

Sraman Mukherjee

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Department of Visual Arts, Ashoka University
Plot No. 2, Rajiv Gandhi Education City, Near Rai Police Station, Rai – 131029
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Permanent Address for Postal Communication in India:
Flat 2A, 30, Dhakuria Station Lane, Kolkata – 700031, India
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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

May 1, 2018, continuing – Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Arts, Ashoka University

PAST EMPLOYMENT

September 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018 – Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Arts/
Department History, Ashoka University

September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2017 – Assistant Professor, School of Historical Studies,
Nalanda University

July 9, 2012 to August 31, 2014 –Assistant Professor, Department of History, Presidency
University, Kolkata

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Art History, Visual Culture, Material Culture, Visual Anthropology, Heritage Studies, Religious
Studies, Cultural Histories of Colonialism and decolonization across South and Southeast Asia,
Histories of Archaeology and Museums, Biographies of Sites and Objects, Asian
Interconnections

EDUCATION

November 10, 2010- Doctor of Philosophy in History, University of Calcutta and Centre for
Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (Title of Doctoral Dissertation - *Unearthing the Pasts of
Bengal, Bihar and Orissa: Archaeology, Museums and History Writing in the Making of Ancient
Eastern India, 1862- 1936*)

2005- Research Training Programme in Social Sciences, Centre for Studies in Social
Sciences (Equivalent to M.Phil. as recognized by the Indian Council for Social
Science Research)

2003- Master of Arts in History, Department of History, University of Calcutta

2001 – Bachelor of Arts with Major in History, Presidency College, Kolkata

FELLOWSHIPS and GRANTS

December 2019- Awarded a visiting research fellowship by Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden, the Netherlands for the research program 'Indonesia and Greater India: scholarly and religious networks and moral geographies, 1880s to 1920s' (originally tenable for May and June 2020, now postponed to end 2020 or anytime in 2021 or 2022 in light of the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic)

March 15, 2018 to March 31, 2020 – Awarded a SSHRC/CRSH Insights Grant by Social Science and Humanities Research Council, Canada, with Dr. David Geary, University of British Columbia, to work on a collaborative project “Reconfiguring a Buddhist Homeland: Transnational memory and moral geography in postcolonial India”

October 2016 - Awarded a Visiting Research Fellowship by Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden, the Netherlands

November 2014 - Awarded a Visiting Research Fellowship by Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden, the Netherlands

July 2012 - Awarded Social Science Research Council Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for Trans-regional Research on Inter Asian Contexts and Connections supported by Andrew Mellon Foundation

April 2011- Awarded an Affiliated Postdoctoral Research Fellowship by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands December 2009 - Awarded Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship in History by the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta

May 2008 - Awarded a research grant by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata for an independent research project on “Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Buddhist Re-inscription of Sarnath”

May 2005 – Ford Foundation India Doctoral Fellowship for Graduate Studies in Cultural Histories of Eastern India

POSTDOCTORAL POSITIONS and RESEARCH RESIDENCES

June and July 2017 - Senior Research Fellow in residence at Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden, the Netherlands (Project Title, *Tracing Traces: Actors, Vectors and Sites in configuring a Buddhist Homeland*, Research Cluster – *Mobility and Belonging*)

November 2014 to January 2015- Visiting Research Fellow in residence at Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden, the Netherlands (Project

Title, *Lives in Motion: Artifactual Mediations across South and Southeast Asia*, Research Cluster – *Mobility and Identities*)

September 2012 to August 2013 - Social Science Research Council Postdoctoral Research Fellow for Trans-regional Research in Inter Asian Contexts and Connections at the Department of Art History and Institute for Advanced Study (IAS), University of Minnesota (Project Title – ‘*Secular*’ Histories, ‘*Sacred*’ Reclamations: *Afterlives Of Buddhist Relics*)

November 2011 to March 2012 - Affiliated Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands (Project Title, *Looking Back from a Post Colonial Moment: A Century of Indian Archaeology*)

December 2009 to August 2011 - Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in History at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (Project Title – *Archaeologists, Tourists, Pilgrims: Monuments, Travel and the Constitution of National Pasts*)

Upcoming Research Residence

2020/2021- Visiting Research Fellow in residence at Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden, the Netherlands (research program ‘Indonesia and Greater India: scholarly and religious networks and moral geographies, 1880s to 1920s’, originally tenable for May and June 2020, now postponed to end 2020 or anytime in 2021 or 2022 in light of the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic)

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Edited Book

2019. *Imagining Asia(s): Actors, Networks, Sites* (co-edited with Andrea Acri, Murari K. Jha, and Kashshaf Ghani). Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, (ISBN 9789814818858).

Articles/ Essays in Peer Reviewed Journals

2020. “Redefining “Indianness” in Indian Art, 1940s-’60s”, *MARG*, Vol. 72, Issue 2, December 2020, 135-143.

2018. “Relics in Transition: Material Mediations in Changing Worlds”, *Ars Orientalis*, 48:20–42

2013. “Configuring Sacred Spaces: Archaeology, Temples and Monument Making in Colonial Orissa”, *South Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, No.1, 15-29

2010. “Being and Becoming Indian: The Nation in Archaeology”, *South Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 219-234

2009. “New Province Old Capital: Making Patna Pataliputra”, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 241-279

Essays/ Book Chapters in Edited Volumes and Conference Proceedings

2019. “Lives in Transition: Locating Buddhist Relics in the Worlds of Scholarship, Antiquarian Market, Diplomacy and Religion” in Shao Dazhen, Fan Di’an, and LaoZhu eds. *Proceedings of the 34th World Congress of Art History*. (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2019, Vol. III of Vols I-III, 846-858)

2019. “Transmissions, Translations, Reconstitutions: Revisiting Geographies of Buddha Relics in the Southern Asian Worlds”, in Andrea Acri, Sraman Mukherjee, Murari K. Jha, and Kashshaf Ghani (eds.), *Imagining Asia(s): Actors, Networks, Sites* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 215-250)

2019. “Introduction”, (co-authored with Andrea Acri, Murari K. Jha, and Kashshaf Ghani), in Andrea Acri, Sraman Mukherjee, Murari K. Jha, and Kashshaf Ghani (eds.), *Imagining Asia(s): Actors, Networks, Sites* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 1-13)

2018. “Collecting the Region: Configuring Bihar in the space of Museums”, in Anjana Sharma ed., *Records, Recoveries, Remnants, and Inter-Asian Connections: Decoding Cultural Heritage*, (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 70-85)

2016. “Buddhism in Contemporary India” (co-authored with David Geary), in Michael Jerryson ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 36-60)

2016. “Relics, Ruins, and Temple Building: Archaeological Heritage and the Construction of the Dharmarajika Vihara, Calcutta”, in Nayanjot Lahiri and Upinder Singh eds. *Buddhism in Asia: Revival and Reinvention* (New Delhi: ICCR, ISEAS, and Manohar, 147-190)

2016. “Recollections of the Restorer: Joseph Daviditch Melik Beglar and the Maha Bodhi Temple”, in Bijoy Kumar Choudhary ed. *Bodhgaya: Impressions Within and Beyond*. (Patna: Bihar Heritage Development Society, 59-74).

2015. “A Site Museum without a Site: The Bodh Gaya Archaeological Museum”, in Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh eds. *No Touching, No Spitting, No Praying* (New Delhi: Routledge)

Articles in Institutional Occasional Paper Series and Newsletters

2014. “From Sites and Museums to Temples: Relics, Ruins, and New Buddhist Viharas in Colonial India”, *Archive Occasional Paper Series*, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, No. 5.

2013. “Between Religion and History: Afterlives of Buddhist Relics”, *The Newsletter*, International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, Special Issue, No. 66, Winter 2013, 54.

2012. “Of Methods and Aims: The Field of Archaeology in Colonial India”, *The Newsletter*,

International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, No. 61, Autumn 2012, 4 - 5.

Book Review

2017. “Review of Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of History: Archaeology, Historiography, and Indian Pasts*. (Delhi, Sage India, 2015)”, in *Journal of South Asian History and Culture*, 8:3, 387-389.

Ongoing Research Projects

Monograph

Inhabiting Ancient Pasts: Heritage, Histories, and the Making of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, 1862-1936

Journal Article

“Remaking Sarnath Buddhist: Relics, Ruins, and the Politics of Heritage”

SELECT CONFERENCES and WORKSHOPS

October 2019. “Challenge of the Object: "Returning" Sarnath to Buddhism”, Paper presented in the panel "Foundations and Legacies of B.R. Ambedkar: Reconfiguring a Buddhist homeland and the politics of belonging", at the Annual Conference on South Asia, Center for South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison

July 2019. “Geographies of Buddhist Relics in post Second World War Asia”, Paper presented in the panel "Spatial Vignettes: community, nation, geography”, at the 11th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), Leiden.

March 2019. Panel Organizer and Discussant of *Temporalities of Art Objects: Book Discussion on Rebecca Brown's "Displaying Time: The Many Temporalities of the Festival of India" (2017)* at the Annual Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), Denver, Colorado.

2017. “Access and Authentication: Material Mediations of Buddhist Relics”, Paper presented in the panel “Reconfiguring a Buddhist homeland: networks, objects and reinventions in contemporary South Asia” at the Association of Asian Studies, Toronto, March 16-19, 2017.

2016. “The Body and the Text: Of Xuanzang and other Relics”. Paper presented at the conference “Xuanzang and India-China Friendly Interactions”, jointly organized by the Consulate General of the People’s Republic of China in collaboration with Nalanda University, Kolkata, November 7, 2016.

2016. “Transmissions, Translations, Reconstitutions: Revisiting Geographies of Buddha Relics in the Southern Asian Worlds”. Paper presented at the conference “Imagining Asia(s): Networks, Actors, Sites”, jointly organized by the Nalanda -Sriwijaya Centre at ISEAS-Ishak Institute (Singapore) and Nalanda University, India, Singapore, October 10-11, 2016.

2016. “Lives in Transition: Locating Buddhist Relics in Worlds of Scholarship, Antiquarian Market, Diplomacy, and Religion.” Paper presented at 34th World Congress of Art History in

Beijing, September 16-20, 2016.

2016. ‘The Specter of the Forged: Revisiting Buddhist Relics in South and Southeast Asia’. Paper presented at the conference “Heritage in Context: Balancing the Global with the Local”, co-organized by the School of Historical Studies, Nalanda University, Anneliese Maier Research Programme, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, and India International Centre, New Delhi, August 20-22, 2016.

2016. ‘Traveling Lives: Archaeologists, the “Buddhist Pope”, and the Bones of the Sakya-Muni’. Paper presented at New York University, Shanghai, in the symposium on “Moving Objects: Authorship, Ownership, and Experience in Buddhist Material Culture”, organized by Centre for Global Asia, New York University, Shanghai, April 28-29, 2016.

2016. ‘Desiring the Buddha: Revisiting Bones and Reliquaries in South and Mainland Southeast Asia’, Paper presented in the conference “Object Emotions: Polemics”, organized by Faculty of English, University of Cambridge, April 15-16, 2016.

2016. “Buddhist Relics: Faith and Diplomacy in Southern Asia”, paper presented at the workshop “Imagining Histories, Writing Pasts” organized by the School of Historical Studies, Nalanda University, International Convention Center, Rajgir, March 12 and 13, 2016.

2015. “Recovering Ancient Pasts”, paper presented at the workshop ‘Archiving the Past’ at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta on July 17, 2015.

2014. ‘At the Frontiers of Empire: Buddhist Relics in the Colony’, paper presented in the conference ‘Sailing the waves of convergence: Cultural links and continuities across the Bay of Bengal’, KITLV, Leiden on December 3, 2014.

2014. “Afterlives of Buddhist Relics”, paper presented in the panel ‘Reconfiguring Buddhism: Sites, Objects, and Heritage in Modern South Asia’ in the 43rd Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, on October 18, 2014.

2014. ‘Material Mediations, Relic Reconstitutions”, Conference on *Cultural Heritage: Environment, Ecology and Inter-Asian Interactions*, organized by Nalanda University and International Institute of Asian Studies, Rajgir (India), January 6-8, 2014.

2014. ‘Bihar Collected, Bihar Displayed’, Conference on *Cultural Heritage: Environment, Ecology and Inter-Asian Interactions*, organized by Nalanda University and International Institute of Asian Studies, Rajgir (India), January 6-8, 2014.

2013. ‘The Curious Case of the Bones’, the Eighth International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 8), Macau, June 25, 2013.

2013. ‘Secular Heritage, Sacred Reclamations’, paper presented at Social Science Research Council Fellows’ Workshop on *Trans-regional Research: Inter-Asian Contexts and Connections*, San Diego, California, March 24 -26, 2013.

2013. ‘Collecting the Region: Configuring Bihar in the Space of Museums’, paper presented in the panel *Relocating the Region: Bihar from the Colonial to the Contemporary*, Association for

Asian Studies Annual Conference, San Diego, California, March 22, 2013.

2013. ‘Old Bones and New Caskets: Relics, Reliquaries, and New Buddhist Temples in Colonial India’, Department of Art History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, March 6, 2013

2011. ‘Relics, Ruins and Temple Building: Archaeological Heritage and the construction of the Dharmarajika Vihara, Calcutta’, paper presented at the conference *Buddhist Revival in Asia* organized by the Nalanda Sriwijaya Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Nalanda University and Max Planck Institute of the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, University of Gottingen, at Singapore, December 15- 16, 2011.

2010. ‘Configuring Sacred Spaces’, paper presented at the conference *Afterlives of Monuments* organized by Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation, Central St. Martin’s College for Art and Design, London, April 28-30, 2010.

2009. ‘Museums, Archaeology, and Territorial Self-Fashioning’, paper presented at the conference *Local Histories, Global Heritage, Local Heritage, Global Histories: Colonialism, History and the Making of Heritage*, organized by the German Historical Institute, London, May 16-17, 2009.

2008. ‘Plotting Pataliputra’, paper presented at the 20th *European Conference of Modern South Asian Studies*, University of Manchester, July 8-11, 2008

2007. “New Province Old Capital: Making Patna Pataliputra”, paper presented at the 12th *International Cultural Studies Workshop on Political Cultures*, organized by the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta at Hyderabad, January 28 - February 2, 2007.

2005. “The Politics of the Framing of Mauryan, Pala and Sena Sculptural Art in late nineteenth and early twentieth century India”, paper presented at the 10th National Seminar on *History of Archaeology in India* at the Centre for Archaeological Studies and Training, Eastern India, Kolkata in November, 2005.

2005. ‘The Archaeological Imagination of Ancient Indian Art’, paper presented at the workshop, *Material Culture and Alternative Histories of the South* at Rabat, Morocco, organized by SEPHIS and CODESRIA in June, 2005.

INVITED LECTURES

2017. Rahul Sankrityayan’s *Ghumakkar Shastra* or ‘A Treatise on Vagabondage/ and Nomadism’: Buddhist self-fashioning in Southern Asia and Visions of ‘Home’, and ‘Greater India’, paper presented in Southeast Asia Lecture Series at KITLV, Leiden (the Netherlands) on July 20, 2017.

2016. ‘Imperial Relics: The “Crafty Afghans”, the Burmese Buddhists, and Bones of the Buddha’. Paper presented at New York University, Abu Dhabi, in the History Research Seminar Series on “Revolutions and Protests”, May 10, 2016.

2015. ‘Conservation, Restoration, Rebuilding’, Bihar Heritage Development Society and K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, December 10, 2015.

2015. “Diplomacy, Scholarship, and Ritual Lives of Traveling Buddhist Relics”, paper presented at fellows’ monthly lecture at KITLV, Leiden (the Netherlands) on January 15, 2015.

2013. ‘Between Religion and History: Circulation of Corporeal Relics’, *Thursdays at Four*, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, May 9, 2013.

2013. ‘Inhabiting Ancient Pasts: Heritage and Historical Memory in Modern South Asia’, Fellows’ Lunch Lecture, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, May 7, 2013.

2013. ‘*Bones are... of... no value*: Evaluation of Corporeal Relics in Colonial South Asia’, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, February 8, 2013

2012. ‘Making Sense of Buddhist Relics in Modern South Asia’, Modern South Asia Seminar Series, Leiden University, Institute for Area Studies, March 29, 2012.

2012. ‘Archaeology, Temples and Monument-Making in Colonial India’, Friends of I. Kern, Leiden University, March 22, 2012.

Conferences/ Workshops Co-organized and convened

2019. *The Politics and Pathways of Return: trans-regional perspectives on a Buddhist Homeland*. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, June 27-29, 2019 (co-organized and co-convened with David Geary, UBC, and Douglas Ober, UBC)

2016. “Imagining Asia(s): Networks, Actors, Sites”, jointly organized by the Nalanda - Sriwijaya Centre at ISEAS-Ishak Institute (Singapore) and Nalanda University, India, Singapore, October 10-11, 2016.

2016. “Heritage in Context: Balancing the Global with the Local”, co-organized by the School of Historical Studies, Nalanda University, Anneliese Maier Research Programme, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, and India International Centre, New Delhi, August 20- 22, 2016.

2013. “Rethinking the Transnational: Concepts, Communities, Practices”, Department of History, Presidency University, Kolkata, September 3, 2013

2010. “Communities at the Margins: Practices and Livelihood” Workshop convened at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta and *Dr. Papiya Ghosh Memorial Trust*, July 1-2, 2010

SELECT COURSES TAUGHT

Courses Designed and Taught at Ashoka University

Histories of South Asian Art: From the earliest times to the present (Gateway course in Visual Arts and cross-listed as elective course with the Department of History)

Sites and Sights: Museums, Exhibitions, and the Making of Art (Gateway Course in Visual Arts and cross-listed as elective course with the Department of History)

Visual Cultures of Modern and Contemporary South Asia (Elective Course in Visual Arts)

Empire, Nation, and Art: Histories from the Visual Image (Elective Course in Visual Arts and cross-listed as elective course with the Department of History)

Why does Art Matter? The Efficacy of the Visual Image (Elective Course in Visual Arts)

Approaching Art: Object, Image, Text (Elective Course in Visual Arts)

Methods in Art History (Gateway for ASP Capstone and MLS students hosted by Visual Arts)

Rethinking Contemporary Art: Artistic Identities, Media, and Spaces (co-curricular course)

Curatorial Practices in Art (co-curricular course)

Courses Designed and Taught Previously at Nalanda University and at Presidency University

Introduction to Asian Art (Undergraduate Survey Course, Presidency University)

Making Sense of Images: Stories of “Art” across South and Southeast Asia, from pre history to c. 1200. (Undergraduate Survey Course, Presidency University)

Visualizing Asia: Sites and Media (Graduate Studies, Nalanda University)

Reading Art: Terms and Methods in Art History (Graduate Studies, Seminar Course, Nalanda University)

Publics and Patrimony: Heritage, History, and Memory across Asia (Graduate Studies, Nalanda University)

Art and Archaeology of Buddhism (Graduate Studies, Seminar Course, Nalanda University)

Urban Cultures of Modern and Contemporary South Asia (Graduate Seminar Course, Nalanda University)

Asia in Global History (Undergraduate Foundation Course co-taught with colleagues from Nalanda University, NYU, Shanghai, and NYU, Abu Dhabi)

Histories of Archaeological Thought and Practice Across Asia (Undergraduate, Presidency University)

Art of Indian Ocean (Graduate Studies Seminar, Nalanda University)

Thesis Supervised

MLS Thesis Supervision at Ashoka

Charmi Badlani

Angelin Joy

Master of Arts Thesis supervised (in the School of Historical Studies at Nalanda University)

Shaashi Ahlawat, “Representations of Avalokiteśvara from Nalanda in dharmachakra pravartana-mudrā: An Art-Historical Approach” (Graduated in 2016).

Pritha Mukherjee, “The Saraikela Saptamatikas: A study in image production, circulation, and altered lives of sculptures housed at the Patna Museum”, (Graduated in 2017)

Phayphot Manirath, “Exploring Buddhist Tradition and Culture in Lao Society through a Study of the Role of the Sangha” (Graduated in 2017)

Shikhar Goel, “Cartoons of the Emergency: A Study of R. K. Laxman’s Cartoons published during the Emergency in *The Times of India* and their reproductions in the NCERT textbook.” (Graduated in 2017)

Master of Arts Thesis supervised (in the Department of History, Presidency University)

Sreya Mitra, “Colonialism and Urban Architecture: Revisiting Calcutta and Bombay” (Graduated in 2013)

Iman Mitra, “Art and Nation Building in Colonial India” (Graduated in 2013)

Bachelor of Arts Thesis supervised (in the Department of History, Presidency University)

Writh Barua, “Bengali Buddhists in early twentieth century” (Majored in 2013)

Manav Basu, “Maps as Art: Pilgrimage in South Asia” (Majored in 2014)

SERVICE TO UNIVERSITY (Ashoka University)

Head of the Department of Visual Arts, Ashoka University (From August 27, 2018 onward to May 31, 2021)

Convener of the Visual Arts Colloquium

Member of Academic Integrity Committee, Ashoka University

Membership of professional organisations, national and international

Member of Association for Asian Studies (AAS)

Member of the *Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art*

Member of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

M. Phil. Examiner for Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta

MA thesis external examiner for IIT Guwahati

PhD thesis external examiner for Shristi School of Art and Design

Book manuscript reviewer for Orient Blackswan

LANGUAGES

English – Medium of Academic Instruction, native fluency in reading, writing and speaking

Bengali – Native Speaker, native fluency in reading, writing and speaking

Hindi – Near Native fluency in reading, writing and speaking