

American Institute of Pakistan Studies Outreach e-Bulletin

Wednesday, July 7, 2010

Sharing Pakistan-studies events with the AIPS community

Dear Members: Please send information about your accomplishments and activities; articles and books published (or in press), conferences organized, call for papers, awards received, promotions, tenure, travel grants, panels organized, in short all the wonderful news that you would like to share with the rest of us. As you will notice in this issue we have started to again publish short essays (1000-2000 words) based on research on Pakistan. We would specifically encourage those among you who have been recent recipients of AIPS fellowships to send us their writing (although everyone is welcome to contribute). The first essay in this series is by Hafeez Jamali who conducted archival research in UK supported by AIPS funds.

Send your information to the AIPS secretariat (aips@pakistanstudies-aips.org) or to Kamran Asdar Ali (asdar@mail.utexas.edu)

Announcements

NEW AIPS Short-Term Lecture and Research Fellowships in Pakistan 2010-11

NEXT DEADLINE: September 1, 2010.

Applications are invited for short-term lecture and research fellowships for senior scholars at the post-doctoral level and for advanced graduate students at the pre-doctoral level. Duration of fellowships will be from one to five months. Fellows will be required to present a minimum of two lectures per month at approved host institutions (see below) or the AIPS centers in Islamabad or Lahore. Each participant will be required to sign a release that stipulates the relevant security issues that need to be adopted.

<http://www.pakistanstudies-aips.org/fellowships/fellowships/index.html>

Report from the Field

Producing Tribal Balochistan: Sovereignty and Rule in a Colonial Frontier State

By Hafeez Jamali, University of Texas, Austin

A key question in recent historiography of South Asia has been the production of people and production of space-time through the apparatuses of colonial rule and their persistence in the post-colonial period of nationalist rule (Chatterjee 2006; Goswami 2004). However, most of these studies have focused on 'regulation' or 'settled' districts of India where British control was relatively uniform and the administrative machinery sufficiently well-oiled to introduce projects of 'improvement'. One the one hand, where the British did encounter adivasi or indigenous peoples of India as in Jharkhand, their

presence or activities did not impinge on strategic imperial interests and the problem of their regulation was subsumed within the broader question of district management. On the other hand, in the frontier territories of Balochistan and the Tribal Areas of North West Frontier Province, colonial authorities had to operate in an environment over which they had less than full control. Moreover, in these territories, at the edge of the empire, the question of protecting imperial interests from the unhealthy influence of rival European powers such as Russia and France and the defense of British India haunted the imperial self much more. Thus, colonial authorities were faced with the problem of securing the attachment to their cause of reluctant tribesmen who had historically shown only nominal allegiance to any central authority and defied it openly whenever the opportunity was offered. My archival research in the British library suggests that in the case of colonial Balochistan (or Kalat Khanate), a frontier state, the exercise of rule was based on a mix of relations of force (sovereignty) and methods of rule (consent).

[View the full report](#)

Dissertation Workshop, AIPS Islamabad-May 17-19, 2010

Report: Kamran Asdar Ali

The second dissertation workshop for PhD and MPhil candidates in Pakistani Universities was conducted in Islamabad in May by Humeira Iqtidar (LUMS and Cambridge University) and Kamran Asdar Ali (University of Texas, Austin). This workshop series is a collaborative initiative between Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and AIPS and the first one was held in May of 2009.

The theme for this particular dissertation workshop focused on anthropological concerns of studying diversity and difference within social spaces. The workshop sought to discuss issues of gender, class, religious and ethnic difference in an historical and anthropological framework. Within this context, the call for proposals encouraged the potential participants to engage with the social-historical and critical understandings of urban practices in Pakistan. However, the range of proposals that were received did not always follow the guidelines. Due to social anthropology not being taught at many universities, the co-coordinators decided to select those candidates whose research were broadly related to the advertised parameters.

The twelve participants were from disciplines of Sociology, History, Linguistics, Social Work, Political Science and Business Studies. The students' research interests focused on issues of social change, ethnic difference, poverty, gender hierarchies, province-centre relationship and the language question in Pakistan. They also came from universities as diverse as Khairpur in Sind to Kohat in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Only candidates from Universities in Baluchistan were missing in the selected group, something future coordinators may want to keep in mind when recruiting for their workshops. The three day workshop was divided into specific sessions. For the morning session the students came prepared having read pre-selected articles that had been sent to them prior to their arrival in Islamabad. The other three sessions each day were dedicated to discussing student proposals. These sessions

consisted of short presentations followed by open and rigorous discussion on the topic. They were conducted as a graduate seminar with the coordinators intervening only to guide the discussion and to raise pertinent questions. The overall atmosphere remained one of intellectual curiosity and academic challenge. The seriousness of engagement was indeed remarkable and the candidates, who in many cases were lecturers in their respective universities, were eager to question their own established points of view. This said, what was also evident was the unevenness of training in different universities (e.g. lack of mentoring in some cases) and the non-access to academic journals, books and other online resources.

The students themselves, as elsewhere, were serious and dedicated. Yet an important question for the co-coordinators was how to translate their enthusiasm into a sustained academic focus in their respective fields of study. These are broader questions that need to be discussed as this excellent initiative develops further with subsequent workshops in the coming months. Perhaps based on a cumulative experience over 2-3 years a dialogue can be initiated between AIPS colleagues and HEC of Pakistan or with particular programs in Pakistani universities.

Finally and importantly the workshop could not have been organized without the support of the HEC, but mostly without the hard work, attention to detail and generous hospitality of the very able staff and colleagues at the AIPS office in Islamabad.

New & Noteworthy

***Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* by Iftikhar Dadi**

University of North Carolina Press (Islamic Civilization & Muslim Networks Series)

This pioneering work traces the emergence of the modern and contemporary art of Muslim South Asia in relation to transnational modernism and in light of the region's intellectual, cultural, and political developments.

Art historian Iftikhar Dadi here explores the art and writings of major artists, men and women, ranging from the late colonial period to the era of independence and beyond. He looks at the stunningly diverse artistic production of key artists associated with Pakistan, including Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Zainul Abedin, Shakir Ali, Zubeida Agha, Sadequain, Rasheed Araeen, and Naiza Khan. Dadi shows how, beginning in the 1920s, these artists addressed the challenges of modernity by translating historical and contemporary intellectual conceptions into their work, reworking traditional approaches to the classical Islamic arts, and engaging the modernist approach towards subjective individuality in artistic expression. In the process, they dramatically reconfigured the visual arts of the region. By the 1930s, these artists had embarked on a sustained engagement with international modernism in a context of dizzying social and political change that included decolonization, the rise of mass media, and developments following the national independence of India and Pakistan in 1947.

Bringing new insights to such concepts as nationalism, modernism, cosmopolitanism, and tradition, Dadi

underscores the powerful impact of transnationalism during this period and highlights the artists' growing embrace of modernist and contemporary artistic practice in order to address the challenges of the present era.

***The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab* by Farina Mir**

University of California Press (South Asia across the Disciplines Series)

This rich cultural history set in Punjab examines a little-studied body of popular literature to illustrate both the durability of a vernacular literary tradition and the limits of colonial dominance in British India. Farina Mir asks how *qisse*, a vibrant genre of epics and romances, flourished in colonial Punjab despite British efforts to marginalize the Punjabi language. She explores topics including Punjabi linguistic practices, print and performance, and the symbolic content of *qisse*. She finds that although the British denied Punjabi language and literature almost all forms of state patronage, the resilience of this popular genre came from its old but dynamic corpus of stories, their representations of place, and the moral sensibility that suffused them. Her multidisciplinary study reframes inquiry into cultural formations in late-colonial north India away from a focus on religious communal identities and nationalist politics and toward a widespread, ecumenical, and place-centered poetics of belonging in the region.

Message from Association of Asian Studies

Robert Snow, the Director for Development and Strategic Planning at the Association of Asian Studies has requested an announcement for CAORC members who may be interested in putting together a panel or round-table at the next AAS meeting (March 31 – April 3, 2011 in Hawaii).

In his message he noted that “the AAS is trying to bring more presenters from Asia, especially from countries in South and Southeast Asia that have been somewhat under-represented.....We are also trying to diversify the voices of presenters at AAS meetings – meaning policy makers, journalists, public intellectuals, people from the NGO world, and so on. I believe that people in the CAORC network are likely to have connections with people in these other realms.”

The call for proposals can be found at <http://www.asian-studies.org/annual-meeting/index.htm> and are due by August 5, 2010.

If you have an announcement for an upcoming e-bulletin, please email: aips@pakistanstudies-aips.org