

Bulletin

BASAS
BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR
SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES
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Merger of BASAS and SSAS

On October the 1st 2007 a new society will be born which will represent the whole range of British academic enquiry into South Asia. The society will be formed by the merger of the old BASAS with SSAS (the Society for South Asian Studies – <http://www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/SSAS/about.htm>). Following a poll of members of both societies, the new society will be known as the British Association for South Asian Studies. The formation of the new society is a significant step forwards in the support and encouragement of SA studies in the UK.

The new society will blend the practices and experiences of the two former parts. All members will therefore see some change in practices, and, significantly, new opportunities. The first change old BASAS members will notice is that the AGM will now be held in November of each year, in London – and no longer at the Annual Conference [held at Easter – see below.] The Society has an office within the Royal Asiatic Society headquarters, near Euston Station. An early

opportunity the ex-SSAS members may note, will be a call for details of their research interests to be included in the next edition of the BASAS Research Register.

The new society is a registered charity, and is in receipt of public funds via the British Academy. It has therefore more formal rules than the old BASAS, taken in modified form from the previous SSAS. Although the constitution is long and detailed, it actually provides flexibility for the way in which we operate, but also quite clear accountability. The finances have to be formally audited, too. There are details which have not yet been settled, so the new Council (aka Executive Committee) will have plenty of immediate work to do. Clearly the merging of the web-sites is one matter among many which is going to demand some effort.

The Corporate Plan

The amount of money provided by the BA to the society depends on the BA's evaluation of our Corporate Plan, to be submitted by the end September.. The committees of the two previous societies have spent considerable effort (but most of the thanks should go to Michael Willis of the British Museum) over the last few months putting a plan together. Success will enable us to maintain support for a range of projects, including ongoing ones and new ones, as well as providing for other scholarly support, for example the popular language training grants. Some of the new projects involve committee members, which might seem a bit incestuous. However, the speed with which this has had to be put together over the summer in practice limited the width of consultation. If you have a project you want included next year, please let the Assistant Secretary or any Council member know as soon as possible.

The Plan will be posted on the web-site in the next few days. (The two existing sites have pointers to each other.)

Sincere thanks to all the members of the former SSAS Council and BASAS Executive Committee. All have played a constructive role and committed considerable time to getting the new society off the ground.

Small Seed Grants for Research

The Society wishes to award one or more small grants for research whose financial outlays are to be incurred before March 31st 2008.

The project can be on any aspect of South Asian studies. Any one grant is unlikely to exceed £10,000, and smaller applications may be preferred. There is no application form.

Please will applicants submit their proposals by October 31st to:

The Assistant Secretary
BASAS
14 Stephenson Way
London NW1 2HD

Forthcoming Events

The **AGM** this year is on Monday November 5th at **5 p.m.** at BASAS' permanent headquarters in the Royal Asiatic Society, 14 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD This is 3 minutes walk from Euston Station.

The Annual BASAS Lecture will be given at **5.30 p .m.** after the AGM by

Professor Chris Fuller, FBA, LSE on

Traditional hierarchy and modern technology: engineering, information technology and caste in south India

Followed by a reception afterwards.

We hope that as many members of the new BASAS as possible can attend. Attendance is free, but please RSVP to Brenda McGregor at secretary@societyforsouthasianstudies.org

British Academy Showcase

EVOLVING SOCIETIES

The British Academy is organizing a 'showcase' of UK overseas research it has sponsored into community, identity and environment on Thursday 15 November 2007 at the Barbican Centre in London. The event is aimed at senior policy makers, civil servants and MPs. This note is therefore not a note inviting BASAS members to attend – but notification of BASAS involvement. The meeting, chaired by Onora O'Neil includes presentations inter alia on the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Turkey, the Maghreb, Greece, Egypt, East Africa and of course South Asia, on everything from archaeology to modern films in Italy. The two presentations for BASAS will be on 'The E-Kanjur: electronic Tibetan Buddhist scriptures on the Web' by Burkhard Quessel and Ulrich Pagel, and on 'Water and Sustainable Development in Bengal' by Graham Chapman.

Workshops

BASAS/SASIN - South Asian Studies in the North

Identities in a South Asian Context Workshop

Friday 16th November 2007

The workshop also looks beyond the reification of 'identity' in South Asia by pushing at how apparently essential and material senses of self, other, sameness and difference are in fact historical, relational, heterogeneous and dynamic productions. In particular the workshop aims to combine the insights of different disciplines in the Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, in explorations of South Asian 'identities'.

This workshop is being co-organised by Dr Katharine Adeney from the Department of Politics, Dr Tariq Jazeel from the Department of Geography, Dr Alistair McMillan from the Department of Politics, Dr Glyn Williams from the Department of Town and Regional Planning and Dr Ben Zachariah from the Department of History. For further details:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/politics/research/centres/identities-sa-workshop.html>

Registration is free, but because places are limited (and to allow us to organise catering), please call or email Margaret Holder to confirm your attendance. 0114 222 1645

email : m.holder@sheffield.ac.uk

The BASAS Annual Conference 2008

March 26th – 28th at the University of Leicester

These conferences are noted for their friendly openness, wide ranging panels, moderate cost and special opportunities for postgraduate students.

The local organizers are



Dr Clare Anderson

School of Historical Studies, 5 Salisbury Road, University of Leicester,
Leicester LE1 7QR, UK

Email: ca26@le.ac.uk / Tel: +44 (0)116 229 7530

Web: <http://www.le.ac.uk/history/people/ca26.html>



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Key Dates for forming panels and submitting papers

Submission of panel abstracts – 30 November 2007

- Notification of acceptance of panels – 14 December 2007
- Submission of independent paper abstracts – 25 January 2008
- Notification of acceptance of independent papers – 8 February 2008
- Final confirmation of panels, and submission of abstracts – 18 January 2008

For more details visit www.basas.ac.uk

20th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Manchester July 2008

The 20th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies will take place between July 8th – 11th 2008 in Manchester, UK. This conference is the official conference of the European Association of South Asian Studies (EASAS), held every other year in a European city. The 19th conference was held in Leiden, the Netherlands, and we are delighted to bring the conference to University of Manchester for the 20th session. The University has a range of specialists in South Asian Studies across the Humanities and Social Science disciplines, and it has recently launched an MA programme in South Asian Studies which draws on this expertise.

Preparations for the conference are well under way, and you can visit the conference website at <http://www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/ecmsas/>. The keynote speaker will be Professor Sanjay Subrahmanyam of UCLA. Professor Subrahmanyam will address the conference on the theme of 'Cultures of Travel between Anjou and Agra: Europe and Asia in the Early Modern World'. The annual Ambedkar Lecture, hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University, will also be held during the course of the conference; details of this will be published on the website in the near future. A list of 40 panels has recently been selected by the Conference Academic Committee. Examples of the panels to be held are:

- *Visual Cultures in South Asia*
- *Indian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges*
- *Lived Islam in Contemporary South Asia*
- *Management of Development Projects in South Asian Countries*
- *Writing the Cities of the South Asian Diaspora*
- *Legal pluralism and tribal politics in South Asia*
- *Slavery and the Raj: Representing unfree labour in colonial South Asia*
- *Religion, Literature and Film in South Asia and the South Asian Diaspora*
- *Citizenship and education in South Asia*
- *Disease, possession and healing in South Asia*

For a full list of panels, please visit the conference website, where you will also find abstracts explaining panel themes and details of the panel convenors. If you would like to offer a paper in any of the conference panels, please contact the relevant convenor(s), as instructed on the website.

We look forward to meeting many colleagues and friends next summer. The organisers of the conference are Drs Nile Green and John Zavos of the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, University of Manchester. If you have any further questions, do consult the website or contact us on ecmsas@manchester.ac.uk.

Members' News

From **Barbara Harriss-White**, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford

Oxford is launching a new Masters degree in Contemporary India at the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies (with strong links with and support from other Social Science Departments. The principles behind the degree are that:

1. the curriculum will not contain options and that all students will learn about India's achievements at the same time as her persistent problems: largest democracy, nuclear power, regional superpower, new IT and business success; culture – religion, caste, ethnicity, gender;

human development failure, large informal and black economy, political violence, widespread environmental degradation.

2. there will be free choice in selecting an extended essay topic.

3. students will be taught about - and encouraged to develop the skills to analyse - the epistemological/historiographical foundations of that knowledge in the social sciences. Students will be required to write an essay on these themes too.

It is hoped to recruit students for entry in 2008.

NEW BOOKS

Congratulations to **Dibyesh Anand** who has moved to be
Reader in International Relations
Centre for the Study of Democracy, Westminster University, London
(D.Anand@westminster.ac.uk)

And on his book

2007 *Geopolitical Exotica: Tibet in Western Imagination* University of Minnesota, Borderlines
http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/A/anand_geopolitical.html

Yunas Samad

has two books out:

2007 Samad, Y. and Sen, K. (Eds.) *Islam in the European Union* Oxford University Press
and

2007 Panda, G. and Samad, Y. *Fault Lines of Nationhood*, Roli Press, New Delhi, 2007 ISBN
978-81-7436-530-9

NETWORKS

From **Arif Zaman**

‘As South Asia integrates with the global economy, policy-makers will increasingly look to the research community and South Asia academia to help both in understanding the challenges as well as addressing the solutions. This was a key message from Pakistan's High Commissioner, Maleeha Lodhi, in a keynote address at the last BASAS conference in March 2007 and recent developments will support this need. As BASAS has been re-born as a new society representing the whole range of British academic enquiry into South Asia, recent months have seen parallel progress amongst researchers in the US and South Asia. Taken together these underline the emergence of a global South Asia research community for the first time, highlight the scope for greater collaboration and contact and hold out the potential of a more grounded understanding of the context in South Asia through interaction with researchers in and across the region.

These developments include the establishment of a research network in the US - the South Asian Studies Alliance (SASA - www.sasia.org) - which grew out of an inaugural conference in May 2007 organised by Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast (ASPAC), an affiliate of the Association for Asian Studies. SASA's next conference will be on 29-30 March 2008 at the School of Religion and the School of Politics and Economics, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California.

SANEI (www.saneinetwork.net) is a regional initiative to foster networking among economic research institutes in South Asia. After five years at The Indian Council for Research on

International Economic Relations (ICRIER), SANEI has recently been re-located to the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in Islamabad. From 2007, SANEI is the South Asia window of The Global Development Network (a network of research and policy institutes working together to address problems of national and regional development launched by the World Bank and operating out of Delhi). See

www.gdnet.org/middle.php?primary_link_id=6&secondary_link_id=30

Other networks include the Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (www.amdisa.org) which from 2007 is located in dedicated facilities in Hyderabad, India and the Academy for International Business - India (www.aibindia.org) which is developing a South Asian community of researchers in international business following the AIB conferences in the UK and US in 2007.'

For further information contact Arif Zaman at arif.zaman@henleymc.ac.uk

Obituary

Professor Papiya Ghosh Historian

It was my great fortune to be neighbour to Papiya during six happy months at the Indian Institute for Advanced Studies in Shimla in 1995. Papiya was on leave from her home city and university of Patna. She had a very friendly and warm personality, a powerful voice and infectious laugh, and was supportive of all her many friends. She was not above putting them straight when they needed to be, without causing offence.

Papiya was born on 8th October 1953, the third of four daughters. Her father, an IAS I officer, was murdered in 1957, and she and her sisters was brought up by her mother. Papiya completed her M.A., M.Phil and Doctorate at Delhi University, in Modern Indian History, working on the Civil Disobedience Movement in Bihar, 1930-34. After Delhi, she chose to go back to Patna Women's College. This decision was not only driven by her commitment to provide support to her widowed mother, who was now alone, but also to contribute to the restoration of academic standards in Bihar. In 1991 on promotion she moved to the Department of History in the Patna University. Her research related, inter-alia, to the impact of Partition, the plight of Dalit Muslims, Peoples' Movements, Popular Syncretic and Culture, Secularism.

Papiya was murdered in her home in Patna along with her female servant on December 3rd 2006. The crime shocked India. Her grieving family have created a web-site www.papiyaghosh.com as a record of her inspiring life and manifold achievements, and to demand justice. The site accepts messages of condolence and stories about her from her many friends. Her last book "**Partition and the South Asian Diaspora- Extending the Subcontinent**" was published posthumously in January 2007, and presented to both President Kalam and PM Manmohan Singh.
Graham Chapman