



February 2015

Hello Friends and Supporters of Sangam House,

Another Sangam House season has just concluded and once again we had the opportunity to host a diverse and fascinating group of writers and translators from around the world. Our program has grown along with the work of our alumni and in recent weeks and months it has been wonderful to see all of the new publications from former residents, as well as several noteworthy award:

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This past season, Sangam was pleased to make two new fellowships available to our applicants: **Bronwen Bledsoe** is now funding the **Eternal Vada Fellowship**, in honor of her late mother, to support the residency of an American writer; and **Lavanya Sankaran**, a long time supporter of Sangam, recently doubled her giving to establish the **Murasaki Fellowship**, which funds a residency for fiction writer.

In addition to our growing list of sponsors, Sangam continues to thrive in its various residency partnerships. This year **Mathilde Walter Clarke** and **NS Koenings** were selected for residencies at the **Chennai Mathematical Institute**, and in the coming weeks we'll be making our selection for the 2015 fellowship at the **Toji Writing Centre in Korea**, thanks to the generous support of **InKo Centre, Chennai**, and **ARKO, Korea**.



We are also happy to announce the establishment of a new residency opportunity for Sangam House alumni: the **Jayanti residency** will host one writer every winter to live and work in a small hotel in the Himalayas. Details will be posted on our website in the coming weeks so stay tuned. This opportunity is made possible through the generosity of **Pushpesh Pant**. We thank Mr. Pant and we welcome him to the Sangam family of supporters.

In January, Sangam House hosted its fourth annual **Lekhana**, a weekend of literary events. The theme this year was 'violence' -- in all its different forms -- and it brought together writers and translators from around the world to participate in panels, readings, and performances. We are grateful to our partners at **Bhoomija** and the **Indian Institute for Human Settlements** for making Lekhana 2015 possible. The program was so successful that Sangam House was asked to participate in the **Leipzig Book Festival**, and we are very proud to be sending our own Arshia Sattar to represent the organization in Germany.

One major highlight from Lekhana was a reading from *Madhurobagan* (translated into English as *One Part Woman*), the latest novel from Sangam House alumnus Perumal Muragan. As many of you may know, in the past month those who take objection to some portions of this novel have subjected Muragan to verbal abuse and violent threats. He has been forced into silence by amorphous Hindu groups in his hometown who have objected to portions of *Madhurobagan* in which a local temple ritual for childless couples is used in the plot. The groups calling for the burning of the book find it insulting to Tamil culture, to the gods and to women.



As a result of these actions, Murugan has been forced to leave his home with his family to ensure their safety. While he seeks a long-term solution to these threats, Sangam House will be providing Murugan and his family safe refuge. We are grateful to all of our alumni and friends who have spoken out about this publically and we will certainly keep you updated as the situation develops.

In the meantime, we are working on a special project called **Simurgh** -- named after the mythical bird that is created only by the mingled energies of each of the seekers. For 10 days in April, a small group of writers will gather at Sangam and we will present them with older Kashmiri writing, primarily poetry, writing from a generation that knows peace in the valley, that celebrates the syncretistic cultures of Kashmir. The gathering will include at least one writer who has penned much of this older work so that he can speak to a very different time in Kashmir and mentor younger writers working in a variety of languages relevant to the region. The young writers will then be asked to react to the seminal works from their own land and their own language in two ways: as translations into a second language but also through their own writing to the idea of 'Kashmir' they encounter in these earlier works.

We are so thrilled at the opportunity to produce such an important and relevant project, and it would not be possible without the collaboration and financial support of **Kalpna Raina** and the **Aditi Foundation**. Aditi will be funding the gathering as well as the publication of the work that emerges from the workshop.



Shortly after Simurgh, we will be hosting seven new residents during the month of May for our spring session. **Nrityagram** continues to be our home away from home and we are grateful for the partnership that we share with this world-renowned organization.

We've already opened up the application cycle for 2016 residencies and we ask all of you to help us spread the word by sending good candidates to our website to check out the application procedure.

We are excited for all the plans we have in store for 2015 and look forward to keeping you all updated as they progress.

As always, much gratitude to all of you for your faith in Sangam House,

Arshia Sattar, DW Gibson, Rahul Soni