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The Newsletter of the American Institute of Indian Studies

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Faculty Development Seminar Participants with Dr. Balasubramaniam in Mysore

Teachers as Students: The Power of Experiential Learning in India's Growing Cities by Robin Kietlinski

"Only when we take a comprehensive and ecosystem approach to our thinking, can we bring about meaningful and sustainable development for all."

—Dr. R. Balasubramaniam, *Voices from the Grassroots*

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AIIS 2019 Book Prizes Awarded to Dipti Khera and Bharat Venkat

The Edward Cameron Dimock, Jr. Prize in the Indian Humanities was awarded to Dipti Khera for *The Place of Many Moods: Painted Lands and India's Eighteenth Century*. In her book, Professor Khera points out that by the early eighteenth century, Udaipur in Northwestern India was at the center of pioneering material and pictorial experiments in presenting the sensorial, embodied experience of space. A wide range of objects, from large-scale court paintings, three to five feet long, to painted invitation letter-scrolls up to seventy-two-feet long, formed representations of Udaipur's lands, lakes, and bazaars as well as Northern India's prominent temples and Indo-British durbars. These objects demanded audiences to make emotional connections of belonging to and longing for real places in the present, and in imagined ideal times in the future. Moving beyond a valuation of art and aesthetic practices predicated on their mimetic merit, Udaipur's painters, poets, scribes, and travelers offered *bhava* – the feel, mood, and emotion – of a place as a rich, layered category to perceive. While generating emotions and moods in visual and literary arts was foundational to the theory of Indian aesthetics, its connection with pictorial practice was hardly straightforward.

Professor Khera argues that Udaipur's unique phenomenon contributes a novel form of art history that was synchronic with Eurasia's own interests in establishing sociability based on structures of feeling and experience of emotions. The cultures of connoisseurship, immersion in pleasurable places and powerful seasons, and practice of politics are artistically bundled to produce thick bonds and lingering memories. Such description of territorialities and of spatial knowledge in topographical images, when placed in the wider history of painted lands, can be seen to confront European visions of history, aesthetics, and landscapes. The emphatic circulation of place-centric art across objects, genres, and spaces is the unifying framework of *The Place of Many Moods*. Its chapters examine the perspectives of courtly communities, of Jain monks, merchants, and pilgrims, who intersect within bazaars, and of the officers, explorers, and artists connected with the British East India Company. The creation of persistent relations between affective phenomenon and efficacious desires, art and knowledge, and politics and aesthetics calls upon us to imagine – distinct from colonial and nationalist accounts of decadence – a history of praise and place in India's eighteenth century.

The AIIS Book Prize Committee noted, "This innovative and interdisciplinary manuscript approaches the painted lands of Udaipur in the long eighteenth century—its lakes, palaces, streets, people, and landscapes, real and fantastical—through the lens of *bhava* (emotion) to recuperate their affective force and moods. The author skillfully draws on historical sources, philosophy and aesthetics, music history, geography, and even environmental studies to explain that artistic renderings portrayed Udaipur as the place of many moods and to argue that images, places, texts, and practices infused with *bhava* and associated with it generated a major pictorial and material change in South Asia. Painters and poets, among others, reshaped imaginative practices across a wide variety of genres in the eighteenth century."



Dipti Khera is an assistant professor in the Department of Art History and the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. She earned her Ph.D. in Art History from Columbia University and was an AIIS junior fellow in 2009-2010. Recent publications that introduce her forthcoming book include "The Joys of Bonding," in *Visions of Paradise: Indian Paintings in the National Gallery* (2018), "Jagvilasa: Picturing Worlds of Pleasure and Power in Eighteenth-Century Udaipur Painting," in *A Magic World: New Visions of Indian Painting* (2016), and "Marginal, Mobile, Multilayered: Painted Invitation Letters as Bazaar Objects in Early Modern India" in *Journal18* (2016). She is co-curating an exhibition at the Freer and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Asian Art, Washington, DC, developed in collaboration with the City Palace Museum, Udaipur, that will introduce broader audiences to an understanding of aesthetics, pleasure, and emotions in Indian art. She is formulating with colleagues at NYU a project on 'Empires of Pleasure across Eighteenth-Century Cultures', and she is a collaborator with Global Horizons in Pre-Modern Art, an

international initiative funded by a European Research Council Consolidator Grant through the University of Bern (2018-2023).

The Joseph W. Elder Prize in the Indian Social Sciences was awarded to Bharat Venkat for *At the Limits of Cure*. In both scholarly and popular conversations, cure is frequently taken as an ending—of illness, treatment, and of suffering more generally. What if, instead, we were to approach cure through its limits; through its partiality and fragility; through the many ways in which it falls apart, unravels or comes undone? Drawing on historical and ethnographic research on tuberculosis in India, *At the Limits of Cure* tells a story that stretches from the colonial period, a time of sanatoriums, travel cures and gold therapy, into the postcolonial present, in which eugenicist concerns dovetail uneasily with antibiotic miracles. This work examines a range of curative reasons as they come up against their limits: in the contrast between idyllic sanatoriums and crowded prisons, through which freedom became a kind of therapy; in ships filled with coolies and soldiers seeking work and treatment across the British empire; in the networks of scientists who developed and tested antibiotics in India as a means of asking whether geography and poverty really mattered to therapeutic success; in clinics where families wondered about the marriageability of tuberculous children who were cured over and over again; and in the reworking of mid-century eugenicist rationalities in the face of contemporary drug resistance in India's urban centers. Taken together, these chapters suggest that approaching cure at its limits provides a stronger, less idealized foundation for thinking the ethics and politics of treatment, and medicine more broadly, in India today.

In the mid-twentieth century, the city of Madras hosted India's first randomized controlled trial, a study of the efficacy of antibiotics in the treatment of tuberculosis. In the wake of that study, it was largely agreed, tuberculosis became a curable condition. Yet, over fifty years later, it is estimated that there are more cases of tuberculosis in India than anywhere else in the world. Widespread drug resistance has left some wondering whether the curable has become, once again, incurable. Through all of this, however, a question remains unasked: what does it mean to be cured in the first place?



The AIIS Book Prize Committee wrote, “This superbly written book manuscript weaves together a remarkable tale of tuberculosis in India. It is at once a transnational history of medical science and technology, an ethnohistory of the experience of disease, an ethnography of medicine, a history of India through the lens of public health, and, at its core, a compelling discussion of the complex, cultural discourse on the concept of “cure,” not only in the history of medicine, but in the desires of doctors and governments, the self-understanding of patients, and even in Hindu mythology. The author’s interest in understanding “how we imagine cure, and what is at stake in such imaginings” endows his text with a general significance well beyond tuberculosis, to all sorts of ailments and, ultimately, to our very conception of time itself. The manuscript presents its story elegantly and lucidly, ‘plays’ with structure and

form to invite the reader into an intimate conversation, and is based on a rich ensemble of archival, ethnographic, and oral historical sources, as well as films and folklore.”

Bharat Venkat is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Oregon; starting in July 2019, he will be assistant professor at UCLA’s Institute for Society and Genetics. He earned his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. His work has appeared in academic journals as well as in more public forums, ranging from *Cultural Anthropology* and *Public Culture* to *Somatosphere* and *Public Books*. He has been awarded fellowships by the American Council for Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation and participated in the AIIS 2013 summer Tamil Program in Madurai. In addition to his research on medicine, he has been developing a series of new projects related to urban design & climate change, financial planning for the apocalypse, contestations over the definition of sham marriages in relation to immigration benefits, and the comparative study of cults.



Accomplishments of Current and Recent AIIS Fellows

Michele Friedner, who carried out her AIIS senior short-term fellowship “Disability, Diversity and Affirmative Action in Urban India” in 2018, organized a symposium at the University of Chicago Center in Delhi on February 17, 2019 called “Roundtable Discussions: Disentangling Disability and Human Rights.” She is an assistant professor in the Department of Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago. The roundtable addressed three topics: 1) Thinking about Disability, Charity, Entitlements, and Rights. In this roundtable, participants considered what a “human rights approach” might entail in the case of disability in India; 2) The Status of Disability Studies in India: Can Academia and Activism work together? What is Disability Studies in India? In this roundtable, participants considered the connections between the growing academic discipline of how Disability Studies has developed in locally specific ways, both in relation to other academic fields and to other social movements; 3) Disability Activism in India: Ways of Theorizing and Doing. What makes a difference? In this roundtable, participants considered different approaches to disability activism from contentious protests to filing public interest litigation to using social media.



Michele Friedner and Symposium Participants

Samay Raga for Wind Ensemble, former AIIS performing arts fellow (2013-2014) **Aakash Mittal's** wind symphony, had its world premiere at Lawrence University on March 2, 2019. He wrote about this piece, "It is my first time composing for over thirty instruments and my first piece that has more notated/scored material than improvisation. (There is some improvisation in the alto flute cadenza). One of my goals with this piece is to center the music, sounds, and noises I experienced in Kolkata in the creative process. Another goal is to offer a work to the wind band literature that intentionally does not delve into western "tonal" harmony and forms that are the cannon of this medium... [t]his piece is born of my personal journey as a half Indian person in the world. It is a journey wherein music regularly plays the role of guide and companion. In addition to being an exploration of technical musical material, this piece is an expression of specific experiences, people, and imagined realities. *Samay Raga for Wind Ensemble* draws heavily from my studies and performances of Hindustani raga music in India. It is also an homage to the decade of wind band playing that was omnipresent in my musical upbringing yet has been largely absent from my professional career. In writing this piece, I want to contribute both to wind ensemble literature and offer a perspective on the possibilities of the raga as a universal musical system. This piece uses both mediums to imagine a futuristic sound world. It is a landscape where the colorful dissonances of raga music form harmonic skylines that are navigated by flowing melodies and punctuated by rhythmic adventures." Aakash Mittal and the Awaz Trio also performed *Nocturne*, a series of pieces that deconstructs five Hindustani evening and night ragas, at Lincoln Center in September 2018.

Former senior fellow **Michael Fisher**, emeritus professor of History at Oberlin College, had his new book *An Environmental History of India: From Earliest Times to the twenty-First Century* published by Cambridge University Press in 2018. About this book, Professor K. Sivaramakrishnan wrote in a review, "This environmental history of India, from ancient times to the present, synthesizes vast amounts of research in readily accessible prose to bring public history and sophisticated scholarship into a congenial dialogue. Novices and experts alike will learn a lot from the lightly-worn erudition of the author and enjoy the smooth-flowing river of stories the book provides."

Current AIIS junior fellow **Jazmin Graves**, a graduate student in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago was named one of the Global Top 100 Most Influential People of African Descent under 40. MIPAD provides global recognition and leadership training to enhance the local impact of current and future leaders in Africa and its diaspora, in support of the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). About her designation, Ms Graves noted, "[b]eing honored as a MIPADian was a deeply impactful experience for me, both professionally and personally... As an African American woman, it was highly compelling to connect with individuals from almost all of the different African nations identified in my ancestry test results, and to discover the ways in which their unique contributions to the development of Africa and the enrichment of its peoples mirrored my participatory action research projects with the Sidis of Ahmedabad, an Indian community of African ancestry." Ms Graves was also one of the speakers at the opening reception of the "Africans in India: From Slaves to Generals and Rulers" exhibition at the University of Pittsburgh on February 15, 2019. The exhibition, the first of its kind, retraces—in over 100 photographic reproductions of paintings and contemporary photographs—the lives and achievements of a few of the many talented and prominent Sidis of yesterday.

Former AIIS junior fellow **Caleb Simmons** (2013-2014), an assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Arizona, has had a number of recent publications as an outcome of his fellowship research including: *Devotional Sovereignty: Kingship and Religion in India, 1782-1868* (Oxford University Press 2019); "The King and the Yadu Line: Performing Lineage through Dasara in Nineteenth-Century Mysore" in *Nine Nights of the Goddess: The Navaratri Festival in South Asia* edited by Caleb Simmons, Moumita Sen and Hillary Rodrigues (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018); and "History, Heritage, and Myth: Local Historical Imagination in the Fight to Preserve Chamundi Hill" in *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* Vol. 22 No. 3 (2018), pp. 216-37. He also delivered a paper, "Rascally Infidels": The Construction of Politico-Religious Identity in Tipū Sultān's Mysore" in the panel "Memory, Narrative, and Networks in Tipu Sultan's Mysore: The Transformation of Political Culture in Eighteenth-Century Southern India" at the Association for Asian Studies conference in March 2019.

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On a gorgeous, warm day in January, along with fifteen other professors from community colleges throughout the United States, I attended a poignant presentation by Dr. R. Balasubramaniam at the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement's headquarters in Mysore, India.

Dr. Balu, as he likes to be called, enlightened us by describing his decades of experience in carrying out grassroots sustainable development initiatives in southern India, and encouraged us to consider new narratives and approaches for thinking and teaching about sustainability. Sustainable human development, he explained, is not only about having resources available for the next generation (as Western resource-driven narratives often emphasize), but also should seek to expand and broaden human and social capital.

Using a whiteboard to draw a simple analogy of a monkey born under a little fruitless tree (signifying those born in poverty), Dr. Balu explained that growing "human capital" involves teaching people in all segments of society how to think and act differently. He called on us to focus not just on developing infrastructure, but – perhaps more importantly – to figure out new ways of developing

people who are able to see the world as being interdependent, and who are mindful that they are part of a larger system with nature. A Sanskrit phrase, *vasudaiva kutumbakam*, or "the whole world is one family," embodies this central concept.

While in India, we were privileged to meet and interact with many speakers who, like Dr. Balu, gave us new theoretical frameworks through which we could better understand issues of sustainable development in India, with many implications for the rest of the world. It was exciting to learn about these new frameworks, and they led me to consider how paradigms of sustainable urban development in Indian cities might work (or be adapted to work) in the Japanese cities where I carry out most of my research projects.

While I know that I will approach my research and my teaching with a new intellectual clarity after spending two weeks exploring the concept of sustainability from a multitude of new perspectives, there was another layer of learning that happened simultaneously with our lectures, discussions, and travel. Learning about India's growing cities while actually experiencing them first-hand brought about a much deeper awareness than I could possibly have obtained by studying these issues from afar.



The author visiting the Taj Mahal

I'm a strong believer in the value of experiential learning, and had thought I already understood how important this concept is to educators. After all, I conduct research abroad, and frequently take my community college students on field trips to important cultural institutions in New York City, where our campus is located. Yet being a student again for two weeks in India, a place I had known and taught about solely through books, proved to be a powerful reminder of the power of first-hand experience when trying to understand and engage with a new culture.

Unexpectedly, some of my most salient and impactful moments in India had to do with the air quality. I am a runner, and set out on an early-morning run in Mysore, along with a fellow seminar participant. But after only five minutes, we could not run any farther, having inhaled a good deal of thick, smoggy air, and we needed to return to our hotel. Reading about air quality problems, studying index numbers, and looking at photos are useful, but simply don't convey the same kind of impact as actually breathing that air oneself. One a more uplifting note, I had already been aware that India was an exceptionally diverse, varied, and multicultural nation. But being present in India, tasting the food, meeting the people, hearing the music and the languages, and climbing magnificent ancient structures in Jaipur, Delhi, and Agra in the north as

well as Mysore and Bangalore in the south was enlightening and truly brought India to life. I fully appreciate the "continent" part of the "Indian sub-continent" in a way I could not have before.

I returned home with notebooks (yes, plural) full of ideas and information, books from which I will excerpt exciting new material for my world history course packs, and thousands of photographs to share with my students and colleagues as I tell them about the insights I gained during my faculty development seminar in India. Yet the most important thing I returned with from India was a much clearer understanding of how deep and meaningful experiential learning can be. The seminar enabled us to better understand the nuances of the complex global society in which we all live, and to become more deeply aware of the importance of becoming agents of change in our own country, and in our ecologically threatened world.

Robin Kietlinski is an associate professor of history at La Guardia Community College in Queens, New York. She was among the 16 participants in the seminar, "Exploring Urban Sustainability through India's Cities," an intensive capacity-building and curriculum development seminar held in India from January 2-18, 2019. (for more information see feature article on pages 2 through 5).



Tenth Annual Dissertation to Book Workshop Held in October 2018

AIIS held its tenth annual Dissertation to Book workshop at the Wisconsin South Asia Conference in October 2018. The workshop was originally conceived by Professor Susan Wadley of Syracuse University who has organized the workshops since their inception. There were 25 participants-- young scholars of South Asia--all of whom earned their Ph.D. degrees recently. The intensive workshop is designed to help them convert their doctoral dissertations into publishable book manuscripts. There were six faculty mentors including Tulasi Srinivas, Susan Wadley, Afsar Mohammad, Anand Yang, Geraldine Forbes, and Sarah Lamb. Chris Ahn, SUNY Press acquisitions editor for South Asia, led a discussion on the publication process.

The participants and their provisional manuscript titles include:

Ashlee Andrews (Ph.D. Indiana University, currently at University of North Carolina, Greensborough) "The Home Shrine and the Transnational World: Agency and Feminine Labor in Bengali Hindu Women's Domestic Shrine Care."

Rachel Ball-Phillips (Ph.D. Boston College, currently at Southern Methodist University) "Shaping the Marathi Imagination: Film and Regionalism in Western India."

Ariel Bardi (Ph.D. Yale University) "Cleansing, Constructing, and Curating the State: India/Pakistan '47^[1] and Israel/Palestine '48."

Anirban Bashiya (Ph.D. University of Southern California) "Viral Selves: Cellphones, Selfies and the Self-fashioning Subject in Contemporary India."

Rita Biagioli (Ph.D. University of Chicago, currently at University of Chicago) “When Perceiving and Thinking About Reality as Relation Motivates Ritual Behavior: A Study of How Bengali Hindus in the U.S. and in India (Come to) Cognize Gods as Material.”

Emera Bridger-Wilson (Ph.D. Syracuse University, currently at Syracuse University) “Working for Dignity: Tourism, Livelihood, and Self-Making among the Sightseeing Rickshaw Drivers of Keoladeo National Park.”

Genoveva Castro (Ph.D. University of Washington, currently at Yale) “Wājīd ‘Alī Shāh plays Krishna’s stolen flute: the multiplicity of voices in the king of Awadh’s dramatic work.”

Luisa Cortesi (Ph.D. Yale University, currently at Cornell University) “Dangerous Waters: Knowledge, Technologies and Disasters in India.”

Dannah Dennis (Ph.D. University of Virginia, currently at NYU Shanghai) “Nepali First: Nationalism and Citizenship in a New Secular Republic”

Gregory Goulding (Ph.D. UC Berkeley, currently University of Pennsylvania) “The Cold War Poetics of Muktibodh: A Study of Hindi Internationalism, 1943-1964.”

Sara Grewal (Ph.D. University of Michigan, currently MacEwan University) “Urdu Through Its Others: Ghazal, Canonization, and Translation”

Mubashar Hasan (Ph.D. Griffith University, currently at University of Oslo) “Islam and Politics in Bangladesh: The Followers of Ummah.”

Alexander Jabbari (Ph.D. UC Irvine, currently at the University of Oklahoma) “Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu.”

Stephen Johnson (Ph.D. Syracuse University) “Tribal Margins: Dalit Belonging and State Recognition in the Western Himalayas.”

Natasha Koshy (Ph.D. Syracuse University, currently at Indian Institute for Human Settlements) “Enacting

“Technology” and Everything Else: Gendered Practices and the System of Crop Intensification”

Kat Lieder (Ph.D. University of Wisconsin) “Performing “Nirbhaya” (Fearlessness): Reframing Sexual Violence Discourse in Modern Urban India”

Katherine Martineau (Ph.D. University of Michigan, currently at SUNY Binghamton) “Marginal Freedoms: Journalism, Participation, and Moral Multiplicity in Odisha, India”

Heryoon Shin (Ph.D. Yale University, currently at Vanderbilt University) “Building a ‘Modern’ Temple Town: Architecture and Patronage in Banaras, 1750-1900.”

Sunny Sinha (Ph.D. University of South Carolina, currently at Marywood University) “Flying’ female sex workers in India: Using ‘cultural biography’ to understand risk perceptions.”

Emma Natalya Stein (Ph.D. Yale University, current at Freer/Sackler Gallery) “All Streets Lead to Temples: Mapping Monumental Histories in Kanchipuram, ca 8th-12th centuries C.E.”

Brian Turnbull (Ph.D. University of Kansas, currently at St. Petersburg College) “Women who only serve Chai: Gender Reservations and autonomy in India.”

Rajesh Veeraraghavan (Ph.D. UC Berkeley, currently at Georgetown University) “Open Governance and Surveillance: A Study of the National Rural Employment Program in Andhra Pradesh, India.”

Sanderien Verstappen (Ph.D. University of Amsterdam, currently at Leiden University) “Mobility and the Region: A Multi-scalar Ethnography of the Vohra Gujarati Community in India and Abroad.”

Vivek Virani (Ph.D. UCLA, currently at University of North Texas) “Find the True Country: Devotional Music and the Self in India’s National Culture.”

Kimberly Walters (Ph.D. University of Chicago, currently at California State University, Long Beach) “Rescued from Rights: From Sex Work to Sex Trafficking in India.”

Faculty Development Seminar on Urban Sustainability Held in India January 2019

AIIS partnered with the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) to hold an intensive capacity-building and curriculum development seminar called “Exploring Urban Sustainability through India’s Cities” in India from January 2 – 18, 2019. The seminar was designed for faculty at community colleges and minority-serving institutions, in order to promote the development of “internationalized” learning environments that both broaden their students’ cultural horizons and foster critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills for an increasingly interconnected world. It included visits to the cities of Delhi, Jaipur, Mysore and Bangalore to study the various economic, cultural, social and environmental pressures confronting some of India’s most important emerging cities within their distinctive histories and cultures; these are now being reshaped as more and more Indians migrate to urban areas in search of work and opportunity. The 16 participants were chosen from an applicant pool of more than 100.



Sian Proctor's Word Cloud

In addition to exploring the overlapping and cross-cutting challenges and opportunities created by India's rapid urban development, participants gained first-hand experience—through specialist-led site visits and cultural excursions—of India's fascinating history, culture, languages, religions, and contemporary society that can be harnessed to address urban sustainability. Throughout the program, participants learned from and had the opportunity to partner with local university faculty engaged in international collaboration and exchanges. The workshop was led by Professor Sandria Freitag of North Carolina State University and Dr. Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi of Karnataka State Open University.

Participants brought a wide range of experience as well as goals and perspectives to the program that they shared with each other and with local experts in India. Sian Proctor, who was the education outreach officer for the first Hawai'i Space Exploration Analog and Simulation (HI-SEAS) Mission - a NASA funded analog habitat for human space flight to Mars, started the sustainability academic program at South Mountain Community College and is the sustainability coordinator for that campus. This program offered an excellent opportunity for her to experience first-hand how India deals with population growth, economic development, social justice, resources management, and waste management in an effort to become more sustainable. Scott Walker served on a local city Planning and Zoning Commission for several years in the greater San Antonio-Austin, Texas "corridor." He is curious to learn how other societies address growing cities and is developing a new Environmental Science course and learning through this India seminar how environmental pressures are balanced (or not) against human needs for urban economic opportunities, energy, water/wastewater, municipal solid waste, and clean air would give ground to a more vivid background to working with such issues for his students. Professor Sandy Freitag noted that "the deep knowledge and sophistication participants brought to the program -- about a range of complementary academic

specialties -- meant they could ask smart questions and discover potentially promising ways to collaborate with the speakers they met."

In his application, Kurt Dershem noted, "At both the local and the international level, many of the challenges we face – and the opportunities those challenges present – necessitate a broader perspective. Dire problems like environmental degradation, wealth inequality, violent extremism, and conflicts which create refugees cannot be solved in isolation. Dialogue and collaboration are essential to addressing these issues. By breaking down barriers of mistrust and misunderstanding, educators play a small but indispensable role in the effort to find solutions." Kerri Finlayson co-teaches a class called "Introduction to Environmental and Sustainable Living." This class is the foundational class for North Central Michigan College's Environmental and Sustainability Studies A.A. program, which she co-created.

Before leaving for India, participants were provided with a variety of background readings including an article that appeared in the Nature Conservancy magazine: "India Rising: One of the planet's fastest-growing countries steps up to balance economic growth with nature" (<https://www.nature.org/en-us/explore/magazine/magazine-articles/india-rising/>); "Introduction: *States, Markets and Society – New Relationships for a New Development Era*", Melissa Leach (ed), in *IDS Bulletin: Transforming Development Knowledge*, vol. 47, no. 2A, November 2016: Looking Back to Look Forward; and "Consumer Behavior of Urban Residents of Jaipur City for Water Supply," by A. S. Jethoo, Dept of Civil Engineering, MNIT.



Seminar Participants in Jaipur

The seminar included round-tables with NGOs and other institutional actors, such as one in Delhi on the "Role of the Three Sectors in Sustainability" which included the Yamuna River Project (Mriyanka Saxena), Grassroots Action led by slum participants (Manu Gupta of SEEDS) and Crafting the National Guidelines for Responsibilities of Business (Shankar Venkateswaran). It also included a number of site visits, including to the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement in Mysore, an NGO focused on health in western and Ayurvedic forms; a meeting with Mysore Municipal Corporation officials and visit to garbage disposal facility; and a visit to a water recycling plant or an urban lake renewal project in Bangalore.

The program left participants with strong impressions as well as plans for follow-up. Scott Walker noted in a blog post he wrote, “Despite not caring much for cities, I nevertheless find myself fascinated with how [cities in India] operate with so many people; how they sustain themselves; how people move from place to place, and generally how people relate to these incredible places. Far from the orderly traffic and character of most US cities by comparison, these Indian cities function at a certain level despite the chaos.” For Janny Li “one theme that was explored in great detail in this seminar was the relationship between NGOs and civil societies...This gave me the realization that NGOs were a viable career track that our students, for the most part, are not professionalized for. This seminar provided the inspiration for how to create partnerships and opportunities with NGOs moving forward,” while for Brian Turnbull, “engaging with practitioners on the ground (like the waste management organization in Mysore) provided incredibly valuable information and the opportunity to discuss important issues with the people most affected. Also, contacts with Indian faculty and organizations that I can use for future study abroad or faculty exchange programs. The presentations that were particularly useful came from VIIS in Mysore, who gave specific details on their program offerings, costs, student arrangements and contact information.”



Lalbagh Garden in Mysore (c) 2019 Scott L Walker

Following the conclusion of the seminar, participants were asked to submit concept notes, detailing their plans for incorporating their experiences in India into their scholarship and teaching. One example was Karen Guerrero who wrote, “I am developing an online professional development module on India with a focus on urban sustainability and citizen engagement. This module will be available for pre-service and in-service teachers through Mary Lou Fulton Teacher’s College at ASU and through the Arizona Geographic Alliance. This module will also be shared with CAORC, AIIS, and fellow participants to share/use as desired. Though the intent of the module is to educate K-12 teachers on India’s culture and human geography through a sustainability lens, it will be embedded in the courses I teach and will be shared within the teacher networks I am involved in. It will also be disseminated at conferences where I will be presenting.” Other participants plan on creating study abroad opportunities at their institutions, such as Janet Armitage who says “My Indian field experiences and observations will serve as a foundation to build a study abroad program to India entitled, “Health and Sustainability in Urban India.” This program will focus on public health and urban life and will include ten or more students in a three-week program to Mysore and the Vivekananda Institute of Indian Studies (VIIS). This St. Mary’s program is aligned with a new initiative on campus for faculty to promote short-term study abroad programs.” In addition, as Professor Freitag noted, “a serendipitous development around this first program has been the ability for several of the Title VI centers to work with AIIS and CAORC on supporting this program, which enabled us to expand the numbers involved, to

help with national access through their recruitment efforts, and hopefully in future, to plan for follow-up activities for returned participants."

The participants included:

Janet Armitage, an associate professor of Sociology at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas
Jacob Bethem, an instructor at Paradise Valley Community College in Phoenix, Arizona
Kurt Dershem, a philosophy instructor at South Central College in North Mankato, Minnesota
Kerri Finlayson, a professor of Social Sciences at North Central Michigan College in Petoskey, Michigan
Carol "Kari" Frisch, a communications instructor at Central Lakes College in Brainerd, Minnesota
Karen Guerrero, a faculty member at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona
Armando Hernandez-Christian, an assistant professor at the College of Southern Maryland
Ssebunya Kasule, an assistant professor at St. Louis Community College
Robin Kietlinski, an associate professor of history at La Guardia Community College in Queens, New York
Janny Li an assistant professor of Anthropology at East Los Angeles College in Monterey Park, California
Sian Proctor a professor of Geoscience at South Mountain Community College in Phoenix, Arizona
Martin Quirk, a professor of history at Rock Valley College in Rockford, Illinois
Danny Sexton, an assistant professor of English at Queensborough Community College in Bayside, New York
Brian Turnbull, an instructor at St. Petersburg College in St. Petersburg, Florida
Scott Walker, a professor of Geography and Environmental Sustainability at Northwest Vista College in San Antonio, Texas
Candace Warner, a professor of Sociology at Columbia State Community College in Columbia, Tennessee



Brian Hatcher Delivers the 2018 Annual Tarun Mitra Memorial Lecture

Brian Hatcher, a professor at Tufts University, presented his talk "Rammohun Roy in Gujarat: Old Comparisons and New" on December 7, 2018 at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta in Kolkata, which co-sponsored the event. Professor Amiya Dev, Convener of the Tarun Mitra Memorial Lecture Committee and Professor Rosinka Chaudhuri, Director of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta jointly presided at the event.



Professor Hatcher's presentation was based on the research conducted during his recently completed AIIS senior fellowship. His project seeks to problematize the origins and enduring legacy of reform-based discourse as it has shaped accounts of modern Hinduism and the Indian nation. Professor Hatcher discussed how Rammohun Roy was understood by British observers active in early nineteenth-century Gujarat, who compared him to Sahajanand Swami, founder of the Swaminarayan Sampraday, who had begun to garner considerable attention at the time. His goal for his project is to arrive at a way both to expose how reform became a comparative tool for early observers and to gesture toward another, less normative framework within which early colonial figures like Rammohun and Sahajanand might be compared.

The annual Tarun Mitra Memorial Lecture was established by the friends of the late Tarun Mitra---who was the chief officer at the AIIS Kolkata Center from 1965 until his retirement in 1991--to honor his memory. The Tarun Mitra annual lecture has become a fixture of the intellectual life of Kolkata.



AIIS Sponsors Panel at AAS to Highlight Research of its Recent Junior Fellows

AIIS sponsored the panel "AIIS Showcase on New Research: Coastal South Asia and its Cultural Connections" at the Association for Asian Studies annual conference, on March 23, 2019. The panel was organized by Professor Purnima Dhavan of the University of Washington and chaired by Professor Tamara Sears of Rutgers University. Panelists included three recent junior fellows who spoke about their research: Arathi Menon of Columbia University (Hipped and Gabled: Medieval Kerala's Sacred Architecture), Deepthi Murali of the University of Illinois (The Politics and Transculturality of Decorative Arts in Kerala, 1750-1875) and Iva Patel of the University of Iowa (Assessing Mercantile and Martial Tropes in Writings from Gujarat, 1750-1850). The panel highlighted recent emerging scholarship on the material culture and textual traditions of the Indian Ocean world that has been shaped by new studies that highlight the complex ways in which coastal communities drew on a variety of maritime and pan-regional cultural repertoires. In creating material artifacts, texts, and performative genres artists and authors situated a littoral perspective in practices that were both locally grounded but which also engaged with multiple cultural perspectives. The papers in this panel explored different examples from Cera-period Kerala, Early Modern Madurai, Colonial Gujarat, and Travancore. The presenters examined the role played by institutional authorities, both sacred and secular, in shaping the ways in which such transcultural exchange was articulated. In each case, using new field research each presenter examined the complex ways in which agents embedded in coastal communities used aesthetic, textual, and performative techniques to engage the multiple, overlapping audiences of these complex, littoral worlds.

Arathi Menon's paper sought to propose a new framework for the study of the region's medieval material culture that includes an understanding of the synthesized aesthetic principles that resulted from the region's composite cultural history. Within this framework, the seemingly inexplicable juxtaposition of scenes from the Old Testament and the Ramayana, carved on the stylobate of a gatehouse in one medieval church in Kerala, for example, can be understood as anything but paradoxical. She argues that a corollary of the Hindu Cēra kingdom's (ca. 800 – 1124) policies was the canonization of a shared architectural and artistic vocabulary that manifested in the region's sacred monuments. Architectural and sculptural notes of syncretism in the region's churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples illustrate an idiomatic mode of visual discourse that was fashioned in a historical milieu as complex as it was cosmopolitan. In her paper, **Deepthi Murali** demonstrates the many ways in which Kerala's decorative arts performed agentive roles in the practice of kingship, as mediators in Indian-European diplomatic encounters, and as agents and products of ecological imperialism. In doing so, she sought to consider decorative arts as agentive beings in productive thing-human relationships especially in the liminal spaces of littoral South Asia, and in particular, to consider their transculturality as a performative tool within cultural and political practices of colonial India. **Iva Patel's** presentation made a case for attending to a nexus of the merchant-martial networks as it appears in the devotional and the didactic works produced in Kathiawad-- now Saurashtra, the peninsula between the Gulf of Khambhat and the Gulf of Kutch, and an important hub of mercantile activity in pre- and early colonial western India-- to discuss the impact the region's involvement in maritime and land-based trade had on the religious rhetoric found there. The writings frequently include mercantile tropes of book-keeping and gain-and-loss, and martial tropes of displaying courage, fighting and conquering, and safeguarding to describe everyday practices of interacting with the divine and to instruct their audiences on the same. Her paper examined Vaishnava and Swaminarayan lyric compositions and transcribed conversations, and assesses the appeal of such tropes and the metaphorical linkages

they foster. Through this exercise, Kathiawad emerges as a vital cultural-economic space in contextualizing sectarian and non-sectarian articulations of devotional expressions, contemplative practices, and instructions on shaping a devotional selfhood.

Several other former AIIS fellows delivered papers at the March 2019 AAS meeting, including:

Lalit Batra “Manholes of Caste and the Indian City”

Amanda Lanzillo, “Persianate Professionals?: Employment between Colonial and “Princely” South Asia”

Navine Murshid “The “Illegal Bangladeshi” in Assam”

Naveena Naqvi “Mercenary Memoirs: The Written World of Military Service in Afghan North India”

Rahul Bjorn Parson “Whose Golden Bengal?: Kolkata's Defiantly Heterogenous Hindi Tradition”

Heidi Pauwels “Songs, Stories, and Kirtan: Towards a Consideration of an Eastern Indian Literary Landscape”

Megha Sehdev “The Numerical Phenomenology of Divorce Settlements in an Indian Counseling Cell”

Caleb Simmons, ““Rascally Infidels”: The Construction of Politico-Religious Identity in Ṭipū Sultān’s Mysore”

Christina Welsch “From Grief Mars Lost His Sword: The Legacy of Tipu Sultan as Colonial Critique”



Sylvia Vatuk, Dennis McGilvray, Rachel Fell McDermott and Susan Bean at the AIIS reception at AAS March 2019



AIIS Welcomes Three New Member Institutions in 2019

Within the space of a few weeks, the AIIS was delighted to welcome three new members to its ranks: Portland State University, Texas State University and the University of California, San Diego.

Portland State University has a small but growing undergraduate program on South Asia within its the College of Urban and Public Affairs, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Institute for Asian Studies. At PSU, academic interest in the Asian continent, especially, in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East has been longstanding. These interests are represented at PSU within the College of Urban and Public Affairs, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Institute for Asian Studies, Middle East Studies Center, Center for Japanese Studies, PSU-Waseda (Japan) Transnational Programs, and the Confucius Institute. Faculty at PSU offer courses relevant to India in the Departments of Anthropology, Communication Studies, Dance, Geography, International and Global Studies, Music, Philosophy, Physical Education, and Politics. Courses include Peoples and Cultures of South Asia; Advanced Topics in South Asian Anthropology; Himalaya & Tibet; Bollywood; International Politics of Asia; East Indian Dance: Bharatha Natyam-Dance of South Asia; World Music – Asia; Introduction to Asian Philosophy; and

Yoga. The University has awarded faculty enhancement grants to tenured and tenure track faculty who conduct research on South Asia. Michele Gamburd of the Anthropology Department was a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore in Winter 2018; Jeremy Spoon, also of the Anthropology Department, received a National Science Foundation RAPID award from the Cultural Anthropology Program (November 2015-April 2018) for his proposed research on critical transitions following 2015 Nepal earthquakes, while Priya Kapoor in International and Global Studies and her overseas collaborators received a National Research Foundation of Korea Grant for USD 1.3 Million annually for seven years.

Texas State University has been working with AIIS to offer a three-week, credit-bearing Study Abroad program in India. Currently, the program goes to Delhi, Mussoorie, and Agra. In 2020, the location will change to Mumbai and Goa for one summer. Texas State offers a number of India-related courses; Leah Renold teaches the undergraduate courses on the History of India, History of Modern India, Gandhi and Non-violence, Peace and Nonviolence, and History of Religions of India and a graduate course on Gandhi in World History. Caroline Ritter also offers a graduate courses on Imperialism and Colonialism that have a significant Indian component. Suparno Banerjee in English teaches courses on post-colonial literature and theory, Binita Mehta teaches Advaita, Yoga, and courses on Asian and Indian religions, and Natasha Mikles offers courses on Buddhism, World Religions, and Myth and Cosmology: Hell. There will be a new Religious Studies major by Fall 2020 that will add new courses on religious traditions of India. Guest speakers who recently came to campus to speak on Indian topics included Mark Kenoyer from the University of Wisconsin-Madison who gave a presentation on the latest research on the Harappan Civilization and Gail Minault, Professor Emeritus from the University of Texas at Austin who spoke on the Khilafat Movement in India as part of a seminar on the History Interpretations of the Caliphate. In addition, the Indian Student Association has monthly meetings and an annual Diwali celebration that showcases Indian dance, music, dress, and food, while a vibrant South Asian Students Association, composed of students from all of South Asia, has offered monthly lectures or cultural events on campus, each featuring

a free catered Indian dinner, which drew around seventy-five students of South Asia heritage at each event.

The University of California, San Diego is the fifth University of California campus to become a member of AIIS, joining Berkeley, Irvine, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. UCSD began its South Asian Initiative in 2016 to encourage program development, discussion, research, and cross-disciplinary exchange among departments and schools. It has more than fifty affiliates across nine of ten academic divisions and professional schools at UCSD. The Steering Committee of the South Asian Initiative, chaired by Professor Kamala Viswaswaran, includes administrators and representatives of the various departments and programs that teach about and carry out research in South Asian countries. Under the South Asian Initiative, UCSD has organized seminars, campus events, discussion sessions, community programs, and opportunities to mentor graduate students. Over the past three academic years, the South Asia Initiative has hosted a range of small seminars and large, campus-wide events that appeal to faculty and students across divisions. It has offered interdisciplinary round table discussions bringing scientists and humanists into dialogue and has also designed innovative undergraduate programming in conjunction with UCSD's Geisel Library and the writing programs in the undergraduate residential colleges on campus and has also collaborated with community organizations such as the South Asia Arts Council of the San Diego Museum of Art, and the India Fine Arts Academy of San Diego to organize performances that reach a larger public, with performances from the Navarasa Dance Theatre Performance, and a lecture demonstration by Sangita Kalanidhi Trichy Sankaran. In 2018, UCSD approved a South Asian Studies minor that includes courses in Anthropology, Music, Linguistics, Hindi, Political Science, Archaeology, Global Health, Economics, Ethnic Studies, Economics, Communication Studies, International Studies, Theatre and Dance, Human Development, Literature, and Religion. About twenty UCSD faculty teach courses on South Asia, such as Indian Classical Music, South Asia Politics and Conflict, Archaeology of Asia, Gandhi in the Modern World, Literature of the Indian Subcontinent, and Food and Culture in South Asia.



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