

## EDITOR'S NOTE

We begin this 2008 volume with a number of announcements. First, we apologize to our readers for not delivering on our 2006 promise that this regular issue would include an interview with President Ismail Omer Gaileh of the Republic of Djibouti. We conducted the interview in the fall of 2005 but, by late 2007, events in the region (particularly Somalia and Ethiopia) had changed so dramatically that both the questions and the responses needed major updating. Consequently, we have decided to keep the extant interview in storage until we secure another opportunity, in the near future, to engage President Gaileh.

Second, we also made another promise at the same moment: to reproduce a poetic tribute to the late nationalist poet, Abdillahi Sultan, Timaade. That poem, in Somali, is included here, but without the translation in English. We failed to do the latter (as well as for the other poems in this volume) because of logistical difficulties. We trust that our readers, who are keen on having translations of both, will find other means to secure English versions.

Third, this 2008 volume opens with two poems. The first was composed by Mahamad Gaal Haayoow a year or so before the death of President Aden Abdille Osman in 2007. The poem underscores a number of crucial points about national leadership: integrity, justice, kindness, fortitude, and competence. This is as good as any recognition of the lasting worth of President Osman to the Somali people, particularly in these dark decades. The second poem, by Ali Elmi Afyareh, a coeval of Timaade and a well-regarded national poet in his own right, was composed in Mogadishu in 1976—three years after the passing away of the supreme poet—one who excelled in working at the intersections of poetry and political life. He is buried in his hometown, Gabileh, thirty miles west of Hargeisa. In the annals of modern Somali politics and culture, Aden A. Osman and Abdillahi Sultan are peerless. Younger generations of Somalis, wherever they happen to be, would do well to study the lives and the inspiring achievements they have left behind.

Fourth, we have republished the short story by Samatar Sooyan. Since we unintentionally did not include the Somali version in Volume 6, we decided to reproduce the story and the English translation. Our apologies to the author and his translator.

Fifth, two years ago, we decided that, on occasion, we would include some bibliographical information on materials about Somali society that might be of some value. This volume includes a short compila-

tion undertaken by our own Professor of History Emeritus Charles Gesheker of California State University, Chico. We are grateful for Dr. Gesheker's contribution; he has been a positive force in Somali Studies for the past thirty years and a most enthusiastic patron of *Bildhaan* from its inception eight years ago.

Sixth, we bid farewell to Professor Lidwien Kapteijns and Wellesley College. Both Dr. Kapteijns and her College were indispensable to the founding and sustainability of *Bildhaan*: she for her unwavering commitment to the success of every one of the first six volumes, including the submission of some of her own work; Wellesley College for generous annual financial contributions. To be sure, we will miss the presence of Dr. Kapteijns, but we wish her the best of fortune as she moves on to pursue her interests in Somali Studies in other contexts.

Seventh, we welcome to the editorial leadership of *Bildhaan* Professor Mohamed Abdi Mohamed. With a doctorate in both Geology and History, he has been teaching at the University of Besançon (France) since 1987. Dr. Mohamed, commonly known as "Gandhi," has published extensively on Somali history and culture. Most noteworthy is the fact that he produced the first dictionary of French-Somali/Somali-French eleven years ago. No doubt that "Gandhi," who combines in his own daily life academic intensity and civic concern over the current condition of the Somali people, and tasteful conviviality to boot, will bring all his talents to *Bildhaan* in the years to come. In the same breath, we also welcome to the International Advisory Board Dr. Anna Lindley. She is a Research Officer at the Refugee Studies Centre, Department of International Development, University of Oxford. Her work relates to conflict, migration, and development issues, and her Ph.D. research focused on how Somalis living in Hargeisa, Nairobi, and London were affected by remittances. We await with eagerness the publication of her new book and contributions to upcoming volumes of *Bildhaan*, as well as ideas about improving the journal.

Eighth, we hope that all previous volumes of the journal will be available on the World Wide Web under the auspices of the Institute for Global Citizenship at Macalester College by the end of this year.

Ninth, we gratefully acknowledge permission to publish the article by Nasir Warfa and his colleagues by Elsevier Press. The article first appeared in *Health and Place*, Vol. 12, Issue 4 (December 2006): 503–515.

Finally, since it will be eight years since the birth of *Bildhaan*, we would like to recall the concerns that compelled us to create the jour-

nal. In Volume 1 (2001), we identified these three questions among the core of the governing preoccupations:

- If the past could *never* be laid to rest, how is one to revisit such a living hinterland? Or, put another way, how might one conduct the unavoidable conversation between history and our moment so that, in Ralph Waldo Emerson's pithy remark, "... the hours should be instructed by the ages, and the ages explained by the hours."<sup>1</sup>
- If the present is *never* just another version of a repetitively abiding past, what is the peculiar nature of this conjuncture of discontinuities and how might one study it?
- If the future is *never* out there waiting to be discovered, but has to be met through on-rushing and remorseless realities, what appropriate questions and scenarios could bring reason and hope together?

All the materials we have published in these past eight years have, in one way or another, touched on one or all of these questions. We expect that their inescapable relevance will continue to shape the identity of *Bildhaan*.

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## Note

1. *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*, Vol. 1 (2001): vi. The Emerson quote is in *The Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 4.