



DĀNESH Newsletter

Fall 2015

2015 DANESH CONFERENCE AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY--BLOOMINGTON

*RESEARCH IN IRAN AND IRANIAN DIASPORAS:
FINDINGS, EXPERIENCES, AND CHALLENGES*

Scheduled for October 24, 2015, this year's DĀNESH conference is hosted by the Indiana University Department of Central Eurasian Studies. The conference will be held in the new School of Global and International Studies Building, 355 North Jordan Avenue, Bloomington.

For presentation at the conference, numerous abstracts were submitted from Canada and Europe in addition to the United States. The abstracts represent a wide range of topics related to the conference theme. The selected abstracts for presentation at the conference are listed in the Conference Preliminary Program announcement, which is distributed along with a registration form.

The Conference Co-chairs are Cyrus Behroozi and Jamsheed Choksy. In addition to them, members of the Conference Planning Committee include Paul Losensky, Irene Queiro-Tajalli (Committee Chair), Sholeh Shahrokhi, and Bitā Zakeri

We look forward to seeing you at the conference.

MESSAGE FROM DĀNESH PRESIDENT

As I write this, my colleagues and I are settling into our offices in the magnificent new Global and International Studies Building, the home of Indiana University's new School of Global and International Studies and the site of this year's DĀNESH Institute conference on October 24. By then the last of the empty boxes should have been hauled away, the men in hard hats will be gone, and the new phone system will finally be working, leaving us to enjoy this beautiful building.

The conference theme this year is "Research in Iran and Iranian Diasporas: Findings, Experiences, and Challenges." The Program Committee has received more than a dozen submissions and has met to finalize the program. It looks like we will have that frustrating embarrassment of riches: concurrent sessions. I'd like to thank the members of the program committee: Cyrus Behroozi, Jamsheed Choksy, Paul Losensky, Irene Queiro-Tajalli, Sholeh Shahrokhi, and Bitā Zakeri. They represent both the DĀNESH Institute and our host, Indiana University's Department of Central Eurasian Studies.

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The international reach of Iran, Iranians, and Iranian culture was driven home to me this spring when I spent a semester at Peking University. Iranian students are studying at the great Chinese universities, and Chinese students are studying Persian. Chinese Muslim students and professors eagerly attended my classes on Iranian philosophy and discussed which Iranian works needed to be translated into Chinese. The Chinese government's Silk Belt and Road Initiative is linking the countries of Central and South Asia, including Iran, reopening the old trade routes that once spread Iranian culture as far as central China. Chinese scholars are rediscovering the "Han Kitab," the 17th and 18th century works by Muslim scholars in which Persian Sufi literature was adapted in Confucian terms for a Chinese audience. The exhibits in Beijing's Ancient Observatory show clearly the degree to which Chinese astronomers in the Mongol period drew on the work of Iranian astronomers.

As with the Islamic conquests and the Mongol invasions, the political upheavals of the last half century have, for better or worse, made the Iranian people into a transnational community, carrying aspects of their culture with them and adopting aspects of their new homelands and contributing to their new cultures, just as they did in the Abbasid and Mongol empires. It's the mission of the DĀNESH Institute to contribute to the understanding of this new phase in the history of the Iranian people

If you are coming to the conference from out of town, I hope that you will take some extra time to enjoy the attractions of Bloomington. That weekend features performance both by the world-famous IU Opera and the IU Theater, both with new productions. The IU Art Museum, the Mathers Museum of World Cultures, and the Lilly Rare Book Library all have exhibits that are open and free to visitors.

I'm looking forward to seeing you here.

With best wishes,
John Walbridge

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF MEMBERS

Mary Elaine Hegland gave a paper, "Political Islam: Engagement and Disengagement in an Iranian Settlement," at the Interdisciplinary International Conference on Islamism and Post-Islamism: Religious and Political Transformations in Muslim Societies at Queen's University School of Religion in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. She will be giving a paper, "Moharram Rituals: Transformations in Politics and Meanings in a Settlement Near Shiraz," at the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in Istanbul, September 8 - 11, 2015 and a paper, "Women's Religious Practices: Expanding Opportunities in an Iranian Village," at the 8th Conference of Iranian Studies of the Societas Iranologica Europaea at the State Hermitage Museum and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg September 15 - 19, 2015. Dr. Hegland has given talks on her book, *Days of Revolution: Political Unrest in an Iranian Village*, at Stanford, New York University, U. of Texas, Austin, San Jose State University, and *Zanan*, a progressive Iranian American women's group in California's Bay Area, and she will be giving talks next year at the U. of Arizona, Tucson and UCLA. Independent Publishers conferred their Gold Metal in History (World) on this book.

Irene Queiro-Tajalli was named a 2015 *Recognizing External Achievements* (REA) recipient for the School of Social Work. All REA recipients were honored at the IUPUI Chancellor's Academic Honors Convocation on Friday, April 24, 2015

On February 20, 2015, **Sholeh Shahrokhi** organized and led the first Faculty Development Workshop "Teaching the Modern Middle East" entitled "How to teach a course on the contemporary Middle East?" at Butler University. She was also invited to carry out a one-day Film/ Discussion workshop and to give a lecture exploring "Today's Revolutionary Middle East: Prospects for Women, Sexual

Revolution, & Gender Justice” at the Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies Program at Purdue University, in honor of the International Women's Day, on March 6. Dr. Shahrokhi was also invited to speak at the Middle East Current Issues Lecture Series on Women of the Middle East at the Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, on March 25. Additionally, Dr. Shahrokhi presented her academic research paper, "Creative Identities, Created Politics: Legacies of the Green Protest Art in Iran," at the Northern Geographers Meeting in Estonia in June. In 2015, her publications have thus far included "Gender and Sexuality: An Anthropological Approach," in the *UNESCO Encyclopedia of Life Support System*.

Drs. Diane and Kazem Tehrani were recognized for Persia House and Persian Studies community service in Oregon and southwest Washington. The award was announced August 1st at the sixteenth annual Iranian Festival 2015 in the Park Blocks of the PSU campus, an event attended by about five hundred members of the Iranian and greater Portland community. The citation reads: "For your selfless service to the promotion of Iranian culture, heritage, and arts". This is the first of an award to be presented annually.

John Walbridge spent four months this spring as the Ken'an Rifa'i Distinguished Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies at the Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies at Peking University. While there he gave a series of lectures on the role of reason in Islamic culture. He also taught a course on the philosophy of the 12th century Iranian philosopher Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi at Minzu University in Beijing, the national university for national minorities and the premier institution in China for Islamic studies. Dr. Walbridge also lectured at the Shanghai Academy of Science, Shanghai Normal University, and Northwest University in Xi'an, the oldest capital of unified China, the eastern terminus of the Silk Road, and, most famously now, the site of the Terracotta Army. In addition to teaching, he was working on his study of the manuscript evidence for the works of Suhrawardi

and his school. This spring he published an edition and translation of three late Greek commentaries on Galen, now preserved only in Arabic, *The Alexandrian Epitomes of Galen*, Vol. 1 (Islamic Translation Series, Brigham University Press).

Bitia Zakeri is the recipient of AAUW Dissertation Fellowship for 2015-2016. She is also the author of a chapter titled "A Double-Edged Sword: The Side Effects of the Model Minority Stereotype on Asian Immigrants in the United States," in N.D. Hartlep (Ed.), *Modern Societal Impacts of the Model Minority Stereotype*. IGI Global, 2014.

DR. MARY HEGLAND'S BOOK AWARD

It is with great pleasure to congratulate Dr. Mary Hegland who received a well-deserved 2015 Independent Publisher Book Award (IPBA) for her latest book, *Days of Revolution: Political Unrest in an Iranian Village*. The awards contest included 2,750 independent authors and publishers participating in the IPBA 19th annual contest. Gold, silver, and bronze medals were won in 273 categories representing 45 U.S. states plus the District of Columbia, six Canadian provinces, and ten countries overseas. Dr. Hegland's book was the winner of the Gold Medal in History.

Published by the Stanford University Press in 2014, *Days of Revolution* is the product of Dr. Hegland's several years of field study in Iran. As such, the book is an insider's view of how Iranians experienced and influenced the 1979 Islamic Revolution and its aftermath. An especially significant, if not unique, feature of the book is its contribution to the readers' better understanding of the Revolution. Stated by the publisher is that, while conventional wisdom assumes that the Shi'a ideology fueled the Revolution, Dr. Hegland "counters that the Revolution spread through much more pragmatic concerns: growing inequity, lack of development and employment opportunities, government corruption."

Dr. Hegland has served as a distinguished member of the DĀNESH Board of Directors for many years and is currently one of its outstanding appointed consultants.

TWO OUTSTANDING BOOKS

Of the 2015 books regarding Iranians abroad, two are especially noteworthy. Sanaz Fotouhi's book, *The Literature of the Iranian Diasporas: Meaning and Identity Since the Islamic Revolution*, was published by I.B.Tauris. In its description of the book, the publisher states that the 1979 Revolution "caused the migration of millions of Iranians, many of whom have written about their experiences. The book traces the origins of the diasporic Iranian literature in English using these origins to examine the socio-political position and historical context from which they emerged. While situating the Iranian literature through existing theories, the author sheds new lights on the role of the Iranian literature in Western literature by showing that the latter distinctively reflects a diasporic experience unique to Iranians abroad. Analyzing the relationship between Iranians and their new environments by drawing on theories of migration, narration and identity, the author examines how the literature born out of the Iranian diaspora reflects the current socio-political realities."

The other book, *Constructing Identity in Iranian-American Self-Narrative*, by Maria D. Wagenknecht, was published by Palgrave-MacMillan in 2015. The book is introduced by its publisher as a study of Iranian-American autobiographical writings as performance of identity. Defined by the 1979 Revolution, forced migration and diaspora, these autobiographies "center in the experience of rupture and discontinuity. Especially the authors' disidentification with traditionalism and politicized Islam as well as their construction of a "Persian" instead of "Iranian" identity speak not only to the diaspora, but is also geared towards greater acceptance in American society. Furthermore, self-orientalization aims to satisfy the expectations of American readers. However,

this seems to be the price that Iranian-American autobiographers need to pay if they want to work as cultural brokers on behalf of a country that has become largely demonized. Tracing these dynamics of individual and collective identity in the United States, this study offers insights that are not only of scholarly but also of political importance."

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST

Akbari, Hamid. *Iranians in Chicagoland: Images of America*. Arcadia Publishing, 2005.

Andalibian, Rahimeh. *The Rose Hotel: A Memoir of Secrets, Loss, and Love from Iran to America*. National Geographic, 2015.

Ansary, Nina. *Jewels of Allah: The Untold Story of Iranian Women*. Revela Press, 2015.

Ardalan, Iran Davar. *The Persian Square: 101 Things to Know about Iranian-Americans*. I. D. Ardalan, 2015.

Friedel, Erika. *Folktales and Storytellers of Iran: Culture, Ethos and Identity*. I. B. Tauris, 2012.

Kamalipour, Zahra. *Iran Memories and Other Poems: An Iranian-American Woman's Journey*. Trafford, 2013.

Mahni, and Joshua Lasiowski (Ed.). *Searching for Pearls: The Story of an Azari/Iranian Woman's Spiritual Journey in America*. Amazon Digital Service, 2013.

Mozaffari, Ali. *Forming National Identity in Iran: The Idea of Homeland Derived from Ancient Persian and Islamic Imaginations and Place*. I. B. Tauris, 2013.

Shahideh, Laleh. *The Power of Iranian Narratives: A Thousand Years of Healing*. UPA, 2994.

Talebi, Niloufar (Translator). *Belonging: New Poetry By Iranians Around the World*. North Atlantic Books, 2008.

Vali, Abbas. *Kurds and the State of Iran. The Making of Kurdish Identity*. I. B. Tauris, 2013.