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ARTICLES

30 MILLION AFFECTED BY FLOODS IN BANGLADESH. HELP THE DISTRESSED FLOOD VICTIMS !

Bangladesh is in the grip of a devastating flood, the most severe in living memory. Two-thirds of the country is under water for the last two months. Millions of poor people, are marooned or in temporary shelters. 30 million people in 47 out of 64 districts have been hit by the onslaught of flood and 80 thousand square kilometers of land has remained inundated. It will not be before the end of this month that the water has completely withdrawn to be followed by rehabilitation work. The flood victims urgently and regularly need food, pure drinking water and medicine to survive.

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For pictures of the flood please see the DRIK website: <http://www.drik.org/flood98/>

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***Editors note:** A consortium of charities in Britain have launched the Bangladesh Appeal and donations can also be made at any high street bank.

SUBSCRIPTION DISCOUNT

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DID WE JUMP OR WERE WE PUSHED?

Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1897 was a celebration of world-wide imperial power, symbolised by the contingents of troops from all over the empire parading through London. Fifty years later, British troops were withdrawn from the Indian subcontinent. In 1997, British administration ceased in Hong Kong, the last remaining significant colonial possession.

The neat symmetry of these dates seems to encapsulate the decline and fall of Britain's world-wide power, and transformation into a post-imperial society. Yet the reality was more complex and ambiguous. The decline was an uneven process. The area under British rule actually grew in the early 20th century, significant loss of territory only occurring after the Second World War. Concepts of imperial or post-imperial Britain are elusive. What was the British people's commitment to empire, even in 1897. When did it cease? What does it mean to be post-imperial? Do we now view empire with guilt, nostalgia or indifference?

The difficulty of explaining British attitudes was brought home in an interview earlier this year with a Hong Kong journalist. I pointed out that later that evening I would be going to a large dinner given by John Major to celebrate the independence of the former British dominion in South Asia. What, my interrogator not unreasonably wondered, was a British government, still more a Conservative one, doing celebrating so crushing a British defeat?

I conceded that there was inevitably some falsification of history in such celebrations, even if for good causes. In the interests of harmonious race relations in Britain and in recognition of the rapidly growing economic power of South Asia countries it was politic to present the transfer of power in 1947 as fulfilling the deeper purposes of British rule, and to claim that

the British and the then-Indian peoples had parted in due time as friends. 1947 was therefore to be celebrated. That message is also relayed in *The Daily Telegraph's The British Empire: 1497-1997, 500 Years that Shaped the World*. "Nothing became the British as a people of empire like their leaving it," John Keegan writes. He describes "the old British Empire" as "a region of prosperous and peaceful states, ruled by legitimate governments ... Much of that success is due to Britain's decision not to resist their imperial subjects' desire for independence but to sponsor and foster it."

This is not an altogether convincing way of describing Britain's 20th-century imperial policy. Britain did not plan Indian independence. After 1945, an overstretched government of India was on the point of collapse. There was no alternative to a transfer of power, even at the price of partition. Not the least of Mountbatten's achievements was to invest the inevitable, and the suffering that went with it, with grace and a sense of fulfilment. Independence for India did not signal a purposeful march towards independence for British Africa. In the 1940s and 1950s determined attempts were made, under intensified colonial rule, to develop African resources for British use. The unravelling of the African empire was piecemeal. Considerations of the viability of colonies as independent states were set aside in a desire to reduce British commitments.

The liberal interpretation sees the end of empire as voluntary relinquishment of power to those deemed ready to take it on. It may involve extensive distortions of the record, but is not a total fabrication and reflects contemporary imperial rhetoric, at least from the 1920s. The triumphalism of 1897 was transitory. The term Commonwealth came into use at the end of the First World War, embodying the view that the empire was a voluntary alliance of free peoples. Non-white populations at first had no place in it, but their eventual inclusion became part of the rhetoric of the Second World War. A British empire of freedom was contrasted with the tyranny of Germany and Japan,

Preparing the British public to accept the loss of empire may not have been the intention, but that was the effect. Ideals of Commonwealth during the 1950s and 1960s, encouraging expectations that independence meant no separation but the perpetuation of British influence, now look almost as outmoded as the ideas of 1897.

Current liberal interpretations have grown from past practice as well as past rhetoric. Full-scale wars of repression were not fought after 1945. Although there was no purposeful preparation for independence, representative institutions developed in most parts of the empire. By the mid-20th century, they were well established in India and were gaining ground in parts of West Africa, but had made little progress beyond the settler communities in East and Central Africa.

Refusal to fight wars of repression and willingness to incorporate local opinion into colonial government is sometimes ascribed to innate British liberalism. But avoiding war and making constitutional concessions more realistically reflected a fundamental assumption of imperial management; empire must not become a burden on Britain itself or interfere with other British interests.

Wars to retain empire did not only involve issues of humanity. They were expensive, possibly diverting British resources from other commitments. The resources of empire could be fully deployed in primarily European wars, but there were limits to the commitment of British resources outside Europe. During the Second World War the first priority was defending Britain and defeating Germany. In the cold war, commitment to Nato overrode all imperial claims. Even limited engagement east of Suez came to be seen as an insupportable burden.

The legendary figures of modern British colonial administration are the district officers,

engineers and medical men who brought order and progress to "their" people. But they were always thin on the ground, their influence usually limited. Direct contact between expatriate officials and the mass of the ruled was beyond the resources of empire. Authority had to be devolved to local people and the co-operation of elite's secured. If they withheld their co-operation, government could not be carried on. By the mid-20th century, elections were the inescapable price of co-operation. Such concessions were intended to shore up colonial rule, not subvert it, still less prepare the way for its total replacement. Nevertheless, they provided some practical preparation for independence in many territories.

The story of the British Empire's last 100 years is less one of decline and fall from apogee to extinction than continuous adjustment. Until well into the 1950s both Labour and Conservative governments were determined to maintain an imperial presence. It had, however, always to be affordable and not conflict with other priorities. Tactical concessions, dignified with liberal ideology, had to be made. This ideology helped the British people to adjust their view of empire and is still a potent force.

British people can, so long as they do not ask too many questions, derive some legitimate comfort from the last phases of empire. It is particularly unwise to ask questions about Hong Kong. "What do the British people feel about the end of empire in Hong Kong?" I was asked by another Chinese interviewer. "Pass" would have been a better answer than the obfuscations I actually offered.

Peter Marshall, Kings College, University of London ©The Times Higher

THE PATH OF TRANSITION

Despite some misgivings about the political climate, the Awami League government headed by Sheikh Hasina Wajed has achieved major diplomatic successes in conflict resolution during its second year in office, tackling long-standing issues of concern both in the international and domestic spheres. In March 1997, it agreed a treaty with India to share the Ganges waters amicably. In December, a peace treaty was finally agreed to end insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. As a key player in SAARC, Bangladesh also sought to diffuse the tensions arising out of the nuclear tests caused by India and Pakistan in May 1998, in a bid to contain arms race in the region.

However, Bangladesh faces constraints to its economic progress largely due to the continued threat of political instability which can be a deterrent to the much sought-after foreign investment. The bitter rivalry between the major parties, the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party has resulted in disagreements over every issue, including the introduction of the institution of care-taker governments to oversee the process of transfer of power from one elected regime to another, which is hoped would offer a degree of stability. The culture of loyal opposition has not yet emerged and consequently there has been frequent boycott of Parliament. Hence the nation is deprived of the benefits of a fully functioning representative body. On the contrary, the Awami League government regularly faces politically motivated disruption in the form of *hartal* and strikes. The relative peace that had followed the elections of June 1996 is increasingly under threat as the opposition looks for weaknesses in the system, which could be exploited to topple the government. In this, its tactics are not too different from those of the Awami League, which had earlier taken to street agitation between 1994 and 1996 to bring down the BNP government of Khaleda Zia.

The domestic policies of the government have received a mixed response, primarily because Bangladesh is an ideologically divided society. Central to its policy of restoring the spirit of

the War of Liberation and rectifying a perceived falsification of history under previous regimes is the trial of the self-confessed assassins of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founder of the nation, which began in March 1997. More controversial perhaps is the understandable attempt by this government to restore the status and image of Bangabandhu. The newly opened bridge, which connects the eastern part of the country across the mighty Jamuna River with the western parts, a major domestic achievement, was inaugurated on 23 June 1998 as the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge. Critics argue that election pledges such as media autonomy and containment of campus violence should be given priority instead.

As against the possible economic ramifications of political instability, Bangladesh appear to have discarded the image of the 'basket case'. A reassessment of the statistics suggests that Bangladesh has a higher per capita income than so far estimated, \$320 US instead of \$280. Today, Bangladesh is nearly self-sufficient in food production, and has achieved a fall in population growth rate to above 1.8 per cent, lowest for South Asia. Although, growth in industrialization has been slow, its share in GDP was 11.1 per cent in 1996/97, 0.2 per cent down from 1994/95, no doubt due to the political turmoil in the interim. An important component of this sector, garments manufacture, have grown to a \$3 billion-dollar industry and constitute a major item of export.

Bangladesh achieved a GDP rate of 5.7 per cent in 1997-98. The projected growth rate for the next budget year, 1998-99, is 6.3 per cent. While this is welcome news, Bangladesh need to achieve 7 per cent GDP per annum to put the economy on the path to self-sustained growth, whereas its average rate of growth in the 1990s has been about 4 percent.

The Fifth Five-Year Plan seeks to achieve a 7 per cent GDP through a structural transformation of the Bangladesh economy with a high rate of industrial growth at 14 per cent. It visualizes private sector led industrialization through the development of labour intensive manufactured exports as a viable strategy for Bangladesh. The target may be unrealistic as it relies heavily on private investment (95 per cent). This may not materialize as indicated by the fact that there has already been a drop in industrial investment registered with the Board of Investment from Tk 11, 094 crore in 1995/96 to Tk 9,261 crore in 1996/97. (One crore = 10 million; 1\$ US = Tk 40). However, Bangladesh also has enormous potential for agriculture related industries, which need to be adequately planned for.

An important potential area of development is the energy sector. The discovery of large deposits of gas, both on and off-shore, and the existence of technology that allows the conversion of gas to oil, has 'sparked an overwhelming flurry of foreign interest' and lured foreign companies such as Cairn and Shell, to invest in the exploration and development of the energy sector. Known recoverable reserves are estimated to be 10,9 trillion cubic feet, which is thirty times more than had been estimated in 1990. A *Financial Times* survey states, 'Even conservative estimates suggest that the country has enough gas to transform its economic prospects - perhaps to turn it into a middle income nation while significantly addressing the poverty which afflicts at least 36 per cent of its 127 million people (May 5, 1998). However, as an analyst, Peter Fowler, points out, gas wealth will not be 'easy' because of the enormous development costs: 'The revenues of the government will increase but so, exponentially, will development demands'.

It is possible that the eastern hub of South Asia could eventually experience some economic regeneration and prosperity once a South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA) comes into effective operation in the year 2001 as agreed by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh at the Three Nation Business Summit hosted by Bangladesh in April 1998.

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WHAT IS SOUTH ASIA?

Introduction

These are some very hurriedly written notes in response to the discussion at the first meeting of the South Asian Commission on 6 April 1997, in Islamabad. I have relied mainly on memory and given very few references at all. The views are entirely my own and I am conscious they are idiosyncratic and likely to raise controversy. At a later stage, I shall elaborate on these notes with more detail, proper references etc. I have written two or three articles on these issues and some unpublished material. All this will be in the next draft. I am conscious that at the very beginning I was hoping to write a very short sketch. So the first two or three pages are even more sketchy than the rest of the paper. (It also says very little about Sri Lanka and nothing at all about Nepal and Bhutan).

What is South Asia?

At present, it is a collection of independent sovereign states defined together geographically. There is unevenness in size, as well as political quarrels among them. There is also a lot of shared history, though there is no agreement on the details of the history. If we go back to 1946, we see the potential of a single entity made up of British India and native states. (This leaves Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and Nepal outside.) The further back we go in time, we get fewer larger and many more smaller entities. To that extent, South Asia is a colonial construct, given some unity by the fact that after a period of rivalry between European powers in the 16th and 17th centuries, it came under British domination. This is what united the disparate regional governments in the region. South Asia is a creation of imperialism. For an alternative, if you don't like giving credit to imperialism, you have to think the unity of South Asians defined culturally. We are the same people, a mixture of many races. Racially South Asia is a mixture, a real racial melting pot. This is in one sense an advantage. Though gradation in skin pigmentation may count for a lot in matrimonial search, there are no distinct racial minorities. The Han people in China are a much more homogenous people by comparison and dominant, numerically and culturally, over the many minorities in China. There is no such single large homogenous racial group in South Asia. The Indo-Europeans (so called Aryans) merged in with the native population thousands of years ago, subsequent incursions of various "peoples" - Scythians etc., have also been absorbed.

The racial mixture has occurred over the centuries via long episodes of incursions of people bearing religions previously unknown to the sub continent. Each new religion interacted with the existing religions and adapted itself, as it influenced these religions over the past four or five thousand years.

These religions have not only shaped the South Asian society. Indeed over the years, these religions have taken a South Asian slant. Thus, South Asian Buddhism or South Asian Islam are different from say East Asian Buddhism or Islam in Arab countries.

There are "castes" among Indian Muslims and Indian Christians (Christian "Dalits" are an example). These religions are simultaneously old but have also evolved over time. What we call Hinduism today is different from the old religion and is very much a product of the last two centuries when the classical Sanskrit texts became more widely available and various reform movements grew up partly as a reaction to the critique by the British and partly endogenously as Western style education spread (Raja Rammohan Roy onwards - Brahmo

Samaj, Arya Samaj, Vivekananda etc).

Broadly speaking, South Asian (though more sub-continental than South Asian, Sri Lanka being the exception) history can be broken down into four epochs:

- 1. Antiquity to the death of Buddha in early C4th BC
- 2. The struggle between Vedic Religion (First version of Hinduism) and Buddhism C5thBC - C7thAD;
- 3. The advent of Islam and its struggle with Hinduism (The reformed version as codified by Sankara) in C8th - C18thAD;
- 4. The incursion of European powers: Portugal, Denmark, Holland, France and Britain (various forms of Christianity, which originally came to India in C3rd AD, were reintroduced in South Asia. The relation of each European power with Christianity was different. The Catholic Portuguese proselytized much more than the Anglican English did.)

This is of course, not the usual way of periodising Indian or South Asian history, which emphasizes political - dynastic - state formations. But for my purposes, these many short-lived political formations are unenlightening for the question of defining the South Asian identity.

A few brief remarks on each episode should suffice for the time being, though each could not be dealt properly with even if one had a library of books.

1. From Antiquity to Early 4th c. BC

There was an indigenous civilization whose higher material achievement was in the urban centres whose remains were found in Harrapa and Mohanjodaro and elsewhere along the Indus valley. The seals illustrate the animistic religion of this culture. (What was happening further South and East of the Indus valley is less well known).

This civilization was destroyed by the incursion of the Indo-Europeans who came from somewhere Northwest. They were pantheistic worshippers of gods who reflected natural forces - Fire, rain, water, sun etc. They also performed rituals with animal sacrifices. The Vedas record of poems, the prayers, the rituals, as well as the scientific and medical knowledge of these people. Sometimes over a thousand years or so, the Indo-Europeans established their hegemony over the various indigenous groups. Their religion also got modified, though the new chronology here is uncertain. They stopped worshipping the many gods and new "gods" not mentioned in the Vedas - Shiva, Vishnu, Kali became prominent in their pantheon. These "new" gods were dark in their skin pigment and reflected, in view of some authorities, the adaptation by Indo-Europeans of the gods of the people they vanquished.

But this post-Vedic religion remained very ritual sacrifice oriented. At sometime around this time, the one social innovation uniquely specific to South Asia began to crystallise - the caste system. It would seem that the Varna system of four orders was perhaps the earliest form of this system (This section needs much more work and biographical search).

We know about this culture from the two great epics, but also from the social critique that two religious tendencies mounted of post-Vedic Hindu religion. The Jain and Buddhist religious tendencies rose against the rituals and the status hierarchies affirming the value of individual devotion and good conduct stripped of ritual sacrifices. All individuals are in principle equal, according to these two new religions the opposite of what the post-Vedic Hindu religion preached and practised. Sometime during this period, the Indus/Ganges

valley civilization spread South and East. The epics give a lot of indirect evidence of this.

2. *The Struggle between Hinduism and Buddhism: C5th BC - C7th AD*

This period of about a thousand or twelve hundred years saw a challenge by the new religion - Buddhism. (Jainism made some inroads but eventually *settled* only around West India - Rajasthan, Gujarat). Buddhism won royal patronage in the many state formations emerging across India and proselytized with the use of itinerant Bhikkhus. The Sangha was an institutional innovation and gave Buddhism something akin to "Church" hierarchy.

Buddhism was socially egalitarian. It succeeded in establishing its hegemony quite spectacularly over a wide region. This is shown by the location of remains from Taxila and Nalanda. (There are no comparable remains of any "Hindu" universities. Hindu religion believed in confining education to a caste elite.)

Hinduism underwent a searching self-examination and reformation. A philosophical system embodied in the Upanishads was constructed which gave a monistic foundation to the religion (though the monistic-dualist debate continued for a long time). The pantheon was slimmed down from many gods to a few. The caste system far from disappearing got more complex (though the history of the caste system is still very sketchy).

During this struggle, the entire South Asian region was settled. We read about many cities - capitals of kingdoms and indeed some Republics. A relatively large population could be sustained with the available agricultural technique. There are plenty of records of trade with Greece and Rome on one side and South East Asia and China on the other. Buddhism spread beyond India to the East and North. It completely conquered Sri Lanka.

We do not know enough about this period but somewhere along the line, despite its early proselytising success, Buddhism lost and disappeared from the Indian subcontinent. Sri Lanka was the only outpost of Buddhism left in South Asia. It remained, of course, as a memory, especially for its egalitarian thrust. It was this memory which helped Dr. Ambedkar launch his anti Hindu revolution for the dalits by a conversion to Buddhism.

The battle between Buddhism and Hinduism was conducted philosophically as well as militarily. Sankara embodies the philosophical pinnacle of this struggle. By the 7th century AD, Hinduism had driven Buddhism out of the Indian Sub continent. This established the Hindu social structure - the Caste system - as the pattern across the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent (I gather Acharya Narendra Dave, the Indian Socialist leader has written on this period, but I have been unable, so far, to get hold of the book, which is in Hindi).

3. *The Islamic Phase: C8th - C18th*

The eastward expansion of Islam took place very soon after its birth. It was during this expansion that the stretch of land through what is now Afghanistan, Pakistan and across North India up to Bangladesh was called Al-Hind.

If we know very little about the thousand years of struggle between Buddhism and Hinduism, we know quite a lot about this phase. At first, from Arabia and later from central Asia, there were incursions of successive groups led by military chiefs who established a succession of dynastic kingdoms in North India.

During the seven hundred or so years, from Mahmud of Ghaznavi up to Ibrahim Lodi (who lost to Babur in 1526), North India was a heterogeneous collection of kingdoms with the regional reach of the Delhi Sultanate waxing and waning. The land revenue system of

North India was codified during this period. Hindu kingdoms were interspersed with Muslim ones.

Through much of this period, the history of South India decoupled from that of North India. South India had its few Muslim kingdoms but also a large Hindu- Vijaynagara - empire. The Muslim hegemony was much weaker in South India than in North India.

There was a thriving sea borne trade between India and the Gulf, as well as Mediterranean countries towards the West, South East and East Asia. Though North India was a land locked economy, South India, as well as Gujarat, and Bengal, were open maritime economies. (That hoary old Marxist chestnut. the Asiatic mode of production - is a totally misleading characterization of South India and only partially misleading picture of North India.)

Both the religions changed and modified as a result of this interaction. The Bhakti movement was yet another attempt to simplify and popularize Hinduism, to take it away from rituals and caste barriers to a one to one relationship between the individual and his/her God. On the Muslim side, various indigenized movements grew up based on Hindu devotion as well as from Muslims. A syncretic culture grew up in North India in art, architecture and music.

This was the period, the first half till the Mughals arrived, which saw the emergence of local languages. The Bhakti movement poets were the original contributors to these languages - Meera, Kabir, Surdas, Chaitanya, and Tulsidas (whose great epic Ram Chaeit Manas was a major Hindi work). There were similar trends in South India though Tamil is perhaps one of the older living languages in the world with a continuous history.

It would also seem that by the sixteenth century, South Asia had a sophisticated credit system despite the multiple metallic money in circulation. The Indian silver Rupiah was established as the medium of circulation by this time. A network of sahuikars and chettiers created a banking system in which money could be deposited and transferred across the country. There was also a private property right in land, which was sold and bought. Revenue could be collected in money form. (The debat on Indian Feudalims is large but the alienability of land via sale and purchase is well established.

By the beginning of the longest dynastic rule in the subcontinent - the Mughals (from 1526 to 1707 (death of Aurengzeb) vigorously and up to 1800 or 1857 formally), the European trading companies had begun to arrive in South India. Through the Mughal era, the rivalry between the Europeans was fought over at high seas in the Indian ocean. Within two hundred years, the Portuguese had been marginalised and in the eighteenth century the French were defeated in India and across the world by the British. All this occurred at the geographical peripheries of the Mughal empire. It was only after the first two hundred years of the Mughal empire, when its strongest rulers had passed on, that the European powers began to make a political impact on India.

But before that happened, India enjoyed briefly for about a hundred years, say between 1580 and 1680, a kingdom, the only kingdom, which had any pretension to be an All-India wide ruler. Of course, even at its height, the Empire did not cover the entire subcontinent but very nearly and certainly a larger population than any kingdom up till then. Despite much local diversity, especially in the bequest of inam land, there was a uniform land revenue system established across North India, at least built upon the work done in the last decades of Afghan phase. Sher Shah Suri is credited with this innovation on which Todar Mal, Akbar's revenue minister is reported to have built.

From traveller's accounts, it would seem that in urban areas, especially capital cities there

was a large population and reasonable prosperity. Such calculations are subject to high margins of error, but the income of India (and China) at this time was probably higher than of any country in Europe. Since the population was about 150-200 million, the per capita income was perhaps not similarly higher. (Angus Maddison has a monopoly of these type of calculations. I am quoting numbers from memory.)

It was this century of a strong central power with a sub-continental reach which has been idealised and idolized by Indian nationalists ever since. A strong belief in South Asia holds that a single powerful central government is good for security and for human welfare. This is contrasted with the subcontinent ruled by a number of separate (and often warring) kingdoms. The imperative of a single national government played a crucial role in the discussion in 1940's, which led to the partition. I hope to discuss this further below. At least one distinguished historian - Tapan Raychaudhuri - has cast doubt on the simple correlation that a strong united country leads to high level of economic well being while division leads to poverty.

It would be logical (though hard evidence is lacking) that the large population of 150 - 200 million was constant over a long period in the subcontinent. Thus, we don't know what the population was say in the 5th BC, 2000 years before the Mughals came on the scene, even a population growth rate of 0.1% per annum (i.e. doubling population every 700 years), gives us between 20 - 25 million people. Any higher growth rate would result in much smaller numbers; 0.2% implies 10-12 million. This is all speculative. But it seems reasonable to conclude that South Asia had enough fertile land to sustain a large population over much of its history.

Religious adaptation and change continued in the Mughal period. Akbar tried but failed to innovate a new synthesis of all religions known to him, but especially of Islam and Hinduism. The pendulum seems to have swung towards affirmation of the differences between Islam and other religions in Aurengzeb's time. But here again we need to know more about movements at regional levels. (Sri Lanka has been neglected up until now. European impact on Sri Lanka came earlier than in India and was deeper. Christianity penetrated further and the four major religions of South Asia were practiced by substantial proportions of the population by 1800. More on this later.)

The century of strong single government (1580 - 1680) was followed by a period of a multiple centres of power. The Maratha kingdom grew to be a great power within this period but suffered a major reverse in 1761 and declined thereafter to become an insignificant power by 1800. Even at its height, the Maratha kingdom did not extend as far as the Mughal empire at its zenith 1580-1680. Many subas of the Mughal Empire had become kings of their territories and fragmentation to even smaller territories continued through the eighteenth century. It was this that confronted the British.

4. The Incursion of European Powers

Along the coastal regions, the presence of European powers with their factories if not their formal kingdoms (the Portuguese, for example in Goa) became noticeably large. Exports of textiles rose during this period (Raychaudhuri: *Jan Company in Coromandel*) and this must have had a positive impact on local economies. The balance of commodity trade was in South Asia's favour and was settled as far as we know by exports of gold bullion from Europe (causing the Mercantilist debate there).

Some of the European maritime trade may have been a diversion (effected by piracy and policing of the Arabian sea by European ships) from the more traditional trade routes to the Gulf and Africa. (M. N. Pearson).

The struggle among the European sea powers in the Indian ocean worked itself out during the Mughal phase of this period. Indeed, the advent of European power and the final triumph of the British by the end of the eighteenth century over its European rivals are an interesting side story of South Asian history. The Dutch figured more in Sri Lanka than in the subcontinent. The Danish came and went early.

As a result, various Christian "sects" were introduced to India (after a break of a thousand plus years.) Printing, especially to spread the Gospel, along with translation of the Bible in local languages was begun early in this period. In the earlier confrontation, Islam had shown little curiosity in writing down Hindu scriptures. One has to credit the Enlightenment (and the Protestant churches) for this curiosity. It was probably one of the more significant developments in the formation of national consciousness.

The political history of the East India Company and the spread of its rule over India as between 1757 and 1851 (Clive to Dalhousie) are well documented. It was during this phase the Industrial revolution occurred in England. This fundamentally altered the balance of trade. While the early depredations in Bengal had to do with the use of political power to facilitate purchase of local produce at extortionate prices for subsequent exports (1760's and 1770's), the flood of cheap textiles which began in the early 19th century changed the economic relationship. The agitation for the removal of East India Company's monopoly in Britain shows how the industrialist began to see the profit opportunities. Subsequent growth of the British economy expanded the scope for the exports of manufactures to India. The degree to which these imports displaced local industries is a staple topic of the nationalist literature.

Another much studied subject is the introduction of land tenure system - whether Zamindari, Raiyatwari, etc. - was a new alien imposition (alienable property rights in land) or merely an adaptation of the pre-existing tenures. But if land tenures were known, the efficiency of revenue collection, the measurement of outputs, the codification of property rights and the growth of litigation in this area were innovations. Indeed, each land tenure system can be seen as an attempt to locate the taxpayer, regardless of who was the actual owner. (I have an unpublished paper on this.)

The variety of land tenure was a factor in making regional economies diverge from each other. To this was added the differential impact of trade and commerce in the coastal areas - the port cities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay (shifting away from the older parts such as Surat, Calicut). Thus, some regional economies "modernised" earlier than others.

In some sense, regional economies must always have been diverse. With low transport capacity, local markets might have shaped local economies. But it is possible to speculate that such diversity did not entail an unevenness in growth. This was due to the imposition of a (colonial) capitalist mode on top of a spatially large area with diversity of natural endowments and even climate.

The dynamics of each region's growth and the evolution of the unevenness are absolutely central to the study of South Asia. There are excellent studies of individual regions in all the various facets - economic, social, anthropological, political. The comparative dynamics of regional growth and the changing levels of unevenness have been studied less well. (An example of this assertion is as follows. In his pioneering study of economic history published at the end of C19th, R. C. Dutt extolled the Zamindari system relative to Raiyatwari and pointed to the prosperity of Bengal through the century (after late eighteenth century depredations so forcefully described in the Fifth Report) and contrasted unfavourably Raiyatwari over Zamindari almost without exception. By the 1930's, all writers praised Raiyatwari and criticised Zamindari. Bengal was no longer prosperous. What caused this switch has not been studied (to my knowledge at least). This is an

example of the changes in unevenness.)

This regional diversity is contrasted with administrative uniformity and standardization. In administrative terms, India, a British India albeit, emerged in the late C19th partly as a result of the emergence of a group of students educated in the Macaulay system and partly as a result of the many local struggles around revenue remission, agrarian debt etc. The elite side of nationalism has been reported more fully than the "Subaltern" side (Sarkar) but that is perhaps because the Subaltern struggles were local and diverse and not linked up across regions. The elite movement was linked and it resulted in the formation of the Indian National Congress (1886).

This disjunction between elite and Subaltern wings was not only due to differential access to western education and caste differentiation, but also due to the "objective" absence of a national economy. India remained a collection of regional economies bound together in an "iron frame" of administrative unity at the end of 19th century. The Nationalist movement asserted the ideological, spiritual unity of India. The Imperialists pointed to the diversities and disparities.

Despite the regional diversities thanks to the administrative unity, it became possible to talk of an Indian economy (or an Indian nation). In a pioneering study, Dadabhai Naoroji was able to put the question of the economic impact of British rule on India. He pioneered the measurement of National Income as well as poverty. R. C. Dutt followed with an economic history of British India.

Parallel with the diversity and unevenness of regions is the more controversial but undeniable unevenness in the economic positions of different religious communities. Parsees were perhaps the first to advance rapidly in Bombay Presidency but they are a numerically small community and did not invite any resentment. The position of Muslims vis a vis Hindus in the take up of modern education as well as modern occupations and industries became a problem which concerned the Muslim Community. The lag in the take up of modern education was perhaps as long as fifty years. By the time Sir Syed Ahmad Khan launched his reform movement (against much orthodox Muslim opposition), this lag and the resulting unevenness had become a political problem. It was to shape the evolution of nationalism in South Asia.

In Sri Lanka, there was similar differential development of the Sinhala and the Tamil Community (of the coast, not the interior where the tea plantation had imported Tamil workers from India). Here again there was a religious difference as well as an economic divergence (this has to be developed more carefully).

There is much that can be said about the 19th century. There were widespread social reform movements, some growth of modern industry and growth of the economy, though it is controversial whether per capita income grew. The cash nexus impacted differently on different local agricultures. Rural indebtedness, local famines contrasted with the settlement of "new" areas such as the canal regions of Punjab. There was arguably some growth of population though also emigration to the peripheral parts of the British Empire. This growth did not reduce unevenness; if anything it increased it.

There was also considerable growth of literature in the many languages as well as a differential growth of social reforms and the forms they took. Thus, anti Brahman element was strong in South India and to some extent in Maharashtra but weaker elsewhere. Reform occurred more in Hindu society than in Muslim society. There was some, though very insufficient advancement of women's rights.

This concludes this brief, somewhat sketchy and scrappy survey. It will need to be filled in

but the real issue of South Asian identity can now be addressed.

The Twentieth Century. The Central Problem in South Asia

Perhaps the most contentious problem for South Asia is to say whether it is a single "nation" or a multi-national polity? Very few other nations have multiple languages as well as multiple religions as well as a history that is common as well as contested. Indian nationalism as it grew in the 20th century faced this problem in a harsh way with literally murderous consequences. (This is common to Sri Lanka as well as the Sub Continent).

During the twentieth century, the first half was occupied by a struggle for independence from foreign rule and the second half has witnessed the sub-continent being partitioned twice (1947, 1971), as well as a civil war in Sri Lanka which has now lasted two decades. Within each "nation state", there have been sub national revolts, which have been put down with considerable violence. There have also been class struggles without a sub-national dimension. (JVP in Sri Lanka, Naxalbari and Telangana in India (much more needs to be said about this period).)

Is there an overriding unity transcending these differences within each nation state and across South Asia? Is there a cultural identity which is South Asian? Or are our separate identities defined by sub nationalities constructed along a language/religion/region triad or do the nation states so recently formed fulfil our need of an identity.

Are we, in other words, South Asians or are we Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis etc, or are we Muslims, Hindus, Christians across South Asia? Are Indian Muslims different from Pakistani Muslims or Sri Lankan Muslims? Or, is India, Pakistan etc, too large a canvass for identity definitions? Are there Gujaratis, Marathis, Tamils, Sindhis etc, or are Indian Tamils different from Sri Lankan Tamils? Are West Bengalis a separate nation from Bangladeshis with whom they share a language but not always a religion? Or are all these people having multiple hierarchical identities simultaneously say, a Bengali speaking Muslim Indian who is also a South Asian?

Has this multiplicity of identities been the main obstacle to South Asian progress? Have we frittered our scarce resources fighting each other, duplicating industries, and refusing to benefit from trade with each other engaged in a negative sum game? A South Asian Commission must address these issues. They may not be the only issues and indeed, I have been backward rather than forward looking. This is because I think that these problems are the most persistent, the most difficult and the most important to tackle.

Meghnad Desai, Centre for the Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics

BOOK REVIEWS

MAHATMA OF THE SITAR

Raga Mala: The Autobiography of Ravi Shankar, by Ravi Shankar edited by George Harrison, Genesis Publications 9 Pilgrim House, Quarry St, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3XY, 336pp, £195.00 ISBN 0 904351 46 7

Fifty years ago this month, a few days after the assassination of Gandhi on January 30,

1948, the 27-year-old Ravi Shankar was about to make a live broadcast for All India Radio from a Bombay studio. He had been asked to play some mournful music but he was having trouble deciding which raga (melodic form) to play. Then an idea came to him; he took the third, seventh and sixth notes of the eight-note *sargam* (Indian musical scale), Ga, Ni and Dha, which approximate to Gandhi's name. He flattened both Ni and Dha and with the occasional use of the second note, Ri, a melodic theme developed and he began composition while tuning his sitar. When the radio announcer asked what piece he was about to play, he had to think quickly. His new raga had some resemblance to a popular traditional pentatonic raga called Malkauns, which has three notes flattened - Ga, Dha and Ni - and uses neither the fifth nor the second notes. "Gandhiji's full name was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, so combining his first name with the similar raga Malkauns I arrived at the name Mohankauns."

The inauguration of Mohankauns must have been an extraordinarily stirring spur-of-the-moment performance, judging from a recording of it made by Shankar in 1981 and released on Deutsche Grammophon, in which I reimmersed myself while reading his new autobiography, *Raga Mala*. The final section of the piece, after the conventional three sections of slow, introspective *alap* followed by faster *chor* and *jhala* throughout which Shankar plays solo, consists of an impromptu question-and-answer passage between sitar and tabla (drum), which at last rises to a crescendo that powerfully, beautifully and cathartically symbolises the triumph of Gandhi's spirit over the forces of evil.

No wonder the former Beatle George Harrison, editor of this book, says of Shankar in his foreword: "There isn't anyone I've ever heard of, in the West at least, who has got such brilliant musicianship." While Yehudi Menuhin, Shankar's other close western patron, writes, in a magnificent afterword: "In many ways he is the greatest musician I have known. If you are going to compare West and East on one footing, then perhaps he would come after Enesco, my teacher, and Bartok - but a close third."

In 1982, the raga Mohankauns reappeared as part of the music for the film *Gandhi* - but now with much less impact. Shankar was asked by Richard Attenborough to score the film, "but there was a slightly discordant feeling from the outset". For Attenborough wanted Shankar to compose only some of the film's music, the Indian passages, leaving George Fenton, a gifted young film composer, to provide orchestral music that would be familiar to western viewers' ears. In other words, Attenborough was worried that too much Indian "twang twang" would turn the audience off. The result was an unsatisfactory compromise; some authentic Indian music and singing floating unanchored on a western substructure.

This episode could stand for so much in Shankar's long, eventful, "incredible" (Harrison's word), career. He, more than any other Indian - including perhaps more brilliant instrumentalists - has made Indian classical music accessible to the rest of the world; but to make that impact, he has been constantly tempted to simplify and distort the thing he most cares for. His autobiography, for all its winning celebration of love as the motive power of his life and music, is saturated with pain and suffering (his own and that of his intimates) caused, in the main, by Shankar's abiding desire to be "faithful to the music" in the face of a highly materialistic society. As he puts it, without exaggeration: "If I had wanted to become a billionaire, I would have had every chance by posing as an ochre-robed swami and a raga-rock king combined."

The tension is built into the very structure of the book. Rather than a single text written by Shankar, *Raga ala* consists of chunks of Shankar, linked by passages written by Oliver Craske that drive the narrative forward interspersed with comments from those close to Shankar, such as Harrison, Menuhin, the composer Philip Glass, the conductor Zubin Mehta, the tabla player Zakir Hussain and Shankar's second wife, Sukanya. This dialectic, combined with Shankar's innate tendency to digress, remind one of the mixture of rigid

order and free improvisation in the music he is describing - and of the Bengali (for Shankar is of course a Bengali, though born outside Bengal) love of discursive conversation.

Thus Shankar on his first meeting with Harrison in 1966: "From the moment we met George was asking questions, and I felt he was genuinely interested in Indian music and religion. He appeared to be a sweet, straightforward young man. I said I had been told he had used the sitar, although I had not heard the song *Norwegian Wood*. He seemed quite embarrassed, and it transpired that he had only had a few sittings with an Indian chap who was in London (a student of the late Motiram, my disciple in Delhi) to see how the instrument should be held and to learn the basics of playing. *Norwegian Wood* was supposedly causing so much brouhaha, but when I eventually heard the song I thought it was a strange sound that had been produced on the sitar! As a result, though, young fans of The Beatles everywhere had become fascinated by the instrument."

On which Harrison comments: "The moment we started, the feelings I got were of his patience, compassion and humility. The fact that he could do one of his five-hour concerts, but at the same time he could sit down and teach somebody from scratch the very basics; how to hold the sitar, how to sit in the correct position, how to wear the pick on your finger, how to begin playing. We did that and he started me going on the scales. And he enjoyed it - he wasn't grudging at all, and he wasn't flash about it either."

No doubt Shankar was fully aware of the prestige attached to have a Beatle as a pupil, and no doubt it fed his vanity to some extent, yet Harrison's basic perception of Shankar's humility seems right. Not only are there many passages of quite severe self-criticism in the book. Shankar also offers clearly heartfelt respect to a string of fellow artists, such as Menuhin, Janis Joplin and his own guru, the legendary musician Allauddin Khan. Of Rabindranath Tagore, he writes: "Even after having seen so many remarkable people around the world throughout my life, I still have not come across such a personality as Tagore. It was like looking at the sun; he was so dazzling."

About Satyajit Ray, the only artist of post-Independence India to enjoy world fame comparable to Shankar's, he is more circumspect. He pays tribute to Ray as "a man of extraordinary versatility and culture", but he also mentions their differences. Shankar scored some passages of extremely fine music for five of Ray's early films, but later Ray decided to compose his own music. Mstislav Rostropovitch described Ray's music as being "not just an accompaniment of actions, but an expression of heroes' souls, of their moods". Some of Ray's songs are today as popular in Bengal as those of The Beatles in the West. While Shankar admits that people liked Ray's music, he is unwilling to recognise its originality and unique appropriateness to his films.

This is significant, because it returns us to the larger question of Indian classical music and the West. Ray, not being a performer, but being steeped in both Indian and western classical music, felt able to break away from Indian tradition without compunction. For Shankar, who is not as well versed in western classical music, there has always been an inner struggle in his own, numerous compositions outside the Indian classical tradition. As he is acutely aware, Indian critics have long harped upon his departures as "cheapening" classical music. His collaboration with western pop stars like Harrison, on top of his experiments with western orchestras (such as his sitar concerto commission by the London Symphony Orchestra), have given added impetus to their charges.

Raga Mala teases out these fascinating cultural issues with uncompromising thoroughness, style and passion, aided by two CDs of recordings from 1957 to date; the latest piece was recorded in August 1997 at EMI's Abbey Road studios and contains a tender sitar duet between Shankar and his young daughter, Anoushka. The book is ravishly produced, with copious unpublished photographs and memorabilia from Shankar's own collection,

bound in Bangalore raw silk, packaged with a box of his favourite incense sticks (Tabla brand, "by appointment to H.H. the Maharaja of Mysore") and signed by Shankar. In due course, one hopes there will be a less expensive version. The present limited edition is a must for anyone who loves Indian classical music.

Andrew Robinson, Literary Editor, The Times Higher Education Supplement ©The Times Higher

A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF FOREST RESOURCE USE: CASE STUDIES OF SOCIAL FORESTRY IN BANGLADESH

By Niaz Ahmed Khan, (with a Foreword by Professor Alan Rew, University of Wales, UK), Ashgate Publishers, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, GU11 3HR, England. (Website: <http://www.ashgate.com>), 1998, 368 pp, ISBN 1 84014 573 0, Hardback, Price GB £42.50.

This book, through its comprehensive examination of forest resource use from a historical perspective, provides an account of change in the use of forest lands in South Asia. The change from the traditional farming systems to more commercial usage resulted not only in resource depletion, but also and, more significantly, in *alienation* of local communities from forest resources and their management. This book starts with an account of the fast deteriorating situation of forestry in Bangladesh portraying a gloomy scenario for the future, the type of holocaust predicted for other South Asian nations and the state's and donors' tendency to view *social forestry* as a panacea, irrespective of its insignificant achievements. This sets the context for Dr. Niaz Khan's research for exploring the *political economy* of forest use in Bangladesh and the status of social forestry (SF) in surrounding political-economic environment.

Khan has analysed the evolution of forest use in South Asia within the three distinct stages - pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence - the ones often used by other researchers including the leading Indian scholars R. Guha, M. Gadgil and M.V. Nadkarni. He provides evidence in favour of a culturally determined and localised pattern of forest use in the pre-colonial (pre-commercial) period which was responsive to local demands, allowed reasonable freedom of access and was also adaptive to changing contexts. The local communities, it is argued, despite being linked to outside polity and society, had considerable access and decision-making discretion in managing forests with little central interference. Khan builds up a case in support of such local institutions, which may not have been egalitarian, but had transaction arrangements such as bartering and trade, and people were bonded to each other through a system of mutual reciprocity and obligations within a territorial framework. He admits, however, that demands on resources may have been modest due to simple living styles and subsistence-oriented farming. Drawing on the archival and historical documents, the author then describes the replacement of these indigenous systems of forest use by more professional, formalised, centralized and commercialised forestry with the advent of colonial rule. The post-independence developments only saw the continuation of these trends of commercialisation and consequent alienation of local people. The modernisation and industrialisation efforts by the newly independent states further weakened the local communities and pushed them into severe competition for resource use. Khan describes this competition by developing a *frame* of some selected political-economic variables: *land ownership and tenurial arrangements*; role of *donors, public institutions and policies*; role of present *local organisations*; *market interventions*; and changing *social dynamics*. The central theme remains that *commercialisation* and bureaucratization resulted in exclusion, impoverishment,

dispossession and finally "alienation" of local communities, a concept he has constructed from the social theory of Marx.

The author then goes on to analyse the advent, practice, achievements and limitations of SF in South Asia as it progressed to decentralise forest management and achieve other ambitious social goals of empowerment, equity, poverty alleviation and local organisation development. Contrary to widely used "participatory forest management" approach, Khan uses SF to include all types of participatory initiatives in South Asian forestry, and thus loses an opportunity to assess and differentiate the project-driven form of SF from more organic form of "joint forest management" (JFM). Khan has reviewed very usefully the available information on SF; but, in his effort to select cases which provide near similar contexts for his empirical research in Bangladesh, he has overlooked some of the well documented gains from JFM in Indian states like Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa and Gujarat. He goes on to analyse SF within the "frame" developed above and concludes that SF, albeit achieving physical targets, has largely failed to realise its stated social goals.

With this conceptual and theoretical framework and with a reliance on "methodological pluralism", Khan then develops interesting analytical and evaluative case studies of prevailing social processes in the selected SF schemes in Bangladesh. These enrich the comparative analysis of SF in India and Nepal, and further support his arguments against relying on SF to influence the causes and reverse the process of alienation. The initial sense of *collectivism* in communities could not be institutionalised as peoples' organisations developed under SF disintegrated against the "frame" which is not conducive to the achievement of goals of SF. In analysing the "frame", he discusses, *inter alia*, the dynamics of commercial logging practices, local market, foresters' "elitist exclusiveness" and the donors' role.

The author does not stop here, but goes on to probe: "why then the government and donors are continuing with SF despite its marginal achievements?" Khan's study only reinforces the view that SF, along with "bio-diversity conservation", is the most promising area for attracting foreign funds and enhancing philanthropic image of its protagonists. Thus SF is reduced to a "strategic compromise" in which governments safeguard their interests, and retain and further consolidate their control in "core endangered" areas by inviting people and allowing limited and prescriptive type of participation in "degraded buffer" lands.

Khan, surprisingly, hesitates to admit that the age-old process of alienation cannot be reverted in a decade of SF practice and experience. He also appears to have thought little of the growing body of field practices and literary evidence which simultaneously provide space and hope for optimism. The last two decades have been a period of transition in some regions of South Asia, wherein, governments have undertaken watershed policy decisions, and increasing number of forest departments and communities have made considerable progress in establishing local forest management systems.

However, Dr. Khan's attempt to conceptualise and explain a political-economic "frame" should be applauded as it has the potential to challenge and inspire practitioners to focus attention, energies and resources on various social, political and economic structures and variables which decisively influence SF outcomes. In concluding that SF innovations and practices need to be institutionalised by making them ecologically and economically attractive, tenurially secure, legally strong, and by redefining a 'new' role for forest departments, the author rightly reasserts the need to resolve these critical and sensitive issues facing participatory forestry in South Asia.

The book is an outstanding contribution to our understanding of the complexities of rural development forestry as also to the 'now' growing body of literature on participatory

forestry, and thus deserves to be read widely.

Minkesh Paul Sood, Himachal Pradesh Forest Service, India and Centre for Development Studies, University of Wales at Swansea, UK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr Gurharpal Singh, Principal Lecturer in politics at De Montfort University has been appointed to the C.R. Parekh Chair of Indian Politics at the University of Hull.

Dr Jamal Malik formerly Officiating Associate Professor Univ. of Bonn and "Privatdozent" at the Univ. of Bamberg has been appointed Professor and Head of Religious Studies, University of Derby.

Brunei Gallery: SOAS welcomes enquiries on works of art which would be suitable for wall hanging in public areas throughout the Brunei Gallery, and which might be available on long-term loan. SOAS, University of London, Thornough Street, Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG, 0171 637 2388.

ADITI, South Asian Dance Organisation: Details of events in London and elsewhere are included in Aditi News. For information contact Aditi, Third Floor, Oldebourne House, 46-47 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1JB, Tel: 0171 931 5288.

ASR/Institute of Women's Studies, Lahore: The purpose of the IWSL is to initiate a formal academic programme which has a third world bias, and which focuses on those interested in making connections and interacting at a more global level. At the same time it is meant to facilitate a conceptual and theoretical understanding to academics, activists, development practitioners, and professionals who see their work as part of the women's movement. The IWSL has four main types of programmes, one of which is a holistic and multidimensional women's studies taught course which takes place annually from January to April. Further details available from: ASR/IWSL, 96-A G Block Gulberg III, Lahore, Pakistan. Tel: 92-42 5882617/5882618; fax: 92 42 5882617/5711575; email: iwsl@asr.edunet.sdnpc.undp.org OR iwsl@asr.brain.net.pk

'Sanskrit Drama' workshop, University of Leiden, 5-6 February 1999: The workshop will be divided into two consecutive sessions. The first will focus on problems involved in editing drama texts, the second will be concerned with the form and content of the plays and with possible approaches to a new history of Sanskrit drama literature. For further information contact: Herman Tiekens, Institut Kern, PO Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands . Tel: +31-71 5272953; email: hjtiekens@rullet.leidenuniv.nl OR Roland Steiner, Fachgebiet Indologie der Philipps-Universität, Wilhelm-Röpke-Strasse 6, D-35032 Marburg, Germany. Tel: +49 6421 282184; email: steiner@mail.uni-marburg.de

Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth: The SPICMACAY was established in 1977 in India, and has been active in the UK for several years. The aim is to introduce traditional Indian culture to the younger generation. Meetings take place every other Tuesday evening in room 228, at SOAS, at 6.30pm. Forthcoming events include:

- 14 October **Maharajpuram Ramchandran** (St Edmund's Hall, Oxford)
- 16 October **Maharajpuram Ramchandran** (8pm Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge)

- 3 November **Sulochana Brihaspati** (8pm, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge)
- 5 November **Sulochana Brihaspati** (St Edmund's Hall, Oxford)
- 10 November **Sulochana Brihaspati** (Meeting House, University of Sussex, Brighton)

Further information from Ms Sonoo Dhar, SPICMACAY (UK), 9 Atherstone Mews, London SW7. Tel/fax: 0171 591 0239; email: sdharaip@aol.com Website: <http://www.spicmacay.org/uk>

1999 BASAS PRIZE

The British Association of South Asian studies (BASAS) prize for an outstanding paper in any area related to South Asia given by a young scholar at the 1999 BASAS Annual Conference

The BASAS prize will consist of a monetary award of £100.00

The BASAS prize is intended to encourage young scholars, either studying for a degree in an institution of higher learning and/or be no older than 35 at the time of the 1999 BASAS Annual Conference. The author need not be a member of BASAS.

The submission may be in any field related to South Asia or South Asians, not previously published or presented elsewhere, a hard copy to be submitted in advance to the secretary of BASAS by 15 February 1999 and be presented at the BASAS Annual Conference to be held 7-9 April at the University of Derby, UK.

The judging panel will consist of members of the BASAS Executive Committee and the panel reserves the right not to present the award and will not enter into correspondence concerning its final judgement.

Secretary BASAS, Dr Yunas Samad, Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of Bradford, West Yorkshire BD7 1DP, UK. Tel: +44-(0)1274-234804 Fax: +44(0)1274-235295 Email a.y.samad@bradford.ac.uk

BASAS <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/ses/basas1.html>

1999 CSA-BASAS PRIZE

A joint prize by *Contemporary South Asia* (CSA) and the British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS) for the outstanding paper given by a young scholar at the 1999 BASAS Annual Conference. The CSA-BASAS Prize will consist of a monetary award of £100.00 and publication in *Contemporary South Asia*.

As the CSA-BASAS Prize is intended to encourage the submission of work by young scholars, the author of any paper submitted must be no older than 35 at the time of the 1999 BASAS Annual Conference. The author need not be a member of BASAS.

To be eligible, a paper should focus on the theoretical and/or practical means by which our understanding of the present problems of co-operation and confrontation in South Asia, its constituent states of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, or

the South Asian diaspora can be enhanced. Papers may address issues relevant to the arts, humanities or social sciences.

In addition, papers must: (a) not have been presented elsewhere or published previously; (b) conform to the length and style described in CSA's 'Notes for Contributors' and/or available separately from its co-editor; (c) be submitted in advance to CSA's co-editor to arrive no later than **15 February 1999**; and (d) be presented at the BASAS annual conference, **7-9 April 1999** at the University of Derby, UK (see the announcement at the end of this newsletter for further details).

The judging panel will consist of an equal number of selected editors of CSA and executive board members of BASAS. The panel reserves the right not to present the award and will not enter into correspondence concerning its final judgment. At the discretion of the judging panel, papers entered for the prize and failing to win but deemed of sufficient merit also may be published in *Contemporary South Asia*.

Contacts for further details:

- Dr Apurba Kundu, Co-Editor, *Contemporary South Asia*, Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP, UK. Tel: +44-(0)1274-235046 | Fax: +44-(0)1274-235295 | Email: a.kundu@bradford.ac.uk
- CSA homepage - <http://www.carfax.co.uk/csa-ad.htm>
- BASAS homepage - <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/ses/basas1.html>

SEMINARS

CENTRE OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES, SOAS, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG, Wednesdays, 5.00pm, Room G52). Chairman: Dr Stuart Blackburn, email: SB12@soas.ac.uk Executive Officer: Mrs Barbara Lazoi, email: BL1@soas.ac.uk Telephone: CSAS direct line 0171 323 6353; SOAS 0171 637 2388 Fax: 0171 436 3844.

- 14 October **James Manor** (Sussex) *What Do They Know of India Who Only India Know?*
- 21 October **Sanjoy Majumdar** (London) *Performance and Popular Culture in Contemporary West Bengal*
- 28 October **Sarah Ansari** (Royal Holloway) *Sind in the 1940s and 1950s: Continuities and Changes*
- 5 November **CSAS Annual Lecture**, 5pm, SOAS Main Lecture Theatre **Professor Partha Chatterjee** (Calcutta) *Modernity and Democracy in Contemporary India*
- 6 November **Workshop** on *South Asian Life-Histories*, 10am-5pm, **Friday 6 November Room 116**
- 18 November **Tsering Shakya** (SOAS) *Contemporary Tibetan Literature*
- 25 November **Peter van der Veer** (Amsterdam) *Masculinity and Imperial Rule: Britain and India in the Victorian Era*

SOUTH ASIA HISTORY SEMINAR, SOAS, Tuesdays, 5.00pm, Room G58, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG. Convenor: **Professor David Arnold**, Enquiries to History Department, Tel direct line: 0171 323 6146.

- 13 October **Faisal Devji** (Ismaili Institute, London) *Gandhi as Liberal Critic*

- 20 October **Sarah Hodges** (Chicago/London) *Revolutionary Family Life, Birth Control and Dravidian Politics: The Self-Respect Movement, 1927-49*
- 27 October **K Sivaramakrishnan** (IDS, Sussex) *Changing Regional Landscapes and Local Authority in Southwest Bengal, 1890s-1920s*
- 3 November **Jamal Malik** (Derby) *18th and 19th Century Islamic Scholarship and Mysticism in Northern India*
- 10 November **No Meeting**
- 17 November **Ruby Lal** (Oxford) *The 'Domestic World' of the Mughals: 'Harem' and Beyond*
- 24 November **Claudia Libeskind** (Royal Holloway) *Waking the Sleeping Masses: Conflict and Co-operation in the Professionalisation of Unani Medicine in Northern India, 1900-1950*
- 1 December **Tithi Bhattacharya** (SOAS) *The Economy of Culture: Defining the Bhadrakalok Through Print*

THE BAGRI FOUNDATION LECTURES by **Patrick French**, SOAS, Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, 6pm, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG. Tel: 0171 637 2388

- 19 November *Taking Tibet: Edwardian Fantasies of Empire*
- 26 November *Hostility and Contempt: The Lead-up to Indian Independence*
- 2 December *Accelerated History 1947: Freedom, Death and Partition*
- 10 December *A Farewell to Whitehall: India at the end of the Millennium*

BENJAMIN ZUCKER LECTURE, ON MUGHAL ART, V&A MUSEUM: The fifth Benjamin Zucker Lecture on Mughal Art, entitled *Visions in Marble: Mughal Mausolea for Saints and Emperors*, will be presented by **Professor Catherine Asher** of the Department of Art History, University of Minnesota, and takes place in the Lecture Theatre, V&A Museum, at 7pm. No ticket is required. Visitors attending the lecture should enter by the Exhibition Road entrance. Doors open at 6.30pm.

CENTRE FOR INDIAN STUDIES, ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE, Michelmas Term 1998: South Asia History Seminar, Tuesdays, 2.15pm, Small Dining Room, 1st Floor, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford. Telephone/Fax: 01865 274559, **David Washbrook** (St Antony's College).

- 13 October **Dr M Waseem** (St Antony's and Quaid-I-Asam University, Islamabad) *Pakistan and India: Pasts and Futures*
- 20 October **Dr M Satish Kumar** (University of Cambridge and JNU) *Gender Codes in the Colonial Port Cities of South Asia: a case study of Bombay and Calcutta, 1872-1941*
- 27 October **Jon Wilson** (St Hugh's) *Deep Games: Negotiating Property and Authority in Eastern Bengal, 1790-1810*
- 3 November **William Gould** (Trinity, Cambridge) *Hindu Nationalist Ideologies in Congress Politics in the United Provinces, 1930-47*
- 10 November **Jeremy Osborn** (Lincoln) *Science and Empire: the exchange of scientific knowledge between Britain and India in the late 18th century*
- 17 November **David Hall-Matthews** (St Antony's) *Famine Process and Famine Policy in British India*
- 24 November **Dr Rosalind O'Hanlan** (Clare, Cambridge) *Defining the Perfect Man: sufism and gender identity at the Mughal court*
- 1 December **Robert Travers** (Caius, Cambridge) *Empire and History. The British Government of Bengal in the late 18th century and 'the Mogul constitution*

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOUSE, International Development Centre, University of Oxford,

Michaelmas Term 1998: Seminar in Contemporary South Asia, Thursdays, 2.00pm, Blackhall Seminar Room, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford. Convenors: **Professor Barbara Harriss-White** and **Dr Nandini Gooptu**. Telephone: 01865 273600; Fax: 01865 273607, Direct Line: 01865 273617; Email: savsp@qeh.ox.ac.uk WWW: <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk>

- 15 October **Naila Kabeer**, (IDS, Sussex University) *Can't buy me love? Gender, credit and empowerment in rural Bangladesh*
- 22 October **Robert Anderson** (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge) *Nucleus and Nation: Scientists and Power in India*
- 29 October **Apurba Kundu** (University of Bradford) *Never a coup: Civil-Military Relations in India*
- 5 November **Craig Jeffrey** (Dept of Geography, Cambridge University) *Money grows on family trees: Class, genealogy and the local state in Northwest India*
- 12 November **K. Srinivasulu** (Osmania University, Hyderabad, and Visiting Fellow, QEH) *Liberalisation and Artisanal Communities: the case of handloom weavers in Andhra Pradesh*
- 19 November **Carey Watt** (St Catherine's College, Cambridge) *Ephobic Patriots or Seditious Sevaks: the Boy Scouts and the development of social service and civil society in early 20th century India*
- 26 November **Sulagna Roy** (Trinity College, Cambridge) *Debates on Hindu-Muslim relations and 'communalism' in the Bengali Muslim Press, c.1930-1947*
- 3 December **G. Omkarnath** (CDS, Kerala and Visiting Fellow, QEH) *Wages in the Agrarian Economy*

THE SOCIETY FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES, Meetings for 1998-99. The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH.

- **1998**: 16 November Annual General Meeting | **Sir John Boardman** (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) *A Hellenist Looks East*
- **1999**: 15 February **Dr Mehrdad Shokoohy** (SOAS) *The Mosques of Malabar at Cochin and Calicut* | 19 April **Dr. Ian Glover** (Institute of Archaeology, UCL) *The Ethnography of High Tin Bronze Working in Kerala, South India, and its Archaeological Implications* | 21 June **Dr. Julia Hegewald** (University College, Oxford) *Jaina Temple Architecture in North Western India*

WELLCOME INSTITUTE FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE, Research seminars, Medical Science and Technology in Asian Cultures, Autumn and Winter terms 1998-99. Mondays at 4.30pm in the Wellcome Building, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BN.

- 12 October **Dr Gerrit Bos** (University of Cologne) *Medico-Philosophical Controversies in Judaism and Islam: Nathan b. Jeol Falaquera's "Balm for the body"*
- 26 October **Dr Manuela Marin** (Instuto de Filologia - CSIC, Madrid) *Cooking Traditions in Islam*
- 9 November **Mr Serguei Turkin** (Institute of Oriental Studies, St Petersburg) *The Horoscope of Iskandar-Sultan*
- 23 November **Dr Claudia Liebeskind** (Royal Holloway) *What Qualifies as Science? The debate on scientificness between Unani and biomedical practitioners in India, 1900-1950*
- 7 December **Dr Nikolai Serikoff** (Wellcome Institute) *Ghost-words in Arabic Medical Terminology*
- **1999**: 18 January **Elizabeth De Michelis** (Cambridge) *Modern Yoga and Medicine in Dialogue: Certainties and Ambiguities*

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Contributions for the next issue have to be received before the end of December for inclusion in the January issue.

BASAS Homepage: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/ses/basas1.html>

BASAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1999

7-9 APRIL 1999, UNIVERSITY OF DERBY, UK

NORM AND DIVERGENCE

The aim of this conference is to draw together scholars from a variety of disciplines to discuss and debate in inter-disciplinary manner issues of historical and contemporary relevance related to Norm and Divergence. What do we mean by Norm and how divergence articulates? There are two main areas, which will run in parallel. One on the South Asian Diaspora and the other on the South Asia region. Under these thematic blocks a number of panels on gender, ethnicity, religion, politics, economy are envisaged. There will be a number of plenary session designed to bring together these two perspectives – that is Norms and Divergence

KEY-NOTE ADDRESS BY

PROFESSOR FRANCIS ROBINSON

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

CALL FOR PANELS AND PAPERS

Politics, Economics, Gender

Literature, Ethnicity, Religion

Media, Arts

There are a limited number of bursaries available on a first come first served basis. The conditions are that the applicant should (i) be a postgraduate student; (ii) be presenting a paper at the conference and (iii) that their paper is accepted by a panel.

The deadline for abstracts is **1 February 1999**.

For further information contact conference organisers:

- Professor Jamal Malik, Department of Religious Studies, University of Derby, Mickleover, Derby DE3 5GX E-mail J.Malik@derby.ac.uk
- Ahmed Andrews, Religious Resource and Research Centre, University of Derby, Mickleover, Derby DE3 5GX. E-mail A.Andrews@derby.ac.uk

THE SOCIETY FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

THE BRITISH ACADEMY, 10 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE

LONDON, SW1Y 5AH

The Society is one of the Schools and Institutes founded and grant-aided by the British Academy. Its aims are to promote study and research into the humanities and social sciences of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Membership:

Members support the work of the Society and are entitled to attend all lecture meetings, colloquia etc. organised by the Society, and receive a copy of the Annual Report. Full members receive the Society's journal South Asian Studies. Full membership rates (with journal) £25 or US \$40 - (£20 if paid by UK Bankers Order or before January 1st each year). Membership without journal £5. Student/junior membership £15.

Lectures and Publications:

The Society organises a regular programme of meetings in London each year. Its journal South Asian Studies is published annually. Details of the separate cost of volumes of the journal and its predecessor Afghan Studies are available from the Assistant Secretary.

Grants:

The Society offers annually a number of small personal research grants and travel grants. Small Personal Research Grants are awarded towards the cost of research and fieldwork in South Asia. These grants are available for work at post-doctoral level or its equivalent. Awards will not be made to support courses research leading to academic qualifications, or for research directly related to the topic of a current thesis. Applicants must normally be resident in the UK, applications for maintenance in the UK will not be considered.

Travel Grants:

A limited number of travel grants of up to £600 each will be awarded to scholars in connection with work at post doctoral level and to younger qualified students who wish to take part in excavations or participate in projects intended to introduce them to organised fieldwork in South Asia.

Applications for both types of grant must be made on the proscribed forms and submitted before the closing dates of 15th May and 15th October each year. For further information about the work of the Society, membership, grant application forms etc. contact: The Assistant Secretary, The Main Wing, Elsworth Manor, Elsworth, Cambs CB3 8HY.

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