Letter from the Director

Dear Colleagues, Students and Friends,

This has been an exciting and hectic year of academic and cultural activity at the South Asia Institute (SAI). We started the year with the Fall 2013 Seminar Series, ‘Muslims from the Margins,’ inviting scholars of history and religion to discuss intra-communal challenges to Muslim hegemonies in South Asia. Also in Fall 2013, we hosted the biennial Texas Asia Conference for graduate students, with participants coming from as far as Norway and China. These were followed by the Spring 2014 Seminar Series, ‘Conflict and Recovery in South Asia,’ joined by speakers from the worlds of public policy, academia and the media. Another major conference in Spring 2014, Buddhism’s Boundaries, saw scholars discuss the interactions between Buddhism and other major religions of South Asia. These conferences and seminars were interspersed with film screenings, talks and lectures by UT-Austin faculty and guests from around the country and abroad. The year ended with the colorful and highly popular Music and Dances of India Festival, which provided a unique opportunity for musicians, dance teachers and students to showcase their talents to the public.

In collaboration with the Quetta-based Balochistan Archives and the British Library, SAI embarked on a project to catalog, digitize and make publicly available rare and endangered manuscripts in Balochi, Pashto and Persian from the Pakistani province of Balochistan. The year was also very successful in terms of outreach. We hosted eight faculty from the Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) in Rawalpindi, Pakistan – four each in the two semesters – and four students from Karachi’s National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in the Spring semester. The latter visits were part of a three-year exchange program between NAPA and UT’s Butler School of Music, facilitated by a $1 million federal grant. While NAPA students learned various aspects of the Western classical tradition during their stay, FJWU scholars attended classes and conferences and worked with individual UT mentors to produce research papers and new course designs. We look forward to continuing both exchange programs in 2014-15. Our outreach officers, meanwhile, conducted workshops to encourage the study of India and South Asia at K-12 schools during the year.

Unfortunately, we had to bid goodbye to Prof. Gail Minault, one of the foremost scholars of South Asian history, who decided to call it a day at the end of the 2013-14 year. She leaves behind very large shoes to fill and will be missed sorely by her colleagues and friends. In the 2014-15 academic year, however, we are fortunate to welcome three new faculty into our community: Prof. A. Azfar Moin in Religious Studies, Prof. Jason Cons in Public Affairs and Malayalam Lecturer Darsana Sasi in Asian Studies.

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SAI Welcomes New Faculty

**Jason Cons**  
Research Assistant Professor, LBJ School of Public Affairs

**Prof. Jason Cons’** research lies at the intersection of history, politics, and geography. He has published several ethnographic studies on life along the India-Bangladesh border in journals such as Ethnography, Political Geography, and Modern Asian Studies, following his 2011 doctoral dissertation titled ‘The Fragments and their Nation(s): Sensitive Space Along the India-Bangladesh Border.’ He has also presented his research at annual conferences of the Association for Asian Studies, American Anthropological Association, American Sociological Association and other academic bodies.

He is now working on a study of postcolonial territory, looking at a series of enclaves along the India-Bangladesh border. “It’s a historical and ethnographic study of the ways these enclaves have been caught up in debates about the border and how people living in them navigate precarious border arrangements on a daily basis,” he told SAI. Other current projects include how climate change and practices such as shrimp aquaculture in Bangladesh influence the lives of its displaced and landless populations. “I am also working on a collaborative project on the overlap between resource frontiers and political boundaries in Southern Asia,” he said.

Cons received his doctorate in 2011 from Cornell’s Department of Development Sociology. He arrives at UT after two years as assistant professor of international relations at Bucknell University, where he taught courses on human security; borders, traffic, and statelessness; sovereignty; and globalization. He won’t be teaching in Fall 2014. “But I’m likely in the long run to teach courses on climate, agrarian change, and borders in South Asia and beyond,” he said.

Cons is keen to be a part of SAI’s work focusing on the history and future of Bangladesh. “I would also be interested in working to facilitate a broader discussion of postcolonial territory in South Asia that cuts across geographic (and possibly regional) boundaries,” he said.

**Darsana M. Sasi**  
Lecturer, Asian Studies

**Dr. Darsana M. Sasi** takes over as Malayalam instructor from her mentor Dr. M.R. Unnithan, who retired in Spring 2014. She joins the UT faculty after teaching for two years under Malayalam Mission, a Kerala government project, and an earlier guest lecturership at NSS College, Thiruvananthapuram. She was also working for the last seven years as a Malayalam presenter for India’s national television (Doordarshan) and radio (All India Radio) broadcasters.

Sasi is teaching both first-year and second-year Malayalam courses in Fall 2014. “The first-year course will focus on the Malayalam alphabet and grammar, but I will make it more interactive with video presentations and plenty of class conversations,” she told SAI. “Second-year students will learn more about Kerala itself as well as formal and informal uses of the Malayalam language.” In addition, she is teaching a seminar on social and religious performing arts of South India, with special emphasis on Kerala.

Sasi received her doctoral degree in Malayalam literature from University of Kerala in December 2013. In January 2014, her book *Padayani*, based on her M.Phil. thesis on a popular folk art in central Kerala, was published by Paridhi Publications, Thiruvananthapuram. Her research focuses on comparative literary analysis, and she has published articles such as ‘Thina Sankalpam Leelakaavyathil’, a comparative study of the styles of ancient and modern poetry; ‘Pennezhuthu Kadavile Mattathy’, a feminist view of the Malayalam novel *Mattathy*; and ‘GODOT Inekathirikkunna Malayalanadakam’, a study of the English play *Waiting for Godot*. She has also presented several research papers at seminars and conferences across Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Austin is offering Sasi her first opportunity of living abroad. “It is a daunting experience to come to Texas from Kerala, but I am very happy to be here,” she said. “UT is one of the world’s best universities and SAI has plenty of resources for teachers and students. I am thrilled to be a part of an exciting team.”
A. Azfar Moin
Assistant Professor, Religious Studies

Dr. A. Azfar Moin’s research explores the interrelations between politics and religion in early modern and modern South Asia, especially the practices and performance of sovereignty in Islam. His book, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (Columbia University Press, New York), was published in 2012 and has won prestigious awards from the American Historical Association, American Academy of Religion, and Association of Asian Studies. “I am now working on the rituals of Muslim kingship in the early modern era, specifically on the role of Sufi shrines as sources of sovereignty,” he told SAI.

Moin’s research is closely tied with his teaching. In Fall 2014, he is teaching ‘What is Religion?’, an undergraduate theory and methods seminar. He will also lecture upper division undergraduates on ‘Islam in the Early Modern World’ in Spring 2015, besides teaching a graduate seminar on ‘Sovereignty in Islam.’

He joins the UT faculty after four years as assistant professor at Southern Methodist University, Dallas. He completed his doctorate in history at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor following undergraduate and graduate degrees in history and Asian cultures and languages at UT-Austin. He also received a bachelor’s degree in electrical and computer engineering from UT-Austin in 1994.

“When I studied engineering, there used to be food stands near the ECJ selling $1-calzones and fried rice, and one could still find free parking,” he reminisced. “I miss both. But it is absolutely wonderful to be back on campus.”

The transition to studying history and religion after working as an engineer was not easy. “Even as an engineering student, I felt that we couldn’t understand the world and our place in it without a critical engagement with the humanities,” Moin said. “One day, after seven years into a good career, I decided to return to UT for a year and earn a BA in history. I had so much fun that I didn’t want to go back.”

He has returned once again to his alma mater—this time as a professor, and is keen to be actively involved with SAI. “I look forward to participating in the South Asia seminar series in the Fall,” he said.
Faculty


**Prof. Ward Keeler**, of the Department of Anthropology, took up a series of fellowships in 2013-14 in support of writing his recent anthropological research in Burma. He spent three months at the Asia Research Institute, part of the National University of Singapore; six months at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, the Netherlands; and two months at the Department of Anthropology, Stockholm University, in Sweden. He also spent a total of nine weeks in Burma, split over two stays at a Buddhist monastery. The fellowships enabled him to complete drafts of three book manuscripts: a monograph concerning hierarchy, gender, and self in Buddhist Burma; a memoir based on his participation in two 10-day meditation retreats in Burma; and a language text book for English-speakers wishing to learn Burmese. An article he wrote about transgender people in Mandalay, ‘Shifting the Transverse: Trans Women’s Move from Spirit Mediumship to the Beauty Business in Mandalay’, has been accepted for publication in the journal Ethnos.

**Prof. Gail Minault**, of the Department of Asian Studies, presented four guest lectures at the University of Oslo in September 2014, focusing on Indian women in modern times. They were titled ‘Indian Women: Women of Paradox’ (September 10), ‘Indian Social and Religious Reform Movements and the Status of Women’ (September 11), ‘Women’s Education and Social Reform among Indian Muslims’ (September 17), and ‘Women’s Roles in the Indian Nationalist Movement and the Post-Colonial Women’s Movement’ (September 18).

His article "The Changing India: Dynamism of Ancient Indian Culture" was published in Culture, People and Power: India and Globalized World, a publication of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Another article, "Talking Animals: Explorations in an Indian Literary Genre" is included in the volume Charming Beauties and Frightful Beasts: Non-Human Animals in South Asian Myth, Ritual and Folklore. The volume is edited by Fabrizio M. Ferrari and Thomas Dahnhardt, and published in Sheffield by Equinox Publishing.

**Prof. Martha Ann Selby**, chair of the Department of Asian Studies, was awarded the 2014 A.K. Ramanujan Book Prize for Translation for her book *Tamil Love Poetry: The Five Hundred Short Poems of the Ainkurunuru* (Columbia University Press). The award was conferred at the AAS annual conference in Philadelphia in March 2014.

**Prof. Snehal Shingavi's** book *Angaaray* (Embers), the first English translation of a banned Urdu short story collection by the same name, was published by Penguin Books Ltd. in May 2014. The original volume, published in 1932, was met with outrage for attacking conservative Islam as well as British colonialism. It was burned by protesters and banned by British authorities. Shingavi's volume also provides an account of the furor sparked by the collection. He is an assistant professor in the Department of English.


**Students**

**Isabel Huacuja Alonso**, a Ph.D. candidate in History, won the Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2014-15. Her dissertation, 'Radio for the Millions: Hindi-Urdu Broadcasting at the Crossroads of Empire,' is a transnational historical study of radio broadcasting in Hindi and Urdu from the late colonial period through the immediate post-independence era. It challenges the existing literature that associates the rise of radio with the solidification of national identities throughout the world.


**Emily Ernst**, a graduate student in the Department of Asian Studies, won a Boren Fellowship for the 2013-2014 academic year. She used the money to study Urdu at the American Institute of Indian Studies in Lucknow.
Andrea Gutiérrez, a graduate student in the Department of Asian Studies, presented a paper titled 'Too Much to Chew? Ambivalence toward Betel Leaf Consumption in Early Indian Sources' at the Donner Institute's Symposium on Food and Religion at Åbo Akademi University in Turku, Finland in June 2014.

Amy Hyne, a Ph.D. candidate in Asian Studies, won the Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship Award in 2014. Her dissertation, 'Pathologizing Deviance in India: Constructions of “Madness” in Classical Sanskrit Texts and Contemporary Debates,' explores the social, religious, and political motivations behind ascriptions of “madness” in classical Sanskrit texts and contemporary discussions in India.

Paromita Pain, a Ph.D. student in the School of Journalism, won the Markham Student Paper Award at the AEJMC annual conference, Montreal in August 2014 for her article on nationhood and national identity construction in Indian and Pakistani media (co-authored with Saif Shahin). She also presented a solo-authored paper at the conference, comparing the use of mobile telephony for participatory journalism among underprivileged communities in India and the United States. In summer 2014, she completed a project with Microsoft India examining how voice-activated technologies help empower resource poor populations in India.

Suzanne L. Schulz, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Radio-Television-Film, received an ACLS/Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship in 2013-2014. Her dissertation is titled 'Lucknow Screens: Cinema, State and Everyday in Postcolonial India.' She also published a translation of Amritlal Nagar’s 'Seven Years of Film Experience' in Synoptique.

Saif Shahin, a Ph.D. student in the School of Journalism, won two awards in the field of communication studies. He received the Markham Student Paper Award at the AEJMC annual conference, Montreal in August 2014 for his article on nationhood and national identity construction in Indian and Pakistani media (co-authored with Paromita Pain). A solo-authored paper exploring the interplay of religious and racial identities in the American-Muslim press won a Top Student Paper Award at the ICA annual conference, Seattle in May 2014. Another article by Shahin, 'Unveiling the American-Muslim press: News agendas, frames, and functions,' is due to appear in the refereed journal Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism.

Aaron Sherraden and Prof. M.R. Unnithan have co-authored a trilingual textbook for Malayalam beginners, entitled Pathana-sahayi: Learn Malayalam through English & Hindi. It provides an overview of basic Malayalam grammar through exercises and explanations in both English and Hindi. DC Books of Kerala, India will publish the textbook. The teaching technique is based on Unnithan’s research. The authors have also prepared an audio supplement, Shravya Malayalam: Material to Accompany Pathana-sahayi, with additional exercises and recordings of a native speaker. Sherraden is a graduate student in Asian Studies; Unnithan taught Malayalam in the same department until the 2013-14 academic year.

Sundar Vadlamudi, a Ph.D. student in the Department of History, presented a paper titled 'European wars in the Indian Ocean: Indian maritime trade during the Napoleonic wars' at the 43rd annual conference on South Asia, hosted at University of Wisconsin-Madison in October 2013.

Aniruddhan Vasudevan, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology, won the 2013 Best Translation Award sponsored by the Tamil Literary Garden. Vasudevan’s book, One Part Woman, describes a relationship caught between the expectations and dictates of society and personal fears and anxieties.

Alumni

Dr. Monica Chadha, a graduate of the School of Journalism, was appointed assistant professor of digital media at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University. She will teach multimedia journalism to introductory and advanced-level students and also conduct research in digital media. Chadha’s dissertation, completed in Spring 2014, assessed the rise of ‘hyperlocal’ news sites.

Dr. Elliott McCarter, a 2013 Asian Studies graduate and instructor of Hindi at Emory University, delivered a talk titled ‘Making the Land of the Gita’ at the Conference for the Study of Religion in India at Butler University in June 2014. This talk focused on the interpretation of Kurukshetra by government entities since 1947 and associated development activities in the region.
South Asia Book Award

The South Asia Book Award, administered by the South Asia National Outreach Consortium, is given annually for up to two outstanding works of literature, from early childhood to secondary reading levels, which accurately and skillfully portrays South Asia or South Asians in the diasporas, that is the experience of individuals living in South Asia, or of South Asians living in other parts of the world. Up to five Honor Books and Highly Commended Books are also recognized by the award committee for their contribution to this body of literature on the region. The 2014 winners are:

**A Moment Comes**
by Jennifer Bradbury (Atheneum Book, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2013)

Before India was divided, three teens, each from wildly different backgrounds, cross paths. And then, in one moment, their futures become irrevocably intertwined. Tariq, Anupreet, Margaret are as different as their Muslim, Sikh, and British names. But in that one moment, their futures become entirely dependent on one another (Grades 8 and up).

**Razia’s Ray of Hope One Girl’s Dream of an Education**
by Elizabeth Suneby, illustrated by Suana Verelst (Kids Can Press, 2013)

Razia dreams of getting an education, but in her small village in Afghanistan, girls haven’t been allowed to attend school for many years. When a new girls’ school opens in the village, a determined Razia must convince her father and oldest brother that educating her would be best for her, their family and their community. Based on the true stories of the students of the Zabuli Education Center for Girls just outside of Kabul (Grades 3-8).

The Honors winners were *Bye, Bye, Motabhai!* by Kala Sambasivan illustrations by Ambika Sambasivan (Yali Books, 2013); *Gandhi: A March to the Sea* by Alice B. McGinty, illustrations by Thomas Gonzalez (Amazon Publishing, 2013); *The Garden of My Imaan* by Farhana Zia (Peachtree, 2013); and *Mother Teresa: Angel of the Slums* by Lewis Helfand, art by Sachin Nagar (Campfire, an imprint of Kalyani Navyug Media, 2013). For more information, please go to the SABA website: http://southasiabookaward.org/
The secret that lies hidden in the breast is not a sermon
It can be divulged from the gallow, not from the pulpit

Thus spoke the great Perso-Urdu poet
Mirza Ghalib. Inspired by the Ghalibian spirit, the fall 2013 seminar series explored the spatial and ideological relationship between the gallow (margins) and the pulpit (center). In offering a healthy discussion towards an interdisciplinary understanding of South Asian Islam, our speakers highlighted intra-communal challenges to various forms of Muslim hegemonies, from the Shahbagh uprising in Bangladesh (Lamia Karim) to the identity formation of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan (Sadia Saeed). Shahzad Bashir and Gail Minault brought into focus the dilemmas that historians face vis-à-vis literary genres when representing the margins. Sajjad Rizvi and Asad Ahmed highlighted sectarian and philosophical currents in nineteenth-century South Asia that resonate in the world of our own times. Sean Pue and Afsar Muhammad drew our attention to the imaginative modes in which diverse Muslim thinkers and artists empower their communities, especially when they are hailed as “minorities” or “outsiders”.

By Akbar Hyder

Regionalism interfaced with broader aesthetic orientations. A recurring theme in the series concerned the rich imaginative modes in which diverse Muslim thinkers and artists empower their communities, especially when they are hailed as “minorities” or “outsiders”.

Paula Newberg of UT-Austin’s Government Department.

WARS HAVE BEEN A pervasive element of politics in contemporary South and Central Asia. South Asia Institute’s Spring 2014 seminar series, titled ‘Conflict and Recovery in South Asia,’ brought seven speakers to Austin—two political scientists, two anthropologists, one legal scholar, one historian and one journalist—for robust discussions on civil strife, cross-border and international conflict, and prospects for recovery. It was led by Prof. Shahzad Bashir, Stanford University.
of Seattle University Law School, engaged both of these issues by dissecting the intersections of Pakistan's geography with the inheritances of colonial cartography. Zahid Hussain, one of Pakistan's foremost journalists, discussed the ways in which Pakistan's persistent, if often interrupted, efforts to strengthen democracy affect its national security; and Dr. Cabieri Robinson offered a careful reading of the roots and effects of militancy in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

Two speakers looked closely at Afghanistan's domestic politics and foreign relations. In advance of Afghanistan's spring 2014 elections, Dr. Andrew Wilder, of the United States Institute of Peace, discussed the complexities of Afghan politics and anticipated many of the serious difficulties that the April elections ultimately encountered. Dr. Alexander Evans, currently with the United Nations, offered an expansive account of the evolution of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and across the region, and the ways the Al Qaeda portfolio is handled by the UN.

Finally, Dr. William Fisher, of Clark University, offered a detailed account of the ways that political, economic and ethnic differences in Nepal's society have affected the country's recovery from years of civil war.

By Paula Newberg

HUF undergrad wins Yale Hindi Debate

CARSON CARRUTH, A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT from UT’s Hindi-Urdu Flagship (HUF) program, won the Best Speaker award in the “national round” of the Yale Hindi Debate, in the Non-Native Non-Heritage Undergraduate category.

The debate was organized and hosted by Yale University on April 18, 2014. Carruth spoke for the motion – “Globalization Diminishes the Significance of Ethnicity.”

“Audience and judges were thoroughly and visibly impressed by Carson’s speech. His winning the first place seemed almost obvious and natural,” said Vidhu Shekhar Chaturvedi, a Hindi lecturer from UT’s Department of Asian Studies and one of Carruth’s mentors.

“His achievement is remarkable considering the fact that Carson began learning Hindi in the Fall of 2011 as an ab-initio learner,” Chaturvedi added. “We are proud of him.”

Yale University instituted the Hindi Debate in 2008 to promote intellectual discourse among students of Hindi in the university and around the country. Each debater presents his or her speech in Hindi for a maximum of three minutes and then takes a question from the audience, also in Hindi.

Debaters are judged on criteria including knowledge of the topic; originality of interpretation; logical presentation; eloquence, diction and fluency; address and format; stance and gestures; sticking to the time limit; rebuttal of opposition’s ideas; rebuttal of interjection; and overall impression. Debaters also lose marks for reading all or most of the debate.
K-12 Outreach

In 2013-2014 SAI received a private donation to focus on the inclusion of curriculum on India for the lower grades. Although not all of this year’s K-12 Outreach events were funded by this infusion of private funds, the request gave SAI an opportunity to focus on this topic in a variety of ways.

SAI sponsored two one-day workshops at UT during 2013-2014. In September, SAI brought together 14 educators from seven local school districts, including those in Austin, Huffman, Round Rock, Navarro, Lake Travis, Bastrop, and Cedars International Academy. “Bringing India into the Classroom: Strategies and Resources for K-6 Educators” covered a range of topics, including highlights of India’s geography, culture and history; celebrations, holidays and festivals; and children’s folktales and literature. SAI presenters guided participants through hands-on activities and materials (books, artifacts, films, lesson plans) to use with younger students. Asian Studies PhD Candidate Amy Hyne presented on the early history of India and curriculum she developed, “Celebrations: Lesson Plan on Holidays and Festivals in India.” History PhD Graduate Aarti Bhalodia provided a second overview of Indian History, focusing on the early to post-colonial period. She also led teachers through a lesson on how to analyze the ten-rupee note, focusing on national symbols and currency as an expression of national identity. SAI’s Outreach Coordinator Neha Mohan and Assistant Director Rachel Meyer shared additional lessons and materials with educators including how to use SAI culture boxes and a discussion on implementing what they learned in their teaching.

In January, 23 teachers attended a second workshop hosted by SAI. “The Emergence of Hinduism and Buddhism in India” again drew on the knowledge of Asian Studies graduate students to share information and resources on two of the world’s major religious traditions that emerged from the Indian subcontinent. MA student Aaron Sherraden presented on “Hinduism through the Ages” and “The Ramayana: A Hindu Tradition,” while PhD Candidate Keely Sutton shared her expertise in “The Basics of Buddhism” and “Jataka Tales: Stories of the Buddha.” Presenters covered the historical emergence of both religions, as well as important ideas and practices that grew from them, including the concepts of karma, dharma, and samsara. Particular emphasis was given to how these religious traditions formed in conversation and changed over time.

“The books and resources are phenomenal. I will be able to easily bring India into my lessons so the culture can be accurately represented...I would love to include all of the activities that were presented (artifacts, currency, festivals newspaper). I also can apply these activities to other countries we teach for comparative lessons.”

As both presenters contextualized terms and ideas within traditions, they also guided educators through active learning exercises and primary source materials to use with their students. As with all its K-12 educator trainings, SAI took care to make the materials and information relevant by aligning the activities and presentations with Texas and national teaching standards.

SAI received positive comments from teachers who attended both training days. According to feedback surveys, the workshops were very beneficial to the attendees with the overwhelming majority of participants reporting that the workshops significantly increased their knowledge of India and presented materials that were very relevant to their teaching. After the January workshop one high school geography teacher shared, “We already teach about world religions at our school, but everything provided makes me more knowledgeable in my teaching about religions...”
in India and answered some questions that I had, so now I can give my students accurate information.” Many attendees at both workshops expressed enthusiasm in developing the presentations and materials into lessons to use with their students as part of their regular teaching. One participant at the September event shared her enthusiasm by saying, “The books and resources are phenomenal. I will be able to easily bring India into my lessons so the culture can be accurately represented... I would love to include all of the activities that were presented (artifacts, currency, festivals, newspapers). I also can apply these activities to other countries we teach for comparative lessons.” Overall, the workshops provided teachers with tools and information to strengthen global awareness and multicultural education for students by providing educators with concrete ways to guide young students toward deeper understandings of similarities and differences among people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Other productive outcomes further extended the impact of these workshops. At the recommendation of a Zilker Elementary teacher, SAI’s Outreach Program met with school librarians at five Austin ISD elementary schools to donate picture books and other works of fiction for young readers that focus on India. SAI also worked with the librarians on strategies for integrating children’s literature on India into the social and emotional learning lessons they lead on library days. Due to the success of the religions training day, World Geography teacher Emily Ward invited SAI to present to 9th grade students at Round Rock High School’s World Religions Fair. Over two days the school gym transformed into a learning landscape where each religion had its own table with a knowledgeable expert. Graduate students in UT’s Asian Studies—Amy Hyne, Keely Sutton, Andrea Gutierrez, Kathleen Longwaters and Hillary Langberg—graciously volunteered to help with the Hinduism and Buddhism tables. They presented concise introductions to the basic tenets, common practices and history of each religion, and fielded follow-up questions. Presenters used visual aids to illuminate concepts and practices. For the Buddhism table, artifacts helped to illustrate major concepts and meaningful events in the life of the Buddha, whereas materials on the Hinduism table helped illuminate important iconography and deeper meanings in stories of deities. Seeing the tremendous value in using material objects and visual aids in teaching about South Asian religions inspired SAI to develop four new cultural enrichment trunks (on Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism) that are now available for teachers to borrow through SAI’s lending library. Volunteers received great feedback from students and teachers. “Students found it an enriching experience and many have begun individual research into each of the religions discussed, due to having their curiosity sparked,” shared Emily Ward.

Based on the curriculum materials and presentations developed through our outreach initiatives, SAI worked with other UT area studies centers. SAI outreach staff worked with counterparts at the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies on a training session “Festivals of India and Latin America” as part of Leander ISD’s Continuous Improvement Conference in February. The training explored important festivals in India and Latin America and revealed the history, mythology, and cultural practices associated with each. On a larger level, the presentation explored universal themes of festivals, regardless of geographic location, along with distinguishing elements that make each festival unique.

“The training was very informative and helpful. I received a lot of ideas to use with my students. It is great to be immersed in content for World Cultures and to attend an in-service that is specific to my content area. I hope to attend more sessions like this!”

continued on p. 14
The Very Old is Very New

South Asia Research, a publication series of the University of Texas and Oxford University Press, releases a new English translation of India’s oldest text, the Rigveda.

We are delighted to announce the publication of The Rigveda: The Earliest Poetry of Ancient India, translated by Stephanie W. Jamison of UCLA and Joel Brereton of the University of Texas. Prof. Brereton recently sat down with us to discuss the culmination of this massive scholarly project. Prof. Jamison and he recently completed. This three-volume translation, which also includes introductions to each of the 1028 poems or “hymns” of the Rigveda, is a complete collection of the earliest literature of ancient South Asia.

AG: Having spent at least fifteen years on this translation and many more years on the Veda, how has your understanding of this body of poems grown?

JB: When you’re first studying the text, you concentrate on translating from word to word and verse by verse. It’s natural: the language is difficult and you have to move slowly through each phrase and each line. But as we worked on the translation, we began to see that the real key to the text is how each hymn was constructed and how it unfolded. This focus on the hymn is the main reason that we don’t have any footnotes in the three volumes, not a single one. However, since withdrawing the usual lifelines of footnotes and verse commentary would leave many readers adrift in the Rigveda, we have provided an introduction to each hymn in which we discuss the particular characteristics of the hymn and its particular difficulties. Our hope is that the reader can then read and understand the hymn as a whole. In connection with that, my appreciation for what the Rigvedic poets accomplished and how difficult the poems are has increased. Maybe because you start out by reading the standard hymns that we more or less understand you don’t realize how much there is that we don’t understand.

AG: This translation of the Rigveda is the first English one in over 115 years. What novelties does it offer that previous ones didn’t or couldn’t?

JB: Its primary novelty is its focus on the hymn as the essential unit of composition and the lack of footnotes in the translation. But we also wanted to produce a translation that reflected recent scholarship on the Rigveda. The scholarly standard has been Karl Geldner’s German translation, but that was completed in the 1920s. Many scholarly waters have flowed since then and we wanted to capture and to consolidate some of these. We also wanted a translation that’s readable. Presented with the Victorian English of R.T.H. Griffith’s 19th century translation, it’s no wonder people turned away from the Rigveda.

AG: What’s your perspective on poetic composition from well over 3,000 years ago in comparison with more recent poetry? I’m thinking in particular of poetry slams….
JB: First of all I think that a great many conventions of high poetry in India can be traced back to the Rigveda, including features of *alaṅkāra* (ornamentation) and *kāvya* poetic conventions. I don't think it's right to isolate the Rigvedic poetry as if it stood by itself in the history of Indian literature. I also believe that contemporary readers may be in a better position to appreciate the poetry of the Rigveda than older scholars. The characteristics of some modern poetry—grammatical and lexical twisting, condensed phrasing, and lack of resolution—echo techniques of the Rigveda poets and give us better entry into Rigvedic poetry. Poetry slams? We don't know exactly how Rigvedic poems were composed, but I don't think these poems were composed on the spot. The intricacy of their construction is just too great. They were composed orally—that's true—and there were poetic contests. Perhaps in the contests themselves poets may have had to compose at the moment. But I think most of the hymns we have were more deliberate than spontaneous. The poets draw on poetic turns and familiar conventions, but rarely recapitulate them, as you might find in *Mahābhārata* or Homer. They put a twist on these conventions, rearranging the order or changing one word for another, so the educated listener would both recognize the standard phrasing and appreciate the clever way that the poet has altered it.

AG: What still remains a mystery to you regarding the minds and lives of those who composed and first listened to these hymns?

JB: Almost everything. First, when we talk about the participants in the ritual and poetic traditions of the Rigveda, we're not dealing with the whole population. We're talking about an elite tradition; we're talking mostly about men. To a degree you can infer what was going on in the rest of society and population, and you can learn something about women, but there was undoubtedly much more to the life and culture of the people of the Rigveda that we can't recover. Also, how in heaven's name did a semi-nomadic people who engaged in animal husbandry and some agriculture develop such a sophisticated linguistic and poetic culture? And sustain it?

AG: Lots of free time in the evenings?

JB: Yep. And there had to be some sort of specializations. These poets undoubtably did other things, but they had to have been trained, professional poets. We know they sought and had patrons; you just couldn't have been a Rigvedic poet just in your spare time.

AG: What's next for you?

JB: Several years ago Stephanie and I said that we would do a website that would contain the “missing” notes. Stephanie has already started on that and I’m intending to do so as well. Since these notes will be published online, they will be freely available. Beyond that, I would still like to go back to the Brhadāranyaka Upanisad, a text on which I had been working when we began the Rigveda project. As if that weren't enough for two lifetimes—and I owe this to you and other grad students—I would really like to pursue Middle Indic languages and texts, such as Ardha Māgadhī and Jain texts. But who knows where this might go?

-Interview by Andrea Gutiérrez
Gail Minault, Professor of History, retired in August 2014. Minault came to Austin in 1972 and spent forty-two years at the University of Texas. She received her B.A. in History from Smith College in 1961. She then joined the U.S. Foreign Service and was posted with the American Embassies in Beirut, Lebanon and Dacca, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Time spent in South Asia and the Middle East ignited a long-term interest in studying the history and culture of those regions. Minault went on to earn her M.A. and Ph.D. in South Asia Regional Studies from the University of Pennsylvania in 1966 and 1972.

During her time at UT, Minault authored numerous books and various articles, and went on to become one of the most prominent historians of South Asia. Her first book, The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India (1982), remains of importance for students of modern South Asian history for an understanding of the role of religion in the creation of a pan-Indian political movement. Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Reform in Colonial India (1997) is a must read for all interested in nineteenth and twentieth century intellectual and social history. Her latest work, Gender, Language and Learning: Essays in Indo-Muslim Cultural History (2009), is a collection of essays on reform, education, and family law during the colonial era.

Minault has mentored students across various disciplines and regional focus, including historians of South Asia and the British Empire, religion and literary studies experts on Asia and the Middle East. Under her guidance graduate students have researched and published on diverse topics such as social reform, education, environmental history, intellectual history of Indian Islam, and many more. Her current and former students remember Minault as a mentor who encouraged them to pursue a topic of their interest with her willingness to supervise work of a broad nature. For over four decades she has taught courses on Indian history, Islam in South Asia, and women in Asia, thereby sharing her knowledge and appreciation for the region with generations of young minds.

Gail Minault’s profession in History is nearly as exciting as her personal history, as many of her students learned as she opened each new semester with the high points of her biography. Even before she joined the Foreign Service, even before her adventures in Beirut, Afghanistan and East Pakistan in the early 60s, even before she began her Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania, it seems she was destined for a life of scholarship and adventure. She was raised surrounded by teachers and students: her father taught French in a college, an all-boys prep school and a summer camp. Her family’s heritage spanned the continents: her mother’s family was Scottish, her father’s French, but for three generations they had been world travelers, and these experiences shaped her worldview and ambition. Her linguistic training began in French, but she added Italian, Arabic, Bengali; it was ultimately the Urdu-Hindi-Persian nexus that she acquired starting in graduate school that defined her professional work. This fluency in language opened the world up to her, and through her, to her many students whose research has ranged from intellectual history, to gender history to history of education to diplomatic history to histories of political movements to studies of borders and of poets, traders and kings, Mughals and Generals, women and children, Muslims and Hindus all across the Indian subcontinent, and even sometimes the Middle East.

In Honor of Professor Gail Minault

By Aarti Bhalodia and Amber Abbas
world over know her as a scholar and a fellow traveler; at Texas she could always be found in the second row at the weekly South Asia Seminar; her students know her as a dedicated teacher and guide. She has commanded the respect of thousands of undergraduates (I once overheard an undergrad tell his friend, “She knows everything!”), and supervised dozens of graduate students. Many of us found, when in India or Pakistan, that merely mentioning her name would get us invited in for tea, conversation, research support. The University of Texas has been lucky to have a scholar of her erudition and dedication on its faculty since 1972, and, if we can look to history to understand the future, I expect her retirement to be another great adventure.

continued from page 10

At the end of the presentation, teachers broke into groups and completed activities they could adapt or re-use in their classrooms. Through Hemispheres, the international outreach consortium at UT, SAI collaborated on three additional training events on “Bringing the World to your Classroom: Resources and Strategies for 6th Grade” as part of professional development days in collaboration with Harlandale ISD, held at Terrell Wells Middle School in San Antonio, and Plano ISDs at Plano West High School (both in mid-August), as well as the Texas Education Agency Education Service Center for Region 13 (in Austin in May). Teachers who attended these events were very enthusiastic. One teacher from Region 13 commented “the training was very informative and helpful. I received a lot of ideas to use with my students. It is great to be immersed in content for World Cultures and to attend an in-service that is specific to my content area. I hope to attend more sessions like this!” Another educator from Harlandale said “Everything was wonderful! This is only my second year teaching and it’s my 1st time in 6th grade so I am hungry for any and all resources. I especially enjoyed the materials and information on world religions and holidays. Who doesn’t like holidays? I also plan to use currency to gain student’s interest. I love tactile learning! I can build off of what I already know with hands-on activities to keep them motivated.” Through these four Hemispheres’ events SAI worked directly with 83 additional 6th grade World Cultures teachers.

A special highlight of the year was bringing a group of 12 teachers to India over Spring Break. SAI worked with the non-profit Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEEO). Teacher travellers completed more than 40 hours of professional development contact hours through an itinerary designed to maximize learning through personal exploration, guided tours and lectures on the subjects of history, culture, education and the environment. The seven-day trip focused on the popular “Golden Triangle” circuit with stops in Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. Highlights for educators included learning about the Moghul period in Indian History with trips to the Jama Masjid, the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatepur Sikri. Teachers also appreciated learning firsthand about the religious plurality and diversity of contemporary India by going to mosques, gurudwaras and temples. Trips to schools in Rajasthani villages and the Salam Balaak Trust, a non-governmental organization that provides support for street and working children in New Delhi, provided opportunities for teachers to think about the needs and concerns of children and the educational system in India. SAI continues to work with trip participants to share what they learned with their students through GEEO’s education travel program.
Austin to Karachi: A Melodious Journey

It may be a cliché to say that music transcends borders, but being part of a musical performance that defies both artistic and political boundaries is probably a once-in-a-lifetime occasion for most musicians. I had this unique opportunity this year when I, an American national, was invited to participate in Pakistan’s Independence Day celebrations.

It all happened because of a three-year partnership initiated between UT’s Butler School of Music (BSM), where I teach, and the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in Karachi. We work with a group of young musicians from NAPA every semester under the program, and NAPA hosts some UT faculty members afterwards. I was fortunate to be one of them this year.

During my visit to NAPA in August, I held a three-day workshop for its faculty and students. Although I received some suggestions on what I should teach, I was given plenty of space to focus on what I thought would serve the students best. The two lectures on the first day, August 11, dealt with pentatonics and the history of blues. The next day I lectured on quartal harmony and triad pairs and finally, on August 15, on the performance of arrangements.

The workshop was quite successful. The lectures were well-attended and the students appeared respectful and appreciative. Sometimes it was difficult to gauge their understanding of what I taught and I wish I had more time to apply the theoretical concepts I introduced in practical performance. But I think all students found the lectures useful and helpful. I also enjoyed practicing on the NAPA roof in the mornings.

In between these lectures on August 14, I participated with the saxophone in an enthralling musical concert at NAPA to mark Pakistan’s Independence Day, titled ‘Jashn Ka Din’ or ‘Day of Celebration.’ I performed ‘Sohni Dharti,’ a Pakistani composition, followed by alto saxophonist Arthut Blythe’s ‘Odessa.’ Ustad Nafees Ahmed Khan, who heads NAPA’s music department, accompanied me on the sitar and we later collaborated on a rendition of the ‘Raag Kalavati.’ Arsalan Pervez, one of the NAPA graduates who visited BSM during the Spring semester, performed his own composition at the concert—aptly titled ‘Karachi to Austin.’

The event was very well received in the local musical community. Commenting on the concert, Dawn, Pakistan’s biggest English-language newspaper, wrote: “NAPA, in partnership with The Butler School of Music, University of Texas, has encouraged cultural exchanges… The evening was a rare treat that focused a lot on fusion music and pushed the boundaries of conventions of music, with multiple instruments working together in harmony.”

I also managed to spend some time taking in the sights and sounds of Karachi, an extremely beautiful and well-developed city. Security restrictions greatly limited my travel and security briefings sometimes made it difficult for me to relax. It is unfortunate that the political situation makes these measures appear necessary. But friends made it a point to take me out to dinner and to the markets as often as our busy schedules would allow.

I felt it was an honor and a privilege for me to be a part of the exchange program. If I had one complaint, it was that I couldn’t spend more time than I did working with NAPA’s faculty and students and exploring the city of Karachi. I can only hope that I will visit again someday.

By Lee Redfield
The partnership between National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA), Karachi, Pakistan and University of Texas at Austin's Butler School of Music (BSM) came as a fresh wave of hope for the faculty and students at NAPA, who were anxious to learn, collaborate and explore the infinite possibilities that music itself provides.

Ahsan Shabbir (Junior faculty / Coordinator at NAPA), Arsalan Pareyal (Junior Faculty at NAPA), Nigel Bobby (3rd year Vocal student at NAPA) and Hafi Mustafa (3rd year Vocal student at NAPA) formed the first group of exchange visitors to audit and observe various classes of the Spring 2014 semester at UT’s Butler School of Music.

Each of us was provided with a mentor at the Butler School who guided us throughout the semester and provided any necessary help that was needed. South Asia Institute facilitated in many ways to build connections between the mentors and us, they made sure that we had all the necessities available.

We got to learn a lot from professors at Butler School of Music, from the way they prepare lessons, to how they gradually prepare students for the final exams. The professors also helped us individually during their office hours. They also helped us in making courses. Now we have a better understanding of music and its pedagogy thanks to the professors.

We found musicians at BSM with whom we collaborated. They rehearsed with us, noted our original songs and played with us at SAI's annual reception and at Sahara Lounge. Our Pakistani friends in Austin welcomed us all graciously.

Arsalan composed an original composition "Karachi to Austin" and with Nigel collaborated with musicians at Sahara Lounge. Together they made four new tracks that will feature on an album produced by Ibrahim, the owner of Sahara Lounge. Nigel also performed with the UT Men’s Chorus at Bates Recital Hall and in a San Antonio Church.

Hafi took Recording class with Gary Powell and also toured a music school in Miami, meeting with professors to discuss curriculum development for NAPA.

Ahsan conducted a lecture/recital at UT Recital Hall, rewriting a traditional Raag by harmonizing it. He visited Moore’s School of Music at University of Houston and Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. He got recommendations from BSM senior professors like Dr. Grantham, and he attended Orchestration and Instrumentation, Beginning Composition and Music theory classes at UT BSOM.

The SAI staff really helped us all the way from Karachi to Austin and made sure that we got through the process smoothly. They provided all the necessary support and created a friendly atmosphere.

By Muhammad Ahsan Shabbir

Charlie Wilson Chair in Pakistan Studies Hosts Reception and Screening with Filmmaker Sadia Shepard

On September 18th, the Wilson Chair in Pakistan Studies, together with the Dean of the College, the Department of Government, the South Asia Institute and the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies welcomed award-winning filmmaker Sadia Shepard to Austin for a one-day residency at the University. To help celebrate the University’s Wilson Chair, Ms. Shepard screened “The Other Half of Tomorrow”, which she produced and co-directed with her mother, the late writer and artist Samina Quraeshi. The film, a group of seven short films that follows the stories of women and girls in contemporary Pakistan, premiered in 2012 at the Margaret Mead Film Festival. After showing the film, Ms. Shepard, with Professor Paula Newberg (Wilson Chair Fellow) engaged the audience of University and community members in a robust discussion of the film's finely honed portraits – ranging from rural women confronting religious prejudice to young urban entrepreneurs to the national women's cricket team—and more generally, of the country's culture and politics. Andreas Burgess, the cinematographer, also participated. On the same day, the Schusterman Center hosted a showing of Ms. Shepard's “In Search of the Bene Israel,” a film she produced and directed about the 2000 year old Jewish community on India's west coast from which Ms. Shepard is descended.

By Paula Newberg
UT-FJWU Partnership Exchange - Fall 2013

Visiting Scholar: Adeela Rehman (Gender Studies)
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa (Sociology)

UT Courses Attended:
- “Gender, Health and Society” by Professor Jacqueline Angel in Department of Women and Gender Studies
- “Human Fertility” by Professor Joseph Potter in Department of Sociology
- “Anthropological Theory” by Dr. Kamran Ali in Department of Anthropology

New and Revised FJWU Courses:
- Gender and Sports
- Women in Folk and Popular Culture of Pakistan
- Technical and Creative Writing

Reflection on visit: “The four-month program for young faculty members of higher education institutions in Pakistan is one of the milestones toward building international networks for achieving high-quality education in Pakistan. It was my immense pleasure and prestige to be a part of this program. I attended a number of courses, seminars, lectures and conferences during my stay at UT, as well as met many intellectuals from different parts of the world. The graduate courses that I attended expanded my knowledge and skills and were designed to generate curiosity and interest among the students. The reading materials, teaching strategies, learning resources and compatibility of modules were specialized to effectively meet learning outcomes of the course and to situate true learning in ourselves. It was also my immense pleasure to have Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa as my mentor. She was very professional and experienced in her field. I am very thankful to her for providing me the chance to work under her kind supervision and extend her valuable help and encouragement to complete my tasks. I would like to express my hearty gratitude for her outstanding guidance.”

Reflections on the FJWU Exchange

Although I am not a specialist on South Asia, I have become very fond of the region during four previous trips to India and Pakistan over the past decade. Through relationships with journalists and academics there, I have been shedding stereotypes and learning about the complexity of the subcontinent. So, when Kamran Ali inquired about my interest in a South Asia Institute-sponsored exchange program with Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), I answered “yes” before he could finish his pitch.

I was matched with Sarah Akhtar Hashmi, a lecturer in the Communication and Media Department, one of the four FJWU instructors in residence at UT for Fall 2013. Our correspondence started over email before the semester as we sorted out the various research projects Sarah had been developing. For her focus while at UT, she settled on a study of Islamophobia in Western newspapers. As a critic of the ideological assumptions that frame US media coverage, I looked forward to getting Sarah’s Pakistani perspective on such a crucial issue. Because she had methodological questions that went beyond my expertise, I enlisted colleagues in Communication Studies, Radio-TV-Film, and Journalism (all part of the UT College of Communication) to help out. In various groupings, Sarah and I shared lunch and conversation with these professors, who followed up with additional help. Then, in what seemed like the blink of an eye, it was December and I was sitting in the SAI conference room for the FJWU faculty members’ final presentation. It was sad to see them go.
But for me the best part of the program was coming up—the trip to FJWU in January. For five days, I led a two-hour mini-course on freedom, media and politics with a dozen FJWU students. Each day, we focused on a different aspect of the subject. We began by looking at how philosophers have understood the idea of freedom through centuries, beginning with John Stuart Mill and his classic On Liberty. The next day, we discussed the arguments for and challenges to the realization of basic freedoms—such as freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association—in different systems of modern representative governance. On the third day, we talked about the best way to organize an economy to maximize human freedom. The last two days focused on freedom as it relates to journalism, especially in Pakistan. We looked at the pros and cons of different models of journalistic practice and institutional structures, how governments, corporations, military and the public understand and evaluate press freedom, and what conceptions of freedom are most appropriate for Pakistan.

I learned quickly I didn’t need to give long lectures; the students jumped in with provocative questions and insightful observations. When not in the classroom, I met with other faculty and administrators, including a lively exchange on globalization with Dr. Naheed Zia Khan, an economics professor. The highlight of the visit was on my final day, when Sarah and I met with Dr. Khan for farewells. In that meeting, Dr. Khan let me know that in addition to her talents in the classroom, Sarah was an exceptional singer, and I had a private concert in which Sarah demonstrated how accurate Dr. Khan was. My positive memories of FJWU had a soundtrack.

By Robert Jensen
The 2013 Texas Asia Conference (TAC), a biennial UT-Austin Department of Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference, was held on November 1-2 in the new Student Activity Center. It featured two faculty keynote speakers and 30 graduate student participants from three continents, including University of Oslo, Norway; Shanghai University, China; and various US campuses. Coordinated by and for graduate students, the Texas Asia Conference provides a dynamic forum for original research from across traditional academic divisions of Asia. The goal of the conference is to encourage transregional, transtemporal, and interdisciplinary dialogues in the study of Asia, and the 2013 conference was no exception: eight panels integrated student papers from a variety of fields and areas. The theme, Tradition and Transition, explored various definitions of and approaches to the term “tradition” as well as the ways in which change has been enacted and negotiated within and across traditions. The panelists addressed a wide range of issues including diasporic identity, colonialism and post-colonial capitalist culture, tourism and nationalism, art history, broadcast media and film, Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions, and poetic literature.

A number of UT graduate students presented papers, including Roanne Cantor (Comparative Literature); Tupur Chatterjee and Kyung Sun Lee (Radio-Television-Film), Sheela Jane Menon (English); and Mung Ting Chung, Andrea Gutierrez, and Erin Newton (Asian Studies). Our faculty keynote speaker on East Asia, Professor Daniel Stevenson, Chair of the Dept. of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, presented a riveting paper, “The Essentials of the Eight Sects of the Japanese Monk Gyōnen (1240-1321) and Modernist Chinese Remappings of Buddhism as a ‘World Religion.” Finally, Department of Asian Studies Professor Emeritus Dr. Patrick Olivelle closed Day 2 of the conference with his keynote speech, “On Fakes and Forgeries: Grafting New Scions onto Old Stock.”

In addition to the high quality of the panelists’ presentations, the success of the 2013 conference was due to the graduate students from several departments who volunteered to help with the event. Further, the 2013 TAC planning committee co-chairs, Vibha Shetiya, Kathleen Longwaters, and Hillary Langberg coordinated all of the details of the event and raised all funding for the conference. We received generous financial and practical support from South Asia Institute as well as the Department of Asian Studies, Center for East Asian Studies, China Endowment, Mitsubishi Japan Studies Endowment, POSCO Korean Studies Endowment, Chao Center for Asian Studies at Rice University, UT-Austin College of Liberal Arts, UT-Austin Department of History, and UT-Austin Department of Comparative Literature.

This support allowed conference planners to provide panelists and faculty speakers with various forms of hospitality including delicious catered lunches from Al Borz and Thai Spice as well as two very special evening events: a buffet dinner for panelists, faculty, and volunteers at Clay Pit Indian Restaurant as well as a wine and cheese reception at Professor Janice Leoshko’s home at the close of the conference. We sincerely thank all of our sponsors, panelists, keynote speakers, and volunteers. Special thanks to the staff of the South Asia Institute and the UT Department of Asian Studies, particularly Jeannie Cortez and Saleha Parvaiz, for all of their efforts in making this conference a success, as well as to Professor Janice Leoshko for her generosity. We also wish to thank Professor Ute Hüskens and Professor Oliver Freiberger for their truly visionary work in establishing the ongoing Academic and Scientific Cooperation and Exchange Agreement between UT-Austin and the University of Oslo that so enriches the Texas Asia Conference experience by bringing conference presenters from Oslo to UT (and vice-versa). Based on the fabulous success of last year’s conference, the next Texas Asia Conference, set to take place in 2015, promises to carry on the tradition of creating a productive and fruitful forum for graduate students to present and discuss their original research on Asia at UT Austin. Any Asian Studies graduate students interested in co-chairing next year’s event should contact Jennifer Tipton at dasgrads@austin.utexas.edu.
This year I was very lucky to be a part of South Asia Institute's collaboration with Huston-Tillotson University. HT, which lies just across I-35 from the University of Texas, is the oldest university in Austin (founded in 1881), offers four-year degrees in a variety of disciplines, and is also one of the country's 106 Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

As part of its mission to provide resources on South Asia to the greater Austin community, SAI offers yearly funding for a course on South Asia taught at HT. The content of the course and the department in which it is offered varies according to the needs of HT and the teaching competencies of the hired instructor. Luckily for me, HT was interested in having a course offered through its Religion department and so I was hired to teach Religions of India for the Spring 2014 semester.

This was an introductory class in which we covered Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, and Sikhism. A few of my students had learned a little about Islam in previous courses and one student was familiar with some basic tenets of Buddhism. But like most undergraduate students who come directly out of the US public school system, they had very little exposure to Asian religions or religion as an academic subject. Much of the course material was new to them, although many of the practices, beliefs, and key figures associated with the religions covered resonated with the students. Many of them constantly compared the new traditions about which they were learning to their own religious and ethical foundations.

SAI made many resources available to me for this course and I think the students benefitted from this immensely. We borrowed a number of books, some film clips, and also a number of cultural trunks with various artifacts from Pakistan, India, Tibet, and Bangladesh. When SAI participated in Explore UT, we had the opportunity to bring the students of UT and HT together for some volunteerism and fun. A number of my students showed up to help kids make Tibetan prayer flags and also stayed late to help the Eurasian studies folks take down their yurt.

Since the students responded really well to the course, I was offered another adjunct position teaching their Adult Degree Program. In this intensive evening program, students have five-week courses and take one class at a time for four hours each week, with an additional four hours of group work outside of class. I taught a course on Comparative Religion, covering approaches to the study of religious diversity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It was quite a challenge, for both the students and myself, to cover so much material over the course of five weeks, but it was an exciting challenge and we had fun with it.

Perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching this course was seeing how the students began to see and understand the similarities between their own traditions and those of others that they had previously thought were very foreign. Many students, for example, had not previously considered the shared history of the Abrahamic religions in terms of texts, beliefs, practices, and sacred geography. Also, students were familiar with certain aspects of Christian belief at the start of the course, but were interested to learn more about the history of this religion, about the formation of the Bible, and about Catholicism and the Protestant Reformation in particular. All students identified as Christian and liked learning about some of the historical developments that often get glossed over or ignored in church services. Additionally, considering concepts like atman in comparison with soul, for example, or the concept of rebirth in samsara in comparison with the idea of rebirth in heaven, gave students the opportunity to reflect on how humans have answered questions of ultimate concern in varying ways over the course of history.

This unique collaboration between SAI and HT has helped me gain invaluable teaching experience and has made it possible for students at HT to have access to courses that are otherwise not available to them. Hopefully we can continue to grow this program in the future.

By Amy Hyne
Archival project to digitize Balochistan manuscripts

South Asia Institute is helping catalog, digitize and make publicly available rare and endangered manuscripts from the Pakistani province of Balochistan, especially those that are written in native languages such as Balochi, Pashto and Persian. In collaboration with Quetta-based Balochistan Archives and the British Library, SAI has embarked on a pilot project that also aims to preserve these manuscripts and train local archival staff in professional digitizing protocols.

Balochistan is the largest of Pakistan’s four provinces, located at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. As a cultural crossroads, it is rich in antiquities, archaeological sites, and historical archives. Contemporary historical research on Balochistan relies heavily on manuscripts and printed materials in English that were written by colonial officials and reflect the priorities and concerns of the British Raj and colonial bureaucracy. These sources are largely silent on the pre-colonial history and cultural formations of Balochistan and its neighboring regions. Anti-colonial movements that used local languages, either in written or oral form, become invisible in the official archives.

The pilot project seeks to address this situation by identifying, documenting and preserving historical source materials in native languages. The vast majority of these source materials are in the form of handwritten manuscripts held by individuals or families in Balochistan. These include histories (Tawarikh), exegetical texts (Shariah and Tafasir), proclamations (Sanads/ Farmans), and letters (Maktubat). These are extremely vulnerable and perishable documents and they may be lost forever if timely intervention is not made for identification and preservation.

A collaboration between scholars, the staff of the Balochistan Archives and the University of Texas at Austin Libraries will create catalogues of and strategies for digitally preserving these materials for dissemination to the broader scholarly community. Noted Balochistan scholars such as Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahui, Prof. (ret’d) Siyal Kakar, Prof. Aziz Mengal, and Dr. Abdul Rauf Rafiqi have been contacted to help identify collections of manuscripts in Persian and other languages. As most individuals and families are unwilling to permanently part with their family heirlooms, an alternative to acquiring manuscripts is borrowing and digitizing these documents for wider dissemination—a form of “post-custodial archiving” of which the UT Libraries have extensive experience.

The first phase will consist of creating a detailed catalog of holdings of rare manuscripts residing with individuals and families in different parts of Balochistan. Through the assistance of the Balochistan Archives and its director, Hafeez Jamali, SAI has obtained hand-lists of manuscripts that are in possession of some notable private collectors and bibliophiles. Using these hand-lists as well as field reports, it plans to verify holdings and to create formal metadata records for the manuscripts resulting in an online, publicly accessible catalog that will be made available through the websites of the British Library, the Balochistan Archive and the University of Texas.

Alongside, SAI will train archival staff in Balochistan on international standards for digitally capturing manuscripts in the field rather than moving them temporarily for digitization and preservation work. All images created through this process will be transferred to servers at the Balochistan Archives in Quetta and shared with the British Library and the University of Texas.

SAGAR – Call for Papers

SAGAR: A South Asia Research Journal publishes innovative academic writing in the humanities and social sciences of South Asia, as well as critical translations of texts from South Asian languages to English. It was established in 1993 and is published annually by The South Asia Institute at the University of Texas at Austin. Two years ago, we transitioned to a peer-reviewed evaluation process for our annual print volumes.

We are now accepting full-length research articles and translations for our next print volume, to be published in Spring 2015. The deadline for submission is November 25, 2014. Submissions for our print issue are blindly evaluated by an editorial board of advanced scholars in the field.

Beginning with this volume, SAGAR will also be listed on EBSCO databases, which are used for academic research by tens of thousands of institutions worldwide. This will substantially enhance the visibility of articles published in the journal.
Besides our annual print volume, we also publish online essays all through the year. Online essays are blindly evaluated by an editorial collective of UT graduate students in consultation with our faculty board. The editorial collective coordinates all submissions.

Manuscripts are expected to follow the 16th edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. Full citation information should be included in footnotes. The entire articles, including block quotations and notes, should be double-spaced. Please remove any identifying information so that submission is suitable for anonymous review.

Submission types:

(1) Full-length research articles: These should be between 8,000 and 10,000 words and should include a one-paragraph abstract.

(2) Original translations: These should be between 3,000 and 6,000 words, preceded by a 1,300-1,600-word introduction that contextualizes the text or excerpt. Please send a scanned copy of the original source text along with your submission. If your submission is accepted, you will be asked to type the original source text for publication on our website.

(3) Online essays: Online essays should be 1,500 words or less and should include citations. Submissions with images, video and/or audio are encouraged.

(4) Reviews of archives: Our archive reviews are published throughout the year. We encourage contributions from scholars who have recently consulted particular archives. Contributors should include information about archive holdings, accessibility and fees, working hours, duplication, and food and lodging.

Please submit electronic copies of papers saved as a Microsoft Word file and include a 150-word biography and publishable images with credits, where applicable. Submissions of articles and translations received after November 25, 2014 will be considered for the following year’s issue of Sagar. Send all electronic manuscripts and questions to sagarjournal@gmail.com.

Saif Shahin and Jeff Wilson  
Co-editors, SAGAR  
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Seminar Series: Fall 2014

Southern Asia has witnessed millennia of royal rule. Refined and elaborate codes of behavior, norms of dress and styles of artistic production flourished in these times. The British empire was fascinated by these and both drew upon and added to them in extravagant rituals of power. It is not surprising that even the republican regimes that succeeded imperial rule in the subcontinent have retained many elements of the Darbar tradition. This seminar series explores various aspects of the latter.

- Sumit Guha

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>3:30-5:30p</td>
<td>Ramya Sreenivasan, University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Households and Courts: Administrations India, c. 1150 – 1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>3:30-5p</td>
<td>Allison Busch, Columbia University</td>
<td>History Off Center: The Mughal Empire from the Hindi Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>3:30-5p</td>
<td>Syed Akbar Hyder, UT Austin</td>
<td>Codes of (Visual) Conduct and the Significance of Darbar Representations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>3:30-5:30p</td>
<td>Richard Eaton, University of Arizona</td>
<td>Codes of (Visual) Conduct and the Significance of Darbar Representations</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/6</td>
<td>3:30-5p</td>
<td>Carla Petievich, UT Austin</td>
<td>From Confessional Ambiguity to the Imperial Shrine of Safavid Iran and Mughal India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/13</td>
<td>3:30-5p</td>
<td>S. Akbar Zaidi, Columbia University</td>
<td>From Court to Public Sphere: How Urdu Poetry’s Language of Romance Shaped the Language of Protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>3:30-5:30p</td>
<td>Anastasia Piliavsky, Cambridge University</td>
<td>From Court to Public Sphere: How Urdu Poetry’s Language of Romance Shaped the Language of Protest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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