Department of History
University of Delhi
Research Scholars' Workshop 2018
Contemporary Practices of History
13-15 March 2018

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DAY ONE: 13TH March:
SESSION ONE: 9:00 – 10:30 – Chair: Prof. Farhat Hasan
POLITICAL ORDERINGS

1) *The self image of Royalty in Early Medieval Bengal and Assam*
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Governmentality is aimed at the subjects, which allows rulers to rule with the former's consensus. It is instituted in multiple and complex ways, involving both the ruling elite as well as the subject populace. Sources like inscriptions show that from the Gupta period onwards , a wide variety of techniques like the construction of elaborate genealogies, appropriation of the *Itihasa-Purana* tradition , patronage of art and literature , financially supporting the Brahmanas, tirthas, temples and monasteries through grants of land came into vogue. Furthermore, the literature, inscriptions, coins, motifs and art of the period show a repetitive set of imageries and visual symbols through which royalty was represented. This was a pan-Indian phenomenon, in which societal pool of religious ideas, symbols and institutions was used by those by those who wielded power to construct a coherent identity in the politico-social realm, to fulfill the twin task of validating and consolidating their status. Political legitimation thus involved manipulative exercise on part of the ruling class, which by maneuvering institutions, ideas and belief-systems of various groups, generated consensus, and created authority. Such manipulative exercises to gain legitimacy were seen across the sub-continent in the early medieval period, which witnessed local state formation in various regions. So an analysis into the land grant charters, which seemed merely yielding only genealogical charts and catalogues of battle, can actually give us an idea of how polity evolved in the first period. In the present paper, I intend to look into the early medieval inscriptions from the regions of Bengal and Assam in order to look into the various devices that the ruling elites in the two historically constructed regions devised to constitute governmentality.

2) *Begums of Shahjahanabad: 'Piety', Patronage and Resistance in Colonial India*
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Shahjahanabad was the last of the seven cities of Delhi, established by the fifth Mughal Emperor Shahjahan. Great planning was involved in the making of *Dar-ul-Khilafa* with the Red Fort situated at the most strategic position to command the entire city to the higher pedestal, indicating the majesty of an imperial capital. A huge Masjid was planned at the nearby hill-top which was suggestively named as *Masjid-e Jahan Numa*. The hyperbolic description was given to suggest that it is not just confined to the city but was something for much larger territorial limits. Though the imperial Mughals largely functioned in the homo-social world of men, one would find a significant participation of women, particularly from the imperial/noble background

beginning to make pietistic self-assertion, particularly from the second quarter of the 17th century. Hitherto negotiated with the female homo-social world through the normative of imperial etiquettes about appearance and mobility, this century witnessed them moving from the role of 'begum' of court to the women of public charity. Over a period, one would see the strong presence of women from various strands of the society disturbing the monosocial world of piety and patronage. Muslim women between the empires-the Mughal and the British-engaged in various activities of piety by not only constructing mosques but other public institutions such as *sarai*, dargahs and gardens as part of their 'charity', a major component of Islamic pietistic world. They not only feminized Islamic piety areas, but heralded a new meaning to the idea of religion itself. Over a period of time, north India witnessed a number of such piety institutions bearing the name of their female patrons. Masjids such as *Masjid-e Fatehpuri, Masjid-e Akbarabadi, Zinat-ul Masjid* in and around Shahjahanabad clearly show the new self-assertion of women from various social layers- stretching from imperial households to courtesans. These mosques left a great impact on the cultural and political situations of the city and changed the ways in which 'religion' was perceived. It is true that Mughal women could play important roles in cultivating court etiquettes, but their new assertion through constructing piety/public institutions and direct involvements in the cultural and social spaces of Shahjahanabad was a remarkable shift in the largely patriarchal imperial culture.

3) *Politics Great and Small: The Charter Act of 1813 and the Assertion of Sovereignty in India*
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The Charter Act of 1813, which formally asserted British Sovereignty on the Territories and Possessions of the English East India Company, has been noted by historians to hold significance since it marks a turning point in Colonial and British Imperial History. It has been included among other indicators of the change in British attitudes towards British Imperialism. It is also held to mark the beginning of a period which saw the British gradually doing away with the *de-jure* ambiguities of rule they had operated under, in India, in the previous century, a process which culminated with the final resolution of contradictions after the Great Revolt of 1857. This paper's aim is to explore the underlying reasons for the assertion of British Sovereignty in India. Noting that historians have paid little attention to the timing of the assertion, and its underlying constitutive process, it looks at Britain's Parliament during the passage of the Act. The working premise is to consider Legislations as events in history, rather than merely documents. The argument highlights the conjunction of macro- and micro- events in the legislative process. At the macro level, it discusses the global network of events influencing Parliament which in turn directly affected India; the impact of the pressures of war in Europe, trans-Atlantic tensions, and evolving British socio-political trends, on legislative deliberations on India. In combination with these, the paper also examines the personal interventions and agendas of specific people in the

legislative process, contextualizing the importance of influential individuals in the larger narratives of history. This bridging of the grand global and societal sweeps of history with the actions, motivations and politics of individuals, can help analyses of Colonial and Imperial histories, especially with regard to the complexities of the reasons for the policies and actions of Empires and Colonial States.

SESSION 2: 11:00 – 12:30 – Chair: Dr. Sanghamitra Misra
FORESTS, ANIMALS AND HISTORICAL AGENCY

1) *Fearless Women and Fearful Tigers: The Forest as a 'Liminal' Space in the 17th century* Raya Mangal
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This paper looks at the interconnectedness of gender and ecology in pre-colonial Bengali texts and their manifestation within a space. This space a 'liminal' one, a transitional zone, that represents an interface, it is also a space that bridges the gap in the ideational and material - between what is familiar and unfamiliar. In the Mangal Kavya texts, a genre that represents an important phase of pre-colonial literary works in Bengal spanning from the 15th to the 18th centuries, the liminal took found representation through metaphors as a forest or a large mass of water (river or sea). This paper looks closely at a lesser discussed Mangal Kavya, the *Raya Mangal* of Krishnaram Das, which is the story of the worship of Dakshin Raya. He is considered (literally) to be the Lord of the South and of the Tigers and is still widely worshipped throughout the Sundarbans. The difference between the liminal spaces in most of the Mangal Kavyas and the *Raya Mangal* is that while in the former, one witnessed the journey to the liminal and of overcoming it, the latter is entirely situated in it. The story of Dakshin Raya takes one back to a more defined space. He caters to the area of the Sundarbans, which is a mangrove forest, in the delta of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna. The central argument of this paper revolves around the liminal space in this composition with special reference to the depiction of female characters. This paper will argue, after elaborating on the idea and the formation of the liminal space, how the conventional gender binaries gets dissolved or reversed at a place such a forest, or under the danger of living in close proximity to wildlife, in this case, tigers. This paper will highlight how the agency attributed to women in the *Raya Mangal* is strikingly different from how women are represented in other texts of the same genre, and how this becomes an intervention in looking at Mangal Kavya texts.

2) *Princely ecology, wilderness and wildlife management in Indian princely states*
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In this theme I am going to examine the ways in which, Indian princes correlated the preservation and use of well maintained hunting grounds rich in desirable flora and fauna with the enjoyment of higher status, strong defenses against foreign interference, and more compliant

subjects(in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century). As a result, they carefully managed wilderness and wildlife in their territories. Major part impacts on environments and biodiversity, with ongoing relevance to the ways in which wildlife and wilderness are perceived in the subcontinent today emerged from the widespread conviction of these rulers that their attempts to govern ecosystems and wildlife demographics were natural and necessary functions of the state. Evidence drawn from hunting memoirs, photographs, paintings, archival records, administrative reports, shooting diaries I am trying to trace the intimate relationship between Indian sovereigns, wilderness and wildlife, therefore, informs new understanding of princely identity, south Asian environmental history, and the elite receptions of European and colonial science and managerial practice relating to forests and wild animals in the era of British paramountcy. The main key of this paper to understanding Indian princely state environment, flora and fauna is in the identity and functions of princely wilderness, or wilderness as located and conceptualized by the princes. Indian princes in the late colonial period did view princely wilderness had flexible boundaries that were contingent on the presence of characteristics flora and fauna; it was intimately connected with good government and princely sovereignty; and because it was perilous as it was beneficent, only those who were exceptionally powerful and self-controlled, or half wild themselves, could interact with it fruitfully.

3) *History of animals or animals in history: Making a case for dogs in history*
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Is it possible to write history of animals, or can we only account for them in human history? Keeping this question in mind, this paper seeks to understand the ways in which dogs have been and could be understood historically. As the oldest companion to humans, their presence spans from prehistoric to historic times. They do have an uninterrupted existence which has been much varied in nature. The 'animal turn' in history has enabled scholars to attend to animals as a distinct and important category of research and analysis. This focus is now being felt in Indian (and South Asian) history writing as well. Taking inspiration from it, this paper focuses on 19th and 20th century to understand the meaning and implication of being termed a 'stray dog' in colonial India. The emphasis will be on legal measures enacted to 'control' and 'manage' the ownerless dogs. Much of these efforts were modelled on the British understanding and legal formulations but did not have similar impact as in Britain. The paper aims to suggest certain reasons for the same. Crucial to note is the fact that these measures were not merely a case of usual exchange between the metropole and its colony but seem to have a colonial global context and presence. There is, thus, a need to go beyond the colonial and look for colonial global connect (especially with regard to animals). Such an attempt is necessary to not only understand present day policy making regarding animals welfare (nationally and globally) , but to also attend to the ways in which the animal-human divide has been constructed historically and continues to evolve in our contemporary times.

LUNCH

SESSION 3: 1:30 – 3:00 – Chair: Prof. Seema Bawa
TEXTS, INSCRIPTIONS AND MAPPING IDENTITIES

1) *A Royal saga: Representations of a king in the* HARṢACARITA
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The aim of this paper is to explore how the personality of king Harṣa is constructed and represented through the *Harṣacarita*. A text as complex as the *Harṣacarita,* is not merely a 'royal biography' but a treatise that reflects political thinking, and, in a way, shapes political discourse. At the same time, it attempts a contextualized reading of representations in terms of literature. Within the *Harṣacarita* itself, the king (Harṣa) has been fashioned through multiple perspectives, through the eyes of an array of people, ranging from the messenger Mekhalaka who came to summon Bāṇa to Harṣa's court; to Bāṇa, as he sees Harṣa for the first time in his court, and again, when he describes Harṣa at the helm of the army proceeding to battle; to the members of Bana's community of Brāhmanas who sing praises of the king; to Prabhākaravardhana, who speaks to his son at his death bed; to the mendicant Divākaramitra, who speaks of him during their meeting. This paper will be an exploration of each of these descriptions in detail, noting the analogies and epithets used for each description and seeing how the image of the king has been constructed over the course of the text. This paper also looks into the descriptions of the king's physical appearance; and allusions to legendary figures that bolster the character of the personality being described, and how that cements the character sketch that evolves through the course of the text. How, then, do we understand the representations of Harṣa in the text? Bāṇa describes the qualities of an ideal king in his own descriptions of Harṣa. But, at the same time, it is worth questioning whether that is a reflection of how the king actually was, or a veiled suggestion of what the king should be. He has been idealised. But even the representation of the ideal is fractured. If we consider the *Harṣacarita* as a whole, we do not have one monolithic image of the king. Reading the representations is therefore important for us, as that is a way in which experiences were translated into narratives on the pages of a text, often shaped by conventions of genres of literature they belonged to, and often transcending them.

2) *Constituting Consent to Rule: Self-Images of Royalty as Gleaned in the Gahadavala and Kalachuri Inscriptions*
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This paper makes a modest attempt to bring out the inherent characteristics of the sources created by Royalty to legitimise itself. We are looking into the epigraphic sources of Gahadavala and Kalachuri dynasties during the early medieval period. Issues related to 'Consent to Rule' and Legitimation during Early Medieval centuries have attracted the attention of scholars since the past few decades and the names of H. Kulke, B.D. Chattopadhyaya, B. P. Sahu, Kesavan Veluthat and Cynthia Talbot readily come to mind. The 'consent to rule' is very essential when we look at 'state' as an institution. In the period and region under study, this consent to rule has been associated with various kinds of images like origin myths, divine connections, hero-ideal etc reflected beautifully in the *prasasti* sections of inscriptions. Admittedly, these images are at times created by the sources and are subject to numerous interpretations. These imageries need to

be studied in their own right and it would be interesting to locate the differences between the Gahadavala and Kalacuri epigraphic sources. Most of the early medieval dynasties, invented their own origin myths, which formed part of the *prasastis* and take the form of those drawing typically on the *itihasa-purana* tradition of north India based on Sanskrit or Brahmanical traditions. In the Gahadavala records of 11th century, there is no attempt at linking the dynasty with a mythological or even supposedly historical past. In the case of Kalacuris, we find the use of the pattern of the *itihasa-puranas,* especially modeled on the epic-puranic traditions. It is clear that both the states originated from local roots and were not the result of decline of any pre-existing state system. The origin myths found in our sources suggest that despite the clear local origins, they participated in a pan-Indian tradition of the origin theories and there is a larger elaboration in Kalacuri records which is generally missing in the Gahadavala records. Similarly, the claims of both Gahadavala and Kalacuri rulers to have defended dharma as against the *dosa* of Kaliyuga, washed its stains or ushered in *Krta* indicates that their ideal was to patronize and promote Brahmanical institutions and ideology, in the larger context of internal transformation and the evolution of political society. All such issues along with many other details are intended to be discussed in this paper and we hope that the discussion would add to our collective understandings of the centuries often identified as early medieval phase of Indian History.

3) *On Margins of the Empire: Cartographic Anxieties, Overlapping Sovereignties in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, 1935- 1947.*
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The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir on several occasions during the years 1935-1947 became a site of political and cartographic anxieties for the British colonial state. The paper explores how the trope of Kashmir's geo-politically strategic position in the Indian subcontinent, along with the colonial images of Kashmir as the 'most romantic region of the mysterious East' shaped the cartographic anxieties of the colonial state. It examines how this colonial construct of Kashmir as a space 'where three empires meet', allowed for it to become a 'space of desire' in the cartographic anxieties and imaginations of the post-colonial nation states, much in line with earlier British colonial constructions, thereby leading to no major rupture on partitioning of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. The paternalistic ideal of the colonial state became the dominant trope in the colonial state's discourse on Jammu and Kashmir's strategic location. Especially, the Gilgit region of the state was crucial in constituting this paternalistic ideal of the 'solicited', the 'benevolent empire' on the northern 'frontier'. It occupied an important position in the construction of the colonial narrative as a paternalistic ruler on the 'frontier' 'who stood as a stern policemen' guarding the frontiers not just of the Dogra Maharaja's 'empire' but, also, more importantly, the Indian Empire, against any perceived threat of foreign invasions, especially the threat of Russia's increasing influence. The paper introduces geo-politics as an instrument of colonialism. It explores, through the notion of 'dual sovereignty', how the British Raj as a territorial sovereign together with the Maharaja's sovereignty functioned in the state in the decade preceding the partition of the Indian subcontinent. This point is illustrated through a case study of the Gilgit region. Gilgit, a region within the state of Jammu and Kashmir, became a microcosm of British Raj's territorial sovereignty over the state and an important site of political as well as cartographic anxieties for the colonial state.

1) *Multi-Religiosity among the Nairs of Medieval Kerala*
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The paper titled '*Multi-Religiosity among the Nairs of Medieval Kerala*' is an attempt to study how the Nairs who were a warrior community and political elites in medieval Kerala shaped themselves and their community identity with the help of religion while responding to the socio-economic and political milieu within which they evolved. This paper tries to analyse the concept of religion among the Nairs and attempts to study how religion facilitated the growth of Nairs as a political and economically strong community in medieval Kerala. The Nairs are an example of a community who followed both the traditional Vedic religion and the alternate folk religions simultaneously. This paper tries to bring out the nuances in the community with respect to the religion that they followed and tries to look at how it facilitated their role as an alternate religious elite group who were more approachable and familiar to the common masses than the Brahmins of the region (with whom the people belonging to the lower strata of the society was not even permitted to come in front of). This interesting blend of the religious practises followed by them was visible in multiple facets of their lives which included their daily prayer routines, the institution of *kalari* and so on.   Contrary to the Vedic traditions, cult religiosities or alternate religion was open to all sections of the society irrespective of the class that the person belonged to and this paper tries to argue that the Nairs who followed both these religion bolstered their social stature by maintaining their proximity to the religiously affluent Brahmins and pandering to familiarity with the populous common masses of the society.

2) औपनिवेशिक शासन में अपराधियों के प्रति बदलता दृष्टिकोण:संदर्भित उत्तर भारत
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ये लेख 19वीं सदी के उत्तर भारत के उन बागी और उपद्रवी वर्गों पर शोध अध्ययन है जो औपनिवेशिक राज्य के दृष्टिकोण में डकैत, लुटेरे और आक्रामक अपराधी समझे जाते थे और राज्य के कठोर आपराधिक अधिनियमों में बांध दिये गये थे। जबकि एक आम दृष्टिकोण इन उपद्रवी वर्गों के प्रति अलग नजरिया रखता था। यह शोध विशेष रुप से औपनिवेशिक बुन्देलखण्ड के डकैत गिरोह की प्रकृति पर प्रकाश डालता है। जो औपनिवेशिक राज्य द्वारा उनका आर्थिक और सामाजिक शोषण के कारण लुटेरे बन गये थे और अपनी उपद्रवी गतिविधियों द्वारा ब्रिटिश सत्ता को सीधे तौर पर चुनौती दे रहे थे। लेकिन एक आम स्थानीय दृष्टिकोण इन डकैत गिरोह को अपराधी नहीं मानता था और उनसे प्रति सहानुभूति रखता था क्योंकि उपनिवेश विरोधी उनकी समान सामुदायिक चेतना के कारण उनके आपसी सम्बन्ध सहयोगपुर्ण थे। औपनिवेशिक स्रोतों के आधार पर इस बात

की जानकारी मिलती है कि ज्यादातर स्थानीय ग्रामीण समुदाय उन्हें शरण देने में सहायता करते थे। डकैतों का दल भी केवल उन्ही को लुटता था जो समृद्ध और अमीर होते थे। यह लेख संक्षिप्त रुप से औपनिवेशिक बनारस के उन लड़ाकू वर्गों की प्रवृतियों की भी जांच करता है जो ब्रिटिश विरोधी थे और आम भाषा में *गुंडे* कहलाते थे। इनकी इन्ही स्वच्छन्द बागी गतिविधियों के कारण ब्रिटिश शासन ने अंतिम 19वीं सदी तक गुंडा अपराधी अधिनियम की श्रेणी में डालने की तैयारी कर ली थी। लेकिन बनारस की स्थानीय समझ में वे अपने परोपकारों के कारण आम लोगों में नायक (hero) समझे जाते थे। यह लेख एक तरफ अभिलेखागारीय औपनिवेशिक स्रोतों के माध्यम से औपनिवेशिक राज्य के दृष्टिकोण और दूसरी ओर लोक साहित्यिक और लोक पारम्परिक स्रोतों के माध्यम से आम दृष्टिकोण द्वारा उत्तर भारत के अपराधियों के चित्रण को दिखाने का प्रयास करता है ।

3) *Memory as History of a Locality: A Study of Delhi's Widow Colony*
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Tilak Vihar is a tiny working class locality, located in West Delhi, sandwiched between the middle class localities of Rajouri Garden and Tilak Nagar. In 1986, the Government of India allocated flats to the survivors of the 1984 Anti-Sikh violence in Tilak Vihar. The locality, therefore consists of survivors from various frontier localities of Delhi, where violence was particularly intense in 84. Residents come from Sultanpuri, Mongolpuri, Trilokpuri and almost all the other Trans-Yamuna areas, which bore the main brunt of anti-Sikh violence. The flats occupied by these women together constitute what is officially called C-Block Tilak Vihar — Widow Colony in popular parlance, although the latter name has now acquired a quasi-official status. In this paper, I will attempt to write a history of Tilak Vihar. However, I do not wish to embark on an exercise to write a chronological history of an urban locality through land and administrative records in the state's archive. Rather, I am interested in the ways in which a history of the Widow Colony can be constructed through the memories of its residents. Moreover, I will try to argue that such a history gives meaning to the violence by giving it a past, present and future, which makes the violence more explicable to those who faced it. Which takes me to the final and the most important concern in this paper — if memory is used as a device to explicate a particular past and present, can memory be seen as history? My attempt to look for an answer to this question, will engage with the works of Dipesh Chakrabarty and Jacques Le Goff.

DAY 2
SESSION 1: 9:00 – 10:30 – Chair: Professor Jaya Tyagi
TEXTS AND AFFECTIVE TIES

1) *Intimate Ties: A Study of Love, Affection and Friendship in three Tawārikhs.*
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In the current paper I will analyse the ways in which 'intimacy' is configured in the narratives of *Ta'rīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhi* by Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* by 'Iṣāmī and *Mir'āt-i-Sikandarī* by Sikandar ibn Muḥammad alias Manjhū ibn Akbar, to understand how relationships were conceptualized by pre-modern litterateurs. I use the word 'intimacy' to denote 'affective ties' in particular 'proximate relationships' as represented by each author. The central question in my paper is: how did these authors understand and represent 'affect' in intimate relationships? In other words, what could be discerned as 'intimacy' in each author's depiction of inter-personal relationships? It is difficult to categorize and define the idea of 'intimacy' in the pre-modern intellectual world as textual narratives were circumscribed by literary norms, as well as each author's contingent situation and ideological thrust. However, the representation of affect was never completely subjective or contingent, but was conditioned by the cultural understanding of relationships and emotions. In this paper I will analyse the ways in which authors occupying distinct spatio-temporal locations, yet writing in the same genre of historical literature i.e., *Tawārikh,* engaged with cultural ideas of relationships, and portrayed 'affect' differently as each author constructed different (yet sometimes overlapping) social norms surrounding proximate relationships. This study will therefore, be a diachronic analysis where I seek to historicize 'affect' in order to understand the complex ways in which relationships were structured in pre-modern narratives.

2) *Understanding Love and Eros through Sanskrit Treatises:15th-16th century*
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While discussion of love, eros and sexuality in Sanskrit literature in context of ancient India has been thoroughly explored in relation to Kamasutra and other erotic texts, no such endeavours have been made for the Sanskrit texts of medieval India. This paper seeks to delve upon this subject through two erotic works in Sanskrit, *Ananga Ranga* (late 15th-early 16th century), written by Kalyana Malla and *Kama Samuha* (15th century) by Anant Kavi, elaborating upon the articulation and regulation of erotic love. The aim of the paper is to examine how medieval Sanskrit erotic works articulated love and desire and its linkages with household, marriage, aesthetics and gender hierarchy. An analysis of these issues reveals how the texts sought to define desire strictly heteronormatively and confined it within the fixed boundaries of household. The discourse of love and eros defined the form of desire that is appropriate and worked towards disciplining it to reproduce social and patriarchal order. I also endeavour to study the continuities and disjunctures in these texts vis-à-vis Vatsyayana's Kamasutra to understand how the ancient Indian erotic tradition was received, reinterpreted, remodelled and appropriated in medieval India, revealing a complex and nuanced dialogue. By examining issues surrounding love, eros and desire, it sheds light on contemporary normative system, social and gender hierarchies, notions of household, body and sexuality. It also seeks to highlight the historical importance of Sanskrit erotic treatises in reconstruction of medieval India.

3) *The Knowledgeable Princess (Vidya) and the Prince Charming (Sundar): Re-reading Eighteenth Century Compositions of Knowledge and Eros*
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This paper attempts to read the interconnections of knowledge and eros in two eighteenth century performative-devotional Bangla renditions of *Bidyasundar* penned by the supposed court poets of the kingdom of Nadiya in Southern Bengal, Bharatchandra Ray and Ramprasad Sen. The late eighteenth century appears a less explored arena in terms of literary cultures, and historians such as Rosinka Chaudhuri has read it within the theoretical framework of the nineteenth century modernity, while, for the majority of literary historians, these compositions qualified as nothing but obscene, laden with undue eroticism. However the late eighteenth century produced remarkable possibilities in literary culture, capable of registering the historical world around them, in their complexities. This paper challenges the conclusions of obscene erotic, and argues that erotic needs to be accounted within what qualified as knowledge. Not only in terms of knowledge, but literary-performative cultures were also successful in upholding interconnected centers of authority such as devotional and royal (as revealed in the signatures – *bhanita* - of these two poets). These interconnections were soon lost in the subsequent years. This paper stems from a larger project of reading human consciousness in literary-performative cultures from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century. It attempts to understand the eighteenth century developments in its own terms and read a part of a Mangalkavya (Bharatchandra's *Bidyasundar*) and intersperse it with a contemporary rendition of the same by the Shakta devotional poet Ramprasad Sen. In reading the meters, styles, intertextual references, signatures and comparisons with early nineteenth century composition, this paper presents the multiple possibilities in eighteenth century literary cultures that has remained under-explored in historiography. In understanding these texts, this paper also draws from editorials, essays and newspaper discourse produced in the early decades of nineteenth century and presents structures of heterogeneous non-Brahmin patronage of performer-poets of the eighteenth century, which changed in the nineteenth. Thus in reading two performative compositions, this paper re-imagines the eighteenth century literary culture and presents their multiple interconnections.

SESSION 2: 11:00 – 12:30 – Chair: Dr. Anirudh Deshpande POLITICS AND COMMUNITIES II

1) *Nathpanthis and the Hindu Devotional Tradition, c.1000-1400*
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Early medieval age witnessed significant interactions between the yogis and bhaktas. This period was important where the yogic philosophy became immensely popular, but it was also notable as bhaktas and yogis were competing against each other for seeking disciples. Emphasizing on the medieval north Indian region, this research paper examines the relationship of the Nathpanthic asceticism with bhakti traditions during the period c.1000-1400. This paper primarily focuses on the comparative study of the beliefs, practices, institutions and philosophy of yoga with Hindu mysticism and spirituality. Regarding the research methodology, we are going to evaluate different genres of literatures based on intertextual analysis such as, Sanskrit Hathayogic manuals, proto-Hindi Nathpanthic text-*Gorakhbani*, devotional vernacular narratives and

hagiographies which include- *Jnaneshvari, Bhaktavijaya, Gita Govinda, Adi Grantha, Amritanubhava,* the Hindi compositions attributed to Namdev and *Ramananda*. This research topic argues that the bhakti practices and theistic ideas such as- notion of one universal deity, mastership, spirituality, esoterism, cosmology, and usage of syllable exercises- were adopted and subsumed from the yogic doctrines and philosophies. Additionally, we shall cover the supernatural themes and miracles associated with the early bhaktas followed by significant differences among the two mystical traditions. The paper mainly argues that both bhakti and yogic traditions complemented each other instead of separate entities, which eventually created a dominant force against the Brahmanical rituals and their dogmatic traditions in medieval north India.

2) *Role of Jaina Merchants and Merchant Families in Early Medieval Western Indian Society and Polity*
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The early medieval centuries particularly from the 10th century and after, witnessed dynamic upsurge in trading activities. With brisk commercial activity in western India during the post 10th century, we see the rise of rich, influential and powerful trading groups (traders/merchants) and merchant-families particularly of Jains (Osvals, Pragvatas, Srimalis, etc.), who in course of the time emerged as a rich and powerful class of merchants in different parts of western India. Sources of the period also shed light on the ascendancy of different merchant families. These merchant lineages such as Dharkata, Dhusara, Oswal, Soni, Srimala, and Pragvatas particularly the latter were gradually inducted into the political and administrative structure, and became closely linked with the ruling lineages. They exercised great influence in the royal court. These influential merchants were not only great ministers but administrators, councillors, treasurers, and warriors as well. They were creditors, surities, formed part of town council, and also acted as witnesses. Early medieval western India also witnessed emergence of new trends towards the composition of *prasastis* for merchant groups. These merchant groups gradually became landed magnates, and spent large sums in the construction of temples and religious institutions. They built memorials, undertook several works of charity. Merchants of western India were great connoisseurs of art and literature. They spent a large part of their wealth on promoting dramas and paintings as well. In short, Jaina merchants on account of their wealth acquired through trade contributed immensely to the society, and polity of the period. Merchant lineages on account of their wealth could now claim a status as high as that of kshatriyas and brahmanas which in subsequent centuries provided the base for stratification among different merchant lineages or groups.

3) *Relationship between the Muslims and Meiteis in Manipur during the Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods*
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Manipur lies at the easternmost corner of India. It has been inhabited by the different religious communities like Meiteis, Muslims (locally known as *Pangals*), Tribes like Kukis and Nagas since times immemorial. When the Muslims started settling in the region in the beginning of seventeenth century, there was a free society. In the early period of the eighteenth century during the period of Garib Niwaz, there was starting of 'loose' relationship between the two communities on account of one particular factor such as the coming of Vaishnavite Hinduism on the soil of Manipur besides other political and socio-cultural factors. In the same manner, this has been continued in the colonial period. During the post-colonial period, there has been increasing emergence of identity creation among the Muslims and Meiteis after one 'unfortunate' incident namely communal riots in May 1993. This incident began to shape the formation of concepts of being 'self' and 'other' among the Muslims and Meiteis in the contemporary Manipur. In this seminal piece, an attempt has been made to explore a brief historical background of the origins of Muslim community in Manipur during the reign of King Khagemba (1597-1652 AD) since the beginning of the seventeenth century. Moreover, another attempt has also been made to examine exclusively the relationship between the Muslims and Meiteis in Manipur during the colonial and post-colonial periods by emphasizing the roles of Hinduism on the Muslim community of Manipur.

LUNCH

SESSION 3: 1:30 – 3:00 – Chair: Dr. Parul Pandya Dhar
HISTORIES AND HISTORIOGRAPHIES

1) *Historical interpretations and representations: A museographical study of Stein Collection*
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Representation of archaeological collection whether displayed in permanent galleries or placed in special exhibitions has an important role for framing a statement. This intrinsic nature of displaying archaeological objects incites certain notions of politicizing the interpretation different from its contextual study. Apart from the analysis of cultural and historical background, the display of archaeological objects also emphasizes on the issues and practices of archaeology. This addresses the relationship between the practice of archaeology and the practitioner of archaeology- the archaeologist, who entitles the objects as a matter of inspection for reconstructing the forgotten history. This paper focuses on particular collection of Aurel Stein from his several expeditions in central Asia. Through his expeditions Stein discovered, excavated and collected massive number of archaeological objects which are now found in different institutions in Europe and India. Most portion of his collection is not available for public viewing but a large scale of studies have been done discussing different aspects of cultural and historical contexts. This contextual analysis of his collection through museum display has formed an understanding about the nature and cultural composition of the settlements on the 'Silk Route'. However, there is further scope to revisit this interpretation for a 'museographical study', to inquire how the display of objects constitutes questions of representation and construction of identity. This paper investigates how this collection has received a distinctive

nomenclature- the 'Stein Collection'; and the way it is presented in museums. It aims to comparatively analyze the collections at the National Museum, New Delhi and Asian Art Museum, Berlin shedding light on the types of objects displayed and narratives they make. It is an ontological analysis to understand how objects have been studied, interpreted and represented. Through this paper, I will attempt to bring the nuances of politics of representation and its visual appraisals in museum display for identity construction. The main evidential sources of this study would be the critical assessment of collections displayed in gallery along with available secondary literature like published catalogue, articles and photographs.

2) *Identity Construction of Rajputs: a critical evaluation of James Tod's Annals and Antiquities Of Rajasthan*
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'Rajput' is a term which was used for the ruling class of Medieval Rajasthan in Western India. They got a worldwide recognition after the publication of the work of James Tod, an East India Company soldier and Orientalist, in the early half of the 19th century. In order to collect the information about native rulers, Tod not only strengthened the already popular warrior class image of Rajputs but also reconstructed their identities. So this paper is an attempt to trace out the colonial mind set behind the foundation of this identity. It is possible to locate Tod's work in the Foucault's argument. Foucault's argument is that knowledge and power are interlinked and it cannot be separated. Power shapes, alters, constructs and reconstruct the knowledge to maintain its own standing. In the same way, Tod's work can be fitted in the nexus of power- knowledge and imperial discourse. He constructed such knowledge about Rajputs to sustain and promote the imperial power in imperial discourse. The writing of James Tod has great influence of Romanticism's ideology. He glorified the Rajputs just as earlier courtly bards and charans did, and this constructed identity of Rajputs became the stereotypical and dominant knowledge about Rajputs. He compared Rajputs with the Spartans of Ancient Greece. So basically his writing was influence by this ideology which was very eulogistic and it redefined Rajputs in a glorious way. And last, but not least, I will try to unveil the colonial Mind-set of Tod in his work. Whatever he wrote down, that was infused with British political motives. Imperial motives were always working behind this documentation. He defined every group according to British political motives such as; Rajputs as brave (supporters of British authority), Marathas as predatory force (Threat to British Empire) and Mughals as despot (having legitimacy for British Empire). So in this way, we see that he included those groups which were beneficial for British Empire and vice versa. On the other hand he divided people so that they could not get united against imperial power. So this present paper will try to shed light on this aspect which is directly related to Rajput Identity. It is an attempt to locate the Rajput's identity in the larger project of documentation regarding the colony, which colonial state was doing since the beginning.

3) *Portuguese Administration in the Subcontinent: A Case Study of Goa*
Abhishek Mishra
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There exists a selective amnesia towards colonial Goa in the historiography of the Indian subcontinent. Being a Portuguese colony and not a British controlled territory partially explains

its oblivion within the larger historical discourse of the Indian Ocean world. The history produced immediately after independence granted Goa and even Pondicherry invisibility due to the absorption of the British discourses and epistemologies by the scholars. While we have moved beyond the British centric empirical history, we have still not integrated the history of Portuguese and French settlements within the history of colonial India. The paper proposed for the conference attempts to; first, grant visibility to Goa within the Indian historical discourse and second, map the contours of the Portuguese administration in the subcontinent.

The paper contextualizes the Portuguese presence vis-à-vis the English by revisiting two instances lost within historiography; where the English tried to purchase and conquer Goa. These episodes reveal the English anxiety about the Portuguese and in Bombay, as the East India Company built upon some of the residual institutions initially created by the Portuguese; the paper maps the imperial structure and administrative institutions in the city of Goa from the *Vice-Rei e Capitão Geral* to the *Regedor* to contextualize the English administration in this region. The paper pays special attention to the municipal council or *Senado da Camara* and the charitable brotherhood of Holy House of Mercy or *Santa Casa da Misericórdia.* As these institutions were common throughout the Portuguese Empire, the variations in the *Camara* of Lisbon, Goa and other Portuguese settlement reveal the varied strategies of imperial control. In a nutshell, the paper is a short history of Goa through an administrative lens and urges us to reconsider our methodology by integrating the Portuguese in the colonial discourse.

14TH March: 3:30 – 5:00 – MOVIE
***Rama in the Hills: Adivasi Ramayanas in Kerala*: a talk and a documentary screening**
Dr. Aseez Tharuvana, Assistant Professor, Farook College, University of Calicut

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DAY 3
SESSION 1: 9:00 – 10:30 – Chair: Dr. Anshu Malhotra
THE FEMALE BODY AND POLITICS

1) *Women, Marriage and Merit-Making in Early Buddhism: Reflections from Pāli* Vimānavatthu *and its* aṭṭhakathā
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Pāli *Vimānavatthu* and its *aṭṭhakathā* is a relatively understudied text. It narrates the glorious rebirths of individuals in heavens as a result of performing meritorious deeds in their previous lives. Significantly, the number of stories recounting female lives are much more than those of men. Thus women were deliberately incorporated in the corpus to augment their active agency in merit-making process, and thereby securing a heavenly future rebirth for themselves. Domesticity and marriage played an important role in channelizing a woman's religious life. *Vimānavatthu* frequently refers to women's marital status, and often the stories revolve around effectively manoeuvring problematic marital issues. In such stories, their ideals as wives, and effectively resolving problematic issues in a marriage are lauded over and above general merit-

making activities such as *dāna* and other forms of worship. In fact, it would not be a stretch to assume that being an ideal wife or, balancing marital problems alongside diligently performing one's religious duties, form a way of merit-making for the women. Interestingly, excepting one tale, marital status or marital problems do not find space in the Men's *Vimāna* stories, and thereby alludes to the fact that marriage did not play much importance in a man's life as compared to that of a woman. The paper would proceed in three sections: the first section delineates the importance given to marital identity of a woman in Pāli *Vimānavatthu* and its commentary. In this section, ideals of womanhood are asserted as ways of making merit. In the second section, we would look at stories which tries to prioritise female merit-making activities over and above problematic marital situations. In the text, these appear in three contexts: marriages in unbeliever households, accusations of adultery, and balancing merit-making acts whilst being pregnant. The third section would undertake a comparison between the Women's *Vimānas* and Men's *Vimānas* tales to understand the gendered nature of the text.

2) *Mapping the Missionary Quest: Teaching, Healing and Saving Souls of Women in Bengal*
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In this paper, I propose to look into the multi-pronged approach of the various missionary societies to reach out to women in Bengal and the resulting consequences of this endeavour. The integral role played by women as the propagators and recipients of missionary aid will be the primary focus in analysing the success of missionary activities. Although moderate gains were palpable under the pioneer male missionaries, it was realised that Bengali women were beyond the access of male missionaries due to seclusion of women prohibiting the entry of any male outsider. This severely obstructed the task of the missionaries, as women were regarded to be the bastions of the Hindu religious belief system and any measurable success of the missions would be hollow and incomplete without winning them over. This practical disability was resolved by incorporating female (including wives of) missionaries, thereby creating the appropriate opportunity for women to become fully involved in diverse aspects of missionary undertakings. The missionaries realised that the imparting of religious knowledge needs to be essentially combined with services in response to other more pressing needs. Hence, they began imparting lessons in reading and writing, which was followed by the administration of medical aid. Providing medical aid became a useful means to win over the faith of the inhabitants in Bengal. The offer of double cure of body and soul thereby became the most effective ploy for gaining greater acceptance for missionary activities in Bengal. This paper would discuss the motivations, establishment, operations and influence of various missionary societies, institutions and the specialised *zenana* missions which were determined to ameliorate the lot of Bengal's women alongside spreading the Gospel. The sources for the proposed paper would primarily comprise of reports published by various missionary societies, monographs by missionaries and wives of missionaries, as well as secondary sources that have contributed towards this area of research.

3) *Ford Foundation and the Politics of Birth Control 1951-1971*
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India was the first post-colonial state to launch a policy of population control. Population control was to be achieved through family planning with the use of new birth control technologies. In making the women the targets of its population control program and by forcing invasive technologies of fertility control on women, the policy affected women's reproductive consciousness negatively. Implicated in this highly negative development for women's rights are the activities of the international development community. Under the pretext of development, organisations like the Ford Foundation and USAID, intervened in the Family Planning Program in India. The implications of this have been deepening patriarchies, and increased dependence on supplier dependent technologies of birth control. Incidentally much of this discourse on development went together with the attempts to control the growth of population. While post colonial national government sought to control population to achieve a certain level of development and other 'national goals', the international agencies saw the rising population of the Third World as a matter of high politics. This dual agenda turned birth control into the realm of population control. Birth control was displaced from being a women's demand to a concern with controlling women's fertility for the larger purpose of population control. In this paper, I will look at the practices of the Ford Foundation in the field of population assistance to India. As will be clear, from its position of power, it created meanings about the local social reality and manipulated understandings about reproduction through developmental scientific and cultural discourses. Indian women's reproductive decisions came under scrutiny and manipulation in ways more than one. It is crucial to engage with the practices of international agencies from the perspective of those affected by them.

SESSION 2: 11:00 – 12:30 – Chair: Dr. Sajjan Kumar
RECONSTRUCTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORIES IN ANTIQUITY

1) *Spatial Dimensions of Megaliths and their Relative Chronology: A Case Study of Willong Khullen Village, Manipur*
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Despite numerous early accounts of the wide-scale presence of megaliths in Manipur, not much work has been done so far. More recently some amount of archaeological and ethnographic research has been undertaken, although their focus is limited to the identification of the megaliths in terms of their morphology and functional categories. What are however absent in such studies are the spatial contexts of the megaliths in the larger landscapes. Taking a cue from the recent more advanced trends in the studies of megaliths in South India, this paper examines the spatial dimensions of different megaliths forms in relation to other ancestral sites, settlement patterns, passageways and water sources by using GIS maps in the specific regional context of Willong Khullen village in Senapati district, Manipur. This paper is the outcome of an archaeological field survey and documentation undertaken in this region of about nine hectare area that has over 400 distinctive monuments. Through the documentation and spatial analysis, it is concluded that the early societies in the region were possibly marked by certain form inequalities in terms of labour organization. Further, this paper also attempts to establish a

relative chronology among different megalith forms based upon their architectural design and colour features.

2) *Coins and Monetization through Epigraphical Lenses: The Case of north Tamilakam between circa 4th-9th centuries CE.*
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Coins by themselves are mere "mute archaeological objects". It is only in the study of economic and religious history of a region that one is able to give them their rightful place. A recent study, however, suggests that it is not appropriate to believe that coins are "used exclusively for commercial, administrative *or* religious transactions". In fact, it is possible that in the remote past they were being "used for purposes with multiple and overlapping consequences". Coins and in general the issue of monetization have been a subject of much speculation and debate since D.D. Kosambi's extensive studies on them followed by the publication of R.S. Sharma's magisterial *Indian Feudalism: c. AD 300-1200* (1965). In fact Sharma's primary argument that the post-Gupta centuries saw a substantial decline in the usage of coins resulting in a situation where the economy "lapsed into a state of natural economy" with land grants replacing cash transactions remained important for quite some time. This hypothesis was, however, questioned in a series of subsequent researches carried out by several scholars including John Deyell (*Living Without Silver: The Monetary History of Early Medieval North India*, 1990). Majority of these scholars have, however, structured their case entirely on north India alone. Southern India, or more particularly early Tamilakam, has been, as Shailendra Bhandare notes, pushed almost to the point of oblivion in this discourse. Barring a handful of publications there has hardly been any work done on such issues with respect to early Tamilakam. In the present paper, besides analysing the physical aspects of the coins, an attempt will be made to critically examine the issue of monetization with respect to this region, drawing mostly on contemporary inscriptions. The rough time frame of this paper is circa 4th-9th centuries CE when the Pallavas were a dominant political entity in the region.

3) *Social Processes under the Western Gangas of Karnataka*
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The present paper is an attempt to reconstruct the society in the early medieval South-east and South Karnataka during the Western Ganga rule (c. fourth century to tenth century CE). The study is primarily based on the inscriptions belonging to the Western Gangas in addition to the archaeological remains available for the region belonging to the Western Ganga period as well as the preceding period. The Western Ganga period in the region was preceded by the prevalence of Megalithic culture. Though it is often argued that the Western Gangas established their rule by overthrowing the Pallavas. But even during the Pallava period, the territories did not witness any significant change in the Megalithic culture, which indicates to the non-interventionist nature of the Pallava rule. The society of the period has been characterized as a 'ranked society'. But due to the absence of any literary evidence, our knowledge of the various aspects of the social organization such as the names and functions of the various classes existing in it, their ordering

in the 'ranked society' and the ideological basis of the hierarchies is still sketchy. As a result, the Western Ganga inscriptions provide us first peep into these untouched issues. A study of these inscriptions suggests that the *varṇa* ideology was not well rooted in the region. Similarly, caste-based division of the society was also not popular. The study also reveals that the kingdom comprised of two broad categories of the society. One category belongs to the social settings in which importance was attached to the clan names in individual's identity, whereas in another social setting importance was attached to the name of the father and personal achievements of the individual. But the absence of *varṇa* and *jāti* hierarchies in the society should not lead to the conclusion that the society was not stratified. We come across existence individuals carrying the honorific name suffixes such as *prabhu, odeya, arasa* etc.

<div align="center">LUNCH</div>

SESSION 3: 1:30 – 3:00 – Chair: Dr. Rahul Govind
RELIGIONS, TEXTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

1) *विनय पिटकः भिक्खु तथा रोग उपचार साधन*

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जीवन निर्वाह हेतु भोजन के साथ-साथ औषधी का होना भी अनिवार्य है। बुद्धकाल में वर्तमान समय की आधुनिक चिकित्सा प्रणाली उपलब्ध नही थी। भिक्खु संघ के विस्तार के साथ अनेक समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ा। सबसे बड़ी समस्या बीमार भिक्खुओं के उपचार से जुड़ी थी। उस दौरान आधुनिक समय के दवाईयां व अस्पताल नही थे। हलांकि बुद्ध के समय का वातावरण आज के दूषित वातावरण से निश्चित ही भिन्न रहा होगा। लेकिन इसका यह अर्थ नही कि लोग बीमार न पड़ते हो। मौसम परिवर्तन, आकाल, बाढ़, जंगली जानवरों द्वारा काटे जाने इत्यादि के असर को नकारा नही जा सकता। इस समस्याओं से निपटने में कौन से उपचार को अपनाया जाता था? निश्चित ही उपलब्ध साधनों व अनुभव के आधार पर ही वे इस समस्या का समाधान करते होंगे। ये साधन क्या थे? उपलब्ध साधनों में प्रकृति से प्राप्त तथा प्राकृतिक रूप से उपलब्ध वस्तुओं पर ही उनकी निर्भरता थी। लेकिन ये कितने प्रभावी थे? इन सभी का अध्ययन इस लेख में शामिल होगा। हलांकि विनय पिटक में हमें चिकित्सा अध्ययन के केन्द्र व शल्य चिकित्सक का वर्णन मिलता है। उपचार के बदले एक बड़ी राशि चिकित्सकों को देने का भी संदर्भ मिलता है। किन्तु यह आवश्यक रूप से सभी हेतु उपलब्ध नही रहा होगा। विनय पिटक, भिक्खुओं हेतु औषधी से संबंधित उपचार की जानकारी देता है। जाहिर है कि यह औषधी संबंधी उपचार सामान्यजन द्वारा भी व्यवहार में लाया जाता होगा। क्योंकि यह वही नियम होंगे जो सामान्यतः समाज में प्रचलित रहे होंगे या लोग जिन्हें प्रयोग में लाते होंगे। यह ग्रंथ बुद्ध के समय की जानकारी देता है और इसका लिपिकरण प्रथम शताब्दी ईसवीं के दौरान हुआ है। यह लेख मूल पाली स्रोत पर आधारित है। लेख में विश्लेषण पर जोर दिया गया है न कि कथावृतांत प्रस्तुत करने का प्रयास किया गया है।

2) *Hideous Ceremonies and Obscene Texts: Discerning the Orientalist Reinvention of Tantric Buddhism*
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Our present understanding of Buddhist tantra, which has been handed down to us through the university courses, expresses several pathetic fallacies about doctrines of the traditional system of Buddhist tantra. It is not by just scholarly speculations and assumptions − ignoring the rhetoric presented by the tradition itself − we can hope to understand the erudite hermeneutics and sophisticated tenets of Buddhism. At the most, a superficial grasp of Buddhist doctrine has been achieved in the past researches conducted in the field of Buddhist Studies. Mostly, these studies have approach Buddhism with non-committal and frivolous objectivity. This paper aims to raise some crucial issues related to the colonial interpretation of the scholastic doctrines of Mahayana and Tantra systems of Buddhism and its present-day socio-religious implications. It discusses at length how the problematic periodization of Buddhist tantric texts and the frivolous interpretation of practices of tantra have crept into the academia, first through the Orientalist scholars and later on by their Indian adherents, who approached to it either with ulterior motives or with their outsiders' version of onlooker scholarship. It must be noted that the all-embracing nature of Buddhism has always allowed different world-views under its overarching canopy. We need to recognize that it has never been a question of Buddhist schools competing with one another or with other philosophical systems; rather they convey different orders of world-view based on the practitioners' capacity and aspirations. Further, it is absurd to contemplate the legends and fables of the tantric treatise that are set in the environs of the Buddha's teachings as mere "literature". As Ananda K. Coomaraswamy has pointed out, "the *Dhamma* cannot be understood apart from its application."

3) *Dayanand Saraswati and the Making of Modern Hinduism in Punjab*
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This paper is a study of the genesis of Arya Samaj in Punjab primarily in opposition to the increased popularity of Christian missionaries before its later reincarnation as a staunchly anti-Muslim religio-political body. I begin with studying the attempts in the nineteenth century to imagine Hinduism as a *dharma,* with the simultaneous redefinition of the term itself, as an analogue to the European concept of 'religion.' I analyse the ways in which attempts at opposing as well as mimicking western notions were similar in character by looking at various published catechisms of the 'Hindu' or 'Sanatana' *dharma*. It was as a part of this larger pan-Indian late nineteenth century phenomena that, an important ideologue of 'Neo-Hinduism', Dayanand Saraswati arrived in Punjab. I study his ideological transformation during his life as a wandering ascetic from Gujarat to Benares via Hardwar and the process of the writing of *Satyarth Prakash*. In the course of this journey, Dayanand had slowly built upon his *shaivite* origin and *advaita* schooling and his ideas about the concept of Dharma transformed a great deal. Slowly his belief in Manu's principles especially *varnaashrama dharma* waned. He developed a modern (akin to anglicised sensibilities) code of basic principles. In the second half of this paper, I briefly discuss the social context of Punjab when he arrived which can help us understand the tremendous impact he had in a brief stay of fourteen months. I analyse the reasons of the support he immediately received from the urban Hindu middle class which infuriated the conservative

Hindus. It were the latter and not the Muslims who disrupted many of Dayanand's lectures. I end with a discussion on the reasons for development of Samaj's aggressive anti-Muslim attitude by the end of nineteenth century.

SESSION 4: 3:30 – 5:00 – Chair: Dr. Santosh Kumar Rai
TEXTS, LITERARY CULTURE AND SOCIAL HISTORY

1) *Rājpūt* identity and political culture in the 'long fifteenth century': A Textual analysis of some pre-modern *Rājpūt* narratives
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The proposed paper aims to look at the social processes of the 'long fifteenth century' northern India which imbued this body of regional elites with certain specific social and cultural traits which were to play a critical role in identifying them as the *Rājpūts* of the following centuries. The time period in discussion here is a rather interesting one. Perched between the dwindling fortunes of the Delhi Sultanate post Timur's invasion and the yet to manifest Mughal empire, this was a time of the emergence several regional political formations characterized by an intense mobilization of resources and personnel. This was also an age remarkable for the forms in which claims to status were narrativised in textual forms, more so than they had ever been in the past. It is in this context that I attempt to analyse this political culture by approaching texts like the *Hammīra Mahākāvya* (1400?), *Kānhadade Prabandha* (1453) and *Prthvīrāja Rāso* (early sixteenth century), texts authored by litterateurs who narrated the ambitions of their patrons who were aspiring to be *Rājpūts*. It is the literary productions sponsored in these regional courts that are vital in deciphering the meaning and content of the evolving term '*Rājpūt*'. This was a new historical context where reading and writing of texts created new contexts where the protagonists could be presented as an ideal *ksatriya* or *Rājpūt*. Within this configuration of a 'textualised milieu' it would be essential to locate the changes in the nature of claims made and the representation of the protagonists in these three narratives separated by almost a century. A foray into this aspect would throw some light on the changing character of the *Rājpūt* identity and political culture in a period generally considered to be only a brief interregnum in the history of imperial formations of medieval India.

2) *The 'ilm of the Sufi in a fifteenth century text: Modes of Reading the* pīr *in the* Jawāmi'
al-Kalim
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Recent scholarship has come to recognise the many roles that Sufis can play in a society. One of these trends has been to pick up certain "scholarly" Sufis and show that they too could be literate and urbane. Significantly, much of this scholarship, a prime example of which is the latest work of Moin Ahmed Nizami, places this trend in opposition to the more superstitious and "popular" Sufis, and sees the scholarly focus as a more recent addition to Sufi discourse. However, knowledge operated at many registers in the pre-modern world, and was an elite resource that

was often employed as social capital. This paper will explore how one Sufi, Sayyid Muhammad Husaini Gisudaraz, employed his scholarly learning in order to claim authority. This paper focusses on the *malfūz*, the *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, which gives us a very rare insight into how elite learning was made accessible to ordinary people. In addition, we will explore the different social groups that partook in the assemblies, and therefore see how the same kind of *'ilm* or knowledge was applied with varying degrees of complexity in specific circumstances among those who were ignorant of Islam as well as those who were already well-versed with intellectual currents in the Islamicate world. We will problematize the modern historiographical notion of Gisudaraz as a propagator of "*waḥdat al-shuhūd*" in order to fully understand how he employed his *'ilm*, and end with a few comments on how knowledge and power went hand in hand in this medieval world.

3) *Sayyid Ghulam Nabi Raslin and His Works: A Historical Analysis of Literary Culture in the Eighteenth Century Awadh*
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Sayyid Ghulam Nabi Raslin's (henceforth Raslin) works are crucial in many aspects especially in the analysis of literary activities. This paper explores the aspects behind the cultivation and circulation of literary works in Awadh during the eighteenth century. In order to understand this phenomenon, a diverse range of sources which cover traditional writings from ancient to medieval times have been consulted. As title of this paper suggests, it will broadly engage with the life of Raslin, aspects of his texts, and lastly with the literary correspondence and multilingual ethos of pre modern Hindi literature. It will also help us to understand the notion of continuity and chance in terms of traditional knowledge. This paper explores and historically analyzes the works of Raslin namely *Rasprabodh* (*Understanding of Sentiments*, 1742), and *Mutafarriq kabitt* or *Phutkal*. Raslin has also written an important text called *Angdarpan* (Mirror of the body, 1737), but this time it is outside of our purview. *Rasprabodh* is a *Riti* text which is the later phase of the Braj literature. In recent times, *Riti* poetry has been recognized as a valuable historical source. Raslin's works will also help us to understand the nature of pre-colonial literary activities and their idioms.