



DĀNESH Newsletter

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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

This year, DĀNESH is a participant in the conference entitled Interfaith Peace Building: Global and Local Perspectives. The conference is sponsored by the Indiana University School of Social Work and the Center for Interfaith Cooperation, Indianapolis. Scheduled for November 5, 2010, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., the conference is to be held at the Indiana Interchurch Center, 1100 W. 42nd Street, Indianapolis.

The focus of the DĀNESH session at the conference will be on Interfaith Peace Building: An Iranian-American Perspective. The speaker at the session will be Dr. Yahya Kamalipour. He is Professor and Head of the Department of Communication and Creative Arts and Director of the Center for Global Studies, Purdue University Calumet.

Please mark your calendar for attending this important conference. Enclosed please find an announcement of the conference and a registration form. However, you are encouraged to register on line at www.internationalinterfaith.org. Looking forward to seeing you at the conference.

MESSAGE FROM DĀNESH PRESIDENT

Greetings. I hope this issue of the Newsletter finds all of our members well and enjoying the first signs of autumn. In the pages that follow, you will find the activities and achievements of our members ranging from USA to Poland.

Put the words “world violence”, “concern”, “interfaith” and “a kinder world” together, and it will take you closer to the purpose of the conference that the DĀNESH Institute is co-sponsoring. This year, the DĀNESH Board of Directors agreed to partner with the IU School of Social Work, the International Interfaith Initiative, and other local organizations to hold this much needed conference. We hope the conference will promote further dialogue and cooperation about the role of interfaith in promoting world peace.

Before the end of the year, you will see improvements in the ‘look and feel’ of our website. We will send you an alert when the revisions are made.

As always, the Board of Directors is appreciative of your support and contributions. Keep in touch and have a wonderful rest of the year.

Irene Queiro-Tajalli

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN IUPUI AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN OPENS WINDOWS OF UNDERSTANDING*

By Sara K. Allaei

In 2001, the deans of the School of Engineering and Technology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Tehran (UT) entered into a historically significant agreement to develop a collaborative “2+2” dual degree program in undergraduate engineering. The program was designed to enable students at UT to complete the first two years of their bachelor’s degree study, transfer to IUPUI to complete years three and four, and then return to UT to present their senior projects. Students who successfully completed the curricular requirements of both universities would receive bachelor’s of science in engineering degrees from Purdue University and the equivalent degree from the University of Tehran. The signing of this agreement was essentially an act of faith and trust on the part of both deans – neither side could be certain that the program could be successfully implemented.

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In Fall 2007, after several years of program development and implementation at the University of Tehran, students began transferring to IUPUI. By Fall 2009, their numbers peaked at 45 students. Representing the strong rate of university attendance among women in Iran, particularly in the field of engineering, 45% of participating students have been women. 25 students have completed IUPUI requirements, and are in various stages of having completed or meeting final UT requirements. Many plan to return to IUPUI or other destinations in the United States or Canada for graduate level study, and several have received offers of full research assistantships for graduate study from institutions such as Purdue University-West Lafayette and the University of Calgary.

Beyond the individual student successes, the opportunity for U.S. and Iranian students to study side by side creates opportunities for greater cross-cultural understanding. Departing Iranian students have expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to experience American culture and develop a firsthand perspective. Equally profound is the impact the group has had on shaping perspectives of the American students they have studied alongside. Required courses on topics such as Organizational Leadership and Supervision provide an opportunity to go beyond the engineering curriculum and explore cultural differences and similarities. The impact of this exchange can best be expressed by the comments of a student from Indiana in her reflection paper from such a course (used with permission):

One of my big misperceptions of Iran was from the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center. This happened when I was 14 years old and was subjected to what the news had to say about people of the Muslim faith. The news portrayed people of the Muslim faith to be bad people, so I automatically assumed this. From befriending [a UT student] and learning more about her and her culture, my view of people of the Muslim faith changed completely. I realized that some bad people from that country have done bad things, just like some people from America have done bad things. There is no reason to judge a whole culture based on a few people's mistakes.

One particular thing that I liked was how the assignment got me out of my shell and forced me to discuss a variety of topics with someone whose culture is completely different from my own. I have always feared working with people from different cultures

because I do not want to face any confrontation that could arise. [The UT student] was the best pick for this assignment because not only did I gain information about her culture, but she also helped me to face some personal fears that I have had my whole life. Before this class and assignment, I could not even tell you where Iran was on the map. Now, I can tell you about their culture, religious beliefs, and some of their business practices. While I do not know everything about Iran, I have learned a lot and have also made a new friend who can teach me even more.

*This report is a follow-up to the conference on Iranian Students in the United States: Challenges and Opportunities, April 18, 2008. The conference was co-sponsored by the IUPUI Office of International Affairs and the DĀNESH Institute.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF MEMBERS

Dr. Yahya Kamalipour's professional activities in October 2010 are to include his participation in a conference in Greece. Later in the month, he is to serve as a keynote speaker at the Global Communication Association Conference in Krakow, Poland. Dr. Kamalipour's newest book is Media, Power, and Politics in the Digital Age: The 2009 Presidential Election Uprising in Iran. For further information about this book, please see Book Reports in this issue.

In May, 2010, **Dr. Kahdija Khaja** was granted promotion and tenure by Indiana University. In addition, this year, she was the recipient of the Joseph Taylor Diversity Award, which illustrates excellence in diversity in improving curriculum development and campus climate. She also co-chairs the Multicultural Teaching Community of Practice team and has received the Faculty Women's Newcomer Leadership Award.

In 2010, an anthology of **Dr. Bruno Nettle's** essays, some published previously and some new, has just appeared as: Nettl's Elephant: On the History of Ethnomusicology (Urbana: University of Illinois Press). In May, he gave several lectures at Charles University, Prague, including one on Persian music. In August, he was the keynote speaker at the 29th conference of the International Society for Music Education, in Beijing. His presentation, "Ethnomusicology and Music Education: a (Usually) Harmonious Relationship," made several references to his experience in Iran.

In 2009, with **Dr. Khaja, Dr. Irene Queiro-Tajalli** presented the following papers: "Latin American Realities and Women's Resistance: Implications for a Multicultural Curriculum," at the Annual Program Meeting, Council on Social Work Education, San Antonio; and "White House Briefing Paper on 'Lives of Muslims in a Post 911 Era,'" Washington, DC. In addition, she presented "Contemporary Struggles of the Labor Movement in Argentina through the Trajectory of the Piquetero Movement," at the Annual Program Meeting, UALE Conference, March 2010, San Diego. Furthermore, Dr. Queiro-Tajalli was one of the recipients of the Recognizing External Achievements award at the IUPUI Chancellor's Academic Honors Convocation, April 16, 2010.

Dr. Diane Tehrani published a book review on Doug Lemov's "How to Teach Like a Champion" in the summer 2010 Newsletter of the Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ORTESOL).

In August 2010, **Dr. Kazem Tehrani** gave a presentation entitled "Persian Language and Literature from Past to Present with Focus on the Book of Heroes (Shâhnâme)," at the annual interdisciplinary workshop for K-12 educators teaching about Iran. The workshop was co-sponsored by the Middle East Studies Center, Portland State University, and the World Affairs Council of Oregon.

Dr. Reza Varjavand has coauthored a paper with Dr. Weng Xiao-Li of Inner Mongolia University of Technology in China entitled "An Empirical Analysis of Discretionary and Accumulated Effects of Government Expenditure on GDP Growth: The Case of China," Journal of International Management Studies, October 2010. He will also present this paper at the annual conference of International Association of Business and Economics in Las Vegas in October. Furthermore, he is to present a paper entitled "Pride Versus Profit: Can Capitalism Solve Our Socioeconomic Problems?" at the Missouri Valley annual conference in St. Louis.

In Fall 2009, **Dr. John Walbridge** spent his sabbatical leave in Istanbul, Turkey. There, he was involved in three projects. One was related to Galen in Arabic, which led to the completion of an edition of three late antique study guides to the works of Galen used in standard medical curriculum. In addition, Dr. Walbridge gave a series of lectures at the Center for Islamic Studies and continued his study of Suhrawardi's works.

BOOK REPORTS

Leah R. Baer. Traditions Linger: Cultural Changes for Iranian Jews in the United States. Mazda Publishers, Inc., 2009.

Dr. Baer reports that Iranian Jewish immigrants encountered the challenge of adapting their ancestral heritage to an American future. In Iran, all facets of life are regulated by religious boundaries. Under Pahlavi rule, Iranian Jews enjoyed economic advantages as well as some legal and political privileges. Yet, an undercurrent persisted of well-established behavioral patterns. Descendants of a community that had limited opportunities to participate in public affairs have progressed to a group of Iranian Jewish Americans who are not only involved with legal, economic, and academic matters, but are actively engaged in the political arena as well.

Iranian Jewish immigrants brought rituals and a value system as well as artifacts of their heritage. They were confronted with the challenge of reconciling their cultural and social values with a secular political environment. In addition, they encountered a Jewish community whose traditions were incongruent with their own. While this work is not a history of Iranian Jewry, a brief review of historical events promotes an understanding of one of the oldest Jewish communities in the world and informs the roots of their traditions without deeply penetrating into the complexity of the community. For further information, see www.mazdapub.com.

Yahya Kamalipour (Ed.). Media, Power, and Politics in the Digital Age: The 2009 Presidential Election Uprising in Iran. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

According to its publisher, this book focuses on the Iranian presidential elections of 2009 and ensuing demonstrations in major cities across Iran and the world. As such, the book provides a balanced discussion of the role and impact of modern communication technologies, particularly the novel utilization of "small digital media" vis-a-vis the elections and global media coverage. Written in a non-technical and easy to read language, the book appeals to policy-makers, scholars, and students alike. For further information, see www.RowmanLittlefield.com.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Mississippi and Iran Cooperation. Considering the brinkmanship over nuclear proliferation and other issues between political leaders of the United States and Iran, it was refreshing to note an important project of cooperation between American and Iranian health professionals. This project was reported by Joel Bourne, Jr., in his article entitled "Iranian Cure for the Delta's Blues," AARP Bulletin, July-August 2010.

The article describes the "health house" project in rural Iran and the plan for its implementation in rural Mississippi and, later, in several other states. One of the beginning steps in this project was last year's tour of the Iranian health system by several health professionals from Mississippi. Organized by Mohammad Shahbazi, MD, of Jackson State University, this tour was with the tacit approval of the US National Institutes of Health and Iran's Ministry of Health.

Iranians in the United States. In its spring 2010 issue, Persian Heritage (page 26) includes a statistical report about Iranians in the United States. Accordingly, the number of Iranians living in this country has been estimated between 1 and 1.5 million(s), most of whom are in the Los Angeles area. Other large Iranian communities are in New York; New Jersey; Washington, DC; Seattle; and Houston.

Of the Iranians in the United States, as of 2000, 50.9 per cent had a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 24 per cent among the total foreign-born population. Furthermore, one in four Iranian-Americans hold a master's or doctoral degree, the highest rate among the 67 ethnic groups studied. Finally, in 2001, the estimated number of Iranian professors in institutions of higher learning in the United States was around 4,000.

Professor Frye in Esfahan. Contributions of Richard N. Frye to the field of Iranology is well-known. As reported in the August 27, 2010 issue of Iran Times (page 7), Dr. Frye, now 90 years old, is recognized in the United States and the rest of the world as the greatest living foreign scholar of classical Iranian culture, second only to the late Arthur U. Pope.

Often called the dean of the world's Iranologists, Dr. Frye founded the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University and served as the director of the Asia Institute in Shiraz. He is currently a professor emeritus at Harvard.

Recently, Dr. Frye wrote directly to the Iranian government asking to be buried near Pope's mausoleum on the banks of Zayandeh Rud (river) in Esfahan. Approving his request, the government also has donated to Dr. Frye a house in Esfahan, which is to be converted to a museum after his passing.

RECENT BOOKS OF INTEREST

Wali Ahmadi. Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan. Routledge, 2008.

Ilan Berman. Iran's Challenge to the United States. Rowman and Little, 2007.

Stephanie Cronin. Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran. Routledge, 2004.

Fereshteh Davaran. Continuity in Iranian Identity. Routledge, 2009.

Shirin Ebadi. Iran Awakening: One Woman's Journey to Reclaim Her Life and Country. Random House, 2007.

Sasan Fayazmanesh. The United States and Iran: Sanctions, Wars, and the Policy of Dual Containment. Routledge, 2008.

Reza Khalili. A Time to Betray: The Astonishing Double Life of a CIA Agent inside the Revolutionary Guards of Iran. Threshold Editions, 2010.

Saira Khan. Iran and Nuclear Weapons: Protracted Conflict and Proliferation. Routledge, 2009.

Stephen Kinzer. Reset: Iran, Turkey, and America's Future. Times Books, 2010.

Azadeh Mahdavi. Honeymoon in Tehran: Two years of Love and Danger in Iran. Random House, 2010.

Seyyed Hossein Mousavian. Iran-Europe Relations: Challenges and Opportunities. Routledge, 2008.

Donette Murray. US Foreign Policy and Iran: American-Iranian Relations since the Islamic Revolution. Routledge, 2009.

Lloyd Ridgeon. Iranian Intellectuals: 1997-2007. Routledge, 2008.

Richard Trapper (Ed.). The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation, and Identity. I. B. Tauris, 2002.

Saeed Zeydabadi-Nejad. The Politics of Iranian Cinema. Routledge, 2009.