespread civil disobedience in East Pakistan in protest against the military's actions, and brutal military repression of those considered responsible for the protests, the Bengali nationalists under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in March 1971 declared East Pakistan an independent state, the People's Republic of Bangladesh. A very brutal and bloody war followed for the next nine months, until India decided to intervene on the side of Bangladesh and Bangladesh become an independent republic on 16 December 1971. So much for the history.

I would like to come back now to the question I posed at the beginning about the subjective element of historical retelling and the role of language in this. The underlying purpose of this is to increase our critical awareness and at the same time to recognize the power of language. Language is not

LECTURE NOTES

a fixed commodity and language is not neutral. The way we express ourselves, the way we use language, the way we talk about history or anything else, for that matter, is tied in with our subjective experiences, with our views and the way we think, and there is nothing wrong with that. On the contrary, our different ways of thinking and expressing our thoughts in language are in themselves a cause for celebration and an indication of the wonderful fluidity of language. But there are some things we need to watch out for.

I mentioned earlier the deliberate manipulation of language as a sign of something going wrong. Manipulation of language happens in totalitarian contexts or in Brave New World-type situations where people's thinking is controlled from the outside. Wherever that happens it is a very worrying thing but it is rarely successful because language is by nature diverse and multi-faceted and changeable. Now let's have a look at something that is a lot more common and less obtrusive: manipulation through language. Manipulation through language is something we come across every day, but we are sometimes not aware of it, for instance when a suicide on a railway line in an announcement to explain why the trains are not running is referred to as an *incident* or when military aggression is called *intervention*. These are euphemisms with the intent of white-washing a situation. A bit closer to home, at universities, where we used to have *teaching and learning* and a mutual relationship between teachers and students, nowadays we, the teachers, *provide services for our fee-paying clients* (that's you!). I'll leave you to think about what the difference is. All of this is a kind of manipulation through language. It is far too wide a field for me today but it is a good thing to be aware of it and to understand how these shifts in language change our perception of the world. But let us get back to Ekushey. I'm going to read to you three different statements about Ekushey and I want you to pay close attention to the language used here:

Rafiqul Islam, prolific writer on all things historical, educational or linguistic in 1967

The Language Movement added a new dimension to politics in Pakistan. It left a deep impression on the minds of the younger generation of Bengalis and imbued them with the spirit of Bengali nationalism. The passion of Bengali nationalism which was aroused by the Language Movement will kindle in the hearts of the Bengalis forever. Perhaps very few people realised then that with the bloodshed in 1952, the new-born state of Pakistan had in fact started to bleed to death.'

Mohammad Omar Farooq 2003 (he was one of the speakers at the LSE debate on Bangladesh last night)

There probably is no other group of people or nation that has had to struggle this way and even give life for its right to their mother tongue. This is a distinguished honour of our nation, something that has been earned by the sacrifice and blood of many valiant people. It is part of our history and heritage that is too precious to allow distortion by anyone. If anyone wants to distort the history of the Language Movement by ignoring or denying the pioneering contributions of those Bengali Muslims who were among the first and foremost to stand up against the unjust decision of Pakistani rulers regarding Bangla, it would be callous and unacceptable.'

Md Saiful Haque (New Age publication 2006)

Fifty-four years ago, on a spring day when scarlet Palash flowers together with other flowers were in bloom, a multitude of valiant youths, like surging waves of the ocean, paraded the Dhaka streets for the noble cause of the recognition of Bangla, their beloved mother tongue. Rafiq, Salam, Barkat, Jabbar and some others sacrificed themselves, dyeing the streets red with their blood, which permanently perpetuated the Bangla Bhasha on 21 February 1952. And that has been recorded in our annals as Omor Ekushey (Immortal Ekushey). The Language Movement was in effect the prelude to the liberation of Bangladesh because from it the struggle for rights and struggle against oppression started to take up steam, which ultimately led to the independence struggle which had its successful culmination when on December 16th, 1971, this nation won freedom...

It is not difficult to detect the directive element in these statements, the colourful imagery, the drama and the direct appeal to our emotions. What is a bit worrying to me is the way the events of Ekushey seem to get more romanticised as time goes by. There is a marked increase in this romantic element between the statement from 1967 and the one from last year. This year (2007) a statue consisting of busts of the five young men who were killed has been placed in the grounds of the Bangla Academy in Dhaka. The statue is entitled *mfqr fgHrb* our pride. What purpose does this serve? What are these statements and this statue trying to say to people? What is the effect of comparing the red flowers to the red blood of these five young men? What does this language do to our thinking?

Let me try a different way of looking at it: What happened that day was an unnecessary and horrific event and the likelihood is that these five young men did not get up that morning with the intention of giving their lives for their language. They wanted to live, to live and to fight for what they saw as right and their deaths were a tragic waste. Wouldn't they have much rather lived on as ordinary young men than to die and be made into heroic martyrs? Wasn't it the need of the people around them to make some sense of this tragedy which propelled this hero and martyr thinking? Isn't it our need for meaning in the sometimes so arbitrary things that happen to us that create these beliefs in the significance of events, in destiny, in heroes, in romanticising the past and in the glorification of war? I think these are things we need to think about.

Many of you have grown up in the UK, you are more at home in English than you are in Bangla. Yet from your early childhoods you have carried with you this history, these stories, this glorious past. And with this history comes the belief that Bangla is somehow an extraordinary language, something to be put on a pedestal. Just as these five young men have been put on a pedestal, just as Robindronath Tagore has been put on a pedestal, so the language is somehow an object of worship and admiration but at the same time removed from us. I don't want to take away your pride in your heritage. I don't want to take away your awe of the Bangla language. I love this language and spend all my waking hours working on it. But I want you to be critical of the way this history is presented to you. I want you to be able to cut through the romance, the flowery language and the big words and think for yourselves.

Bangla is a wonderful language, but it is not just the

language of Robindrosongit and Nozrul giti and important people standing up on a stage and mesmerising you with their beautiful words. It is also the language of farmers and fishermen and village women and of every child living on the streets of Dhaka. From my linguistic perspective and the research I have done I know that it is these ordinary people who keep this language alive and flexible and as fascinating as it is.

I'll give you one of my own experiences to show this. In the preface to my book *Essential Everyday Bengali* I gave the example of what *pregnant* is in Bangla. When you ask people they give you *gorbhoboti* but when they talk to one another they say *pete baccha a baby in the womb*. This is quite a normal feature of a diglossic language but it is also a status thing. I made this point in a speech I gave a few years ago to some Bangladeshi law students at Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the High Commissioner of Bangladesh was also present. In his speech, which came after mine he picked up this point and coined the word *gorbhobotiwallah* to refer to people who are very conscious of status, particularly of their own status. This shows something about the High Commissioner's sense of humour and his ability to think on his feet, but it also shows something about the inbuilt flexibility and creativity of the Bangla language. With two completely unconnected words a new concept was created.

If you want to put it in a metaphor you could say that the great poetry, the songs and the refined language of the *gorbhobotiwallahs* is the icing on the cake, but for everyday use we want bread more than we want cake. Actually, I don't like this image. I've never liked icing but I wouldn't want to be without poetry. We could turn it round and say that Robindronath is about our unfathomable souls but as everyday people our needs are physical more than spiritual. And this takes me back to these pedestals. You may say to me, 'Well, we Bangladeshis are proud and emotional people and there is nothing wrong in remembering the struggles and victories of the past and in honouring our language if it makes us feel good and inspires us to do our best'.

This is quite true but there are some aspects to this which cause me some serious concerns. I've already mentioned the glorification of war but there is another problem which is much more immediate.

I will give you five separate and unrelated scenarios from my own life and will then try to connect these events to the larger picture. This is where my own personal agenda comes in and where you may pick up on things that I am not aware of.

(1) When I started planning my first dictionary, which was meant for foreigners who wanted to learn Bangla, the very people from whom I had learnt most of my Bangla said to me, 'Oh no, you can't put that in your book, that's just the way we talk.'

(2) When I tell people that I am writing a Bangla grammar they tell me they are very pleased that finally someone is laying down some rules for this language.

(3) I have had a number of very kindly meant offers to teach me proper Bangla to get me away from this sub-standard Bangal that I picked up in a Bangladeshi village.

(4) When I tell people that I work on colloquial contemporary

Bangla, they mostly assume that I work on dialects. When I tell them that I don't, they point me in the direction of Bankimchandra, Tagore, Shorotchandra or other 'good quality' literature. 'There is a lot of grammar in Bankimchandra' apparently.

(5) A number of very friendly middle-class people in Dhaka who were at first quite keen to socialise with us cut off the contact abruptly when they realised we were also socialising with village people.

This last one has nothing to do with language but all of these scenarios relate to value judgement and unfortunately this value judgement seems to be a by-product of this 'our glorious Bangla language'. I would love to be proved wrong on this but so far I haven't. It seems to me that there is an inbuilt idea of what is or isn't good language and that the Bangla which deserves our worship and admiration is really only a particular part of this language. This is a hierarchical thinking which classifies language and classifies people, a value judgement in terms of worthy and not so worthy and it goes against everything I believe in.

If we think back to the history for a moment and to the way the people of East Pakistan stood up for their own identity as Bengalis, then perhaps we can see what an important part of our identity language is. If we celebrate this standing up for one's identity of a whole country, then shouldn't we give the same respect to individuals or groups of people whose identity is defined by language? There is, I think, very little in our lives that is as much a part of us, as inalienable to us, as our language. And yet, half the people, more than half the people, in Bangladesh live under the impression that their language is somehow inferior. So much so that they are, or at least some of them, looking to a foreigner to set the norms of how they should speak. To any clear-thinking person this is an absurdity.

The fact that these things happen and not just as isolated incidents, shows that there is something wrong, not with the language, not at all with the language, but with the people who think of their own language as something that is imposed on them from the outside and for which they need to learn the rules of what is 'proper' and what isn't. And there is something wrong with people who glorify some parts of this language and look down on the rest of it. As for the Bangal thing, I am increasingly grateful that I have this supposed 'flaw' in my language because it shows me first hand just how condescending people can be about other people's language. As I said earlier, language is by nature diverse and multi-faceted and changeable and if we celebrate language, especially if we celebrate Bangla, we should celebrate all of it. There is, not surprisingly, just as much grammar in ordinary village language as there is in Bankimchandra. The reason for me to choose this somewhat fuzzy 'ordinary' Bangla for my research is quite likely a reaction against this hierarchical thinking. It is not that I don't like the literature. I do, very much, though I do have some reservations about Bankimchandra. But there are plenty of admirers of Tagore and Nazrul, there is plenty of adoration of poetry and it is perhaps time that the scales are balanced out a bit and that some of these biases are made explicit.

As a foreigner I have quite a high status in Bangladesh. That is, of course, another aspect of the same thing and is no better than looking down on people, but I must admit that I

LECTURE NOTES

make use of this elevated position quite consciously and I throw in my 'objective' linguistic expertise for good measure in order to get my points across. There will always be people who are beyond the reach of any foreigner but through my work and through my persistence I am slowly but surely getting to a place where this 'ordinary' language and the gradual changes that are occurring in this ordinary language are taken a bit more seriously as a research object.

But enough about me. Let's get back to Ekushey and to what celebrating language and celebrating Bangla means for us in the light of these points and in looking towards the future. Celebrating Bangla for you should not mean leaving your critical faculties at home and letting these Ekushey speeches wash over you like a pleasant shower. It does not mean putting the Bangla language on a pedestal where it is safely glorified out of your reach! I am delighted that SOAS now has a Bangladesh Society and that similar groups are being formed in other universities. I sincerely hope that next year one of you will stand up here and talk about the meaning of Ekushey for you. Groups like this should be about showing the rest of the world (or even just the other students) what Bangla and being a Bangladeshi is all about but it should also be forum for you to think about what you can do for the future of Bangla and the future of Bangladesh. You, as students of SOAS, are in a strong position to make some real changes. You've got the status – your families, I'm sure, are very proud of you for getting this far and they will listen to what you say.

Celebrating the Bangla language should also mean – I am duty-bound to say this, of course – that you should learn the language. It is part of your heritage and it is by no means out of your reach. You are lucky that you have this dual cultural background. Make it yours, learn the language, read the literature and the newspapers and have your own say. I went to this debate at the LSE last night and even though

it was announced as a potentially 'explosive debate', I was very impressed with the level-headedness and constructive thinking of these people. I couldn't quite help thinking, 'Well, they are British educated – they are taught to think for themselves' – this is, no doubt, a bias in me. SOAS is the only university in the UK where Bangla is taught and we want to keep our Bengali Department and expand our courses. We want this to be a place where different cultures can come together and learn from one another and we need your involvement for this. The more students we have, the better we can plan our teaching, the more tailor-made our courses can be and the more fun we will all have. And believe me, there is a lot of fun to be had in learning Bangla!

There are, of course, many different ways to celebrate Bangla. I came across a website yesterday about some new software and it said:

Once again we have proved ourselves as the Pioneer of Bangla Language. Windows Vista came out this month and our Bangla Computing Solutions are ready for Microsoft Windows Vista.

Good for them. But particularly with recent events in Bangladesh we cannot be unaware that things are far from stable. And in such situations we need more than glorification and pride. We need to be able to think with clear heads and open minds. We need to be able to recognize not only other people's prejudices and agendas but also our own. No dialogue is possible without this and dialogue is what the world needs more than anything else. We need to be able to listen as well as talk. And that, I think, is my cue to shut up! Thank you!



Dr Hanne-Ruth Thompson

On the State of South Asian Studies

by Ezra Rashkow
PhD Research Fellow and TA
Department of History

The equation “knowledge is power” may seem an old cliché, but significantly, it is also the motto established in 1916 for London’s prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies. The first western scholars to turn their gaze beyond Europe, believed firmly that knowledge was power, and studied the world so as to rule it. The modern academic study of South Asia has thankfully come a long way since the days of administrator-scholars like William Jones, and South Asian intellectuals themselves have often become the preeminent academic researchers in their own nations’ arts and culture, history, economics, politics, and postcolonial theory. But today, besides British historians and Indian scholars themselves, there is a new rising star in the firmament of “area studies”, with research interests again firmly based on controlling new lines of power.

Since the events that rocked America in September 2001, “area studies” in general, and South Asian studies in particular, have gained enormous attention in US institutions of higher learning. Some wary scholars have duly noted this fact, but almost no public attention has been drawn to this highly significant *coup d’academia*. Unless we want to end up with a new generation of administrator-scholars, it is high time to pay attention. The problem is not American scholarship as such, but rather the US government’s push to create a pool of experts in world affairs working for the benefit of national interests, i.e. to maintain US political, military, and economic dominance around the world. The problem is when legitimate scholarship gets conscripted into a highly dubious political agenda.

In the months following 9/11 there was a Congressional directive to “double the number of students pursuing advanced training” in languages and societies defined as crucial to national security interests. A program known as Title VI funding, which oversees the Fulbright-Hayes and FLAS (Foreign Language Area Studies) fellowships, received a \$20.5 million dollar booster from Congress. This was the largest increase into this program since its 1957 inception at the height of the Cold War. According to the US Department of Education, Congress directives on the use of these funding increases, “clearly reflected the Federal government concern that the United States has sufficient domestic expertise in languages such as Pashto, the language of the Taliban, and Arabic.” However, nearly every Indian language from Hindi to Tamil fell under the ambit of the funding as well.

Unfortunately, such a dramatic rise in the numbers of students studying non-European languages and societies, has not been motivated by a sudden popular outburst of altruism for the oppressed and impoverished masses. The explicit goal of Title VI is defined as developing a “pool of international experts to meet national needs.” But for many of the individuals applying for these funds, I would argue that it is a result of the popular and wholly selfish phenomenon known as the run for the money. Consider the following as a metaphor for the state of American academia: at many elite American undergraduate colleges, fourth year students have a tradition of a running race across campus for big cash prizes. The only catch is, they have to run

naked in the middle of the night. To put it bluntly, scholars are more than willing to prostitute themselves for cash.

The US government has repeatedly tried to impose further oversight on Title VI funds, to make sure they are used for a national security agenda. Where this has not been possible through academia, funds have been redirected into private think tanks with known conservative and even neo-imperial agendas. Money, of course, is also what is driving a whole generation of Indian scholars into institutions in the United States. Many of these scholars are among the most distinguished scholars in their respective disciplines, but they are devoting their energies to teaching a young generation of Americans about the fundamentals of South Asia.

The US National Security Educational Program (NSEP) has also broadened its reach. Through the David Boren scholarship program it incentivizes young area studies experts with up to \$30,000 per student per year, and sends well over 100 students per year into areas of the world, including India, which are deemed to be of national security interest. The only catch is that after your postgraduate degree is done, recipients commit to working in national security for the US government. Kevin Davis, a US graduate student stymied in his attempt to study Sanskrit at the University of Wisconsin complains, “in the US, all money is from the Defense Department. You can’t study ancient India here.”

The study of the world should not be co-opted by the US State Department. Academics are *not* government agents, and government should not be extending its influence over scholarship. The more it does so, the greater the danger that U.S. researchers and students will start to be perceived an arm of the intelligence community, rather than as pursuing legitimate research interests. This is already a problem for American academics traveling to India where the government strictly controls who may enter the country on a research visa. Scores of legitimate researchers are kept from entering the country to pursue their fieldwork each year.

As Arthur Dudley, a Columbia South Asian studies graduate student put it, “for most of us who work on South Asia in area studies, our reasons are personal rather than reactions to world affairs.” Dudley, a recipient of FLAS funding, says he thinks he can, “better serve the nation by being an academic rather than holding a position in the State Department... Hopefully initiatives like FLAS will help to create a generation of scholars who can generate enough public pressure that politicians make the right decisions.”

There is nothing wrong with the government encouraging outstanding scholarship through financial support, as long as it respects the free exchange of ideas. Though recent moves by the US government might be seen as an unsurprising response to a terrorist threat, they jeopardize the fundamental purpose of the academic project: the unhampered growth of knowledge, and not one particular country’s national agenda. As a progressive university, and one located in the UK, SOAS has so far done a good job resisting trends set in the US. But as a relatively poor institution (in one of the world’s most expensive cities) engaged in highly politicized fields of study, we must be wary of giving up academic freedom for cash, incentivized by regressive agendas.

PhD Title: “Endangered Wildlife and Livelihoods in India: 1857 - 1970”

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Economic, social and regional inequalities constitute major sources of political friction, conflict and even violence. With the rapid socio-economic and political transitions underway throughout South Asia, there is pressing need to research interrelationships among economic growth, inequality and conflict and to draw out their implications for public policy. The 3rd International Conference on South Asia will provide a forum for presenting and discussing results of fresh research on this vital subject, for comparing and learning from national experiences within the region and for promoting future collaboration among scholars of the region. Under the broad rubric of *Political Economy of Growth, Inequality and Conflict*, proposals are especially welcome under the following heads:

1. Economic Reforms and Inequality Trends: The Politics of Measurement and Perception
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6. What Constrains Redistribution under Unequalizing Growth: Politics or Economics?

While the focus will be on empirically oriented national or provincial case studies, cross-national comparisons within the region are strongly encouraged whilst theoretical analyses based on the secondary literature will not be excluded. The theme demands trespassing across disciplinary boundaries and so ISAS extends a special invitation for joint proposals from scholars in economics, sociology, anthropology, political science and geography.

Proposals should include a title, an abstract of about 1,000 words, a select bibliography and a short curriculum vita of the authors. These should reach the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) by 15 May 2007. Authors will be notified about ISAS' decision on their proposals by 25 May 2007. To qualify for the final selection, authors of the short-listed proposals must submit their papers of between 8,000-9,000 words by 25 September 2007. Proposals are welcome from researchers at all levels, with proposals from younger scholars being especially welcome. Preference will be given to researchers who have published under the theme and heads mentioned above.

Paper presenters will be provided round-trip economy air fare and local hospitality. ISAS will have the papers collectively published in a volume. The probable dates for the conference are 29-30 November 2007. Information about ISAS and updates on the Conference will be available on ISAS' website at www.isas.nus.edu.sg.

Please address all correspondence related to the conference to:

The Organising Committee
3rd International Conference on South Asia
Institute of South Asian Studies
469A Tower Block, Bukit Timah Road #07-01
Singapore 259770
Email: isasseminars@nus.edu.sg

WORKSHOP

'Queer Diasporas' 24-25 May 2007

Further information please contact: Encarnacion Gutierrez-Rodriguez (e.gutierrez@manchester.ac.uk or Margaret Littler (Margaret.Littler@manchester.ac.uk)

Programme**Thursday, May 24, 2007****Martin Harris Building, Bragg Lecture Theatre**

- 3.30 - 4.00 Welcome
- 4.00 - 5.30
Diaspora of Thought
Panel: 'Migrating Theories? Thinking about queerness in South and South East Asian contexts'
Chair: Margaret Littler
Paul Boyce (TCRU)
On (non) male-to-male sexual subjectivities in India and in trans-national context
Caroline Osella (SOAS)
On 'cinematic' ['Bollywood'] dance, gender segregation, and the expansion of female gendered and erotic ranges
Martyn Rogers
On young men's negotiations of mixed and segregated spaces on college campuses
Mark Johnson (Hull)
On why gender theory has always been mobile and labile
- 5.45 - 6.30
Film Screening
Chair: Rajinder Dudrah
Milind Soman Made Me Gay
Written and Directed by Harjant Gill
30 mins/2007/In-Post Production

Friday, May 25, 2007**Martin Harris Building, Bragg Lecture Theatre**

- 9.30 - 10.30
Chair: Rajinder Dudrah
Key Note Lecture by
Professor Gayatri Gopinath (University of California at Davis)
Rethinking Space and Sexuality in Transnational Times
- 10.30 - 10.45 Coffee Break
- 10.45 - 12.15
Stories of Displacement
Chair: Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez
Carrie Hamilton (Roehampton University, London)
Moving In: Queer Migrations Inside Cuba
Bettina Büchler (University of Bern, Switzerland)
A Sense of (Un)belonging - Real and Imagined Spaces of Women-Loving Migrant and Refugee Women in Switzerland
Adi Kunstmann (University of Lancaster, Lancaster)
Genealogies of Hate, Metonymies of Violence: Immigration, Homophobia, Homopatriotism
- 12.15 - 01.30 Lunch Break
- 1.30 - 3.00
Queer Identities
Chair: Shirley Tate
Michela Baldo (University of Manchester, Manchester)
Queering Femininity in Italian-North American female writers
Christian Klesse (Manchester Metropolitan University)
On the Limits of Community Discourses: Gay and bisexual British South-Asian men and the question of non-monogamy
Sanaz Raji (SOAS, London) and Michelle S. Davis (SOAS, London))
Queer Iranian Diaspora Through the Pages of Literature and the Vision of Film
- 3.00 - 3.30 Coffee Break
- 3.30 - 5:00
Queer Performance
Chair: Chris Perriam
Alpesh Patel (University of Manchester, Manchester)
Queer "Desi" Art Criticism
Humaira Saeed (University of Manchester, Manchester)
Fixity, Fluidity, and Queer Diasporic Subcultures
Harjant Gill (American University, Washington DC)
On The Significance of Salting & Peppering Mangoes -
Music, Performance and Transgression of MIA in the South Asian Diaspora
5.00-5.30 Concluding Comments

24th Annual Sanskrit Tradition in the Modern World Seminar

अनु प्रत्नास आयवः पदं नवीयो अक्रमुः

The ancient bards have walked in a newer step - R̥g Veda 9, 23, 2

24th Annual STIMW Seminar

Fri 25 May 2007 10.45 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

Kilburn Building, G95, University of Manchester

Programme (Order to be confirmed)

- 10.45-11.10 Coffee and registration
- 11.15-12.00 **McComas Taylor** (Australian National University)
'The current renaissance of Sanskrit in India'
- 12.05-12.25 **Payal Doctor** (University of Liverpool, UK)
Research report: 'The Tradition of Sanskrit Commentaries and their Future'
- 12.30-1.35 Lunch
- 1.45-2.25 **Dermot Killingley** (University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK)
'Ezour Vedam: Europe's illusory first glimpse of the Veda'
- 2.30-3.10 **Jacqueline Suthren Hirst** (University of Manchester, UK)
'The six schools of Indian philosophy: some Indian and European constructions'
- 3.15-3.45 Tea
- 3.45-4.25 **Annapurna Waughray** (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)
'Caste discrimination and human rights law'
- 4.30-4.45 **STIMW 2008**
and the European Conference for Modern South Asian Studies

For further details, please see

<http://www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/subjectareas/religionstheology/newsevents/stimw/>

or contact jacqueline.hirst@manchester.ac.uk

For administrative queries, please contact janet.meredith@manchester.ac.uk

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAMME
 ASIAN STUDIES CENTRE
 ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Trinity Term 2007

SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY SEMINAR

Tuesdays, 2.00 p.m.
The Deakin Room, Founder's Building,
St Antony's College

<i>Week 1</i> 24 April	PRS presentation Ian Desai (Merton College) <i>Gandhi the Inmate</i>
<i>Week 2</i> 1 May	Dr Dilip Menon (Delhi University & Magdalene College, Cambridge) <i>Self-serving narratives: religion, history and identity in fin de siècle South India</i>
<i>Week 5</i> 22 May	Dr Sangeeta Dasgupta (Visvabarathi University & St Antony's) <i>From description to definition: locating the Oraon 'tribe' in nineteenth century Chotanagpur</i>
<i>Week 6</i> 29 May	Dr Hayden Bellenoit (Bowdoin College & St Antony's) <i>Aesthetics, environment and education in colonial North India c. 1840-1940</i>

All are welcome

Convenor: Dr D.A. Washbrook
 Enquiries: e-mail: asian@sant.ox.ac.uk or tel: 01865-274559

WORKSHOP

FACULTY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES AND SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES
PROGRAMME, ASIAN STUDIES CENTRE, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE

Oxford Early Modern South Asia Workshop

'Ideas in Circulation'

25-26 May 2007

Much recent writing about the 'early modern' in South Asia has focused on the theme of circulation, of the growing rapidity with which commodities, texts, skilled personnel, technologies and ideas diffused through the social and commercial networks of the subcontinent. For many historians, this theme of intensified circulation is what in fact defines the early modern in South Asia and links the region's historical development to that of a wider early modern world. At the same time, there is much about this key feature of the period that needs more detailed investigation. The purpose of this workshop is to explore some rather specific questions about the social and cultural aspects of these processes of circulation.

Reconstructing Networks: What techniques of investigation are available to help us piece together a history of the circulation of texts as manuscripts?

Patrons, Collectors, and Readers: Is it possible to work towards a more definitive understanding of the nature of reading practices, readerships and audiences?

Shifting Genres: Given the difficulty of identifying 'the new' in the early modern setting, how far can we take apparent transformations in literary genres to be a sign of deeper social and intellectual change?

The Identity of Authors: How was authorship understood in different genres, and by different audiences?

The Reality of Continuity: Has the search for rapid forms of cultural diffusion curtailed our understanding of processes that placed a premium on continuity and exclusivity?

Participants

Muzaffar Alam (Chicago)
Sheldon Pollock (Columbia)
David Washbrook (Oxford)
Polly O'Hanlon (Oxford)
Dominik Wujastik (UCL)
David Taylor (Oxford)
Imre Bangha (Oxford)

V. Narayana Rao (Wisconsin)
Sanjay Subrahmanyam (UCLA)
Christopher Minkowski (Oxford)
Nile Green (Manchester)
Jonardon Ganeri (Liverpool)
Jeevan Deol (SOAS)
Allison Busch (Columbia)

Place: Dahrendorf Room, St. Antony's College

Dates: Friday, 25 May, 9:30am – 6:00pm, Saturday, 26 May, 9:00am – 4:00pm

Conference organizers:

Christopher Minkowski
Polly O'Hanlon
David Washbrook

There is no formal registration process or fee for attendance, but please contact Professor O'Hanlon rosalind.ohanlon@orinst.ox.ac.uk if you plan to attend.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

INAUGURAL LECTURE

Professor Polly O'Hanlon

(Professor of Indian History and Culture
and Fellow of St Cross College)

**CULTURES OF THE BODY IN
THE MAKING OF MODERN
INDIA**

**Week 5
Tuesday 22 May
5.00 p.m.**

**Nissan Lecture Theatre,
St Antony's College**

Centad's Submission for 'South Asia Newsletter' (SOAS), April 2007 IssueEvent Report

RELEASE OF THE 'SOUTH ASIAN YEARBOOK OF TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (2006)'
Multilateralism at Cross-roads: Reaffirming Development Priorities

14 March 2007, New Delhi, India

Centre for Trade and Development (Centad), New Delhi, India is an autonomous, not-for profit institution that seeks to strengthen the abilities of governments and communities in South Asia to make economic globalisation work for development. The second annual issue of Centad's flagship publication the *South Asian Yearbook of Trade and Development (2006)*, titled *Multilateralism at Cross-roads: Reaffirming Development Priorities* was released jointly by Gopal K. Pillai, Commerce Secretary, Government of India (GOI) and S. N. Menon, Former Commerce Secretary, GOI, in a Book-Release Function organised by Centad at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India on 14 March 2007.



At the release of the *South Asian Yearbook of Trade and Development 2006* (from left) Palash Kanti Das (Executive Director, Centad); Samar Verma (Head-Global Economic Justice Team, Oxfam GB); Gopal K. Pillai (Commerce Secretary, GOI); S. N. Menon (Former Commerce Secretary, GOI); B.S. Chimni (Professor of International Law, JNU); and Paras Bansal (Senior Manager, Acquisitions, Wiley India).

The Release Function started with Kasturi Das, Research Officer, Centad, welcoming all the distinguished guests and participants on behalf of Centad. She then invited Palash Kanti Das, Executive Director, Centad, to deliver the Inaugural Address and to take the proceedings forward. Delivering the Inaugural Address Palash Kanti Das observed that the *South Asian Yearbook of Trade and Development* was launched by Centad in 2005 with the primary objective of articulating debates on development implications of trade in South Asia through rigorous policy analysis and research. The *Yearbook* is envisaged as a comprehensive collection of policy research papers which attempts to reflect the South Asian perspectives at the international trade negotiations and provides policy suggestions for the trade negotiators, policy makers and other stakeholders of the region, he noted. Mr. Das pointed out that the inaugural issue of the *South Asian Yearbook (2005)* titled *Mainstreaming Development in Trade Negotiations: Run up to Hong Kong* was very well-received all across South Asia and elsewhere. Addressing the gathering, Gopal K. Pillai, Commerce Secretary, GOI, remarked that the theme of the *Yearbook (2006)* was extremely relevant since multilateralism was surely at a crossroads, though reaffirming development priorities, he believed, would possibly come a little later. Delivering his address, S. N. Menon, former Commerce Secretary, GOI, acclaimed Centad for the quality and range of work it was undertaking on both multilateral and regional issues and appreciated "the absolute quality and professionalism" in Centad's publications. "Without research you really cannot negotiate because you have to go and negotiate from a position of strength and the strength

can only come from knowledge”, he emphasised and added that this was where Centad’s work assumed importance. As for the *Yearbook 2006*, he observed that it was wide-ranging in its scope and coverage of issues and was guided by an extremely eminent panel of Editors and that it would be of great use to anyone following the subject of multilateral negotiations. Addressing the audience B. S. Chimni, Professor of International Law, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and one of the Editors of the *South Asian Yearbook 2006* congratulated Centad for the excellent quality of work it had done on the *Yearbook 2006*. He regretted that India had not had the same kind of intellectual capital and organisations like Centad when the Uruguay Round negotiations were launched. He explained that many of the mistakes that India as a nation had made in negotiating the outcome of the Uruguay Round would not have been committed had the country then had the kind of research, analysis and experience it has today. Representing Wiley (India) - the co-publisher of the *South Asian Yearbook 2006*- Paras Bansal, Senior Manager, Acquisitions, Wiley (India), announced that amazon.com had picked up the *Yearbook 2006* for displaying on their website and that Wiley (India) was going ahead with the publication of the *Yearbook* across all demographics and geographies. Introducing the *South Asian Yearbook 2006*, Samar Verma, Head- Global Economic Justice Team, Oxfam GB, Oxford, observed that a wedding of rigorous research and political analysis could produce a document that was of real use to the policy makers and that was one of the key objectives of the *Yearbook*. Noting that the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was a difficult subject to handle, he remarked that still there was ample scope for demystifying the debates around the WTO and that was something this annual publication of Centad aimed at achieving, among other things. The *Yearbook* also intended to build up strong arguments on the basis of solid empirical evidence, because negotiations were not done on the basis of emotions but on the basis of hardcore empirical evidence, Dr. Verma commented. While proposing the ‘Vote of Thanks’, Kasturi Das, Research Officer, Centad; and Research Coordinator of the *Yearbook 2006* thanked everyone who had played a role in bringing out the volume, mentioning in particular the editors and authors of the Papers, and Wiley (India) - the co-publisher. The evening ended with a dinner hosted by Centad.

Event Report

WORKSHOP ON ‘BUILDING TRADE SAFETY NETS IN AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS IN SOUTH ASIA’

26 April 2007, Hyderabad, India

Centad, in collaboration with the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad, organised a one-day workshop on ‘Building Trade Safety Nets in Agricultural Systems in South Asia’. The Workshop, held on 26 April 2007 in Hyderabad, India, reflected on the experiences and concerns of the South Asian countries in the area of agricultural trade after the advent of the WTO in 1995. The speakers at the Workshop included Prof. C.H. Hanumantha Rao, Member, National Advisory Council, Government of India; and Vadde Shobanadreeswar Rao, former Minister of State for Agriculture, Andhra Pradesh, India. The Workshop deliberated on the asymmetric distribution of gains from trade in favour of the developed countries and how agricultural trade in the WTO-era had left the farmers of South Asia worse-off. It was this scenario that had triggered the need for putting in place an appropriate mechanism of trade-safety nets by the South Asian governments so as to balance the asymmetric gains, it was highlighted. The deliberations observed that the urgency of trade safety nets was further accentuated by the uncertainty that prevailed in the agricultural negotiations at the WTO and the lack of effective domestic instruments securing the confidence of the farming communities of the region. The Workshop took note of the price induced adverse terms created on account of trade flows and emphasised the need for an effective price stabilisation fund insulating the farmers from distress on account of price transmission. The deliberations highlighted how the massive agricultural subsidies in the developed nations were distorting the terms of trade depriving the developing world of the legitimate gains from agricultural trade. The Workshop, which saw representation from all the major South Asian countries, brought to the fore various concerns of the region in the field of agricultural trade, such as non-tariff barriers, trade facilitation, food security, etc. As for policy prescription, the need for domestic reforms was mooted in the Workshop to provide policy space to the small farmers of the region. The need for stepping up farm lending to small and marginal farmers was also stressed. A formal e-group was launched to facilitate exchange of views on trade safety nets in the region and for furthering the plans for more such regional consultations on trade safety nets in future. It was also decided that with the aim of streamlining the debates and discussions around trade safety nets, the proceedings of the Workshop would be published jointly by Centad and CESS by the end of the year.



Emphasising the need for Trade Safety Nets in South Asia: (from left) Linu Mathew Philip, Research Officer, Centad; Vadde Shobanadreeswar Rao, former Minister of Agriculture, Andhra Pradesh; C.H.Hanumantha Rao, Member, National Advisory Council, GOI; Mahendra Dev, Director CESS; K. Sakthi Srinivasan, Lecturer, Kongu Arts and Science College, Tamil Nadu; and Kumar Gautam, Research Co-ordinator, Make Trade Fair Campaign, Oxfam.

Event Report

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON 'CONSUMER DRUG INFORMATION IN INDIA: A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS'

29 March 2007, New Delhi, India

On 29 March 2007, a National Consultation on 'Consumer Drug Information in India: A Situational Analysis' was organised in New Delhi by Centad in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Country Office in India.

The agenda of the Consultation included: (a) presentation of the 'Approach Paper' on the theme of the Consultation and critical review of the Paper by a panel of experts; (b) presentations on the experiences of civil society and pharmacy representatives dealing with issues of providing information on drugs to consumers; and (c) a discussion on the plan of action and recommendations by a panel, which included representatives from the government of India, the WHO, and pharmacists and other medical professionals. Recommendations were also made by other participants at the Consultation.

The components of consumer drug information include drug composition; brand and generic names; indications and contraindications; rational and irrational drug combinations; price comparisons; dosage; side effects; precautions; drug use in special conditions such as pregnancy; storage conditions, expiry dates; dietary habits associated with the medication, etc. The 'Approach Paper', written by Yamini Srivastava (Research Consultant, Centad) and K. M. Gopakumar (Research Officer, Centad) pointed out that in India drug information for consumers was widely scattered and was not provided in a systematic manner. Apart from information exclusive to drugs, there was also a need to provide information on medical devices, other forms of treatment and information on the disease/medical condition itself.

The Consultation emphasised the need for improving consumer drug information both in terms of quality and quantity. A consensus emerged among the participants that the Indian law and policy on health needed to be restructured to include provisions on drug information. The necessity of the active participation of the multiple actors in the field was also recognised. Hence, information, suggestions and models of drug information systems by various stake holders were welcomed.

CENTAD PUBLICATIONS

Recent Releases

South Asian Yearbook of Trade and Development 2006

Multilateralism at Cross-roads: Reaffirming Development Priorities

Editors: B. S. Chimni (*Professor of International Law, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India*)

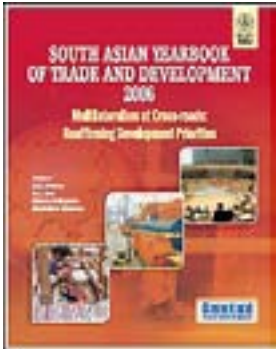
B. L. Das (*India's former Ambassador to the GATT, New Delhi, India*)

Saman Kelegama (*Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka*)

Mustafizur Rahman (*Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, Bangladesh*)

Foreword: Ha-Joon Chang (*University of Cambridge, UK*)

Publisher: Centre for Trade & Development (Centad) & Wiley (India)



About the *South Asian Yearbook 2006*: In 2005, Centad launched the annual series of publication called the *South Asian Yearbook of Trade and Development*. The second annual issue of the *Yearbook*, titled *Multilateralism at Cross-roads: Reaffirming Development Priorities* is a comprehensive collection of research papers contributed by trade experts and professionals from South Asia. As is evident from the theme itself, the volume attempts to reflect on the development priorities and concerns of the South Asian region in the backdrop of the crucial phase through which the multilateral trade negotiations are currently passing. The *South Asian Yearbook 2006* is a rich mixture of new research and useful policy insights on a wide variety of topical themes including:

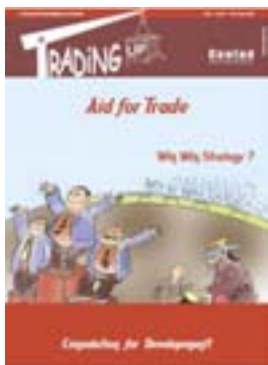
- sectoral issues, like agriculture; services; and textiles and clothing;
- cross-cutting areas, like technical barriers to trade; Duty-Free-Quota-Free market access; and
- issues like Rules of Origin and Anti-dumping.

While the volume predominantly deals with issues pertaining to multilateral trade negotiations, critical issues of regional trade integration have also been addressed in some measure. For further details, please visit: <<http://www.centad.org/tradereport.asp>>

Trading Up

Volume 2, Issue 4, October-December 2006

Aid for Trade



Trading Up is a quarterly trade magazine of Centad, aimed at demystifying issues around trade and development. The latest (October-December 2006) issue of *Trading Up* is focused on *Aid for Trade*. Full download of the current issue is available at:

<[http://www.centad.org/download/Trading_Up_Vol2\(4\)_Oct_Dec_06.pdf](http://www.centad.org/download/Trading_Up_Vol2(4)_Oct_Dec_06.pdf)>

Highlights of the Current Issue:

- **Interview** with **J. Michael Finger**, former Lead Economist and Chief - Trade Policy Research Group, World Bank.
- **Interview** with **Miguel Rodriguez Mendoza**, Senior Fellow, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD).

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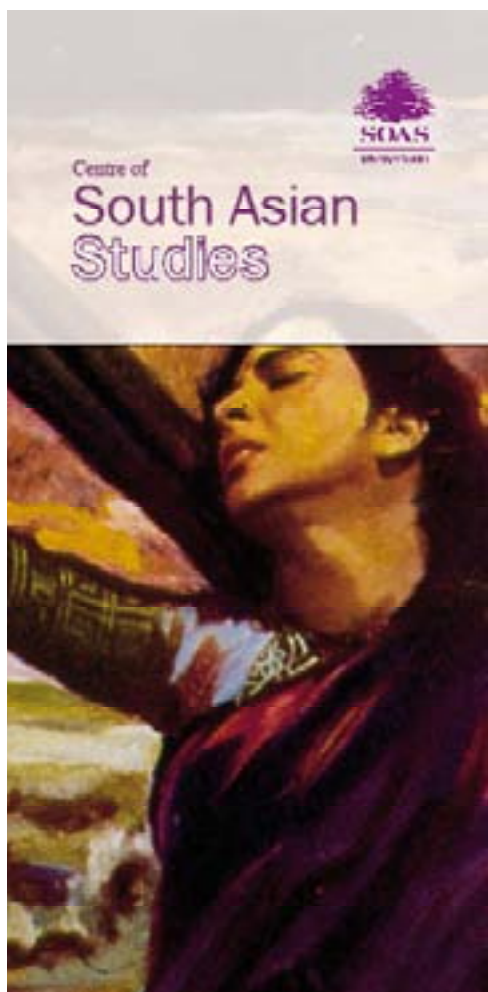
ABOUT THE CENTRE

Since its inception in 1916, the School of Oriental and African Studies has been an important international centre for the study of South Asia. In 1966, the Centre of South Asia Studies was established to co-ordinate the research of the South Asian specialists spread widely throughout SOAS.

At present SOAS employs over thirty full-time South Asian specialists in the teaching staff. In addition to a department of South Asian Languages and Cultures, SOAS has South Asia specialists in the departments of Anthropology, Art and Archaeology, Development Studies, Economics, History, Law, Music, Religions and Politics. Several South Asian specialists are also based near SOAS in other institutions of the University of London.

One floor of the SOAS Library is dedicated to the South Asia collection, overseen by the South Asia librarian and two assistants. The Library continues to develop its web pages relating to South Asian Studies.

More than 100 courses on South Asia are taught at SOAS, and many others contain a significant South Asian component. Students may elect for a single-subject South Asia degree, or combine South Asia with a discipline in a two-subject degree. Presently SOAS offers degrees or joint degrees in the following South Asian languages: Bengali, Gujarati, Nepali, Hindi, Pali, Sanskrit, Sinhala, Tamil and Urdu; some of these languages are also available for MA degrees. All languages, and many other South Asian courses, are also available as one unit within the MA South Asian Area Studies or within the MA South Asian Cultural Studies.



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- CSAS mailing list;
- your email address; and
- your first name and surname.

CSAS Keywords Webpage:

The Keywords Project initiated by Dr Rachel Dwyer, the previous Centre Chair, can be found on:

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/centres/centreinfo.cfm?navid=912>

The essays on South Asian Keywords have been written by a number of internationally known scholars.

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Contributions

If you would like to submit a piece for consideration for the next edition of the Newsletter (October 2007) please send the details in electronic format to centres@soas.ac.uk

The Centre Chair will have the final say on which materials appear in the Newsletter. Items we would like to particularly receive are:

- reports on academic workshops/conferences;
- details of forthcoming academic events

We would like to thank all the readers who have already sent in articles.

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