

The Great Hydraulic Transition: Modern Origins of Land and Rivers in South Asia

BY

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ROHAN D'SOUZA is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Studies in Science Policy (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi). He is the author of *Drowned and Dammed: Colonial Capitalism and Flood control in Eastern India* (2006). His edited books include *The British Empire and the Natural World: Environmental Encounters in South Asia* (2011) and *Environment, Technology and Development: Critical and Subversive Essays* (2012). He has held postdoctoral fellowships at Yale University and the University of California, Berkeley. He was also a Senior Research Associate at the Centre for World Environmental History (University of Sussex) and Visiting Fellow at the Resources Management Asia-Pacific (Australian National University). Dr. D'Souza was recently awarded the Short Term Chair at the University of Tokyo (Japan) as Visiting Professor of Contemporary Indian Studies by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (2012).

About the Lecture:

Most writings on lands and rivers in South Asia have disingenuously accepted the “politics of Separations.” Land as property and river as resource, thus, are overwhelmingly recognized as distinct conceptual domains. Histories about land settlements, rent extraction, the burdens of revenue, legal ownership, or the commons have occupied discussions only as the political economy of the soil. Rivers, on the other hand, became a technical subject involving infrastructure and the biographies of engineering and control. Dr. D'Souza will argue that this politics of separations acquired a defining force in the region only through the course of the long nineteenth century. An amphibian South Asia with its soil-water admixtures actually characterized its environmental and social worlds before being transformed into the reptilian terrain of colonial modernity.

LECTURE TIME: 12 noon to 1:30 p.m.

VENUE: CASI – 3600 Market Street, Suite 560 (5th floor) Philadelphia, PA 19104-2653

About CASI

Founded in 1992, the Center for the Advanced Study of India (CASI) at the University of Pennsylvania is the first research institution in the United States dedicated to the study of contemporary India. The Center's key goals are to nurture a new generation of scholars across disciplines and to provide a forum for dialogue among the academic, business, and foreign policy communities.

