

The Other From Within 3-Day conference (13th-15th October, 2020)

Day 1

Panel Title: The birth of Indian anthropology: Colonial legacies and the re-invention of the other

Dr. Anirban Bandyopadhyay (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences)

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Title: A Wonderful Home: N K Bose and Indian Anthropology

Abstract: N K Bose is not an entirely unfamiliar name to students or scholars of Indian anthropology. He taught at the University of Calcutta for many years, and published nearly 1500 pieces over his long career, which ended only with his death at 72 in 1972. Yet, within 10 years after his death, M N Srinivas told Jack Goody in an interview in Cambridge that Bose 'did not publish much'. More recently, Abhijit Guha in his brief biography of T.C. Das and elsewhere has practically accused Bose of borrowing from Das without acknowledgement. Andre Beteille in a recorded interview with the author (A. Bandyopadhyay) in July, 2017 observed that Bose published too much too quickly without adequately polishing his ideas. It makes for an interesting research question. How to assign a context to Bose 's contribution to Indian anthropology or an anthropology in India? Pradip Bose in a paper in 2007 argued that Bose suffered from an excess of what may loosely be called scientism. I propose to ask a different, or more distinct, question. How to organise the contribution of a mind or career as plural or as diverse as that of N K Bose, within a rubric such a history of Indian anthropology or Anthropology in India? He began his career at 18, as a tourist guide, and later participated in the Non-Cooperation movement. He had dropped out, before returning to complete two Masters degrees, one in anthropology and another

in Geography. He never wrote a PhD and taught at both departments at the university. He conducted extensive field work all his life in Bengal and Odisha, reflecting and publishing on themes ranging from tribes, castes, temples and nationalism. He worked with Gandhi and was one of the greatest Gandhi scholars of his time, whose books had revealed as early as 1952 matters that western scholars had begun to discover barely twenty years ago. He was a member of several influential public committees and commissions during Nehru's tenure and headed Anthropological Survey of India for a length of time, shaping its research priorities in important ways. His disciples and admirers lived and worked in all parts of India until the eighties, except perhaps Delhi. It is a significant absence. He published regularly across a diverse range of themes and concerns, in both English and Bengali, including monographs, reports, policy papers and personal reflections. He ran the journal *Man in India* practically singlehandedly for decades on end. He was an exasperatingly meticulous professional, who filed and preserved almost all papers and kept a regular diary. Yet, he preferred to call himself a *paribrajak*, or a wanderer. I propose, tentatively, to write a historically informed intellectual biography of Bose, based primarily on his own diaries and other papers, including an impressive collection of archival material in Kolkata, Delhi and several other Indian cities. I have already collected quite a bit of these sources, including two previously unpublished recorded lectures Bose delivered in Michigan in 1958. My provisional hypothesis is that his perspective was grounded on what I call the idea of a 'wanderful' home-wide travel within the subcontinent but rarely abroad, except on brief lecture trips- which did not always care too much for the approval or endorsement from his more stably institutionalised or 'disciplined' peers. He was thus both an insider and outsider to the more orthodox and institutionalised forms of what later came to be homes of Indian social anthropology or Social Anthropology in India.

Prof. Bhangya Bhukya, (Department of History, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, Gachibowli, Hyderabad. 500 046, Telangana State, India)
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Title: Anthropological Developmentalism: Furer-Haimendorf and Evolution of Social Policy in Hyderabad State

Abstract: Christoph Von Furer-Haimendorf has left a formidable legacy on the social policy of Hyderabad State which was ruled by an Indian ruler during the British colonial rule. Although the Hyderabad state was outside the orbit of the British colonial rule at least in principle, all the major colonial developments found a place in it. The entry of a renowned professional anthropologist, Furer-Haimendorf, had inaugurated a new social policy in the state. As a field anthropologist, administrator and professor at Osmania University, Furer Haimendorf had played an important role in designing adivasi development policies which were mainly rooted in utilitarian philosophy. The new social policy of the Hyderabad State did take the adivasis to

modern education and provided state welfarism in form of distribution of land, agricultural loans, setting up of health centres, etc. However, it did not stop the marginalization of adivasis. This may be attributed to the anthropological developmental approach embedded in the policy, which was silent about the political rights of the adivasis. Yet, Furer-Haimendorf is a much celebrated figure among the adivasis of the state. The paper aims to examine the role of Furer-Haimendorf in architecting new social policy and the intricacies of the policy concerning adivasi development, which I call 'the anthropological developmentalism'.

Prof. Aya Ikegame (Associate Professor, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo)

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Title: Undoing Othering: M.N. Srinivas and nationalising anthropology

Abstract: M.N. Srinivas (1916-1999), the father of Indian sociology, was trained as a social anthropologist in India and the UK. Familiar analytical terms used to describe Indian society such as 'dominant caste', 'vote bank' and 'Sanskritization' were all invented or popularised by him. During his long and influential career as a leading academic and public intellectual, he introduced to India modern anthropological methods based on long and intensive fieldwork and trained many Indian sociologists and anthropologists at the prestigious Delhi School of Economics (D School). This paper examines the ways in which Srinivas turned the inherited nature of anthropology as a science of the exotic under a colonial gaze into a science of the nation by Indians themselves. This shift was successful in many ways but his own ethnographies reveal serious tensions and contradiction within the nationalising project.

Dr. Sumahan Banerjee (Editor, Man in India & Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Vidyasagar University)

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Title: Re-inventing the self and the other: A century old journey of Man in India, the oldest surviving journal of anthropology in India

Abstract: Man in India was first published in 1921 under the editorship of Sarat Chandra Roy with the subtitle 'A Quarterly Record of Anthropological Science with Special Reference to India'. Over the past one hundred years, the journal has moved forward to keep this 'record' not by simply maintaining descriptive notes of anthropological investigations, but also by reflecting the changing dimensions of anthropological researches in the country. In this sense, the journal has been a mirror of those trends which contributed significantly to the shaping of anthropology in India. It was envisioned in the very first issue in a paper authored by Crooke, a colonial scholar that the journal would focus on more minute and intensive studies on smaller groups and special problems

related with religion and sociology. According to the founding editor S.C.Roy, the journal intended to assist anthropological study and research in the country and to undertake interesting anthropological investigation on 'Indian Man'. Therefore, from the very beginning, the journal is seen to follow the western footsteps of positivist orientation of the anthropological science with priorities set within the colonial boundary on the one hand, but on the other hand it is trying to understand the 'Man' in India through anthropological lenses and to build resources to help to shape the anthropological study and research. In this backdrop, the present paper tries to give an account of the historical development of the journal to the present and to locate the major turning points of the journal as reflected through publications to address the questions how far Man in India carries the colonial legacies and how it has re-invented the self and the other.

Panel Discussant: Dr.Uday Chandra

Assistant Professor at SFS-Qatar

Uday Chandra is an Assistant Professor of Government. He received his B.A. in economics from Grinnell College and his PhD in political science from Yale University in 2013. He received the 2013 Sardar Patel Award for writing the best dissertation in a US university on any aspect of modern South Asia. Before coming to Doha, he held a prestigious research fellowship at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Goettingen, Germany.

Uday's research lies at the intersection between critical agrarian studies, political anthropology, postcolonial theory, and South Asian studies. He is interested in state-society relations, power and resistance, political violence, agrarian change, rural-urban migration, popular religion, and the philosophy of the social sciences. Uday's work has been published or will appear shortly in the *Law & Society Review*, *Social Movement Studies*, *New Political Science*, *Critical Sociology*, *The Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *Contemporary South Asia*, the *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, and *Modern Asian Studies*. He has co-edited volumes and journal issues on self-making in modern South Asia, subaltern politics and the state in modern India, caste relations in eastern India, and social movements across rural India today. Volumes on the comparative politics of "populism" and transnational circularities in the Indian Ocean are in the works.

His first monograph *Negotiating Leviathan: Making Tribes and States in Modern India* will be published by Stanford University Press. He is also working on a second book project on Hindu nationalism and democracy in postcolonial India.

Dr. Arkotong Longkumer

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Title: 'Please take us seriously': fieldwork, the RSS, and the ethnographer as 'son of the soil'

Abstract: This presentation reflects on the process of doing fieldwork in the Northeast of India amongst the Hindu-right, comprising mainly of the RSS. I will examine how I gained access, and the ways in which being seen as a 'son of the soil' enabled the individuals, and groups, to engage with my research. While being 'local' gave me access, it was also striking how I was often viewed as a sympathiser to their cause, despite the fact that many in Northeast India are adamantly opposed to this Hindu presence. Fieldwork requires long-standing relationships and trust to develop but how is it done without becoming a sympathiser? This brings up the question, to what extent can we study controversial movements such as the RSS without either caricaturing them as a homogenised 'repugnant cultural other' (Harding 1991) or 'taking their side'? What are the ethical futures of such projects when we navigate between the humanity of our informants, while at the same time challenging the ideological perspectives that shape violence and the politics of hate in many parts of India?

Dr. Kriti Kapila

(Academic Director, International School for Government, Lecturer in Social Anthropology and Law, King's College London)

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Title: The location of culture in Indian anthropology

Abstract: The bounded notion of culture, and especially its Frazerian catalogue of traits had animated much of early anthropology. Early anthropological theories about culture, cultural change, and cultural difference have had an enduring life, especially as their influence breaches disciplinary boundaries. One of these enduring ideas for Indian society was the idea of the endogamous group, which spoke directly to the prevalent anthropological canon. In this paper I examine how and why early ideas of cultural boundedness in not just space but also physical bodies have remained a fairly stable imaginary. This relationship between the cultural and the biological, which forms the bedrock of physical anthropology, has found a thriving afterlife in the more recent work on historical genetics and genetic anthropology. The so-called stability of the endogamous group and marriage rules have acquired a new life in the postgenomic era. This paper examines some of the pre-theoretical commitments in the research on human population genetics and genomics in India and trace them to these early settlements on kinship models in India. In the case of early and colonial anthropology especially, it is always difficult to disentangle administrative compulsions from scholarly pursuits. In this paper I explore the early debates on these questions of heritability, descent, admixture that inform much of the contemporary

research, but also why administrative rationale and scholarly pursuits remain fully entangled, though in new ways and at an altogether different scale.

Prof. William Gould

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Title: Sociology and the vagrant in India: The 'beggar problem' and social welfare in 1950s India

Abstract: This paper will position early sociological work on beggars within the complex of inter-relationships between the social sciences and state policies on welfare, poverty and law in postcolonial urban India. It takes as its focus three points of focus, that of Radhakamal Mukerjee and Vasudeva Moorthy in the mid 1940s, an extensive study of 1955 undertaken by Madhav Sadashiv Gore in the Delhi School of Social Work, and the 1959 Bombay Prevention of Begging Act. Central to the paper will be the 1955 sociological study, undertaken by a postgraduate unit of the Delhi School of Social Work. Led by Madhav Sadashiv Gore, later a key figure in the social sciences academy in India, the study represented the most complete sociological analysis of vagrancy and begging of its time. The Beggar Problem in Metropolitan Delhi, published in 1959 was part of a series sponsored by the Planning Commission and employed some of the latest approaches in the discipline. The study explored the broader societal conditions for beggars in a large Indian city, revealing the nature of interactions between policies of development/planning, the welfare state and social science research. It also showed how the application of the social sciences was conditioned by ideas about Indian secularism, modernity, the role of the state, and a historicism drawn from Europe. In contrast to V. Moorthy's earlier 1945 study, The Beggar Problem exhibited a number of other contemporary preoccupations about national development, the new roles of the state, urban-rural differences and a rapidly changing society. Indirectly too, work of this kind concerned itself with changes to family structure and the authority of the caste panchayat created by views of rapid urban change, and the supposed 'break up' of family. This was viewed as both a primary factor in beggar motivation, but also a condition of rapid urbanisation. Studies such as Gore's, however, inadvertently revealed other contemporary sociological ideas about social inclusion and national belonging. The paper also explores how and why the outcomes of the research were in tension with the ultimately punitive implications of the 1959 Prevention of Begging Act.

Dr. Arunima Bhattacharya

(Postgraduate Research Assistant on 'The Other from within')

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Title: Studying Gender and Caste as variables that impact ‘social tension’ between East Pakistani refugees and the Indian state in West Bengal: B.S. Guha’s ‘Studies in Social Tensions Among the Refugees from Eastern Pakistan’

Abstract: This paper will focus on the Studies in Social Tensions Among the Refugees from Eastern Pakistan, a report published by the Indian Government’s Department of Anthropology in 1954. The report was the culmination of a series of conferences and meetings between the representatives of the Indian Government and UNESCO to deal with the refugee crisis in India, particularly in Bengal, following the partition of the country in 1947. The survey and report was conducted under the supervision of Birija Shankar Guha (1894-1961) an anthropologist and the founding director of the Anthropological Survey of India. The report focuses on two distinct refugee colonies in West Bengal, Jirat, a refugee settlement managed and funded by the West Bengal Government in the sub-urban district of Hooghly, and Azadgarh colony near Jadavpur in south Calcutta which was established by displaced people on illegally occupied land and developed and administered by elected ward committees from among the refugees themselves. The intent of this project was to use the construct of ‘social tension’ to infer the causative factors that induced the instabilities in the psychology of the refugee subjects as revealed through their life histories—within this construct, the project recorded allegations made by the refugees against Muslims from East Pakistan, against whom they were helpless. It was inferred by the project that the communal tension linked to their trauma of loss and displacement was displaced by emotions of antagonism against the Indian government and its people. This paper will build on my [blog article](#) where I analyse the inadequacies of the theoretical understanding of the refugee problem in Bengal as inferred from this report.

In this talk I will focus on the categories of caste and gender and how this report breaks down communal attitudes based on tables that collate intersections of caste, gender and class to analyse and allocate communal bias to specific sections of refugees. The paper will also address the intrinsic link between land acquisition legislation in West Bengal in the 1950’s with the refugee problem in relation to the ‘Rehabilitation Bill’ passed while the survey for this report was ongoing, commenting on how these refugee settlements decisively impacted the urban environment of the Calcutta and its suburbs.

Panel Discussant: Dr. Dr Jesús F. Cháirez-Garza (Lecturer in the History of Race and Ethnicity, The University of Manchester)

Day 2

Panel Title: The fieldwork of ideas: Anthropological Problems in India in the nationalist moment.

Day 3:

Panel Title: People on Parade: Anthropology and the role of museum exhibitions

Prof. Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri

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Title: Anthropological Museums, Exhibitions and Representations of Indigenous People of India

Abstract: In India, one can find diverse types of anthropological museums or even ethnographic galleries in various regions or states. Historicity of these museums can be traced with the establishment of The Asiatic Society of Bengal at Calcutta by Sir William Jones in 1784. It was followed by another major milestone that was the emergence of first teaching department of Anthropology in the University of Calcutta. And then subsequently one can trace the history through the establishment of other national, regional and village/community based museums across the political boundaries of various states with the involvement of state and non-state agencies. In response to the mandates of such hugely diverse museums, we can find out different forms or types of exhibitions, which may be of permanent, temporary or even mobile in nature, which had served various purposes. The present paper will try to underscore the nature of such diverse museums and their historical roles linking with the issues of representation of Indigenous people of India who have contributed substantially for the growth of Indian nation-state. Taking help of selective cases, this paper will also reflect on the development of new museum movement in India and finally, will try to explore various roles anthropological museums have played in addressing the issues of cultural diversity, livelihoods and other crucial issues which Indigenous people of India are still facing in response to the various forces of transformation in a modernising nation-state.

- Dr. Vibha Joshi Parkin (Research Affiliate ISCA, University of Oxford)

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Title: Engaging with ethnographic museum objects from erstwhile Naga Hills in their historical contexts, ranging from imperial, colonial and postcolonial eras to contemporary reimagining

Short abstract: The colonial appropriation of Naga artefacts in northeast India enhanced anthropology in Europe and informs recent interest in Naga collections amongst European academics and museums, as well as in India. The paper examines the contrasting historical trajectories, positions and modern consequences.

Long Abstract: During the colonial period, between 1921-1935, six detailed monographs were published on the Naga peoples of present North East India by British officers cum amateur anthropologists using the guidelines in 'Notes and Queries' prepared by the RAI. In addition, many artefacts were collected from different Naga communities for western ethnographic museums, especially in the UK and elsewhere in Europe at the turn of the 20th Century. Naga objects taken from northeastern India became museum collections in the European metropolitan countries (notably UK, Germany and Austria), fueling the development of anthropology and museology (Hutton, Haimendorf, Mills, Kaufmann). Some objects collected during the colonial period became part of the Indian Museum in Kolkata and those collected soon after Independence in 1947 by anthropologist and adviser to the GOI, Verrier Elwin, were deposited in the National Museum in New Delhi.

This paper asks how far the 'decolonizing the museum' approach can be applied in studying Naga collections in European museums and can critically engage with ethnographic objects from Naga communities in both Western and Indian museums. The colonial history of Naga collections is now confronted by the regeneration of interest in them both among European/New World academics and ethnographic museums in the late 1980s, mid-2000s and currently in Humboldt Lab (2015) and Forum (2021) and by Naga communities themselves. The paper examines how the contrasting historical trajectories, positions and modern consequences play out.

- Dr. Debojyoti Das
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Title: Visual Anthropology and the Knowledge of the 'Other': Representing colonial Anti-Slavery/ Headhunting Expedition through Photographs in Naga Hills

Abstract: The formal end of British colonisation and the emergence of nation-states during the latter half of the twentieth century has in more recent years given rise to a new range of studies devoted to re-examining the history, politics, psychology and the language of colonialism (Spurr 1993). In the Naga Hills of colonial Assam, textual description through monographs, tours and military reports, memoirs and ethnographic descriptions have preoccupied

scholarly attention towards understanding colonial situation and power exercised over the Naga tribes of frontier Indo-Burma. Photography and illustration through visual art, exhibits and museum displays as powerful project of empire and state making has entered more recently in anthropological discourses and historical descriptions that have primarily relied on ethnographic treaties, narratives and 'notes and queries' as investigative tools. In this paper I will introduce photographs as powerful mediums of representation that not only produce the 'other' but have played a critical role in bringing out the tensions of colonial dominance and rule over little known communities like the Eastern Nagas. Until 1947 vast part of the eastern Naga territory remained unadministered, occasionally captured by the 'colonizing camera' during retaliatory raids (colonial counter insurgency operations) and 'good-will' annual tours, carried out by British civil servants accompanied by adventure anthropologists, botanists and explorers aimed at building patronage with friendly villages and to punish head takers and slave trafficking Nagas. These photographs generated enormous curiosity among metropolitan readers to know about culture and places that were presented en masse as 'people of the other time' through late Victorian journalism (for example, The Illustrated London News). The paper tries to explore in two ways the importance of photography in the representation of the Nagas of the unadministered Naga Hills: Firstly, by foregrounding visuals as a powerful route into memory where there are limited ethnographic documentation (texts) of the eastern Nagas. Secondly, by looking at social life through photographs and the production of violent history where photography became a 'governmental technology' to define colonial subject through what I call the 'colonizing camera'. My paper explores the critical question of visuals in 'world art' as it can be meaningfully deployed in visual ethnographic research to explore the domain of past. It can contribute as a critical methodological tool in studying marginalised societies where colonial still photography is a vital recourse to reconstruct social life in the background of limited archived (written) history. -

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-Dr. Dakxinkumar Bajrange
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Title: Budhan Theatre Group: the creation of an archive of cultural protest

Abstract: This large collection of films is now being curated, preserved and made available online as part of the 'Other from Within' project. Dakxin Chhara, film-maker and Director of the Theatre Group will talk about the history of Budhan Theatre and their role in Chhara cultural activity and protest. Kevin Greenbank, archivist at the Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge,

will discuss the creation of a film archive from a 'born-digital' source and its preparation for presentation to a wider online public.

Link to the digitisation work: <https://www.theotherfromwithin.com/resources>

Dr Kevin Greenbank (Centre for South Asian Studies, Wolfson College, Cambridge)

Kevin Greenbank completed a PhD in History at Wolfson in 1998, writing a dissertation on the introduction of apartheid in Cape Town. Since finishing his degree he has worked as the Archivist at the Centre of South Asian Studies. The Centre is a resource for scholars from across the University and has an archive comprising papers, photographs, films and oral history. Much of his work is on the digital preservation and presentation of archive material, in particular film and audio collections, of which the Centre has a large collection, and on which he writes and conducts research.

Dakxinkumar Bajrange (Contact: dakxinchhara@gmail.com)

Dakxinkumar Bajrange is an award-winning filmmaker, playwright and an activist from the Chhara De-notified Tribes of Ahmedabad in the western part of India. He is a recipient of Ford Foundation International Fellowship (2010-11) to study Graduate studies in 'Theatre and Global Development' at the University of Leeds, UK. His book 'Budhan Bolta Hai' (Budhan Speaks) awarded first prize for "Mahatma Gandhi Best Creative Writing on Human Rights" by National Human rights Commission (NHRC) for 2010-11. He is also a recipient of Rajiv Gandhi Arts Fellowship (2004-05) from Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, and Bhasha Fellowship (2002-03) from Bhasha Research and Publication Centre to study art forms of nomadic and de-notified communities in Gujarat. He is also a recipient of South Asia Award called "Jeevika 2005" for his documentary film Fight For Survival. Currently, he works as an "Artistic Director" at Budhan Theatre (www.budhantheatre.org) and runs his film production house Nomad Movies Pvt Ltd. He has written and Directed 13 plays and Supervised 48 Theatre Productions of Budhan Theatre and performed more than 1000 shows in different parts of India. Ahmedabad Mirror nominated him for "Heroes of Ahmedabad" campaign for his work in the field of Theatre and social activism. As a Filmmaker, he directed 120 fiction and non-fiction films/TV programs on various developmental, social and political issues of India. He directed his debut critically acclaimed Bollywood film "Sameer", which was released in theatres in India on 8th Sept 2017 and then released on Netflix platform from 1st Oct 2017 to 30th Oct 2019. It was also selected to screen in New York Indian Film Festival (USA), Charlotte Asian Film Festival (USA) and Indian International Film Festival of Queensland, Australia where he received "Best Director" award. Recently he has finished his three Socio-political documentary films (1) Bullet (2) The Last Man (3) Covid-19 Blame Game.

His academic and journalistic articles on Theatre and Films appeared in number of national and international journals/newspapers.

Panel Discussant: Prof. Crispin Bates (Professor of Modern and Contemporary South Asian History, School of History, Classics & Archaeology, University of Edinburgh)