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Rehanna Kheshgi performs with Papon and band during Bihu Tour 2015 in Assam, India. Photo by Jitu Saikia.

Crowning the Bihu Queen: an AIIS Junior Fellow Becomes a Pop Music Star

Rehanna Kheshgi traveled to the northeastern Indian state of Assam on an AIIS fellowship to conduct research on Bihu music and dance, a formerly stigmatized rural genre, which has now gained widespread appeal as the official state New Year's festival. She spent the 2014 Bihu season in a village in Dhemaji District in northeastern Assam performing with rural Bihu troupes. During her AIIS fellowship in April 2015 she joined Angaraag "Papon"

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AIIS Will Host South Asian Flagship Languages Initiative Students

AIIS will be hosting the overseas component of the new South Asian Flagship Languages Initiative (SAFLI) at its language program centers in Jaipur and Lucknow, starting in the fall of 2016. SAFLI is a special initiative of the Boren Awards for International Study offering Boren Scholars and Fellows the opportunity for intensive language study of Hindi and Urdu and for cultural immersion by participating in domestic and overseas language programs. Students in the program will study Hindi or Urdu with the South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI) at the University of Wisconsin in the summer and will then go to India. The overseas fall program is administered through the American Councils for International Education, which also administers the Critical Languages Scholarship Program, for which AIIS also provides language instruction for Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and, for the summer of 2016, for Bengali (Bangla) as well.



AIIS Director-General Purnima Mehta Among the Economist's Top 50 Diversity Figures in Public Life

The American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) is pleased to announce that its Director-General, Purnima Mehta, has been distinguished by inclusion in *The Economist's* list of Top 50 Diversity Figures in Public Life (<http://www.globaldiversitylist.com/top-50-diversity-figures-in-public-life.html>). Other notables on the list, which was published in November 2015, include President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, former Secretary of State and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousufzai, the Reverend Jesse Jackson and Queen Noor of Jordan.



AIIS Director-General Purnima Mehta

Mrs. Mehta, who has served as AIIS Director-General for the past ten years, oversees all AIIS operations in India, including: the management of its intensive language programs, located at multiple sites in India; the two AIIS research centers--the Center for Art and Archaeology and the Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology; support of AIIS research and performing and creative arts fellows; and overall responsibility for the relationship of the Institute with the Government of India, the educational network in India and the U.S. Embassy. Under the direction of Mrs. Mehta, the AIIS language programs have expanded exponentially in the previous decade, providing instruction in up to sixteen Indian languages to nearly 300 students each year. She has been pivotal in the AIIS effort to provide enhanced services to U.S. study abroad programs in India and to expand opportunities for a diverse range of students in the U.S. to engage in service learning projects with Indian NGOs.

"We are thrilled that Purnima has been recognized for her extraordinary endeavors, creating opportunities for a broad array of U.S.-based students, scholars, artists and members of the public to obtain a deep understanding of the diversity of India and its people" said Philip Lutgendorf, President of AIIS. "We always knew that Purnima was amazing and now the whole world knows it as well," added Elise Auerbach, U.S. Director.

AIIS Language Program News

In the summer of 2015 173 students participated in fourteen different language programs: Bengali (Kolkata), Gujarati (Ahmedabad), Hindi (Jaipur), Kannada (Mysore), Malayalam (Thiruvananthapuram), Marathi (Pune), Mughal Persian (Lucknow), Pali/Prakrit (Pune), Punjabi (Chandigarh), Sanskrit (Pune), Sindhi (Pune), Tamil (Madurai), Telugu (Hyderabad), Tibetan (Dharamsala), and Urdu (Lucknow). Academic year and semester programs in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Sanskrit, Tamil and Urdu will continue through the end of April 2016. For summer 2016 AIIS, which has operated the Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu programs for the Critical Languages Scholarship program since 2006, will also be operating the CLS Bangla program.

Among the summer language students was His Excellency Johan Frisell, Sweden's Ambassador to Bangladesh, who studied Bengali with AIIS in Kolkata. In a letter sent to AIIS he noted that "I highly benefitted from the experienced professors and staff, and I enjoyed the pleasant ambiance at the Institute." Among other highlights, AIIS Tamil students were featured in an article that appeared in the Madurai edition of *The Times of India*. In an article "Foreigners blend into the city's culture," reporter wrote about the Tamil students' language proficiency, their fondness for local delicacies, and the bike rides they frequently enjoy when they are not hard at work studying Tamil. Participant Daniel Ball, a graduate student at the University of Kentucky, was quoted as saying he plans "to stay in Tamil Nadu for many more years to come."

Aaron Shew, an alumni of several AIIS language programs, has been deploying his linguistic proficiency to accomplish his long term goals which involve researching and developing food security programs in South Asia. He participated in the AIIS summer Hindi and Urdu programs as well as the academic year 2014-2015 Hindi program. He started his language training while still an undergraduate and also studied Arabic in Fez Morocco. After earning his B.A. in Global Studies and a B.S. in International Relations from Middle Tennessee State University in 2011, he managed a soybean milling operation in Mazar-i-Sharif Afghanistan and launched a new agribusiness project in Erbil in Iraq while working for the NGO SALT International, which focuses on facilitating food security development. In 2013 he entered the interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in Environmental Dynamics at the University of Arkansas, and will also complete an M.A. in Geography and an M.S. in Agricultural Economics. He was recently appointed a visiting scholar in the Department of Agronomy at Kansas State University and invited to work on a USAID Feed the Future: Sustainable Intensification and Innovation Lab project in the coastal region of Bangladesh. The project operates on a research for development platform and aims to sustainably intensify and diversify agricultural production in the "polder" region. He plans to write his doctoral dissertation on weather-crop system modeling under future climate scenarios and further link this to risk perceptions and production decisions among small-holder farmers in the Ganges Brahmaputra Delta.



Aaron Shew with friends and coconuts

Bianca Fraise is a senior at Chicago State University, completing a dual major in the Department of Communications, Media Arts, Theatre and the Department of International Studies. She hopes to pursue a career in

the U.S. Foreign Service. She participated in the fall 2015 Hindi program in Jaipur and has written about her experiences during this, her first trip to India.

On my first night in India, I stayed at the AIIS guesthouse. Unable to get a restful night's sleep I awoke at sunrise. I sat up in the bed and pondered my unusual surroundings. The room, now bathed in sunlight, revealed a door I was too overwhelmed the night before to notice. Embracing my curiosity, I headed for the door and opened it. Behind the door was a balcony which overlooked a peaceful neighborhood awaking with the sunrise. The first full day of my adventure in India began with a pleasant start.

Weeks after arriving and settling in Jaipur, I had assumed I knew what life in India had in store for me. During my walks to and from my Hindi classes, I was always greeted with new surprises. From roving gangs of scary monkeys to stumbling upon hideaway temples, each day offered new adventures and experiences.

While traveling around India led to sights I could only imagine, Jaipur provided for amazing experiences not far from my home away from home. Feeding elephants at the Rahul's Elephant Farm gave me insight for the odd day when I saw an elephant on the road while walking to class. I knew how to interact with the elephant and even helped ease the fears of two foreigners from the UK, too afraid to approach the elephant. In Pushkar, I had my second animal ride during the annual camel festival which brings in animals and animal herders from all across India. Pushkar's friendliness overwhelmed me as groups of dancing women invited me to see them perform. At night, Pushkar Lake was at its most beautiful as it reflected the shining candles lit all over the small city.

Celebrating Diwali was a particularly heartwarming experience for me as I was invited to celebrate with my friend's family. Not only welcoming me into their home, they also included me in their family tradition of writing down their goals for the upcoming year and the people they met along the way. The night before Diwali we shopped for mandala stencils and colored sand to decorate their home. On Diwali, we made our mandalas, lit the candles, and sat on the roof to watch the fireworks fill the sky.



Bianca Fraise visiting the Taj Mahal

I was able to witness the beauty of India's amazing landscapes when I visited friends in Chandigarh. After riding up winding roads in the Himalayas, I was met with breathtaking views of low valleys and bustling towns nestled between the world's highest peaks.

Although it might be a cliché, the stunning marvel of the Taj Mahal left me in awe. The extraordinary work of art that is the Taj Mahal gets no justice from photographs alone. The interior, which holds the graves of Mumtaz and Shah Jahan, creates a solemn atmosphere of contemplation.

Mahanta and his band East India Company on their annual Assam Bihu tour, performing 20 shows over the span of two months. The contrasting experiences of performing Bihu in ritual contexts with rural troupes in Dhemaji and performing as a celebrity alongside one of Assam's most famous artists has shaped Ms Khesghi's dissertation research, which is titled *Sounding Rural Modernities: Gender, Performance and the Body in Assam, India*.

By singing and dancing as part of both rural and urban-based groups, Ms Khesghi experienced firsthand the stresses and joys of celebrity stardom, the flexibility and continued salience of ritual performance, as well as the overwhelming hospitality of living with families in their homes. Through these experiences she learned about how folk performance is incorporated into the broader entertainment industry. She discovered that Bihu music and dance, while grounded in intimate local experiences, provide young people with opportunities to experiment with socially determined boundaries of gender and sexuality, to learn how to navigate risks, and to bridge seemingly incommensurable media worlds.

During the 2015 Bihu tour with Papon and band, she also learned about the stakes of performing traditional music in new styles. Papon's father, the late Khagen Mahanta, widely recognized as the "King of Bihu," and mother Archana Mahanta, were two of the first artists to record Bihu with the Gramophone Company in the 1960s. Papon has taken Bihu to another level, performing his iconic "Pak Pak" Bihu medley on MTV India's Coke Studio. Ms Khesghi observed how Papon and the East India Company band work together to arrange Bihu songs for mass consumption, infusing folk with eclectic melodies and beats in order to reach a new generation of Assamese youth and making Bihu appealing for an international audience.

A critical part of Ms Khesghi's research was conducted in Guwahati with Probin and Roshmirekha Saikia, folklore researcher-performers who direct a folk music and dance school called Panchasur ("Five Notes" or "Pentatonic"). Ms Khesghi learned alongside Panchasur students and performed in a concert at Rabindra Bhavan in Guwahati which was sponsored by the Guwahati Regional Office of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. She also performed Bihu songs, Hindu devotional songs and other Assamese folk songs with the Saikias on local Assamese television news talk shows. Not only have the Saikias provided crucial insights into historical and contemporary Bihu performance practice – they

have also opened their home countless times and treated Ms Khesghi like a member of their family.

Another component of Ms Khesghi's research focuses on the recent proliferation of Bihu reality television competition shows based out of Guwahati. These shows incorporate elements from the outdoor stage competitions that pop up every spring across Assam, as well as reality television style candid interview scenes and on-site visits to the village homes of finalists. At the culmination of each competition, one young woman is crowned Bihu queen and presented with a brand new car or similar reward. These competitions often serve to launch celebrity careers for young performers who go on to host future seasons of the shows, act in Assamese serials and music videos, and become brand ambassadors for Assamese culture. In 2015, Ms Khesghi got a close look at how these shows operate behind the scenes when she served as a guest judge on the show Bihu Rani produced by the news channel DY365 and the show Bor Bihuwoti produced by NewsLive. She was also interviewed by the local Assamese newspaper *Asomiya Pratidin* about her research; people responded by contacting her with information that helped further her research.

During Ms Khesghi's AIFS fellowship period, she also began following research leads on a newly codified music and dance tradition associated with the Bodo tribal community of Assam. She originally intended to incorporate this research into her dissertation, since some Bodo performance genres are referred to by non-Bodos as "Bodo Bihu." But as she began working with choreographer Dilip Narzary in Kokrajhar and villages in Udalguri in the western region of Assam, she realized this subject deserves separate treatment. She performed the Bodo ritual dance "Kherai" at a large Bodo gathering celebrating the 25th anniversary of a Bodo Thansali (a temple associated with the indigenous religion Bathou). She intends to pursue research on Bodo music and dance as a second book project.

As a result of the massive publicity Ms. Khesghi received during her stint as a celebrity in Assam, she caught the attention of the Assam Association of North America and accepted their invitation to sing Bihu songs alongside Assamese pop stars Simanta Shekar and Priyanka Bharali at the annual AANA convention in Las Vegas in July 2015. This aspect of Ms. Khesghi's research with Assamese diaspora communities has grown since her first experiences in the UK in 2007, when she wrote a Master's thesis at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, on discourses of authenticity

surrounding Bihu among UK-based Assamese families and young professionals.

Attaining proficiency in the Assamese language was critical to her preparation for conducting her research project. AIIS created an Assamese program for Ms Ksheshgi while she was based in Kolkata; she has expressed her indebtedness to Navamalati Neog Chakravarty for her patient and creative instruction. Ms Ksheshgi noted that projects like hers, that rely on ethnographic fieldwork as a central research methodology, require extended periods of time living and traveling in India, and that the support provided by AIIS was critical to her success. She further noted that, in addition to financial support, AIIS facilitated important relationships with local institutions like Dibrugarh University, Ms Ksheshgi's host institution in Assam. She is very grateful to the Assamese

Department at Dibrugarh University for their hospitality and assistance. Interactions with faculty and students during her final research presentation in Dibrugarh inspired her to write a paper entitled "Conflict in the Field: Navigating Collaboration across Disciplinary and Other Boundaries," which she presented at the Seventh International Doctoral Workshop in Ethnomusicology sponsored by the Center for World Music at the University of Hildesheim and the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, in Hildesheim Germany in June 2015.

Rehanna Ksheshgi is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Music at the University of Chicago. She carried out her AIIS junior fellowship in India in 2014-2015



AIIS Sponsors Array of Cultural Events in Delhi and Kolkata

From Bengali festivals to Mahatma Gandhi to the spiritual aspirations of impoverished rural residents of southeastern Rajasthan---a wide range of topics were featured in events sponsored by AIIS in India in recent months, reaching large audiences at each venue.

Ralph W. Nicholas, Chair of the AIIS Board of Trustees, spoke at two AIIS-sponsored events in India in November. On both occasions his lecture was titled "The Axis of Bengali Culture," a concept he developed in his new book, *Thirteen Festivals: A Ritual Year in Bengal* (Delhi: RCS Publishers and Orient BlackSwan, 2016). This book is the fourth in a series he has written based on the Hindu ritual cycle in a village in East Midnapur District, West Bengal.



Professor Sengupta unwraps a copy of Thirteen Festivals as Ralph W. Nicholas and Subir Sarkar look on

In Delhi his talk was jointly sponsored by the University of Chicago Center in India, and was held on November 19 at the Center's facility in central New Delhi, near Connaught Circus. The book was formally released by Mr. Jawhar Sircar, the former Chief Secretary of the Indian Ministry of Culture and currently CEO of Prasar Bharati, the Indian national broadcasting network. Mr. Sircar was formerly Chief Secretary of the Ministry of Culture; he has a deep interest in Bengali cultural history and has published work on some distinctive features of religious practice in rural Bengal.

The AIIS Kolkata Center sponsored the event on November 26 at the Rabindranath Tagore Hall of the Indian Council on Cultural Relations. A large audience was present for the talk, which was chaired by Professor Gautam Sengupta, Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture at Visvabharati University, and former Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India.

On December 2, Professor Tridip Suhrud, the director of the Sabaramati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust in Ahmedabad, delivered the third annual Tarun Mitra Memorial Lecture at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture in Kolkata. The lecture series honors longtime regional Director of AIIS in Kolkata, the late Tarun Mitra, and his profound dedication to scholarship in many disciplines. Professor Suhrud's talk was entitled, "Exiled at Home: The Burden that is Gandhi." An authority on Gandhi and his works, Professor Suhrud received the 2010 Sahitya Akademy Award for his translation of Harilal Gandhi's life. The event, which drew a full house, was presided by Professor Amiya Dev. Professor Geraldine Forbes wrote the following summary of Professor Suhrud's presentation:

The focus of Professor Suhrud's lecture was Gandhi's troubled relationship with Ahmedabad, Gujarat and Rajkot from 1915 through the 1930s. His objective was to shed light on the complex views of Gandhi held by Gujaratis today. Professor Suhrud began with Gandhi's residence at Sabarmati Ashram, a site intimately connected in the public mind with the Mahatma. Gandhi left Sabarmati in March of 1930 to begin the Salt March but never returned to live there. For the following 18 years, he spent less than one year in Gujarat, making his last visit to Ahmedabad in

1936 and his last visit to Gujarat in 1942. He visited Rajkot in 1939 but never returned.

The lecture focused on three issues of contention: Gandhi's decision to make untouchables members of the Sabarmati community, his attempt to create a Gujarati language for the people, and effort to mediate between the people of Rajkot and the ruler. Each of these efforts was extremely important to Gandhi but each case involved a degree of failure. Gandhi's decision to include untouchables in the ashram upset many of his supporters as well as the larger community and Gandhi and his followers were forced to leave the site of the first ashram for Sabarmati situated on land outside a cremation ground. Gandhi's efforts to make a simplified Gujarati the standard never met with the approval of the literati. Finally, when Gandhi attempted to intervene in Rajkot, the state he grew up in, against the corrupt rule of Thakore Saheb Dharmendrasinh and his diwan, he was humiliated and finally defeated. At the beginning of April 1939, Gandhi was garlanded with shoes on his way to prayers and the prayer meeting disrupted. It was an experience that Gandhi said pierced him "like arrows." His attempts to bring about a solution failed and Gandhi wrote that Rajkot had put *ahimsa* to a test beyond anything he had imagined.

Drawing on his extensive reading of Gandhi's published and unpublished works and the writings of Gandhi's contemporaries, Professor Suhrud presented the audience with a new understanding of Gandhi's contentious experiences in the land of his birth.

Bhrigupati Singh, the winner of the 2015 AIIS Joseph W. Elder Prize in Indian Social Sciences gave a talk about his prize-winning book *Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India* at the India International Centre on January 12, 2016. The event was co-sponsored by AIIS and the Oxford University Press. Other speakers included William Dalrymple, Veena Das, Aarthi Sethi, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, while AIIS president Philip Lutgendorf presided. Artist Subodh Gupta also created an installation in response to the book. In his book, Bhrigupati Singh asks how we conceive of the quality of life not only in an economic sense, but in terms of a more encompassing sense of vitality and loss, in ways that includes human and non-human forces, as

well as forms of spiritual striving. Through an ethnographic exploration of the *Sahariyas*, former bonded laborers, officially classified as Rajasthan's only "primitive tribe," this book asks how aspiration and the quality of life is imagined in spiritual and material terms by a lower status group in a resource-scarce environment at a time of widening global inequalities.

On the following day, Professor Lutgendorf delivered a guest lecture at the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University on the topic, "Diving into the Lake: On the Necessity, Joy and Anxiety of (Re) Translating Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas*."



AIIS Continues Successful Partnership with Mid-Atlantic Consortium-Center for Academic Excellence

AIIS has been collaborating with the Mid-Atlantic Consortium-Center for Academic Excellence (MAC-CAE) since 2012 to bring students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities for an intensive two-month summer program in India. MAC-CAE is led by Morgan State University and directed by Dr. Arlene Maclin. Students on the program engage in intensive language study, service learning and also work on their own special projects. During the summer of 2015, nine students from four institutions—Morgan State University, Norfolk State University, Elizabeth City State University and Howard University—participated in the program. The students, who majored in fields including biology, strategic communications, criminal justice and political science, were based in Jaipur and most attained an intermediate proficiency in Hindi during the course of the program.

Priscilla Offei, a junior majoring in biology stated that "India was an amazing experience including the food, the vibrant colors, dresses, language, religions, culture and customs. As I was leaving for India, I was excited. I thought it was about to be just another trip. That wasn't the case. It wasn't just another trip. It was a trip that changed my views and my beliefs. A trip where I made friends that I will keep over a lifetime. A trip that made me appreciate cultural differences. All the words used to describe my trip to India do not beat your experiencing it for yourself."



MAC-CAE students with Professor Arlene Maclin and AIIS Director-General Purnima Mehta

Raigan Wheeler, a strategic communications major, noted that the Hindi course she took was "extremely rigorous." Her career aspirations involve potentially working for a "US agency involved in international relations or international community development." She stated that "I would like to work for the government in the U.S. and

other countries helping to manage crisis or media situations or political campaigns. I know that having a high competency in critical languages will propel us all into arenas that we never thought we could reach as people of color. I'm so ready to see what having global experience and knowledge in a critical language(s) will do for us (the others in my group). A master's in international or government relations is definitely in my future!"

Damola Aluko, a senior majoring in political science from Howard University, stated that "the MACCAE program is one of the most enriching programs that I have ever participated in. Under this program I received the chance to travel to Jaipur, India and learn Hindi, a very critical language. This program, coupled with the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), not only helped me attain intermediate proficiency in a new language but, also exposed me to a beautiful culture. Indian culture is one of the longest lasting cultures in the whole world. When examining it, one can make many intercultural connections and see the impact Indian culture has made on many of the world's cultures. Learning a new language can be very difficult especially when having to learn a brand new phonetic system/alphabet. Also, being an American, I was very far removed from Indian cultural context. Thanks to great teachers and a very interactive program curriculum, I was able to learn each new lesson in Hindi with very little trouble. My teachers and host family were very accommodating and helped me get acclimated to India's vastly different cultural terrain."

Daniel Nobles, a senior majoring in criminal justice from Elizabeth City State University stated "To the teachers in the program, I cannot express how much patience, kindness, and a hint of tough love here and there they demonstrated throughout the entire program. Leaving them was something that I honestly can say was the hardest part about leaving India. I felt that while in India we gained a true connection with our teachers because you could feel how much they actually wanted to help us learn. Having multiple teachers that truly care about your success is something that I have not seen in a long time."



MAC-CAE students enjoy a field trip

Briana Spruill-Harrell, a junior majoring in biology at Norfolk State University summed up her experience by saying "I came to India with little to no expectations because I am an 'in the moment type of person.' Reflecting on my experience, I am glad that I did not have any pre-conceived notions about India. Setting foot on Indian soil is an encounter that no one can predict. For me, my experience was coupled with awe, self-reflection, and motivation. This once in a lifetime opportunity compelled me to want to do better. Speaking for myself, I take things such as my friends, my family and my education for granted. Living in India for two months revealed to me how blessed I am and fortunate to live in a society where my necessities are not far out- of- reach. The ultimate lesson learned from my Indian experience was the value of hard work and dedication to get to where I want to be in life. Not everything will be handed to me so I have to press forward in spite of the obstacles to get to my destination."

Ashley Ashburn, a junior majoring in biology at Norfolk State University stated: “My experience in India was life altering. Stepping outside of my comfort zone and 15,000 miles away from home I was forced to truly think outside the box. Now, I understand what people mean when they say cultural immersion is the key to truly learning foreign languages. I can say that I have retained and learned more Hindi while staying in India for two months than Spanish while sitting in a classroom for nearly 4+ years. Going to India showed me many things including that we are not as different across continents as we think however, we are extremely blessed. This experience opened my eyes to what real life is all about. It also gave me a home away from home...I hope to go back to India soon and study abroad in various countries while pursuing both my PhD and MD after undergraduate school. India will always be my home away from home and have a strong place in my heart.”

The experiences of three of the students were highlighted in an article “Two months in India opened their eyes” written by Corinne Saunders for the *Daily Advance*, that appeared on August 13, 2015 (<https://www.dailyadvance.com/features/two-months-india-opened-their-eyes-2954909>) The two months spent in India “marked the first trip out of the country for [the three students featured in the article], and they said they came back more appreciative of many aspects of life in America, but also seeing ways in which their homeland can improve.” Students Dwayne Ponton and Kiana Rivers “both hope to go to law school; all three students are considering eventually working for government intelligence agencies. The three said that their intensive study of the Hindi language was difficult but beneficial.”

AIIS expects to welcome fifteen MAC-CAE students in India for the summer of 2016.



Collaborative agreement with CAA is making large collection of digital images widely available

A collaborative agreement between the American Council for Southern Asian Art (ACSAA), the University of Michigan History of Art Visual Resources Collections and the AIIS Center for Art and Archaeology (CAA) has made possible the launch of thousands of images in the ACSAA Digital Images available for free direct downloading for non-commercial, educational and scholarly purposes through the Virtual Museum of Images and Sounds (VMIS). The ACSAA Color Slide Project had been conceived by former ACSAA President Walter Spink, and was created as a premier image resource to facilitate the study and teaching of the rich artistic heritage of Southern Asia. Over 12,000 images suitable for Power Point presentations have been made available to the public. The images can be viewed at <http://www.vmis.in>. The VMIS is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India.



AIIS Seventh Annual Dissertation to Book Workshop

AIIS held its seventh annual Dissertation to Book Workshop at the Madison South Asia Conference on October 21-22, 2015. The program was organized by Professors Susan Wadley of Syracuse University and was co-sponsored by the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies, and the American Institute of Sri Lankan Studies. The workshop was funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. Thirty-two young scholars of South Asia—all of whom earned their Ph.D. degrees recently and many of whom were AIIS junior fellows—participated in this intensive workshop designed to help them convert their

doctoral dissertations into publishable book manuscripts. Faculty mentors included Cara Cilano of the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, Joyce Flueckiger of Emory University, Geraldine Forbes of SUNY, Oswego, Henry Schwarz of Georgetown University and Susan Wadley of Syracuse University. Workshop participants and the titles of their projects were:

Mujeeb Ahmad, “Barelwis and their Religio-Political Parties in Pakistan, 1947-1971.”

Feriyal Amal Aslam, "Choreographing [in] Pakistan: Indu Mitha, Dancing Occluded histories in 'The Land of the Pure.'"

Debjani Bhattacharyya, "Fictions of Possession: Land, Property and Capital in Colonial Calcutta from 1820 to 1920."

David Boyk, "An examination of the public life of Patna."

Aryendra Chakravartty, "Territorial Self-Fashioning: 'Place-Making' in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Colonial India."

Namrita Dharia, "Scaffolding Sentiment: Money, Labor, and Love in India's Real Estate and Construction Industry."

T. Nicole Gaulet, "The Many Faces of Sarada Devi: Colonial and Postcolonial Representations of the Divine Mother."

Ellen Gough, "Making a Mantra: Jain Superhuman Powers in History, Ritual, and Material Culture."

Kathryn Hardy, "Becoming Bhojpuri: The Production of Cinema and the Production of Language in Post-Liberalization India."

Patrick Inglis, "It Will Become: Modern India and the Labor of Aspiration."

Aftab Singh Jassal, "In Search of Nagaraja: Divine Embodiment and Place Making in Garhwal."

Roanne Sharp Kantor, "Even If You Gain the World": The Twining Routes of Latin American and South Asian Literatures in the Twentieth Century."

Laurah Klepinger, "Flexible Labor in a Spiritual Economy: Peace, Work, and Inequality in Globalized Yoga."

Peter Knapczyk, "Crafting the Cosmopolitan Elegy in North India: Poets, Patrons, and the Urdu *Marsiya*, 1707-1857."

Nisha Kommattan, "The Public Secret: Femininity and Non-Normative Desires in South India."

Julia Kowalski, "Counseling Kinship: Rights and the Politics of Dependence in Jaipur."

Sadia Mahmood, "Minoritization of Hindus in Pakistan (1947-1971)."

Daniel Majchrowicz, "The Means to Victory: Travel Writing and Aspiration in Islamate South Asia."

Mark McLaughlin, "Lord in the Temple, Lord in the Tomb: The Hindu Temple and Its Relationship to the *Samādhi* Shrine Tradition of Jñā eśvar Mahā ā."

Durba Mitra, "Restraining Desire: Women and the Regulation of Sexuality in Colonial Bengal, India, c. 1830-1930."

Rochisha Narayan, "Caste, Family and Politics in Northern India during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries."

Anisha Saxena "Landscapes, Memory and History: Claims, Conflicts and Conversion in the Constitution of Sacred Geographies in India."

Dwaipayan Sen, "The Decline of the Caste Question: Jogendranath Mandal and the Sublation of Dalit Politics in Bengal."

Caleb Simmons, "The Goddess and the King: Devotion, Genealogy, and King-fashioning in the Kingdom of Mysore."

Anubha Sood, "Navigating Pain: Women's Healing Experiences in a Hindu Temple."

Nathan Tabor, "A Market for Speech: Poetry Recitation in Late Mughal India."

Leilah Vevaina, "Trust Matters: Parsis and Property in Mumbai."

Tyler Williams, "From Sacred Sound to Sacred Book: A History of Writing in Hindi."

Nicole Wilson, "Middle-class Identity and Hindu Women's Ritual Practice in South India."

Andrea Wright, "Migratory Pipelines: Labor and Oil in the Arabian Sea."

Shahla Young, "Changing Women's Lives: A Study of Government Schools for Girls in Late Colonial Bengal."

S. Akbar Zaidi, "Contested Identities and the Muslim *Qaum* in Nineteenth Century North India."



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