

SOUTH ASIA Institute



FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN





Letter from the Director

Dear Colleagues, Students, and Friends,

This cool, bright mid-October morning, as I look out onto Shoal Creek that traverses Austin, I think of peoples who have also called this home. Inhabited by frogs, turtles, water snakes, barred owls, and coyotes, the creek, older neighbors say, used to yield arrowheads every time it swelled and quickly receded, washing in and out histories of life and settlement. What sorts of memories did these not-now

inhabitants have of this creek that now claims me? And what sorts of joys did it yield to them?

Since the start of the pandemic 18 months ago, I have grown intimately familiar with the little strip of Shoal Creek and its inhabitants just outside my window. This global pandemic has been incredibly hard on all of us: some of us have lost our loved ones to COVID-19, others have lost jobs, and many of us yearn for family and

friends we have not visited in almost two years. Yet, the pandemic has also provided me another lens to life. Instead of constantly being on the

move, I am learning new ways of being, of dwelling here and taking in the rhythms of the human and non-human world around me. The South Asia Institute is a large part of this world, and for that, I am grateful.

Perhaps our Fall 2021 newsletter can give you a sense of all that we have been doing this past year, even as we have taken lockdowns, record COVID-19 numbers, and overfilled Texas hospitals in stride. The ATX+PAK Entrepreneurship program (2015-2020), funded by the US Embassy in Islamabad, ended in September 2020. Connecting entrepreneurs, investors, and influencers in Austin to their counterparts in Pakistan's emerging innovation ecosystem, ATX+PAK reached more than 2,500 entrepreneurs, investors, and educators. SAI and Hemispheres hosted the workshop "Streams of Buddhism in South Asia," in October and November 2020 for K-12 teachers across Texas. And, over the course of Fall 2020, Dr. Janice Leoshko pulled together a wonderful group of speakers for the seminar she convened, titled "For the Times They Are A Changin': Perspectives on the Study of South Asia" to reflect on the changing nature of what, and how we study South Asia. We ended 2020, perhaps fittingly, with the inauguration of the South Asia Garden on our campus, which came together through the joint efforts of Scott Webel and University Housing and Dining's UT Farm Stand.

We started off 2021 with a panel discussion organized by Dr. Indrani Chatterjee titled "Governance Across the Indian Ocean" where the panelists pushed us to reimagine state-centric models of governance through offering new primary materials. In April 2021 we collaborated with South Asian Studies Council at Yale University and New York University to organize a two-day virtual conference titled "South Asian Languages in the Diaspora" (SALD). Later that month we were incredibly proud to launch the Sajjad Zaheer Digital Archive, which was the culmination of years of work by our colleagues, Mary Rader, Kamran Ali, and Akbar Hyder who forged a partnership between UT Austin and Ambedkar University Delhi, with endorsement from Sajjad Zaheer's estate, to host the digital archive. Our colleagues Drs. Gautami Shah, Ahmed Shamim, and Darsana Sasi-Manayathu received the Learning Community Grant offered through UT Austin's Faculty Innovation Center. Together with eight faculty members in the Department of Asian Studies, representing six Asian languages, they convened regular sessions of their study group to exchange ideas on how to identify common issues and challenges in working as in-person and online instructors in less commonly taught languages. And throughout Spring 2021, we met regularly on Thursday afternoons to hear from our speakers who participated in the Spring 2021 seminar series, "Life, Death, and Value."

Though some events were cancelled for summer 2021, we continued to be busy. From July 1-3rd 2021, South Asian academics, activists and

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Front cover photo by Alayna Hudson, University Housing and Dining

Newsletter editor: Sahar Ali



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HUF Alumnus is helping Nepal fight the COVID-19 pandemic



Above: Community partners delivering kits to those in isolation. Right: Contents of the Home Isolation Kit



Nearly 10 years ago, I returned to South Asia for a study abroad program as the first batch of the Hindi-Urdu Flagship (HUF) program at UT Austin. This was my first time back in the region since I moved to the US from Nepal. While studying Hindi and Urdu was the focus, extracurricular experiences delivering basic health education in marginalized communities in the slums of Lucknow inspired me to continue that work after my return to Austin. This led to the foundation of a student organization called HAPSA, Health Advancement Programs to Serve All.

After the HUF program, I completed a medical and a public health degree. Now, I work as a global health specialized emergency medicine physician at Brown University and continue global health efforts through HAPSA. Over the last year, I have been in the clinical forefront of pandemic response in the United States while also conducting virtual training of health workers across the globe. This spring, I found myself in the global epicenter of the delta-virus fueled pandemic in Nepal.

Over the years, my focus in global health has guided HAPSA's programs in Nepal. HAPSA has worked extensively in hand-washing education, hosted numerous health, dental and eye

camp, and has worked in supporting health centers affected by the devastating earthquake of 2015. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, HAPSA conducted multiple virtual public health programs focused on rural Nepal.

Within a few weeks of my arrival in Nepal in the spring (2020), Nepal overtook India as the country with the worst per capita COVID-19 cases and the highest viral replication in the world. With world news focused on the Indian COVID-19 crisis, Nepal felt overshadowed and forgotten globally. For nearly 30 million people, Nepal has 1200 ICU beds, less than 500 ventilators, and a major lack of healthcare human resources. Knowing the best way to help the strained health system is to keep as many people home as possible, we designed a kit that would allow COVID-19 infected individuals to establish care for themselves at home. In fact, nearly 80% of people with COVID-19 don't need hospitals. We called this "GharMaiSyhaar" campaign, or Care at Home. The kit includes essential medications like paracetamol and cough syrup, with detailed instructions on dosing, in addition to masks, soap, sanitizer, vitamins, a thermometer, and quality-checked pulse oximeters. In the kit was also a detailed instructional video link/QR code

on how to use the kit, and a 90-minute video with essential public health information on COVID-19.

Still guided by the core mission to work with community partners, HAPSA partnered with local municipal governments and non-profit organizations to identify the target population and disseminate these home isolation kits. As of today, we have partnered with 27 local municipalities across Nepal, and requests for these kits are pouring in daily. HAPSA works closely with other partners to provide hotline support to kits' recipients. Once the pandemic ends, municipalities will re-collect the pulse oximeters to equip local health centers.

HAPSA's work in Nepal is mostly successful because of the trust and partnerships we have been able to build over the years, and it all started when I was a young student at UT Austin.

I flew out of Nepal at the end of June on a chartered flight, heavy-hearted that the country was still on lockdown. But I continue my work with the team there virtually.

With the rise of monsoon floods, we have adjusted our home isolation kits to include water purifiers, and I continue to raise funds to support them. While the current focus has been on acute response, these few months have highlighted the importance of developing a strong emergency care infrastructure. As a global health focused emergency physician with a long-standing relationship with the country, this will be my lifelong goal in Nepal. In the words of Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz:

*Chale chalo ke woh manzil abhi nahi aaie
Keep on moving, the destination is yet to come ❄️*

Ramu Kharel, a HUF alumnus, is a physician at Brown University's Department of Emergency Medicine.

Remembering John Bordie *(April 3, 1931 - January 23, 2020)*

John Bordie's association with Pakistan goes back decades, perhaps starting in the early 1950s when the country was still a fledging state. This much I know that his PhD thesis was in Sindhi phonology, and he kept going back for his research with his wife Camilla, and their three children. Although John had travelled widely, he seemed most connected to Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and others.

When I arrived at the University of Texas for a PhD in the fall of 1985, many other international scholars arrived with me. The Foreign Language Education Center (FLEC), where John was the Director and the founding faculty, was a galaxy. In addition to scholars from Muslim countries we had graduate students from all over the world: the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Malawi, India, Guam and elsewhere. We all gravitated to FLEC because of John and the center's reputation as a world class institution for linguistics and foreign language education.

In the early 1980s John was our consultant to the Open University in Islamabad and the Federal Ministry for Education in the capital. John and I worked together to design and implement a graduate diploma program in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language. The program was mainly for college and university lecturers who had qualified for the Master's program in English literature with a third division, the equivalent of a C grade. These faculty were hired in temporary positions where they could lose their jobs any time a better qualified faculty was available. There were close to 5,000 third-divisioners all over the country, which meant that if they were to lose their jobs, the approximately five thousand families they supported would be left financially destitute. The compromise solution was to retrain these lecturers through a nine-month diploma in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

The world had changed by the 1980s. Foreign language education and applied linguistics based on the practical application of language use was the mode. The target audience for retraining in the field were these five thousand faculty and others in the profession who aspired to learn the new techniques of language learning through listening, speaking, hearing, and writing skills.



Dr. Bordie (top left) with his family

I recollect when John first came to my office. The first remark he made was about a card, posted on my wall with Ophelia sailing down a river, her shroud a wreath of flowers. I was going through a traumatic period in my personal life. How observant he was! That Ophelia card came off the very next day.

Over the next five years, John and I laid the groundwork for a new English language program. With his input, many other American and British consultants were engaged through USAID, USEFP (United States Education Foundation in Pakistan), The British Council and Britain's Overseas Development Agency.

John and I did several ELT conferences together and workshops all over the country, so much so that within a period of five years we had retrained close to 3,500 academics in the four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, then called the North West Frontier Province. Not to mention our engagement in Islamabad, the federal capital and an entity unto itself. Later, the Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi, the Sri Lanka University and some long-distance universities in Bangladesh adopted our model. Effectively, John and I changed

the very face of English language teaching in South Asia.

As we speak, I wonder if John was one of the architects of the Institute of Sindhology in Hyderabad Sindh? USAID and UNESCO funded the project which is an archive of the rich Sindhi culture including its history, antiquities, ethnomusicology, politics and a range of disciplines which has brought Sindh and its people to international recognition. The institute is linked to the University of Sindh, in Hyderabad, Pakistan. That outfit can only be the accomplishment of a trained linguist, and John was that linguist. The Institute of Sindhology is perhaps the world's largest and finest archive of Sufi music, musicians, female and male performers of Sufi music in Sindhi, Siraiki, Punjabi, Persian, Arabic and English.

The late Dr. G.A. Allana was the Director of the institute perhaps while it was founded. He was also our Vice Chancellor at the time John and I were working on our ELT programs. We had tremendous support from Dr. Allana on our English language projects.

Going back to John Bordie, I'm now connecting the dots of many conversations we had. He knew that there were millions of unused dollars still in the kitty for the Institute of Sindhology. He

planned with me to get those dollars for our use to enable a graduate program in linguistics at the Open University.

Another conversation John shared with me was about a contract signed between UT and the Pakistan

federal government for cooperation on academic training and research. The contract had been signed in the 1980s by Pakistan's federal minister for education, Dr. Muhammad Afzal, an influential player in General Ziaul Haq's cabinet. He was a close relative of Ziaul Haq. Himself a graduate of an American university, Afzal was another key player in Pakistan's English language programs. He knew every English language academic's name and he always participated in the ELT conferences that John organized and whose proceedings he published. Afzal was a down to earth, humble official unlike any minister.

John moved around Islamabad on his blue Vespa scooter, unlike the other foreign consultants who travelled in chauffeur-driven embassy cars. Just before John completed his tenure in Islamabad, I went to see him in the University Grants Commission guest house, where he lived. I wanted his input on American universities for my planned PhD. He gave me a long list of American universities that were Centers of Excellence in ELT/Teaching English as A Second Language and applied linguistics. He casually mentioned the University of Texas at Austin where he was the Director of FLEC. It was the USEFP Director Bruce Lohof, who said, "It's always good to go to a place where you have a live contact." So, I went to UT.

I kept in touch with John and Camilla and whenever I visited Austin, I always met the Bordies. They had a special connection with Pakistan. Camilla bravely said on one such visit, that they had a child buried in Pakistan. In one of my later visits from Pakistan, John and I met at Texas French Bread. John expressed his wish to visit Pakistan where their child was buried. He said, sadly, "It's only a memory."

John and I always argued over who will pay for coffee. "Don't accept her money, it's counterfeit," he said to the cashier. We all laughed.



We both talked about their life in Pakistan, and his bagful of stories.

An interesting story he told was of the Khattak dancers in Peshawar. The male Khattak dancers put on a show dressed in their white frocks, white shalwar trousers, and their bob-cut hair. Because of gender segregation, the Khattak dancers sometimes play female roles as well with lipstick, rouge, kohl: the whole nine yards. They even wear *ghungroo*, jingling anklets worn by professional female dancers. The dancers kept the performance going throughout the night until dawn by which time their stubble grew grey. Cinderella was in rags, her carriage a pumpkin!

Another memorable "John comment" was when he dropped me off at the student ghetto where I lived, to write my book, *The Female Voice in Sufi Ritual*. I had fled Pakistan and the blasphemy charge brought on me in my university. The charge carried a death sentence.

John saw the ten square feet hovel where I lived.

"Is that it?" he asked.

"Yes, John, that's it," I responded.

On the way out, as I walked him to his car, he said, "You people won't write books unless you go to prison or get a blasphemy *fatwa*."

My last meeting with John was at Central Market on South Lamar, which was halfway from Dripping Springs where he and Camilla lived. He was undergoing dialysis. I knew that was our last meeting. His last Christmas card was a scribble. When in February I received his children Ralph and Robin's card, before I opened it, I knew: John had left us. Farewell, John and Camilla. You will always live in our hearts. ❄️

Shemeem Burney Abbas is Professor of Political Science, Gender Studies and Literature at the State University of New York at Purchase.

Letter from the Director

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artists convened an online conference commemorating 50 years of the Bangladesh war of 1971. And, on August 13, 2021 Aruna Kharod (doctoral candidate, ethnomusicology) hosted an online symposium to share her collaborative work with local South Asian elders on Partition narratives and songs related to their experiences growing up in the aftermath of the Partition.

The lockdowns initiated by the pandemic have been emotionally and socially debilitating, but through it all we have had each other. What were once upon a time challenging Zoom room situations are now commonplace. Indeed, we look forward to these virtual meetings because we get to see friends and colleagues from halfway across the country and the world on a regular basis. But all of this would not have been possible without the colleagues in our presence, right here in Austin—Rachel Meyer, Rita Omrani, and Scott Webel. Their brilliance, good cheer, and efficiency make SAI happen. My thanks to Sahar Ali too who always steps in to pull together this newsletter, and Anshuman Sharda who keeps track of it all.

Onward.

Sharmila Rudrappa

Faculty

Kamran Asdar Ali was elected Vice President of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), starting in March 2021. He will serve as President of AAS from March 2022 for a period of one year. He published the Afterword in Ali Khan and Ali Nobil's edited volume, *Film and Cinephilia* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), "On Female Friendships and Anger" in *Love, War, and Other Longings: Emergent Cinema in Pakistan*, eds. Vazira Zamindar and Asad Ali, Karachi: Oxford University Press, and "Female Friendship and Forbidden Desire: Two Films from the 1960's Pakistan" in Esha De and Elora Chowdhury (eds.) *Transregional Filmscapes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press). He is guest-editor with Claudia Derichs of an upcoming Special Issue of *International Quarterly of Asian Studies*, "The Long 1960s in Asia." Kamran published two articles in Pakistani newspapers in spring 2021: "Tribute: Unsettling Intellectual Comfort Zone" (Sunday Magazine, Dawn Karachi, March 7) and "My Days Are Not Passing. Remembering Asif Aslam Farrukhi" (*The News* on Sunday, February 7). He was also published in the *Journal of Urdu Studies* (August 2021 issue) "*Dosti Ka Safar: Asif, Karachi and I: Remembering Asif Aslam Farrukhi (1959-2020)*" and a review of *Who Is a Muslim?: Orientalism and Literary Populisms* by Maryam Wasif Khan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2021) in *Journal of Urdu Studies*. He has written the epilogue in a forthcoming volume *Forms of the Left in Postcolonial South Asia: Aesthetics, Networks and Connected Histories* (Hoek and Sanjukta Sunderason edited volume, UK: Bloomsbury Press, 2021).

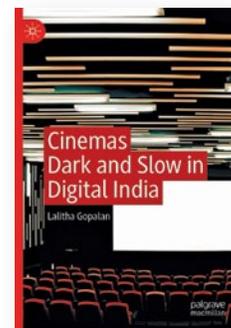
Indrani Chatterjee was interviewed by Jessica Hinchy and Girija Joshi for the *Journal of Global Slavery*, published as "Towards a More Varied Picture of Slavery" and also for *Itenerario: Journal of Imperial and Global Interactions*, published as "Selective Amnesia and South Asian Histories." She won the Raymond Dickson Centennial Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching for 2021-22 from COLA, UT Austin.

Diane Coffey's forthcoming research paper, "Measurement of population mental health: Evidence from a mobile phone survey in India" in *Health Policy & Planning* (Coffey, Diane, Payal Hathi, Nazar Khalid, and Amit Thorat) received media attention in the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine's "HPP Debated" podcast. Also forthcoming is "Neonatal death in India: The effect of birth order in a context of maternal undernutrition" in *The Economic Journal* (Coffey, Diane and Dean Spears). In 2021, she published "When women eat last: Discrimination at home and women's mental health" (Hathi, Payal, Diane Coffey, and Amit Thorat). Published research in 2020 includes "Persisting prejudice: Measuring outcomes and attitudes by caste, religion, and gender" (Thorat, Amit, Nazar Khalid, Nikhil Srivastav, Payal Hathi, Dean Spears, and Diane Coffey) in the title, *Caste: A Global Journal of Social Exclusion* and "Assessing high-profile public messaging for sanitation behaviour change: Evidence from a mobile phone survey in India (Coffey, Diane, Payal Hathi and Dean Spears; *Waterlines* 2020). Coffey co-authored a technical report for the National Centre for Data Innovation at the National Council for Applied Economic Research in India on "Mobile Phone Survey Methods for Measuring Social Discrimination." She gave a talk on "The consequences of caste and untouchability for health and human capital" at the Bridgeport Hospital Global Health Initiative Seminar (June 2021) and the Center for Contemporary South Asia Seminar Series: Caste and Economics, Watson Institute, Brown University (May 2021). She delivered another lecture, on "Caste and gender discrimination, and the health of all Indians" in the Fall 2020 South Asia Seminar Series "For the Times They Are A-Changin': Perspectives on the Study of South Asia" in September 2020.

Jason Cons has been working on a book manuscript about climate change and competing projects of making the future in the Bengal delta. The book will focus on the intersection between development, security, conservation, urbanization and agrarian change in Bangladesh's southwest.

Don Davis published the chapter "Conscience is Tradition: Classical Hindu Law and the Ethics of Conservatism" in *Rules and Ethics: Perspectives from Anthropology and History* (eds. Morgan Clarke and Emily Corran, 37-58. Manchester University Press, 2021). He presented "Philology in All Directions: Śāstrakāradigvijayah" in the plenary session at the 231st Meeting of the American Oriental Society in March 2021 and also delivered a keynote address, "The History of Law and the History of Jurisprudence in Classical India" at the 2nd Annual All-India Legal History Congress, Tamil Nadu National Law University in May 2021.

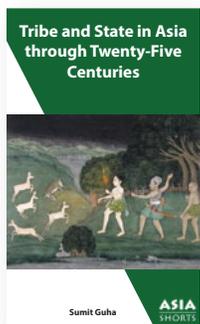
Oliver Freiberger's book, *Considering Comparison: A Method for Religious Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2019) was the subject of an Author-Meets-Critics panel at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Freiberger also gave a keynote lecture at the Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions, University of London, and published a chapter on "J. Z. Smith and Comparison" in a volume



commemorating Jonathan Z. Smith.

Lalitha Gopalan published *Cinemas Dark and Slow in Digital India* (Palgrave MacMillan and Orient BlackSwan), which engages

with overlooked archives in film cultures across India. The book is based on years of fieldwork and research funded by AIFS, Fulbright-Nehru, and the Tagore International Fellowship.



Sumit Guha published a monograph titled *Tribe and State in Asia through Twenty-Five Centuries* (Columbia University Press for the Association for Asian Studies). He delivered the Thomas Trautmann

Honorary Lecture at the University of Michigan on February 19, 2021 with a talk titled “Time, Memory, Oblivion: Social Frames and the Production of Collective Pasts.”

Ward Keeler published a textbook for the Burmese language, *Burmese: A Cultural Approach* (Hong Kong University Press). Taking the dialogues written by co-author Allen Lyan, Keeler’s book focuses on patterns in social interaction, as well as grammar, after the model developed in his earlier language textbook, *Javanese: A Cultural Approach*. This fall he will start a ten-month fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Study in Aarhus, Denmark, putting together a collection of essays about hierarchy, including ones developed out of two talks given for the SAI seminar series he organized last year entitled “Alternative Hierarchies.” Most of the essays will focus on Southeast Asia, but will include a longer version of his essay “Hierarchy in America,” published in *Anthropology Today* (February 2021).

Dalpat Rajpurohit published a peer-reviewed essay, “Bhakti versus Riti? The Sants’ Perspective” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies* (Vol. 84:1, 95-113). He also published articles in *Scroll.in* and *Rajasthan Patrika* on Rajasthani language teaching and institution-building. He served as the chief advisor for the foundation of the Rajasthani Language Academy and delivered a Centennial Lecture (online) on the completion of 100 years of the Hindi department at Banaras Hindu University, India. He led three reading sessions in “the Early Hindi & Braj Bhasha workshop” (online), organized by the South Asia Research Cluster, Wolfson College, University of Oxford in July 2021. Dalpat received the Research Reboot Award from UT Austin’s Provost Office.

Darsana Manayathu Sasi was guest lecturer in a “Nature of Inquiry” course in Fall 2020 (taught by Dr. Virginia A. Brown, Sociology). Her talk was based on an article she published in 2006, on the feminist study of the novel *Mattathy* written by Sarah Joseph. Dr Manayathu Sasi presented a paper entitled ‘The Saga of Survival’ at a webinar series on “Covid-19: Changing World Order” conducted by St. Xavier’s College Thumba, in collaboration with the State Institute of Encyclopedia, Department of Cultural Affairs, Govt. of Kerala (September 2020). She conducted two Malayalam Language Teaching Workshops at UT (October 24th & November 7th) for Malayali community volunteer teachers nationwide. The workshops covered how to enhance the classroom experience for students, how to identify the traits of Novice/Intermediate/Advanced level students, and techniques to improve speaking, reading, listening, and writing proficiency. She received an award entitled ‘Aksharasree’ from Dallas Sauhruda Vedhi, one of the prominent literary associations in Texas, for outstanding contributions and leadership to Malayalam Language & Literature in Texas.

Martha Ann Selby published “Is there a Cankam Way of Feeling? Body, Landscape, Voice, and Affect in Old Tamil Poetry” in *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Emotions in Classical Indian Philosophy* (eds. Maria Heim, Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad, and Roy Tzohar, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021). The UT College of Liberal Arts also awarded Selby a Humanities Research Award to further her work on *Kuruntokai*, a Tamil anthology of love poetry from the third century CE.

Gautami Shah received an Actions that Promote Community Transformations grant from the Provost’s office for the 2020-21 academic year for her proposal, “Increasing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Student-Generated Course Materials.” Shah worked with ex-students on the selection and development of age-appropriate, creative material content. The collaboration resulted in the Inclusive Hindi Project, a collection of peer-generated,

age appropriate open educational resources (OERs) that aim to make the Hindi classroom and Hindi language more inclusive. In May 2021 Shah also received a Faculty Innovation Center Undergraduate Teaching Grant for her proposal on actively engaging students through intentional planning of course modules to create a more inclusive classroom experience. In November 2020, Shah presented Pedagogical Implications of Translanguaging in the Language Classroom at the annual conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Shah was also invited as a guest panelist on Howard Blumenthal’s Reinventing School: Episode # 43, Language Learning Part I.

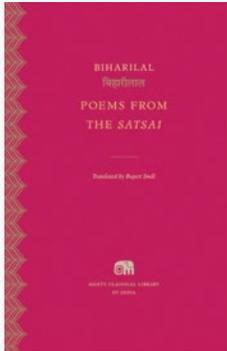
Cynthia Talbot published “Anger and Atonement in Mughal India: An Alternative Account of Akbar’s 1578 Hunt” in *Modern Asian Studies*. She remotely presented the invited lecture “Rajput Loyalties in the Mughal Age” to the Modern South Asian seminar of Oxford University in November 2020.

Emeritus Faculty

Kathryn Hansen published two articles: “The Beauties of Lucknow: An Urdu Photographic Album” in *Journal of Urdu Studies* 1:2 (2020), and “Tamil Drama in Colonial Madras: The Parsi Theatre Connection,” in *South Asian History and Culture*, 12:1 (2021). Each contains numerous illustrations, reproduced in color in the online version.

Gail Minault was recently awarded the Sir Syed Excellence Award by Aligarh Muslim University in recognition of “her seminal work on the 19th and 20th century history of India, including religion, politics, intellectual and social history, and women’s movements.” The award committee highlighted Prof. Minault’s two influential monographs “The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India” (1982) and “Secluded Scholars: Women’s Education and Muslim Reform in Colonial India” (1997), along with several edited volumes and collections of her shorter academic works.

Patrick Olivelle published *Yājñavalkya Dharmaśāstra: The Textual History of a Hindu Legal Code*. (Critical Edition with critical apparatus) Delhi: Primus Books, 2020.



Rupert Snell published "*Biharilal, Poems from the Satsai*" translated by Rupert Snell (Harvard University Press, Murty Classical Library of India, 2021.) The Braj Bhasha text is accompanied by an innovative verse translation, reworking the original couplets as English tercets.

Student News

Sundas Amer virtually presented papers entitled "Literary Solidarities between Iran and Pakistan in the Twentieth-Century" at a panel entitled "Literature and Politics in South Asia" at the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies and "Alternative Feminisms between Iran and Pakistan in the Twentieth-Century" at a panel entitled "Repression and Resistance in the Postcolony" at the University of Chicago South Asia Graduate Student Conference XVIII. She received a McIlhenny Endowed Presidential Fellowship, Persian Heritage Foundation Academic Research Grant, American Institute of Pakistan Studies Short-Term Research Grant, and an academic year FLAS fellowship. In December 2020, she defended her dissertation prospectus and formally advanced to candidacy in Spring 2021. She worked as a writing, content, and strategy tutor for Texas Athletics in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. She served as a Faculty Assistant for Urdu at the South Asian Summer Language Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and helped organize the Fall 2021 South Asia Institute seminar series entitled "Construction and Circulation of Ideas: Orality, Textuality, and Materiality" during Summer 2021.

Harsha Gautam was awarded an M. Phil in Ancient History from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India in April, 2021. Last fall, she presented a paper about the Buddhist nuns in contemporary India at the virtually held 2020 Oral History Association's annual conference in Baltimore. Her paper entitled, "Reclaiming Dignity and Democracy: Re-emergence of Buddhist Nuns in India" will be published in the upcoming edition of IOHA's digital journal *Words and Silences/ Palabras y Silencios*.



Indian bhikkhunis (following the Theravada tradition) with Harsha Gautam, during her fieldwork

Hamza Muhammad Iqbal spent the spring and summer of 2021 at the University of Heidelberg in Germany as a visiting scholar as he worked on his dissertation. Since the university was physically closed due to COVID-19, Hamza based himself in Berlin but virtually presented the preliminary part of his dissertation at the University's South Asia Institute symposium. He also partook in their fortnightly reading groups on South Asian literature. While in Berlin, he worked out of Humboldt University's library and the American Memorial Library.

While in Europe, Hamza presented a research paper from his dissertation at the 26th European Conference on South Asian Studies (ECSAS 2021) in Vienna, Austria.

Namrata B. Kanchan organized an online Mellon experts event with co-fellow Suzie Herman in September 2021. The event brought together Dr. Deborah Hutton from the College of New Jersey and Dr. Emily Mann from the Courtauld Institute of Art in a discussion on new methodologies and theories in the field of art history.

Anuj Kaushal presented "Hybrid Sexuality: Where Kikkaka Meets Ibn Sina in the Twentieth Century North India" at the European Conference on South Asian Studies at the University of Vienna, July 27, 2021.

Daniel Ng interned as a Junior Fellow in the Asian Division at the Library of Congress where he worked under the mentorship and supervision of Asian Studies alum Dr. Charlotte Giles. He helped to inventory over 330 Bengali works that were part of the Franklin Book Program and developed a library guide for future researchers interested in learning more about the collection.

Mackenzie Schnell received a 2021-22 Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) award to study Kannada. She completed the intensive summer course and is now in the intermediate level course with the American Institute of Indian Studies. She is also a recipient of the Dean's Prestigious Fellowship Supplement for 2021.

Benjamin Simington married Jauhara Ferguson (PhD student in Sociology at Rice University). The wedding took place in Atlanta, Georgia on June 5, 2021. It was officiated by Imam Ihsan Muhammad. The small ceremony was attended by close family.



Alumni

Abdul Haque Chang was awarded the Post PhD Research Grant by The Wenner-Gren Foundation. His research titled, "The Making of Shah Jo Raag: An Ethnographic Study of Sufi Musical Tradition in Sindh, Pakistan," will focus on the making of Shah Jo Raag, a tradition of devotional music in the province of Sindh, Pakistan, transmitted orally by families of hereditary traditional musicians since 1743.

Andrea Gutiérrez won the prestigious DK Award for the Outstanding Doctoral Thesis on Sanskrit in 2021, given once every three years by the International Association of Sanskrit Studies, for her PhD dissertation "A Genre of its Own: A History of *Pākaśāstra* and Other Culinary Writing of Early India" (2020). This past summer Andrea was selected to present some of her original research in talk and roundtable format at the Oxford Food Symposium, likely the oldest and most esteemed conference on food and food history worldwide. She also has a book chapter on "Medieval Food as Deity Worship: The Elaboration of Food Offerings in Cōla-Era Ritual Practice" that will be published in an upcoming volume, *Hindu Temple: Materiality, Social History and Practice* (Routledge, eds. Himanshu Prabha Ray, Salila Kulshreshtha and Uthara Suvrathan).

Zeltzyn Rubi Sanchez Lozoya completed her PhD in Asian Cultures and Languages in May 2020. She served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder in the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations from 2020-21. She has now joined the faculty of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the English Department where she will teach Film Studies courses on Global Cinema. In addition to her academic appointments, Dr. S. Lozoya's most recent article "Working with monstrous men: Ambivalent Sexism in the Bombay Film Industry" was published in *Feminist Media Studies*. Dr. S. Lozoya's past presentations include talks at Stanford and Duke University.

Student Awards

Aggarwal Graduate Scholarship in Indian Studies

In Fall 2017, the Department of Asian Studies received a generous gift in support of graduate studies on India from long-time supporters Dr. J K Aggarwal and Dr. Shanti Aggarwal. The Aggarwal Graduate Scholarship for Indian Studies supports conference attendance to present original research, fieldwork and archival research, and other professional development opportunities. We are grateful to the Aggarwals for this significant boost to Indian Studies at UT. Their support will help us improve the educational experience and professional training for our students.

2020-21 Recipients

Namrata Kanchan, Katie Chandler, Benjamin Simington, Nishant Upadhyay, and Jackson Walker all received Fall support

Katie Lazarowicz, Nishant Upadhyay, and Michael Fiden all received support in the Spring
Sravani Kanamarlapudi received Summer support

Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship Awardees 2021

Rutuja Joshi (*Senior, Management Information Systems*)

Aggarwal Endowed Presidential Scholarship for Undergraduates Awardee 2021

Kumail Imam (*Senior, Natural Sciences/Plan II Honors Program*)

Devika Kumar (*Senior, Plan II Honors Program*)

Nima Rahman (*Senior, Neuroscience/Plan II Honors Program*)

FLAS Summer 2021 Awardees

Jackson Cyril* (*Telugu, Comparative Literature, PhD, University of Chicago*)

Isaac Dwyer (*Urdu, Asian Studies, MA*)

Stephen Graf* (*Telugu, Politics, MA, New School for Social Research*)

Mustafa Hammad (*Urdu, Asian Studies, MA*)

Dinithi Navarathna (*Hindi, Civil Engineering, BS*)

Anusha Paul (*Malayalam, Computer Science, BS*)

Christian Blake Pye (*Persian, Religious Studies, PhD*)

Benjamin Simington (*Urdu, Asian Studies, MA*)

Jackson Walker (*Urdu, Asian Studies, MA*)

*Non-UT Students

FLAS Academic Year 2021-22 Fellows

Sundas Amer (*Persian, Asian Studies, PhD*)

Cicely Bonnin (*Hindi, Asian Studies, PhD*)

Katharine Chandler (*Bengali, Asian Studies, MA*)

Isaac Dwyer (*Urdu, Asian Studies, MA*)

Michael Fiden (*Malayalam, Asian Studies, PhD*)

Mustafa Hammad (*Urdu, Asian Studies, MA*)

Shereena Mathew (*Malayalam, Journalism, BJ*)

Dinithi Navarathna (*Hindi, Civil Engineering, BS*)

Sruti Ramachandran (*Malayalam, Sociology/Communication and Leadership, BA*)

Mackenzie Schnell (*Kannada, Communication Studies/Business Administration, MA*)

Benjamin Simington (*Urdu, Asian Studies, MA*)

Divya Sreedharane (*Tamil, Biology, BS*)

Jackson Walker (*Urdu, Sociology, PhD*)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Rupali Warke was the internal fellow at Institute for Historical Studies (IHS) for the year 2020-21. She is currently writing an article that explores the influence of Sufis and holy men in the Maratha political economy. At an IHS workshop in December 2020, she presented a preliminary paper, "A Piece of Bread and Royal Power: Sufi Discipleship and Dargah Worship in the Maratha Empire." In Spring 2021, she taught Early Modern India, 1500-1750 in History and Asian Studies. She organized a roundtable panel, "Exploring Gender in Colonial South Asia: A Round-Table Discussion on Women, Islam, and Familial Intimacy in South Asia" (2021) and "Governing Gender and Sexuality in Colonial India: The Hijra, c. 1850-1900" (2019), for the 2021 Annual South Asia Conference. She is a Visiting Assistant Professor of History at Bard College, where in the fall she is teaching a survey class in Indian history, India pre-Western Imperialism 1200-1750 and a mid-level gender history class on Domesticity and Capital: gender, households, and women's wealth in South Asia. ❄️



New Faculty

Nabanjan Maitra has joined the Asian Studies faculty this year to teach Sanskrit as well as a "Meaning of Life in Hinduism" course to undergraduate students.

This is his first time teaching undergrads, though he spent a year at Columbia as a Teaching Assistant. He has loved being in the classroom, experiencing the "youthful exuberance" of his students, and is committed to being available to his students 'beyond the classroom' as well. The excitement he experiences from his students is not unlike his own being in the proximity of UT professors whose scholarship he has long admired, and who have influenced his own research. He refers to Patrick Olivelle's work as "foundational" and also names Joel Brereton, Indrani Chatterjee and Dalpat Rajpurohit as scholars whose work has contributed to advancing his own academic inquiry.



Before moving to Austin, Nabanjan was finishing up his PhD in the History of Religions from the University of Chicago's Divinity School, while living in London, where his wife lives and works. Immersing himself into social life post-COVID and after the isolating process of writing his thesis, has been challenging. When he landed in Austin during the summer, the emptiness of the campus in general and the Hogg Building that houses his office, felt eerie. Perhaps more so because he would bike to work before 6am so as not to be 'under the Texan sun' that had burned him already, as he relates below.

Under pressure from friends to familiarize himself with the culture and cuisine of his new home, Nabanjan found himself walking around campus in 95-degree weather to eat Texas BBQ. Though this first experience was a scorcher, he does admit that he hasn't yet eaten a taco he didn't like. The Tex-Mex food he has tasted so far counts as a "huge quality of life improvement."

Having felt the 'burn' when he ventured out to grab some TX barbecue, it's not surprising that he's been a little hesitant in immersing himself in Austin. He's heard much of the music scene but hasn't had the opportunity to experience it yet. There are of course "structural barriers" such as not having a car. He lives close enough to campus to bike to class but hasn't ventured further afield to explore more of the city. "I'm waiting for my friends to visit to explore Austin," he says. ❄️

India-China Border Crises: Beijing's Strategic Signalling or PLA's Tactical Adventurism?

In May 2020, Indian military forces and Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops engaged in a physical altercation at Pangong Lake in the eastern sector of the contested border. The face-off was a high point in a series of such confrontations over several years. However, unlike several previous incidents, the Pangong Lake face-off resulted in casualties for the first time in

25 years. The India-China border was tense with massive military mobilization and fears that the confrontation would spiral into a war for the next few months. However, patient diplomacy and political engagement seem to have averted a military escalation between the two Asian powers.



Jaganath Sankaran

Why did the face-off occur between the two armies? Two explanations have been offered. First, some note that the 2020 skirmish was a warning by Beijing to India against its growing geopolitical alignment with the United States. Second, it is suggested that Beijing intended its actions to express dissatisfaction over recent attempts by India to build up its infrastructure along the contested border.

These explanations, while plausible, rely on a Realist theoretical model of a rational, unitary state actor in Beijing armed with clear intelligence and directing PLA's action on the India-China border. Moreover, these explanations imply an ability to identify and clearly understand Chinese leaderships' decision-making and motivations. However, in reality, we have limited means to do so. All elements of Chinese elite politics are opaque, none more so than the nature of China's military decision-making. Furthermore, as Zhou Bo, a retired PLA Senior Colonel, points out, "If China has to compete in an America-initiated great power competition, why would it suddenly divert its attention and strength away from that to take on India?"



Map of border areas contested by India and China. Sites of recent altercations are circled, with Pangong Lake in white.

An alternate theory that focuses on the internal dynamics of national decision-making mechanisms may better explain the recurrent India-China border skirmishes. What role do the PLA forces play in India-China border crises? Preliminary research suggests that fragmentation of decision-making authority exists between civilian and military decision-makers in China on matters of national security policy. The CCP Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC), staffed with civilian generalists, has primary decision-making authority in setting overarching national security policies. The PLA faithfully implements these policies. However, broad political control over the PLA is distinct from supervising and coordinating PLA day-to-day operational activities. In matters of military tactics and

operational details, civilian leaders concede to the PLA, affording it significant autonomy in implementing policies and programs.

The PLA has adopted an assertive and aggressive posture in defending the shared border with India. It is enacting an active campaign, often without detailed civilian oversight, challenging Indian troops across the breadth of the contested border, a move reciprocated by the Indian forces. The back and forth between the two militaries may be the source of several recent escalating confrontations. The solution to peace in the India-China border lies in reforming bilateral military postures and tactics. ❄️

Jaganath Sankaran is Assistant Professor in the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs.



The Partition Songs Project: Singing South Asian History in Central Texas

As a grandchild of Partition survivors, I grew up hearing stories of narrow escapes during Partition punctuated by emotionally-potent poems and songs from that era. Megha Uppal, a fellow grandchild of Partition survivors and board member of Austin-area South Asian senior organization, SAIVA, shared similar experiences with me. As collaborators on the Partition Songs Project (January to July 2021), we sought to explore the strong relationship between Partition-era songs and South Asian identities by interviewing Partition survivors from Central Texas.

We drew inspiration from the potential of sharing songs and stories of Partition to forge a new sense of community across South Asian groups in the diaspora

Funded by a City of Austin Cultural Initiatives grant, Uppal and I worked with local South Asian elders to record oral histories, host community-based conversations, and compile

songs related to their experiences growing up in the aftermath of Partition. On August 13, 2021, we hosted a well-attended online symposium to share our project with the community. We reached over 400 audience members from the US and South Asia. The symposium featured Partition historian Dr. Radha Kapuria (University of Sheffield, UK) and Dr. Guneeta Singh Bhalla, Director of the 1947 Partition Archive, as guest speakers. Under South Asian-American filmmaker Prakshi Malik's direction, we are creating a short educational video about this project that will be ready later in the fall.

Through this work, we also came face-to-face with systemic and cultural challenges to public humanities projects within South Asian communities. The first challenge was procuring funding and community support. Grant reviewers within the Butler School of Music (BSOM) and South Asian community organizations were hesitant – even resistant – to support this work. For example, a BSOM grant reviewer told me that the project did not reach a wide enough audience for the music school to invest in it, despite community partnerships with SAIVA and the internationally-known 1947 Partition Archive. These challenges illustrate the deep-rooted systemic bias of institutions that devalue community archiving projects within minority communities.

Within the South Asian community, only two of 10 regional and faith-based organizations responded to our requests for help connecting us with Partition survivors. This challenge brought to light long-lasting divides between South Asian diasporic communities on the basis of religious, linguistic, regional and national identities – living fault lines of Partition.

We realized the time-sensitive need to document Partition narratives from different communities. Secondly, we learned how traumatic it can be for elders to recount their Partition experiences. Hosting group sessions with peers from their community encouraged elders to share their experiences while receiving essential emotional support. Health, COVID, and technology-related delays also inspired us to develop and enact more compassionate approaches to public humanities projects.

Finally, we drew inspiration from the potential of sharing songs and stories of Partition to forge a new sense of community across South Asian groups in the diaspora, and promote it as a way of healing from the trauma of this shared South Asian experience. ❄️

Aruna Kharod is a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology at the University of Texas at Austin.

In Memoriam: Fredrick Asher (May 25, 1941 - June 26, 2021)

Rick Asher passed away a month after his 80th birthday and after having successfully battled some cancers. Many know him as a significant scholar of eastern Indian art, an area he has long worked on as witnessed by his first book, *The Art of Eastern India, 300–800*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980). He participated in ground-breaking

Where Buddhism Began which was published by the Getty Research Institute in 2020.

For all of us at UT involved in the study of South Asia, Rick Asher's contribution to the field importantly included an astonishing level and amount of service. For long he participated at the highest levels of administration of the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIIS), eventually serv-

academic community through other significant service in national or international organizations such as the College Art Association.

I have known Rick for a very long time as our fields of research overlapped, and I interacted with him a great deal during my years working with the AIIIS's Center for Art and Archaeology, which contains much of the phenomenal field work materials amassed by Rick as well as that of his wife, Cathy Asher, a significant scholar of Indo Islamic art and culture. Besides all else that can be said, Rick was a consummate teacher and colleague, always willing to collaborate and always curious. This last year he enthusiastically participated in a Zoom seminar with my students on issues of decolonizing museum collections and how archival research might move discussions further about such thorny subjects.

Finally, he had begun to share across various platforms his recent engagements with the study of visual culture of Indian Ocean trade before 1500. While significant work has now been completed about the later developments of this trade, looking for new ways to define earlier periods of interactions is only just emerging. It was a natural next project for Asher as in various ways he had worked throughout his career to define South Asia within the greater understanding of global developments. He was deeply interested in the issues of production and distribution that arise when we think beyond the moment of creation for what is often called "art." Concepts like networks help to animate the world in which objects exist, but we still often have precious little to define the spaces in which they emerged and circulated. Rick Asher got the ball rolling so to speak about how to consider that South Asian visual material "acted" both trans-locally and with local developments, and I am sure others will build on his good foundation. He will, however, be much missed. ❄️

Janice Leoshko is Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Art History.



Cathy and Rick Asher

studies such as his collaboration with Professor Walter Spink questioning the early date of the monumental Didarganj Chauribearer ("Maurya Figural Sculpture Reconsidered," *Ars Orientalis* 19, [1989]: 1-25). He was also an early participant in tracing the scattering of artistic material into various collections by examining British archival records ("The Former Broadley Collection, Bihar Sharif," *Artibus Asiae* 32 [1970]: 105-22). More recently he embarked on a deep study of geology so he could understand the quarry sites from which material was extracted to create India's many sculptures ("Stone and the Production of Images," *East and West* 48 [1998]: 313–328). The subject of Buddhist sites was yet another focus as witnessed by his 2008 survey of Bodhgaya, published by Oxford and his recent volume, *Sarnath: A Critical History of the Place*

ing as its president. His time with AIIIS included supporting its passage through very stressful periods of growth and constraint, and his enthusiastic counsel continued to-date with its current officers. He believed deeply in the core mission of supporting scholarship and developing opportunities for the study of South Asia by the next generation of scholars. The strength of Title VI programs such as UT's is due in no small measure to his remarkable vision and untiring efforts.

Professor Asher retired from teaching art history at the University of Minnesota after many decades where he also served as the department's chair and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. He enthusiastically mentored students and colleagues across the world, helping to elevate the awareness of South Asia's visual achievements across the wider

Perspectives on the Study of South Asia

The fall seminar series was convened by Professor Janice Leoshko and SAI director, Professor Sharmila Rudrappa

The Fall Seminar Series was devoted to the changing nature of how we study and what we study about South Asia.

Change was not only the theme; the seminar form itself had changed in response to the constraints of the pandemic. For the first time ever, we stopped meeting in the Meyerson Conference Room, missing each other's bustling company, overlapping conversation, and the samosas, tea, coffee, and sweets, instead meeting in the grid of the Zoom meeting room. Colleagues in their homes in Austin or halfway across the world greeted each other, taking turns talking and listening from different time zones. The totally online format allowed us to still have important contributions by scholars from many places despite COVID restrictions.

Professor Janice Leoshko (Asian Studies and Art History) and SAI director Professor Sharmila Rudrappa (Sociology) convened the fall series. One goal of the series was to highlight different points of scholarly careers, especially with the participation by those at UT. The series began with "Reimagining India's Ancient Past: Old Fashioned



Sewage treatment plant at Sri Pada. Photo by Alex McKinley

Philology Meets New Methodologies," a paper by Patrick Olivelle (Emeritus Professor of Asian Studies) offering a senior scholar's reflection on the new methodological and philological tools for studying ancient texts. It was followed a few weeks later with a roundtable discussion by PhD students or those with freshly minted doctoral degrees about "Ethnographic Fieldwork and 'Art' in South Asia," moderated by Professor Heather Hindman (Asian Studies). Professors Roanne Kantor (Stanford - English) and Aniruddhan Vasudevan (Princeton - Anthropology), daniel dillon (Asian Studies PhD candidate), and Charlotte Giles (Asian Studies PhD candidate; Library of Congress South Asian Collection) discussed their experiences using interdisciplinary methods, especially the incorporation of texts, media and art within ethnographic fieldwork. We also gained the perspective of a postdoctoral fellow,

Dr. Mishal Khan, who was then at UT's Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice. Her talk "Neither 'Slaves' nor 'Unfree' Labor - Thinking through Abolition in India over the Longue-Durée" was moderated by Professor Indrani Chatterjee (History). Finally, we heard from our own well-established scholars with their ongoing research projects, with Professor Syed Akbar Hyder (Asian Studies) on "From Islamabad to Malihabad: Alternative Reform Voices in Urdu Literature" and Professor Diane Coffey (Sociology) on "Caste and Gender Discrimination, and the Health of All Indians."

Another important aspect of the seminar was the way in which it sought to acknowledge the innovative nature of South Asia research as scholars broaden how they approach their subjects or the questions asked. For instance, Dr. Alex McKinley (Loyola University), who recently completed his PhD in religious studies, gave a paper titled "The Urban Nature of a Wilderness Reserve: Political Ecology & Pilgrimage at Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka" on the shifting character of activity at the famous mountain pilgrimage site. He commented, "There is a definite crossover between urban-style infrastructural development and what is built on Sri Pada. At the same time, the branches of government that control infrastructure are intrinsically tied to the Ministry of Defense and branches of the military and police... All this makes the mountain one of the oddest official wilderness reserves in the world."

Holding the series online also allowed us some room for trying a different format to create deeper discussion of selected issues by staging talks on the same day. Professor Padma Kaimal (Colgate University) and Professor Rob Linrothe (Northwestern University) presented strikingly different perspectives on the consequences of collecting and exhibiting "art" in South Asia. Richard Davis (Bard College - Religion) and Janice Leoshko (History and Asian Studies) demonstrated the importance of vexed questions by addressing "When is it Iconoclasm?" with case studies concerning Bamiyan, Afghanistan, the Babri mosque at Ayodhya, India, and Confederate monuments in the United States in the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement.

The greatest silver lining of the online format was the ability to bring a larger and more diverse audience to the South Asia seminar series than has been possible for the in-person mode. Thus a truly serendipitous consequence of COVID's constraints makes us keenly aware of the amazing connections and breadth of the global community of scholars engaged in South Asian studies. ❄️

Janice Leoshko is Associate Professor of Art History, specializing in South Asian Art.



Bodhisattva Padmapani
Western Tibet, 10th–11th century; Brass inlaid with silver and gold, H. 10 1/3 in. (26.2 cm); Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1976.70

The first object seen at Northwestern University's Block Museum exhibition of Collecting Paradise: Buddhist Art of Kashmir and Its Legacies (Serindia Publications, 2015), intentionally turned so that the visitor sees the hole through which consecration materials were originally placed inside the figure, then sealed. Typically, when consecrated objects enter the art market, the seal is broken and those materials removed. The exhibition illustrated the two types of "collecting" which each have their own display conventions: as consecrated object in a shrine, and as a work of art in a museum.

—Robert Linrothe

Re-examining “Life, Death, and Value” in the shadow of a global pandemic

Given over a year of COVID-19, we at SAI could no longer ignore mass death across the world. Convened by Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa (Sociology) in consultation with affiliated faculty and students, the Spring 2021 seminar series, “Life, Death, and Value” invited speakers from anthropology, communication studies, film, history, and sociology to examine the quotidian ways by which different forms of values are inculcated and embedded in our worlds. And, how these values foster the circulation of ideas, goods, and persons through space and time shaping life and death.

The seminar series started off with Dr. Sarah Besky, associate professor in International and Comparative Labor, Cornell University who thickly described how tea from plantations in Darjeeling is tasted in Calcutta. These rituals of sampling, sipping and savoring not only establish the value of that product, but move back in space, shaping how plantations themselves organize growing, picking, and curing that raw tea, which shape labor management, and the persistence of plantation agriculture. Building from her own research on tea plantations in Sri Lanka, Dr. Mythri Jegathesan, associate professor in anthropology, Santa Clara University, commented on Dr. Besky’s presentation.

A couple of weeks later, our colleague from the Moody School of Communications, Dr. Shiv Ganesh, presented his lecture titled, “Strands of Value: Organic Cotton and the Project of Transparency.” A large part of the value in organic products is not just how it is produced, but how companies make evident, and reveal processes of growth and production. That is, they do not obfuscate what happens in the cotton fields and in the factory, but instead make transparent their ethics and beliefs in environmental concerns and workers’ rights. But how is that transparency achieved, and how does transparency itself become a market value to be inculcated in order to establish the value of commodities?

For our next meeting we came prepared after having watched Dr. Swarnavel Pillai’s critically acclaimed film, *Kattumaram* (2018). In a discussion moderated by Dr. Lalitha Gopalan, associate professor in Radio, Television and Film in UT Austin, Dr. Pillai, professor in film studies and production in the Media and Information Department at Michigan State University, answered our queries about choices he’d made in his film, and other kinds of resonance *Kattumaram* evoked for us. *Kattumaram*’s narrative revolves around the Tsunami-affected lives of Tamil fishing communities, focusing specifically on an aging patriarch in charge of caring for his niece and nephew. Part of that caring is arranging his niece’s marriage, who instead falls in love with her fellow woman teacher, Kavita.

Given that we were at the anniversary of Bangladesh’s 50 years as a nation-state on March 26, our lectures for the month of March focused on topics related to Bangladesh. Dr. Erin Lentz, associate professor of Public Affairs, UT-Austin, presented her new work on the 1974-75 famine in Bangladesh. Though she has not been able to conduct fieldwork as yet because of the pandemic, Dr. Lentz shared with us on the social life of the famine. Refusing to see the famine as a single, in-the-past event, Dr. Lentz showed that people do not simply suffer through disaster; instead, their attempt to navigate these crises have afterlives, shaping health, livelihood, and familial/generational outcomes. A few weeks later Dr. Nazli Kibria, Professor of Sociology and the Associate Dean of the Faculty for the Social Sciences, Boston University, spoke of Bangladeshi migrants and nationalism among migrants in her lecture titled “*Shonar Bangla on the Move: Fifty Years of International Migration and Nationalism in Bangladesh.*”

Specializing in the rituals and visual cultures of Buddhism, Dr. Eric Huntington, Gragg Postdoctoral Fellow, Rice University, in a richly illustrated lecture, presented on “Embodied Buddhist Landscapes in India, Nepal, and Tibet.” Dr. Mythri Jegathesan visited us again, but this time to speak

of Hollywood’s depictions of Sri Lankan tea plantations, in her lecture “‘Fortune and Glory’: The Speculative Afterlives of Sri Lanka’s Tea Plantations in Hollywood Film.” Dr. Besky too returned, but this time as a discussant. Dr. Anish Vanaik, visiting associate professor in Purdue Honors College and associate professor of History, Jindal Global Law School, Delhi looked at historical business directories and yellow pages over the decades to map the changing nature of businesses and business names in markets and neighborhoods in Delhi that reflected the growing “Hindu-ization” of the city between 1911 and 1932. Dr. Kamran Ali, Professor of Anthropology, UT Austin, was discussant. And finally, Dr. Jyoti Puri, professor of sociology, Simmons College presented from her to-be-published manuscript in a talk titled “First Funerals, Weird Rites, and Burning Ghats: Of South Asian Deathways and Civilization,” which highlighted Euro-American depictions of South Asian death rituals that shaped ideas and understandings of civilizational and racial difference.

The lectures were all online, but after a semester of life in a pandemic, we were all socialized into the norms and etiquette of Zoom protocol. Online presentations meant that speakers could revisit others who presented in the series, often bringing their students too with them. And once again, we had colleagues joining us from around the world. The camaraderie and online co-presence of colleagues from halfway across the country or the world more than made up for delights of in-person seminars replete with refills of chai and repeat visits to the samosa tray. We will get back to that format soon enough, but for now we are simply grateful that we continue the work that we do in the communities that matter to us. ❄️

The Newsletter Editorial Team

South Asian stories, not statistics

"The universe is not made of atoms, it's made of stories." - Muriel Rukeyser



The 2020 census revealed two important facts about the Asian population in general and South Asians in particular: Asians are America's fastest growing immigrant population, expected to surpass Hispanics by 2065 as the largest group of immigrants in the country; and, there are nearly 5.4 million South Asians living in the US today, up from 3.5 million in the 2010 census. While these numbers are important news for government and politicians, they don't tell the multitude of stories that make up the colorful universe of South Asians living in America.

Last fall, SAI commissioned graduate research assistant Prakshi Malik to create an original series of short films highlighting some of the unique South Asian stories in our midst. These videos are intended both as an outreach tool and conversation starter, and are suitable for K-12 audiences.



Mokama Sisterhood

The first of these is about three women who migrated from Kerala to work as nurses in New York. Their friendship, forged in the town of Mokama where they are from and then in Bihar where they attended nursing school taught by



American nuns, has endured for decades. It traveled with them to New York where they all landed seeking better opportunities for their families, and eventually settled in Texas, which is now home to all three. Their connection has been passed down to their daughters, who at one point were all roommates in college and also remain friends.

Over a Zoom call Elsy, Lila and Elamma along with their daughters Tracy, Sandhya and Zeena recalled moments from the 'Mokama Sisterhood.' Moments like 1st birthday celebrations and 50th wedding anniversary parties, baptisms, communions, and high school graduations.

"Our moms blazed this whole new world," said Tracy. "That model was so normalized – a working mother who could also cook and put together a party and have a social life – that to do anything but, seemed unusual."

"It was such a loving, supportive community to grow up in," added Zeena.

Autorickshaws in Sri Lanka

The second film features PhD candidate daniel dillon's research into autorickshaws in Jaffna, which he calls "the historical preserve of Tamil culture globally."

Following rickshaws as they go around has been a key element of dillon's research for his PhD. Sri Lankan Tamils in general are astutely attuned to historical injustice, says dillon. Enti-

ties like Bob Marley and Che Guevara, therefore, have a quasi-revolutionary appeal for rickshaw drivers, and it is very common to see their faces on rickshaws. The drivers also find inspiration among fictional anti-heroes they are paid to advertise. When *Pirates of the Caribbean III* was released, the publicity campaign rollout included posters on rickshaws. This encouraged the rickshaw drivers to watch the movie and they began associating Jack Sparrow with a free-wheeling autonomy, that he could go anywhere and do anything as long as he had his ship, the *Black Pearl*. He quickly became an icon for an entire generation of rickshaw drivers.

Most of the drivers, says dillon, are physically and psychologically impacted by the war. The references to inspirational texts like couplets from poetry represents "light at the end of the tunnel," says dillon. One of his favorites, though,





is a phrase that translates to "I'm not pretty and I know it!" It expresses a sort of defiant self-love that is characteristic of the rickshaw drivers' ethos.

South Asia Garden

The process of planning and planting the South Asia Garden on the UT-Austin campus is the focus of one of the films in the series. The garden was financed by the UT Green Fund and built by Landscape Services, with oversight from the South Asia Institute for which the garden is another creative mode of outreach.



From the design of the raised planting beds in the form of an 8-pointed star found in Mughal architecture to the central reflecting water feature to the idea of a sheltered space producing food you can eat – everything is inspired by the idea of the Paradise Gardens attributed to Persia and recreated across South Asia.

Three types of plants have been chosen for cultivation in that space: ornamental, edible and those with blooms to add pops of color. Edibles harvested from the garden are to be used to cook popular dishes from South Asian cuisines in the UT kitchens.

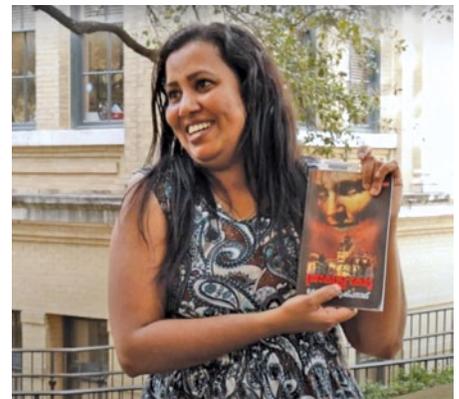
The garden features four different types of chile peppers, several varieties of basil including holy basil or 'tulsi,' okra, taro, pomegranate, bananas, guava, and citrus. The garden is also home to a cutting from the original bodhi tree

presented by the Dalai Lama to UT when he visited the campus 15 years ago. Together, SAI's Scott Webel and Neil Kaufman from University Housing and Dining, have contributed their time and enthusiasm to making the South Asia Garden bloom and grow.

Collecting Pulp Fiction

The last of the four films features the Library's collection of Pulp Fiction – the so-called "trashy literature" that is sold at train stations across South Asia. Speaking of her trips to India to buy titles for the collection, South Asia Librarian Mary Rader recalled her conversations with booksellers in pursuit of pulp fiction titles. "Those aren't 'nice' books," they would tell her. "Well, I want the 'not nice' books," she would reply. Explaining why UT sought to create this collection, Rader referred to the "literary sub-culture" with its unique language and art forms, that students at university campuses would never have been exposed to had it not been for this collection in Austin.

According to Malayalam lecturer Darsana Manayathu Sasi, these books have also improved



the study of South Asian languages because of the conversational style they are written in.

Rader reminds us that even though they are ubiquitous in South Asia, they are rather ephemeral. The search for cult classics has not been easy. "It can be very difficult to find an individual text, or whole editions of a given writer or series," says Rader, who has made multiple trips to the region to grow the collection. ❄️

Sahar Ali is editor of the *South Asia Institute's annual newsletter*.



Plurality in governmentality: a re-investigation

A special panel discussion on 'Governance across the Indian Ocean' was sponsored by the South Asia Institute and organized by Indrani Chatterjee (Professor, Department of History, UT-Austin) in January 2021. The panel was composed of Sebastian R. Prange (Associate Professor of History, The University of British Columbia) and Teren Sevea (Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, Harvard Divinity School). The panelists challenged the boundaries of a state-centric model of governance and governmentality (Foucault's term for the education of desires, habits, aspirations, beliefs, and attachments). They offered a different approach, and new primary materials, that encompassed the role of collaborative individuals in disciplining and governmentality.

Sebastian Prange's presentation, 'Fluid Sovereignities: Law, Power, and Violence in the Early Modern Indian Ocean', asked us to re-evaluate our understanding of maritime politics in the early-modern Indian Ocean. Prange questioned the dominant theories of indigenous littoral societies as passive recipients of western maritime hegemony. On the contrary, he elucidated how Malabar and Konkan coastal society had active participants that facilitated the evolution of a socio-economic system predicated upon maritime dominance and trade. His paper positioned merchants,

pirates, and other littoral community members as active participants of the capricious state-building apparatus. Countering the European hegemony model, Prange brought

into analysis the indigenous local seafaring communities' role as a potent challenge to Portuguese and Dutch maritime powers' inroads in the Indian Ocean. Various local aspirations brought indigenous society into contention with Europeans, yet the former's representation as a passive bystander silenced their dynamic nature. Prange's paper reinvestigates these misconceptions to elucidate a fluid nature of sovereignty predicated upon individual agency exercised over high seas.



A shaman on South Boeroe conducts an exorcism.



An illustration from Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerio*, which did much to expose to the European world the secrets of 16th century Portuguese trade and navigation in South Asia.

Teren Sevea's paper, 'Animal Islam: Malay Accounts of Sufism, Hunting and Governance', elucidated the social lives of spirits as a means of governing and organizing material life. He delineated peripatetic Sufi mystics and trappers (*pawang*) as agents of technology that facilitated material production in the Malay Archipelago during the late nineteenth century's colonial rule. Sevea analyzed the role of these *pawang*s, as mediators between native Malay courts and Western colonial residencies, in the preservation and transmission of a particular genre of esoteric knowledge (*ilm al-batini*). This *ilm* encompassed knowledge that was closely tied to material formations and social organization. It included talismans and incantations to help tame or trap belligerent beasts and spirits. They also helped establish an enchanted order of body comportment to regulate social behavior and sexual conduct among the mining industry's labor force. Such entanglement of miracles and materiality are often overlooked by western 'rationalist' scholars. However, Sevea emphasized that this knowledge, though traditionally transmitted orally as an embodied practice,

was being recorded and collected by colonial officers. Sevea used rare Malay manuscripts from the 'Maxwell Collection' in the Royal Asiatic Society, to emphasize the British colonizer's participation in this world of enchantment. His presentation shifts the spotlight towards the local embodied practices as an important technology in the craft of colonial politics and governmentality.

Overall, the panel emphasised the need to move beyond traditional epistemologies of historical source material to facilitate a re-investigation of lived experiences and practices of subjects. The field of social science has much to gain through an abandonment of the model of colonial history from above. It extends the analysis of individual agency and habitus in reconstruction of past in South and South-east Asia. Such approaches reassess disciplinary and source materials' boundaries, constructed by Eurocentric archetypes, through a de-colonial investigation that elucidates the plurality in 'governmentality'. ❄️

Anuj Kaushal is a PhD candidate of history in the Department of Asian Studies.

‘Is it enough just to remember?’

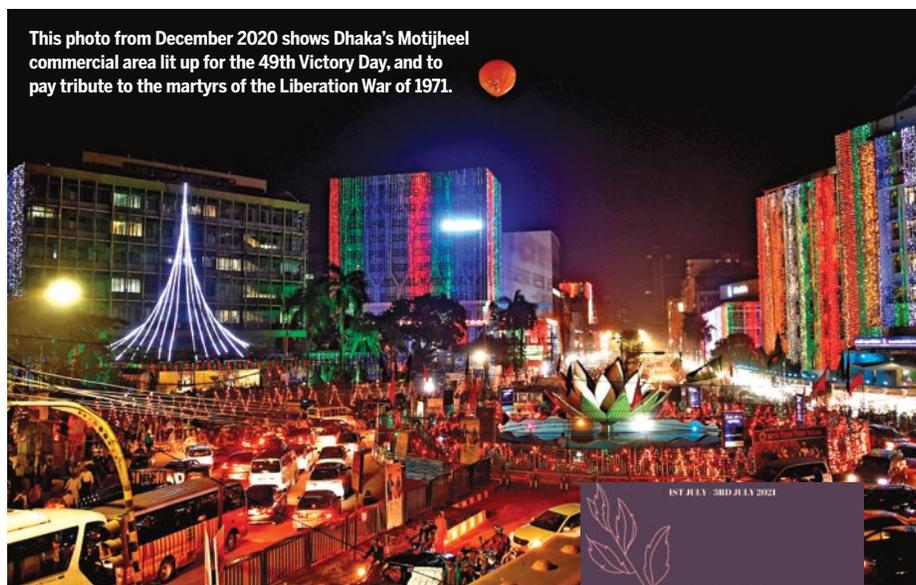
Commemorating 50 Years of the Bangladesh War of 1971

The question of remembrance, from Catherine and Tareque Masud’s 1995 film *Muktir Gaan* (Song of Freedom), emerged as a formative theme in the conference *War, Violence, and Memory: Commemorating 50 Years of the Bangladesh War of 1971*, held from July 1 to July 3, 2021.

Bringing together South Asian academics, activists, and artists, the conference sought to shift the discussion on the Liberation War of ‘71 from the mere practice (and performance) of remembrance to its politics and manipulation. Accordingly, each of the five panel discussions attempted to address contentions that have historically determined the frames and subjects of collective remembrance.

Preliminary speaker presentations offered the economic, political, and cultural background to the nascent Pakistani state’s disparate and exclusionary policies against erstwhile East Pakistan. Statist interventions to recast the partitioned territory of Bengal as national economy, (mis)using the language controversy to frame dissenters as conspirers and rendering entire populations marginal to the discourse of development were all discussed as emblems of the postcolonial state’s co-option of colonial legacies as its official policies. Beyond these institutionalized and symbolic forms of violence, discussion on the physical, sexual, and psychological violence of the war itself necessitated questions of culpability, erasure, and justice. To this end, the creation of the identity of ‘birangana’ (victims of wartime rape), of refugees, and of homelessness (within one’s land and one’s own body) spoke to the persisting legacies of histories built on willful erasure, denial, and scapegoating. The lingering presence of disavowed pasts was exemplified via a comparative perspective on Pakistan’s continued exclusionary policies and governance in its province of Balochistan, and on the continuation of colonial anxieties in Bangladesh’s contemporary political landscape, particularly on issues of religion, nationalism, and gender.

The silence, partial truths, and amnesia on the 1971 war have, over the decades, concretized into official narratives of the states involved. These otherwise accepted histories



This photo from December 2020 shows Dhaka’s Motijheel commercial area lit up for the 49th Victory Day, and to pay tribute to the martyrs of the Liberation War of 1971.

“The war is over; our country is free. But amidst the triumph and celebration, I remember... those who suffered, those who died, and those who gave everything for our victory. But is it enough just to remember?”

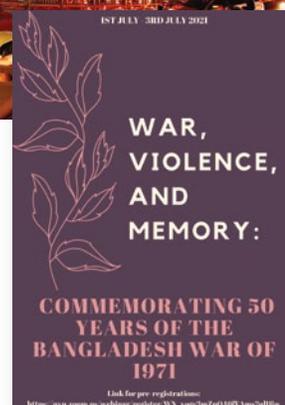
were problematized by speakers who instead contended that the forgotten victims and actors of the Liberation War become the narrators and scribes of their own histories. Annals of such a history, that the conference attendees glimpsed at momentarily, included the struggle of peasant liberation fighters, histories of international resistance against Pakistan’s transgressions, and recognition of the multifaceted injustices levied against women, their bodies, and their desires. Such a vantage, the panelists illustrated, holds the potential to rupture pervasive histories, making conceivable a remembrance that can bear witness to the varied experiences of war.

Towards the end of the three-day conference, a curation of literature, film, and music archives symbolized ways in which the liberation of Bangladesh has been remembered over the decades, how this remembrance has been complicated by personal narratives, and how these records continue to cast a light on

our presents. One of the films showcased by the curators was *Muktir Gaan*, which I have referenced in the beginning of this text. The narrator prompts the question, “Is it enough just to remember?” And then concludes, “Can we do justice to their sacrifice? Can we uphold the cause for which they fought and died?”

Amidst the denial and erasure adopted as Pakistan’s official stance on the 1971 war, the question of justice and cause of liberation seem distant. But the opening of dialogues, such as the War, Violence, and Memory conference, and the expression of collective will to bear witness to suppressed pasts, testify that though distant, justice is attainable. And because it is attainable, it is also necessary. ❄️

Shafaq Sohail is pursuing a PhD in Anthropology at UT-Austin.



Developing New South Asian Language Materials for Texas and Beyond

The South Asia Institute is always looking for innovative ways to facilitate a symbiotic relationship between UT and South Asian language learners and speakers in Texas, and the world at large. A group of SAI-affiliated faculty members, students, and administrators has started a new project with support from the United States Department of Education meant to build new pathways of service to anyone interested South Asian languages. This three-year project, now completing its first year, fulfills two functions: 1) creating open educational resources (OER), accessible to anyone hoping to learn South Asian languages and 2) developing credit-by-exams (CBE) to help Texas high school students with previous language experience get academic credit for their linguistic abilities.

Open Educational Resources (OER)

A silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic has been a palpable sense of urgency in creating the content and awareness necessary to provide students with high-quality, equitable online learning resources. The OER aspect of our project addresses that urgency by providing everyone—be they affiliates of UT or the community at large—free and unqualified access to language-learning materials in Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Bangla, and Kannada. Through a series of new websites—one for each of our target languages—online visitors will find numerous OER aimed at building the basic skills necessary to achieve aural and oral proficiency, expanded grammatical and cultural knowledge, and literacy in their language(s) of choice. Some keystone OER created so far include guides for learning scripts and improving pronunciation, word games to increase vocabulary, and cultural lessons aimed at deepening a student's understanding of the region(s) where the target language is spoken.

The beauty of OER is the built-in provision that they be available for repurpose in different contexts. Students learning these languages are, of course, a target audience. However, South Asian language educators from all around the world can also freely access these resources and



Darasana Manayathu Sasi, Assistant Professor of Instruction in Malayalam, and others, participate in a recording session of OER for Malayalam at the COERLL at UT.

apply them to their own coursework with whatever modifications they deem fit. Thanks to our web designer, Jonathan Seefeldt (PhD candidate in History at UT), the language websites include interactive interfaces and ample downloadable content to help facilitate such endeavors. So far, our team has been hard at work developing these open-access online resources for Malayalam and Hindi. Dr. Don Davis, Chair of the Department of Asian Studies, and Dr. Darsana Manayathu Sasi, Assistant Professor of Instruction in Malayalam, have been building our collection of Malayalam OER while Dr. Mansi Bajaj, Assistant Professor of Instruction in Hindi, has been laying the foundation for OER in Hindi. I, too, have been contributing to the Malayalam and Hindi OER as I am able. We will soon begin work on Urdu and Tamil as the project continues in the coming months.

The concept of OER is not new. In fact, OER have been hiding in plain sight, even at UT. The Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (COERLL) on campus is an institute dedicated entirely to providing teachers and students alike with information on language OER, how to create them, where

to access them, and how they can be used to enhance coursework. We have been partnering with COERLL to develop the best possible OER content for all our target languages and advertise their existence and benefits.

Credit-By-Exams (CBE)

UT High School (UTHS.), a rather unique amenity at the University of Texas, provides a plethora of online and in-person resources and courses that provide students and educators alike with a chance to further their education and careers. UTHS offers online high school diploma programs and online courses for students as well as professional development opportunities for educators in Texas and beyond. Another hallmark of UTHS offerings are credentialing exams for high school students seeking credit for foreign languages they know from contexts outside their normal curriculum. These exams, called credit-by-exams, are where UT High School and the South Asia Institute intersect.

The CBE system provides high school students throughout Texas with a chance to take a series of language proficiency exams

that, if passed, can stand in as their high school foreign language requirements (in total, this typically amounts to four semesters worth). These exams test students' abilities in speaking, listening, reading, and writing across four exam levels of increasing complexity. Students receive a semester's worth of credit for each level that they successfully complete.

A silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic has been a palpable sense of urgency in creating the content and awareness necessary to provide students with high-quality, equitable online learning resources.

UTHS currently has CBEs available in seven languages other than English (LOTEs) including French, German, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. As of now, however, there are no South Asian languages represented on the list of languages for which UTHS offers CBEs. By the end of this project, there will be six: Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Bangla, and Kannada—nearly doubling UTHS' CBE offerings in LOTEs from seven to 13. The Malayalam CBEs are nearly complete with Hindi not far behind. Work on other languages is set to begin soon. By developing these CBE materials, SAI, in close partnership with UTHS, will be providing any high school student in Texas who speaks one of these South Asian languages, an unprecedented avenue to get academic credit for the linguistic knowledge that they already possess. ❄️

Aaron Sherraden is Project Manager for OER/ CBE for Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, Bangla, Tamil and Kannada.

Significance

- Imposter phenomenon is a significant predictor of mental health¹
- Conditions that give rise to imposter feelings affect course outcomes for all students²
- Disproportionate and varying impacts on students of different backgrounds and social identities^{1,2}
 - Asian/Asian-American
 - Black/African-American
 - First-generation

1. Colley, K., et al. (2017). Imposter feelings as a moderator and mediator of the relationship between perceived discrimination and mental health among racial/ethnic minority college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 64(2), 141-154. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000196>
2. Canning, E. A., LeCesse, J., Krueger, K. M., & Murphy, M. C. (2020). Feeling Like an Imposter: The Effect of Perceived Classroom Competition on the Daily Psychological Experiences of First-Generation College Students. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 11(3), 647-657. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619890032>

The screenshot also shows a grid of eight video thumbnails with names: Christy N Cao, Gautami Shah (shah...), Camila Bohorquez, Nisha Saif (shahur), Chikako Cooke, Yuki Aida, Yi-Chun Lin, and Alice McCoy-Bae.

Bringing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion into the Asian Studies Language Curriculum

Eight faculty members representing six languages at the Department of Asian Studies got together over the past academic year to form a study group on *inclusive language pedagogy* (ILP). Participants included Yuki Aida (Japanese), Mansi Bajaj (Hindi), Chikako Cooke (Japanese), Yi-Chun Lin (Chinese), Darsana Manayathu Sasi (Malayalam), Alice McCoy-Bae (Korean), Gautami Shah (Hindi) and Ahmed Shamim (Bengali).

The study group was funded by a Faculty Innovation Center (FIC) Learning Community Grant with Gautami Shah (PI), and Ahmed Shamim & Darsana Sasi-Manayathu (Co-PIs).

The rationale was that through the exchange of ideas across different, less commonly-taught languages (LCTLs) we could identify common issues and realize important synergies. Members of the ILP discussion group explored issues related to inclusive pedagogy and address ways to effectively engage with increasingly diverse student populations. Discussion topics included (1) biases found within the parent culture of the language; (2) challenges posed by the linguistic features of the target language (TL), for example, the gendered nature of some of the languages we teach; (3) biases that invariably arise when materials are created by faculty authors with systematically different backgrounds and cultural norms, than the students for whom they are meant; (4) bridging the heritage and non-heritage student groups; (5) multilingual students and trans-languaging; (6) making the languages we teach relevant to African-American students; (7) increasing minority enrollment; (8) engaging STEM students in LCTL classes; and most importantly (9) the need for empathy and understanding towards students.

Nisha Saif, Christy Cao and Camila Bohorquez, Undergraduate Peer Educators from the Counseling and Mental Health Center at UT-Austin, were invited to conduct a workshop on *Imposter Syndrome and the Learning Environment*, which resulted in one of the most revealing and gratifying discussions. At each stage, members examined their own pedagogy in light of the topic being discussed, with the idea of identifying best practices of inclusive teaching in our LCTL classrooms and adjusting syllabi, materials and/or teaching methodology to reflect the same.

In summary, the study group was a rewarding experience for those involved. As we share these experiences and what we learned in the course of the discussions with other colleagues beyond our study group, we believe the experience will leave an impact on all our programs, and hopefully on future student cohorts. We hope to continue and repeat similar study groups in future years, exploiting the momentum and the energy that was created with this study group. ❄️

Gautami Shah is Associate Professor of Instruction in the Department of Asian Studies.

South Asian Languages in the Diaspora: building bridges

In April 2021, SAI, in collaboration with the South Asian Studies Council at Yale University, and New York University, organized a two-day virtual conference “South Asian Languages in the Diaspora” (SALD).

The SALD conference was conceived to create a meeting space for all—for academics, researchers and students engaged in South Asian language (SAL) pedagogy, and for non-academic colleagues engaged in sustaining South Asian languages in the diaspora. While language pedagogy was clearly central to the conference, by moving beyond the traditional confines of academic conferences, SALD hoped to build bridges to initiatives celebrating South Asian languages and diversity in the diaspora, and to the opportunities created by such initiatives that involve poets, writers and translators, to name a few. The unifying focus of all stakeholders involved, was creating and engaging with users of South Asian languages in the diaspora.

The SALD meeting hosted panels, paper presentations and ‘lightning rounds’, with themes ranging from inclusivity and social justice in language pedagogy, to the role of collaborations

in South Asian language pedagogy, challenges in teaching ‘dead languages like Sanskrit’, creating dictionaries, examining various pedagogical styles and outcomes, language pedagogy related research, and teaching with technology.

Taking advantage of the online nature of the meeting, 75 participants from six countries including the US, Canada, England, Norway, Poland and India, registered for the conference.

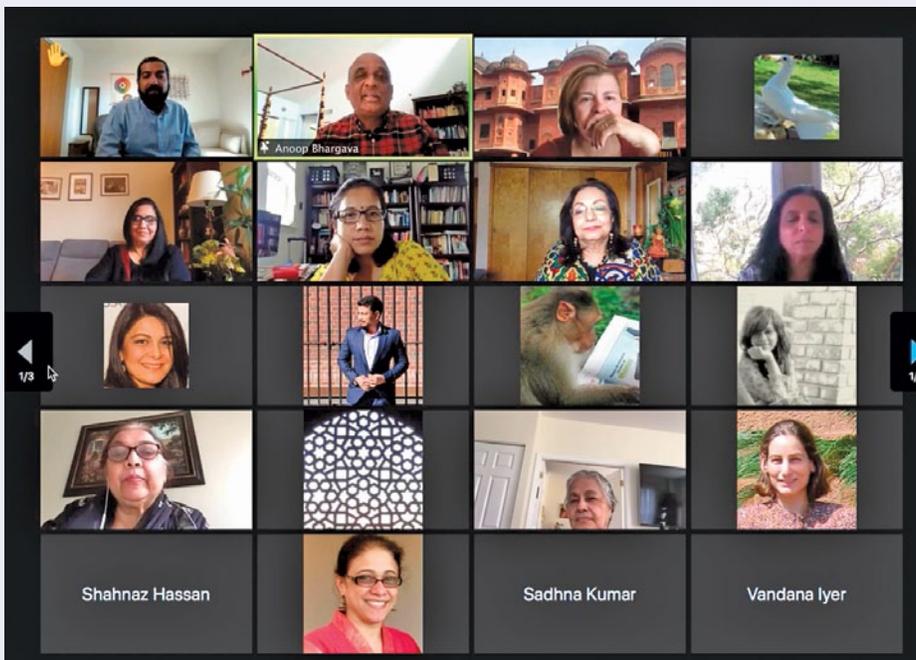
Day 1 of the conference started with a ‘Lightning Round of electrifying ideas in South Asian language pedagogy and the role of collaborations.’ Sandeep Bhutoria (Prabha Khaitan Foundation (PKF), Kolkata, India) kicked off the lightning round by sharing insights on how academic programs can tap on non-academic organizations like PKF that are dedicated to celebrate diversity in literature and culture and thereby foster inclusion. It was heartening to hear of exciting and creative collaborations where such initiatives bring together writers and poets with their readers, who often are our students, and provide platforms for launching works of creative writing, to name a few. Pankaj Narke (Vellore Institute of Technology, Andhra Pradesh University, India) then went on to

examine the role of intercultural competence in language pedagogy, to be followed by Ritu Jayakar (Penn State University) exploring how to integrate emerging technologies like Carrington’s *pedagogy wheel* into SAL pedagogy. Rajni Bhargava (New York University) made a case for being student centered through a differentiated approach, laying the grounds for a healthy debate the next day. Mansi Bajaj (UT-Austin) ended the lightning round with her presentation examining the ‘gap’ between second year and accelerated first year classes, and suggesting strategies to bridge that gap, as students from both groups are expected in following semesters, to continue into the same language course.

In the afternoon, SALD participants truly witnessed a ‘dead language’ come alive through riveting presentations in a panel titled “A ‘dead language’ Comes Alive: Teaching Sanskrit in the 21st century”. By sharing his experiences in using the poem *Rāvaṇa-vadhā* by Bhaṭṭi as a “practice resource” for highlighting some less common features of Sanskrit, Aleksandar Uskokov (Yale University) made a strong case for employing some traditional pedagogical materials in the teaching of Sanskrit, especially grammar. Nataliya Yanchevs-kaya (Princeton University) spoke of the “challenges of teaching Sanskrit in a modern American classroom”, whereas Nell Shapiro Hawley (Harvard University), drawing on her experiences in the Sanskrit classroom, eloquently championed applying the principles of ‘active learning’ found in modern language classrooms, to the teaching of Sanskrit. The panel on Sanskrit pedagogy was aptly followed by Swapna Sharma (Yale University) sharing her decade-long experience of being part of the process of compiling *The Dictionary of Bhakti*.

The day ended with a SALD social hour at the ‘Gather Town Rooftop Bar’. Colleagues got a chance to let their hair down and relax, walking around or lounging on sofas, informally mixing and chatting, catching up with old friends or making new connections, as they so desired.

The next morning, the first panel examined the limitations of currently employed student centered approaches in SAL pedagogy, as exposed in the light of globalization and shifting senses of identity, intersectionality of identi-



SALD 2021 Conference: from left to right, top to bottom: Rajiv Ranjan, Anoop Bhargava, Gabriela Nik Ilieva, Swapna Sharma, Nilakshi Phukan, Seema Khurana, Gautami Shah, Romeena Kureishy, Sarfraz Farooqui, Divya Chaudhry, Zahida Shaikh, Meena Rustgi, Maggie Cummings, Ritu Jayakar



SALD 2021 Social Hour at Gather Town's Rooftop Bar" - after an intense day of sharing, debating, questioning, participants relaxed, walking around or lounging on sofas, informally mixing & chatting, catching up with old friends or making new connections.

ties, multiculturalism, multilingualism and the related phenomena of translanguaging. Seema Khurana (Yale University) and Gautami Shah (UT-Austin) kicked off Day 2 by exploring ways to effectively engage with such diversity in SAL courses and classrooms. They noted that either the linguistic features of some SALs (like the gendered nature of Hindi for example), or cultural norms with which the SALs being taught are associated, often pose a challenge in making SAL courses inclusive. Khurana and Shah offered strategies to negotiate these realities in an attempt to make SAL courses more inclusive and accessible to students of all backgrounds and identities. Shah also shared a grassroots effort to make Hindi grammar more inclusive and thereby in tune with ground realities of identity. As discussant of the panel, in addition to sharing challenges he faces and strategies he employs to be inclusive in his Bangla courses, Ahmed Shamim (UT-Austin) discussed the linguistic implications of grassroots efforts to make grammar more inclusive.

Furthering discussions of inclusion and diversity, Gyanam Mahajan (University of California, Los Angeles) suggested curricular overhaul that incorporates goals of higher education and goals of learning in the Humanities as a way to make SAL classes more equitable, diverse and inclusive.

Day 2 also saw a demonstration by Divya Chaudhry (Vanderbilt University) on how to implement an interaction-focused lesson plan in a SAL classroom. The presentation under-

scored the importance of supporting the development of a student's interactional ability and intercultural competence to enhance language acquisition. Whereas Nilakshi Phukan (North Carolina State University) discussed how, through the effective use of technology-related projects, language and literature classes can be integrated with computer science, engineering, graphic designing, and other STEM disciplines.

The conference ended with a session organized by Language and Cultures Educators (LACE) at NYU. Topics touched by the presentations in this session spanned from effective online instruction, to the importance of research and everything in between. Romeena Kureishy (STARTALK@ Kean University) explored strategies to work towards increasing interpersonal-communication during online instruction, whereas Sarfaraz Farouqui (FLTA, New York University) discussed how to engage students in SAL classes through interesting, out of the box online activities in the three modes of communication. Anoop Bhargava (Jhilmil, New York) shared insights on a widely embraced and successful global education project *Kavita Ki Pathshala*, launched to teach the techniques and grammar of Hindi Poetry to students from all over the world. Through her presentation "Goat Yoga Club: Witnessing Cultural Appropriation by Diaspora", Bhavya Singh (NYU) stirred up a lively discussion bringing to forefront the role of language in such appropriations, if any. Questions of 'what is,' 'when does it become' and 'who determines that it is' cultural appropriation

were hotly debated. Rajiv Ranjan (Michigan State University) made a compelling case for research backed pedagogy, with an example of research based effective approaches to teach grammar. A flurry of chat messages showed that Ranjan hit a nerve, and that there was untapped interest and support to further explore related issues of SAL research and writing. The momentum that was generated in this discussion resulted in the spontaneous formation of a working group on "research and writing", led by Divya Chaudhry (Vanderbilt University) and Kusum Knapczyk (Duke University).

After an intense day of debating, questioning, sharing and learning, participants once again congregated at 'Gather Town's Rooftop Bar' by popular demand. This time to celebrate SALD.

Support provided by SAI Assistant Director Rachel Meyer, and Program Coordinator Scott Webel, ensured that the conference went smoothly without a hitch.

All in all, the conference was well received by all participants—presenters and non-presenters—with a multitude of requests to make it an annual affair. SAI once again successfully stepped in to fill a void in the world of SALs in the diaspora, this time in collaboration with Yale and NYU. ❄️

Gautami Shah is Associate Professor of Instruction in the Department of Asian Studies.

Libraries Collaborate for Open Access to Archive of Prominent Urdu Writer and Activist



The archive of influential Urdu writer, social critic and political activist Sajjad Zaheer has been officially launched and is now accessible for scholarship and study thanks to a partnership between The University of Texas at Austin and Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), with endorsement from the Indian writer's estate.

The Sajjad Zaheer Digital Archive, a portal to the private collection of Syed Sajjad Zaheer (1905-1973), functions as a searchable finding aid for the materials preserved in the digital collections of the Center for Research Libraries and the physical materials at AUD.

The archive contains a rich collection of letters, manuscripts and photographs, and includes resources related to contemporaneous writers (including the Progressive Writers Association and the Afro-Asian Writers Association), political activities (like the Rawalpindi Conspiracy and the Communist Party of India) and to the Zaheer family, notably his wife, Razia Sajjad Zaheer, herself a distinguished Urdu author. Materials in the Sajjad Zaheer Digital Archive are variously presented in English, Urdu and/or Hindi.

Sajjad Zaheer was born near Lucknow in Northern India in 1905, the son of a prominent judge and Chief Justice of the Lucknow Chief

Court. After completing his studies in politics and law at the University of Lucknow, Zaheer enrolled at the University of Oxford in 1927 to study law. During his eight years abroad, Zaheer evolved in his opposition to British Imperialism in his home country and helped establish the Indian Progressive Writers' Association in London. He later organized the first conference of the Progressive Writers' Association in Lucknow in 1936.

After returning to India, Zaheer became involved in politics, becoming Uttar Pradesh state secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI) as well as a member of the working committee of the Congress in 1936. He was jailed for two years during World War II for opposing India's participation in it.

Following the Partition of India in 1947, Sajjad Zaheer co-founded the Communist Party of Pakistan and was appointed Secretary General. In 1951, he was arrested in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case along with Faiz Ahmed Faiz. He remained in jail for four years and upon release was given Indian citizenship by Jawaharlal Nehru. While in India he continued to work in cultural activities organized by the Communist Party of India. Zaheer died in 1973.

Zaheer's writings included novels, collections of short stories, poetry, criticism, non-fiction and translations, as well as critical political writings. He also served as the editor and contributor to a number of papers and magazines throughout his career including *Bharat*, *Chingari*, *Qaumi Jung*, *Naya Zamana*, *Awami Daur* and *Hayat*.

"Our hope is that these newly available resources will inform nuanced research, will inspire teaching, and will advance collaborative scholarship across national borders," says Mary Rader, South Asia Librarian at UT. "The intention all along—now realized—was to make these materials openly and freely available thereby exposing the work and life of Sajjad Zaheer to new audiences."

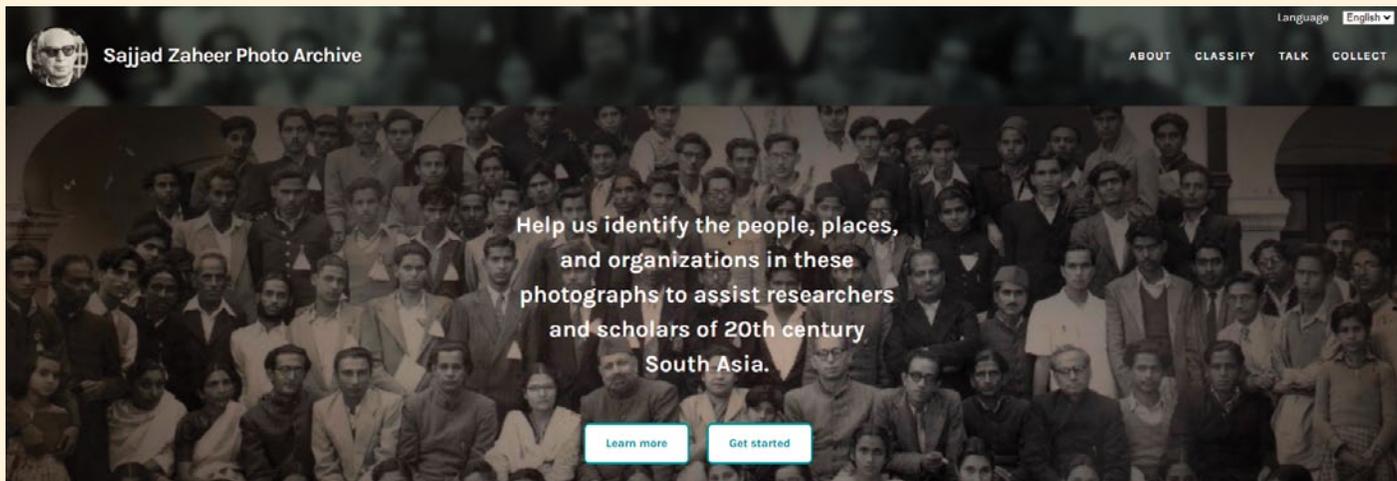
Virtual Launch of the Sajjad Zaheer Digital Archive
April 27, 2021 | 9-10:30AM CDT | 7330 97th India | 7-830PM Pakistan
Register at <https://tinyurl.com/zaheerarchive>

The Sajjad Zaheer Digital Archive ([https://www.austlii.edu.au/other/au-other/crl/zaheer/](https://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/au-other/crl/zaheer/)) is a portal to the private collection of Syed Sajjad Zaheer (1905-1973), renowned Urdu literature and political activist. As the personal and working archive of an author, activist and family member, the archive contains a rich collection of letters, manuscripts and photographs. Highlights include items related to contemporaneous writers (including the Progressive Writers Association and the Afro-Asian Writers Association), politics (like the Rawalpindi Conspiracy and the Communist Party of India), and the Zaheer family (especially Faiz Sajjad Zaheer). Materials are available in English, Urdu and Hindi. The Sajjad Zaheer Digital Archive serves as a finding aid to the freely accessible digital collection preserved at the Center for Research Libraries. The physical collection is currently held at the Ambedkar University Delhi.

PROGRAM
Moderator: Syed Akhtar Hyder, Associate Professor of Asian Studies and Islamic Studies, University of Texas at Austin
Expansions of institutional support
Doreen Lighthart, Professor, Jindal Global University, Executive Director, Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University Delhi
Judy Alroy, Area Studies Program Manager, Center for Research Libraries
Shamaila Rafiq, Director, South Asia Institute, University of Texas at Austin
Reflections from those who made the digital archive possible
Sorena Rappaport, Granddaughter of Sajjad Zaheer, Independent Consultant
Surjit Sarkar, Associate Professor, Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University Delhi
Dhritishree Bhattacharya, Tata, Classroom Media Communications
Mary Rader, South Asia Librarian, The University of Texas Libraries
Comments on the importance of the archive
Bilal Hashmi, Assistant Professor of Urdu, Teaching Stream, University of Toronto Mississauga
Sultana Hashmi, Artist, Educator and Professor of Art (Emerita), Daughter of Faiz Ahmed Faiz
Nagwan Tahir, Naya Tharwat, Daughter of Habib Tahir
Ahsan Razi, Professor (ret.) of English, University of Delhi, Son of Amrit Razi
Kamran Andar Ali, Professor of Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin
Future prospects
Rohit Negi, Associate Professor of Urban Studies, and Director, Center for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University Delhi

This project was supported by AUD's Center for Community Knowledge, the South Asia Institute at The University of Texas at Austin and the South Asia Materials Project (SAMP) at the Center for Research Libraries. ❄️

Travis Willmann is Communications Officer at University of Texas Libraries.



Crowd-sourcing captions for the Archive

While physical archives tend to describe their materials at the folder or box level, digital archives tend to describe their contents—each letter, each draft, each photograph—at the individual item level.

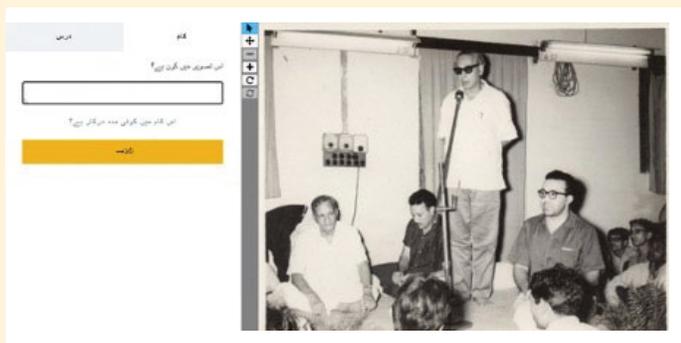
The Sajjad Zaheer Digital Archive presents this item-level description in two finding aids: a PDF inventory created by Dhritabrata Bhattacharya Tato of Daastaan Media Communications and in an Excel spreadsheet created by Jonathan Seefeldt, a doctoral student in History here at UT.

Lacking from both, however, are robust and accurate descriptions of the more than 700 photographs included in the Zaheer archive. Many of the people and places remain unidentified and oftentimes the dates are unknown. Rather than guessing or leaving those photographs unidentified, we decided to turn to “the crowd” for help.

Madeline Goebel, a former Master’s student in UT’s iSchool, used the freely available Zooniverse platform to create opportunities for crowd-sourcing metadata to identify the people and places represented in the rich collection of photos. With the help of Akbar Hyder, Mansi Bajaj, Namrata Kanchan and Nishant Upadhyay, the photo identification site was translated into Hindi and Urdu and allows anyone to submit descriptions in English, Hindi or Urdu.

Please help! The image identification site will be open through the spring of 2022 and with your help we can identify people, places, and dates thereby providing additional contextual information and description. This information will help scholarly researchers, students, family members, and anyone interested, to gain a more in-depth understanding of Zaheer and North Indian life in the twentieth century. ❄️

Mary Rader is South Asia Librarian and Head of the Arts, Humanities & Global Studies Engagement Team, UT Libraries.



Top: Sajjad Zaheer Photo Archive landing page

Above: Examples of photographs that need expanded description in the Sajjad Zaheer Photo Archive

Left: Urdu instructions for submitting descriptions in the Sajjad Zaheer Photo Archive

Far left: Urdu input page in the Sajjad Zaheer Photo Archive



یہاں سوال آپ سے تصویر میں موجود اشخاص کی شناخت کرنے کے لئے کہتا ہے۔ اگر تصویر میں کسی خاص تنظیم کے اجتماع کو دکھایا گیا ہے تو وہ معلومات بھی یہیں فراہم کی جانی چاہئے۔ برائے کرم نام براہ راست ترتیب میں درج کریں (مثال کے طور پر، سجاد ظہیر)، اور نیویگیٹون کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے متعدد اندراجات الگ کریں (مثال کے طور پر سجاد ظہیر؛ ترکی پیسڈ مصنفین ایسوسی ایشن)

جاری رکھیں

Visit the image identification site at <https://tinyurl.com/zaheer-archive>

A new garden takes root on UT Campus

Located behind Brackenridge Hall, the South Asia Garden is a living classroom where campus visitors can learn about South Asian cuisine, sustainable food production, healthy eating, and the fascinating global histories of vegetables and herbs common to South Asian foodways. The Garden is a collaboration between the South Asia Institute and University Housing and Dining (UHD)'s UT Farm Stand program.

Some of the foods grown in the garden – like cucumbers, eggplants and curry trees – were first cultivated in South Asia and then spread across the globe, while others – like chili peppers and ginger – made their way into the region through trade networks to become key ingredients in South Asian cuisine. Language faculty can treat the garden as a classroom for units on food and ingredients. Faculty who work on food security and sustainability can visit the garden with classes to discuss South Asian agricultural practices and critical food heritage. The garden also brings together the UT community to plant and harvest each spring and fall.

The South Asia Garden was designed and constructed by UT Landscape Services under the guidance of horticulturalist Ty Kasey. The garden's installation was funded by a UT Austin Green Fund grant secured by UHD's sustainability coordinator Neil Kaufman. The garden's beds of local limestone blocks form a geometric shape inspired by South Asian garden traditions, namely the "Paradise garden" design with prominent water features and a sense of enclosure. These gardens are characterized by two features: an orchard of fruit trees that surrounds a central open space of garden beds and trellises. The eight-pointed star figure of the bed appears in many of the religious traditions of South Asia.

The South Asia Garden design and crops reflect both the traditions of royal gardens as well as day-to-day household kitchen gardens. The plants growing here are part of a slow process of globalization and exchange that began over 5,000 years ago, as people in the South Asia region cultivated indigenous plants while blend-

ing new plants into their cuisines through waves of migrations and introduction from Africa and Southeast Asia. Beginning 400 years ago, Portuguese and British trade networks introduced New World foods to the region, and further spread the region's unique herbs and vegetables – and their flavors – around the world. Visitors to the garden can also sit under a Bodhi tree propagated from the tree given to UT Austin by the Dalai Lama, itself a cutting from the Bodhi tree in Bodhi Gaya, India, where Buddhist texts say Siddhartha Gautama experienced enlightenment.



Red hot chili peppers, sweet banana leaves and other South Asian herbs, fruits and vegetables growing in the raised beds of the South Asia Garden. The 8-point star masonry made of Texas limestone and the fountain in a blue ceramic pot replicate the aura of a Paradise Garden.

Care of the South Asia Garden is overseen by the UT Farm Stand team. UT Farm Stand is a student-run program that focuses on the three main areas of food sustainability: production, distribution, and waste. This is accomplished through two on-campus gardens (located at Brackenridge and Kinsolving), a biweekly farmers market, and a plate waste initiative. The food grown in these gardens is harvested for sale at the market or for use in the UHD cafeterias. The crops grown in the South Asia Garden are maintained with the highest level of sustainable agricultural practices. For example, Integrative Pest Management, organic fertilization, and off-grid irrigation are all part of the standard operating procedures.

The garden's educational benefits are numerous and span a variety of approaches and audiences. SAI faculty and UT's sustainability networks are encouraged to incorpo-

rate trips to the garden in their classes. The project intends to expand the understanding of sustainability among students to encompass cultural competency. UHD's chefs create several "Cultural Dinners" throughout the year to showcase the world's cultural diversity through food. The South Asia Garden will serve as a backdrop for a future South Asia Cultural Dinner, where foods can be grown and harvested for that dinner. SAI and UT Farm Stand anticipate hosting educational programs at the gardens that may include both culinary and academic components. There will also be signage in the gardens describing the uses and origins of plants, with their names written in the South Asian languages taught at UT. Mansi Bajaj, Anand Balakrishnan, Michael Fiden, Sumit Guha, Andrea Gutierrez, Shahnaz Hassan, Neil Kaufman, Darsana Manayathu-Sasi, Nicholas Roth, Ahmed Shamim and Scott Webel contributed to the signage content.

In addition to these educational components, the garden also offers a space for reflection, relaxation, and recreation. Likewise, the garden establishes a physical, living structure on the UT campus that recognizes one of the largest demographics on campus. Over 20% of UT Austin's student body and 30% of UHD residents identify as Asian or Asian American, many of whom specifically trace their roots to South Asia. In addition to the educational benefits to the UT campus community at large, we hope the South Asia Garden provides a space for UT's students, faculty, and staff of South Asian heritage to feel a sense of belonging and celebration within the rest of the UT community.

At the garden's opening event on November 20, 2020, SAI graduate students offered readings of garden-related poetry in five South Asian languages (Sundas Amer with Urdu, Daniel Dillon with Tamil, Michael Fiden with Malayalam, Cicely Bonnin with Hindi, and Daniel Ng with Bengali) and a sitar performance by Aruna Kharod. A small group gathered for the event, which was broadcast live online to the UT community.



From L to R: Sundas Amer, Ty Kasey, Daniel Ng, Sharmila Rudrappa, Scott Webel, Neil Kaufman "hook 'em" at the opening ceremony.



Fragrant Thai basil attracts bees and other pollinators to the garden's delights.



The difficulties of the pandemic year were, for a moment, put aside to celebrate something we so often take for granted but that has the power to bring people together – the simple pleasures of growing and eating nurturing food. It felt like a healing moment for SAI's community, and in that spirit, we hope you will visit the garden and slow down to explore and experience the plants' colors and smells, the sound of the water and birds, and watch the pollinators help the garden grow. ❄️

Scott Webel is Program Coordinator for the South Asia Institute.

Garden photos: Alayna Hudson, University Housing and Dining



Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) has been eaten on the islands of Southeast Asia for at least 7,000 years. Austronesian-speaking people—the first people to engineer ocean-going sailboats—had spread ginger to South India and Sri Lanka by around 3500 BCE, eventually taking the spice as far as Hawaii. The plant's edible rhizomes annually shoot up leaves and flowers. The rhizomes can be eaten raw, cooked, dried and pulverized, juiced, brewed into tea and even fermented into bubbly beverages. Medicinally, ginger is recognized to help with nausea, respiration, digestion and reducing inflammation.



Spring	Perennial (early fall or spring planting)
Tulsi (Holy basil)	Curry tree
Cilantro	Ginger
Malabar spinach	Turmeric
Karela/bitter gourd	Guava
Eggplant	Banana
Okra	Colocasia/taro (shade)
Cucumber	Pomegranate
Chili peppers	
Fall	<i>Garden Design by Ty Kasey, MLA</i>
Lauki/bottle gourd	
Cilantro	
Mustard	
Fennel	





The pioneering historian William McNeill pointed out that certain types of airborne disease, typically respiratory infections, need a steady supply of new victims in order to maintain their transmission and evolve to overcome immune systems. These are often lumped under the name 'influenza'. As viral illnesses, they are capable of mutating quickly so as to evade antibodies left by earlier attacks. COVID is the most recent of these. Like many such illnesses, it only kills a small percentage of its victims and leaves others minimally ill. The latter especially serve to spread it.

But this has not been the first global pandemic. Lethal epidemics like the cholera that emerged from the Ganges delta in 1817, arrived in Europe in the 1830s. Cholera has been shown to spread through immune carriers, such as the UN peacekeepers from Nepal who reintroduced it to Haiti in 2010. Yet others, like the bubonic plague that spread from southwest China and maintained transmission via animal reservoirs such as wild rodents and urban rats, can still burst out unpredictably like the Yellowstone National Park outbreak of 2015. (*Yersinia pestis* traveled to San Francisco by steamship from

East Asia in the 1890s and has ensconced itself in the Rocky Mountain states).

While there is no doubt that sudden increases in disease deaths would have been noticed in any community, yet the creation of the statistical apparatus needed to generate durable records only occurred in a few societies.

Britain's Ministry of Health's global survey declared "total mortality in India in October 1918 [to be] without parallel in the history of disease."

While the Mughal emperor Jahangir recorded an outbreak of plague, he made no effort to count the victims. Statistical records began to appear systematically with European empires and were always constrained by parsimony and administrative weakness. But when the plague returned to South Asia – this time via steamship

from Hong Kong in 1896 – numerical records of its victims were being kept. (See my open access article, "India in the pandemic age". *Indian Economic Review*, 2020).

COVID-19 is therefore only the latest of the afflictions of globalization. As many have pointed out, this outbreak came almost exactly a century after the first worldwide influenza at the end of the First World War. Gina Kolata, in a recent history (*Flu, The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918*), writes that where good statistics were kept, the flu killed 2.5 percent of cases, or one in 40. The total number who died worldwide was estimated to be between 20 and 100 million. A great many of them were in the British empire in India, currently divided into Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Its exact origin is still uncertain, but the earliest cases of the new influenza in India occurred in the great port city of Bombay (Mumbai). It was at that time a major logistical base for World War I in the Middle East. Then as now, record-keeping was uneven across the Indian subcontinent. Some British provinces had developed fairly comprehensive recording systems: others were backward. The princely states (nearly 600 in number) were often

statistical black holes from which no information emerged. Registration was nowhere complete and only a varying fraction of all deaths was recorded. Furthermore, recorders often relied on reports by illiterate watchmen to lower-level officials as to cause of death. They entered many deaths as resulting from ‘fever’: which could have been malaria, plague, TB or many other diseases. But through all data problems, it is fairly clear that the great influenza was regionally diverse in its impact. Bengal province (then comprising today’s West Bengal and Bangladesh) was reported as having only 4.7 deaths per thousand of the population while the lands of Western India from (undivided) Punjab southeast to the old province of Bombay all had more than 40 recorded deaths per thousand. The demographer Tim Dyson recently recalculated aggregate influenza deaths at that time at between 10 to 14 million. In relation to a population of 300 million, this would amount to 33 to 48 deaths for every thousand. Even that is lower than the calculation of Kingsley Davis, who thought that up to 20 million had died, or over 66 per thousand. Britain’s Ministry of Health’s global survey declared “total mortality in India in October 1918 [to be] without parallel in the history of disease.”

There has not been anything comparable until 2020. But the world had several near-misses in the past two decades before COVID burst out upon it. SARS originated in China but was contained by adjoining countries of East



Covid-19 vaccination queue in May 2021.

Asia in 2003. That experience as well as stronger state capacity and the rapid development of vaccines has enabled countries in the region to cope better with COVID of 2020-21.

How does this last great epidemic compare with the contemporary one? We are still beset with regionally variable reporting and diagnostic problems. The *London Telegraph* reported in 2020 that some health authorities in India and Pakistan were actively suppressing COVID deaths. More recently, the *Indian Express* carried out an intensive analysis of the data for Indian states between April 1 and May 31, a time when there was an enormous surge in COVID cases. During the corresponding period of 2019, there were 544,000 deaths from all

causes; in 2021 that number was 1,141,000, suggesting almost 600,000 “excess” deaths, that may be attributable to COVID. There was a noticeable variation in reporting across the states. According to *The Hindu* coronavirus tracker, as of August 28, there were nearly 438,000 reported deaths from this illness since the start of the pandemic, with 31,876,000 having recovered and 376,000 active cases. There are today striking variations between different countries across the globe and between Indian states. Only eight states were able to supply aggregate data in time for the report: among these Kerala had the lowest proportion of excess deaths and Madhya Pradesh the highest.

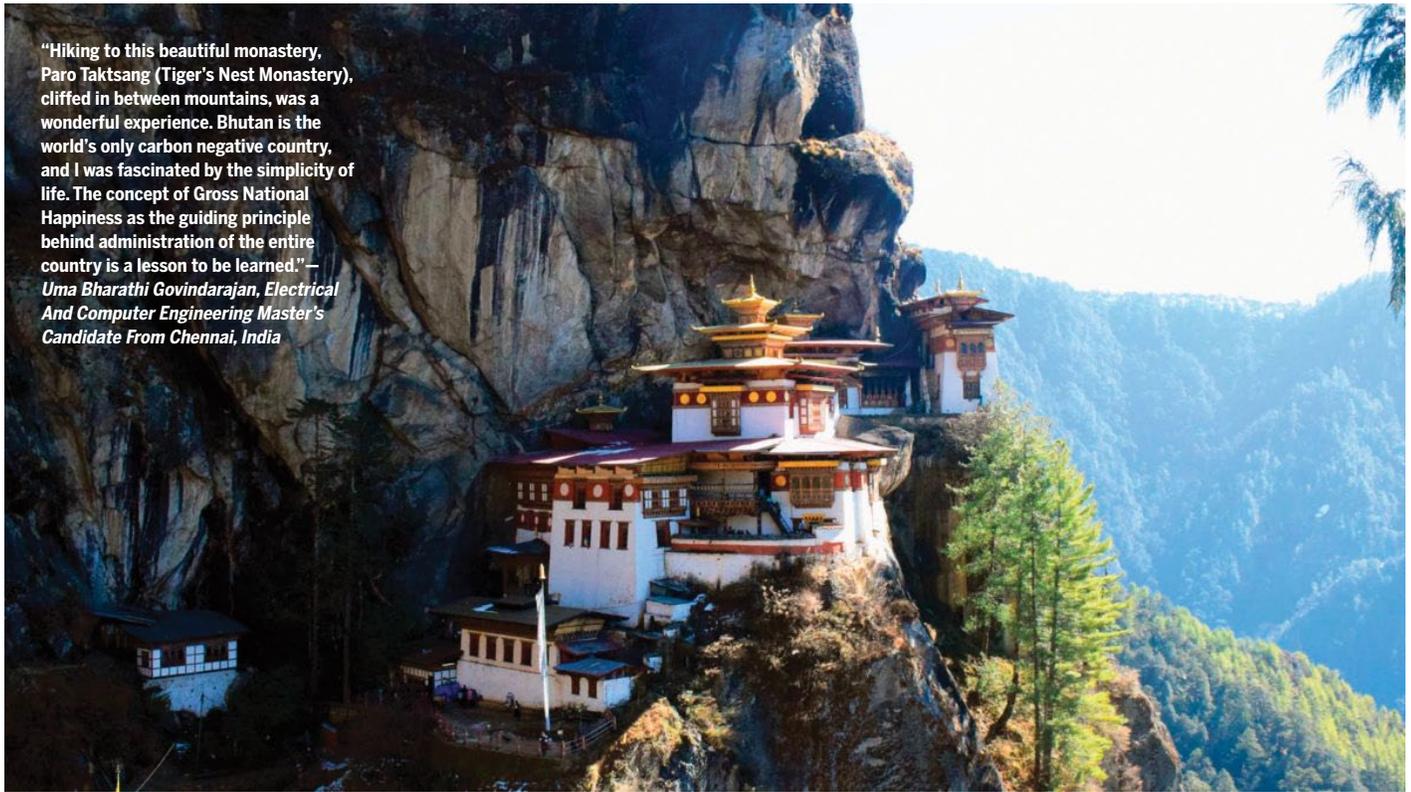
Experts agree that the pandemic death rate is underestimated, but we may compare it with the 6 million dead reported for the 1918 influenza, though the comparable present-day population is more than four times as large. The last pandemic occurred at a time when there was no effective remedy or preventative anywhere in the world. As the *Indian Express* commented, the quality of health reporting reflects levels of state competence and healthcare. It is likely that, as in 1918, the true aggregate number will never be known. But the enormous toll of the current pandemic will still be lower than that of 1918-19, though probably far higher than it might have been. ❄️

Sumit Guha is Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin.



Stranded migrant workers during fourth phase of the lockdown.

Texas Global's Spotlight on South Asia



As it poured outside our windows reminding us of the South Asian *saavan* (monsoon), SAI talked all things South Asia with Teri Albrecht, the Assistant Vice Provost of Texas Global.

First up, some numbers. Since 2019, there have been almost 1,300 individuals across campus who are connected in some way with countries in South Asia. The largest among these is of course students. In 2021-22, there are 1,141 international students from South Asian countries on campus, the largest number from India (968) followed by Pakistan (61), Bangladesh (34), Nepal (22) and Sri Lanka (2).

There is significant faculty engagement as well in South Asia. As many as 55 faculty members have either in the past worked in or on South Asia, are currently involved in programs there, or intend to participate in future. And finally, there were 37 UT Students Abroad in the academic year before Covid (2018-19).

UT's outreach across the region is even larger. "India is probably our biggest area [in South Asia] in terms of the in-country work as well as students," Teri tells me over Zoom. She cites as an example a recently concluded 2-year

program titled "Breaking the Glass Ceiling" in West Bengal supported by the US Embassy in Kolkata and run by the Global Innovation Lab, which brings together government, universities and industry to train and support entrepreneurs in their communities. This initiative promoted entrepreneurship through business training, networking and access to resources for women business owners.

From an application pool of 150 women entrepreneurs, 60 were selected for online training and mentoring. Based on scores from the training workshops and homework assignments, 30 were selected for an intensive "boot camp," providing the basic building blocks to create a high-impact venture, improve their

marketing and sales forecasting, facilitate access to funding and create market linkages, revenue and jobs. Up to 15 participants presented their business model to a panel of Indian investors. Three showing the highest potential for success will participate in pre-incubation and will be granted membership in the Indian Women Entrepreneurs Association.

Several factors determine how—and where—Texas Global programs are planned, funded and carried out. Perhaps the key is "where our faculty connections are," says Teri. Another key factor is accessibility, or in other words "how easily we can travel there." Teri explains that its UT's extended networks in India that keeps things continuing. "There's a historical network in place between



Women entrepreneurs participated in an event organized as part of the Breaking the Glass Ceiling project in Patna, and completed the Global Texas Innovation Readiness online course as part of the project.

faculty and institutions in India,” Teri says, adding, “India really is a country where the higher education connections are the greatest.”

While UT’s footprint in India is Texas-size, several programs are afoot in other parts of the region as well. Through the Texas Global Virtual Exchange Initiative for example, UT Austin faculty co-create and teach collaborative online international learning courses with peers at universities around the world. These virtual exchanges help UT students gain global perspectives, deepening their understanding of the subject matter while engaging in projects or problem-based learning.

This year (2021-22), a policy research project will track “Perception towards and adaptation to climate change by family farms in India, Japan, Nepal and Texas.” This research is led by David Eaton from the LBJ School of Public Affairs in partnership with Hiroshima University in Japan, Tribhuvan University in Nepal and Birla Institute of Technology and Science in India.

In Spring 2022, Sara Stevens, Assistant Professor of Instruction (School of Human Ecology/Division of Textiles and Apparel, College of Natural Sciences) will teach a “Global Textile and Apparel Product Development” course in partnership with Institute for Arts and Culture in Pakistan. [see “ATX+PAK: Connecting Texas and Pakistan through Culture, Commerce, Common Good” on the following page for how this institutional partnership came about. Sarah Stevens also reported on her trip to Pakistan in the previous issue of our newsletter.]

Another Texas Global initiative in South Asia is the Faculty Research Seed Grant supporting international collaboration with the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in Pakistan. Sonia Seeman, Associate Professor at Butler School of Music and Arshad Mahmud at NAPA will work together on “Supporting Music Education at Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan.” This entails organizing a capstone conference and concert event, the “Sangeet Sangam Music Conference.” This two-day conference event will showcase the musical pedagogical skills of NAPA faculty along with their BSOM colleagues with workshops, panel

“Breaking the Glass Ceiling” in West Bengal, supported by the US Embassy in Kolkata and run by the Global Innovation Lab, brings together government, universities and industry to train and support entrepreneurship through business training, networking and access to resources for women business owners.

presentations, lecture-demonstrations for pedagogy, and a final concert of Pakistani and Pakistani-fusion music.

The seed grant will cover travel for up to six UT faculty members and student alumni. This conference event serves as the culmination of a two-semester series of workshops and seminars to train NAPA faculty to develop music curricula, funded by a University Partnership Grant from the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP). As a result of this grant, NAPA faculty will then lead curriculum development/teacher training workshops for faculty and administrators at four Karachi universities: Habib University (HU), Institute of Business Management (IoBM), Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST), and the public sector University of Karachi (UoK). These workshops will set models for the expansion of music training and support in their respective departments, and thereby set a model for music education in Pakistan.

A President’s Award for Global Learning was awarded in 2020-21 to “create educational public health and health literacy videos for the Rohingya refugee community in Bangladesh.” Three student team members (Soufia Ali, Mahija Ginpall, Oishika Das, Maharajni Perla) along with graduate student Dana Reilly worked on this with guidance from faculty team members David Eaton, Anjum Khurshid and Jennifer Adair.

Perhaps the most picturesque way South Asia was represented at UT was in the Texas Global calendar. In 2019, The University of Texas at Austin sent more than 4,400 Longhorns around the world and brought over 8,000 international students and scholars to the Forty Acres, ranking the university at No.3 in the country for study abroad participation and one of the top global universities in the world! Among the 12 extraordinary photos taken by Longhorns around the world chosen for the calendar, was a photo of a monastery perched on a mountain-top in Paro, Bhutan. Uma Govindarajan, a Master’s candidate in electrical and computer engineering from Chennai, India wrote this to caption her photo:

“Hiking to this beautiful monastery, Paro Taktsang (Tiger’s Nest Monastery), clifed in between mountains, was a wonderful experience. Bhutan is the world’s only carbon negative country, and I was fascinated by the simplicity of life. The concept of Gross National Happiness as the guiding principle behind administration of the entire country is a lesson to be learned.”

“We continuously look at Department of State grants to bid on a program in one of these [South Asian] countries,” says Teri. This engagement with communities beyond campus, beyond Texas and beyond the US is what Texas Global strives for to create a globally connected campus. ❄️

The SAI Editorial Team conducted the interview and research for this article.



ATX+PAK: Connecting Texas and Pakistan through Culture, Commerce, Common Good

In a small village outside the ancient city of Multan, in the southern Punjab region of Pakistan, a community of artisans carry out Centuries-old stitches, beadwork, and other embellishments on everything from blouses to bedspreads, their nimble hands bringing a myriad of intricately designed pieces to life.

In northern Punjab, on a pristine factory floor in Faisalabad, oversized spools of thread spin at the speed of progress, the first step to bringing popular branded apparel pieces from concept to customer closets.

A world away in Austin, a runway awash in color sparkles with couture representing modern South Asian fashion designers finding footing with new global audiences.

At the Austin Community College Fashion Incubator and Asian American Resource Center, Pakistani artists lead masterclasses introducing the artistry and technique of legacy South Asian textile and craftwork for a new generation of students and practitioners.

The thread tying all of these experiences together: The City of Austin's ATX+PAK Entrepreneurship program (ATX+PAK).

ATX+PAK is a business development initiative between Austin, Texas and Pakistan, funded by a grant from the United States Embassy in

Islamabad. Founded in 2015, the program is the first of its kind to be implemented by a local government in the United States.

The Fashion Forward Initiative (FFI) focused on increasing fashion and textile related trade activity between the US and Pakistan and the Global Market access program (GMAP) focused on helping growth stage companies scale their businesses into the US via Austin, are the most recent ATX+PAK program tracks.

FFI has provided customized experiences for entrepreneurs, creatives, and educators to explore partnerships beyond borders.

"This program is the ideal medium for industry and academia to collaborate in bringing sustainable outcomes for people and community where everyone benefits," said Lahore-based arts educator and program participant Salman Afzal who led community textile design workshops in Austin.

ATX+PAK experiences also included trade and discovery tours of Pakistan where Austin's business leaders and educators were able to see the entire fashion and textile supply chain in action from raw cotton to legacy textile design to mainstream retail ready apparel.

"These trade missions are quite frankly life-changing for the business... it's changing the





whole scale at which we operate," said Musa Ato, CEO, League of Rebels and Adolphin group based in Austin.

Business development missions to Austin provided Pakistani fashion designers, educators and major retailers curated meetings and events to explore. At the center of it all, Shop South Asia, an immersive marketing and customer insight pop-up retail shop in central Austin. The pop-up provided a platform for Pakistani designers to connect with customers and receive invaluable shopper insights in real-time on products exclusively designed for the US market. Afzal believes Shop South Asia is a powerful networking and active learning tool. "Principles we were teaching in the classroom, we were able to demonstrate them for students in practice," Afzal said.

Shop visitors also had a chance to learn through virtual tours of designer studios and workshops illustrating the design and construction process for each brand. Lahore based Euphoria XR and Austin based Chocolate Milk and Donuts teamed up to create the VR experiences. Their partnership, one of more than a dozen born of the ATX+PAK program.

"ATX+PAK proved to be a game-changer for Euphoria," said company co-founder Ahmed Malik. "We went from being a company with negli-

gible revenue to having multiple partners in Texas and the US with more than \$500,000 in revenue."

Euphoria XR's ATX+PAK success story is one of many. The Program is the catalyst of more than a dozen revenue generating commercial partnerships, new businesses/expansions, and educational partnerships.

In November 2019, after joining an ATX+PAK delegation to Pakistan which toured artisan villages across Punjab as part of the FFI, UT's fashion and textile design students will have curriculum centered around the work of regional artisans in Punjab while the regional artisan-entrepreneurs will receive training on how to develop their products for global markets! The initiative will be part of the UT Austin Global Virtual Exchange Program which supports the development of collaborative international curriculum.

Another exciting outcome is the collaboration between Pakistan's Institute of Art and Culture and UT being championed by the South Asia Institute and Sara Stewart Stevens, Assistant Director, Division of Textiles and Apparel, School of Human Ecology. SAI is also exploring future cultural and educational exchange opportunities with the Institute for Art and Culture in Lahore as a result of the program.

While ATX+PAK is centered in fostering meaningful in-person connections, travel restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic led to a successful shift to virtual programming in 2020-21. The pandemic pivot came with a silver lining – the ability to reach more people through digital platforms.

More than 2,000 people viewed the FFI designer talks and workshop series featuring four fashion designers while Shop South Asia transformed to an AR/VR enabled virtual pop-up experience on shopsouthasia.com featuring 360 degree tours of brand boutiques in Pakistan.

ATX+PAK concluded grant funded activities the end of September 2021. The program model has been successfully scaled in Egypt (ATX+EGYPT) and Detroit (D2PAK). ❄️

Alicia Dean is Marketing Communications Consultant with the City's Public Information Office and founder of the City of Austin's ATX+PAK Entrepreneurship Program.



A few of the 153 statues of Buddha that populate the Dambulla Cave temples in Sri Lanka.



Conjuring South Asia in a Texas classroom

As the global pandemic has continued over the past year, educators have still sought to teach creatively and seek quality professional development opportunities in the virtual world. Over the years, the Hemispheres Outreach Consortium and SAI have provided high-quality in-person professional development and resources



Anthony Zanin

to support K-12 teachers in the teachings of the different regions of the world. In the spirit of adaptability and creativity during the times of COVID-19, Hemispheres and SAI have transitioned many of their amazing workshops from in-person experiences to virtual ones. I have had the privilege of participating in workshops that helped further my students' understanding of South Asia as well as work on projects that helped to blend pedagogical innovation in geography with content specific topics in South Asia.

SAI is a strong supporter of projects that help to bring South Asian studies to life in the classroom.

During October and November of 2020, SAI and Hemispheres hosted "Streams of Buddhism in South Asia," a workshop which examined two regions in South Asia: Sri Lanka and The Himalayas. These two regions represent very distinct developments in the practice of Buddhism. The workshop was held in a hybrid synchronous/asynchronous format and featured primary resources curated by content experts from

Art History, Asian Studies, Anthropology, and Religious Studies. Through an online platform, participants engaged in materials curated by content experts around thinking about Buddhism – the Northern Stream in the Himalayas and the Southern Stream in Sri Lanka. On November 14th, participants had the opportunity to engage in live presentations and Q&A sessions with the content experts.

In my undergraduate coursework, I had opportunities to take courses that focused on Asia, but lacked an emphasis on South Asia. As the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the Advanced Placement courses in Social Studies focus on more specifics of South Asian history and culture, it is important for teachers to have experiences such as this workshop to further their content knowledge in the different regions of the world, in order for it to be represented in the curriculum and their teaching with as much accuracy as possible. Buddhism is one of the world religions that appears frequently in the curriculum. However, I lacked an in-depth knowledge of Buddhism, which I felt hindered my teachings. As I have continued to seek opportunities to learn more about Buddhism, this workshop did just that and provided me with tangible resources to take back to my classroom. The workshop featured a presentation by Dr. Ann Horak from the University of Texas-El Paso who spoke about the Bhutanese influence and partnership on the UTEP campus. Part of the curated resources provided to participants were images, readings, and videos of Bhutan and UTEP. These resources were easily adaptable to my teaching of cultural landscapes and cultural diffusion in the AP Human Geography course that I teach.

This example is one of the many ways that these resources can be used in the K-12 classroom. In addition to providing teachers with content-rich resources, SAI and Hemispheres supports teachers in the creation of lesson plans using these resources and can be found on the Hemispheres website.

SAI is a strong supporter of projects that help to bring South Asian studies to life in the classroom. In partnership with the Texas Alliance for Geographic Education, I have been working to create lesson plans that align with Powerful Geography, a new framework for the teaching of geography. This framework aims to engage students in geographic knowledge and skills that will best prepare them for their future personal and career goals. Dr. Rachel Meyer, SAI assistant director, has been integral in helping to curate resources on topics, such as the Rohingya genocide and urban planning in South Asia, so that I can create lessons that are both regionally specific and fulfill the content that is covered in AP Human Geography and World Geography, while also aligning with the Powerful Geography framework. These lessons are designed to engage students in critical thinking about South Asia, while understanding how they can engage in regionally specific discourse and see a connection in their lives and future aspirations.

Even through a remarkably challenging year and the uncertainty of the year to come, I am extremely grateful for all of the ways that Hemispheres and SAI continue to support K-12 educators and students. ❄️

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Laxmi's Mooch: Challenging Beauty Norms, Gender Roles, and Colorism

Laxmi's *Mooch* is the debut work of Atlanta-based immigration lawyer and community advocate Shelly Anand. *Mooch* is the Hindi word for mustache. As the title implies, the picture book celebrates Laxmi's identity as a young South Asian child growing up in North America who is made fun of for her facial hair. When Laxmi comes home dejected, her mother invokes the histories of powerful South Asian women to console her.



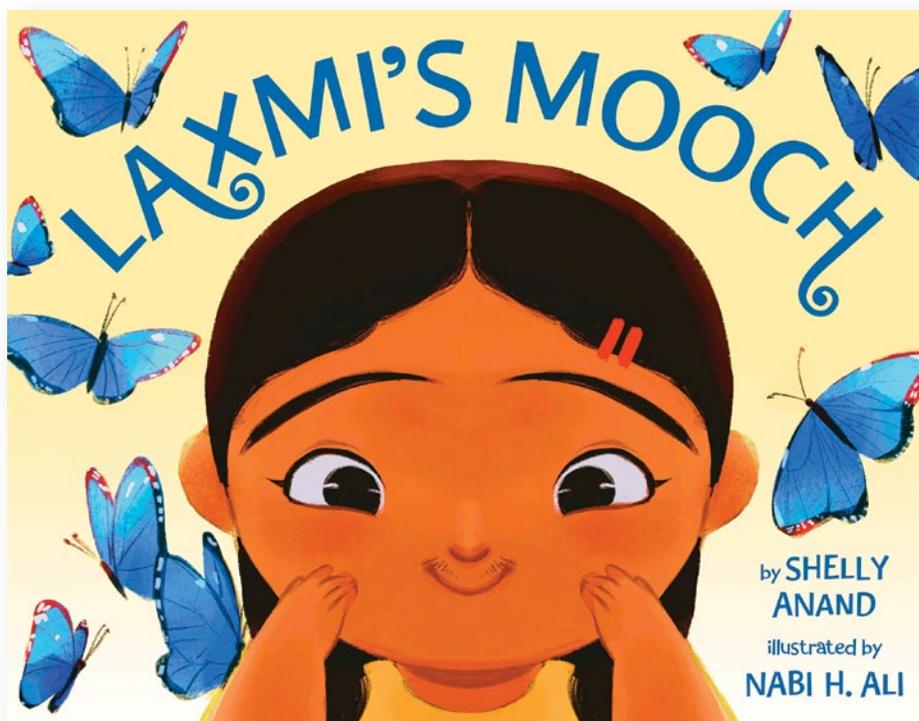
Shelley Anand

She reminds Laxmi that everyone has body hair, including iconic figures like Frida Kahlo. Upon returning to school, Laxmi chooses to celebrate her newfound confidence in meaningful ways with her

teacher and classmates. This text joins a welcome assortment of diverse and socially relevant children's literature by South Asian authors that provides young readers an opportunity to see themselves and their own experiences mirrored in the books they read.

In a recent analysis of young adult novels, Sivashankar and Viswanath (2021) found a troubling prevalence of problematic stereotypes about Indians and Indian Americans that ranged from cultural exoticism to 'Bollywoodification.' Anand's book breaks away from this trend by providing a real-world story of a young South Asian protagonist who is authentic and free from orientaling tropes. *Laxmi's Mooch* was provided to participating K-6 teachers during the Critical Literacies for Global Citizenship workshop in June 2021, sponsored by the South Asia Institute as part of the Hemispheres Consortium. The author was invited for a Q+A session with participants. We had the chance to learn about her inspiration for the book, as well as her current and future projects.

Each year, the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison analyzes diversity and representation in children's literature and disseminates the results of their study to the general public. In 2019, the last year of reliable data given the COVID-19 pandemic, about 9% of children's books that were published centered on real-life or fictional Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander characters.



The statistics for AAPI representation is more promising than that of other minoritized groups, but 70% of children's books still feature white characters or animals (CCBC, 2021) Data on AAPI representation should also be disaggregated to understand the breadth of representation of more than 30 cultural and ethnic groups that fall under the AAPI umbrella. Furthermore, the Asian American category in the CCBC data does not differentiate between Asian and Asian American. As a result, only a handful of the 317 books published in 2020 by and about Asian Americans reflect the desi American experience in authentic ways.

Given this background, *Laxmi's Mooch* is all the more remarkable. Aside from the primary storyline, Shelley Anand's picture book invites young readers and their families to think indirectly about colorism and gender roles. As the illustrator, Nabi H. Ali worked together with Shelley Anand to conceptualize the joyful illustrations for the book. Laxmi's mother, for example, is intentionally depicted with a darker skin tone. In the scenes at home, her father dons an apron and is preparing food in the kitchen. The illustrator and author make deliberate decisions to interrupt social norms based on skin color and gender in South

Asian cultures. Research shows that children as young as five are ready to have conversations about race, colorism and privilege (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Hilliard et al, 2021). Caretakers can use the illustrations and narrative itself as a springboard to pose questions to young children: What do you notice about the character's skin color? Who is cooking in this picture? Why do you think the illustrator made these choices?

Laxmi's Mooch received a starred review on important indexes of children's literature including Kirkus, Booklist, and School Library Journal, ensuring that the text will make it into the library holdings of school and public libraries. The author is a full-time mother and civil rights lawyer in Georgia, where she is involved as an activist and advocate for immigrant rights. She is busy at work with her second children's book, which we are anxiously awaiting. ✨

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The Future of Work



The future of work is the subject of intense deliberation among varied stakeholders: scholars, policymakers, and advocates around the world and across the political spectrum. While much of the discourse is about technology and how it is impacting economies, these discussions largely ignore the importance of informal work to wealth creation, resulting in the denial of appropriately valued work for many in the world. UT's Summer 2021 Pop-Up Institute, "Beyond the Future of Work: New Paradigms for Addressing Global Inequality," held from May 24-June 17, focused on the lived experiences in both the Global South and North (and South in the North) of those rendered most in a time of COVID-19 and beyond. Here are some key contributions to the event from South Asia speakers.

People over profits.

In her keynote address, "Workers at the Center: Reimagining the Future of Work," Sarita Gupta, director of the Ford Foundation's Future of Work(ers) program, said the future of work should be centered on people rather than the industries and companies they uphold. Labor markets around the world, but especially in the Global South, are deeply shaped by climate change, technological innovations, and demographic shifts. She urged, "Workers must have a seat and a voice at the table," elaborating that workers need to have meaningful representation in terms of how firms, industries, and nation-states re-imagine economic futures. She envisioned a future where workers, regardless of citizenship status and in both formal and informal sectors will experience economic security, dignity in the workplace, and greater opportunities for social security for themselves, and future generations. Gupta posited that this was not just utopic thinking, but was within the realm of possibilities through three political innovations: modernizing the social contract, reimagining capital flows and global markets, and fostering socially and environmentally responsible innovation/technology.

The respondents to Sarita Gupta's keynote speech were Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa (Professor of Sociology, UT-Austin) and Dr. Kamran Asdar Ali (Professor of Anthropology, UT-Austin). Dr. Rudrappa's work is primarily on the care work sector which encompasses both formal and informal labor markets in healthcare, elder and childcare, education, and housework. Dr. Rudrappa elaborated that wages in the formal care industries are declining. Additionally, much of the care work done today is unrecognized, and as a result, unpaid. Remarking on the crisis in care experienced during the pandemic, she said that was to be expected, given the systemic devaluation of care work since at least the 1970s.

Dr. Kamran Ali's research interests lie in labor markets in the Global South. He noted that the earlier concerns in 1950s-2000s were about overpopulation and economic depredation in countries like Egypt, India, and China. Today, however, the concerns are on "human resources" and capacity. Recalling the observation from an earlier era of economic development that, "there are too many Egyptians in Egypt," as well as China's one-child policy to restrict population growth, Dr. Ali wondered, who will carry the burden of producing for the world, and who will reproduce the Global South's workforce.

"If courts quantify women's unpaid labor upon death, why not do the same when they are alive?"

—Prabha Kotiswaran

A series of events led up to the Pop-Up Institute, notably the Fall 2020 Colloquium, "Inequality, Labor, and Human Rights: The Future of Work in the Age of Pandemic." The second of four lectures in the colloquium was delivered by Dr. Prabha Kotiswaran, titled "An Ode to Altruism: How Indian Courts Value Unpaid Domestic Work."

In her paper, Prabha discussed how unpaid domestic and care work (UDCW), or the "labor of housewives" has long captured the imagination of feminists. Its invisibility and lack of recognition result in gender inequality and women's disempowerment. Roughly 150,000 women, men and children are killed in road accidents in India each year. Many of the victims are housewives. In a review of 200 cases decided by Indian appellate courts between 1968 and 2019, Dr. Kotiswaran examined how the law of personal injury recognizes the 'labor of housewives,' and how it is valued under the Motor Vehicles Act of 1988 through the compensation awarded to surviving family members.

In earlier cases, compensation was calculated based on a notional income of the female victim multiplied by her life expectancy. In the year 2000, after UNICEF declared that "unpaid care work is the foundation of human experience," court rulings began to appreciate UDCW more fully. This growing realization culminated in an influential Supreme Court decision in 2010 which has since then been widely followed by Indian High Courts. Given greater judicial willingness to recognize the full range of UDCW performed by women within the home, Dr. Kotiswaran pointed to the wider implications of this "wages for housework" jurisprudence; that it could travel beyond tort law to other legal fields and influence current debates on women's economic empowerment. "At the very least it could be used to direct the census authorities to reimagine the production boundary and assess women's labor in a more accurate manner." This, she concluded, could have a knock-on effect on the demand for universal basic income.

This report has been compiled by the Newsletter's Editorial Team.