



The Center  
for Research  
Libraries

# FOCUS

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## SOUTH ASIA *studies*

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### *President's Message*

## South Asia Studies

For millennia the South Asian subcontinent has been the source of a boundless wealth of culture, knowledge, and information. Today, the nations of South Asia—India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Tibet, and Maldives—and their peoples are the subjects of scholarly research at universities and research libraries throughout the world. This issue of *Focus* details the many ways in which projects and programs based at the Center for Research Libraries support such research by preserving cultural and historical evidence from the subcontinent.

The Digital South Asia Library project, the online Digital Dictionaries of South Asia, and the South Asia Microform Project gather and provide access to thousands of books, newspapers, reports, pamphlets, photographs, maps and other documents from or about the subcontinent. The Center for South Asia Libraries

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On page 1: Landholders and laborers, Kabul, Afghanistan, 1879–80. Photograph by John Burke. From the Curzon Collection in the British Library.

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and the South Asia Union Catalogue, programs supported by the Center, are mapping the terrain for future access to collections of important materials that reside in South Asian libraries and research centers from or about the subcontinent. This effort has been given new impetus by a grant of \$798,131 recently awarded to the Center by the U.S. Department of Education, under its Technological Information and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access (TICFIA). The four-year collaborative project will improve access to vital resources on South Asia for scholars, public officials, and others, and create new digital resources to be delivered via the Web.

These resources flourish through the efforts of Center partners, in particular the South Asia Language and Area Center at the University of Chicago, and the Library of Congress field offices in the region. Through the latter, the Center has acquired hundreds of thousands of documents and publications from South Asia since the early 1950s. Through another partner, the Center for South Asia Libraries, numerous libraries and research centers on the subcontinent are now engaged in an international effort to make the intellectual and cultural products of the region better known and more discoverable throughout the world.

*—Bernard F. Reilly, Jr., President*

## South Asia Microform Project— a *Ghazal* of Historical Resources

James Simon

Director of International Resources  
Center for Research Libraries



An image illustrating the proliferation of nationalist sentiments in South Asia in the 1960s. From SAMP's "Collection of South Asian political tracts," collected by Norman Gerald Barrier.



The South Asia Microform Project (SAMP), one of six area studies preservation programs based at the Center for Research Libraries, is an indispensable tool for South Asian scholarship. As a framework for cooperative collecting and preservation and scholarly resource of unique higher education materials, SAMP exemplifies the benefits of cooperative activity.

The collection, spanning four centuries and covering the entire subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh), is a treasure for scholars in all disciplines of the social sciences and humanities. Much as a *ghazal*, a traditional poetic form popular across the region, is a collection of loosely associated two-line poems, so SAMP's collection is a loosely grouped set of research material, each resource capable of being appreciated in its own right, but assembled as a whole forming a rich tapestry of themes and subjects important for the understanding of South Asian civilization.

A useful sketch of [SAMP's early history](#) was undertaken in 1988 by Jack C. Wells, then South Asian bibliographer at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In it, he relates the founding of the project in 1967 by 22 participating libraries. At the core of the project was the mission to cooperatively acquire and maintain a readily accessible collection of unique materials in microform related to the study of South Asia. Materials

are collected both through the filming efforts of the project and through the purchase of positive copies of materials filmed by other groups, institutions and companies.

Since 1988, SAMP has scaled up its collecting efforts through the preservation of major archives from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Major funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Department of Education, the U.S.-India Fund for Cultural, Educational, and Scientific Cooperation, and the Government of India have assisted SAMP in its efforts to provide access to a vast array of social, cultural, scientific, and political materials. SAMP's catalog currently lists over 27,600 records (though this number would likely double should one take into account the as yet unanalyzed sets of fiche and microfilm available).

Some of the major collections assembled in the 1990s include over 4,000 Hindustani titles from the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC) from the 19th century, covering a range of subjects including arts and sciences, history, literature and religion. This collection complements a previous effort to preserve over 2,000 unique Hindi texts from the OIOC for the same period and subject themes.

Atop these valuable collections, and one of the most valued assets in SAMP's collection, are the nearly 24,000 titles

filmed so far under the “Microfilming of Indian Publications Project (MIPP).” This effort seeks to preserve and make accessible all books listed in [The National Bibliography of Indian Literature: 1901–1953](#), a compilation of 56,000 books in the sixteen languages of India. The collection documents the development of the cultural milieu of the struggle for independence from colonial rule and exemplifies the flourishing of scholarly publishing in the subcontinent.

Historians of the colonial era will find a wealth of resources relating to the India Office and East India Company, chief among them the “India Office Records, Home Miscellaneous Series, 1631–1859.” This set comprises most of the important surviving documents relating to the London administration of India and Burma before independence. The entire contents of the Home Miscellaneous Series (IOR/H) can be searched in the [Access 2 Archives](#) database.

Additional sources from this period include records from the East India

and official gazettes of the central and provincial governments of British India) contained in the IDC fiche sets, “Selections from the records of the Government of India.” SAMP also possesses a number of missionary society archives from this period.

As India and other provinces moved towards independence, nationalist sentiment and the emergence of provincial governments and a federal legislature are documented in such collections as the legislative assembly debates and proceedings for central and provincial councils in India, East Bengal (Pakistan), Ceylon and other regions. Additional confrontation may be evidenced in such collections as SAMP’s [Indian Proscribed Tracts](#) (material censored by the British either for its criticism of the regime and calls for self-government or for its expressions of communal conflict) and the “Meerut Conspiracy Case, 1929–32,” in which 31 leaders of organized labor and Communist party members were arrested for sedition—regarded as the largest political trial ever held in India.

Complementing all of these resources is SAMP’s collection of 100-plus newspapers from the region, focusing mainly on the late 19th-early 20th century. Significant titles include *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (1905–1951, supplementing CRL holdings of 1962–current); *Behar Herald* (1913–1961); *Bombay Chronicle* (1913–1950); *Madras Mail* (1868–1889); *The Tribune* (Lahore, Pakistan, 1881–1961); and many others. SAMP continues to engage in the acquisition of newspapers and is actively pursuing vernacular language titles.

SAMP’s collection has been characterized generally as covering “pre-independence India with less attention being paid to Nepal and Sri Lanka, and to the subcontinent after 1947.” This description remains generally true: approximately 85% of imprints are from or related to India. However, in recent years SAMP has increased its emphasis

on the other regions and languages of the subcontinent.

As an example, SAMP is collaborating with the [Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta](#) to create use copies of microfilm for Bengali literary and historical journals. The Hitesranjan Sanyal Memorial Collection contains some of the most important holdings of 19th century Bengali periodicals, monographs, and reports, filmed from the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat and other collections. By creating surrogates of the 576 reels produced by the CSSSC, SAMP is ensuring that the originals and the master negatives will be secured for future scholarship.

In another project, SAMP recently supported the efforts of the [Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya](#), the principal archive of books and periodicals in the Nepali language, to preserve its extensive collection of newspapers. The titles preserved in Kathmandu (and duplicated through our partners in Chennai) span the entire 20th century and represent a wide spectrum of opinions.

In one of the most compelling examples, SAMP provided physical and financial support to aid the work of scholars identifying collections abroad. While in the field searching for obscure texts relevant to her research, Professor Rebecca Manring (Indiana University) stumbled upon a neglected private manuscript collection in West Bengal. The collection belonged to the late Sukumar Sen, one of the leading scholars of Bengali vernacular literature as well as a gifted linguist and prolific writer. Dr. Manring began cataloging the material and sought SAMP funding to preserve the collection. Dr. Manring spent several months in India, cataloging and preparing the materials, dusting the manuscripts, assisting the filmers who used SAMP’s portable microfilm camera, and repackaging the materials for safe storage. Her close connection with the Sen family, established credentials in India, and respect for the wishes of

*Complementing all of these resources is SAMP’s collection of 100-plus newspapers from the region, focusing mainly on the late 19th-early 20th century.*

Company, *India Office Lists*, 1876–1947 (a registry of service records for higher ranking civil servants), and the large collection of official publications (acts and regulations, legislative debates

the family all contributed to the realization of the project. A printed index to the collection is forthcoming.

The extensive set of microfiche acquired in cooperation with the Library of Congress Field Office in New Delhi comprises a significant part of SAMP's contemporary collection. SAMP and the Center for Research Libraries have been collaborating since 1985 in the acquisition of this material, numbering hundreds of thousands of fiche. As this material was selected for microfiche because of its fragile, voluminous, or dispersed nature, it covers every country in the region with a wide variety of topics (sciences, social sciences, and the humanities) and date ranges. Increasingly, material such as pamphlet collections is being arranged topically ("Islam in Pakistan," "Ecology and environment in India"). The Center is engaged in retrospective cataloging of this material to improve access.

While the resources described above primarily support historical or socio-political research, there is a wide variety of other material, including agricultural and scientific documents, philosophical and legal journals, and a broad selection of literature and literary studies (see related article on Premchand and Kabir). Of note is the extensive collection of "Popular literature in Hindi and Urdu" from the collection of Dr. Frances Pritchett (Columbia University). This fiche set is comprised of *qissah* (narrative "chapbook" literature), *nautanki* (folk-opera) texts, and other popular genres.

In any properly formed *ghazal*, the last couplet is devoted to the maqta (a stanza in which the poet's pen name is employed as a "signature"). In the SAMP collection, a fitting reminder for the important role played by the project, the first and last frame of each reel reads "Microfilmed by the South Asia Microform Project of the Center for Research Libraries." ❖

## Other Important Resources Held by SAMP

### *Archaeological Survey of India. Circle Reports [1881–1921]*

From the middle of the 19th century, the Archaeological Survey of India worked to explore, excavate, conserve, preserve and protect the monuments and sites of national & international importance. The country was divided into a number of zones (called "Circles"), which were responsible for the exploration of new and potential archaeological sites, scientific clearance and small scale excavations, conservation, preservation and protection of sites and monuments under its jurisdiction.

The annual progress reports of the Archaeological Survey of India contain a wealth of material of importance to archaeologists and historians. The Circle Reports are also basic reference material for any student doing research in the field of Indian art. The earliest report is the one for 1881 issued by the Southern Circle. The publication of these reports was discontinued after the report for 1920/21.

### *Extracts From the Native Press [1874–1916]*

These are weekly reports on India vernacular and English-language newspapers, arranged by province. In some cases this is the only evidence of the contents of short-lived newspapers, since many of the original papers have not survived. The items selected for notice are often revealing, both of the newspapers' contents, and the selector's criteria. SAMP acquired early collections for Bengal, Northwestern Frontier Province, Bombay, and Punjab.

### *Kaiser-i-Hind [1882–1981]*

This newspaper, published in Gujarati and English, became a platform for the Indian National Congress formed in 1885. The paper represents the view of the Parsi community in India and is of great historical value to historians, scholars, and political scientists. Filmed in collaboration with the [International Coalition on Newspapers](#).

### *India Land Settlement Reports*

SAMP holds a near complete collection of Indian Land Survey and Settlement Reports, filmed at the British Library's India Office Library. This collection reflects an important source of material for the study of Indian rural society, particularly economic and social changes during the period of British rule in India.

The Land Survey and Settlement Reports were compiled by the provincial administrations primarily as a fiscal and cadastral record to identify the lands and persons under obligation to the government. The first part of each land settlement report generally describes the physical features and population of each district and provides a sketch of its revenue history. The second part contains the account of the latest survey and settlement operations and analysis of the statistics compiled from the records prepared. These survey and settlement reports contain information on a variety of other subjects, including boundaries and administrative divisions existing at the time, their physical features, quality of soils, condition of communications, markets, population growth, and information about caste and social groups. They also include comparisons of the past and present conditions of the areas.

# Digital South Asia Library

Gerald Hall

Project Director

Digital South Asia Library



A detail of the ceiling in the Old Jami Masjid Museum, a sandstone structure dating to the 8th–14th century AD, located in Junagadh, Gujarat, India. Photo from the American Institute of Indian Studies—Center for Art and Archaeology.

Beginning in the early 1990s, American research libraries were confronted with a pressing problem: the decreasing value of the U.S. dollar and the increasing cost of all library acquisitions threatened the quantity and quality of acquisitions for area studies. As a result, a task force of the Association of American Universities and the Association of Research Libraries proposed “the creation of a network-based, distributed program for coordinated development of foreign acquisitions for U.S. and Canadian research libraries.”<sup>1</sup> With the help of a two-year pilot project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and grants from the United States Department of Education, the Digital South Asia Library (DSAL) has become widely recognized by scholars and Internet search engines like Google as an essential resource for the study of South Asia.

From its inception, DSAL has been a collaboration between research libraries and institutions in the U.S., Europe, and South Asia, including the Center for Research Libraries, University of Chicago, South Asia Microform Project, Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation, Association for Asian Studies, Library of Congress, Asia Society, British Library, University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, Roja Muthiah Research Library in India, Sundarayya Vig-

nana Kendram in India, and Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya in Nepal. The participating institutions have contributed both resources and expertise to the construction of a library that has made crucial resources available to a broader audience. The Center for Research Libraries has played a vital role in coordinating these innovative collaborations.

DSAL is now the home of more than 100 separate resources, arranged among eight broad categories, and more than a dozen others are in various stages of development. A detailed description of a few of the resources will illustrate the increasing importance of DSAL to research on South Asia. Among the essential reference works provided to the public via the Internet is the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* consisting of 26 volumes and more than 25,000 pages of text and scores of detailed maps. Compiled during the course of six decades and published in several editions from 1881 until 1931, the *Gazetteer* is acknowledged as “one of the largest and most influential exercises in imperial information gathering undertaken in

<sup>1</sup> Association of American Universities/Association of Research Libraries’ Global Resources Program, “Report of the AAU Task Force on Acquisition and Distribution of Foreign Language and Area Studies Materials,” (Washington, D. C.: AAU Presidents Steering Committee, 1994), <http://www.arl.org/aauf/FA.html#Program> (accessed May 3, 2005).

the nineteenth century.”<sup>2</sup> The *Gazetteer* provides critical descriptions of cultural, geographical and administrative districts of South Asia under British rule.

As with many of the resources on DSAL, there is an effort to provide patrons of the *Imperial Gazetteer* both with formats that appear familiar, such as page images that look and feel somewhat like the original volumes, as well as newer formats that allow users to take advantage of the more robust search capacities, such as full-text and proximity searching, that digital editions permit. Furthermore, in the production of digital resources, DSAL has attempted to plan for the future and the implementation of new capacities. Provisions have been made for the integration of geographical information systems to better link the historical and statistical data contained there with cartographic representations of the subcontinent such as those found in another invaluable resource currently in the latter stages of development for DSAL, *A Historical Atlas of South Asia*, edited by Joseph E. Schwartzberg. Additionally, DSAL is investigating methods in which to link its collections of more than 50,000 historic photographs with the descriptions of the *Gazetteer* and the *Historical Atlas*. In order to make all of these interconnected digital resources more accessible to scholars and the pub-

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Cotton, “Hunter, Sir William Wilson (1840–1900),” rev. S. Gopal, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14237> (accessed May 3, 2005).

lic, DSAL, with help of the University of Michigan’s OAIster project, is developing a portal using the Open Archives Initiative metadata harvesting protocol in which large digital collections with only collection level records will in the future have records available for each individual digital object. This has the added potential to make visible and accessible thousands of digital files hitherto unknown to patrons using Internet search engines.

Another important DSAL resource that exemplifies the benefits of close collaboration is the digital version of the *National Bibliography of Indian Literature* (NBIL). The NBIL is a selective bibliography of literary texts in 22 languages compiled by a group of distinguished language specialists under the direction of B. S. Kesavan, a former director of the National Library of India. The NBIL implementation on DSAL comprises not only the more than 55,000 titles included in the print bibliography but also provides additional information on those titles that were included in the Microfilming of Indian Publications Project (MIPP) undertaken by the Library of Congress and the National Library of India, acquired by the South Asian Microform Project (SAMP) and housed at the Center for Research Libraries. The linking of bibliographic information with holdings information is an essential tool for scholars, and DSAL is expanding this concept beyond the select corpus represented by the NBIL to develop a South Asian Union Catalogue (SAUC) with bibliographic and holdings descriptions for books and periodicals

published in South Asia from 1556 to the present. These important resources for the study of South Asian literature in several languages are augmented by DSAL’s role as the host site for the Digital Dictionaries of South Asia, a project of the South Asia Language and Area Center of the University of Chicago, Columbia University, and the Triangle South Asia Consortium in North Carolina that currently provides 21 digital dictionaries for the study of South Asian languages. Through the collaboration fostered by DSAL, a core set of essential tools to find, access, and understand an important corpus of South Asian literature has been made available to scholars and the public.

In the spring of 2005, the Center for Research Libraries was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education through the Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access program to continue the work of DSAL in improving access to vital resources on South Asia. Through this grant DSAL will continue to develop the South Asian Union Catalogue. It will also provide an important resource for the teaching of less commonly taught languages by digital conversion and delivery of audio recordings from the Linguistic Survey of India. In these and other activities intended to preserve and deliver materials from South Asia to readers in the U.S. and elsewhere, DSAL will continue to rely upon the collaboration of critical partners in order to provide new and innovative resources for scholarship. ❖

# A Union Catalogue for South Asia

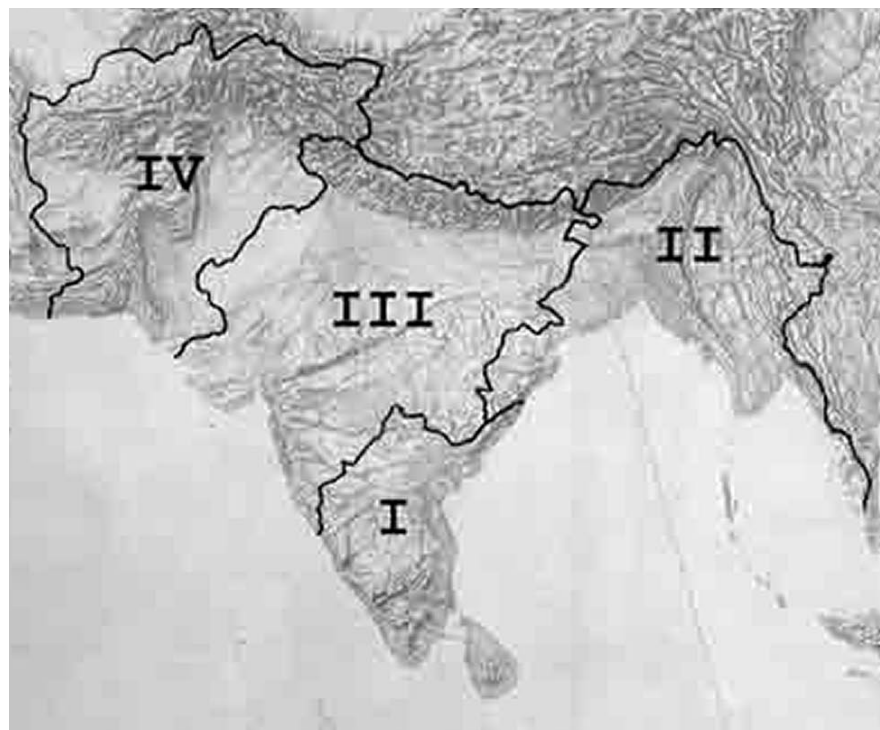
James Nye

*Bibliographer for Southern Asia and  
Director, South Asia Language and  
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The South Asia Union Catalogue is a cap-stone program gathering existing bibliographic records and combining them with new cataloging created under current projects to create a definitive statement on publishing in the South Asian subcontinent. The South Asia Union Catalogue intends to become an historical bibliography comprehensively describing books and periodicals published in South Asia from 1556 through the present. In addition, it will become a union catalog in which libraries throughout the world owning copies of those imprints may register their holdings. Scholars of South Asia in North America and elsewhere in the world will be given free access to the historical bibliography and the holdings information through the online Union Catalogue, a resource that will be delivered under the Digital South Asia Library (see article, page 6).

The four phases of the South Asia Union Catalogue program are defined by the regions of book production. Phase I encompasses south India and Sri Lanka. Phase II covers eastern South Asia and colonial Burma. Phase III covers north central South Asia, including Nepal. Phase IV ranges over western South Asia and includes Afghanistan, Pakistan, and parts of northwestern India.

Work on Phase I of the South Asia Union Catalogue began recently with support from the Ford Foundation. The third and fourth phases will commence late in 2005 under a four-year grant awarded in April to the Center for Research Libraries by the U.S. Depart-



The four phases in the creation of the South Asia Union Catalog.

ment of Education. While full funding for Phase II is still being sought, a pilot project encompassing that sub-region will begin in 2006.

More specifically, the South Asia Union Catalogue will:

- 1) Create unique bibliographic records and new authority records for books and periodicals published in the subcontinent during the period 1801–1959;
- 2) Make the bibliographic records available on the South Asia Union Catalogue's Web site;
- 3) Improve the brief bibliographic records created from colonial registers by upgrading the descriptive catalog data using copies in hand and attaching holdings information and statements on physical condition of the imprints to the database; and
- 4) Distribute the new bibliographic data with known holdings to international databases at the conclusion of the project.

In accomplishing these objectives, the proposed South Asia Union Catalogue program will build upon strong working relationships with a federation of



libraries created by the Center for South Asia Libraries. The federated libraries are located in South Asia, Europe, the United States, and elsewhere in the world.

To gain a sense of the problems South Asian studies humanists face, it is necessary to recall the complexities of research in the U.S. prior to the advent of major online bibliographic databases such as WorldCat and RLIN. Even more appropriately, one should imagine research in the era before the mid-19th century advent of the *Catalogue of printed books in the British museum* and the *National union catalog*. It is no overstatement to declare that today's scholars attempting to locate early imprints from the subcontinent face many of the same problems as a scholar of U.S. or British studies working prior to 1840.

The significance of the South Asia Union Catalogue deserves special attention. It will yield distinct benefits in several key areas.

- **Scholarship**—The Union Catalogue will have far-reaching consequences for scholarship about South Asia, both in the U.S. and elsewhere. Research in the social sciences and

humanities is heavily dependent on access to texts and to the record of prior scholarship. Yet current library collections in the United States are, for several reasons, distinctly ill-equipped to provide scholars with early printed texts in the languages of South Asia. Only a small fraction of the estimated 1,300,000 imprints produced in South Asia prior to 1960 are available in North America. There is little capacity to generate new knowledge when linkages to the printed record are weak. The South Asia Union Catalogue will give researchers a reliable base of holdings information from which to pursue their work. With the Union Catalogue available, U.S. researchers will use their time in the field more efficiently. This is especially important given the relative scarcity of travel grants for scholars to work in South Asia.

- **Publishing Heritage**—The Union Catalogue will foster a greater awareness of South Asia's large and influential publishing heritage. That heritage is generally little-appreciated and under-protected even though it was an important force in the creation of modern consciousness in the region.

- **Preservation**—The database will serve as a base for coordinated efforts to preserve the published cultural patrimony of South Asia. It will be possible to set preservation priorities and make intelligent selection decisions based on specific knowledge about library holdings and the physical condition of those holdings represented in the South Asia Union Catalogue.
- **Cross-Border Connections**—The Union Catalogue will enable virtual cross-border connections without the political complications that can cripple collaborations between organizations in adjacent countries. Institutions now separated by national borders and antagonisms in South Asia will be mutually enriched.
- **Bibliographic Control**—The Union Catalogue will contribute to the objective of universal bibliographic control. Currently, only a small fraction of South Asian imprints are described with electronic records.

In sum, the South Asia Union Catalogue may have an impact upon South Asian studies comparable to that of the English Short-Title Catalogue for the study of the Anglophone world. ❖

# Rare Literary Gems: The Works of Kabir and Premchand at CRL

Todd Scudiere

South Asia Cataloger

Center for Research Libraries

This edition of *Focus* highlights two prominent literary masters of the Indian tradition: the mystic poet Kabir and the novelist and social activist Premchand. The Center has an extensive collection of material by and about both, including unique holdings from the South Asia Microform Project (SAMP).

Original works by Kabir at the Center include 25 titles in Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, and English, 11 of which are unique holdings on microfilm and part of the South Asian Microform Project (SAMP). SAMP offerings include a 1915 edition of *100 Poems of Kabir*, translated by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, as well as an 1872 edition of *Kabira Kavya*, a selection of Kabir poems, translated into Gujarati. An edition of the *Bijak*, the complete works of Kabir, is also available in English translation. There are more than 40 additional titles, including biographies and critical interpretations of Kabir, in the Center's catalog.

The Center offers an impressive array of writing by and on Premchand, with 107 original works in Urdu and Hindi, as well as translations into other Indian languages and English, and more than 90 titles on SAMP microfilm and microfiche. Examples include a 1939 edition of *Ghaban* in Urdu, a 1939 edition of *Nirmala* in Gujarati, and a 1938 edition of *Karmabhumi* in Hindi. There are also collections of his stories in English, and more than 40 biographies and critical interpretations on his life and career.

## Kabir: 15th c. Mystic Poet

Kabir (1440–1518) is considered one of the foremost mystic poets in the Indian tradition. Influenced by Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs alike, he espoused an array of their philosophical ideas. He promulgated a oneness with God, embracing the Hindu concept of *jivatma* (individual soul) as being directly linked to *paramatma* (universal or supreme soul). Kabir's idea of loving God with devotion appealed to both Hindu Bhakti as well as Muslim Sufi concepts and practices.

The origins of the poet-saint known as Kabir are shrouded in mystery. Legend says he was born to a Hindu Brahmin widow but was adopted by childless Muslim weavers named Niru and Nimma, who supposedly found him afloat a giant lotus leaf in the Lahara Tala lake, adjacent to the holy city of Varanasi (Das, xvii). Today Varanasi, also known as Kashi or Banaras, is considered one of the oldest cities in the world as well as the world's oldest continual culture. Fifteenth-century Varanasi bustled with spiritual life, attracting devotees and students of all faiths. Kabir's Muslim upbringing led him in his youth to explore Hindu Vaishnava and Muslim Sufi traditions, which both center on intense love for the Lord. During that time of considerable debate between orthodox Hindu and Muslim groups, Kabir focused on common fundamentals of organized religion, such as love and devotion, as well as weaknesses. He delivered this message of tolerance and understanding between the faiths

सत्य नाम ।



कबीर साहेब.

An image of Kabir, the 15th century mystic poet-saint. From the collections of the Center for Research Libraries.

through his *dohas* (couplets) and songs (Das, xviii–xix).

Kabir also reminded us that no human being can escape the clutches of old age, sickness, and death. He believed these uncontrollable aspects of life were not something that we should worry about, since we are all subject to them. He also discusses the figurative death of the mind and its illusory nature as a means of attaining eternal life.

Kabir could not read or write, and he eschewed formal education. He viewed

the only meaningful knowledge as that received directly from the divine. His style is spontaneous, powerful, and tender; his words seem to destroy duality instantly and brilliantly. Vaudeville elegantly states that Kabir's "best utterances are endowed with a diamond-like quality, the transparency, multi-faceted brilliancy and mysterious glow of a pure diamond" (Vaudeville, 130).

The original language of Kabir's couplets and songs has been a matter of controversy. Most Indian scholars recognize that it borrows from a variety of dialects spoken at that time (Vaudeville, 119). Technically speaking, the "language" of Kabir contains elements of old Avadhi, Braj, and Bhojpurī. He used common language that resonated with all people and transcended social barriers.

While Kabir may have placed no value on books, his legacy is preserved in written form, and his influence and popularity has spread throughout the world. Click on Author Search and Subject Search below for access to a selection of Kabir titles available in the Center's online catalog.

### Kabir

[Author search](#)

[Subject search](#)

### **Premchand: "Emperor of Novels" and Social Activist**

Premchand (1880–1936) was born Dhanpat Rai in a village called Pandepur, near Varanasi. Like Kabir, Premchand was a literary figure who transcended the barriers between Hindus and Muslims. Premchand's mother died when he was a young boy; his father, a postal clerk, died while Premchand was still a student, leaving his stepmother to raise Premchand and his stepsiblings under difficult financial circumstances.

Premchand began his career as a school teacher and later worked as a journalist.

Premchand's novels and short stories often incorporate social themes like poverty, with many set in villages like his own. He also wrote about issues faced by the urban middle class, including exploitation, prostitution, widowhood, and the freedom movement. He portrayed real-life characters in real-life situations and relationships, and he famously included elements of chance in his plots (Urdustan). Premchand became known as a social reformer of his time and used his novels to awaken interest in national and social issues. Mahatma Gandhi was a profound influence—in response to Gandhi's call for noncooperation with the British, Premchand eventually quit his job and devoted himself full time to writing.

Dhanpat Rai began writing in Urdu under the name of Nawabrai and published his soon-to-be-famous Urdu short stories in the journal *Zamana*. Controversy came quickly: in 1909, the British government labeled his first collection of short stories, *Soz-e-vatan*, subversive and immediately censored it. They mandated that all subsequent writings be examined by the government or not published at all. The author steered around this by creating a new pseudonym, Premchand, and continued to publish (Pandey, 15–16).

In 1915 Premchand began to write and publish in Hindi. He started by translating previously published Urdu works into Hindi and later wrote exclusively in Hindi (Pandey, 19). Still, he refused to write in the Sanskritized Hindi of the elite and instead used Hindustani, the colloquial language of much of North India that is in many ways a combination of Hindi and Urdu. He wrote authentically about people in the language that they spoke and understood. By 1930, Hindi speakers considered Premchand the *Upanyas Samrat*, or "Emperor of Novels" (Pandey, 14). He is also known in Urdu circles as the

father of the Urdu short story.

Premchand's more than 300 short stories include *Shatranj ke khiladi* (The Chess Players), *Budhi Kaki* (The Old Aunt), *Kafan* (The Shroud), and *Bade Bhaisahab* (The Big Brother). Some of his best-known novels include *Gaban* (The Embezzlement), *Godan* (The Gift of a Cow), *Nirmala*, and *Sevasadan*. When searching for works by Premchand, be aware that the authority form for his name is "Premacanda, 1881–1936," or call up a title list from the Center's online catalog through the following Author Search and Subject Search links.

### Premchand

[Author search](#)

[Subject search](#)

In addition, the Center's Digital South Asia Library (see article, page 6) offers a full-text version of *A Premchand Reader* by Norman H. Zide, which features nine of Premchand's most famous short stories. ❖

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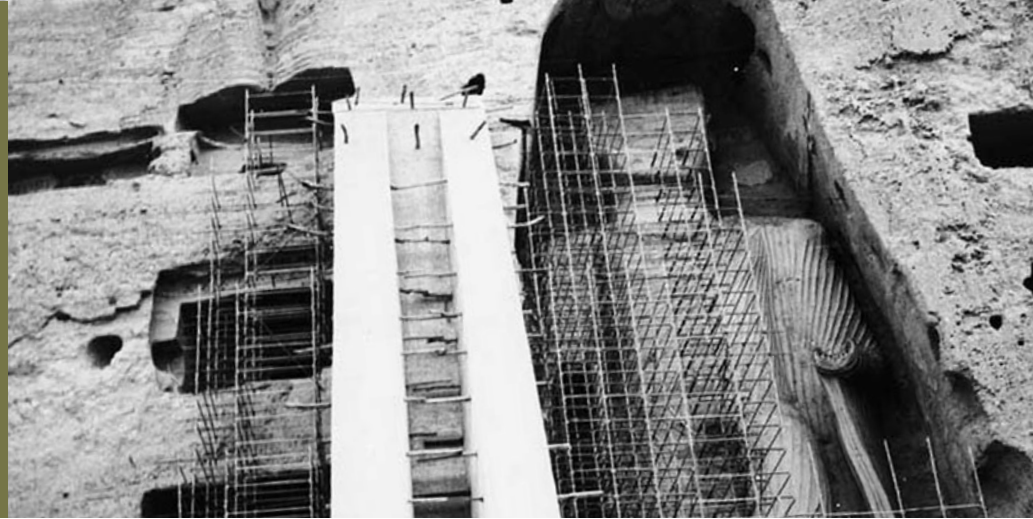
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# DSAL's Digital Jewel: The Institute of Indian Studies Center for Art and Archaeology Photo Archive

Gerald Hall

Project Director

Digital South Asia Library



Images of the 175-foot Bamiyan Buddha statue destroyed by the Taliban in March 2001. Photos from the American Institute of Indian Studies—Center for Art and Archaeology.



Among the lesser-known jewels for the study of South Asia available in the Digital South Asia Library is the American Institute of Indian Studies Center for Art and Archaeology Photo Archive. Founded in 1961, the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) is a consortium of U.S. universities and colleges engaged in research in South Asia. Among its numerous activities in support of scholarship, the AIIS maintains research centers and facilities in South Asia and is a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). At its Center for Art and Archaeology in Gurgaon, India the AIIS houses an archive of more than 120,000 photographs and color slides documenting Indian art and archaeology. This renowned collection formed the basis of the monumental multivolume *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*.

In collaboration with AIIS, DSAL has mounted more than 50,000 of these discrete images in its digital archive to date, and will eventually provide digital delivery of the entire collection. The archive is intended to provide the most extensive and easily accessible resource for the study of Indian art through a comprehensive documentation of India's monuments. Each monument has been carefully photographed. In addition, plans of temple complexes are included. All of the images include a rich variety of metadata providing key details such as location, historical period, style,

and religious affiliation of the monuments. The DSAL presentation includes metadata not only for the images that are already available but for the entire collection as well.

The database of art from Indian monuments will, it is hoped, not only inform existing scholarship but also foster new approaches to understanding Indian art and architecture. Presenting scholars with a large corpus of Indian art and architecture to consider and compare, will stimulate analysis of the wider contexts of production and meaning.

Among the most fascinating recent uses of the AIIS photo archive involves a project, led by a team of scientists at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETH Zurich) in Switzerland, to restore a pair of colossal, 5th century Buddha statues in Afghanistan that were destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban. The ETH Zurich team used photographs from the AIIS Center for Art and Archaeology Photo Archive to help create a computer reconstruction of the Great Buddha that can serve as an exact model for the eventual restoration of the monument.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the AIIS collection is contributing to the stewardship of the cultural heritage of South Asia. ❖

<sup>1</sup> Armin Grun, Fabio Remondino, and Li Zhang, "Photogrammetric Reconstruction of the Great Buddha of Bamiyan, Afghanistan," *The Photogrammetric Record*, 19 (107) September 2004, 177–199.

## Center for South Asia Libraries

David Magier

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This medallion enhances the cover of *Gujaratanum Murtividhana*, a book of Gujarati sculpture from the Center for Research Libraries.

The Center for South Asia Libraries (CSAL) is an American overseas research center designed to facilitate scholarly research and teaching on South Asia in all academic disciplines through improved preservation of and access to the heritage of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, as embodied in their intellectual and artistic output in all forms. It functions as a research support facility for American scholars in the region by providing infrastructures and services to enhance research effectiveness and the exchange of scholarly information. These aims are accomplished through current and planned activities of the Center operating in conjunction with several organizations and institutions in South Asia holding similar objectives. CSAL is a member of the [Council of American Overseas Research Centers](#) (CAORC) and works closely with CAORC's [Digital Library for International Research](#).

CSAL was founded by Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and the Center for Research Libraries. The CSAL Executive Committee consists of David Magier (President), Bernard Reilly (Vice-President), and James Nye (Secretary/Treasurer). With contributions from participating member institutions and consortia, and significant funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Association of Research Libraries, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, and other agencies and foundations, CSAL operates in the subcontinent to connect students and scholars directly with the research information they need. CSAL's initiatives are designed to create

research support structures that parallel those available for the study of classical antiquity in libraries operated by CAORC bodies in Rome and Athens.

CSAL is based upon the principle of mutual benefit to U.S. and South Asian scholars. Consonant with that objective, CSAL works with research centers, universities, libraries, and archives throughout South Asia to preserve important local resources (usually by microfilming), to provide full bibliographic access (by cataloging, article indexing, and other means), and to prepare them for full-text or full-image delivery over the Internet. Unlike other approaches based on acquisition, CSAL's *modus operandi* allows the original research materials to remain in South Asia for the benefit of local scholars, while the information products of CSAL's activity are disseminated over the Web for use by scholars in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Libraries in South Asia are inadequately funded. Therefore, without a cooperative effort such as CSAL, it is unlikely that the issues of preservation and access would be addressed to the satisfaction of scholars and students doing fieldwork in the region. CSAL acts as a locus for activity and a magnet for funding opportunities to benefit scholars and libraries in South Asia as well as the U.S. and the rest of the world. With its US headquarters based at CRL and its field headquarters in Chennai, CSAL operates through the federation of organizations known as the Council of South Asian Library

Centers to carry out its projects in the subcontinent. Major partner organizations include the Roja Muthiah Research Library in Chennai, the Sundarayya Vignana Kendram and its Urdu Research Center in Hyderabad, the Urdu Documentation Center in Hyderabad, the Center for Studies in the Social Sciences in Kolkatta, and the Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya in Kathmandu. The US Library of Congress in New Delhi, as well as the British Library, have also been significant participants in CSAL projects. CSAL also functions in close coordination with the other South Asian overseas research centers: the American Institute of Indian Studies, the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies, and the American Institute of Sri Lankan Studies.

To date, CSAL has attracted funding for such varied initiatives as an extensive survey of archival collections in South Asia; preservation, digitization, and indexing of South Asian materials through the Digital South Asia Library; a cataloging workshops for CSAL partners to be trained in technical issues of AACR2 cataloging; support for the development and maintenance of [SARAI](#) (South Asia Resource Access on the Internet); and ongoing funding for the South Asia Union Catalogue (see related article, page 8). In recent developments, CSAL is collaborating with Cornell University to digitize and preserve 19th century Urdu periodicals through the support of the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme. ❖

## Digital Dictionaries of South Asia

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An architectural fragment depicting the figure of Buddha dating from the 1st–3rd century AD, from Mathura (Kankali Tila), Uttar Pradesh, India. Photo from the American Institute of Indian Studies—Center for Art and Archaeology.

### CLICK HERE

TO HEAR VOICE MESSAGES  
IN PASHTO, THE LANGUAGE  
OF AFGANISTAN.

The Digital Dictionaries of South Asia project is expanding a vital part of the digital architecture for language learning and instruction. At present 21 dictionaries are available through the project Web site at <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries>. An additional 27 lexical files are in advanced stages of testing and will be available late in 2005.

Few resources are as important for language knowledge as good dictionaries. For academic users, the ability to consider not simply the most commonly understood meaning of a word or phrase but its diverse social connotations is of great importance. Without the benefit of high quality dictionaries the critical nuances of great literature and detailed scholarship are difficult to express or comprehend, for native speakers as well as other readers.

This project aims to make high-quality dictionaries in each of the 26 modern literary languages of South Asia universally available in digital formats. At least 55 dictionaries will be converted from printed books, often multi-volume, to electronic resources. A wide variety of users are already making extensive use of the electronic dictionaries via the project's Web site, comfortably located within the Digital South Asia Library. These readers include not only the academics whose study of Indic languages has long been supported by the Department of Education, but also

American-born learners of South Asian heritage, and individuals around the world. More than one billion people or 86 percent of the total South Asian population have one of these 32 languages as their mother tongue.

Each of the project's dictionaries is selected by an Advisory Panel of distinguished linguists and language teachers according to merit, converted to digital format by the highly accurate technique of double-keying and verification, reviewed for accuracy by South Asian scholars, and implemented on the World Wide Web. The project has relied on the University of Chicago's American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language (ARTFL) for Web implementation.

The project is funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Education to the University of Chicago, the first of which was in collaboration with Columbia University and the Triangle South Asia Consortium in North Carolina. The Hinduja Foundation funded the inclusion of a Sanskrit dictionary. Additional support has come from the Consortium for Language Teaching and Learning for lexical resources on three minority languages of Pakistan—Khowar, Pashto, and Torwali—including the addition of digital audio files, such as the sound messages above, enabling students to hear the pronunciation of entry words and selected sentences as examples of word usage. ❖



# The Center for Research Libraries

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