

CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

Invites you to a lecture

Writing Power and the Power of Writing
*Literature and History in the Fifteenth
Century North India*

Pankaj Jha

University of Delhi

Room No: 326

Committee Room, CHS, SSS-III

22 March 2017, 3 pm (Wednesday)

Enclosure: Abstract & about the speaker

Writing Power and the Power of Writing

Literature and History in the Fifteenth Century North India

Abstract: Techniques of documentation had a long, patchy and discontinuous tradition in Sanskrit in pre-Mughal times. Persian traditions in this respect were richer, fuller, more systematized and continuous. A careful study of a fifteenth century writing manual in Sanskrit opens up exciting possibilities of reflection on the fraught relationship between writing and power, fictitious and factual, literature and history as well as between the worlds of Sanskrit and Persian. The paper explores these possibilities with a view to understand the ways in which literary idioms of imperial power could gather steam within ostensibly narrow territorial confines of tiny chieftaincies. It also highlights the need to study the worlds of Sanskrit and Persian together rather than only as separate compartments of parallel cosmo-political tradition.

About the Speaker: Dr. Pankaj Jha did his Bachelor's and a Master's in History from Ramjas College, Delhi. His M.Phil and Ph.D. too are from the University of Delhi. Part of his doctoral work was done at the University of Texas when he was there as a Fulbright Fellow for about a year. For M. Phil, he worked with Persian materials. For Ph.D., he worked closely with Sanskrit and north Indian 'vernacular' texts, thus becoming one of the very few historians trained in Medieval India to focus on non-Persian sources as well. As a medievalist, his primary area of interest is languages and literary cultures of north India and their linkages with 'mainstream' history. An area of special interest for him is knowledge formations of north India in the fifteenth century. His book on A Political History of Literature is expected to be out soon by Oxford University Press, Delhi