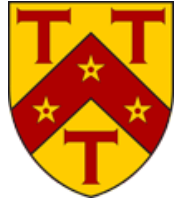




A RECOGNISED INDEPENDENT CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

The Asian Studies Centre, St Antony's College;  
The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies  
*South Asia Seminar, Week 3*



The Majewski Lecture, Hilary Term 2017:

Tuesday January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2 p.m.

Fellows' Dining Room, St Antony's College

*The Colloquy between Muhammad and  
Saytān: The Eighteenth-Century Bangla  
Iblichnāmā of Garībullā*

**Tony K. Stewart**

Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Chair in Humanities; Professor and  
Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University



In 1287 b.s. [=1879/80 c.e.] a short Bangla work was published in Calcutta under the title of *Iblichnāmār punthi* by the highly productive scholar Garībullā, who had composed the text about a century earlier. This somewhat unusual text is a colloquy

between the Prophet Muhammad and the fallen Iblich (Ar. *Iblīs*), also called Saytān. The reader is offered humorous, often naughty descriptions of the depraved and licentious acts of Saytān's lackeys, parodies of the standard 'aḥādīth literatures regarding proper conduct—*everything a good practicing Muslim is not!* This fictional inversion of all that is good and proper titillates the reader in its mad escape from the Bakhtinian monologic of theology, history, and law that governs the discourse of the conservative Sunni mainstream. It is the exaggerated negative image of the law as seen from the imagined squalid underbelly of Bengali society.

*Professor Stewart will give another guest lecture on a related topic, 'When Muslim and Hindu Worlds Meet in Fiction: Mapping the Bengali Imaginaire' on Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. in the Library of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.*

**Tony K. Stewart** is the Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Chair in Humanities Professor and Chair, Department of Religious Studies at Vanderbilt University. His recent monograph, *The Final Word: the Caitanya Caritamṛta and the Grammar of Religious Tradition* (Oxford, 2010), focused on the creation of the Gaudiya Vaisnava movement, and was preceded a translation of the key text, produced with the late Edward C. Dimock, Jr. (Harvard Oriental Series, 1999). In *Fabulous Females and Peerless Pirs* (Oxford 2004) Professor Stewart translated eight tales on the ways women, aided by Satya Pir, keep the world ordered in the wake of male-generated chaos. This literature in turn pointed to his current project, tentatively titled *Romance of the Pirs: Fictive Discourse in Early Modern Bengali Sufism*, which examines how the Islamic *imaginaire* insinuated itself into a Bengali consciousness.

**All are welcome**

Convenor: Dr Faisal Devji

Enquiries: asian@sant.ox.ac.uk or 01865-274559

*The South Asia seminar series is organised with the support of the History Faculty.*

*Picture: Demons from the late fourteenth-century Kitāb al-Bulḥān, Bodleian Libraries shelfmark MS. Bodl. Or. 133. Fol. 28.*