



# KHABAR

FALL 2022-SPRING 2024

## THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA OF EXCELLENCE AT THE ISAS INTRODUCING NEW LEADERSHIP AT THE INSTITUTE

IN SUMMER 2023, AFTER 16+ YEARS, DR. SANCHITA SAXENA STEPPED DOWN AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE AND DIRECTOR OF THE CHOWDHURY CENTER FOR BANGLADESH STUDIES TO PURSUE OTHER RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. WHILE WE WILL DEEPLY MISS DR. SAXENA AND WISH HER ALL THE SUCCESS IN HER FUTURE ENDEAVORS, WE ARE HAPPY TO SAY THAT WE HAVE FOUND EXCEPTIONALLY QUALIFIED REPLACEMENTS FOR BOTH HER ROLES. PLEASE JOIN US IN GIVING THEM A WARM WELCOME.

particularly looking forward to developing initiatives furthering the Institute's work on climate change, which is perhaps the most urgent example of a phenomenon that disrespects boundaries—geographic and disciplinary—which are hardening around the region. One of the inviting things about my work is using our programs as an excuse to learn more about areas beyond my knowledge or expertise. To that end, I would like to weave a greater diversity of disciplines and approaches into our programming, from the natural sciences to critical theory.

On a more campus-based note, nothing would please us at the Institute further than for foot traffic to increase again after the scatteredness of the pandemic-years. So, remember, our doors are always open.

### THE NEW DIRECTOR OF THE CHOWDHURY CENTER FOR BANGLADESH STUDIES: DR. ELORA SHEHABUDDIN

I am thrilled to be faculty director of the Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center. The center was ably led by Dr. Sanchita Saxena in its first decade and I am grateful for all she and the center have accomplished. I look forward to continuing the center's growth.

This is a particularly exciting time in the field of Bangladesh Studies, which we at the center see as "all matters pertaining to the region that is today Bangladesh as well as its historical and contemporary diasporas." Such a broader understanding is possible today precisely because there has been an exponential growth, within and outside Bangladesh, in scholarship across the humanities and social sciences that pushes beyond the preoccupations with development and security and challenges the boundedness of present-day national borders and national history that dominated research on Bangladesh for several decades.



### THE NEW ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE: DR. ANIRBAN GUPTA NIGAM

I am excited and nervous in equal parts at the prospect of helping the Institute for South Asia Studies navigate through its next phase, building on the amazing work that has come before. I hope my academic background in history, film, and visual studies will inflect differently some of ISAS's already vibrant area studies programs and initiatives.

This is a fascinating, and in many ways precarious, moment to be considering South Asia in different aspects, in unexpected alignments. I am



particularly looking forward to developing initiatives furthering the Institute's work on climate change, which is perhaps the most urgent example of a phenomenon that disrespects boundaries—geographic and disciplinary—which are hardening around the region. One of the inviting things about my work is using our programs as an excuse to learn more about areas beyond my knowledge or expertise. To that end, I would like to weave a greater diversity of disciplines and approaches into our programming, from the natural sciences to critical theory.

DR. ANIRBAN GUPTA NIGAM grew up in Delhi. He has a BA in History from St. Stephens College (University of Delhi), an MA in Art and Aesthetics from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), an MPhil in Cinema Studies from JNU, and a PhD in Visual Studies from UC Irvine. He has variously worked for the People's Union for Democratic Rights as well as the New Trade Union Initiative (both in Delhi), the University of California Humanities Research Institute (Irvine, CA), and – most recently – as Associate Director for the Humanities and the Public Sphere (at the University of Florida, Gainesville). In addition to a number of peer-reviewed publications, Dr. Gupta-Nigam has a long history of public advocacy and engagement. ❖

*I am excited to showcase the fascinating new work by activists, practitioners, and scholars interested in Bangladesh through both in-person and online events in the coming months and years.*

— Elora Shehabuddin  
Director, Subir & Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies

ations with development and security and challenges the boundedness of present-day national borders and national history that dominated research on Bangladesh for several decades. The dramatic events of July 2024—student-led protests that toppled the government—have created new opportunities to revisit the past and reimagine the future of Bangladesh. This fall, we are excited (cont'd on p.3)

*In the future, I'd like to imagine collaborations across the various networks the Institute is a part of, especially the UC system and other Centers for South Asia (Studies) nationally.*

— Anirban Gupta-Nigam  
Associate Director, Institute for South Asia Studies

## A VIEW FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

On March 19, 2024, the Institute for South Asia Studies (ISAS) hosted Prahlad Singh Tipanya and his ensemble as they sang the poetry of the great 15th century mystic Kabir in the folk style of Madhya Pradesh's Malwa region. Our conference room was packed with around 120 people, mostly seated on white sheets or standing many rows deep in the back hallway or front room. It may have been the largest number of people squeezed into the Institute, ever. The occasion was an extraordinarily joyous one that drew in old friends and supporters as well as many, many newcomers. I was overcome with a flood of emotion. Some part of it was Kabir and the sheer exuberance of the performers and crowd. But something else was also afoot. Later that evening, upon reflection, I realized that this event marked the moment when the ISAS community conclusively put the ghosts of Covid-19 behind us. People were coming back to large in-person gatherings at the Institute! During the Covid years, we revamped our technology to make our programming globally accessible, and to revitalize our physical surroundings. And now people were back to enjoy the improvements. We are grateful to recent donor gifts, including an eighteenth-century limestone carving, a centuries-old wooden Vishnu sculpture, and a nineteenth-century wall carpet, all of which have made the already attractive ISAS venue a destination now even more worth visiting.

The past two years have been marked by lots of other new beginnings. None was more important than Dr. Sanchita Saxena's decision to step down from the Associate/Executive Director's position after sixteen years (2007-23). Under Sanchita's leadership, ISAS went from strength to strength becoming, in the words of one external reviewer, "the most dynamic and vibrant South Asia-focused center in all of North America." As well as teaching at Haas Business School and concentrating on her own research work, Sanchita plans to engage in consulting work. We wish her all the best in this next chapter of her life. I am thrilled to say that the feared vacuum around Sanchita's departure has been quickly filled by her successor, Dr. Anirban Gupta-Nigam. Over the past year, Anirban has shown that he is a highly effective administrator, a respected interlocutor for our faculty, a thoughtful and compassionate colleague, and someone with lots of ideas about how to build on Sanchita's legacy and continue to grow ISAS's reputation and public reach. I look forward to working with him over the remaining three years of my tenure as director of ISAS. Similar sentiments apply to Puneeta Kala, ISAS's Program Director and its heart and soul since 2007. It is Puneeta's dedication to her job, her steadiness under fire, her accessibility and collaborative spirit, and her general joie de vivre that make the Institute such a special place for faculty, students, other visitors, and everyone else who works directly with her.

In Spring 2023, a massive, almost two year-long, effort to retrofit and renovate Stephens Hall finally came to an end. There are new windows, better air circulation, and no more leaky ceilings—we could not be happier. It has encouraged us to take our programming efforts to the next level. Since Spring 2023, ISAS has been hosting almost 50 events a semester. In some months, such as in April 2024, we had an event every day of the week! A cheery workspace is not enough to do all that we do, however. We also benefit from the support of many extraordinarily generous donors. Foremost among them is the Department of Education. In 2022, it renewed our Title VI grant—worth just over \$2 million—until 2026. With this money, we are able to partially cover administrative salaries, fund language instruction and fellowships, and plough resources into Doe Library's South Asia collection, K-14 education, and a range of other activities. With the support of other big-hearted donors, we have been able to expand programs and initiatives focused on Bangladesh, South Asian Art, Sikh Studies, Tagore, and Urdu Studies; create new fellowship opportunities for students and faculty—special mention here of the Bruce R. Pray Grants Program; buttress Hindi, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu language instruction on campus; and benefit the South Asia-focused ecosystem at Berkeley in myriad other ways. For more information about our work, please see the rest of this issue of *Khabar* as well as visit our website: [southasia.berkeley.edu](http://southasia.berkeley.edu)

Continuing with the theme of new beginnings, our South Asia-focused faculty has continued to grow at a rapid pace. This is also true for the number of visiting faculty and affiliated scholars. The latest count places our scholarly community at close to ninety. Thankfully, our growing numbers have not affected our longstanding and widely admired collegiality. Without exception, all of my faculty colleagues see a vibrant ISAS as contributing to their happiness and growth at Berkeley. Consequently, they are always quick to respond to our pleas for help (whether in the form of leading or coming to events, committee work, programming ideas, fund-raising, or simply mentoring faculty in other departments). For this well of warm-hearted and energetic collegiality, we can all be deeply grateful.

For all our successes, much remains to be done. I would like to create permanent endowments to protect our existing language programs. In light of expanding cuts to language teaching budgets across the US, this effort is more important than ever. Given the growth in Gujarati, Kannada, and Malayalam-speaking communities in the US, I would like to find a way to fund at least one section of Beginning and Intermediate instruction every year in these languages. I believe the establishment of a Sikh Studies Program and a Jain Studies Program are long overdue at UC Berkeley. And I look forward to the possibility of establishing a permanent subvention fund for new books by Berkeley-based faculty and lecturers and increasing research funding for graduate and undergraduate students interested in South Asia-focused topics. If any of these priorities match your own, please be in touch with me. If you have other ideas that you might be interested in funding, do not hesitate to reach out to me at [faruqui@berkeley.edu](mailto:faruqui@berkeley.edu)

As always, we look forward to seeing you at our events. If you happen to be in the 10 Stephens Hall neighborhood, stop by for a cup of tea/coffee or simply to chat. In the meantime, please check our website for upcoming events, and research and funding opportunities. Please also encourage friends and others to join our mailing list, using the "Join Our Mailing List" link, at the bottom of the ISAS home page.

Fiat lux and Go Bears!

Munis

# THE INSTITUTE FOR SOUTH ASIA STUDIES

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY



*The ISAS team (clockwise from left) Puneeta Kala, Anna Chek-Wing Wong, Anirban Gupta-Nigam, & Munis D. Faruqui*

## ISAS TEAM

DIRECTOR

**MUNIS D. FARUQUI**, Sarah Kailath Chair of India Studies, Associate Professor of South & Southeast Asian Studies

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

**ANIRBAN GUPTA-NIGAM**

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**PUNEETA KALA**

WORK STUDY

**ANNA CHEK-WING WONG**

## DIRECTORS & CHAIRS

DIRECTOR: CENTER ON CONTEMPORARY INDIA

**JENNIFER BUSSELL**, Associate Professor of Political Science & Public Policy

DIRECTOR: SUBIR AND MALINI CHOWDHURY CENTER FOR BANGLADESH STUDIES

**ELORA SHEHABUDDIN**, Professor of Gender & Women's Studies and of Global Studies

CHAIR: SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE

**SUGATA RAY**, Associate Professor of History of Art

CHAIR: TAGORE PROGRAM ON LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND PHILOSOPHY

**RAHUL B. PARSON**, Assistant Professor of South and Southeast Asian Studies

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**SAI BALAKRISHNAN**, Associate Professor of City and Regional Planning

**GANESH IYER**, Edgar F. Kaiser Professor of Business Administration

**SONIA KATYAL**, Roger J. Traynor Distinguished Professor of Law

**SUPREET KAUR**, Associate Professor of Economics

**AARTI SETHI**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology

## SANCHITA STEPS DOWN

— her tenure remembered

### MUNIS D. FARUQUI

Director, Institute for South Asia Studies (2017 - present); Associate Professor of South and Southeast Asian Studies

Although all of us at the Institute warmly support Dr. Saxena's desire to try something new, a nagging question remains: "Can we survive without Sanchita?" After all, Dr. Saxena wasn't just responsible for managing, implementing, and administering the day-to-day operations of the Institute and the Chowdhury Center but also overseeing all our public outreach, fundraising, and the diverse initiatives focused on South Asia at UC Berkeley. Three generations of Faculty Directors (Raka Ray, Lawrence Cohen, and myself) have benefited immensely from her always clear and sage advice, fierce loyalty to the Institute, cool under fire, imaginative approach to any problem, and her approachability and kindness toward all. Under Dr. Saxena's watch, two new centers (focused on Bangladesh and contemporary India) were established, the number of Institute-affiliated faculty more than doubled, the Institute now hosts more initiatives, programs, and events than any other South Asia-focused center or institute in North America and Europe, millions of dollars were raised to protect or expand Berkeley's South Asia-focused ecosystem, and the Institute developed a robust global presence thanks to a plethora of partnerships with universities, think-tanks, non-profit organizations, and governments. These are but a few of Dr. Saxena's many

(cont'd from pg. 1) to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the center by showcasing exciting new work connecting aesthetics and culture to political economy, and to efforts to understand and address the socially unjust reverberations of planetary climate change.

**ELORA SHEHABUDDIN** is Professor of Gender & Women's Studies and Global Studies. She is the author of many articles and books including *Sisters in the Mirror: A History of Muslim Women and the Global Politics of Feminism* (University of California Press, 2021), recipient of the 2022 Choice Outstanding Academic Title by the American Library Association and the 2023 Coomaraswamy Book Prize by the Association for Asian Studies), *Reshaping the Holy: Democracy, Development, and Muslim Women in Bangladesh* (Columbia University Press, 2008), and *Empowering Rural Women: The Impact of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh* (Grameen Bank, 1992). She co-edited, with Ebru Kongar and Jennifer Olmsted, *Gender, and Economics in Muslim Communities: Critical Feminist and Postcolonial Analyses* (Routledge, 2018). She is associate editor of the *Journal of Bangladesh Studies* and the *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures* and serves on the editorial board of a new Cambridge University Press book series titled "Muslim South Asia." Dr. Shehabuddin received her AB in Social Studies from Harvard University and PhD in Politics from Princeton University. ❖

accomplishments. Hers is an extraordinarily rich legacy of exceptional service to Berkeley and the world beyond. She will always be remembered for it.

### RAKA RAY

Dean of Social Sciences, Professor of Sociology; Director of the Institute (2003-2012)

Hiring Sanchita to be the executive director was the single best thing I did during my decade as chair of CSAS (as it was then called). I have the fondest memories of our partnership as, together with the indomitable Puneeta, we organized major conferences on Indian democracy and on Indian cities in Delhi and Bombay, and that beautiful event around Faiz (Munis and the late Saba Mahmood were instrumental here). We established many new fellowships and internship programs -- none of which could have happened without Sanchita's professionalism, grant-writing ability, organizing skills, intellect, and thoughtfulness. She was a fantastic team leader -- I recall that she forbade me from coming too early to events because I would drive Puneeta crazy with my anxiety! I also remember well the time she physically drove out from the office someone who was threatening our staff! But above all, I carry with me the memory of the joy of working with the team she created, filled with affection and respect, where we could always count on each other to commiserate, celebrate and laugh with each other. It is now clear that ISAS is not the end of the story for this amazing person, but the world now gets to see her brilliance and passion for ethical economic practices. Lucky world!

### ROBERT P. GOLDMAN

Professor Emeritus of Sanskrit; Director of the Institute (1990-2000)

Like all of us in Berkeley's Institute for South Asia Studies community, I was shocked at the news that our dear Sanchita was leaving the Institute. Shocked because she had been with us for nearly twenty years as Vice Chair, Director of the Chowdhury Center, and an integral part of the Institute, and it seemed unimaginable that she would no longer be with us. But aside from the sadness, I am happy for her as she moves on to explore the many other areas of her extraordinary talents and interests. Although Sanchita came to the then CSAS after I had served my turn as its Director, I have always maintained close ties with the unit and thus was in very frequent contact with Sanchita, relying on her gracious and unstinting advice on all manner of issues connected to the Institute and the field. I wish her

Over the last 16 years, for me, 10 Stephens Hall was where stimulating conversations took place, strategizing and brainstorming happened, and beautiful art was created. This was where colleagues bonded, students were supported, and lifelong friendships were made. Semester after semester, I was privileged to work with the most amazing group of colleagues, faculty, students, community members, and invited guests to help advance the mission of making the ISAS one of the premier South Asia centers in the world. I learned so much on a daily basis — whether about cutting edge research or how to effectively deal with the Berkeley bureaucracy, no two days were ever alike or ever dull! Most of all, I will never forget the laughter, the warmth, the engagement and the pride of creating something fantastic together. Even though now I may not come to 10 Stephens Hall as often, the ISAS will always remain an important part of me.



Sanchita Saxena

all success on whatever new paths her journey takes her. So, dear Sanchita, thank you for all you have done for the Institute and all of its faculty staff and students. *Sivās te panthānah santu!* May your future paths be auspicious.

### LAWRENCE COHEN

Professor of Anthropology; Director of the Institute (2012-2017)

Perhaps the greatest pleasure of my time at Berkeley has been the years spent working with the stunning team behind the Institute for South Asia Studies (ISAS). At the core of this team and of what made the Institute so effective as a forum for research, teaching, and community was the brilliant Sanchita Saxena. A political scientist and expert in comparative labor policy, Sanchita brought extensive work in foundation governance to Berkeley. Her comparative focus opened up the Institute to a far broader conception of its role; her policy focus enabled it to leverage diverse scholarship in impactful ways and attracted major donors, leading most notably to the establishment of the Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at Berkeley. It has been an honor to work with her and a privilege to count her as a friend.

### SAKTI DAS

Donor, Tagore Program on Literature, Culture and Philosophy

Having known Sanchita through my early acquaintance with her late father, it has been enchanting to see her blossom into an intellectually groundbreaking scholar and a skilled administrator. As a newcomer to the ISAS hierarchy, I benefited greatly from her guidance in navigating the affairs and activities of our flourishing Tagore program since 2019. I have perused her writings on labor rights in South Asia's garment industry, especially her paper *Labor, Global Supply Chains, and the Garment Industry in South Asia*, which is pivotal in highlighting workers' rights. Brava Sanchita. Our best wishes. *Charaivet!*

## THE INSTITUTE'S DISTINGUISHED LECTURES

### THE INDO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY LECTURES IN INDIA STUDIES FOR 2023

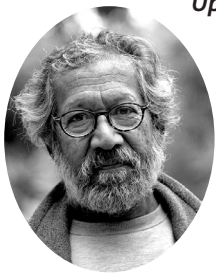
April 19, 2024

**FAISAL DEVJI**  
—A GUFTUGU (CONVERSATION)

This vibrant discussion featured Faisal Devji, a historian and professor of Indian history at the University of Oxford, in conversation with Janaki Bakhle and Poulomi Saha, both professors at UC Berkeley. Faisal Devji, known for his critical work on the intellectual history of Islam and South Asia, engaged in a dynamic dialogue with Bakhle and Saha, exploring themes such as nationalism, identity, and the legacies of colonialism. Devji's insights into the intersections of religion and politics in South Asia provided a profound context for understanding contemporary issues in the region. Janaki Bakhle, with her expertise in modern South Asian history, and Poulomi Saha, a specialist in postcolonial studies and feminist theory, enriched the conversation with their diverse perspectives. ❖



(From L) Dr. Munis D. Faruqui, Dr. Faisal Devji, Dr. Sudipta Sen, Dr. Janaki Bakhle, Dr. Poulomi Saha, & Dr. Shard Chari



Upcoming in October 2024

**PRADIP KRISHEN**

Award-winning ecological gardener and environmentalist will be in residence in UC Berkeley as our Indo-American Community Lecturer in India Studies for 2024.

ESTABLISHED IN 1990-91 WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE THEN CG OF INDIA IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE HON. SATINDER K. LAMBAH AND HUNDREDS OF MEMBERS OF THE INDO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY, THIS LECTURESHIP ENABLES THE INSTITUTE TO BRING PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS FROM INDIA TO BERKELEY TO DELIVER A LECTURE AND INTERACT WITH CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS OVER A TWO-WEEK STAY. PAST LECTURERS HAVE INCLUDED DR. TANIKA SARKAR, DR. ROMILA THAPAR, DR. PRATAP BHANU MEHTA AND DR. NANDINI SUNDAR.

April 23, 2024  
**RADHA KUMAR**  
—THE REPUBLIC RELEARNED

Radha Kumar, a scholar and author, is known for her extensive work on peace processes, conflict resolution, and women's rights in South Asia. In her lecture, Kumar delved into the concept of "The Republic," offering a critical examination of contemporary democratic practices in India. She explored the challenges and opportunities faced by the republic in the context of rising authoritarianism, social inequalities, and the struggle to maintain secular and pluralistic values. Kumar emphasized the need for a collective re-engagement with the foundational principles of the Indian republic and the importance of civil society, grassroots movements, and an informed citizenry for safeguarding democratic institutions and ensuring justice and equality for all. Her insights provided a comprehensive understanding of the current socio-political landscape in India and the imperative for citizens to actively participate in the democratic process. ❖



Dr. Kumar (on right) with the event moderator, Dr. Janaki Bakhle.

### THE BHATTACHARYA LECTURE ON THE FUTURE OF INDIA FOR 2023

November 14, 2023

**NIVEDITA MENON**  
—THE SAFFRON & THE STAR:  
SCRIPTING HINDUTVA IN BOLLYWOOD

Feminist scholar and political theorist, Nivedita Menon, delivered a lecture on how the BJP returned to power in India in 2019 with the intention of completing its agenda for the establishment of Hindu Rashtra. She argued that high on the list of targets for cleansing and reshaping was the Bombay film industry (a.k.a. Bollywood). This process was galvanized by the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, as the tragedy was weaponized to mount an attack on the industry and its stars. Menon suggested that this interest in disciplining Bollywood is part of the larger move by Hindutva politics to control and purge spaces seen as either bearing a "left liberal" stamp (universities for example) or reflecting a syncretic culture unamenable to Hindu-Muslim polarization (the Bombay film industry). The lecture sparked a lively discussion, with the audience engaging Menon's insights on the intersections of politics, religion, and culture in India. ❖



(From L) Dr. Munis D. Faruqui, Dr. Nivedita Menon, & Shankar Bhattacharya

ESTABLISHED BY SHANKAR & THE LATE KIMI BHATTACHARYA, THIS SERIES ASKS LEADING SCHOLARS AND PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS TO ADDRESS THE POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR INDIA IN THE FUTURE. PAST SPEAKERS HAVE INCLUDED RAMACHANDRA GUHA, RAGHURAM RAJAN, RAVISH KUMAR AND SIDDHARTHA MUKHERJEE.

### THE ISAS-VSB LECTURE ON RELIGION IN THE MODERN WORLD FOR 2024

April 5, 2023

**PHILIP LUTGENDORF**  
—ENDING WITH A CROW:  
BHUSHUNDI IN THE  
RĀMCHARITMĀNAS OF TULSIDAS

Philip Lutgendorf, a scholar of Hindi and Modern Indian Studies at the University of Iowa, delivered the 3rd ISAS-VSB Lecture on Religion in the Modern World on April 5, 2023. The event provided an exploration of the character of Bhushundi, a crow with a pivotal role in Tulsidas's epic poem *Rāmcaritmānas*.

The character of Bhushundi, a crow with deep spiritual wisdom, serves as a unique lens through which Lutgendorf explored the themes of transformation, devotion, and enlightenment. He explained how Bhushundi's story within the *Rāmcaritmānas* exemplifies the concept of *Bhakti* (devotional worship) and the possibility of divine

grace for all beings, regardless of their form. Bhushundi's unwavering devotion to Rama and his role as a teacher to other characters underscore the text's message of the accessibility of divine knowledge.

Lutgendorf also discussed the symbolism of the crow in Hindu culture, traditionally viewed with ambivalence, yet elevated by Tulsidas to a position of reverence through Bhushundi. This transformation reflects Tulsidas's broader theological vision, where divine grace and wisdom can transcend conventional boundaries and hierarchies.

The event concluded with closing remarks by Swami Prasannatmananda, Principal Officer at Vedanta Society Berkeley, who reflected on the



(From L) Dr. Munis D. Faruqui, Dr. Philip Lutgendorf, Swami Prasannatmananda & Dr. Robert P. Goldman

enduring impact of Tulsidas's work. Lutgendorf's engaging presentation provided the audience with a deeper appreciation of the *Rāmcaritmānas*, highlighting its intricate layers of meaning and its significance in modern religious and cultural discourse. ❖

HOSTED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE VEDANTA SOCIETY BERKELEY, THIS ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES INVITES DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS OF WORLD RELIGIONS TO CAMPUS WITH THE AIM OF IMPROVING AND DIVERSIFYING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN MODERN SOCIETIES. PAST LECTURERS HAVE INCLUDED ROBERT THURMAN AND TONY K. STEWART.

**DISTINGUISHED LECTURES contd.**

**THE INSTITUTE CONGRATULATES VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS, OUR INAUGURAL SARAH KAILATH MEMORIAL LECTURER ON "WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP," ON HER HISTORIC NOMINATION AS THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.**



*Kamala Harris (then Attorney General of California) with Raka Ray (then Director of ISAS) at the 1st Sarah Kailath Memorial Lecture on Feb 21, 2010 at UC Berkeley*

**THE 8TH SARAH KAILATH MEMORIAL LECTURE ON "WOMEN & LEADERSHIP"**

**March 14, 2024**  
**DEBRA DIAMOND**  
**—GEO-AESTHETICS IN UDAIPUR: CARTOGRAPHY, TEMPORALITY & EMOTIONS IN MONUMENTAL PAINTINGS, 1700-1900**

Art historian and specialist in Indian court painting, Debra Diamond presented an insightful lecture that explored the intricate relationship between geography and aesthetics in the monumental paintings of Udaipur. Highlighting specific paintings that illustrate the dynamic interplay between geographic representation and artistic expression, Diamond explained how the works conveyed a sense of time and space, historical events and collective memories. She demonstrated how art served as a medium for expressing the rulers' political aspirations and their deep connections to the land. The

lecture offered a nuanced perspective on Udaipur's visual culture, engaging the audience with the rich tapestry of the region's artistic heritage and its broader implications for understanding historical and cultural identity.



*(From L) Dr. Debra Diamond, Dr. Tom Kailath, Dr. Sugata Ray, Dr. Munis D. Faruqui & Dr. Robert P. Goldman*

Debra Diamond, is the Elizabeth Moynihan Curator for South & Southeast Asian Art at the Smithsonian. ❖

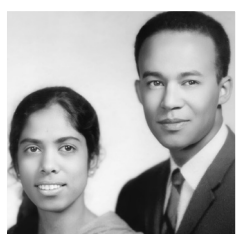
**ESTABLISHED BY TOM KAILATH (AND VINITA & NARENDRA GUPTA) IN MEMORY OF SARAH KAILATH, THIS LECTURE SERIES RAISES AWARENESS ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT.**

**KAMALA HARRIS**  
**—TRACING HER UC BERKELEY & INDIA ROOTS**

A photo essay that delves into the unique journey of Kamala Harris, tracing her deep connections to both UC Berkeley and her Indian heritage. *(All photos unless noted courtesy of Kamala Harris campaign)*

**IMMIGRANT PARENTS**

Shyamala Gopalan, the daughter of an Indian civil servant from Tamil Nadu, arrived in the U.S. to pursue a PhD in Nutrition, and Endocrinology at UC Berkeley. Donald Harris, an immigrant from Jamaica, came to do a PhD in Economics. The two met at a study group for Black students in 1962 and quickly formed a bond. They married in 1963 and welcomed their daughter Kamala in 1964, followed by Maya in 1967. They divorced in 1972. Shyamala spent her early career conducting research at Berkeley's Dept of Zoology and Cancer Research Lab. She returned to the UC campus for the last decade of her work at the Lawrence Berkeley Lab. Donald retired as Professor Emeritus of Economics from Stanford University



*Shyamala Gopalan and Donald J. Harris,*



*Kamala Harris as a child and her mother Shyamala Gopalan*



*From left: Kamala, her grandmother Rajam Gopalan, grandfather P.V. Gopalan and sister, Maya.*



*Kamala Harris, front center, with, from left, her sister, grandfather, mother and grandmother in 1972*

**Researcher Opinion**

**KAMALA HARRIS AND THE FUTURE OF INDIAN AMERICANS IN POLITICS**

by **Karthick Ramakrishnan** and **Sital Kalantry**



*Karthick Ramakrishnan*

The national election promises to herald an unprecedented year for Indian Americans in U.S. politics. President Joe Biden endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris when he announced he was ending his presidential campaign. Usha Vance, the wife of former President Donald Trump's vice presidential pick, JD Vance, also traces her roots to India. And earlier this year, Nikki Haley and Vivek Ramaswamy were among the final candidates left standing during the Republican primary, signaling the growing presence and political clout of Indian Americans.

Beyond just anecdotes, data also demonstrates that Indian Americans have been disproportionately elected to important government positions for a long time now. While they constitute 0.6% of the adult citizen population in the US, Indian Americans make up nearly double that proportion in the U.S. House of Representatives. About 4.4% of senior positions in government are filled by Indian Americans, according to a recent report by San Francisco-based *Indiaspora*.

The success of Indian Americans in U.S. politics as compared to other immigrant groups derives at least in part from the shared colonial heritage of the two countries. As a result of colonialization by the British Empire, English is a national language in India and Indian immigrants to the US have largely been educated in English. The model of government in India also bears numerous similarities to that in the United States. Both countries are democracies and

*(cont'd on p. 6)*

**A CHILDHOOD IN BERKELEY**

Growing up in Berkeley, Kamala was exposed to the vibrant culture of social activism that characterized the campus and surrounding community. Her parents were actively involved in the civil rights movement and instilled in Kamala a strong sense of justice, equality, and service to others. They took Kamala to events, with the vice president later sharing that they gave her a "stroller's-eye view of people getting into what the great John Lewis called 'good trouble'" on the streets of Oakland and Berkeley. *(Kamala Harris, Instagram, 2020)*

*Kamala left, with her sister, Maya, and mother outside their apartment in Berkeley in January 1970*



*As a child, she lived in this home on Bancroft Way. (Photo: Steven Finacom)*



*Shyamala, left, & college friend Lenore Pomerance at a protest on the UC Berkeley campus.*



*A mural celebrates Kamala at her elementary school in Berkeley.*

Cal Student Activism

## UC BERKELEY STUDENTS PROTEST IN SOLIDARITY WITH INDIAN FARMERS

by Tanay Gokhale

On Thursday, March 21, the UC Berkeley Sikh Students' Association held a protest at Sather Gate on campus. The objective was to show solidarity with the farmers protesting against the Indian government in north India, and to protest against the Indian government's treatment of Sikh political prisoners like Amritpal Singh and Jagtar Singh Johal.

More than a dozen student protestors shouted slogans like "No farmers, no food"; "India Kills Minorities"; "Free Sikh Activists," and chanted "Jo Bole So Nihaal, Sat Sri Akal" (Blessed is the one who says God is the Timeless Truth). A large cloth banner in the center read "India is killing its farmers". The protestors also distributed pamphlets and spoke to passersby about their cause. Some protestors also held up a flag of the Khalistan movement and raised slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad."

### FARMER'S PROTESTS IN INDIA

The UC Berkeley protest has its roots in the larger protests happening in north India, where thousands of farmers – mostly Sikhs – have been protesting against the Narendra Modi-led Indian government, demanding a minimum support price for their crops to provide security against volatile crop prices, and crop loss caused by weather events.



Harnoor Singh (left: holding the "ask me???'s" sign) and Jeewan Kaur (right: dressed in black, speaking to student) at the protest. Photo by Tanay Gokhale

This is the second time that farmers have protested against the Modi government. The first protests in 2020-2021 lasted a year, and the government agreed to roll back three controversial farm laws to meet farmer demands. Less than three years later, however, the farmers rose in protest again claiming that the government had not fully met the terms of their agreement, by failing to institute a minimum support price or withdrawing legal cases against protesters.

Since the farmer protests began again in February, authorities have tried to thwart their march into Delhi, sometimes using tear gas and rubber pellets. According to reports, a 22-year old protester Shubhkar Singh died after a firearm injury to the head.

### FARMER SUICIDES

A study by the Punjab Agricultural University found that between 2000 and 2018, 9,291 farmers died by suicide in Punjab, mostly because of debt.

For Harnoor Singh, a protester and a junior at U.C. Berkeley, the persistence of protesting farmers despite the violence is a testament to the grim situation they face.

"I come from a very rural place near Amritsar, it's a small village called Bagga, and I have seen a lot of people committing suicide," he said. "The arthiyas (agricultural commission agents) say not to sell the crop at a certain price, then the crop starts decaying, and the farmer loses all his money. He already has so many loans that he is not able to pay back, and the only option left is committing suicide or running away."

### CULTURAL GENOCIDE OF SIKHS

Jeewan Kaur, another student protestor, said that the farmer suicides are not just a symptom of an ailing agricultural sector. "Farmer suicides will go up, and with that, a cultural genocide happens," she said. "When you basically reduce an entire population to poverty, you're reducing the culture as well."

Kaur pointed to a historical record of economic and cultural oppression of the Sikh community in Punjab. Starting with the 1947 Partition to Operation Blue Star, and the riots following Indira Gandhi's death to the more recent mistreatment of separatist prisoners, "India has tried

to put Sikh and Punjabi people in this fear state, with just so much violence, just to silence them," Kaur added.

She finds a sense of solidarity between the Sikh farmers' movement and the peace movement for Palestine. A few Palestinian supporters joined the Sikh students at Sather Gate.

"There's obviously solidarity from our community, because we know exactly what they're fighting for," she said. "We're [both] fighting to keep our culture, our religion, and our land intact."

Harnoor hopes that protests like these will raise awareness and strike a chord in the U.S. about the plight of Sikh communities in India. "We have the Israel-Palestine conflict, (and the) Russia-Ukraine conflict. This is a conflict as well," he said. "People need to be aware so that some of the lawmakers from the U.S. could go ahead and guide the Indian Government to make certain laws that are acceptable, both to the government and to the larger farmer communities."

### STUDENT GROUP UNDER ATTACK

The Sikh Students' Association promotes Sikh culture and welcomes anyone who wants to learn more about Sikhism and its culture, regardless of their religion, race, caste, or gender. They regularly host a variety of events such as kirtan nights where they sing religious hymns; self-defense workshops with traditional Sikh weapons like the gatka; Gurbani Vichaar, or spiritual discussions about Sikhism; and protests such as this one.

Harjot Kaur, the association's president, emphasizes that all their activities are directed towards education and awareness. Unfortunately, the organization is regularly attacked on social media, she added; some members have been doxxed and trolled.

Other events the association has organized such as a similar protest in 2021, and a 2023 art exhibition about the 1984 genocide also elicited online vitriol.

"Recently, we've also found out our account has been banned within India; a lot of people can't access it," said Kaur. "This is not just our account, it's happening with SSA's (Sikh Student Association) all over California and all over the world."

Kaur believes that these reactions are unwarranted (cont'd on next page)

(cont'd from pg. 5) have strong rights-bearing constitutions, even though India is a parliamentary democracy.

Indian immigrants are also one of the fastest-growing groups in the country. The Indian American population in the US grew from 400,000 in 1980 to 4.4 million in 2020, which is 1.5% of the U.S. population. Moreover, Indian Americans are now the largest single-origin Asian group in the country, with about 270,000 more than Chinese Americans, the next largest group.

They are also among the fastest-growing voter groups in the country, with over 2.1 million adults eligible to vote and over 235,000 naturalizing over the latest four-year cycle. Indian Americans also had the highest voter turnout among Asian Americans in 2020 at 71%, according to analysis by AAPI Data. This level of participation was on par with voter turnout for non-

Hispanic white Americans (71%), the highest for any racial group in 2020.

It is not clear how Indian Americans will vote, now that Biden has withdrawn and Harris, a presidential candidate of Indian origin has been nominated. Before this new development, AAPI Data released a national survey of Asian American registered voters that found that while 65% of Indian Americans said they would vote for Biden in 2020, only 46% said they would have voted for him this November. Other surveys from AAPI Data have indicated over the past year these declines may be related to the dissatisfaction with Biden's handling of the economy and of the Israel-Gaza conflict..

However, the Indian Americans who were disaffected with Biden didn't necessarily translate into increased support for Trump. The proportion of Indian Americans supporting Trump

held stable at 29% (compared to 28% in 2020), while the remainder indicated that they would vote for some other candidate (5%), did not know who they would vote for (14%), or declined to answer the question (5%). This suggests that Indian Americans could be wooed back to the Democrats by the right candidate. Just as Harris energized Indian American donors and voters in 2020 when she was selected for the Biden ticket, her dramatic rise to the top of the presidential ticket in 2024 may spawn a new wave of Indian American enthusiasm. ❖

*Karthick Ramakrishnan is founder and executive director of AAPI Data at UC Berkeley. Sital Kalantry is a law professor at Seattle University School of Law. A longer version of this article was originally published in The Seattle Times on July 23, 2024. An edited version reprinted here with permission from the authors.*

An event report

# AAKAR PATEL: EVERY DAY, WE SEE NEW WAYS OF BRUTALIZING OUR MINORITIES

by Chintan Girish Modi

On 19 April 2022, the Institute for South Asia Studies at University of California, Berkeley, hosted a talk by journalist-author-translator and former Amnesty International India chief Aakar Patel. Titled "The Attack on Civil Society in India", the lecture was co-sponsored by the Sarah Kailath Chair of India Studies, The Center on Contemporary India, and the Department of History at UC Berkeley.

Initially planned as an in-person gathering, it was changed to a Zoom event and livestreamed on Facebook due to restrictions on Patel's movement following a look out circular issued against him by the Central Bureau of Investigation. He was barred from flying out of Bengaluru over alleged violations of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). The talk, with Patel speaking from a room in India rather than a podium in the US, was held three days after a Delhi court upheld the trial court order that directed the CBI to withdraw the circular.

(cont'd from pg. 6) because the Sikh Students' Association is an awareness and education-oriented group that welcomes a diverse range of opinions, all of which deserve a space.

For example, she explained that some members support the Khalistan movement and others don't, but the group allows for, and celebrates this diversity in opinion. "For them, they see the solution being Khalistan. So it's pretty open for a lot of students; if they want to advocate for that they can."

She hopes that those who disagree with the group's beliefs try



The Sikh Students Association of UC Berkeley protests in solidarity with farmers' protests in India on March 21, 2024. Photo by Tanay Gokhale

to engage with them through dialog instead of hate messaging online. A farmer's daughter herself, Kaur urged everyone to make a genuine effort to learn about and understand the plight of protesting farmers.

"These are our own parents. These are our grandparents. We all come from the same land back home, and I think at the moment, we're trying to do the best we can to raise awareness here," she said. "The word Sikh comes from the word seekhna, which in Punjabi means to learn. That's exactly what we stand for." ❖

Article previously published in India Currents on March 26, 2024. Reprinted here with permission.

The event was moderated by Abhishek Kaicker, Associate Professor of History at UC Berkeley, who introduced Patel's work as chronicler and critic of the Hindu Right in India. Patel is the author of *Our Hindu Rashtra: What It Is, How We Got Here* (2020) and *Price of the Modi Years* (2021), both published by the erstwhile Westland Books.

Expressing regret over Patel's absence on campus, Kaicker alluded to "obstacles, legal and otherwise", explained away as "retribution for the kind of work he has been doing." Since Kaicker referred to Amnesty International India as "now defunct", Patel began by clarifying the current state of affairs at the organization: "Amnesty in India is dormant right now," he said, confirming that the organization has lost all its staff and is currently running with the support of volunteers after its bank accounts were frozen. "The work has not stopped, thankfully, and we hope to resume fully," he added.

Patel said that mass mobilisation through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has never been welcome in India, despite the freedoms granted by Article 19 of the Constitution, so the state has been involved in regulating these organizations. He also reminded the audience that the FCRA came into existence as a law in 1976 during the National Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government. He said, "Its purpose was to stop foreign funding to media, political parties, the judiciary, and members of Parliament."

Patel also referred to a speech given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Odisha in 2016 where the latter spoke about a conspiracy by NGOs to defame him and destabilise his government. "The current Prime Minister believes that civil society is a threat to him personally," said Patel, emphasizing that Modi's crackdown on NGOs should not come as a surprise given that he has gone on record to declare his disapproval of the work that they do.

During his talk, Patel highlighted amendments to the FCRA [Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act], including the most recent one in 2020 that requires "all office bearers and primary stakeholders such as trustees to sign affidavits saying they would not engage in seditious activity or stoke communal tension."

Patel pointed out the unfairness of this requirement, given that the private sector is not expected to do the same. He also drew attention to the fact that NGOs now have to apply every five years to renew their registration with the Income Tax Department so that funds received by them are exempted from income tax. According to him, this practice is meant to create a sense of fear among NGOs and make them fall in line with the ideology of the state.

Patel said that the Enforcement Directorate holds tremendous power because it can freeze bank accounts of NGOs that attempt to critique or challenge the government. He pointed out that in a country like India with its poverty and inequality, "it is difficult for civil society to raise resources locally", so NGOs depend on international funders to support vital work.

Patel also spoke about "deliberate



Aakar Patel (on right) with Dr. Abhishek Kaicker

electoral apartheid" against Muslims in India. He noted that none of the 28 states in India has a Muslim chief minister. Holding the Bharatiya Janata Party responsible for "denying tickets" to Muslim candidates to contest elections, he suggested that this exclusion has become acceptable to a large population of Indians.

He gave many examples of how Muslims are being targeted - lynching of people found in alleged possession of beef, laws in some states to put an end to interfaith marriages involving Muslim men and Hindu women, and laws regulating conversion to minority religions. Patel said, "The state appears to devolve its powers to the mob. It appears to encourage people who are willing to impose their values on other Indians, especially minorities. The Bharatiya Janata Party is comfortable with what is happening. This is, in fact, exactly what they want."

According to Patel, the Constitution of India guarantees many freedoms in principle but the story is quite different when it comes to implementation as the so-called "reasonable restrictions" imposed on citizens are far greater than the rights that are available to them. That said, he did celebrate two major "civil society victories" - the protests at Shaheen Bagh led by Muslim women against the Citizenship Amendment Act as well as the National Register of Citizens, and the farmers' protests that made the government repeal the new farm laws.

Patel said that the irony about religious freedom in India is that "propagation is both a fundamental right and a criminal offence." When Kaicker asked him to comment on calls for extermination of Muslims, Patel said, "Every day, we see new ways of brutalizing and torturing our minorities; of survivors and victims being blamed for the violence." He also spoke about violence towards Muslims in terms of women being forced to take off their hijab.

During the question-answer session following the talk, many Indians living in the US wanted to know how they could intervene to make a difference in India. Patel urged them to write to senators and representatives, to show up at protests, and to push back in any way they can.

Kaicker concluded the session by thanking Patel for his bravery, for the personal hardships that he has endured in the course of his work, and for helping the audience understand "what's happening in a country where we have deep and profound investments and love." ❖

Article previously published in News9live.com on April 22, 2022. Reprinted here with permission.

## STUDENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

THE INSTITUTE OFFERS A WIDE VARIETY OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES TO GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WHOSE WORK FOCUSES ON SOME ASPECT OF SOUTH ASIA. FUNDING INCLUDES TRAVEL GRANTS FOR RESEARCH & CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE, PRIZES FOR OUTSTANDING PAPERS, SUMMER INTERNSHIPS IN INDIA, AND FELLOWSHIPS FOR LANGUAGE STUDIES. IN 2018 WE ADDED A NEW FUNDING SOURCE IN SUPPORT OF HINDI LITERATURE STUDIES. FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT [SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/GRANTS-AWARDS](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/grants-awards)

### FLAS

#### FELLOWSHIPS

Each year the Institute provides U.S. Dept. of Education

funded Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) awards to support students studying Bengali, Hindi, Persian, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. FLAS fellowships cover tuition and a stipend and are awarded either for the academic year or for a summer language study program.

#### The 2024 Award Recipients:

##### ACADEMIC YEAR

**BENGALI:** Rokshana Bushra (UC Berkeley), Christopher LeBoa (UC Berkeley); **HINDI:** Matthew Busch (UC Berkeley); **PERSIAN:** Ross Rosenthal (UC Berkeley); **TAMIL:** Srihari Nageswaran (UC Berkeley); **TELUGU:** Charitra Shreya Pabbaraju (UC Berkeley)

##### SUMMER

**SANSKRIT:** Kevin Morales-Bernabe (UC Berkeley); **URDU:** Evan Grennon (UC Berkeley)

#### The 2023 Award Recipients:

##### ACADEMIC YEAR

**HINDI:** Matthew Busch (UC Berkeley), Lucas Rojas Mendoza (UC Berkeley); **SANSKRIT:** Monica Thunder (UC Berkeley); **TELUGU:** Mayadevi Murthy (UC Berkeley); **URDU:** Yasmeen Azam, Sarah Merchant (UC Berkeley)

##### SUMMER

**BENGALI:** Daniel Adel (University of Hawaii); **TAMIL:** Jeevan Palaniyandy (Tufts University); **URDU:** Joshua Jacobson (UC Berkeley), Isa Syed (Yale University), Eric Villalobos (UC Santa Barbara)

#### The 2022 Award Recipients:

##### ACADEMIC YEAR

**HINDI:** Surili Seth (UC Berkeley); **URDU:** Keyle Horton (UC Berkeley), Sarah Merchant (UC Berkeley)

More information at [SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)  
Deadline: EARLY FEB

### THE BHATTACHARYA GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

Established by Shankar and the late Kimi Bhattacharya, the fellowship awards competitive grants of up to \$1000 for research travel to India on topics related to contemporary India.

#### The 2024 Award Recipients

**Alyssa René Heinze** (Political Science): The Gender Politics of Water

**Kamya Yadav** (Political Science): Beyond the Ballot: Rethinking Women's Political

### THE BERREMAN-YAMANAKA GRANT FOR HIMALAYAN STUDIES

Established in memory of UC Berkeley Professor of Anthropology, Gerald Berreman, by his family and wife, Dr. Keiko Yamanaka, this endowment provides an annual award of up to \$1500 to UC Berkeley graduate students for research related to Himalayan Studies across Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

#### The 2024 Award Recipients

**Meghan Amber Hale** (MA Student, Public Policy): The Socioeconomic Impacts of Waste Management Programs in Himalayan Nepal

**Pronoy Chakraborty** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian): Representation of Tantric Buddhist Mahasiddhas in Temple-struts of Kathmandu Valley

#### The 2023 Award Recipient

**Petra Lamberson** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies): Identities in Situ: The Contested Sacred Sites of Nepal

#### More information at

[SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)

Deadline: APRIL 1

#### SUMMER

**BENGALI:** Tausif Noor (UC Berkeley), Basil Bastaki (Yale), Spencer Pennington (UC Los Angeles); **HINDI:** Anisha Ahuja (Claremont), Thom Tyler (University of Denver); **MALAYALAM:** Alexander Verdolini (Yale University); **SANSKRIT:** Eric Davenport (University of Virginia), Anya Fredsell (Emory University), Ria Gandhi (UC Berkeley), Tertia Gillett (Villanova University), Mackenzie Haight (University of Virginia), Aaron Minnick (Harvard), Hannah Stoltenberg (University of Hawaii); **URDU:** Ambika Athreya (UC Berkeley)

Ambition and Gendered Pipelines into Politics

**Sayantana Mitra** (Agricultural & Resource Economics): The Forest-Development Trade-off: How are Local Populations Impacted When Infrastructure Replaces Forests in India?

**Nina Schoener** (Psychology): Children's acquisition of Hindi kinship terminology: the relationship between semantic complexity and partial knowledge

**Pranav Kuttaiah** (City & Regional Planning): Movement Without Mobility: Aspirations, Sensibilities and the Making of a Pan-Indian Labor Market

### THE MAHARAJ KAUL MEMORIAL GRANT

Established in the memory of Maharaj Kaul, a UC Berkeley alum, tireless campaigner against injustice, and long-time supporter of ISAS's mission and activities, this grant provided support for awards of \$1000 toward research travel in South Asia.

#### The 2024 Award Recipients:

**Sophie Regan** (Psychology): Multilingual India: Investigating the effects of language diversity on cognitive development

**Krishna Shekhawat** (History of Art): Shifting Scales: Images of Time at Mehrangarh Fort)

#### The 2023 Award Recipients:

**Aparajita Das** (History): The Long Afterlife of Mughal Monuments: Sheesh Mahal, Shah Pir Dargah and Public History in India

**Sourav Ghosh** (History): Muddle in the Middle? Sovereignty and State Formation in a Mughal Borderland (1652-1750)

#### The 2022 Award Recipients:

**Akshita Todi** (South & Southeast Asian Studies): Generating a Communal Feeling: Marwari Women as Emotional Subjects in Hindu Texts and Ritual Performances

**Aparajita Das** (History): Flows of Change: Historicizing the Mughal Empire from the River Ganges (c.1550-c.1750)

#### More information at

[SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/MAHARAJ-KAUL-MEMORIAL-PROGRAM](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/maharaj-kaul-memorial-program)  
(NOTE: THIS GRANT IS NOW CLOSED)

### SUPPORT THE ISAS

By supporting us, you strengthen our ability to provide quality programs, and research not covered by our Title VI award. Your contribution can help us:

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- Provide scholarships to students from South Asia to attend graduate programs at UC Berkeley
- Host performances and speakers of interest to the wider Bay Area community
- And much more!

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at [southasia.berkeley.edu/](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/)  
**GIVE-BIG-SOUTH-ASIA**

#### The 2023 Award Recipient:

**Anurag Advani** (South & Southeast Asian Studies): The Long Afterlife of Mughal Monuments: Sheesh Mahal, Shah Pir Dargah and Public History in India

#### The 2022 Award Recipient:

**Alyssa René Heinze** (Political Science): Women's representation and gendered pathways to political influence

#### More information at

[SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)

DEADLINE: APRIL 1



## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES CONTD.

THE **MIR** RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP IN **URDU** STUDIES

Endowed by Sadia Azmat & Muhammad Umair Shaikh, members of the Institute's Urdu Language Advisory Board, the Mir Research Fellowship in Urdu Studie supports University of California graduate students whose scholarship focuses on a topic related to Urdu. It provides for one or more graduate research awards (max: \$10k) on a topic related to the study of Urdu.

## The 2024 Award Recipients

**Daniyal Channa** (PhD Student, Middle Eastern Languages & Cultures, UC Berkeley): Under the Gaze of the Colonial Modern: Tradition, Reform and the (Re) making of the Urdu Sphere

**Syed Haider Shahbaz** (PhD Student, Comparative Literature, UCLA): All Voices Are Mine: Forms of Anticolonial Relation in Urdu Periodicals

**Spencer Pennington** (PhD Student, History, UCLA): The Emergence of an 'Islamicate Christianity': The Urduphone Protestants of British North India, c. 1854-1914

## The 2022 Award Recipients

**Andrew Kerr** (PhD Student, Anthropology, UC San Diego): Feeling (in) the Indian Public Sphere: Circulating Urdu Poetry and Emotion

**Talib Jabbar** (PhD Student, Literature, UC Santa Cruz): Militarism, Mushairas, and the Moros: Pakistan, the Philippines, and the Queer Politics of U.S. Intervention.

**Ambika Athreya** (PhD. Student, German, UC Berkeley): Captive Audience, Captive Subjects: German Linguistic Engagement with South Asian Prisoners during WWI.

More information at  
[SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/  
FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)

Deadline: APRIL 1

THE **TELUGU** SOCIETY OF **AMERICA** SUMMER STUDIES **RESEARCH AWARD**

Established with the generous support of the Telugu Society of America, the goal of this award is to promote quality interdisciplinary undergraduate or graduate research on topics pertaining to the Telugu people, their language, region, culture, political economy, and rural and urban planning. The award provides for one grant of \$2500 towards Telugu Studies or research in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

## The 2024 Award Recipients:

**Revanth Ukkalam** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies, UC-Berkeley): Mapping the Nārasimha Śatakam

**Saila Sri Kambhatla** (PhD Student, Columbia University): Goddess Gangamma: Fisher folk community and political ideologies

## New in 2023

THE **BRUCE R. PRAY** FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

The Institute for South Asia Studies is pleased to announce that thanks to the generosity of Professor Emeritus Bruce R. Pray (Department of South & Southeast Asian Studies), the Institute for South Asia Studies is able to offer the following funding support to UC Berkeley students and faculty:

**BRUCE R. PRAY GRADUATE STUDENT RELOCATION FELLOWSHIPS**

Grants of \$3000 to assist incoming South Asia-focused graduate students relocate to Berkeley. The money will be disbursed to the successful recipients following their arrival in Berkeley.

## The 2024 Fellows

- **Ellie Penner** (History of Art)
- **Tahir Noronha** (City & Regional Planning)
- **Soham Deb Barman** (English)

## The 2023 Fellow

- **Revanth Ukkalam** (South and Southeast Asian Studies)

**BRUCE R. PRAY UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT**

Administered by the Blum Center for Developing Economies, and open to Global Poverty and Practice (GPP) Minor students in support of their international Practice Experiences in South Asia, this grant offers up to \$3,000 to cover costs associated with their practice experience

## The 2024 Recipient

- **Shreya Chaudhuri** (BA Student, Science and Geography) in support of her travel to the Bagchi Bari Tea estate in Assam, India to help create an archive of traditional ecological knowledge of tea farming.

**BRUCE R. PRAY JUNIOR FACULTY AND LECTURER BOOK WORKSHOP GRANTS**

Grants of \$4000 for UC Berkeley-based South Asia-focused tenure-track assistant professors and early career/pre-6 lecturers who have completed a new

**BRUCE R. PRAY**

Professor Bruce R. Pray joined UC Berkeley in 1965 and became a member of the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies following its establishment in 1973.



*Bruce R. Pray*

He was instrumental in setting up the Berkeley Urdu Language Program in Pakistan (BULPIP) and served as the director of the inaugural program in Lahore, Pakistan, subsequently administering it for several years. In addition to teaching courses on Hindi, Urdu, and related subjects, he held several administrative positions, including two years as the director of Berkeley's Language Laboratory. In 1994, he retired under an early retirement plan but later returned to serve as the director of a Berkeley program in instructional technology until 1999. Prof. Pray holds a PhD in linguistics from the University of Michigan. ❖

book manuscript in any discipline in the field of South Asia Studies. Deadline for submission: September 15

## The 2024 Recipients

- **Rahul Bjørn Parson** (South and Southeast Asian Studies): Confluences at the End of the Ganges: Modernity, Migration and Hindi Literature in Calcutta
- **Vasugi Kailasam** (South and Southeast Asian Studies): Tamil Realisms: Reading the Global Tamil Novel.

**BRUCE R. PRAY GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE GRANTS**

Grants of up to \$1000 for presenting at the Annual South Asia Conference in Madison-Wisconsin. Deadline for submission: September 15.

More information at  
[SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/  
FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)

THE **HART** FELLOWSHIP FOR **TAMIL** STUDIES

Annual grants in support of Tamil Studies through the generous contribution of UC Berkeley Professors of Tamil studies, George & Kausalya Hart:

- **Hart Fellowship for Tamil Studies** of up to \$2000 for research & \$500 for conference/library travel
- **Bodha Pravaham Undergraduate Fellowship for Tamil Studies** supports two awards of \$900 for travel to South Asia to undergrads.

## The 2023 Award Recipient:

**Vineeth Vaidyula** (BA'23, Biology, Virginia Commonwealth University): Social Epidemiology of Vitiligo in South India: Exploring the Impact of Social Class on Prevalence and Quality of Life.

More information at  
[SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/  
FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)  
Deadline: APRIL 1

## The 2024 Hart Research Fellows

**Balakrishnan Raghavan** (PhD Student, Music, UC-Santa Cruz): Queer Activisms from the Margins: Practice, Advocacy, and Tamil Selfhoods

**Shibi Laxman Kumaraperumal** (PhD Student, History, University of Toronto): Tamil Pandits, Print and Manuscript Culture in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

More information at  
[SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/  
FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)  
Deadline: APRIL 1

**ADDITIONAL ISAS AWARDS LISTED IN KHABAR**

- **The Bhushan & Santosh Khashu award for Tagore Studies**—See page 15
- **The Subir & Malini Chowdhury Center Fellowships for Bangladesh Studies**—See page 16
- **The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Award**—See page 18

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES CONTD.

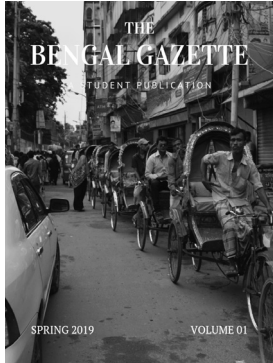
## THE SOUTH ASIA FORUM

—Funding student-led initiatives

The Institute supports undergraduate students in creating meaningful and engaging events by providing financial and in-kind resources. Our goal is to foster a vibrant campus community and encourage student leadership and initiative. The South Asia Forum offers such a space. Over the past two years, the Institute has sponsored several student-led events, including:

### THE BENGAL GAZETTE

The *Bengal Gazette* is a student-run publication associated with the University of California, Berkeley. It serves as a platform for the community on campus, focusing on issues, news, and cultural aspects relevant to students of Bengali descent and those interested in Bengali affairs. Initially a print publication—the first issue was published in April 2019, it is now primarily an online magazine. The Institute provided critical support for the *Bengal Gazette* in its early days, assisting with funding, printing, circulation, and publicity.



The inaugural Spring 2019 issue

### DESI CINEMA NIGHTS

The Institute actively supports students interested in films from South Asia by facilitating field trips to local movie halls, offering the use of the Institute's premises for in-house screenings, and providing funding to cover the costs of snacks and refreshments.



Fall 2023 field trip to Fremont to watch *Leo*



Spring 2024 in-house screening of *Eega*

The Institute provided critical support for the *Bengal Gazette* in its early days, assisting with funding, printing, circulation, and publicity.

The Institute actively supports students interested in films from South Asia by facilitating field trips to local movie halls, offering the use of the Institute's premises for in-house screenings, and providing funding to cover the costs of snacks and refreshments.

In Fall 2023, students of the class, *South Indian Cinema*, led by Cal undergrad, Reyansh Neha Sathishkumar, took a field trip to the Fremont Ciné Lounge to watch *Leo*, a 2023 Tamil-language action thriller film directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj.

In Spring 2024, the Institute facilitated an in-house screen-

ing of *Eega* (The Fly), a 2012 Indian Telugu-language fantasy action film written and directed by S. S. Rajamouli.

### LECTURES BY PROMINENT THOUGHT LEADERS FROM SOUTH ASIA

The Institute plays a vital role in supporting students in hosting influential speakers from the region by assisting in securing suitable venues, providing essential financial support and, in some cases, facilitating the creation and maintenance of an official email account. Some recent events include:

*Lights, Identity, Action: The Role of Theater & Media in fostering Bengali Queer and LGBTQ+ Activism:* A conversation with Bangladeshi transgender rights activist, model, actress, and news anchor, Tashnuva Anan Shishir.



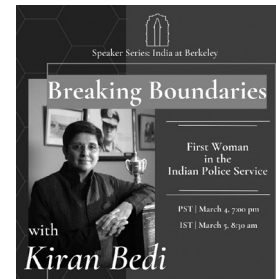
Cal undergrad, Cynthia Rahman introducing Tashnuva Anan Shishir

*Rivers, Forests and Earth: Speculating Dalit Histories and Dalit Futures in Bengal:* A talk by author of science fiction and a columnist writing about history, politics, technology and futures, Mimi Mondal



Mimi Mondal (on right) with grad student, Pratiti Ketoki

*Speaker Series India @ Berkeley:* The "India @ Berkeley" Speaker Series is a student-run platform at UC Berkeley that hosts distinguished speakers to



Event poster

### THE PREMCHAND AWARD FOR HINDI LITERATURE

The Premchand Research Award in Hindi Studies, an award in support of research in Hindi literature, provides upto \$2000 grants to students for undertaking research on Hindi literature in India. This award is funded by an anonymous donor and is named in honor of Munshi Premchand, a towering Hindi literary figure.

#### The 2024 Award Recipients

**Archit Nanda** (PhD Student, Comparative Literature, Queen Mary University of London): *The World' of Hindi Literature: Translation, Curation and Criticism*

**Akshita Todi** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies, UC Berkeley): *Women's Bazaars: Hidden Histories of Kolkata's Barabazaar*

**Anjali Yadav** (PhD Student, Asian

Languages and Literature, University of Washington, Seattle): *Women Whereabouts: Missing Women Voices from the Eighteenth-Century South Asia*

#### The 2023 Award Recipient

**Akshita Todi** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies, UC Berkeley): *Hindi and Marwari Literature: Canons and Peripheries, Nation and Community*

#### The 2022 Award Recipient

**Radhika Prasad** (PhD Student, Literature, UC Santa Cruz): *The Cosmopolitanism of Hindi Modernism: Hindi Modernity, Literary Experimentalism, and the Nation Form*

More information at  
SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/  
FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES

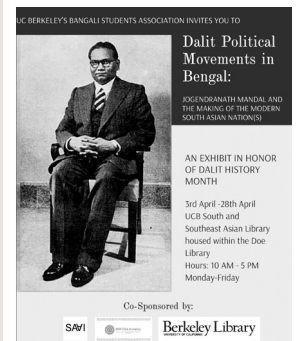
Deadline: APRIL 1

discuss various aspects of Indian culture, politics, and society. Past speakers have included notable figures such as politicians Kiran Bedi and Smriti Irani, actors Boman Irani and Bhumi Pednekar, journalists Anupama Chopra and Barkha Dutt, and business leaders Nandan Nilekani and Kiran Mazumdar Shaw. The Institute has been a crucial supporter of the SSIB since its inception in 2017.

### SUPPORTING EXHIBITIONS

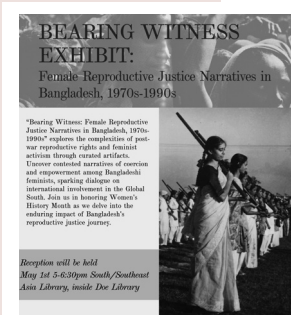
The Institute, in collaboration with the Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies, supports student-led exhibitions focused on issues related to South Asia by providing critical financial support as well as assisting in promoting the exhibition to a wider audience.

*Dalit Political Movements in Bengal: Jogenranath Mandal and The Making of the Modern South Asian Nation(s):* On the occasion of Dalit History Month in April 2023, UC Berkeley's Bangali Student Association hosted a month-long exhibition in Doe Library on the impact of Jogenranath Mondol, a prominent Dalit leader and politician, on Dalit political dynamics in Bengal and beyond. The exhibition showcased the extremely rich and complex history of the Dalit movement in Bengal and its connection to the larger anti-caste movements in South Asia.



Exhibition poster

*Bearing Witness: Female Reproductive Justice Narratives in Bangladesh, 1970s-1990s:* In honor of Women's History Month in March 2024, UC Berkeley's Bangali Student Association hosted an exhibition in Doe Library that explored the complexities of post-war reproductive rights and feminist activism in Bangladesh.



Exhibition poster

### YOUNG SCHOLARS RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM: CELEBRATING STUDENT EXCELLENCE

Featuring a series of fifteen-minute presentations, this symposium provides a platform for Berkeley undergrads or graduate students engaged in South Asia-related research to present their research findings, participate in meaningful discussions, and receive valuable feedback from peers and experts in the field. This annual event not only recognizes and celebrates their academic achievements but also fosters an environment that promotes intellectual growth, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a deeper understanding of South Asia's rich cultural & schol-

(cont'd on p. 11)

Supporting Community College Faculty Development:

## EXPLORING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH INDIA'S CITIES

The Institute, in partnership with the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) and the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), offers a program to professors at U.S. community colleges and minority-serving institutions to help them develop and expand international education related to India on their campuses. Titled, *Exploring Urban Sustainability through India's Cities*, this fully-funded, two-week long, study trip allows faculty to experience India's rich culture and engage with local scholars grappling with complex global issues like climate change and religious and ethnic diversity, thus gaining the first-hand experience needed to develop and improve the India component in their international curricula. In the essay below, Nick Timmerman shares his experience on the Overseas Faculty Development Seminar in India in January of 2023, and how the program affected his perspective on water usage and sustainability.

A Community College Faculty Experience (funded by ISAS-CAORC-AIIS)



Nick Timmerman

### WATER IS LIFE

by Nick Timmerman

Water is life. A phrase used frequently in recent years as environmental challenges, including access to clean water, has become a focal point. The population

in the world continues to grow, temperatures continue to rise, the climate is dramatically changing, and much of the research on causes point directly to human influence on the global environment. Few countries are at the epicenter of rapid population increases, economic industrialization and globalization, and serious environmental concerns such as air and water quality as India..

I've always pictured India as hot and humid, with jungle-like flora and fauna, with people everywhere. Traveling to northern India in January gave me a very different picture of what northern India is versus my presumptions, yet many of my preconceived ideas were met. It is a nation filled with people, particularly in the cities. When we traveled around Delhi, the joke on the bus was to add another 20-30 minutes onto whatever the estimated travel time was because of the enormous amount of traffic. Initially, traffic seemed like utter chaos to my Western mind, but over time I began to see patterns and a natural flow of people that was even present when we walked in enormous crowds. There was order in the chaos, the order of people going about their daily life as I do in the U.S. The perceived chaos was frustrating and yet beautiful.

Visiting Delhi in the winter presented a drastically different picture than my preconceived ideas about climate and weather. It was cold, overcast, and thick smog and the smell of smoke clung to our clothes and chilled us to the bone. I

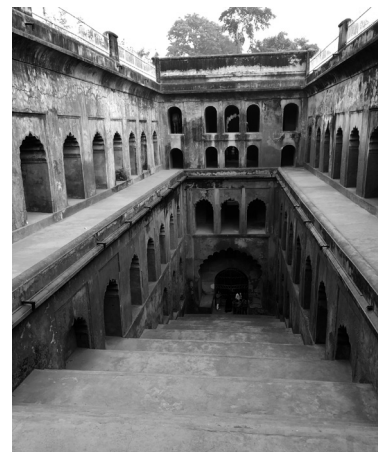
was not prepared for the cold, the wind chill, and the bone-chilling humidity, even though we were warned to dress appropriately. The cold continued with our travels to Lucknow, but the air quality improved slightly from Delhi. I was met with the realization of the vastness of India when we traveled to Jaipur and then Agra, where the temperatures were delightful, the humidity was low, and the air quality significantly improved. We traveled to different cities via plane and bus. The bus rides across the countryside from Jaipur to Agra and Agra to Delhi gave me another unique perspective of rural India, far away from the major population centers. The contrast between the urban and rural was cathartic and another reminder that my presumptions of India were incorrect.

The entire focus of the faculty development seminar was "urban sustainability" with a focus on environmental issues directly linked to water. I grew up in Flint, Michigan, and the Flint Water Crisis made international news in 2014, so I am familiar with water quality problems. As an environmental historian, I've researched and studied environmental racism, environmental exploitation, industrial disasters, environmental degradation, etc., and yet witnessing the overwhelming challenges present across India, I left the seminar in awe about the magnitude of issues related to water quality. We met with several individuals, researchers, academics, government agencies, and non-profits working tirelessly to confront these challenges. They recognized the magnitude, the societal pressures, and the governmental bureaucracy that can be a hindrance or helpful. Poverty, the caste system, religious beliefs, and quickly shifting populations all strain what can or cannot be done to address the issue of clean water. Using my limited knowledge of the environmental problems in India and my own work on environmental history as a frame of reference, I could not identify where to start. However, amid what seemed to me as an insurmountable challenge, we were presented with

hope. It was emotionally challenging to walk around the slums and witness how people live in extreme poverty. Meeting and interacting with women who faced discrimination, abuse, and mutilation was hard. Yet, their stories were filled with hope and empowerment.

I wanted to go to India and be a part of this seminar for a number of reasons, and one that was at the top of my list was my desire to learn more about water and environmental issues around the globe and how countries are addressing these issues. I had the opportunity in 2019 to attend an international conference in Shijiazhuang, China. Both China and India have huge populations, and their environmental issues are multiplied due to this fact. Both nations also have drastically different environments across the enormous space within their borders. It was a unique international comparison and one that I want to continue. I was also drawn to an opportunity to explore the deep history of India. As an American and a historian of the United States, I can attest to my country's youth in comparison to the ancient history present in India. It was amazing getting to see sites such as Shahi Bauli Stepwell in Lucknow and the Amer Stepwell in Jaipur, and to learn about the civilizations that emerged along the Yamuna River and the Gomti River.

I was struck by the variety of tools and resources implemented to help communities across India access clean water. From small filtration systems that can be constructed with local material to water treatment facilities, there seemed to be a widespread effort to attempt to meet people where they are at in society. This is a point that was also a central underlying theme in the seminar, how individuals are trying to make a difference at a very personal level.



Shahi Bauli (Step Well) in Lucknow,



Amer Stepwell in Jaipur

(cont'd from p. 11) arly traditions.

The most recent symposium, held in



The 2024 cohort with Ankita Kumar (standing on left), faculty-lead of the course and Geeta Anand (standing third from left), Dean, School of Journalism

Spring 2024, featured the work of the students of the India Reporting Project at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism. These student journalists traveled across India, uncovering and reporting on diverse narratives in both print and video formats. The event provided a platform for these emerging journalists to present their findings and share their unique experiences in the field. Attendees had the opportunity to hear firsthand accounts of their investigative journeys and gain insight into the challenges and triumphs of reporting from one of the world's most dynamic regions. ❖

See "Special Section" at the end to read one such story.

I am deeply grateful to CAORC and AIIS for the resources and support provided to me to be a part of this faculty development seminar. India is a country rich with history, heritage, religion, traditions, and culture. It is a country that serves as an excellent case study for studying water and environmental issues, and is an excellent space to collaborate with individuals working relentlessly to address some of our biggest challenges facing the future of our planet. ❖

Nick Timmerman is History/Political Science Faculty member at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. His research and teaching interests are in U.S. Environmental History with a focus on African American, Native American, and Public History.

THE CENTER ON CONTEMPORARY INDIA (CCI)

# INDIA @ BERKELEY

—the Center on Contemporary India (CCI) at UC Berkeley is a central resource for research and initiatives related to the politics, economy, and society of modern India. It achieves this through three main programs: the India Policy Forum, the India Politics Workshop, and the South Asia Summer Reading Group. In its initial four years, the Center also offered two funding opportunities to support graduate research: the Rapid Response Research Grant and the Dissertation Research Grant. More info at [indiacenter.berkeley.edu](http://indiacenter.berkeley.edu)

Ongoing CCI Program

## INDIA POLICY FORUM

— A platform for discussions on Indian public policy, bringing together scholars, policymakers, and professionals

September 23, 2022:

### Artificial Intelligence, Biometrics, and Democracy: India's Experience in Global Perspective

The inaugural India Policy Forum, held in Fall 2022, explored the intersection of advanced technologies like AI and biometrics with democratic processes and governance in India. Discussions



CCI Director, Dr. Jennifer Bussell (standing fourth from right) with invited speakers, faculty discussants, and organizers

centered on how these technologies are shaping policy, surveillance, privacy, and citizen-state relations, comparing

India's experiences with global trends. The forum aimed to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that AI and biometrics present for democratic governance, examining both the potential benefits and ethical dilemmas associated with their use.

Plans are underway for a second India Policy Forum with a central theme on climate change, particularly focusing on its impact and challenges for India. This event will convene experts from various fields to discuss how India can address the urgent climate crisis, explore sustainable practices, and develop policy frameworks that balance economic growth with environmental conservation. Our hope is that the forum will foster collaborative discussions and generate innovative ideas to help shape India's approach to climate change and its global implications. ❖

Ongoing CCI Program

## INDIA POLITICS WORKSHOP

— A virtual platform that combines paper-based panels with discussions between academics and non-academics on topics of shared interest, offering diverse perspectives on contemporary political issues in South Asia.

May 3 - 6, 2021

### Gender & Politics in South Asia

A four-day virtual conference dedicated to exploring the complex relationship between gender and politics in South Asian contexts. The workshop brought together scholars, researchers, and practitioners from various disciplines to examine how gender dynamics influence political participation, representation, policy-making, and social movements across South Asian countries. Participants engaged in discussions on a range of topics, including the role of women in

electoral politics, the impact of gendered social norms on political engagement, and the intersectionality of caste, class, and gender in shaping political identities and experiences.

The workshop featured a keynote panel with Nina Singh of the Indian Police Service and Janet Napolitano, former president of the University of California. Moderated by Jennifer Bussell, the discussion explored women's leadership, challenges, and contributions to governance and policy in South Asia and the U.S.



CCI Director, Dr. Jennifer Bussell with Janet Napolitano (L) and Nina Singh (R)

May 9 - 11, 2022

### Identity & the State in South Asia

A three-day virtual conference focused on examining how identity politics shape state policies and governance. The workshop convened a diverse group of scholars, researchers, and practitioners to discuss how various forms of identity—including ethnicity, religion, caste, and regional affiliations—interact with state structures and policies in the region. Discussions delved into topics such as the role of identity in electoral politics, the impact of state policies on minority rights and representation, and the ways in which identity-based movements challenge or reinforce state authority. ❖



Presenters at the workshop with Dr. Jennifer Bussell (top row, on right)

Ongoing CCI Program

## SOUTH ASIA SUMMER READING GROUP

—A virtual book club designed for graduate students and scholars to discuss recent publications on South Asian politics.

The reading group first convened in Summer 2020 and has continued annually, with the most recent session in Summer 2023, provides a platform for in-depth analysis and dialogue on contemporary political issues in the region. Books discussed have included a range of topics, from political dynamics and governance in South Asia to the impact of social movements and policy changes. The group fosters a collaborative learning environment, encouraging participants to critically engage with new scholarship and contribute to ongoing academic conversations about South Asia. ❖

## #SARG2023



Past CCI Program

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

— During the first four years, the Center also provided two types of funding opportunities designed to help graduate students conduct fieldwork, access resources, and advance their research on topics related to contemporary India.

The Rapid Response Research Grant

offered up to \$5,000 to support urgent or time-sensitive research needs; a total of 13 grants were awarded under this program.

The Dissertation Research Grant

provided up to \$15,000 to support more extensive dissertation-related research endeavors, with a total of 7 grants

awarded.

The 2023 Recipients:

### RAPID RESPONSE RESEARCH GRANT

**Pratiti Ketoki** (MA Student, Asian Studies): The Bizarre in

the City: Science, Nature and Narrative in Calcutta

**Johnathan Guy** (PhD Student, Political Science): Seizing the Sun: Political Opportunism in Modi's Solar Boom.

**Sharik Laliwala** (PhD Student, Political Science): Effects of Inclusive Nationalism-

Oriented Political Programs on Ethnic Relations

**Ooha Uppalapati** (PhD Student, City and Regional Planning): Centering the City Masterplan: Re-examining 20th and 21st Century Political Economic Shifts in India

### DISSERTATION RESEARCH GRANT

**Mark Campmier** (PhD Student, Environmental Engineering): Characterization of Extreme Air Pollution: Novel Measurements in the Indo Gangetic Plain

**Thomas Oommen** (PhD Student, Architecture): Houses of Labor: Dwelling, Middling Experts, and Oceanic Architectural Cultures on the Malabar Coast (1069-2022)

The 2022 Recipients:

### RAPID RESPONSE RESEARCH GRANT

**Ananya Tiwari** (MA Student, Journalism): Decoding the aftermath of India's farmers' protests on voting patterns

**Surili Sheth** (PhD Student, Political Science): The politics of compromise: the adjudication of women's disputes in India

**Pratiti Ketoki** (MA Student, Asian Studies): How Tintin became Bengali? Herge's afterwork in India.

**Pranav Gupta** (PhD Student, Political Science): How Ideas Spread: Ideological Diffusion in India

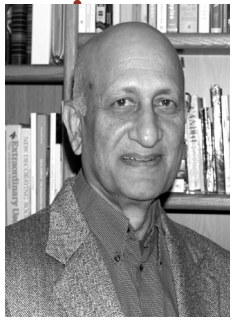
### DISSERTATION RESEARCH GRANT

**Payal Hathi** (PhD Student, Demography & Sociology): Improving stillbirth measurement by understanding the production of stillbirth statistics in India

# PAKISTAN @ BERKELEY

—an area studies initiative that is focused on encouraging wide-ranging conversations on topics related to history, religion, culture, economics and politics.

## Donor Acknowledgement



## HONORING A LEGACY

The Berkeley Pakistan Initiative gratefully acknowledges a generous bequest of \$10,000 from the late Amjad Noorani in support of Pakistan-related studies at UC Berkeley.

**Amjad Noorani** A passionate activist for education reforms in Pakistan, Mr. Noorani served as a Director on the board of TCF-USA and dedicated over twenty years of his life to TCF and the cause of education. His book, *Agents of Change: The Problematic Landscape of Pakistan's K-12 Education and the People Leading the Change* (co-authored with Nadeem Hussain), offered critical insights into the challenges and opportunities within Pakistan's educational system. A recording of a book talk, co-hosted by the Berkeley Pakistan Initiative and the Stanford Graduate School of Education, and held on Oct 19, 2021, may be viewed at [bit.ly/noorani-book-talk](https://bit.ly/noorani-book-talk). Mr. Noorani passed away on June 3, 2022, in Los Altos, CA. He was 75. ❖



Professor Faisal Devji with Tatheer Hamdani (Habib University)

## THE MAHOMEDALI HABIB DISTINGUISHED LECTURES ON PAKISTAN

**April 20, 2024**  
**FAISAL DEVI**  
—A PROPHET DISARMED

The 11th Habib Lecture on Pakistan was delivered by historian of South Asia, Dr. Faisal Devji. In his

talk, Dr. Devji explored the evolution of controversies surrounding insults to the Prophet Muhammad, tracing their origins to mid-19th century India and their global escalation post-Cold War. Devji argued that these controversies stem from the diminishing of the Prophet's religious and political stature, rendering him susceptible to insults as if he were an ordinary person. This transformation has triggered intense reactions among Muslims, who, faced with a Prophet

seemingly like themselves, experience a surge of passion and defensiveness. The lecture provided a profound analysis of the intersection between religious identity, political power, and mo-

derernity, offering a nuanced understanding of why insults to the Prophet evoke such powerful reactions among Muslims today. Devji's insights underscored the broader implications of these controversies for global Islam. ❖

**December 1, 2022**  
**MATTHEW A. COOK**  
—SINDH, GRAPHIC PLURALISM, & SUFISM: SCRIPT & CULTURE

The 10th Habib Lecture on Pakistan was delivered by historian of South Asia,

and Sindh, Dr. Matthew A. Cook. In his presentation, Dr. Cook delved into the debates surrounding graphic pluralism that culminated

in the 1856 British mandate of an Arabic-style script (*naskh*) as the official writing system for the Sindhi language. By integrating anthropology, linguistics, and history, Cook explored how language

became a tool for imperial dominance and colonial differentiation. He argued that the adoption of the modern Sindhi script served as a critical mechanism through which imperialism permeated the everyday lives of the colonized people. Furthermore, Cook also made the case that the British imposition of an Arabic-style script was instrumental in embedding Sufism as a central aspect of Sindhi society and culture, thereby shaping the region's socio-cultural fabric in profound ways. ❖



Professor Matthew Cook with Professor Munis D. Faruqi

ENDOWED BY THE HABIB FAMILY, THIS LECTURE SERIES IS AIMED AT IMPROVING AND DIVERSIFYING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT PAKISTAN IN THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR US AND PAKISTAN-BASED SCHOLARS TO DIALOGUE. PAST SPEAKERS HAVE INCLUDED OSMUND BOPEARACHCHI, SALIMA HASHMI, ATIF MIAN, RAZA RUMI, DAVID GILMARTIN, JONATHAN MARK KENOYER, CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT, AYESHA SIDDIQA, AND ASMA JAHANGIR.

## THE SYED SHARIFUDDIN PIRZADA DISTINGUISHED LECTURES

### THE 2022 LECTURES

**April 11, 2024**

**SHOZAB RAZA**  
—THEORY FROM THE TRENCHES: REVOLUTIONARY DECOLONIZATION ON PAKISTAN'S LANDED ESTATES

Dr. Shozab Raza (Assistant Professor, Social Justice Education, University of Toronto) discussed the grassroots movements and revolutionary efforts aimed at decolonizing land ownership and reforming agrarian structures on Pakistan's landed estates. ❖

**ZAHRA HAYAT**  
—THE SCANDAL OF ACCESS: PHARMACEUTICALS IN PAKISTAN

Dr. Zahra Hayat (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of British Columbia), explored the complexities and inequities in the availability and distribution of pharmaceuticals within Pakistan. ❖



(From L) Dr. Sharad Chari, Dr. Amna Jaffer & Rafat Pirzada, Dr. Shozab Raza, Dr. Zahra Hayat, Dr. Munis D. Faruqi, & Dr. Cori Hayden

### THE 2021 LECTURE

**February 7, 2023**

**AMNA QAYUM**  
—THE DEMOGRAPHIC STATE: POPULATION, GLOBAL BIOPOLITICS, AND DECOLONIZATION IN SOUTH ASIA, C. 1947-71

In her Pirzada Lecture, Dr. Amna Qayum (Fellow, Global Economy and Development, The Brookings Institution) examined the intersections of population control, global biopolitics, and the decolonization processes in shaping gender, development, state authority, and sociopolitical dynamics in South Asia during the mid-20th century, highlighting the complexities and contradictions of these forces in the region. ❖



(From L) Dr. Sadia Sayeed, Dr. Elora Shehabuddin, & Dr. Amna Qayum

ESTABLISHED BY RAFAT PIRZADA AND HIS WIFE, DR. AMNA JAFFER, AND NAMED AFTER RAFAT PIRZADA'S FATHER, SYED SHARIFUDDIN PIRZADA, THIS ENDOWMENT SUPPORTS TWO PROGRAMS: THE SYED SHARIFUDDIN PIRZADA DISSERTATION PRIZE ON PAKISTAN—AN ANNUAL DISSERTATION PRIZE FOR THE BEST WORK IN THE HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, LAW, OR PUBLIC HEALTH ON PAKISTAN,

AND THE SYED SHARIFUDDIN PIRZADA LECTURE ON PAKISTAN—AN ANNUAL LECTURE GIVEN BY THE WINNER OF THE DISSERTATION PRIZE.

## Upcoming in Fall 2024: THE S.S. PIRZADA LECTURE FOR 2023

### THE 2023 AWARD RECIPIENT

**SIDRA KAMRAN**

Dissertation: *Work, Class Ambiguity, and Multiple Femininities: Women Beauty and Retail Workers in Pakistan's New Service Economy*. (New School for Social Research, 2022.)

Dr. Sidra Kamra is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Lewis & Clark College. Her Pirzada Lecture will take place at 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 21, 2024 in 10 Stephens Hall, UC Berkeley. ❖

More information on the prize and how to apply at: [SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)  
Deadline: DECEMBER 1



Sidra Kamran

## SOUTH ASIA ART@BERKELEY

—The South Asia Art Initiative (SAAI) at the University of California, Berkeley promotes research-based conversations and collaborations around the arts of South Asia + its diasporas from the ancient period to the now.

### SAAI SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE PARTHA MITTER



Partha Mitter

In Spring 2023, the UC Berkeley South Asia Art Initiative inaugurated its Scholar in Residence program with Dr. Partha Mitter, one of the most eminent scholars of global modernism and modern South Asian art in the world today.

Dr. Mitter, Emeritus Professor in Art History, University of Sussex, specialises in the reception of Indian art in the West, as well as in modernity, art and identity in India, and more recently in global modernism. His publications include *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (1977) as well as *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (1994) and *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-Garde – 1922-1947* (2007).



Round table with (from L) Dr. Aglaya Glebova, Dr. Harsha Ram, Dr. Partha Mitter, and Dr. Atreyee Gupta



BAMPFA viewing session with UC Berkeley graduate students



Upcoming in  
Spring 2025  
SAAI  
ARTIST IN  
RESIDENCE  
IMRAN  
QURESHI

Dr. Mitter, in residence on campus from April 3-7, 2023, took part

### THE SOUTH ASIA ART & ARCHITECTURE PRIZES

The Institute's South Asia Art Initiative offers two annual prizes in support of the arts of South Asia: the **South Asia Art & Architecture Dissertation Prize** for an outstanding doctoral dissertation on the art, architecture, or visual cultures of South Asia and its diasporas from any discipline in the arts, humanities, or social sciences and the **South Asia Artist Prize** for an outstanding body of work by an artist of the South Asian diaspora or by someone whose work addresses the politics and cultures of South Asia.

#### THE 2024 AWARD RECIPIENTS

- The South Asia Art & Architecture Dissertation Prize**
- Saarthak Singh:** Places of Piety, Sites of Sovereignty: Architecture & urbanism in medieval Malwa, c.1050–1450
- The South Asia Artist Prize**
- Janhavi Khemka** (MFA, Art Institute of Chicago)

#### THE 2023 AWARD RECIPIENTS

- The South Asia Art & Architecture Dissertation Prize**
- Shivani Sud:** Painting, Print, and Photography: World-Making in Jaipur, ca. 1780-1920.
- Mohit Manohar:** The City of Gods and Fortune: An Architectural and Urban History of Daulatabad, ca. 13th–15th centuries

#### Honorable Mentions for 2023:

- Kanwal Syed:** We Sinful Women: Urban Feminist Visuality in Contemporary Art and Feminist Movements in Pakistan After 9/11
- Saptarshi Sanyal:** Shaping the Modern: Architectural Cultures and Critique in Late-colonial India (1913—c.1948)
- The South Asia Artist Prize**
- Bhasha Chakrabarti** (MFA, Yale School of Art)

#### THE 2022 AWARD RECIPIENTS

- The South Asia Art & Architecture Dissertation Prize**
- Vishal Khandelwal:** Crafting Expertise: Art and Design Pedagogy and Professional Values at the National Institute of Design in India, 1955-1985
- Sonali Dhingra:** Cult and Colossus: Buddhist Sculpture from Odisha in History and Memory (ca. eighth to twelfth centuries).
- The South Asia Artist Prize**
- Saba Qizilbash** (MFA 2022, Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford)
- Honorable Mention for 2022:**
- Sayan Chanda** (MFA 2022, University of the Arts, London)

More information at [SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)

in the following events:

Delivered two public talks— **The Triumph of Modernism: Indian Artists and the Global Avant-garde, 1922-1947** and **Why do we need to reimagine Modernism? Global Modernism and its discontents** — that situated 20th-century South Asian art within debates of the “global” in art history.

Participated in a round-table— **The Virtual Cosmopolis** with Aglaya Glebova (History of Art), Atreyee Gupta (History of Art), and Harsha Ram (Slavic Languages and Literatures), on the concept of “virtual cosmopolitanism.”

- Reflected on the long arc of **India's Modernism/s** in a fireside chat with Atreyee Gupta at the home of Dr. Dipti Mathur, Chair of the South Asia Art Initiative Advisory Board.
- Led a **Berkeley Art Museum Study/Viewing Session** with 18th- and 19th-century works that were specially brought out from the BAMPFA South Asian art collection for the occasion. ❖

#### SAAI Field Trip

### TREE & SERPENT: EARLY BUDDHIST ART IN INDIA, 200 BCE–400 CE

by Brishti Modak & Kevin Morales-Bernabe

In Fall 2023, as New York welcomed the onset of autumn, a group of UC Berkeley students from Art History, Art Practice, and South and Southeast Asian

Studies visited New York to view *Tree & Serpent: Early Buddhist Art in India, 200 BCE–400 CE*, a groundbreaking exhibition



Dr. Guy explaining the intricate details of the railing post (*Satavahana, 2nd - 1st century BCE, Pauni, Maharashtra*). Sandstone. National Museum, New Delhi. Photo: Kevin Morales-Bernabe

curated by Dr. John Guy at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The exhibition featured intricately carved stupas and richly decorated stone slabs depicting elephants, nagas, and trees, connecting nature throughout the display. It encouraged a reevaluation of early Buddhist art by shifting focus from north India to the Deccan Plateau and Eastern Ghats, highlighting significant but less emphasized regions. A central theme in the exhibition was the symbolic representation of the Buddha using spoked wheels, footprints, and symbols rather than direct depictions, prompting a rethinking of materiality. The juxtaposition of a stupa structure with reliquary displays emphasized the importance of stupas and relics in Buddhist art, with relics presented alongside gemstones, crystal, and precious metals, evoking historical reverence. The exhibition also featured objects illustrating the global histories of Buddhist art, including a bronze Poseidon and an ivory yakshi from

Pompeii. Spending an entire morning with Dr. Guy, discussing his curatorial work, deepened our appreciation for the complexities of maintaining historical authenticity.

The trip also included visits to the Rubin Museum, the Talwar Gallery, the Aicon Gallery, and an exhibition tour with artist Rina Banerjee at Galerie Perrotin. It was a remarkable experience to hear Rina Banerjee speak about creative processes as well as see Nasreen Mohamedi's works, which Deepak Talwar specially hung for us at his gallery. We are thankful to the South Asia Art Initiative and Professor Sugata Ray for organizing this remarkable experience. ❖

*Brishti Modak & Kevin Morales-Bernabe are PhD students in the History of Art Dept.*



Artist Rina Banerjee discussing her recent exhibition *Black Noodles* with graduate students at Galerie Perrotin, NY. Photo: Sugata Ray

# TAGORE @ BERKELEY

—The first of its kind in the US, the Tagore Program on Literature, Culture, and Philosophy is dedicated to fostering a deep understanding and appreciation of the literary, cultural, and philosophical contributions of Rabindranath Tagore. Currently, the programs that anchor Tagore studies at Berkeley are: the Tagore Spring Institute; the Maya Mitra Das Annual Lecture; and the Khashu Research Award.

## TAGORE SPRING INSTITUTE

An online seminar series dedicated to the study of Rabindranath Tagore's works and ideas. Each seminar focuses on a specific theme related to Tagore and features an esteemed scholar who teaches the course.

## THE BHUSHAN & SANTOSH KHASHU AWARD FOR TAGORE

### RELATED STUDIES

Established with a generous contribution from Dr. Bhushan Khashu and Dr. Santosh Khashu, both prominent physicians and philanthropists from New York, the Bhushan & Santosh Khashu Research Award for Tagore Studies supports graduate students pursuing research projects focusing on the life and legacy of Rabindranath Tagore. The award provides for one grant of \$5000 for research travel to South Asia. Mid-career graduate students conducting research toward a Master's thesis or dissertation proposal may propose to conduct research in Santiniketan, West Bengal or at another location relevant to Tagore's life.

### The 2024 Award Recipients:

**Astrid Hallaraaker** (PhD Student, Political Science, CUNY Graduate Center): A Refuge for Purer Politics: Tagore's Influence on Gandhi's Political Stamina

**Pratiti Ketoki** (PhD Student, Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature, University of Minnesota at Twin Cities): The Travelling Poet: Tagore as a Global Figure

### The 2022 Award Recipient:

**Anirudh Karnick** (PhD Student, Comparative Literature, University of Pennsylvania): Like Tears Softening Pebbles: Tagore in the Making of Modern Hindi Poetry

More information at

[SOUTHASIA.BERKELEY.EDU/FUNDING-OPPORTUNITIES](https://southasia.berkeley.edu/funding-opportunities)

Deadline: APRIL 1

### TAGORE SPRING INSTITUTE: 2024

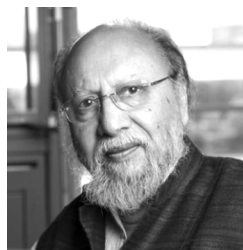


**RANJAN GHOSH**  
Academic, Thinker, Member of the Faculty in English, University of North Bengal

#### PLASTIC TAGORE: THINKING AFTER YESTERDAY

- Apr 5: Understanding Tagore, the Philosophy of Plasticity and Plastic Art
- Apr 17: Plastic Pedagogy I: Aesthetic Education and Paedosophy
- Apr 19: Plastic Pedagogy II: The Idea of University and the Politics of Counter Education
- Apr 22: Tagore, World Literature and Plastic Theory
- Apr 24: Is Tagore a Poet-Historian? Reflections on the Idea of History
- Apr 26: *Tagore Visiting Scholar Lecture for 2024*: Tagore in the Age of Anthropocene: Plastic Nature.

### TAGORE SPRING INSTITUTE: 2023

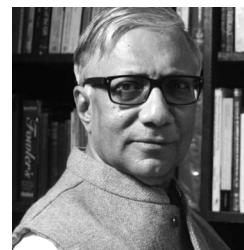


**ASHIS NANDY**  
Sociologist, Clinical Psychologist, Public Intellectual

#### RABINDRANATH'S DISCOVERY OF GANDHI

- Mar 6: *Tagore Visiting Scholar Lecture for 2023*: Rabindranath's Discovery of Gandhi
- Mar 9: Rabindranath in Public life I: Patriotism, Nationalism and Modernity
- Mar 13: Rabindranath in Public Life II: Equity and Social Justice
- Mar 16: Tagore's Memories of Fearsome Urban-Industrialism Return
- Mar 20: The Curse of the Nation State: Tagore and Violence.
- Mar 23: Tagore and Death: The Art of Dying:..

### TAGORE SPRING INSTITUTE: 2022



**SUKANTA CHAUDHURI**  
Literary scholar, Professor Emeritus of English, Jadavpur University

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND THE AESTHETICS OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

- Feb 7: The Two Gitanjalis
- Feb 10: Songs of the Partition of Bengal, 1905
- Feb 14: Tagore's Poetry of the Middle Years
- Feb 17: *Raktakarabi*
- Feb 22: Interrogating Society
- Feb 24: Civilization in Crisis
- Mar 3: *Tagore Visiting Scholar Lecture for 2022*: Tagore & the Synergy of the Arts.

#### Upcoming in Spring THE TAGORE VISITING SCHOLAR FOR 2025

### MICHAEL COLLINS

Professor of Modern and Contemporary British History, University College London



## MAYA MITRA DAS LECTURE ON TAGORE

Established in Spring 2022, as a part of the Tagore Program on Literature, Culture and Philosophy at UC Berkeley, this lectureship brings a distinguished scholar to campus each year to give a lecture on Rabindranath Tagore's literary, cultural, and philosophical contributions.

The inaugural lecture in this series was delivered by acclaimed literary theorist and feminist critic, **DR. GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK** in Spring 2022.



Dr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

Dr. Spivak's lecture, titled, *Starting at the End: Picking Up the Relay of Shesher Kabita*, held on Apr 22, 2022, explored the enduring impact and interpretations of Tagore's novel Shesher Kabita in modern literary contexts, highlighting its relevance to

contemporary readers and its influence on subsequent literature.

Our second speaker was scholar of South Asian politics and intellectual history, **PROF. SUDIPTA KAVIRAJ**. His lecture titled, *The Artistic Truth of Politics: Reading Rabindranath's Fictional Writings*, delivered virtually on Oct 19, 2023, examined the intersection of politics and artistry in



Dr. Sudipta Kaviraj

Rabindranath Tagore's fiction, revealing their profound interconnectedness and the underlying social commentary in his narratives.



Dr. Bashabi Fraser

The 3rd Maya Mitra Das Lecturer was **DR. BASHABI FRASER**, the Director of the

Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies at Edinburgh Napier University. Dr. Fraser's talk titled, *The Primacy of Creativity in Rabindranath Tagore*, held on Apr 4, 2024, gave an overview of Rabindranath Tagore's life, emphasizing the primacy of creativity and innovation in his extensive literary and philosophical contributions. ❖

#### Upcoming in Spring

THE MAYA MITRA DAS LECTURER FOR 2025

### HANS HARDER

Professor of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures at Heidelberg University



## THE CHOWDHURY CENTER TURNS 10

ten years of dedicated scholarship, cultural engagement, and fostering international dialogue. Established in December 2013 and officially inaugurated on March 30, 2015, the Chowdhury Center has grown into a vital interdisciplinary hub, advancing the study of Bangladesh, its culture, and its global diaspora. The center has supported academic research, hosted public events, and collaborated with other institutions to highlight diverse aspects of Bangladeshi life, from arts and literature to political and social dynamics. Over the past decade, the center has played a pivotal role in promoting a deeper understanding of Bangladesh's history, society, and its contributions to global culture.

We are thrilled to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Chowdhury Center with a kick-off event on October 12, 2024, bringing together scholars, artists, and practitioners for enriching conversations on ecological and architectural practices geared towards sustainable collective futures. This celebration will reflect on the Center's achievements and set the stage for future initiatives that foster knowledge exchange and collaboration. ❖

*Celebrating the 10th Anniversary*

### THINKING FROM BANGLADESH, BUILDING WITH JUSTICE

Despite producing less than 0.5% of global carbon emissions, Bangladesh disproportionately faces the catastrophic impacts of anthropogenic climate change. Combined with rapid urbanization, its largely deltaic geography exposes the country to regular floods and cyclones threatening poor communities, natural habitats, and infrastructures. At the same time, as organizations as diverse as the World Bank and NPR have recognized, Bangladesh has met these significant challenges with ingenuity, deploying high-tech solutions alongside innovative indigenous, community-oriented solutions. *Thinking from Bangladesh, Building with Justice* posits Bangladesh simultaneously as a node in global ecological flows, and a place from where collective sustainable futures can be imagined differently.

The event will be anchored by a keynote by pioneering Dhaka-based architect, **MARINA TABASSUM**, who describes her work as establishing "a language of architecture that is contemporary yet reflectively rooted to place, always against an ecological rubric containing climate, context, culture, history." To take one example, in 2020 Tabassum created *Khudi Bari*, a shelter for landless communities living along the Meghna riverbed. The



Marina Tabassum

mobile bamboo and steel structure can be re-and-de-assembled quickly and contains two levels to offer refuge during flooding.

The keynote will be followed by a roundtable conversation featuring architects, urban planners, and anthropologists whose work has been fundamental in foregrounding two elements missing from technocratic approaches to climate solutions: culture and community.

Hosted at the David Brower Center in Berkeley, California on the afternoon of October 12, 2024, *Thinking from Bangladesh* will develop the decade-long

The Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at UC Berkeley marks a significant milestone as it completes

work of the Chowdhury Center in fostering the study of Bangladesh at the intersection of policy and the public humanities. ❖



## BUILDING TOWARDS JUSTICE

An afternoon of conversations on ecological and architectural practices towards sustainable collective futures

- Keynote: **MARINA TABASSUM** in conversation with **ISHA RAY, PRADIP KRISHEN** and **JASMIT RANGR**
- Roundtable: **NAVEEDA KHAN** and **ADNAN MORSHED** with **ZACHARY LAMB** and **SUDIPTA SEN**
- and much more

Sat, Oct 12, 2024

2 pm - 6 pm

David Brower Center

### SELECT CHOWDHURY CENTER EVENTS 2015-24

—Between Spring 2015 and Spring 2024, the Chowdhury Center organized an impressive 130 events, featuring a diverse range of topics and speakers. Here are a select few: lectures by renowned scholars on Bangladeshi politics and culture, panel discussions on contemporary social issues, film screenings highlighting Bangladeshi cinema, and workshops exploring regional literature and arts. Each event provided valuable insights and fostered meaningful dialogue on the complex and vibrant aspects of Bangladesh.



Fazle Hasan Abed

Mar 30, 2015

*Distinguished Lecture Series*  
Sir Fazle Hasan Abed | A Quiet Revolution in Bangladesh

Mar 13, 2016

*Distinguished Lecture Series*  
Amartya Sen | In Conversation With Pranab Bardhan

Apr 25, 2016

Rubana Huq | In Conversation With

Sept 15, 2016

Ashok Gadgil | On the Largest Mass Poisoning



Amartya Sen



Rubana Huq

### THE SUBIR & MALINI CHOWDHURY CENTER

#### FELLOWSHIPS FOR BANGLADESH STUDIES

—The Chowdhury Center provides several annual fellowships to Berkeley students in support of their Bangladesh-related studies.

#### *The Subir Chowdhury Undergraduate Scholarship*

2024 Recipients **Aaron Oculito** (South & Southeast Asian Studies, Political Science), **Xiucheng Li** (South & Southeast Asian Studies, Environmental Economics and Policy)

2023 Recipients **Parneet K. Behniwal** (South & Southeast Asian Studies, Psychology); **Jade T. Lumada** (South & Southeast Asian Studies, History)

2022 Recipients **Thomas Kilbane** (South & Southeast Asian Studies); **Lillian Maheu** (South & Southeast Asian Studies)

#### *The Malini Chowdhury Fellowship on Bangladesh Studies*

2024 Fellow **Cara Schulte** (PhD Student, Public Health): Climate Change as a Labor Rights Issue: Documenting the Health and Human Rights Impacts of Extreme Heat on Workers in Dhaka, Bangladesh

2023 Fellow **Thomas Kingston** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies): The Environmental, Social & Political Histories of the Naf River

2022 Fellow **Kirtana Dasa Mausert** (PhD Student, Anthropology): Citizenship and Belonging in Bamar Buddhist-dominated Burma/Myanmar

#### *The Subir Chowdhury Fellowship on Quality of Life in Bangladesh*

2024 Fellow **Mahfuza Islam** (PhD Student, Environmental Health Sciences): Assessing animal-to-human and human-to-human health risks to guide infectious disease models and prevention strategies

2023 Fellow **Tarannum Sahar** (MA Student, Public Policy & MS in Energy, Civil Infrastructure and Climate): Hybrid Renewables, Climate Resilience, & At-Risk Island Communities

in Recorded History:

Arsenic in Drinking Water in Bangladesh & Vicinity

Oct 18, 2016

Ali Riaz | Bangladesh: A Political History since Independence

Feb 16, 2017  
*Distinguished*

*Lecture Series*

Sara Hossain | Justice & Accountability in Bangladesh

Oct 2, 2017

Salil Tripathi | The Colonel Who Would Not Repent:

The Bangladesh War and its Unquiet Legacy

Sept 25, 2018

Sabina Rashid | The Invisible Reality of 'Chintha Roge' (A Life of Chronic Worry): The Illness of Poverty in Dhaka's Urban Slum Settlements



Ali Riaz



Sara Hossain



Upcoming in Fall 2024

# BIPLOB IN BANGLADESH —HOW A STUDENT REVOLT OVERTHREW A REGIME

Organized by the Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at UC Berkeley, *Biplob in Bangladesh: How a Student Revolt Overthrew a Regime* is a series of five virtual conversations, scheduled in Fall 2024, on the student-led protest movement that successfully toppled the government in Bangladesh. Featuring a diverse range of speakers, including scholars, activists, and policymakers, these conversations will aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors leading to the uprising, the strategies and motivations of the protesters, and the broader implications of the movement for Bangladesh's political and social landscape. The five sessions are:

## VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINES —September 11, 2024

The first session will feature Bangladeshi students and faculty sharing firsthand accounts of their experiences during the protests, highlighting the motivations, strategies, and challenges they faced on the ground.

Confirmed panelists at this session are **Dr. Samina Luthfa** (Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Dhaka), **Dr. Moshreka Aditi Huq** (Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Chittagong), **Dr. Nusrat Chowdhury** (Associate Professor of Anthropology, Amherst College), **Sayeeda Meher A. Shaonlee** (student at Jahangirnagar University), and **Mostak Ahmad** (student at Khulna University)

## INFORMATION BLOCKADE —September 25, 2024

This discussion will examine the misinformation campaigns and fear-mongering that falsely portrayed the protests as an Islamist uprising, analyzing the

impact of these tactics on public perception and dissent.

Confirmed panelists at this session are **Dr. Farhana Sultana** (Professor of Geography & the Environment, Syracuse University), **Dr. Navine Murshid** (Associate Professor of Political Science, Colgate University) and **Meghmallar Basu** (President Student Union Dhaka University Bangladesh)

## REBUILDING DEMOCRACY — October 9, 2024

Focusing on post-dictatorial institution-building, this session will explore the potential challenges and pitfalls that Bangladesh faces in its transition to a democratic political system.

## TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY — October 23, 2024

This session will address the socio-economic changes needed to create a more inclusive economy in Bangladesh, looking at policies and strategies that can promote equitable growth and reduce economic disparities.

## THE OUTSTANDING PAPER PRIZE IN BANGLADESH STUDIES

A prize for exceptional research in Bangladesh Studies by Berkeley undergrads

### The 2024 Award Recipients

**Aryan Shafat** (BA Student, Economics/Statistics/Global Poverty and Practice)

- Title:** The impact of the World Bank's Social Safety Net for the Poorest Project on short-term welfare in rural Bangladesh.
- Abstract:** An analysis of the welfare effects of the World Bank's Social Safety Net for the Poorest Project in Bangladesh, which was implemented from 2013 till 2017

**Cynthia Rahman** (BA 2024, Global Studies)

- Title:** Governing Empowerment: "Second-Wave" Feminism and Population Control Post-1971 War of Independence in Bangladesh.
- Abstract:** An analysis of how Western involvement in abortion and contraception between the 1970s and 1980s led to controversial reproductive practices and sterilizations without consent.

More information at [CHOWDHURYCENTER.BERKELEY.EDU/FUNDING](http://CHOWDHURYCENTER.BERKELEY.EDU/FUNDING)

## LITERARY & CULTURAL REIMAGININGS OF THE BIPLOB — Date TBD

The final session will explore how literature and culture can help reimagine and reshape the narrative of the uprising, examining how artistic expressions capture the spirit of the movement and contribute to the collective memory of this transformative period in Bangladesh's history.

All sessions will be on Zoom from 9 am to 10:30 am PST (10 pm to 11:30 pm BST) and will be moderated by Dr. Elora Shehabuddin, Director, Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies. ❖

Oct 2, 2018  
Samia Huq | Thinking about the Secular

Oct 25, 2018  
Gary Bass | Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide

Nov 1, 2018  
*Distinguished Lecture Series*  
Daniel Kammen | Clean Energy Transition in Bangladesh

Feb 22, 2019  
*Chowdhury Center-LSE Bangladesh Summit 2019*  
Reimagining Health, Empowerment, and Sovereignty in Bangladesh



Shahidul Alam

Nov 9, 2019  
*Distinguished Lecture Series*  
Shahidul Alam | The Challenge of a Journalist in Bangladesh Today

Feb 7, 2020  
*Conference*  
Beyond the Crisis Narrative: Rohingya Statelessness



Mushfiq Mobarak

and its implications for Bangladesh. [Read a report at bit.ly/Rohingya-Conference](http://bit.ly/Rohingya-Conference)

Sept 3, 2020  
Mushfiq Mobarak | Impact of COVID-19 In Bangladesh and Nepal



Naila Kabeer

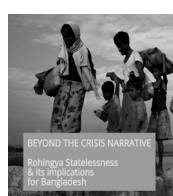
Oct 1, 2020  
*Distinguished Lecture Series*  
Naila Kabeer | Contested Narratives about National Identity: Gender, State and Community

Mar 11, 2021  
Ayesha Mahmud | The Dynamics of Infectious Diseases in Bangladesh



Ayesha Mahmud

Oct 12, 2021  
Mirza M Hassan, Naomi Hossain | Governing COVID-19 in Bangladesh: Build Forward Better



Conference Poster

Nov 30, 2022  
*Screening with Director*



Mirza M Hassan, Naomi Hossain

Sohel Rahman | The Ice Cream Sellers: A Story of the Rohingya People

Apr 6, 2023  
*New Publications Series*  
Elora Halim Chowdhury, Nayma Qayum, & Camelia Dewan | *New Directions in Bangladesh Studies*

Sept 16, 2023  
Mushtaque Chowdhury | 50 Years of Bangladesh Independence: Advances in Health

Feb 6, 2024  
Sayeed Ferdous | Partition as Border-Making: East Bengal, East Pakistan, and Bangladesh

Mar 14, 2024  
*New Publications Series*  
Malini Sur, Sahana Ghosh, Navine Murshid | The Bangladesh-India Border

Apr 30, 2024  
Nuran Nabi | An evening with a Freedom Fighter of Bangladesh's Liberation War



Elora Halim Chowdhury, Nayma Qayum, & Camelia Dewan



Malini Sur, Sahana Ghosh, & Navine Murshid

**THE BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN AWARD**

The inaugural award was shared by two recipients: Asif Iqbal (Visiting Assistant Professor of English, Oberlin College) and Bertie Kibreah (Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology, University of South Florida). Dr. Iqbal was in residence on campus in Nov 2023. The second Bangabandhu Fellow, Dr. Bertie Kibreah will be on campus in Fall 2024 and will deliver his lecture on Sept 20, 2024.

November 2, 2023

**ASIF IQBAL —COUNTER-IMAGINATIONS OF PARTITION IN THE BENGALI NOVEL**

Dr. Asif Iqbal gave a talk on the impact of the Partition on the political transformation of East Bengal via an analysis of two novels, Shahidul-lah Kaiser's *Sangsaptak: A Bengali Saga*



Dr. Asif Iqbal (4th from L) with members of the US Bangabandhu Parishad and Dr. Elora Shehabuddin (5th from L)

and Akhteruzzaman Elias' *Khoabnama*. He argued that these literary works offer a counter-imagination that provides a more nuanced understanding of the Partition, highlighting the emotional and psychological impacts on individuals and communities. ❖

ESTABLISHED WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE US BANGABANDHU PARISHAD, A CALIFORNIA-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION ENGAGED IN THE PROMOTION OF THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF BANGLADESH, THIS AWARD ALLOWS THE CENTER TO BRING GRADUATE STUDENTS OR EARLY CAREER FACULTY MEMBERS EACH YEAR FROM INSTITUTIONS IN THE US AND EUROPE TO SHARE THEIR RESEARCH ON BANGABANDHU AND/OR BANGLADESH WITH THE UC BERKELEY COMMUNITY.

UPCOMING IN FALL 2024:

September 20, 2024

**BERTIE KIBREAH —DEBATE ON THE DAIS: SHRINE PERFORMANCE AND DISCURSIVE DEVOTION IN BANGLADESH**

Dr. Bertie Kibreah's talk will focus on Bangladesh's *bicār gān* ("songs of rumination"). ❖



Bertie Kibreah

A Briefing Paper

**RANA PLAZA 10 YEARS ON: LESSONS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND BUSINESS**

by Sanchita Banerjee Saxena and Salil Tripathi

It has been a decade since the tragic collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh, which resulted in the deaths of 1,134 people and left thousands more injured, many of whom were garment factory workers producing clothing for international brands. While some progress has been made in protecting workers' rights and safety, many challenges persist. Notably, only 27% of Bangladesh's 7,000 garment factories participated in the Accord and

Alliance initiatives—key international standards established to safeguard workers in the wake of the Rana Plaza disaster. This means that approximately three million garment workers still lack the protections that these international standards provide.

The Rana Plaza disaster prompted critical questions about the role of businesses and governments in safeguarding workers' rights. What have we learned about how to better protect workers since this tragedy? Why have business and human rights interventions following the disaster been insufficient? What further steps are needed to ensure the safety and rights of workers throughout global supply chains?

To address these pressing questions, Sanchita Banerjee Saxena and Salil

Tripathi have authored a briefing paper that examines the impact of the disaster and evaluates the actions taken in the decade since. Their work sheds light on ongoing vulnerabilities in the garment industry and underscores the urgent need for more robust protections. Read the full paper at [CHOWDHURYCENTER.BERKELEY.EDU/RESEARCH-NOTES/ARTICLES](http://CHOWDHURYCENTER.BERKELEY.EDU/RESEARCH-NOTES/ARTICLES)

Sanchita B. Saxena is a professional faculty member at the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley. Salil Tripathi is a Senior Advisor at the Institute for Human Rights and Business. ❖



Sanchita B. Saxena



Salil Tripathi

**SELECT ISAS EVENTS 2022 - 2024**

FALL 2022

Sept 13, 2022

Dalvir Pannu | The Sikh Heritage - Beyond Borders: An Illustrated history of the Sikh shrines in Pakistan

Sept 20, 2022

Amrita Pande, Banu Subramaniam, C Sathyamala | Birth controlled: Selective reproduction and neoliberal eugenics in South Africa and India



SEPT 30, 2022

ASIM WAQIF

ARTIST TALK: DECENTRALISING THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Bangladesh

Oct 6, 2022

Chander Shekhar | Projection of Self in Indo-Persian Historical Texts of 17-18th C: From Asad Beg Qazvini to Shakir Khan

Oct 11, 2022

US-India Partnership: A New Paradigm in a Changed World

Oct 13, 2022

Climate Resilience in the Global South: Perspectives from South Asia



OCT 13, 2022

AKSHAYA MUKUL

WRITER, REBEL, SOLDIER, LOVER: THE MANY LIVES OF AGYEYA

Oct 17, 2022

Supriya Chaudhuri | Modernism, Realism and Catastrophe: Local and Global Aesthetics in Mid-Twentieth Century India

Oct 18, 2022

Sukanta Chaudhuri | On Translation: Tagore and Beyond

Oct 27, 2022

Nikky-Guninder K. Singh | Poems from the Guru Granth Sahib

Nov 7, 2022

Ghazal Asif Farrukhi | Marvi's Sisters: Hindu Belonging and the Muslim State in Pakistan

Nov 2, 2022

Taha Siddiqui, Tasneem Khalil, Masrat Zahra



NOV 3, 2022

JASON FELCH

CHASING SHIVA: INVESTIGATING THE MARKET IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN ANTIQUITIES

| Exiled Journalists: Media Un-freedom in South Asian Democracies

Nov 16, 2022

Gilles Vernier | Why Women Run for Office?: The Meaning of Political Engagement

SPRING 2023

Feb 9, 2023

Choi Chatterjee | Leo Tolstoy and Rabindranath Tagore: Principles of Global Thinking

Feb 14, 2023

Alexander Jabbari | The Making of Persianate Modernity

Feb 23, 2023

Swarnavel Eswaran | Kattumaram (Catamaran)

Feb 27, 2023

Amit Ahuja | Internal Security in India: Violence, Order, and the State

March 3, 2023

Deven Patel | An Epic 20th-century Sanskrit Life Story: Baldev Upadhyaya and Srinivas

FEB 21, 2023

NANCY UM

THE ART OF WOOD AND ITS NARRATIVES OF MOBILITY ACROSS THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN



FEB 28, 2023

MADHAV DESHPANDE

KSHATRIYAHOOD DISPUTES IN 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY MAHARASHTRA



Rath's Baladevacarita-mahākāvya

Mar 7, 2023  
Jyoti Thottam | Sisters of Mokama: The Pioneering Women Who Brought Hope and Healing to India

Mar 13, 2023  
Osman Khan | Road to Hybridabad

OCT 17, 2023



LUTHER J OBROCK  
SANSKRIT IN THE COURT OF SULTAN ZAYN: RETHINKING LITERATURE AND HISTORY IN 15TH CENTURY KASHMI

Oct 3, 2023  
Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub | Bollywood: Representations of Muslims in Culture & Society

Oct 11, 2023  
Sonali Dhingra: Making Monumental Figural Sculpture at Ratnagiri, Odisha (ca. 8th-10th centuries)

Oct 11, 2023

Dalit: Surviving India's Caste System

Feb 14, 2024  
Teena Purohit | Sunni Chauvinism and the Roots of Muslim Modernism

FEB 15, 2024  
Welcome Reception | Ambassador Dr. K. Srikar Reddy, the Consul General for India at San Francisco

MAR 7, 2024

MUDIT TRIVEDI



ARCHAEOLOGIES OF IMAN: FRAGILITY, ORNAMENT AND THE EMBRACE OF ISLAM IN MEDIEVAL NORTH INDIA

Feb 21, 2024  
Yamini Narayanan | 'Save Cow, Save India': Interspecific vulnerabilities in India's cow protection politics

Feb 27, 2024  
Anil Swarup | On the Role of Bureaucracy in Fostering India's Ascent

Feb 29, 2024  
Daniel Morgan | Beyond Networks: Sufi Letters & Intellectual History in 18th Century North India

Mar 5, 2024  
Nadeem Omar Tarar | Crafting the Art Education in Pakistan: An Archival History of NCA

MAR 21, 2024

VASUGI KAILASAM



THE PROGRESSIVE TAMIL NOVEL IN SOUTH ASIA

Mar 6, 2024  
Kirin Narayan | The Mystery of the Mistris: Following Family Stories to Ellora

Mar 13, 2024  
Sreenivasan Jain | Countering Falsehoods / Discourses of Power

Mar 21, 2024  
Amrita Jhaveri + Manjari Sihare-Sutin | Vital Love: Collectors Speak Series

APR 2, 2024

SUDIPTA SEN



REVISITING GANGES: THE MANY PASTS OF AN INDIAN RIVER

Apr 7, 2024  
Shashank Subramanyam | An afternoon of Carnatic music with the renowned flautist from India

Apr 9, 2024  
Bradley Gardner | Two Years After Sri Lanka's Historic Default: Lessons Learned and What Comes Next

APR 25, 2024

AUDREY TRUSCHKE



THE LANGUAGE OF HISTORY: SANSKRIT NARRATIVES OF INDO-MUSLIM RULE

Apr 10, 2024  
Susmita Basu Majumdar | Asoka and the Afterlives of Asokan Edicts

Apr 18, 2024  
Devika Singh | A transnational history of art in India

OCT 24, 2023



ABHISHEK SINGHVI  
SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IN INDIA: IN THE PURSUIT OF EQUALITY AND JUSTICE BY THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

Padma Dorje Maitland: Emotional Fragments and Modern Networks of Buddhist Materiality in India

Oct 12, 2023  
Anush Kapadia | A Political Theory of Money

Oct 23, 2023  
Suraj Yengde | The Moral Cost of Caste

Oct 31, 2023  
Jawad Sharif | Indus Blues: The Forgotten Music of Pakistan

NOV 16, 2023



P. SAINATH  
TELLING THE STORIES OF CLIMATE CRISIS, INEQUALITY AND JUSTICE IN 2023

Nov 7, 2023  
Manoj Mitta | Caste Pride: Battles for Equality in Hindu India

Nov 8 2023  
Hafsa Kanjwal | Colonizing Kashmir: State-building Under Indian Occupation.

Mar 5, 2024  
Nadeem Omar Tarar | Crafting the Art Education in Pakistan: An Archival History of NCA

APR 11, 2023



ARFA KHANUM SHERWANI  
INDIA AT 75: THE DOWNGRADING OF INDIA'S DEMOCRACY AND ROLE OF THE PRESS

Women of Color Can Redefine Power in Corporate America

Apr 4, 2023  
Aruna Ranganathan | Asynchronous Teamwork and Gender Differences in Performance: A Study of Folk Musicians in India



APR 13, 2023  
PRANAB BARDHAN  
A WORLD OF INSECURITY: DEMOCRATIC DISENCHANTMENT IN RICH AND POOR COUNTRIES

Mar 14, 2023  
Sree Padma Holt | Vibhishana's Metamorphosis in the Ramayana and Beyond: A Query

Mar 21, 2023  
Deepa Purushothaman | The First, The Few, The Only: How

Apr 13, 2023  
Sujata Patel, D. Parthasarathy, George Jose | Mumbai / Bombay: Majoritarian Neoliberalism, Informality, Resistance, and Wellbeing

April 17, 2023  
Dror Wahrman | The Prince, the Jeweler and the Mogul: The Paradoxes on an Early Modern Object

Apr 18, 2023  
Rochona Majumdar | Anger and its Aftermath in Indian Cinemat

April 25, 2023  
Sadhana Naithani | Narratives Within: Wild Animals of India in Colonial British Writing

Apr 27, 2023  
Michael Hutt | Nepalese Dalit literature

FEB 1, 2024



ADITYA BALASUBRAMANIAN  
TOWARD A FREE ECONOMY: SWATANTRA AND OPPOSITION POLITICS IN DEMOCRATIC INDIA

Nov 17, 2023  
Peter Flugel | The Jaina Prosopography Database: A New Tool for the Humanities

Dec 5, 2023  
Iftikhar Dadi, Rebecca M. Brown, Ming Tiampo, & Atreyee Gupta | New Directions in Modernist Studies

SPRING 2024

Jan 23, 2024  
Gemini Wahhaj | The Children of This Madness

FALL 2023

Sept 12, 2023  
Peter van Riel | A short history of the Indos: On the migration of Indo-Dutch and Indo-Americans 1950-2020

Sept 28, 2023  
Joyojeet Pal | Social Media Influencers and Political Capture in India

Feb 8, 2024  
Claire Roosien | Babur's Grandsons: Pirimqul Qodirov's 'Starry Nights' and the South Asian Imaginary in Soviet Uzbekistan

Feb 13, 2024  
Yashica Dutt | Coming Out As

FEB 22, 2024



BRIAN BOND  
COMMUNAL AFFECTS: PAKISTANI CASSETTES, SUFI MUSIC, AND INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS ON INDIA'S WESTERN BORDER

OCT 5, 2023



JACOB P. DALTON  
CONJURING THE BUDHA: RITUAL MANUALS IN EARLY TANTRIC BUDDHISM

**Gaurav Banerjee** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies) was a recipient of an American Institute of Indian Studies Language grant to attend the Mughal Persian program in Lucknow, India, in the summer of 2024.

**Pronoy Chakraborty** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies) received the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies' 2023-24 Graduate Student Prize for Sanskrit.

### ANIBEL FERUS-COMELO AWARDED THE COMMUNITY ENGAGED TEACHING FACULTY AWARD FOR 2021-2022

Dr. Anibel Ferus-Comelo, Director of Community-Engaged Academic Initiatives, the UC Berkeley Labor Center, received a Chancellor's Award for Public Service in 2022. Through her courses at Berkeley, Ferus-Comelo has partnered with 29 organizations in the Bay Area that have



Anibel Ferus-Comelo

focused on various challenges such as housing, climate justice, teacher unions, and more. This prestigious award recognizes her outstanding commitment to integrating community engagement into her teaching, her innovative approach to service-learning, and her impactful collaborations with local organizations, exemplifying the transformative potential of community-engaged education.

**Johnathan Guy** (PhD Student, Political Science) was awarded the Katherine S. and James K. Lau Graduate Fellowship in Climate Equity to support his dissertation research titled, *Selecting for Solar: Electricity Planning, State Structures, and the Politics of Distributive Control*, in India and Indonesia.

**Petra Lamberson** (PhD Student, South and Southeast Asian Studies) was the recipient of the Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Teaching Award for 2023-24 for teaching courses on South Asia. She was also awarded a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad grant as well as the Institute's Berreman-Yamanaka to support her research titled *Identities in Situ: The Contested Sacred Sites of Nepal*.

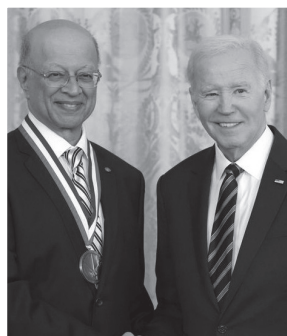
**Piyush Narang** (MA, Development Practice) was awarded the Zilberman Award for Outstanding Capstone Project and a \$250 Prize for his poster on Cooling Shelters for vulnerable

populations during heat waves in India for the Climate Showcase: Innovation Expo at the BERC Summit 2024.

**Ariana Pemberton** (PhD Student, History of Art) was awarded the Fulbright Nehru Research Award to conduct doctoral research in 2024-25. She was also awarded the Decorative Arts Trust Research Grant to study the "Elephant of Charlemagne" ivory chess piece purportedly gifted by the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid to the Roman emperor Charlemagne. In Spring 2024, Ariana presented research from her dissertation on medieval ivory at the Getty Research Institute Graduate Symposium in Los Angeles, the Arts of the Indian Ocean Conference in Toronto, and the 36th Congress of the Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art in Lyons.

### ASHOK GADGIL AWARDED THE NATIONAL MEDAL OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR 2023

Berkeley Lab's Ashok Gadgil was awarded the National Medal of



Ashok Gadgil with President Biden

Technology and Innovation, the nation's highest honor, for 2023 in recognition of his exceptional contributions to sustainable development and humanitarian engineering. His ground-breaking work

includes the development of UV Waterworks, a low-cost water purification system, and the Berkeley-Darfur Stove, an efficient cooking stove designed to reduce fuel consumption and emissions. Gadgil's innovations have had a profound global impact, addressing critical public health and environmental challenges, and exemplifying the role of technology in advancing human well-being and sustainability.

**Krishna Shekhawat** (PhD Student, History of Art) was awarded the Decorative Arts Trust Research Grant to study an 18th-century palanquin in the collection of the Mehrangarh Fort Museum. She also presented research from her dissertation on Jodhpur at the Decorative Arts Trust's Emerging Scholars Colloquium and co-organized the eighth annual Berkeley/Stanford Symposium at SFMOMA. In Fall 2023, she founded the Art Histories of South Asia Townsend Center Working Group.

### ABHISHEK KAICKER AWARDED THE BERLIN PRIZE FOR SPRING 2025

The American Academy in Berlin has awarded Dr. Abhishek Kaicker, Associate Professor of History at UC Berkeley, the prestigious Berlin Prize for Spring 2025. Awarded annually to US-based scholars, writers, composers, and artists, from the humanities and social sciences



Abhishek Kaicker

to journalism, public policy, fiction, the visual arts, and music composition, who represent the highest standards of excellence in their fields, the Berlin Prize provides recipients the time and resources to advance important scholarly and artistic projects, free from the constraints of other professional obligations. Kaicker will spend a semester at the Academy's Hans Arnhold Center in Berlin, pursuing his project, *The Colors of Life in Late Mughal Delhi: A Biography of Anand Ram Mukhlis*.

**Sara Sohail** (PhD Student, South & Southeast Asian Studies) was the recipient of an American Institute of Indian Studies Language grant to attend the Mughal Persian program in Lucknow, India, in the summer of 2024.

### TAUSIF NOOR AWARDED THE GRACE DUDLEY PRIZE FOR ART WRITING AND AN ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION ARTS WRITERS GRANT

Tausif Noor, PhD student in the Department of History of Art, is the recipient of two prestigious awards



Tausif Noor

for excellence in art writing: the 2023 Grace Dudley Prize for Arts Writing from the Robert B. Silvers Foundation and the 2023 Andy Warhol Foundation/Creative Capital Arts Writers Grant for Short Form Writing.

Tausif's research focuses on global modern and contemporary art with a focus on South Asia and its histories of decolonization.

Faculty Spotlight

# FROM UC BERKELEY TO RURAL INDIA, AN ANTHROPOLOGIST WORKS TO EXPAND LIBRARY ACCESS

by, Kenny Ma, Lilah Klein, Berkeley News

In her many years of fieldwork in rural central India, UC Berkeley Anthropology Professor Aarti Sethi pondered what could make a real difference in the lives of people there. She realized the answer was knowledge: a public library system, an asset scarcely available in the region, which would open doors to literacy and knowledge.

In India, there is no national public library system. Marginalized communities have little access to basic educa-

tional resources. Sethi's realization of this disparity led to her involvement in the Free Library Network, a collective effort pushing for a national public library system in India. Along with her longtime collaborator, Indrajit Labhane of the Free Library Network, Sethi helped open the first community library in a small village in rural Maharashtra, a state in western India.

The impact of this first library project was immediate and profound. Within

two months, the library gained about 200 members, predominantly children, indicating a voracious appetite for reading and knowledge in the community. This initiative not only facilitated access to books, but also created a public space fostering learning and growth for first-generation readers.



Aarti Sethi

"The joy of watching a child open a book for the first time in a library is indescribable," Sethi said. "A library is not just about reading; it's about opening doors to a world of possibilities that were previously inaccessible. I think what is so moving to me is to watch children travel with their imagination. A library says that you can be a child in a small village in central India and yet the whole world is open to you to think with, to travel in, to discover through books."

Watching the small rural village's enthusiasm and excitement about this library led Sethi to strive to build more libraries to benefit more first-generation readers, children whose parents didn't go to school or dropped out at a young age. In India, there is no national policy for a public library system. Sethi and Labhane are part of an effort to draft a national policy on libraries for India.

They're also advocating for its introduction in the Indian Parliament.

Sethi said state-funded libraries must be a fundamental right.

"Libraries are more than just book repositories; they are vibrant hubs of learning and discovery, especially in areas where educational resources are scarce," Sethi said. "Our mission in establishing these libraries is to ignite a love for learning and provide equal opportunities for knowledge access."

She added that a library should be a basic social institution.

"When we say reading is a fundamental right, we mean something much larger than books," Sethi said. "Particularly in countries like India, in which large sections of society have been denied access to education, information and knowledge, public libraries perform a critical role in creating a space for equal access to information. Libraries

Libraries are more than just book repositories; they are vibrant hubs of learning and discovery.

— Aarti Sethi, UC Berkeley professor

## RECENT ISAS FACULTY TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE SOCIETY OF HELLMAN FELLOWS

The Society of Hellman Fellows is an endowed program at all ten University of California campuses that provides research funding to promising assistant professors who show capacity for great distinction in their chosen fields.

gion, and technologies and institutions of governance shared between Tibet, Inner Asia and China. The Hellman Fellowship will assist in the completion of her first book - *The World the Medicine Buddha Built: Tibetan Medical Governance in Qing Inner Asia*. The book reveals how a vast network of Buddhist medical institutions brought Tibetan and Mongolian technologies to the heart of imperial governance as the Qing Empire expanded over Inner Asia.

2022  
**VASUGI KAILASAM** (South & Southeast Asian Studies)  
*Tamil Realisms: Reading the Global Tamil Novel*



Professor Kailasam's research concerns global Tamil literatures, postcolonial literature and filmic and digital cultures of contemporary South Asia and its diasporas. Her Hellman award, along with joint funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), and the Doreen B Townsend Center, will contribute toward the completion of her first book project titled *Tamil Realisms: Reading the Global Tamil Novel*, which investigates the growth and the evolution of the postcolonial Tamil realist novel produced in India, Sri Lanka, and the South-east Asian countries of Singapore and Malaysia from the 1940s to the 1980s.

2022  
**AYESHA MAHMUD** (Demography)  
*Climate shocks and Population Dynamics: Characterizing Climate-driven Population Migration and Displacement Patterns in Bangladesh*



Professor Mahmud is a demographer, who is broadly interested in the interplay between human population changes, environmental factors, and infectious disease dynamics. Her Hellman project aims to understand whether certain populations are more vulnerable to climate-driven displacement, and whether patterns of displacement (for example, how long people are displaced for) are mediated by certain factors (for example, household income). The focus will be on South Asia, a region that is particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change.



2023  
**ZACHARY LAMB** (City & Regional Planning)  
*Manufacturing Resilience: Climate Equity for Residents of California's Mobile Home Parks*

Professor Lamb's research interests include climate change adaptation, affordable housing, shared equity housing, and manufactured housing. His Hellman project will use a mix of methods to assess the threats faced by residents of California's manufactured home parks from climate change and insecure housing. Berkeley, he was an Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Civil, Architectural & Environmental Engineering at UT-Austin.



2023  
**AARTI SETHI** (Anthropology)  
*Republic of Readers: Libraries, Democracy, and the Public Sphere in Contemporary India*

Professor Sethi's research interests include agrarian anthropology, the politics of knowledge, political economy, comparative religion, debt and capitalism, and feminist theory. Her Hellman book project is an account of a community library coming into being in a village located in the central Indian cotton-belt. The book brings together an ethnography of the making of this village library, a historical inquiry into colonial and postcolonial libraries, and a broader philosophical and theoretical investigation of the relationship between rural citizenship and readership.



2023  
**STACEY VAN VLEET** (History)  
*The World the Medicine Buddha Built: Tibetan Medical Governance in Qing Inner Asia*

Professor Van Vleet's research examines the history of medicine, reli-



Aarti Sethi is surrounded by about a dozen kids listening to her read. They're gathered in front of a library bookshelf, a space the Sethi has advocated people to have greater access to

empower people's ability to participate in society."

UC Berkeley Library, a system of 20 libraries, holds materials (cont'd on p. 22)

## TRIBUTE TO BOB AND SALLY GOLDMAN

In Spring 2022, Professor Robert Goldman and Dr. Sally Sutherland Goldman retired after fifty and forty years, respectively, of teaching and research at Berkeley, marking the end of a significant era in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies.



Bob and Sally Goldman

### TRANSLATING VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA

Bob & Sally led a 40-year project to translate the Valmiki Ramayana to modern English.

Read the full story about their translation project and watch a video of Prof. Goldman reciting a Ramayana passage at

[BIT.LY/RAMAYANA-TRANSLATION-PROJECT](https://bit.ly/Ramayana-translation-project)

Renowned for their exceptional scholarship and dedication to the study of ancient Indian languages and literatures, the Goldmans have been central figures in the field of Sanskrit studies.

Their work has not only enriched the academic community at Berkeley but has also had a profound impact on the broader understanding

of Indian culture and history. Bob Goldman is particularly celebrated for his work on the critical edition and translation of the Sanskrit epic, the *Ramayana*. His multi-volume translation of the *Ramayana*, undertaken with the help of his wife, Sally, is regarded as a monumental contribution to the field and is widely used by scholars and students alike. Sally Goldman has been instrumental in teaching and guiding students, providing them with the tools to navigate the complexities of Sanskrit grammar and literature. Together, the Goldmans have mentored generations of students, many of whom have gone on to become prominent scholars in their own right.

The couple's retirement leaves a significant legacy at UC Berkeley, where they have helped to maintain the university's reputation as a leading center for the study of South Asian languages and cultures. Their contributions to the field, through both their teaching and scholarly work, will continue to influence the study of Sanskrit for years to come. The university community and their colleagues celebrate their achievements and wish them well in their retirement, recognizing the lasting impact they have made on the academic world.

To honor their illustrious careers and their innumerable contributions to the field of South Asian Studies, the Institute organized a two-day conference that brought together current and former students of the Goldmans who continue their scholarly legacy. The event featured presentations, reflections by Bob and Sally, and a lighthearted fireside chat with Munis Faruqi. The festivities concluded with

a celebratory dinner, highlighted by a recitation of a poem penned by Penny Edwards in honor of Bob and Sally. ❖

### A TOAST TO BOB AND SALLY

A poem by Penny Edwards, the Walter and Elise Haas Professor of Asian Studies and Professor of Southeast Asian Studies

If you think Sanskrit is a reach  
Just remember  
Lisa's leech:  
No simple squishy worm:  
But every doctor's dream intern,  
These "sweet",  
"medical actants"  
Thrive under the right guidance.



Penny Edwards

And when Lisa spoke of "*poṣaṇa*"  
As the arts of "proper nurturance"  
And of doctors "*learning to understand*  
*And appreciate their behavior*  
*and enrol them in suitable...*"  
I wondered "Is this the secret  
to Bob's advising?"  
Sure enough, Bob popped the question:  
were they treated "as children"  
or "as collaborators" with a  
"vision of their own?"

And when Lauren Bausch spoke of souls,  
Expanded on ritual fires and roles  
And on the Brāhmaṇa texts that  
[to quote her learned paper]  
Made it easier for students  
"to remember sacrificial procedures"

I was only too relieved  
That Jenkin Leung had



Bob and Sally reminiscing about their careers in a fireside chat with Munis

### IN CONVERSATION WITH THE GOLDMANS

From poring over texts translated in collaboration to donning a motorcycle helmet in Pune to protect against bats, day 1 of the conference closed with the Goldmans regaling the audience with anecdotes and stories about their decades-long experiences in academia—and around each other! Nudged by ISAS Director Munis Faruqi's playful questions, Bob and Sally reminisced about idiosyncratic and intellectual aspects of a journey that began with them discovering Indian languages and cultures as students and culminated in their recognition as the world's foremost scholars of Sanskrit.

See a video recording of the conversation at [BIT.LY/GOLDMANS-IN-CONVERSATION](https://bit.ly/goldmans-in-conversation)

(cont'd from p. 21) in more than 400 languages and over 14 million volumes that are available to the campus community and the public. The importance of brick-and-mortar libraries, like those on campus, cannot be overstated, said University Librarian Jeffrey MacKie-Mason.

"Physical libraries are not book museums," he said. "They are lively meeting grounds bringing together learners and experts who collaborate to find, evaluate and use the world's knowledge to create better futures."

At Berkeley, even with its easy access to a world-class library system, Sethi discovered that many of her students,



In January 2024, Aarti Sethi gathered with children in the Yavatmal District, Maharashtra, beneath a sign that translates to: "Community Library, Tirjhada."

who are accustomed to digital media, were unfamiliar with navigating physical libraries. This led to her integrating library orientation into her courses, with students exploring the stacks in UC Berkeley's library system and engaging with physical books.

These library expeditions revealed that the students were missing out on self-directed learning experiences and the joy of discovering knowledge through books. Her students wrote letters describing the joy of rifling through books on a shelf instead of scrolling on a screen.

"There is an experience that you get from wandering around the stacks that just does not compare to using a search engine, which is optimized and algorithmic," one student wrote. "You can find so many interesting things that you did not even go into the library looking for."

Added another: "The challenge with digital methods of exploring research was that the popularity of certain texts usually influenced the type of options that I was led to. ... Thanks to this class activity, I was physically shown that the opportunity to take greater control over

the knowledge I was exposed to sat within the thousands of rows of texts housed in the libraries."

Sethi said she hopes library orientation, particularly how to navigate the stacks, can become a standard part of undergraduate education, enabling students to fully utilize the rich resources available to them.

Sethi's experiences in India and the U.S. highlight a global challenge in knowledge access and literacy. In India, the struggle lies in the absence of a structured public library system, whereas in the U.S., the issue is more about reacquainting students with the value of physical libraries in an increasingly digital world.

"In both rural India and at UC Berkeley, I've seen the transformative power of libraries," Sethi said. "Whether it's introducing first-generation readers to books or helping digital-native students discover the depth of physical libraries, these spaces are essential for nurturing informed, curious and engaged learners." ❖

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survived Sanskrit classes  
To write his Honors thesis,  
And lived to tell the Tale of  
the Yakṣa King (夜叉王)  
Alias the ten headed monarch,  
十頭王 Thập Đầu Vương,  
And how a kingdom of monkeys  
rebirthed the Ramayana  
In the City of Champa

Fast forward to nineteenth  
century Burma,  
Where the monk, Shin Nyanabhivamsa,  
Was recruited to translate  
Sanskrit texts to consecrate  
King Bòdawhpayà's hold on power  
Among them, the *Rājābhiseka*

But for all those texts on coronations  
What seized Burmese imaginations  
Was that most beloved drama,  
Known in Cambodia as the *Reamker*  
Whose fave rave is Sovann Macha  
The mermaid queen wooed by Hanuman.

But back to Burma, where King Mindon  
Fuming at the vile tricks  
of those temple-snatching Brits  
Sent his troupe to Rangoon  
To perform the abduction of Sita  
As a warning to Queen Vic,  
About the power of colonial karma.  
And where years later, memes  
of Sita and Ravana  
Banned by the Myanmar junta,  
Protested Aung San Suu Kyi's captivity.

Now back to Cambodia, where  
Sophearith wrote of *pchum ben*,  
Where ritual and language,  
Khmer and Sanskrit conjoin  
In a ceremony to honor the ancestors,  
transmitted across generations  
Reshaping *śrāddha* through  
indigenization.

And Ian wrote of solar kings

and naga queens  
Ancestral grandmas on an elephant hunt,  
Through Old Khmer terms like "*śākha*"  
rooted in Sanskrit for branch,  
Deciphered stone deeds to  
many a tenth century ranch  
And translated those  
pearly terms to trace  
The land within a lord's embrace  
The stela of *Sdok Kok Thom* King  
and Queen did celebrate.  
It also nailed real estate:  
"*Clumsily etched on a slab of schist*"  
Mother, daughter, and sister  
Often loomed larger than their misters.

Which brings me to Queen Indradevī  
whose 12th century eulogy  
Inscribed at the Temple of Phimeanakas  
Praised her late 'sis' Jayarājadevī  
Who, "*installed as lecturer*", "*constantly  
lectured to the assembly*"  
"*Among the lovelies who loved learning*"  
She "*scattered lovely nectars*"  
"*Wise by nature, a polymath*"  
Her "*learning bested the  
best philosophers*"

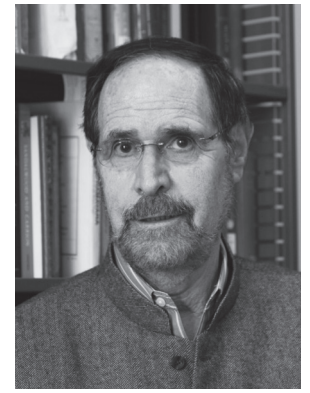
And well – of course, I thought of Sally  
Who in that place named  
"*temple of patience*"  
That tower of eloquence  
- Dwinelle, no less -  
helped students of Southeast Asia  
Siyonn Sophearith, Ian Lowman,  
Jenkin Leung and Trent Walker  
(to whom I owe this regal translation)  
Make sense of all that royal graffiti

So let's raise a toast to Bob and Sally  
And to all the incredible  
students they have trained  
In the language of Gods  
– and of women!

—Penny Edwards, 29 April 2022

## WHAT A LONG, STRANGE TRIP: HOW DID A NICE JEWISH KID FROM BROOKLYN END UP AS THE PROFESSOR OF SANSKRIT AT UC BERKELEY?

by Robert  
Goldman



Robert P. Goldman

Over my more than forty-five years of teaching Sanskrit and India Studies at the university level the question I have been most frequently asked by my students, my colleagues, and my innumerable friends in India and in the Indian diaspora is, "How did you get to be a Sanskrit scholar?" This is not just an idle question about a normal career choice, as one might ask someone, "What made you choose Accounting or Neurology?" and so on. For me the question has always come with a (mostly) unspoken expression of surprise indicating the questioner's curiosity which could perhaps be framed more clearly as follows: "You aren't Indian (are you?) So why and how have you given your life over to the study of Indian culture and civilization through the medium of India's most difficult and demanding language."

For the many, deeply learned Shas-  
tris, Pandits and academic (cont'd on p. 24)

## CELEBRATING THE GOLDMANS

April 29 – 30, 2022  
International House, Berkeley

### A G E N D A

FRI, APRIL 29

9:30 am: Opening Remarks

9:50-11:05 PANEL 1

Moderator: Deven M. Patel

- KASHI GOMEZ: On Finding Adopted Daughters in a Bahuvrīhi
- TRAVIS LAMAR SMITH: *Veśyā and Veśā*: Courtesans and the Matriarchal Household
- JESSE KNUTSON: *Babhūva tumulam yuddham*: The Syntax of Violence in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the "tumula Verse-Type"

11:15-12:30 Panel 2

Moderator: Adheesh Sathaye

- MICHAEL SLOUBER: Coming Full Circle
- VESNA A. WALLACE: The Applications and Interpretations of the *Kāvyadarśa* in Inner Asia
- SEAN KERR: Buddhist Spins on Mindfulness of Breathing

1:30-2:50 Panel 3

Moderator: Michael Slouber

- PRIYA KOTHARI: On the Politics of Preaching Stories of Krishna in Gujarat
- KRISTI WILEY: Vidyādhara in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki and the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra* of Hemacandra
- ALEXANDRA CIOLAC: Illustrating a *laghukāvya*: Jain Illuminated Manuscripts of the Bhaktāmara Stotra

What is a Leech? (And Why or How Should You Care)

- JENKIN LEUNG: The *Rāmāyaṇa* in Literary Chinese Texts
- LAUREN BAUSCH: *Vedic ātmans*

4:30-5:45 pm REFLECTIONS

Professor Robert Goldman and Dr. Sally Sutherland Goldman in conversation with Professor Munis D. Faruqi

SAT, APRIL 30

9:30-10:45 am Panel 5

Moderator: Lauren Bausch

- ISHAAN SHARMA: When Gods Play Messenger: Examining Krishna's Theophany in the Kuru Court
- LUTHER OBROCK: Like Some *Rāmāyaṇa* or *Mahābhārata*: Kalhana on Narration and History
- PETRA LAMBERSON: Identities in Situ: The Contested Sacred Sites of Nepal

10:55-12:10 pm Panel 6

Moderator: Travis LaMar Smith

- DEVEN M. PATEL: *Triśaṅku ṭīkā*: An Argument for Sanskrit Literary Commentary as Translation
- JANET UM: Framing Daṇḍin: Author as Character in the *Avantisundarī*
- ADHEESH SATHAYE: How (Not) to Translate a Sanskrit Joke



Bob and Sally with their current and former students.

3-4:20 Panel 4

Moderator: Luther Obrock

- LISA ALLETTE BROOKS: Who or

(cont'd from p. 23) Sanskrit scholars with whom I have studied and worked over the past fifty years and more in India, the question was easily resolved. As these colleagues often said, "You must have been an Indian in a previous birth!" This is meant as a compliment and that is exactly how I have always taken it as it is intended to show that the speaker is impressed with what little mastery of the vast and rich tradition of Sanskrit learning that I, a westerner, have managed to acquire. The idea is inspired by the time-honored idea in the Indian tradition that a person's knowledge, inclinations and tastes are strongly influenced by his or her experiences in previous lives. A term for these latent influences is *vasana*, literally "perfuming" and it is thought that these impressions carry on from birth to birth as a sort of transmigrational unconscious. As the great poet-playwright Kalidasa put it so beautifully in his most famous drama, *Shakuntala*.

"When seeing beautiful sights and hearing sweet sounds even a happy man is filled with a sense of longing. Surely he must be unconsciously recalling loving relationships from previous lives deeply fixed in their hearts."

And maybe this is not far from the truth, for who really knows what determines a person's tastes, desires and choices? But, let me confine this brief *atmakatha*.

Life, as the Beatles sang, can be a long and winding road or even, as the Grateful Dead would put it, a long, strange trip and my circuitous journey took a sharp turn in 1961 when I was an enthusiastic young pre-medical student majoring in Chemistry at Columbia College. One of the great things about being an undergraduate at Columbia is the College's insistence on a truly "liberal education" for all its students, who are

thus required to take a series of courses on the history of western civilization, philosophy, literature etc. which constituted its then heavily Eurocentric "core curriculum."

In my sophomore year, a change was introduced to the rather rigid course requirements, which allowed sophomores to substitute for a previously required course on the history of western social science a two-semester sequence, which, in those old, pre-Saidian days, was innocently called "Oriental Civilization". In this course one covered a history of the great civilizations of India, China and Japan from the earliest surviving records down to the present day. This course, taught by outstanding senior scholars in the three areas, was an extraordinary eye opener to American students like me who, educated in our public schools, had had virtually no exposure to any of the history or rich cultural traditions of Asia.

I found the amazing cultures, societies and civilizations of China and Japan to be absolutely fascinating. But, as for the segment on India, well, I was just completely entranced by its philosophy, its religious traditions, its literature, its arts... in short, everything. I asked my teachers to suggest further courses and they directed me to Columbia's extensive curriculum in Indian history, music, art and so on. But when I asked how I could get to learn about the culture in a truly profound way they said, "You should take Sanskrit."

And so I did, for Columbia was and remains one of the very few American universities to offer instruction in this amazing language. Once I was exposed to the complexity, expressiveness and beauty of the *devavani*. "The language of the gods" and the vast and varied body of texts in a wide spectrum of fields of

knowledge and literary genres written in the language I was, as they say, hooked. I changed my major to "Oriental Studies" (i.e. Sanskrit) and, after graduation, did my graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania completing my doctoral dissertation on the *Mahabharata* after two years of intensive studies with learned Shastris in India, mainly in Pune, a city with a storied history of Sanskrit scholarship. My dear mother was, it is true, perhaps a bit disappointed that I did not go on in medicine, but she at least had the pleasure of introducing me to her friends as Dr. Goldman. She never needed to specify exactly what kind of doctor I was.

In India I read and spoke Sanskrit with traditionally trained Sanskrit scholars virtually every day in all kinds of texts but especially steeped myself in the great Sanskrit epic poems, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. My fascination with these great works and the culture of which they are so seminal a part was so great that it led me to devote the greater portion of my career to the translation and annotation of the original *Ramayana* composed by the poet seer Valmiki. After some forty years and seven large volumes, I am happy to say that the work—done in collaboration with other Sanskrit scholars—is now complete.

After teaching for a year at the University of Rochester (New York) I came to Berkeley where, apart from my many visits and long stays in India I have been happily teaching Sanskrit and Indian literature to generations of graduate and undergraduate students. For my part I think I could not have made a better choice of career. ❖

An earlier version of this appeared in *Khabar* 2016.

## ISAS AWARDED US DEPT. OF EDUCATION TITLE VI AWARD FOR SOUTH ASIA STUDIES!

The Institute for South Asia Studies (ISAS) is among a select group of academic institutions awarded Title VI funding by the U.S. Department of Education for the 2022-26 grant cycle.

The grant, totaling just over \$2 million over four years for the National Resource Center (NRC) component and for Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships, will support and promote course development and pedagogy related to South Asian languages and content; workshops, seminars and visiting lectures; collaboration with local, regional and national media, business, and government officials; and outreach to K-14 schools.

The NRC program has been important to ensuring the global diversity of United States-based university research, teaching, and community outreach. Many strong South Asia programs around the country compete to be National Resource Centers. Berkeley's selection is testimony to the great strength of its faculty and students, its deep community support, and the continuing commitment of administrators

across campus to sustaining an over one hundred year engagement with South Asia Studies. ISAS is grateful to both the Department of Education and Congress for sustaining the NRC program.

The FLAS enables students—both graduate students and exceptional undergraduates, in both primary research and professional fields—to study language intensively and to link language study to focused regional study relevant to that language. It is a critical support to training students rigorously and to supporting them with scholarships. FLAS, along with the dedicated support of the Bay Area community, has enabled this campus to be a national center for many South Asian languages, including Bangla, Hindi, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.

The importance of these grants cannot be underestimated. At Berkeley, it has enabled the Institute to focus attention on both research and teaching in emerging areas of scholarship across the sciences and engineering, the social sciences, and the humanities. It has enabled ISAS to build links to community colleges and primary and secondary schools. It has helped support the ISAS staff whose knowledge and abilities have connected faculty and students with communities across the Bay Area and beyond. Finally, these grants have allowed ISAS to continue its cutting edge work and programs on South Asia. ❖

## DAISY ROCKWELL WINS THE BOOKER FOR HER TRANSLATION OF TOMB OF SAND

Former Associate Director of the then Center for South Asia Studies (2003-2007), Dr. Daisy Rockwell, has been awarded the 2022 International Booker Prize and the 2022 Warwick Prize for Women



in Translation for her Hindi to English translation of Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand*. *Tomb of Sand* is the first novel translated from an Indian language to win the Booker award. Dr. Rockwell is a painter and a translator of Hindi and Urdu literature. She has translated a number of classic works of Hindi and Urdu literature, including Upendranath Ashk's *Falling Walls*, Bhasham Sahni's *Tamas*, and Khadija Mastur's *The Women's Courtyard*. Her 2019 translation of Krishna Sobti's *A Gujarat Here, a Gujarat There* was awarded the Modern Language Association's Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Translation Prize. As an artist she paints under the *takhallus*, or alias, *Lapata*, which is Urdu for "missing," or "absconded." ❖



## NEW SOUTH ASIA FACULTY



**LUTHER OBROCK**, a Sanskritist, returns to his alma mater UC Berkeley as an Assistant Professor of Sanskrit in the Department of South and Southeast

Asian Studies and teaches a wide range of topics, including early Indian civilization, epics in South Asia, Hindu-Muslim religious interaction, as well as advanced Sanskrit readings. Luther is interested in the literary and cultural history of second millennium South Asia, particularly the production of Sanskrit literature during the Sultanate period. Dr. Obrock concentrates on *kāvya*, or elite ornate poetry in Sanskrit, and its continued use and relevance in medieval India. His current research focuses on literary histories of Kashmir from the twelfth through the sixteenth century. Before arriving at Berkeley, he was Sanskrit lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania and Assistant Professor in South Asian Religions at the University of Toronto. Obrock received his MA from UC Berkeley in 2008 and earned his doctorate in 2015.



**AJAY PILLARISETTI** is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at UC Berkeley's School of Public Health. Dr. Pillarisetti's research

focuses on measuring and modeling the health, climate, and economic impacts of air pollution, with a focus on household energy use and related behaviors in low- and middle-income countries. He has over fifteen years of experience working on global environmental health research, practice, and capacity building in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with a recent focus on making science-backed, policy-relevant recommendations on the benefits of clean energy transitions at scale. His work has been funded by the US National Institutes of Health, World Health Organization, and the US EPA among others. He is a cofounder of Ideas United and Campus MovieFest, the world's largest student film festival, and was a Fulbright Scholar in Nepal in 2007-2008. He has a PhD in Environmental Health Sciences from UC Berkeley.



**JASMIT SINGH RANGR** is a Lecturer in Architecture at the Berkeley College of Environmental Design. He grew up on the coasts of India, and in the UK,

and has lived in the U.S. since attending Yale for college and graduate school. In 2004, Rangr founded Rangr Studio. The firm has designed and built architecture across the U.S. and internationally, including the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Costa Rica, and India. Rangr Studio's work has been published in more than 40 countries and has won global awards since 2008. In 2021, Rangr Studio was a finalist in two Architizer "Firm of the Year" categories: Best North American Firm and Best Residential Firm, as well as winning a 2021 Global Architecture Design Award. Since 2019, in addition to practicing architecture, Rangr has taught architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. He is a licensed architect in California and is certified by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.



**MANISHA SHAH** is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy. She is a development economist whose primary

research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of applied microeconomics, health, and development. She has written several papers on the economics of sex markets in order to learn how more effective policies and programs can be deployed to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STIs. She also works in the area of child health and education. Shah has been the PI on various impact evaluations and randomized controlled trials and is currently leading projects in Tanzania, Indonesia, and India. Her research has been supported by the Gates Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the World Bank, and the National Science Foundation, among others. She is an editor at *Journal of Health Economics* and an Associate Editor at *The Review of Economics and Statistics*. She has a PhD from UC Berkeley



**ELORA SHEHABUDDIN** is Professor of Gender & Women's Studies and Global Studies, and Director of the Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at UC

Berkeley. Previously, she was Professor of Transnational Asian Studies at Rice University and Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and Political Science at UC Irvine. She earned her A.B. in Social Studies from Harvard and PhD in Politics from Princeton. She is the author of *Sisters in the Mirror* (2021), *Reshaping the Holy* (2008), and *Empowering Rural Women* (1992). Her articles have appeared in numerous journals, and she serves on various editorial boards. She has received fellowships from prestigious institutions, including the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mellon Foundation. Her book, *Sisters in the Mirror*, was a 2022 Choice Outstanding Academic Title and won the 2023 Coomaraswamy Book Prize. Her dissertation won the APSA's 2002 Aaron Wildavsky Dissertation Award.



**TRAVIS LAMAR SMITH**, a Sanskritist with interests in religious and mythological narrative literature (epics and *Purānas*) as well as

erotic and sexological literature (*Kāmasāstra*), returns to his alma mater UC Berkeley, and joins the Department of South and Southeast Studies as the new lecturer of Sanskrit. Prior to coming to UC Berkeley, he was an Associate Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Seoul National University, South Korea. His current project is a critical edition and translation of the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana. In addition to his academic pursuits, he has been involved in various collaborative research projects and has presented his work at numerous international conferences, contributing significantly to the field of Sanskrit studies. Travis studied at Williams College and Antioch University (BA), and conducted graduate work in Sanskrit language and South Asian religions at UC Berkeley and Columbia University (PhD)

## FACULTY &amp; SCHOLARS WHO HAVE AFFILIATED WITH THE INSTITUTE THIS PAST YEAR



Teaching Professor, Statistics

ANI ADHIKARI



Adjunct Professor of Buddhist Art, Archaeology, & Numismatics

OSMUND BOPEARACHCHI



Research Anthropologist, Center for Race & Gender

ANGANA P. CHATTERJI



Lecturer, Physics

SWAPAN CHATTOPADHYAY



Professor of South and Southeast Asian Studies

PENNY EDWARDS



Lecturer, Law, Director, Domestic Violence Field Placement program

MALLIKA KAUR



Director, AAPI Data Project

KARTHICK RAMAKRISHNAN



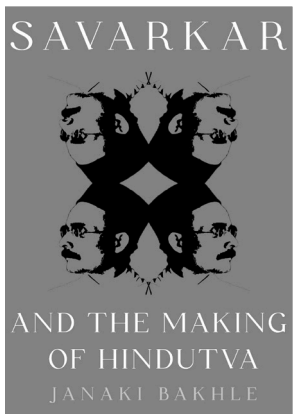
Executive Director of Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive

JULIE RODRIGUES WIDHOLM

**Savarkar and the Making of Hindutva**

Janaki Bakhle (Author)

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883–1966) was an influential intellectual, ideologue, and nationalist leader in India's independence struggle, known for his anti-Muslim writings promoting Hindu majority rule. This book is the first comprehensive intellectual history of this contentious figure. Bakhle examines the full range of Savarkar's voluminous writings in his native language of Marathi, from political and historical works to poetry, essays,



and speeches. She reveals the complexities in the various positions he took as a champion of the beleaguered Hindu community, an anticaste progressive, an erudite if polemical historian, a pioneering advocate for women's dignity, and a patriotic poet. Bakhle's critical examination of Savarkar's thought shows that Hindutva is both an aesthetic idea and a militant political program. The book also explores Savarkar's rise from provincial India to historical significance, and the hagiographic literature that perpetuates his myth as a revolutionary Hindu leader.

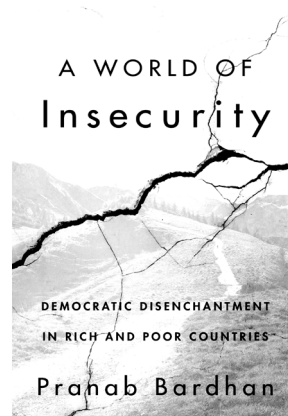
About the Author:

Janaki Bakhle is Professor of History. She is the author of *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*.

**A World of Insecurity: Democratic Disenchantment in Rich and Poor Countries**

Pranab Bardhan (Author)

The retreat of liberal democracy in the 21st century is evident worldwide, with nationalism and majoritarianism on the rise. Critics blame capitalism and liberalism's failures, but economist Pranab Bardhan argues the issue is insecurity—both financial and cultural. Globally, antidemocratic movements span diverse demographics: older, rural populations in the U.S.; educated, urban youth in India; and European populists supporting the welfare state for nonimmigrants. The common thread is the fear of losing money, national pride, culture, and tradition. Bardhan advocates for solutions, like universal basic income for poor countries and worker empowerment universally, while warning against China's authoritarian model and emphasizing civic pride to ease cultural anxieties



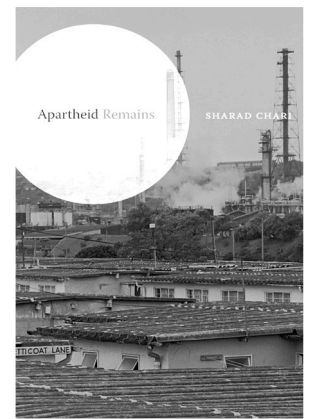
About the Author:

Pranab Bardhan is Professor Emeritus, of Economics. His books include *Awakening Giants, Feet of Clay: Assessing the Economic Rise of China and India*, and *Scarcity, Conflicts, and Cooperation: Essays in the Political and Institutional Economics of Development*.

**Apartheid Remains**

Sharad Chari (Author)

*Apartheid Remains* investigates how South Africans navigate the legacy of segregation and apartheid through the lens of Durban's industrial-residential landscape. Drawing on historical and ethnographic research, Chari portrays South



Africa's 20th century as a layered palimpsest, revealing how state efforts to reshape territory and identity often worsened spatial contradictions. As South Durban's residents mobilized through Black Consciousness politics, traditions from the Indian Ocean and Black Atlantic emerged as powerful resources. Chari highlights Black documentary photography as a vital critique of these struggles. Integrating Marxism, feminism, and Black studies, he proposes a geographical approach attuned to the spatial and embodied remnants of history, envisioning a future beyond racial capitalism and environmental suffering.

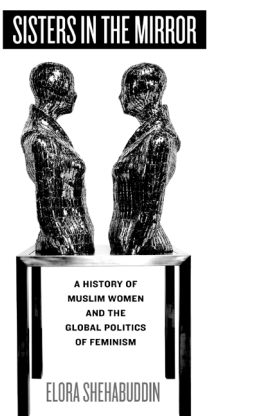
About the Author:

Sharad Chari is Associate Professor of Geography and Critical Theory. He is the author of *Fraternal Capital: Peasant-Workers, Self-Made Men, and Globalization in Provincial India*

**Sisters in the Mirror: A History of Muslim Women and the Global Politics of Feminism**

Elora Shehabuddin (Author)

In *Sisters in the Mirror*, Elora Shehabuddin challenges the Western portrayal of the Muslim world as the last frontier of global feminism. She presents a nuanced history of feminist interactions between Western and Muslim societies, emphasizing that Muslim women have long been active in their own struggles for rights. The book spans from the Enlightenment era to the War on Terror, illustrating how feminist strategies and women's lives reflect broader political and economic changes. She highlights that, like their counterparts in colonized societies and marginalized communities in the West, Muslim women have had to negotiate their rights amid struggles for national independence, resistance to occupation, and economic inequality. Through the stories of various



figures from South Asia, Britain, and the United States, the book explores how these encounters prompted reflections on societal norms and gender roles, demonstrating that progress in women's rights has been achieved through persistent and multifaceted struggles in both Western and Muslim contexts.

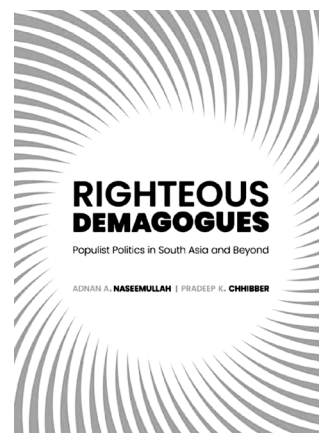
About the Author:

Elora Shehabuddin is Professor of Gender & Women's Studies and Global Studies. She is the author of *Reshaping the Holy: Democracy, Development, and Muslim Women in Bangladesh* and *Empowering Rural Women: The Impact of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh*

**Righteous Demagogues: Populist Politics in South Asia and Beyond**

Adnan Naseemullah (Author) and Pradeep Chhibber (Author)

*Righteous Demagogues* examines the causes, dynamics, and consequences of populist politics in South Asia and beyond, arguing that populism arises from crises of representation and reflects democratic malaise. It explores how populist leaders evoke the moral contract to mobilize voters, leading to party system changes and varying forms of democratic backsliding.



About the Authors:

Adnan Naseemullah is Reader in International Relations and South Asia at King's College London. He is the author of *Patchwork States*. Pradeep Chhibber is Professor of Political Science at UC Berkeley. He is the author of *Ideology and Identity: The Changing Party System of India* (with Rahul Verma).

**ISAS**  
Institute for South Asia Studies  
University of California at Berkeley

South Asia Research Notes  
Spring 2023

**SISTERS IN THE MIRROR**  
A History of Muslim Women and the Global Politics of Feminism  
ELORA SHEHABUDDIN  
A History of Muslim Women and the Global Politics of Feminism  
Elora Shehabuddin is Professor of Gender & Women's Studies and Professor of Global Studies, University of California, Berkeley

**NEW SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH NOTE**  
e-version at southasia.berkeley.edu/SARN

SPRING 2023  
SISTERS IN THE MIRROR: A HISTORY OF MUSLIM WOMEN AND THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF FEMINISM

## PUBLICATIONS contd.

***Conjuring the Buddha: Ritual Manuals in Early Tantric Buddhism***

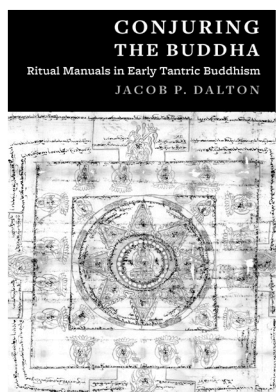
Jacob P. Dalton (Author)

In *Conjuring the Buddha*, Dalton explores the history of early tantric Buddhist rituals through Tibetan manuscripts discovered near Dunhuang on the ancient Silk Road. Ritual manuals, dating back to at least the late fifth century, were used by monks, nuns, teachers, disciples, and laypeople to perform daily rites, offering a personal complement to canonical sutras and tantras. Dalton argues that these manuals provided an extracanonical

literary form for Buddhists to engage with their tradition in new and locally specific ways, serving as precursors to the tantras and crucial to the emergence of esoteric Buddhism. By examining ninth- and tenth-century tantric manuals, Dalton reveals the development of rituals such as consecration, possession, sexual yoga, and subtle body practices. This book offers unprecedented insight into the personal practices and development of the tantric tradition in early Buddhism.

About the Author:

**Jacob P. Dalton** is Professor of Tibetan Buddhism. He is the author of *Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism*.

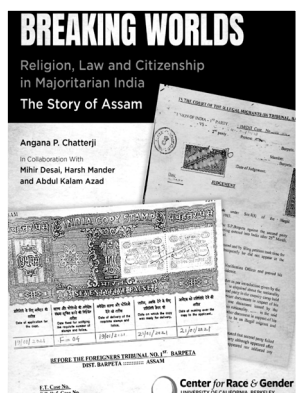
***Breaking Worlds: Religion, Law and Citizenship in Majoritarian India - The Story of Assam***

Angana P. Chatterji (Author)

This monograph, co-authored with Mihir Desai, Harsh Mander, and Abdul Kalam Azad, explores the intersections of religion, law, and citizenship in majoritarian India, focusing on Assam. It examines how religious and ethnic identities influence legal and political frameworks, affecting citizenship experiences. The narrative analyzes the impact of majoritarian policies on marginalized groups and their struggles for recognition. Through detailed analysis, the book highlights the implications of religious and ethnic majoritarianism on Indian society, offering insights into identity and governance.

About the Author:

**Angana P. Chatterji** is Research Anthropologist and Founding Chair, Political Conflict, Gender and People's Rights Initiative at the Center for Race and Gender. She is the author (with Blom Hansen and Jaffrelot) of *Majoritarian State: How Hindu Nationalism is Changing India*

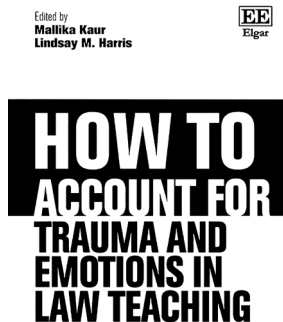
***How to Account for Trauma and Emotions in Law Teaching (How To Guides)***

Mallika Kaur &amp; Lindsay M. Harris (Editors)

Co-edited by Mallika Kaur and Lindsay M. Harris, this prescient How to guide, challenges the notion that the legal profession must be emotionally detached. The book emphasizes the importance of trauma-centered pedagogy for a healthier and more inclusive legal profession. It features contributions from diverse legal academics who critically analyze various educational techniques, such as violent imagery, simulation, and the Socratic method, considering their emotional impact on both students and professors. The guide covers charged topics like domestic violence law and typically unemotional courses like civil procedure, advocating for sensitive and attentive teaching methods. Aimed at legal educators, lawyers, law students, and trauma professionals, the book promotes creating engaging and empathetic learning environments in legal education.

About the Editor:

**Mallika Kaur** is Lecturer of Law. She is the author of *Faith, Gender, and Activism in the Punjab Conflict: The Wheat Fields Still Whisper*.

***Bankrolling Empire: Family Fortunes and Political Transformation in Mughal India (Cambridge University Press, 2023)***

Sudev Sheth (Senior Lecturer in History, the Joseph H. Lauder Institute of Management &amp; International Studies, University of Pennsylvania)

***Urban Histories of Rajasthan: Religion, Politics and Society (1550–1800) (University of Chicago Press, 2023)***

Elizabeth M. Thelen (Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Exeter)

## NOTABLE PUBLICATIONS BY SELECT CAL ALUMNI

***Musical Resilience: Performing Patronage in the Indian Thar Desert. (Wesleyan University Press, 2022)***

Shalini R. Ayyagari (Assistant Professor of Music, University of Pittsburgh)

***Not of an Age, but for All Time: Revolutionary Humanism in Iqbal, Manto, and Faiz (Peter Lang Press, 2021)***

Abdul Jabbar (Emeritus Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, City College of San Francisco)

***Old Stacks, New Leaves: The Arts of the Book in South Asia (University of Washington Press, 2023)***

Sonal Khullar (Associate Professor of South Asian Studies, Department of History of Art, University of Pennsylvania)

***The Idea of Indian Literature: Gender, Genre, and Comparative Method (Northwestern University Press, 2022)***

Preetha Mani (Assistant Professor of South Asian literatures, Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures, Rutgers University)

***Krishna's Mahabharatas: Devotional Retellings of an Epic Narrative (Oxford University Press, 2024)***

Sohini Pillai (Assistant Professor of Religion at Kalamazoo College)

***Corruption Plots: Stories, Ethics, and Publics of the Late Capitalist City (Cornell University Press, 2023)***

Malini Ranganathan (Associate Professor, School of International Service, American University) Co-authored with David Pike and Sapana Dosh

***Raya: Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara (Juggernaut Press, 2023)***

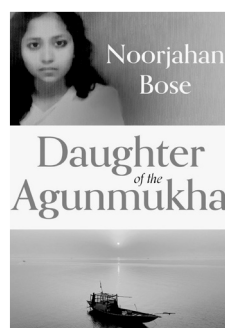
Srinivas Reddy (Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University)

## BOOKS IN TRANSLATION

Rebecca Whittington is a Bangla language instructor at UC Berkeley. Specializing in linguistic diversity and social/environmental justice in South Asian literatures, Dr. Whittington is a literary translator from Tamil, Bangla, and Hindi. Her recent translations include Bangladeshi writer and women's rights activist Noorjahan Bose's riveting memoir and Jibananda Das' iconic novel on love, loss, and the human condition in pre-independence Bengal. Dr. Whittington has a PhD from the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies

**Daughter of the Agunmukha**  
by  
Noorjahan Bose

English translation by  
Rebecca Whittington



**Malloban**  
A Novel  
by  
Jibananda Das

English translation by  
Rebecca Whittington



## AT 16, HE WAS A CRICKET STAR. THEN AN ACCIDENT MADE HIM RETHINK HIS FUTURE

New UC Berkeley student Vihaan Hampihallikar started playing cricket in Singapore at age 6. Ten years later, he made the national men's team. After a traumatic eye injury derailed his plans, he started a project to help others get the health care they needed.

By Anne Brice, Berkeley News



Vihaan Hampihallikar is a first-year student at UC Berkeley, where he's joining the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences. (Brandon Sánchez Mejia/UC Berkeley)

Vihaan Hampihallikar had a cricket tournament to train for. But unlike his other matches, the stakes were higher this time. It was December 2022, and he'd recently made the Singapore men's national cricket team as his country's youngest player, at just 16 years old. He wanted to prove himself to his more experienced teammates, most of them in their 20s and 30s.

Vihaan wasn't worried; he'd been training nonstop for this moment for years. Plus, he liked the pressure. He was used to it. It often gave him an extra push to achieve at a high level.

"I've always thrived in competition," said Vihaan, who's joining UC Berkeley as a first-year student this fall. "It feels natural to me."

After his first tournament on his new team, Vihaan realized he needed extra training. He wanted to do really well in the next tournament in Dubai in February. So he set up a couple sessions with a longtime coach in Mumbai who was well-versed in advanced throwing, or bowling, techniques.

Little did he know that his carefully laid plans to be a world-class cricket player were about to be derailed — and he'd be forced to rethink his future.



Vihaan, 16, playing for the Singapore Under-19 team, bowls during the International Cricket Council Division II qualifier against Hong Kong in October 2022. He went on to join the men's national team that same year. (Courtesy of Vihaan Hampihallikar)

### MORE THAN A SPORT

Born in Mumbai in 2006, Vihaan moved with his family to Singapore at 4 months old. The island city-state in Southeast Asia, known for its high standard of living and top-notch education system, offered an environment where his parents felt their

son could reach his potential.

"My mom really wanted me to focus on academics, and it was my dad's dream for me to play sport," he said. "But when you know you have to do well in both, your body just gives you the extra drive that you need."

Since he was young, Vihaan has known that cricket holds a special power in Indian culture. He remembers watching the 2011 Cricket World Cup on TV as a 4-year-old with his family. When India won, the second time since 1983, Vihaan looked on as his parents screamed in jubilation.

"It's something that flows in the veins in every person," he said. "It's not just a sport; it's an emotion. It's brilliant."



Vihaan with his mother, Rashmi, and his father, Prashant, during move-in at Berkeley. Growing up, Vihaan learned to balance his mom's wishes for him to excel in academics with his dad's dream for him to be a sports star. "When you know you have to do well in both," he said, "your body just gives you the extra drive that you need." (Brandon Sánchez Mejia/UC Berkeley)

Growing up, when he wasn't in school or studying, Vihaan was playing cricket. At 10, his dad enrolled him in a training academy, and by 13, he was recruited to play on the national Under-19 team. So when he made the men's national team three years later in 2022, it felt unreal, like a dream come true.

### THE SOUND CAME FIRST

On the morning of Dec. 26, 2022, Vihaan met up with his coach at Gandhi Maidan Stadium in Bihar, India. They began working on one of the most difficult bowling styles called a leg spin, where the ball — smaller and heavier than a baseball — spins from right to left when it bounces off the pitch, away from the leg side of a right-handed batter. Yes, it's as hard to master as it sounds.

Cricket is the second most popular spectator sport in the world behind football, which Americans call soccer. While cricket is popular in Asia, Australia and the U.K., it's not commonly played in the U.S.

As Vihaan and his coach were working on his leg spin, his parents stood on the sidelines watching the session, chatting and snacking in the sun. Several other cricket practices and matches also were happening in different areas of the massive field.

About 10 minutes in, Vihaan de-

livered a ball and was listening to his coach's feedback. He still remembers the sound that came next.

"It's hard to explain it," he said, "but I could hear the revolutions of a ball."

### FROM TRAGEDY CAME DE-TERMINATION

As a reflex, Vihaan turned his head toward the sound, and a cricket ball — which can travel between 40 and 100 miles per hour — struck his eyeglasses. His hands flew up and cupped his right eye, and he doubled over on the ground. As a cricketer, Vihaan was used to shaking off injuries. But he couldn't shake this one.

His mom knew immediately that something was wrong. She quickly strode across the field and gently asked, "Can you open your eyes?"

He slowly moved his hands away and opened them.

"There was blood everywhere," he said.

Within minutes, he and his parents boarded a rickshaw and sped to the nearest hospital, where a doctor assessed the damage. The next morning, he was transferred to another hospital for a two-hour surgery.

Vihaan with a bandage over his right eye and wearing a face mask

After the procedure, the first of five to come, the doctor delivered the bad news: His shattered eyeglasses had pierced and destroyed his right eye's lens and his cornea, the outermost layer of the eye that needs to be clear for good vision.

Lying in a hospital bed with a bandage covering 40 stitches in his eye, Vihaan only worried about one thing: Could he play in the February tournament?

"Absolutely not," said the doctor.

"That's when I completely lost it," he said. "I'm not one who shows emotion easily, and I was bawling. I was saying, 'Why? Why did this have to happen to me?'"

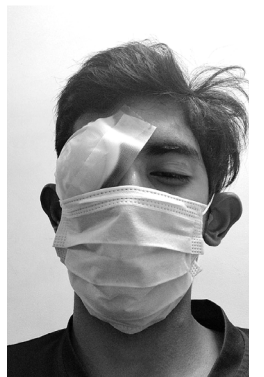
"Will I ever play cricket again?" he wondered. "Will I be blind in my right eye forever?" Nobody knew for sure.

The months to come would be full of challenges, but they taught Vihaan that he had the strength to deal with whatever came next. His struggle also led him to a resolution: He would use his accident to help others who required eye surgeries but couldn't access the care they needed.

### CHANNELING HIS PASSION INTO HELPING OTHERS

Vihaan underwent surgery after surgery over the next seven months, to repair his cornea and eventually replace his eye's lens with a synthetic one. At times, it was excruciating, both the painful procedures themselves and the heartbreaking uncertainty of his future in cricket.

All the same, he knew he was lucky. "So many worse things could have happened," he said. "What if the glass pierced both my eyes, and I went completely blind?" (cont'd on p. 29)



After a cricket ball hit Vihaan's eyeglasses during a training session in December 2022, his right eye required about 40 stitches. (Courtesy of Vihaan Hampihallikar)

A Student Initiative

## LIVING WITH THE MEDIEVAL AND LETTING IT LIVE

by, Anurag Advani, Aparajita Das, Sourav Ghosh, and Sonia Wigh

**L**iving With the Medieval and Letting It Live intends to protect neglected monuments in South Asia and raise awareness and engagement among



Laser scanning of Shish Mahal in progress

high school students. Our current project is a little-known seventeenth-century monument and garden, Sheesh Mahal (literally meaning

“Glass Palace”), in Shalimar Bagh (“Garden of the Abode of Joy”) in north Delhi. It served as the coronation site for the sixth Mughal emperor Aurangzeb ‘Alamgir in July 1658. The area was originally designed in 1653 by the fifth emperor

Shah Jahan’s wife, Akbarabadi Begum, as a premier Mughal garden modeled on the other two, more famous and better-preserved Shalimar Baghs in Kashmir and Lahore. It later served as the official home of nineteenth-century British residents like Sir David Ochterlony and Charles Metcalfe and also played a pivotal role for Indian soldiers during the Rebellion of 1857. Today, however, the monument lies a derelict ruin – nothing of the garden remains except an empty brick water channel and overgrown weeds, while the structure itself is barely a shadow of its former glory.

In the winter of 2023–24, we secured permission from the Archaeological Survey of India to conduct laser scanning and render a 3D model of the monument. We collaborated with Gurugram-based photogrammetrist Lokesh Ranga and Spain-based architect Imran Khan for image capturing and processing. Since the monument is located in a high-security zone of Delhi, despite concerted efforts, we were not able to secure permission to use a drone, which is necessary for capturing a top-down and panoramic image of the monument. Nevertheless, over two days of on-site photogrammetry, the laser was able to capture the top of the building and render an approxi-

mation of the rooftop, including the central pavilion, the outhouses (*hammams*), the stables, and the enclosure walls. We now have a 3D model of the monument and its environs, which will enable us to create a website with a virtual tour for public access. This unique endeavor preserves the monument for posterity and gives an interested audience a digital platform to experience



Front facade of the monument in the 3D model

the monument, imagining its splendor and magnificence during the heyday of the Mughal Empire. We will continue to collaborate with local high schools and conduct on-site workshops. ❖

*Dr. Anurag Advani is Visiting Assistant Professor in Asian Studies, Hamilton College. Aparajita Das is a PhD Student in the Department of History at UC Berkeley. Dr. Sourav Ghosh is a Lecturer in the Department of History, UC Berkeley, and Dr. Sonia Wigh is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at Cambridge University.*

(cont'd from p. 28) What if I couldn't see the right doctor at the right time? What if my parents didn't have connections with the best specialists?"

Every time he went to an eye clinic in India, he passed by hordes of people waiting outside, hoping to be seen by a cornea specialist. There simply weren't enough doctors trained in the field, nor were there enough corneas available for those who needed a replacement.

Never one to balk at a challenge, Vihaan, then 17, decided to help.

He teamed up with the Singapore Red Cross and started Open Your Eyes, a project that urges Singaporean residents to pledge to donate their corneas after they die for essential surgeries. He asked his family and friends to support the cause. He gave talks in schools and uni-

versities across Singapore. And slowly, word about the effort started to spread.

“Everyone has a different ideology about donating your body to science,” he said. “Some people are comfortable with it. Others aren't and have their minds set. But I try my best to convince them.” So far, Vihaan said, more than 100 people have pledged to donate their corneas through Open Your Eyes. In 2024, Vihaan's project was nationally recognized by the Red Cross. He continued to push himself, pursuing new projects to help others get the support they needed to live more fulfilled lives. In 11th grade, he led a 15-student engineering team to create the Qube, a learning aid designed to assist children with ADHD and autism using sensory methods. In 2023, the team won the Singapore Junior Achievement Company of the Year Competition and was a finalist in the Asia Pacific Junior Achievement Company of the Year competition that followed. That same year, he also helped launch and run Earthfirst, a non-profit that employs visually impaired workers to sew shopping bags and other items and sells them worldwide.

could eradicate humanity as we know it. It's something that I'm very passionate about, as everybody should be.”

And just recently, he started playing cricket again — he has regained 60% of his vision in right eye. But his depth perception is still off, so he's easing into it for now. He might have his cornea replaced someday, but at this stage of his young life, the risks of doing it outweigh the potential benefits.

He plans to join Berkeley's cricket club and hopes to build up its membership while on campus. He'd love for cricket to be more popular across the U.S.

“I think cricket is a sport that needs to be spread in the country,” he said.

### THE U.S. NEEDS CRICKET, HE SAYS

At Berkeley, Vihaan plans to keep building his entrepreneurial skills.

“That's my biggest love,” he said.

He's joining the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences, and looks forward to being a part of the campus's collaborative learning atmosphere.

After earning his bachelor's degree, Vihaan is open to pursuing many fields, but is especially interested in renewable energy, possibly developing highly efficient batteries to compete with fossil fuels, something that he said “needs to be eradicated right now.”

“Climate change was introduced to us in the first grade,” he said. “The more we learned, the more we realized how, even by 2030, it could become irreversible. It's surprising to me that more attention isn't being paid to it in the U.S. presidential election, since it



Vihaan with his new roommate, Kian, on Berkeley's campus. While at Berkeley, Vihaan hopes to scale up and publish two research papers he wrote in 11th and 12th grade, one on the minimum force to hit a six in cricket, and the other on energy loss after a projectile collides with a barrier. (Courtesy of Vihaan Hampihallikar)

“I'm not sure if I can single handedly do it, but I'll try. Let's see what happens.”

After all, cricket isn't just the best sport in the world, he said. It's a way of life. One that he'll always choose, one way or another. ❖

*Article was previously published on Berkeley News on August 26, 2024. Reprinted here with permission from the authors.*



In 2023, Team Sensit, led by Vihaan, won the Singapore Junior Achievement Company of the Year Competition. Here they are at school being recognized for their work. (Courtesy of Vihaan Hampihallikar)

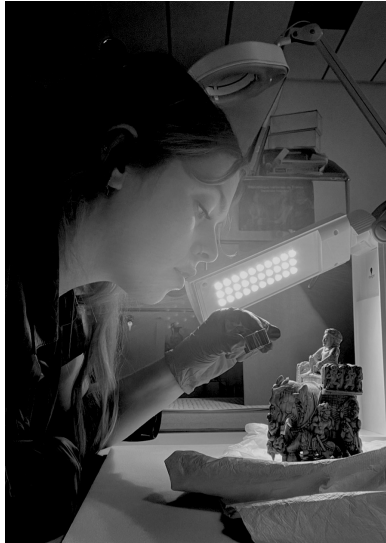
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So far, Vihaan said, more than 100 people have pledged to donate their

## DENTINAL HISTORIES: SOUTH ASIAN IVORY OBJECTS FROM SOUTH ASIA, CA. 700–1500 CE

*Ariana Pemberton is a PhD student in the History of Art Department. She studies South Asia and the Indian Ocean world during the medieval period, that is, between ca. 700 CE—when the Indian Ocean trading networks were bolstered significantly by Arab mercantilism and the spread of Islam—and ca. 1500 CE—when South Asia and the Indian Ocean world became subject to the rise of European imperialist expansion and colonialism. She is particularly interested in material culture and history, environmental and eco-art history, and histories of non-human animals.*



*Examining the so-called “Elephant of Charlemagne,” Paris, June 2024*

### Tell us about your research project and your fieldwork?

My dissertation project examines South Asian ivory carved objects dating between the 8th and 15th centuries, and the transregional trade of elephant ivory within the Indian Ocean world more broadly. During this period, religious icons were carved out of ivory, rulers sat on ivory thrones, medical practitioners prescribed ivory for infirmness and infertility, men and women lay on aphrodisiac ivory beds to secure a male progeny, and ivory chess sets were traded among the ruling and elite classes across Eurasia.

In 2023, I began conducting fieldwork for my project by examining ivory objects using a bio-analytical method called Peptide Mass Fingerprinting (PMF) which allows me to determine whether the ivory was sourced from an African or Asian elephant, or another species altogether. In the US, I have been able to examine South Asian ivory sculptures in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the Cleveland Museum of Art and have found that both Asian and African ivory was used. Given the abundance of elephants in medieval South Asian art, art historians have often assumed that ivory sculpture from the subcontinent was carved using locally sourced material. However, my research has already made evident that the medieval trade in ivory was far more global than previously assumed.

### What are some of the highlights of your fieldwork experience?

Recently, in Paris at the Bibliothèque Nationale, I was able to examine and test a large and elaborately carved “chess piece” that was purportedly gifted from the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (766–809) to the Roman emperor Charlemagne (r. 774–814). While the piece was more likely carved in the late-9th or early-10th century, and may not have been used as a chess piece at all, the sculpture depicts the entirety of a chess board: a decorated elephant (representing the bishop) mounted by a bejeweled king and surrounded by cavalry (knights) and foot soldiers (pawns). The now-disproven legend of Charlemagne’s gift notwithstanding, the object, still referred to as “The Elephant of Charlemagne,” is nevertheless spectacular. Being allowed to handle an object with such a rich history—it was likely carved in northwest India (Sindh) around the 9th or 10th century, brought to Baghdad, and, by 1505, entered the collection of the Treasury of Saint Denis in France—was particularly exciting to me.

The kindness and support I have thus far received from not only museum curators, conservators, scientists, but also senior scholars in the field who have helped me make important connections, has undoubtedly been the most uplifting part of my fieldwork thus far. I am particularly grateful to Mathilde Avisseau-Broustet, the curator at the Bibliothèque Nationale, for making the carving accessible to me and to Dr. Daniel Kirby, a conservation scientist at Northeastern University, for teaching me spectrometric testing.



*Sampling an 8th-century Kashmiri ivory plaque, Cleveland, July 2023*

### What are some of the challenges you’ve faced during fieldwork?

I think the biggest challenge up to this point has been, and will likely continue to be, access. Even while PMF is a non-destructive method of analysis, it is minimally intrusive since it requires obtaining a microscopic sample of the material. This immediately raises red flags for some curators, conservators, and private collectors, and I feel very lucky to have been successful in my endeavors thus far.

The other issue with access relates to the material itself; elephant ivory is, of course, a highly contentious material. The international ban on the ivory trade, and the understandable pressure to de-romanticize the ownership and display of ivory, has consequently casted a shroud of secrecy and privacy over many objects that are of interest to me. Indeed, if an ivory object was illegally trafficked across borders, the process of tracking it down to eventually publish is not always welcomed by collectors. Even while the ban includes an exemption for antique ivory objects (items that were produced over 100 years ago and have not been modified or repaired later than 1979), the documentation required for legal antique ivory sales is tedious and, undoubtedly, skirted by some more unscrupulous dealers. Consequently, building a comprehensive archive of objects to study is a challenge; I have had to accept that there are likely many objects that would be invaluable to my project, but that I may never know about. This is, of course, not a complaint about the ban by any means, but an obstacle that comes with the territory of working on ivory, nonetheless.



*Holding a 13th-century Odishan ivory sculpture, Boston, March 2023*

### What are your goals for the future?

I have only just begun my fieldwork, and still have a lot to do. In the coming year, I will be continuing my research in India, where I plan to examine, document, and test more ivory objects kept in both museum and private collections, as well as visit architectural and archaeological sites where in-situ sculptural friezes depict elephants, raw ivory tusks, and carved ivory objects.

In addition to my fieldwork in India, and continuing work in the US, I also plan on returning to Europe in order to examine and test numerous medieval South Asian ivory objects kept in collections located in Germany, the UK, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Italy.

More broadly, I am looking forward to writing my dissertation which aims to offer new inter-disciplinary frameworks to study medieval South Asian art by incorporating scientific research on the provenance of ivory alongside my own art historical analysis, presenting my research at conferences and continuing to make invaluable connections in the field, and, eventually, entering the job market to become a professor of South Asian and/or Global Medieval Art History. ❖

## GOVERNANCE TRANSITION IN INDIA: CONVERSION OF PANCHAYATS TO URBAN LOCAL BODIES

*Sharik Laliwala is a PhD student in the Department of Political Science. He is interested in studying the linkages between the descriptive and substantive representation of minorities. He also works on urbanization and municipal governance in India. Sharik has an MA in Contemporary India from King's College London and a BBA (Majoring in Economics and Finance) from Ahmedabad University. He has also worked as a researcher with the University of Pennsylvania, Brown University, Sciences Po, and Ashoka University's Trivedi Center of Political Data.*

### Tell us about your research project and your fieldwork?

This project is a joint endeavor with Dr. Alison Post, faculty in the Department of Political Science and Global Metropolitan Studies at Berkeley. We're exploring the effects of converting large villages from rural governance structures like panchayats to urban municipal institutes in Rajasthan.

So far, we have interviewed many state-level and local bureaucrats and politicians, including MLAs, chairpersons, and ward-level councilors, to understand the decision-making, incentives, and potential effects on public goods delivery of this transition from rural to urban local bodies.

### What have you enjoyed most about your field work? Is there any particular incident or incidents that come to mind?



*A typical bazaar set-up in a small town*

I enjoyed visiting government offices (no jokes here)! For example, the top officers of a bureaucracy operate out of well-functioning offices in the state capital, a clear contrast from what many newly formed municipality offices look like, of which some have just one or two full-time employees. Juxtaposing just the location, scale, and infrastructure of a government office tells a lot about government priorities and the state of an institution.

### What are some challenges that you have faced during your fieldwork?

Gaining the trust of public officials is often one of the most significant challenges in fieldwork, and it can be an excruciatingly slow process. Cultivating those

relationships is a crucial skill for fieldwork. That said, despite these challenges, local bureaucrats and politicians have been extremely helpful in sparing their time to talk about this project.

Another significant challenge in fieldwork is data accessibility. Even when researchers finally gain access to the necessary data, they often encounter additional obstacles. Data may be coded or stored in formats that are difficult to analyze, requiring substantial effort to transform it into a usable form. This might involve decoding complex systems, translating information from local languages, or digitizing handwritten records. Such processes demand a combination of technical skills and local knowledge, and they can significantly extend the time line of a project.



*A municipal office in Jaipur*

### What made you focus on Rajasthan out of all the other states in India?

We chose Rajasthan for two reasons. One, it has had the highest number of panchayat to municipality conversions across all Indian states in recent years. Second, we already had some leads in bureaucracy from previous work and networks that made access to officials easier to navigate.

### What is the significance of this research? Why would converting panchayats into urban municipal institutes help in bettering the lives of the people?

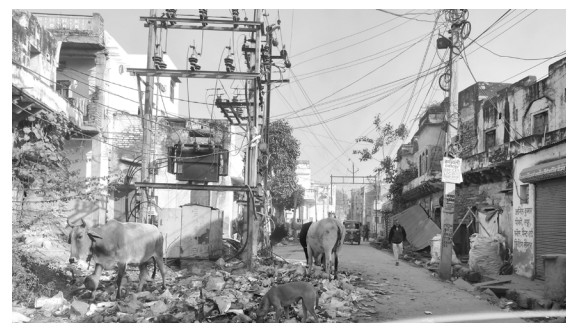
The general expectation among people and politicians is that converting a panchayat into an urban municipality will lead to more grants from the central and state governments, bring in more employees, and expand the revenue-generating ability of the local government. In turn, better resources should theoretically allow the local government to build better roads, schools, and health infrastructure, improve sanitation measures, and so on (though municipality functions vary widely across states). Many also expect that the city tag will bring in more industries and generate employment, although that is strictly outside the scope of a municipality's function.

### What are your goals for the future?

We are at a preliminary stage of the work. As we move ahead, we would like to understand the effects of the transition from rural to urban local bodies on several levels. As villages become towns and cities, new infrastructure is needed, such as drainage, piped water networks, street lighting, and road infrastructure. Cities must also generate additional revenue via taxation to fund this infrastructure. Do cities mobilize more revenue after converting from panchayat to municipal status, and how does that help the city's infrastructural needs? Moreover, electoral dynamics also change as cities gain urban status: unlike in the cities, candidates fight elections without a party's nomination. Does this transition affect the kind of politicians who gain access to the municipal office, and with what consequences? We hope to answer these questions. ❖



*Sharik (second from right) and Dr. Alison Post (on right), with a ward councilor and his wife*



*India's towns and cities are messy--and all the more so once monsoon arrives. The overflow of garbage on the streets is often a usual site*

## IN MEMORIAM



Professor Joanna G. Williams

## PROFESSOR EMERITA JOANNA G. WILLIAMS (1939-2022)

By Sugata Ray (Associate Professor in the Departments of History of Art and South and Southeast Asian Studies)

Professor Emerita Joanna G. Williams, distinguished scholar of South and Southeast Asian art, passed away at her home in Berkeley on June 16, 2022, at the age of eighty-four. She was one of the foremost scholars of South and Southeast Asian art and architecture and, indeed, one of the most well-regarded for her seminal work on fourth- and fifth-century sculpture and architecture as well as later folk traditions.

Born in southern Indiana, Williams received a BA from Swarthmore College in 1960 and a MA from Radcliffe College in 1961. She then received a PhD from Harvard University for her dissertation title, *Buddhist Wall Paintings of Khotan* (1969).

Williams joined the faculty at UC Berkeley in 1967, where she held a joint appointment in the Departments of History of Art and South and Southeast Asian Studies, where she also served as Chair. She retired in 2010.

Williams told her students that her interest in India was first sparked by a small town in Indiana called Hindustan, located just north of Bloomington and founded by a 19th-century businessman engaged in the India trade. This early attraction to India and the Indic world was developed over many years of fieldwork spent in India (especially in her beloved Orisha), Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Southeast Asia, and by a period (1984-86) during which she served as Program Officer for Education and Culture for the Ford Foundation in New Delhi.

Her distinguished career included landmark publications such as *The Art of Gupta India: Empire and Province* (1982) and *The Two-Headed Deer: Illustrations of the Rāmāyana in Orissa* (1996). *The Art of Gupta India* offered a groundbreaking analysis of Indian sculpture and architecture of the fourth and fifth centuries. Turning to debates on the category of the folk in South Asia, *The Two-Headed Deer* focused on narrative strategies that were mobilized by Orissan artists to visualize the epic.

Essays such as “A Recut Ashokan Capital and the Gupta Attitude toward the Past,” *Artibus Asiae* (1973) and “From the Fifth to the Twentieth Century and Back,” *Art Journal* (1990), among others, redefined the history of South and Southeast Asian art history. Her trailblazing research was supported by grants and honors from the Phi Beta Kappa, the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, the American Institute of Indian Studies Fellowship, and the Guggenheim Fellowship, among others.

Williams also advised on many exhibitions at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), and was instrumental in bringing the Jean Marshall Collection of Indian miniature paintings to BAMPFA. Additionally, she was a valued advisor to the San Francisco Society for Asian Art, and to SACHI (Society for Art & Cultural Heritage of India), and an active member of many professional and governmental organizations focused on South Asia, undertaking several curatorial projects, including *Kingdom of the Sun: Indian Court and Village Art from the Princely State of Mewar* (Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, 2007).

In 2009, Williams’ contributions to the fields of South and Southeast Asian art were celebrated by her former students in the panel “Marga and Desi

in the Art of South Asia” at the 38th Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In celebration of her retirement in 2010, a double-issue festschrift edited by her former student Padma Kaimal (PhD, 1988) was published in *Artibus Asiae*.

Williams was a mentor extraordinaire, an exceptional teacher, and a compassionate advisor who was committed to fostering the study of a region and a field that she cared about deeply. Her students went on to win many awards and publish groundbreaking scholarship that radically reimagined South and Southeast Asian art history’s place in the world.

In 2012, the Joanna G. Williams Endowment was established to honor her vision for the field of South and Southeast Asian art history by supporting students with their research, visits to museums, summer travel for fieldwork, language study, travel for presenting papers at conferences, and fellowship support.

Joanna Williams was preceded in death by her parents and by her son, Dylan Williams, who died in 2011. She is survived by her daughter-in-law, Emily Nilsson, of Portland, Oregon, and by a multitude of friends, students, and colleagues worldwide. ❖

## IN MEMORIAM

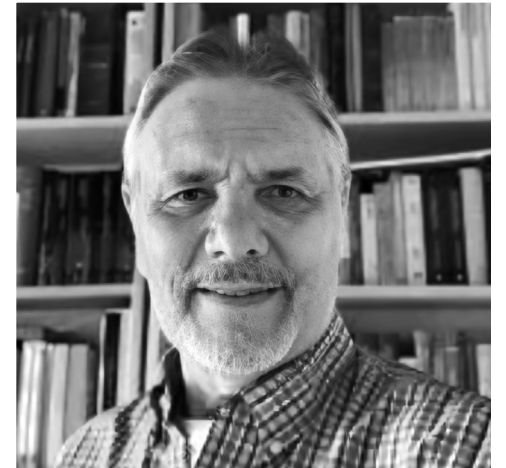
## DR. LUIS GONZÁLEZ- REIMANN (1948-2022)

By Robert P. Goldman, Professor of the Graduate School and Professor of Sanskrit Emeritus

It was with great shock and sadness that we members of the SSEAS family learned of the sudden and unexpected loss of our former PhD student and cherished colleague Dr. Luis González-Reimann, who passed away as a result of a heart attack while on a family visit to his hometown of Mexico City during the night of Saturday, March 26, 2022. It was exactly one week shy of his 74th birthday.

Luis completed his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Professor Robert Goldman in 1998, with a specialization in Sanskrit, after having earned his MA in Asian and North African Studies, with a specialization in India, at El Colegio de Mexico in 1986. Prior to turning his attention to the study of classical Indian language, religion, and literature, he had completed a Licenciatura in Business Administration at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico in 1974.

Luis was a world-renowned authority on Sanskrit epic and puranic literature and had special interest and expertise in the various classical Indian theories of cyclical time. He published several books and articles in this field including *Tiempo cíclico y eras del mundo en la India* (1988), *La Maitrayaniya Upanisad: introducción, traducción y notas* (1992) and *The Mahabharata and the Yugas: India’s Great Epic Poem and the Hindu System of*



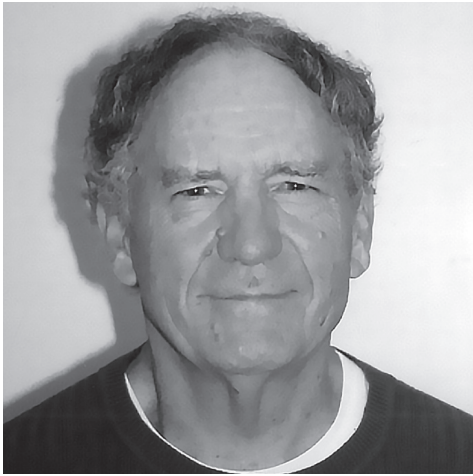
*world Ages* (2002). His scholarly articles covered a number of critical issues in vedic, epic, literary, and puranic texts.

Prior to coming to Berkeley, Luis served as a lecturer and research scholar at El Colegio de Mexico, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, the Universidad Iberoamericana, and El Claustro de Sor Juana, all in Mexico City. During his time at Berkeley, he served the campus in a number of ways as a Lecturer and research scholar in the Religious Studies Program, the Institute for South Asia Studies, and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. But it was to the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies that he most fully devoted his outstanding pedagogy, teaching a wide variety of undergraduate courses in Hinduism, Mythology, and the Indian Epics. Indeed, he was in the middle of his spring semester 2022 offering of “The Great Epics of India” when, at the end of spring break, he suddenly left us.

Before devoting himself to the study of classical Indology, Luis was a significant figure in the Mexican youth countercultural scene (La Onda) during the turbulent ‘60s, especially the area of rock music. He was instrumental in the launch of the journal *Piedra Rodante*,



IN MEMORIAM



**PROFESSOR  
EMERITUS EUGENE  
F. IRSCHICK  
(1934 - 2022)**

by, Cathryn Carson, Professor and Chair  
Department of History

It is with great sadness that I convey news of the death of Eugene F. Irschick, a distinguished historian of South Asia and a member of the Berkeley History Department since 1964. Born in 1934, Gene passed away on November 10, 2022, in El Dorado Hills, California, at the age of 88.

Gene was born in India, the son of Lutheran missionaries. He was a graduate of the missionary-sponsored Kodaikanal International School. In later life he became sharply critical of the missionary project, but remained proud of Kodaikanal's high academic reputation. Of the twelve boys in his high school class of 1949, eleven went on to obtain PhD or MD degrees. Gene came to the United States to attend Gettysburg College, from which he graduated in 1955 with a BA with honors in History and a minor in Greek and Religion. He then took an MA in the University of Pennsylvania's South Asia Regional

inspired by *Rolling Stone* magazine, and was one of its reviewers and editors. He also served as a rock-and-roll disc jockey for the UNAM radio station, hosting a new daily show "La Respuesta Está en el Aire," with a titular nod to Bob Dylan. He even ran his own rock music store, "Yoko," one of the few places where young Mexicans could acquire foreign rock albums.

Luis was a kindly and beloved teacher and a generous scholar, always ready to help students and his colleagues with his vast knowledge of Hinduism and its literature. It is difficult to express the depth of our sudden loss, let alone imagine our department without his gentle and caring presence. He will be deeply missed by his students, friends, and colleagues.

Luis is survived by his wife, Dr. Linda Hirshfeld, a Bay Area clinical psychologist, and by his two grown sons, Eric and Ilan. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

*na khalu sa uparato yasya  
vallabho janah smarati*

He is not truly gone whom loving friends remember ❖

Studies Program, before entering the doctoral program in History at the University of Chicago. Immediately upon completion of his degree there in 1964 he joined the Department of History at UC Berkeley. He retired in 2010.

The first of Gene's books was *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929* (UC Press, 1969), which grew out of his doctoral dissertation. The second, *Tamil Revivalism in the 1930s* (Crea, 1986) continued his engagement with the South India of his own childhood and youth. During the later years of his publishing career, he became engaged with postmodern theory and wrote a very different book, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795-1895* (UC Press, 1994). Although the raw materials for this book remained those found in the history of the Tamil regions of India, Gene's analytic approach was different. While his earlier work had been strongly empirical, this new work, inspired by the Russian social theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, offered a fresh approach to the history of India organized around cognitive structures. He was additionally the author of the textbook *A History of the New India: Past and Present* (Routledge, 2015).

Gene's mentorship and care are warmly remembered by students and colleagues. At this time of loss, our thoughts go out to Gene's wife Gabriela Gerlach of Folsom, California, his former wife Ann Feeney, and his children Jessica, Katherine, Michael, Duncan, and Sophie Charlotte. ❖

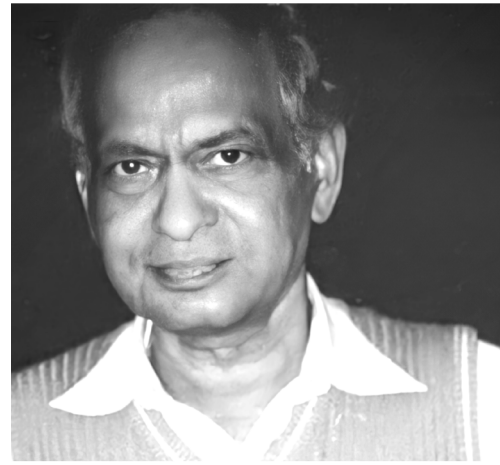
••••• IN MEMORIAM



**DR. JANE SINGH  
(d. 2024)**

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Professor Jane Singh, a cherished lecturer in the Department of Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley. A dedicated scholar, she earned her PhD in South and Southeast Asian Studies in 1990, with a dissertation titled *Echoes of Revolution: The Role of Literature in the Gadar Movement*. Professor Singh was deeply committed to exploring South Asian identity and immigrant experiences in America, significantly contributing through her research, teaching, and mentorship. She served as the coordinating editor of *South Asians in North America: An Annotated and Selected Bibliography* (1988), an important resource in the field. Her course, *South Asian American Historical and Contemporary Social Issues*, was integral to the curriculum,

IN MEMORIAM



**PROFESSOR  
EMERITUS  
JYOTIRINDRA  
DASGUPTA,  
(1933 - 2022)**

It is with extreme sadness that we announce the passing of Prof. Jyotirindra ("Jyoti") DasGupta, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at UC Berkeley, at the age of 88 on March 17, 2022.

Professor DasGupta spent 61 years of his life in Berkeley; he loved both the university and the town. He first came to Berkeley from Kolkata, India as a doctoral student in August of 1961. He completed his PhD in 1966, joined the faculty in 1965, and taught in the department until his retirement as a full Professor of Political Science in 1995. His accomplishments were many, among them establishing and chairing the Development Studies program, his groundbreaking work on language politics and ethnicity in South Asia, and his work with the Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies (now the Institute for South Asia Studies), which he also chaired for a short time. He served in the Faculty Group in Asian Studies and on the board of the journal *Asian Survey* for many years as well. As Professor Emeritus, he kept up in his field, published regularly, and advised graduate students for decades after his official retirement. A fixture at the old Barrows Hall, he spent nearly 60 years of his life walking the halls of that building and kept an office there until just a few years ago. His most recent works focused on issues of federalism and elections in India.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to his wife of 57 years, Rupasree, daughter Modhurima (Rima), son-in-law Jonathan Eldridge, and his beloved granddaughter, Mira. ❖

••••• profoundly influencing students and colleagues alike. From 1983 to 1990, she led the NEH-funded project "Expressions of Ethnic Identity: The South Asian Immigrant Experience in the United States," which supported programs and an exhibit on South Asian immigrants. Professor Singh's scholarship and dedication have left a lasting impact on the academic community. She will be greatly missed by her students, colleagues, and all who had the privilege of knowing her. ❖

## SPECIAL SECTION

The India Reporting Project  
at the Graduate School of Journalism  
UC Berkeley

# CAN A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY CHANGE THE FATE



Tarini Mehta

## OF ONE OF INDIA'S MOST BACKWARD DISTRICTS?

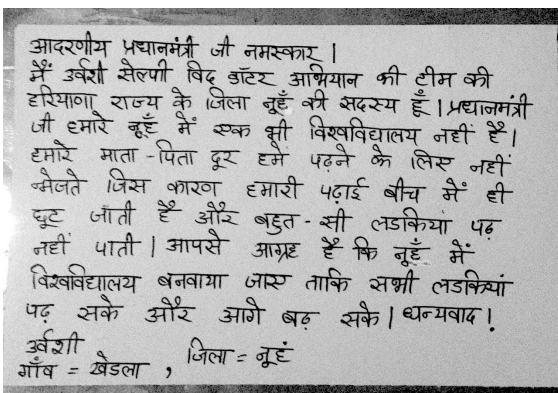
by Tarini Mehta  
UC Berkeley Graduate School  
of Journalism, Class of 2024.

Sarita had big dreams. She wanted to work with computers. Or learn how to run a business. When she told her family this, they encouraged the 21-year-old feisty woman to do what she wanted – but without going far from home. That's the catch: there's no university near Sarita's home.

Sarita is from Nuh district in Haryana, the most under-developed of the 22 districts in the state. In 2018, it sat at the bottom of the NITI Aayog's list of most backward districts in the country. Nuh has a literacy rate of 56 per cent as against the state's 75.5 per cent. It is a mere 80 km away from the national capital, Delhi, and about half that from the financial and tech hub of Gurugram, but to date has no rail connectivity. The 1,500-square-kilometer district with a Muslim-majority population is for the most part ignored, except for its reputation as a hotbed for cyber crime and communal tension.

But the young women of Nuh, like Sarita, have big dreams. They want to be engineers, doctors, lawyers, pilots and air hostesses, said 24-year-old Anjum Islam, who grew up in the district and is currently doing her Master's in Law at a university in Sonapat.

Over the last two years, these women



One of the many postcards sent to PM Modi

have written thousands of postcards to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to demand a government university in Nuh. There are 56 universities across Haryana; not one of them is in Nuh. This has limited the educational and employment opportunities for the approximately 11 lakh people in the district, especially women. Now, they are determined to change that.

THE YOUNG WOMEN OF NUH DISTRICT IN HARYANA HAVE BIG DREAMS – THEY WANT TO BE LAWYERS, DOCTORS, ENGINEERS, BUSINESSWOMEN. BUT THESE DREAMS GET STIFLED VERY QUICKLY. AS RESIDENTS OF ONE OF THE MOST BACKWARD DISTRICTS IN THE COUNTRY, THEIR ACCESS TO EDUCATION IS VERY LIMITED. FURTHER, AS WOMEN, THEIR MOBILITY IS SEVERELY RESTRICTED. THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE TAKING THIS LACK OF OPPORTUNITY LYING DOWN. THE YOUNG WOMEN OF NUH HAVE COME TOGETHER TO DEMAND A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN THEIR DISTRICT. TOWARDS THAT GOAL, THEY HAVE WRITTEN THOUSANDS OF POSTCARDS TO PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI AS WELL AS THE STATE GOVERNMENT. AS THEY AWAIT A RESPONSE, THE STORY OF NUH ASKS A BIGGER QUESTION – WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO LIFT A COMMUNITY OUT OF DECADES OF DEPRIVATION?

### THE POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

At present, Nuh has four colleges, all of which are affiliated to universities in Gurugram and Rohtak. These colleges offer only a few degrees such as Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Technology. A university, on the other hand, is usually home to multiple departments that provide students with undergraduate and postgraduate degree options.

To make this new university in Nuh a reality, activist Sunil Jaglan championed a postcard initiative. He put together a team of around 50 girls, including Sarita and Anjum, who then motivated others to get involved. They did online and offline programs, and encouraged women from other states to support them. To coordinate their efforts, they used a 1,000-member WhatsApp group called 'Mewat University Team'.

"Respected Prime Minister, there is not a single university in our district," reads one of many postcards sent to PM Modi. "Our parents don't send us far to study, as a result of which our education gets halted midway. I request you to build a university in Nuh so that all girls here can study and move forward."

"We will run this campaign till a university is built," Jaglan said. "We won't accept defeat."

Jaglan, who previously served as the village headman in Bibipur village in Jind district of Haryana, first shot to fame when he launched the social media campaign 'Selfie With Daughter' in 2015. The campaign encouraged parents to post selfies with their daughters to fight against female foeticide. Since then, he has run several movements to promote women's rights in India.

The gram panchayats (village councils) in Nuh district have also been working towards the university goal and participating in the postcard campaign. More than 300 sarpanches (elected village heads) held meetings between August and December 2023 to discuss the decades-old demand for a university in Nuh, or Mewat as it was earlier known. At these meetings, several panchayats promised hundreds of acres of land free of cost for the university, said Rafik Hatori, president of the sarpanch association in the district.

"(Most) kids here pass Class 10 and then are left to sit at home," he said. "The route to employment is closed for them. Why are our people deprived of education? We have no issue with any government or party; we just want to ensure the university is made so we can give our youngsters a new direction. If we have to agitate for it, we will."

This is not the first time this issue has come up. The demand for a university in Nuh can be traced back to The All India Meo Sabha, a political organization founded in 1967 to unite the Meo

population. The Meos are a Muslim-Rajput tribe that inhabit the north-west Indian region of Mewat. For decades, the All India Meo Sabha has centered the demands for a university and rail connectivity in the region, but the needs of the community still remain unfulfilled.

### SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN

For the boys, there is still a shot at reaching universities outside their home district. They usually have more freedom over their movement and can, if material circumstances allow, head to nearby districts to do professional courses. But mobility for girls has historically been restricted.

"Even if family members agree to

send us out, the neighbors won't," said Sarita. "They ask – 'What will a girl do after studying outside? She has to take care of the house.' They say – 'She'll fall in love and get married if you let her leave home.'"

If a family can afford to send a child outside to study, the money is usually reserved for sons.

"Through the course of schooling, the amount of money that a family spends is gendered and usually more is spent on young men," said Dr Anjali Thomas, a researcher with a specialization in gender, education and inequality in Haryana.

As a result, most of Sarita's female friends, she said, got married off after high school despite performing well academically. "If there was a university here, they could have all got admission," she said. "Instead, now they're just taking care of the house."

The closest university, Gurugram University, is headquartered 45 km away from Nuh.

### A VIRTUOUS SPIRAL

Pradeep Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner in Nuh, said a lot of work needs to be done in the district in the domains of education and skill development.

"If we've made the effort to educate a child at the school level, they should have good options post Class 10 and 12," he said. If not, there's no point of that primary education. The kids will get left in the middle. Education is like a plant – you need to water and take care of it till it becomes self-sufficient."

"Once we have sufficient institutes, we also need to motivate people to educate their girls and raise awareness," he added.



Sunil Jaglan holding up a poster saying, We demand a women's college in Nuh.

This often works as a virtuous spiral. According to researcher Dr Anjali Tiwari, when a girl from a family in Haryana accesses higher education, it encourages other girls to do the same. She said during her study in Mahendragarh in the state, she asked women what the impact of Central University of Haryana being in their district had been. They said it had not just increased their access to education, but brought about cultural changes – like



*Farheen Khan, a 25-year-old BA student at a government college in Nuh, wants to do a B.Ed. and her Master's and eventually teach the children of her community.*

a rise in Paying Guest (PG) accommodation options – as well.

### THE COUNTERARGUMENT

Not everyone is of the opinion that the university will transform lives in Nuh. Dr Shariq Hussain, youth leader for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Nuh wing, said there is no real need for a university in the district at present.

"Will the children of Nuh study at a university?" he asked. "Only kids who pass 10th will go to 12th, and only those who pass 12th will go to college. The roots at schools aren't strong right now. There aren't enough students here to fill university seats; if the seats remain empty, it's the university that will lose out."

Further, he alleged that it wasn't the people of Nuh but political leaders from Opposition parties who were raking up the issue for electoral gains. "They did nothing when they were in power, so now they look for such demands and highlight them," he said.

He said it was the dream of former Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar that a university be built in Mewat, but that this plan was on the backburner till the more pressing issues of teacher vacancies and quality of school education were addressed.

Earlier in March, only days before resigning as chief minister, Khattar had visited Nuh and announced development projects worth Rs 700 crore in the district. Among other things, he said gurukuls and madrasas that opted for "modern education" would receive financial support on registering with the Haryana School Education Board and more than 1,500 local youth would get teaching positions.

Echoing Hussain's sentiments, District Child Welfare Committee Member Meena Kumari said the colleges that already exist in Nuh are not being used adequately and building a university will, therefore, not change anything.

"Building a university is not a simple thing," she said. "You need so much money. If it's not going to benefit the community as much as it should, it's a waste of the government's resources. First fix school and college education here."

According to Kumari, a very small percentage of girls in Nuh access education. "If there's a primary school in the village, girls go. But 80 per cent of them drop out after that and only 20 per cent go to another village to continue their education. It's the same after Class 10 and 12 and very few

go to college. Child marriage is very common here. So how can you think of a university when your schools are empty? Who will come?" she asked.

### WHAT STUDENTS SAY

Farheen Khan, a 25-year-old BA student at Shaheed Lieutenant Kiran Shekhawat Government College for Women Salaheri in Nuh, vociferously disagreed.

"Since the government opened this one college, so many girls have come to study," she said. Her college currently has 621 girls enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program and 73 in the Bachelor of Commerce program.

"Earlier, schools were till Class 8 in the villages so girls used to study up to Class 8. When they made it till Class 10, they started studying till matriculation. Same with Class 12. So build the university, and girls will come."

The girls here are very smart and can do everything, she added. "It's not that only girls from cities can do it, we can too! In fact, girls from the villages can do more and are smarter!"

Khan, the oldest of six siblings, dropped out after Class 8 because the school in her village did not have provisions beyond that. The closest secondary school was too far and there was no bus, she said. Finally, she persevered and completed Class 10 and 12 via open schooling. After graduating from college, she wants to do a B.Ed. and her Master's and eventually teach the children of her community.

These courses are only available in the district at private colleges like Yasin Meo Degree College, which is affiliated to Maharshi Dayanand University in Rohtak and Gurugram University.

"The fees at private colleges are Rs 20,000 per year. My family does not have that kind of money. They'll have to sell our land to educate me. People in our district are not well off,

there's no employment here. We need government institutes," she said.

Government universities usually charge much lower fees than private institutes, allowing children of lower-income households to achieve social mobility. Their role in the education ecosystem is unparalleled.

### A UNIVERSITY ON THE HORIZON?

Among those actively fighting for a Mewat Vishwavidyalaya (Mewat University), optimism is running high.

I have full faith that a government university will be made here very soon, said Sarpanch Rafiq Hatori. "I spoke to ministers in Chandigarh. They're saying our message has reached high up and it's close to being approved. Of course, we can't say anything with certainty," he said.

Work on budgeting for the university has begun, Jaglan said he had heard from top government sources.

So far, no official announcement on the same has been made.

As the community awaits a clear response, it remains to be seen if the efforts of Sarita, Anjum and thousands others like them will enable the little girls and young women of Nuh to follow their dreams. ❖

*Tarini Mehta is a graduate of the 2024 India Reporting class.*

*Article previously published in The Outlook on June 15, 2024. Reprinted here with permission.*



*Sunil Jaglan sitting with young women in Nuh to discuss the campaign.*

## THE INDIA REPORTING PROJECT AT UC BERKELEY

FROM NEW DELHI TO MUMBAI, DOWN TO KERALA, OVER TO BIHAR AND EVEN VENTURING INTO KASHMIR, STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM HAVE CRISSCROSSED INDIA IN PURSUIT OF STORIES.

IN AN EFFORT TO BETTER TRAIN YOUNG JOURNALISTS TO COVER A COMPLEX COUNTRY LIKE INDIA, THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND THE CHATTERJEE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION CAME TOGETHER TO ESTABLISH THE INDIA REPORTING PROJECT IN 2003.

SINCE THEN, INDIA'S MIDDLE CLASS HAS GROWN RAPIDLY. INDIA'S HIGHLY EDUCATED WORKFORCE IS ENTERING THE GLOBAL MARKET AND THE COUNTRY IS QUICKLY BECOMING A MAJOR ECONOMIC POWER. BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT A MAJORITY OF INDIANS STILL DEPEND ON AGRICULTURE TO MAKE A LIVING, LACK ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND CANNOT ACCESS BASIC HEALTH CARE. MORE PEOPLE IN INDIA SUBSCRIBE TO A CELL PHONE SERVICE THAN HAVE ACCESS TO A PROPER TOILET, AN OFT QUOTED FACT THAT ILLUSTRATES THE TENSION BETWEEN A COUNTRY MOVING FORWARD AND THOSE BEING LEFT BEHIND.

THE RAPIDLY CHANGING TIDE IN INDIA DEMANDS JOURNALISTS WHO UNDERSTAND AND ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE DIVERSE COUNTRY. IT WAS TO THIS END THAT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM LAUNCHED THE INDIA REPORTING PROJECT AND THE NIRUPAMA CHATTERJEE TEACHING FELLOWSHIP.

THE SCHOOL OFFERS THE FELLOWSHIP ANNUALLY TO AN INDIAN EDITOR OR REPORTER, WHO COMES TO BERKELEY FOR A SEMESTER AND TEACHES A COURSE PREPARING OUR JOURNALISM GRADUATE STUDENTS FOR A HANDS-ON REPORTING TRIP TO INDIA. OVER THE PAST DECADE, THE SCHOOL HAS INVITED RENOWNED JOURNALISTS FROM INDIA TO GUIDE OUR STUDENTS THROUGH A COURSE FOCUSED ON READING AND REPORTING ABOUT INDIA, CULMINATING IN A REPORTING TRIP AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER.



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### What's Inside

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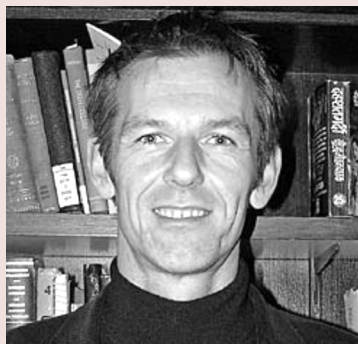
Celebrating the Goldmans: Bob and Sally retire

In Memoriam Joanna Williams



Editor: Puneeta Kala

## Upcoming in SPRING 2025



The Maya Mitra Das Annual Lecture on Tagore

**HANS HARDER**

Professor of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures  
Heidelberg University



The Tagore Visiting Scholar

**MICHAEL COLLINS**

Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary British History  
University College London