



**The Book Unbound:
Two Centuries of Indian Print**
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Abstracts

Keynote Address

A Note on the Use of Punctuation in Early Printed Books in Bengali

Swapan Chakravorty

Punctuation was sparse and uneven in Bengali handwritten books. Poetry, it is well known, used the vertical virgule to end the first line of an end-stopped couplet (payaar), and two vertical lines at the end of the second. For triplets or tripadis, each set of three used a space between the first and the second, and the first set was closed by a vertical line and the second by a pair of virgulae. These marks were not necessarily grammatical or rhetorical, but more often than not prosodic. Line divisions, however, were erratic and optional, even after the introduction of print. Punctuated prose appeared only with the coming of print, instances of earlier manuscript prose being rare except in letters and a few documents relating to property, court orders and land records. Rammohan Roy's (1772-1833) early Bengali prose hardly employed punctuation. Between 1819 and 1833, when he was trying to fashion a modern prose and to codify its grammar, we see his texts using a sprinkling of commas, question marks and semi-colons. Common wisdom persuades us that it was Iswarchandra Vidyasagar (1820-91), scholar, author, social activist and printer, who standardized punctuation in Bengali printed prose. The disposition of Western punctuation, paragraphs and line-divisions could at times be excessive in Vidyasagar, impeding the rhetorical flow of a passage and distorting the 'eye-voice span'. There are precursors of Vidyasagar in experimenting with Western punctuation in Bengali printed prose, many of whom are ignored in the current literature. The paper looks at such attempts at Fort William College in Kolkata, the Baptist Mission in Srirampur and Kolkata, and Calcutta School Book Society, and attempts a few observations on the promises and failures of these experiments.



Panel 1: Grammar and typography in early printed books

Dating the first Bengali block print specimen: A review

Abu Jar Md. Akkas

Bengali printing with moveable types came into being with the publication of Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* in 1778. But there have also been, according to Sajananikanta Das (*Bangla Sahityera Itihasa: Gadyer Prathama Yuga*, Mitralaya [A history of the Bengali literature: the first phase], Kolkata, 1946), print specimens of Bengali alphabet or letters from blocks in at least six books before 1778. Sripantha, or Nikhil Sarkar, in his book *Yakhan Chhapakhana Ela* [When printing presses arrived], Pashchimbanga Bangla Akademi, Kolkata, 1977) lists eight such specimens, with the first being the one printed in *China Illustrata* by Atanasius Kircher published from Amsterdam in 1667. Sripantha gives a plate of the 1667 specimen, his first of the specimens of the Bengali prints

from block, in his book under the caption 'Specimen of the Bengali script as printed in *China Illustrata* in 1667' on page 3 in the plate section. The specimen has also been referred to as being the first by Mofakhkhar Hussain Khan in his book *The Bengali Book: History of Printing and Bookmaking* (Vol. 1, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1999). He also gives the plate in his book, on page 495, under the caption 'Alphabetum Bengalicum inserted after page 42 in *China monumentis* by Athanasius Kircher.' While the Kircher book appears not have any such plate, and the face of the head as it is printed on the plate does not match the style of any of the plate heads in the Kircher book, the plate appears in *Acta Eruditorum Quae Lipsiae Publicantur Supplementa* (Vol. 9, Leipzig, 1729). The *Acta Eruditorum* plate perfectly matches the ones printed in Sripantha and Mofakhkhar's books as being referred to from the Kircher book. It appears that the Kircher book (1667) has no Bengali specimen. The *Observations Physiques et Mathematiques* specimen, printed in 1692, therefore, stands to be the first and the *Acta Eruditorum* specimen, printed in 1729, the third specimen, with the one in Georg Jacob Kehr's *Aurenck Szeb* (1725) being the second.

Under the Shadow of Print: The Institutionalization of Halhed's Grammar and Its Consequences for the Bengali Character

Deeptanil Ray

The printed Bengali character shelters in itself in narratives of its institutionalization in Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* (1778) and Charles Wilkins's typographical efforts to systematize a set of moveable types for the Bengali language. While these narratives fulfil the genealogical functions of identification, classification, and unification, they impose or suppose a bundle of limits on our understanding of the historical evolution and topology of Bengali character forms. What particularly escapes attention is that this institutionalization highlights, albeit ahistorically, a single variant of late eighteenth century scribal *munshi* hand out of a plethora of hands, forms, shapes and diverse writing traditions of the long manuscript era; it is further conditioned by an orientalist understanding of typographical synchrony as hermeneutic rationalization which discounts the heterogeneity and complexities of pre-print writing traditions in the Indian subcontinent, and without an understanding or concern for the diachronic processes of writing as ritual and *consignatio* (written proof founded on legitimacy and authority) within the Sanskritic, Buddhist, and Islamic knowledge systems of the pre-colonial era.

This paper will try to identify the problems of this institutionalization, and ask for a reappraisal of the manuscript-era conventions of inscription in the Bengali language. It will try to argue that, the complexities of homeomorphism as encountered in contemporary Bengali typography has to do with a lack of historical attention to the rootedness of Bengali character forms to manuscript traditions, which prevents us from understanding the topologically valid properties of the Bengali alphabet as historically contingent on centuries of pre-print manuscript and scribal cultures.

Scribes, Scripts and Speed: Marathi Handwriting in the Age of Print

Prachi Deshpande

The story of Marathi's encounter with print is a rich and complex one. The arrival of print in the early nineteenth century not only triggered the language's standardization, it also brought about significant changes in its grammar, the scripts used to write it, and practices of reading and writing. Existing scholarship has examined the emergence of new literary genres, newspapers, educational texts and pedagogies, a modern public sphere and its socio-political dimensions, and the twin influence of Sanskrit and English on this overall process of the modernization of Marathi since the nineteenth century in the age of print.

In this paper, I shift the focus away from printed texts proper to the wider world of handwriting that was being transformed by the arrival of print. Scribal practices in Marathi had evolved over the medieval period in two scripts - Modi for bureaucratic, and Balbodh/Nagari for religiously oriented writing - and were shaped by diverse ideas about what constituted good writing, and good writers. These writerly discourses underwent complex changes in the age of print, towards fresh ideas about literacy, legibility and efficiency, and informed wider, persistent debates in Marathi language practices ranging from idiom, to orthography, to the elaboration of the language's very history. This handwritten 'underbelly' of the history of print, I will argue, is critical to understanding the trajectory of Marathi linguistic modernization - and indeed, that of other languages in the subcontinent as well.



Panel 2: Print-house practices and personnel

The Many Lives of Raja Krishnachandra Ray: Koutuk Bilas, Biography-Writing and the Introduction of Gopal Bhand in Print in Nineteenth Century Calcutta.

Priyanka Basu

In 1843, Shyamacharan Mukhopadhyay published a fictive account of the life of Raja Krishnachandra Ray of Nadia, named *Kauttak Bilas* from the Kamalalay Press. Two more editions of the text appeared later—in 1847 from the Sambad Bhringadut Press and in 1864 from the Hindu Press in Calcutta—with some changes in the initial publication. This paper looks at the 1864 edition of *Kauttak Bilas*, renamed as *Koutuk Bilas* and introducing the text in the subtitle as ‘the amusing deeds of Gopal Bhand, the court jester of Maharaj Krishnachandra Ray’. The trend of writing commemorative biographies gained ground in nineteenth century Bengal, with a number of accounts appearing on Raja Krishnachandra Ray himself. Of these Rajiblochan Mukhopadhyay’s *Maharaja Krishnachandra Rayasya Charitra* (1805), the *Kshitishvamsavalicharitra* translated into English by W. Pertsch (1852) and the *Vamsabali* (1855/1861) document Krishnachandra’s life and times as genealogy, chronicle and character eulogy. *Kauttak Bilas* (1843; 1847) seems to follow this trend of the commemorative biography as evident in the text’s subtitle. However, the change in the name of the text to *Koutuk Bilas* in 1864 and an emphasis on the character of Gopal Bhand (without actually changing the content) suggests an important departure in the nature of biography writing itself. Hans Renders (2012) has shown how the commemorative biography celebrating the subject as a unique person shifted to a more critical/journalistic format in the nineteenth century itself. Could the emphasis on Gopal Bhand, the court jester immortalized in Bengal’s oral lore and still circulated in print, be read as this transition from the commemorative to the critical? Moreover, can *Koutuk Bilas* be seen as a balance between the medieval *mangal kavya* (poems of benediction) tradition and the more formalized historical narrative? This paper is an attempt to understand *Kotuk Bilas* in the context of the print and performance culture in nineteenth century Bengal.

Ramram Basu’s letter of 10 February 1801

Abhijit Gupta

On 10 February 1801, Ramram Basu wrote a letter to John Ryland of the London Missionary Society, who received the letter on 6 November the same year, and translated it into English. The original letter, still preserved in the Baptist archives, is an extraordinary document, a plea for recognition and rehabilitation by a man who had taught Bengali to John Thomas and William Carey, two of the earliest Baptist missionaries to work in Bengal. Both Thomas and Carey were consumed by the idea of translating and printing the New Testament in Bengali, and Ramram Basu’s tutelage was key to their ambitions. Ramram also wrote Christian hymns along with his principals, but it was his *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra* (1802) which can truly lay claim to be the first original prose work to be printed in the Bengali language. This paper will read Ramram’s letter as a digest of the missionary enterprise in colonial Bengal,



with particular attention to the translation of the New Testament. It will also try to locate the often invisible labour of figures such as Ramram whose interventions are crucial to our understanding of the early history of print in south Asia.

Autobiography of a Proofreader: An Intimate History of Print Culture in Odisha

Jatin Nayak

In the latter half of the nineteenth century printing technology came to be seen as an agent of transformation. The resistance to the printed book gradually gave way to awareness of its advantages and in periodicals one comes across references to printing presses and the importance of printing technology. After 1866, Cuttack Printing Company emerged as a powerful institution on Odisha and enabled print culture to strike deep roots in the province.

In my paper I would focus on the autobiography of Krushnachandra Kar, who worked as a proofreader for a living in the first half of the twentieth century. He was associated with eminent editors of prestigious periodicals and established himself as an author and a lexicographer. Replete with interesting his autobiography reveals fascinating aspects of the evolving print culture in Odisha.



Panel 3: Identity and print

“I alone am the rightful Panda for the Assamese at Kalighat Temple”: Reading Advertisements, Pilgrim Connections and the Political Economy of Vernacular Print Cultures in the *Bijuli* (A Nineteenth Century Asamiya Periodical)

Hemjyoti Medhi

Studies of print cultures in Assam have largely been limited to discussions of the American Baptist Mission Press run first Asamiya periodical the *Orunodoi* (1846-1883) and by extension the missionary intervention in the construction of an “Assamese” identity vis a vis the influence and predominance of the Bengali language in 19th century Assam. What this position does not take into account is the complex question of the integrated political economy of the late 19th century Asamiya print culture and the Calcutta literary marketplace. I would like to highlight this through a reading of an Asamiya periodical titled *Bijuli* (1891-92?). I have not seen any discussion on the *Bijuli* except being mentioned as a publication by Padmanath Barua and its antagonism towards another contemporary Asamiya periodical *Jonaki* (1889--?). As most early periodicals including *Bijuli* are hard to locate there is silence about this periodical. The periodical itself was short-lived, a predicament true of many Asamiya periodicals in the 19th century including *Assam-Bandhu* (1884-85), *Mou* (1891), *Assam News* and so on.

In this paper I shall concentrate on the available issues of the *Bijuli* (in the British Library) which interestingly devote nearly one third space in every issue to advertisements. Though all the advertisements in themselves would be a very interesting reading I shall focus on the two worlds of literary print culture that the *Bijuli* inhabited. Firstly, the constant support that the Calcutta literary marketplace offered from printing services to advertisements involving social and material connections. Secondly, despite this overbearing presence and publication from 67 Mirzapur Street, Calcutta, and printed in several presses there (*Bijuli* management was conscious of that), there is an underlying critique of the dominance of the Bengali language in schools and social practices in Assam in the pages of the *Bijuli*. Interestingly both these worlds come together in a curious intersecting pilgrim market where travels to Assam, in entries such as “Assam Jatra”, is as meticulously and seriously engaged with in the periodical, as contestations in advertisements spaces about who the rightful *panda* to represent an Assamese in the Kalighat temple, Calcutta. I argue that the construction of this space is significant to our imagination of nascent print cultures in colonial Eastern India

The Formation of Mithila Desh: the emergence of ‘nation’ in the Maithili print in early 20th century

Sneha Jha

This paper will try to locate the idea of ‘nation’ as it developed and took shape along with the newly emerging print capitalism. It borrows from Benedict Anderson’s concept of print nationalism and tries to track the relationship between print and nationalism, as they grew simultaneously in Mithila. Mithila *desh* was an important category of understanding. It defined a way of relating to each other and to the territory in which Maithils lived. The journals of the time showed how the idea of Mithila *desh* took roots and shape, grounded itself, got challenged and reconfigured.

The paper will be divided into 3 sections. In the first section, I explore the relationship between Mithila *desh* and Bharat *desh*. I argue that the very act of introducing Hindi as a national language and

adopting Nagari script can be understood through the trope of sacrifice. Hindi was equated with Nagari and the resentment that built up against Hindi was often seen as antipathy towards Nagari. In the second section, the relation between Mithila, Nepal and Bengal, as portrayed in the early journals, has been explored. The notion of shared heritage became a focus of public discussions. The politics of the identity in the twentieth century, led to a close introspection of the closeness and distance of these regions from each other. The third section deals with how the idea of decline was appropriated by the Maithils while trying to develop a consciousness around the *desh*. The idea of decline has been a common characteristic in most of the revivalist movements. A golden past of Mithila was referred to and Maithils were asked to give up laziness if they wanted to see their *desh* in that position again. Subsequently, I take other conceptual tropes such as shame, courage and debt to map out the idea of Mithila *desh* further. Through these three sections, I hope to bring out the complexity of the formation of 'nation' in Mithila.

Between Manuscript and Print: Authenticity, Purity and the Politics of Selfhood in Vaishnava Publications in Colonial Bengal

Varuni Bhatia

One of the comparatively lesser-examined aspects of print culture in colonial South Asia has been the publication of pre-modern texts. This is especially true in the context of religious-themed literature, especially in vernacular languages, that otherwise abounds in print in the early to middle decades of publishing. In this paper, I will discuss the process of discovery and publication of Vaishnava literature in late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Bengal, focusing on key individuals and institutions that took a lead in this process. By examining the often unresolved controversies around authenticity that marked the journey from manuscript to print in the context of some Vaishnava texts, I argue that ideas of selfhood and identity were closely imbricated within Vaishnava publishing in this period



Panel 4: Digital expressions of South Asian print

Digitising Bangla: Perspective from Bangladesh

Naira Khan

An Indo-Aryan language of the Indo-European language family, Bangla is the sixth most widely spoken language in the world. It is also one of the most digitally under-resourced languages of the world. The digitisation of a language comprises converting and storing the language, spoken or written, in the form of digital data. It is a digital representation of the language that allows for storage and transmission, as well as computational processing of the language. More specifically, digitising a language entails building digital resources, as well as tools and applications. For Bangla that involves building balanced corpora as a primary digital resource, along with specific tools, ranging from less complex applications such as spell-checkers, text-to-speech, optical character recognition software etc., to higher level programmes such as dialogue systems and automated machine translation. Much of this work involves building computational models of linguistic data and subsumes both the fields of computer science and linguistics. I present the current status of digitising the Bangla language in the context of Bangladesh and the projects that are currently in progress at various institutions. I also explore the role of computational linguistics in digitising Bangla and the challenges faced in such an undertaking.

Visualising Print Worlds in Colonial North India

Leigh Denault

An enduring problem in studying the historical circulation of texts and ideas is how to understand the life-worlds of print beyond the page: how texts were produced, distributed, and promoted; and how we assess readership, audience, and reception. In colonial South Asia, state-collected statistics on literacy and print can only ever give an incomplete picture of a 'print public' which was 'literacy aware' if not mass literate, and which blended multilingual and manuscript, oral, and print cultures. Attention to the construction of publics, paratexts, and 'addressivity,' has provided scholars with new methodologies to understand the ambiguous and experimental spaces of colonial print. As digitisation projects begin to make inroads into South Asian archives, historians have suggested that digital platforms might, by removing texts from 'known' and certain contexts, allow us to identify new connections and patterns. My current project investigates how GIS (Geographic Information Systems, used in this case to map historical datasets) and social network visualisation tools might be deployed to help us better understand the material and spatial worlds of colonial print. This presentation will introduce a larger project which is using colonial archival sources and extant colonial newspapers to trace events, themes, places, or people across North India in time and space, to better understand the personal and professional connections which linked editor-proprietors, newspapers, subscribers and patrons. As Francesca Orsini has suggested, our tendency to privilege particular themes within a diverse print world has reinforced certain historical narratives while obscuring others. GIS analysis could contribute to a finer-grained approach to analysing meaningful patterns within a larger extant corpus of government and cultural history sources.



The Journey of a DH-er: Through Bichitra to Pathdarpan
Spandana Bhowmik

In 2004, the School of Cultural Texts and Records, probably the first of its kind in India, was set up in Jadavpur University - I joined in 2005. As and when possible, the school continued its research and experimentation on textual computing. The experience gathered led towards the project “Bichitra: Online Tagore Variorum”, and for me, personally, to my doctoral thesis. In this presentation, I will briefly explain Bichitra, and its constituent parts, and discuss the problems, challenges and achievements of the project, and the impact the repository has made in the student-researcher-teacher community.

The experience of working in Bichitra project in general and especially as part of the collation software development team influenced my personal research. My work was on analysing the genesis and transformation of a series of texts of Rabindranath Tagore, and representing it in a multimedia platform. However, the platform, Pathdarpan, has some limitations which I will analyse briefly, along with the possibilities of future enhancements.

I will also touch upon how Bichitra helped as a resource in my research, and also as a basis of the platform I later created to represent collaborative digital critical editions of a cluster of plays including multimedia content. I will share the challenges I faced, working as a sole researcher without a proper technological support team, as well as my learnings from this experience.



Panel 5: Print and the public sphere

The Instability of Language: Grammar and Criticism in the Hindi public sphere, 1905-6 Charu Singh

This paper reconstructs an early-twentieth century debate on linguistic standardization focused on the question of grammar in the Hindi public sphere. In November 1905, Mahavir Prasad Dvivedi, editor of the prominent monthly *Sarasvatī* (Allahabad) wrote an article castigating the lack of uniformity in the written and spoken language, and called for a standardized grammar for Hindi. To demonstrate the disparate styles in use, he chose examples from the writings of prominent Hindi writers, present and past, and lambasted them for their allegedly ungrammatical usage. Dvivedi's essay initiated a flurry of literary activity in the following months. A series of articles attacking Dvivedi appeared in the weekly *Bhāratmitra* (Calcutta) under the pseudonym Atmaram. Soon after, the scholar Govind Narayan Mishra rose to Dvivedi's defense against Atmaram in the *Hindī Bangavāsī* (Calcutta). The paper revisits an important moment in Hindi's literary history to examine the nature of the public discourse surrounding language reform. It also probes issues of literary authority, grammatical correctness, and the place of debate and criticism within the public sphere.

Everyday reading: Middlebrow magazines and book publishing in 1950s North India Aakriti Madhwani

In my thesis, I examine the world of “middlebrow” commercial publishing and the attendant practices of reading of North Indian middle-classes in the 1950s and 60s, arguing that commercial publishing offers an unexpectedly rich entry-point for an alternative understanding of the middle classes, social constituencies that were considered, in many senses, to be fundamental to the wider dispersion of the Nehruvian vision. However, while this vision insisted on a deferral of pleasure in service of the nation, through my analysis of the form and content of bestselling commercial magazines like *Sarītā* and *Dharmyug* as well as Hind Pocket Books, the first paperback in Hindi, I argue that the Hindi middle classes who read these magazines and paperbacks were everyday active consumers who defied the state's prescription, carving their roles outside the ambit of the institutional logic of the austere nation. I also discuss how, almost immediately after 1947, the pre-Independence rhetoric—of nationalism, collective service and duty to an ideal beyond the family or the individual—reflected in the period's popular and nationalist journals, could no longer serve as a template in order to rationalize, control or regulate gender roles, relationships, and consumer behaviour in the post-Independence period.

In this climate, a new object of publishing and consumption, the “middlebrow” magazine and paperback, became dominant. I define “middlebrow” magazine and paperback, a “wholesome” readable object in the logic of the market that gives rise to individualized acts of and demands for reading, particularly by women, within a familial space that has begun coveting the magazine as a material object, and most importantly, reference itself in the light of its consumption. For the conference on “Two Centuries of Indian Print”, I shall, through a select archive of commercial Hindi magazines and paperbacks, present an overview of the development and role of the “middlebrow” publishing in the 1950s.



A Series of Unfortunate Events: Reading Calamities in Nineteenth Century Bengali Chapbooks
Aritra Chakraborti

Nineteenth century Bengal is often seen as the time of great cultural and social development. It was the time of the Bengal Renaissance, a cultural movement that is believed to have catapulted, not only Bengal, but the entire country towards modernity. However, a large section of the native population also saw this as a time of great plight – a time that brought in its wake the signs of the end of the world. As one reform bill after the other brought about new changes to the society, the conservative Hindus felt that their long-cherished order of quotidian life was being attacked by the ruling British and their native accomplices. *Adhunikota* (modernity) was seen as a pest that was trying to overthrow the centuries-old Brahminical traditions, by giving freedom to women, and urging the so-called ‘lower castes’ to seek better lives.

In this environment of social paranoia grew a thriving millenarian culture. The present time was seen as Kaliyuga - the final and most corrupt of the four ages the world goes through, as described in the Hindu scriptures. Speculations about how this amoral age would push the world towards a certain apocalypse became a major part of the discussions in the public sphere. Popular print culture, too, felt its impact. A vast number of pamphlets and chapbooks written around this time drew copiously from this metaphor of the apocalypse. Especially after each natural disaster, slender volumes would come out, declaring the most recent calamity as a direct result of the assault on time-honoured beliefs and norms. Storms, earthquakes, outbreaks of deadly diseases – were all seen as the divine retribution for the decadence of the elites. These chapbooks show a curious reaction to ‘fate’: a blend of journalistic collection of facts and colourful stories of an impending apocalypse. This paper attempts to read some of these chapbooks, with an aim to find out how this *mythos* of the end of the world influenced popular print culture.



Panel 6: Solo works/authors in the Age of Reproduction

The curious case of *Pericles*, or *Pariklesha Rajavu*: Lambs' Tales and Shakespearean perigrinations

Thea Buckley

In 1891, nearly four centuries after Vasco Da Gama's search for 'black gold' had landed him in the spice port of Calicut, the town press printed a Malayalam-language edition of *Pericles*. Titled *Pariklesha Rajavinte Katha*, the prose translation was completed by P. Velu. Shakespeare's tale of a seafaring prince and a princess abducted by pirates is one rarely performed. Even the *First Folio* omits *Pericles* (possibly written in collaboration with George Wilkins), yet it appeared in British India. Closer examination reveals that Velu's prose book is actually a translation of a translation, completed from an edition of Charles and Mary Lamb's *All Shakespeare's Tales: Tales From Shakespeare*.

This presentation examines Lambs' *Tales* as one route through which indigenous translations of William Shakespeare's plays circulated in British India, from the north all the way to the Malabar Coast. Through exploring British Library collection items, I connect the East India Company's import of Shakespeare with the export of spice from today's Kerala state, and discuss the resulting literary fusion.

A MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION:

The Making of Sambasivam Pillai's Medical Encyclopaedic Dictionary in Tamil

A.R. Venkatachalapathy

With over 4000 pages and over a hundred thousand headwords the *Tamil Lexicon* remains unsurpassed as a dictionary of Tamil based on historical principles. As this major lexicographical exercise was in progress, during the years 1912–1936, another equally monumental dictionary was being compiled. If the *Tamil Lexicon* was produced under the aegis of the University of Madras, underwritten by the colonial government, and compiled by a distinguished team of scholars, the medical dictionary was prepared single-handedly by a man who was only a matriculate.

T.V. Sambasivam Pillai's medical dictionary consisting of about 4000 pages and 80,000 headwords remains a staggering achievement that is also in current use by Siddha medical practitioners. The dictionary encompasses anatomy, pathology, diagnosis, aetiology, pharmacology, philosophy, alchemy, magic and many other fields—modern and secular as well as pre-modern and religious. The dictionary is rooted in the Tamil 'renaissance' intellectual tradition which attempted to distinguish Tamil/Dravidian/Non-Brahmin/South India from Sanskrit/Aryan/Brahmin/North India. It makes an important intervention in this political project by defining Tamil (Siddha) medicine in contrast to Ayurveda.

M.A. Macauliffe and the printing of the Guru Granth Sahib

Rimi B. Chatterjee

This paper will explore the tangled history of the translation and printing of the Guru Granth Sahib by Max Arthur Macauliffe and Oxford University Press in the context of India's polymorphous religious traditions and their problematic encounter with Western post-Enlightenment rational materialism. The Guru Granth Sahib is a notoriously difficult text from both a bibliographical and a philosophical angle, and many of its difficulties are the artefacts of its generation and context. It is, I would argue, less a holy book than a holy archive, and as such its architecture and registers are fundamentally different from

what Western scholars would expect from a Sacred Book, even from the East. OUP's long engagement with the printing of such books was stretched somewhat more than usual both by the text and its translator, who remains a shadowy but intriguing figure among Western scholars of Indic religions. Through this exploration I hope to shed some light both on the Western approach to Indic religion as consumable product, and to the always potentially present power of this 'commodity' to burst out of its bounds and threaten Western categorisations of it.



Panel 7: Topographies of Print

The publishing landscape in Nepal: 1820-1950

Deepak Aryal

First Nepali language book was published in 1820 in Calcutta and print era in Nepal started in 1851 with the arrival of the first printing press. By the first decade of the 20th century Nepali publishing showed signs of going commercial with the arrival of few more printing presses and emergence of some private publishers. In 1913 Gorkhabhasa Prakasini Samiti-- a government authority to promote the Nepali language and regulate print and publishing in the country, was formed. In the next 20 years, the Samiti would publish around 35 titles by itself and approve publication of 25 titles from private publishers. In a country where not more than 200 books had been published in the first 60 years of the print history, the book publication rate after the Samiti was not different than before its existence. In effect, the Samiti did more regulation than publication.

Here, I argue that it was regulatory work of the Samiti that stymied the nascent publishing sphere inside Nepal. The Nepali publishing sphere which had its roots in Kolkata, Darjeeling, Banaras and Kathmandu, then shifted almost entirely to Banaras which had already emerged as one of the largest publishing hubs in the Indian subcontinent. To illustrate, the paper will map Nepali publishing sphere within the period of 1820-1950, categorize the publications on the basis of (a) time period, (b) geography—within and outside of Nepal; in and outside of Kathmandu (c) publisher, (d) genre. It will also be a part of the baseline data to map the print history of the Nepali language.

Early lithography in the Bombay Presidency

Murali Ranganathan

The role of the colonial government in introducing and facilitating lithography in the presidency towns of Calcutta and Bombay in the early and mid-1820s have been well documented. However, the key role played by private actors in the spread of lithography during the same decade has been all but ignored. This paper seeks to discover early lithographic presses in the Presidency of Bombay which were established by private agency. It draws on sources in the archives, contemporary newspapers and the lithographic imprints themselves to document the careers of these presses.

Significance of Arabic-Persian-Sanskritized titles of *ada'b* literature in Bangla (late 19th-early 20th century)

Epsita Halder

When Munshi Naimuddin wrote his scriptural manual *Zobdatal Masail* (1873) gathering references from several *hadis* sources, he reaffirmed the authenticity of his sources by retaining an Arabic title while transferring the original material into *tatsama* Bangla. His move was innovative and radical for his translation of the *Qur'an* and writing of scriptural discourses in a Sanskritized Bangla went against the language preference of the *sabiqi mullah* (old generation of clergy). Naimuddin was informed by a reformist sensibility and represented a time when the new age *ulama* collaborated with the literati of *Sudhakar* to create Islamic *jatiya* in *tatsama* Bangla together. To replace the charismatic local pirs and the sensory and ritualistic forms of Islam prevalent in early modern Bengal, the reformers attempted to



bring the community back to the fundamentals of Islam since the 1830s. Didactic Traditional *ada'b* literature was started to be written and printed prescribing the common masses about *iman* and *farz* in a more structured way.

In my paper I will talk about the multifariousness of the Bengal Muslim public sphere energized with the dynamic values of print by looking at the scriptural treatises written both in *tatsama* and Musalmani Bangla and engaging with the different sorts of *sensorium* that they invoked. What were the forms of 'otherness' that were emerging out of such reformist reformulations (*kafir*, *be-iman*, *gomrahi* etc) within and without the Bengal Muslim community? I will see, by bringing in the nuances of multiple sectarian ideals (Mohammadi, Faraizi and Hanafi) whether a broader historical context of the identity formation of the Bengal Muslim community could be derived.