IT HAS BEEN A BUSY AND PRODUCTIVE YEAR AT THE SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE. As mandated by the University’s South Asia Initiative, while continuing to build on UT-Austin’s established achievements in the study of pre-modern India, the Institute has been working hard to strengthen its focus on contemporary South Asia, both in the social sciences and by means of collaborations with the University’s professional schools. It has also continued to expand its vigorous outreach program, especially to K-12 schools and post-secondary educational institutions. Many of these activities are more fully described elsewhere in this newsletter.

In the course of the last twelve months the Institute has received two new awards from the U.S. Department of Education. One is a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship grant. The other is a National Resource Centers (NRC) program grant. Both awards run for four years. Then, in October, the Institute was selected to establish a National Flagship Language Program (NFLP) in Hindi and Urdu. This program, which is administered by the Institute of International Education, will be the first of its kind in the country. It is designed to attain a very high level of undergraduate competence in Hindi and Urdu that is grounded in its professional use across a range of disciplines. These grants, combined with the continued support of the University’s administration, as well as the invaluable contribution of endowment funds such as those provided by the Marlene and Morton Meyerson Centennial Chair, will do much to underwrite the future accomplishments of the Institute.

When Richard Lariviere, then Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, called me in the spring of 2004 to ask if I would take on the directorship of the recently established South Asia Institute, it was an invitation that I had neither sought nor anticipated. But neither was it one that I could readily decline, even though it was only a few months since I had completed eight years as chair of the Anthropology Department, and I was already looking ahead to retirement. So I agreed to serve for a couple of years. The next two-and-a-half years (as they turned out to be) have been unremittingly strenuous and challenging, but also rewarding in equal measure. I thank my colleagues, staff and other associates for their unstinting support and dedication. And I wish my successor, Itty Abraham, who took over the directorship of the Institute in January 2007, every success in his endeavors.

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James Brow
THE SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE IS PLEASED TO WELCOME ITTY ABRAHAM as its new director, succeeding James Brow. Dr. Abraham was hired following a national search and began work in the spring of 2007. He holds a joint appointment as associate professor in the departments of Government and Asian Studies. Prior to this appointment, he was a fellow at the East-West Center Washington, and before that, program director for South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Global Security and Cooperation at the Social Science Research Council, New York (1992-2005). Dr. Abraham received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has been a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University’s Center for International Security and Arms Control, and has taught as a visiting professor at George Washington University’s Elliot School.

Dr. Abraham’s research interests include international relations, science and technology studies, and postcolonial theory. He has published a number of book chapters and journal articles on these topics and also on issues of higher education in South Asia. His first book, The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State (Zed, 1998) received acclaim for its novel inter-disciplinary approach to a vitally important topic. In 2005, he co-edited Illicit Flows and Criminal Things: States, Borders and the Other Side of Globalization with Willem van Schendel, and had just completed another edited volume, Nuclear Power and Atomic Publics: State and Culture in India and Pakistan, which is due to come out in 2008. He is the editor in chief of a new book series from Indiana University Press called Critical International Studies, and is working on a book on the history of Indian foreign policy.
WHEN PRESIDENT FAULKNER ANNOUNCED the formation of the South Asia Institute in 2003, and pledged a university-wide commitment to make this region the second center of excellence in international studies on the UT campus, no better guardian than James Brow could have been selected to direct the Institute through its next phase of development. Since joining the Institute, James Brow oversaw the successful funding of three major grant awards. Two awards came from the U.S. Department of Education and will run for four years -- a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship grant and a National Resource Centers (NRC) program grant. Most recently, the Institute was granted funding to establish a National Flagship Language Program (NFLP) in Hindi and Urdu.

Under his guardianship the Institute also has sponsored a breath-taking schedule of conferences, seminars, and other programs. Some of the more notable events include conferences on “Economic Globalization and Its Implications for Democracy” (April 2005), “Change and Continuity in Tibetan Cultures” (September 2005), “Contemporary Islamic Movements: Ideology, Aesthetics, Politics” (February 2006), and “Sixth International Congress on Traditional Asian Medicine” (April 2006).

Before coming to the South Asia Institute, James Brow served as Chairman of the Department of Anthropology from 1985 until 2003. He taught courses in Anthropology and Asian Studies since first coming to the University of Texas in 1979. During that time, he also has supervised the dissertations and theses of dozens of grateful graduate students. Brow’s own research has delved into the anthropology of development and underdevelopment in village communities in Sri Lanka. His most recent book, Demons and Development: the Struggle for Community in Sri Lanka, received many accolades for its rich ethnographic

RICHARD LARIVIERE CAME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS FRESH out of graduate school as an Assistant Professor of Sanskrit in 1982. During his close to twenty-five-year association with UT, Richard has been responsible, more than any other person, for making UT one of the top institutions in the world for the study of South Asia. He rose rapidly in the ranks, becoming Full Professor, Director of the Center for Asian Studies, Associate Vice-President for International Programs, and finally Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. He left UT in the summer of 2006 to become the Executive Vice President and Provost of the University of Kansas.

Richard became the Director of the Center for Asian Studies in 1986 and led it until 1994. He was responsible for making UT a comprehensive National Resource Center for South Asia under Title VI of the U. S. Department of Education. This period saw considerable expansion of faculty (continued on p. 23)
THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION (IIE) has chosen the South Asia Institute to establish its National Flagship Language Program in Hindi and Urdu, with an award of more than $700,000 to fund the program in its first year. From the fall semester of 2007, this innovative new undergraduate program will add an important new element to Hindi and Urdu studies, which have long been at the heart of South Asian studies at UT. The program will be directed by Herman van Olphen, who will be supported by two colleagues from the Department of Asian Studies serving as Associate Directors — Akbar Hyder (Urdu) and Rupert Snell (Hindi); and by an administrative team based in the SAI.

Students in the Hindi Urdu Flagship (HUF) Program will learn advanced language skills for a wide range of professional careers. Its curriculum will extend beyond language and literature to include many disciplines featuring a South Asian component, such as Anthropology, History, Radio-Television-Film, and Business. In these disciplines, courses taught by professors with a knowledge of Hindi or Urdu will be adapted for HUF students through the addition of course components using materials in Hindi and Urdu.

The intensive four-year HUF Program is designed for students who already have some background in either Hindi or Urdu, whether acquired at home or in school. The junior year will be spent in India and will combine study at Indian universities with internships in contexts relevant to the individual student’s professional development. The program will be available to all suitably qualified undergraduate students and will be limited to 20 new students each year.

In addition to its special intensity of study and its integration of linguistic training across a range of subject areas, the HUF Program will be innovative in several ways. First of all, each HUF student will have the benefit of close linguistic and academic support from Hindi and Urdu-speaking teaching assistants with competence in the disciplines/area studies being studied by Flagship students. In addition, the language curriculum will introduce a range of computer-assisted audio-visual materials, drawing on the latest instructional technologies; this development will be guided by Orlando Kelm, Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, who has successfully developed such facilities for several languages.

Though the special funding for the National Flagship Language Program does not entail any particular employment obligations, HUF students will certainly be well positioned for employment with the federal government or in the worlds of business, technology, administration or academics. RUPERT SNELL
HERMAN VAN OLPHEN, a leading Hindi educator, has been the driving force behind the development of the Hindi language program at UT. He is recognized for his participation in the field of evaluating language proficiency, materials design, and teaching Hindi at all levels. He was involved in the initial establishment and subsequent enhancement of the guidelines of the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which are the accepted standard for evaluating proficiency in Hindi. As Chair of the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Advanced Language Programs in India for almost a decade, he was responsible for overall structure and evaluation of the programs—giving him a direct hand in the language education of a generation of American scholars of India.

Van Olphen has taught and overseen many Hindi courses while at UT. He continues to oversee Beginning and Intermediate Hindi language courses. He has taught courses in Advanced Hindi; the Hindi Short Story; the Hindi Novel; Language in Society in Asia; as well as many other courses where the students are exposed to a variety of Hindi genres.

Van Olphen serves as Director of the new Hindi and Urdu Flagship Program.
It is a pleasure to announce that RUPERT SNELL, Emeritus Reader in Hindi at the University of London, joined the Department of Asian Studies in fall 2006. Snell was the recipient of the prestigious Sir George Grierson Hindi Sevi Sammaan Award given by the President of India in 1997 in recognition of his services to the Hindi language. Snell, who is known worldwide for his text Teach Yourself Hindi, teaches Hindi language at all levels. He has produced several other instructional texts with audio accompaniment and readers for the Hodder & Stoughton “Teach Yourself” series.

In addition to creating Hindi educational materials, Snell’s research interests focus on 16th and 17th century Braj Bhasa poetry, particularly on how distinctiveness of voice is achieved by individual poets, and in the practice of translation from Hindi to English. Snell published The Eighty-Four Hymns of Hita Harivamsa, which is an anthology of 16th century Braj Bhasa devotional hymns attributed to Hita Harivam. Another book that has received much acclaim is Snell’s translation of In the Afternoon of Time: An Autobiography, the autobiography of the 20th century Hindi poet, Harivansh Rai Bachchan. Snell has also edited several texts, including According to Tradition: Hagiographical Writing in India and Classics of Modern South Asian Literature. His literary and linguistic interests converged when he taught a course titled “Medieval Literature of Northern India.”

Snell works as an associate director of the new Hindi and Urdu Flagship Program.

AKBAR HYDER, beloved among colleagues, staff, and students alike, has been a faculty member in the Asian Studies Department since 2000. His dynamic approach to teaching has captivated students throughout the years. Hyder has been the coordinator for the Urdu program since his arrival at UT. Hyder’s language courses are oriented around particular themes such as “Female Voices in Urdu Literature” and “Progressive Urdu Literature.” He has also created unique content courses ranging from Afghanistan to Sufism.

Hyder’s research interests center on Indo-Muslim culture, history, literature, and language. His book, Reliving Karbala: Martyrdom in South Asian Memory, underscores the complexity that religious symbols carry in varying contexts. Karbala is the site in Iraq where the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson, Husain, and other followers were massacred at the hands of the caliph Yazid in 680 CE. Hyder reveals multiple, and often conflicting interpretations of this story, and he investigates the varying ways in which the story is used for personal and communal identity in South Asia. His second book, Aïye Urdu Parhen: Let’s Study Urdu, An Introductory Urdu Textbook (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), was co-authored with Ali Asani, Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard. This textbook for beginning Urdu students has already received acclaimed as an effective and authoritative tool for teaching Urdu.

Hyder serves as an associate director of the new Hindi and Urdu Flagship Program.
THE CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES, THE South Asia Institute, the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, and the Center for European Studies, the Religious Studies and College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Austin collaborated with the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World to organize an international conference on Contemporary Islamic Movements: Ideology, Aesthetics, Politics (February 16-17, 2006).

The conference sought to explore Islamic thought, politics, and social life through an interdisciplinary approach. The representation of Muslim life and Islam in public and private forums leaves much to be desired in terms of its depiction of the complexity of Muslim experiences and practices across the globe. By assembling scholars who have first hand knowledge of Muslim societies and of Islam, the conference addressed and engaged with these representational themes. The presenters had conducted scholarly investigations in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, Europe and Africa and spoke on Islamist movements, theological debates, Muslim aesthetics, gender categories and politics and on Muslims living as demographic minorities, all extremely pertinent issues in the contemporary moment. The endeavor was to bring forward a comprehensive and broad understanding of the variety of ways Muslims lead and experience social life and practice their religion over a range of geographical spaces and political circumstances.

The conference got off to a rousing and somewhat controversial start with the presentation by keynote speaker Reza Aslan, discussing his celebrated book No god but God. He began by speculating that the rumors of bin Laden’s death were most likely greatly exaggerated, and suggesting that its still not too early to speculate how he will be remembered 100 years from now, as a murderous criminal and character in the “Islamic Reformation” or like Thomas Muenster and Martin Luther, Christian Reformation radicals. Aslan used the term Reformation deliberately to emphasize that the current bloodshed and violence are 1) not “a clash of civilizations” but rather an “internal civil war in Islam”; and 2) that these current conflicts are questions all religions grapple with while confronting modernity. The Christian Reformation itself was a “bloody” argument, Aslan argued, that raged for over a century and centered on the same question of who defines faith, the institution or individual. Aslan’s propost that the current friction in Islam is a more complicated version of the same process. The audience did not seem to totally agree with Aslan’s postulations as many historically based questions were put forward by the audience, forcing him to reconsider some of his more generalized arguments.

The subsequent day and half were taken up by a series of panels. The first, Pushing Boundaries: Gendered Lives in Muslim Context, sought to explore the multiple ways gender and religious practice intersect in diverse Muslim societies. In his paper, Scott Kugle showed how groups of believing Muslim homosexual and transgender populations in South Africa struggle to balance their faith with their participation in the politics of rights and sexual freedoms. Another panelist, Lara Deeb, provided an ethnographic investigation of women activists in the Shi’i politics of Lebanon. Finally, Schirin Moazami presented a critical piece on Muslim feminist intellectuals in Europe. The panel on Muslim Aesthetics, Popular Politics, had papers by Moustafa Bayoumi, who spoke on Iraqi immigrants and their everyday life in Lebanon. This was followed by Iftikhar Dadi’s exposition on the contemporary ways in which the Mughal Miniature is used in the art of contemporary Pakistan and by Asef Bayat’s sociological investigation of the question of whether Islam allows for fun or not.

The next day the first panel was Jihadis in Action: Social Movement Actors, Anarchists or anti-Globalization Activists. The three speakers explored the multiple ways in which contemporary Jihadis need to be understood in relation to their particular histories and social milieu. One panelist (Devji), borrowing from his recent book, argued that Jihadis should be looked at in terms of globalized social movements, such as the environmental movement.

(continued on p. 23)
ON JANUARY 20-22, 2006, THE INSTITUTE HOSTED a workshop on the grammatical basis of teaching Hindi and Urdu. The workshop, conducted mostly in Hindi, enabled creative South Asian language teachers to meet and discuss various aspects of their teaching techniques, as well as to plan for future workshops. After the introductory presentation by Herman van Olphen, organizer of the workshop, Gabriela Ilieva (NYU) and Rakesh Ranjan (Emory University) described the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) project and efforts to develop computerized placement exams for Hindi. Surendra and Vijay Gambhir (University of Pennsylvania) further discussed the grammatical basis of teaching Hindi. Amy Bard (University of Florida) and Gautami Shah (Rice University) presented the role of literature and film songs in Hindi teaching. Jishnu Shankar (Syracuse University) discussed performance-based teaching. After Rupert Snell’s presentation of his own Hindi teaching materials, the conference closed with a discussion encouraging other gatherings that focus on the pedagogy of South Asian languages through the revitalization of the South Asian Language Teachers Association (SALTA). Since the workshop several participants have succeeded in establishing a framework for a new SALTA.
SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine (IASTAM), the South Asia Institute, and the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Austin, this four-day congress was organized locally and convened by Martha Ann Selby, Associate Professor, Department of Asian Studies. Held on campus at the Texas Union in central Austin, the congress featured 19 organized panel sessions and workshops, with a total of 65 scholars and practitioners presenting their work. Participants came from all over the globe, representing India, Japan, China, Bhutan, Mongolia, the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Germany, Belgium, and the United States. The presentations were drawn from various disciplines of study, including the history of medicine and medical anthropology, and from specific areas of practice, including Ayurveda, acupuncture, Unani, and other Asian medical forms. The Congress was officially inaugurated by James Brow, Director of the South Asia Institute, followed by opening addresses delivered by outgoing IASTAM president Waltraud Ernst, University of Southampton, and by outgoing IASTAM Secretary General Vivienne Lo, Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London. Dorji Wangchuk, Director, Institute of Traditional Medicine Services, Thimpu, Bhutan, was welcomed as Chief Guest and introduced to the congress participants by Martha Ann Selby.

The theme of the Sixth Congress was “Sense and Substance in Traditional Asian Medicine,” and many of the papers were devoted to the senses (such as vision, hearing, and the sense of touch in different contexts of treatment) and their functions in medicine and in different medical contexts (such as prognosis and diagnosis), and sensory perception. Panelists also addressed issues of how sense is made out of various sets of symptoms in practice, and how contemporary adaptations “make sense” of older Asian medical paradigms. Highlights of the sessions included panels devoted to Chinese foodways and medicine, Toyohari acupuncture techniques and their applications in the treatment of infertility and in diagnostic contexts, and sense and substance in Ayurvedic clinical contexts.

Paul U. Unschuld, Institut für Geschichte der Medizin, University of Munich, delivered the plenary address, titled “The Limits of Individualism and the Advantage of Modular Therapy: Concepts of Illness in Chinese Medicine.” Charlotte Furth of the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, spoke directly on the theme of the conference in her keynote address, simply titled “Sense and Substance in Traditional Asian Medicine.” Both addresses were well attended, and the audience included many members of the University of Texas faculty, staff, and the student body, as well as clinicians and students representing schools of acupuncture in Austin and members of the local community.

Charles Leslie, Indiana University–Bloomington, presided over the A. L. Basham award ceremony. The A. L. Basham medal is awarded to one or two outstanding scholars in the study of traditional Asian medicine every five years, and the 2006 Basham awardees were Zheng Jinsheng of the Research Institute for the History of Medicine and Medical Literature, China Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Beijing, and Narendra S. Bhatt, Ayurvedic practitioner and CEO, Zandu Pharmaceuticals, Mumbai.

New IASTAM officers were elected during the course of the congress. Volker Scheid, University of Westminster, was elected president, Judith Farquhar, The University of Chicago, was elected Vice President, and Marta Hansen, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, was elected Secretary General (she will begin her service in the 2007 calendar year). Joseph S. Alter, University of Pittsburgh, will remain in his post as IASTAM treasurer for a second term.

Plans are underway for the Seventh International Congress, to be held in 2009. Possible venues under discussion include Thimpu, Bhutan, Kathmandu, Nepal, and Toronto, Canada.

Congress details can be accessed at http://www.iastam.org.

MARTHA SELBY
THE THIRD ASIAN STUDIES GRADUATE Conference commenced on Friday, October 13, 2006 and extended through Saturday evening. While the superstitious would agree that the opening date was inauspicious, the results proved otherwise—the conference was a great success! Graduate students specializing in a variety of disciplines journeyed to Austin to present their original research in this academic forum. While most of the participants hailed from universities around the United States, there were a few graduate students who traveled from England and Canada. This was the first graduate conference that attracted students from such great distances eager to participate in this exchange of ideas.

One of the more difficult aspects of organizing a conference is culling through the submissions. There were many excellent proposals, but unfortunately not all of them could be accepted. The group of twenty scholars who were chosen, however, proved to be an outstanding lot. Presenters included graduate students from The University of California at Berkeley, University of Washington, Tufts University, The University of Michigan, University of Kansas, Boston University, University of California at Santa Barbara, The University of London, The London School of Economics, University of Toronto, as well as many students from The University of Texas.

Organizers of the conference arranged the six panels thematically. Since Asian Studies is of necessity an interdisciplinary field covering all geographical areas of Asia, this was not always an easy task. One interesting result was that the scholars were forced to think about their topics in a larger framework and confront cultural convergences and divergences as they pertain to scholastic approaches to different regions of Asia. The panel on “Missionaries,” for example, brought together scholars of India and Korea who were working on topics that crossed temporal boundaries, ranging from the medieval period through to the present day. Much of this panel focused on occidental perceptions of Asia and how these (mis)understandings contributed to identity formation and nation building. Scholars on the panel concerning “Patronage and the Arts” spoke on topics ranging from an 18th century Korean painter who, as a realist, was one of the first to paint images of common people as a means of political commentary to the political and ideological undercurrents that gave rise to regional cinema in modern-day India. While the geographical and chronological setting of the research varied greatly in the panels, the fruitful outcome was a compelling discourse on methodology, translation, and interpretation.

The thematic panels also placed scholars of different disciplines side-by-side. This underscored the methodological
diversity present in the study of Asia. Members of the final panel, “Gender and Equality: Representations of Women in Asia,” for instance, had scholars from anthropology, women’s studies, and performance studies; each focused on a different region of Asia: Thailand, Indian communities in diaspora, and Japan. Each scholar had a specific concern, such as identity construction of the modern woman, images of the Thai rice goddess, and cultural understandings of suicide as portrayed in Japanese Kabuki plays.

The two keynote speakers only underscored the diversity of academic approaches on display at the conference. On Friday afternoon, Akbar Hyder (Department of Asian Studies, The University of Texas at Austin) introduced Tony Stewart, Professor of Religion at North Carolina State. Prof. Stewart delivered a fascinating exegetical paper titled “Heaven on Earth: Religious Nostalgia in Hindu Bengal” on the relationship between ritual, mandalas, and the nature of reality in a late medieval Gaudiyā Vaishnava text. In emphasizing the different methodological approaches, this paper dovetailed nicely with the second keynote address on Saturday. Following an introduction by John Traphagan (Department of Asian Studies, The University of Texas) Susan Orpett Long, Department of Anthropology at John Carroll University, delivered a paper titled “Final Days: End of Life Decisions in Japan.” Professor Long’s approach was primarily ethnographic in nature, as she interviewed Japanese citizens who were approaching death. Her questions, while sensitive, were very poignant, and her talk received an active participation from the audience. The conference ended with Matt Sayers, a UT Asian Studies Ph.D. candidate and an organizer of the conference, giving a summation of the two days and drawing connections between the panels and methodologies. The conference closed with a hearty round of applause for all the participants.

One core element of the conference was to provide a forum for community building. UT graduate students hosted many of the visiting scholars for the weekend. This hospitality allowed intellectual bonds to be forged and friendships to be made. The finale of the two days was the Department of Asian Studies fall party at Dr. Patrick Olivelle’s house. All visiting scholars were invited following the close of the conference. It was a relaxing venue for recapping the conference and following up on unanswered questions. The next Graduate Student Conference will be held in fall 2008.
HEMISPHERES, THE INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH consortium at the University of Texas at Austin, offers a broad educational program to increase knowledge and understanding of Latin America; the Middle East; Russia, East Europe, and Eurasia; and South Asia. Using the resources of one of the nation’s largest research institutions, we work with educators to address critical needs and to supplement existing knowledge of the world around us. Over the past decade, Hemispheres has worked to strengthen the relationship between the university and K–12 teachers by engaging in an ongoing dialogue with more than 2,000 educators around Texas and beyond.

Hemispheres continued to enhance its standing as a premier Title VI consortium. In April of 2006, we presented as a panel at WIOC, the Wisconsin International Outreach Consortium Conference. Our presentation on Teacher Training highlighted our work for the past two years on developing a series of curriculum units. Our hour and a half long multi-media lecture focused on three areas: building credibility with educators; meeting curriculum needs; and presenting, refining, and completing curriculum units. We fielded many queries from the audience of more than 55 outreach coordinators. In fall 2006, Hemispheres also presented curriculum units and promoted its resources at the annual conferences of The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) in Lake Tahoe, The Texas Council for Social Studies (TCSS) in Ft. Worth, and the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) in Washington D.C.

Our 2006 Summer Institute, 21st Century Challenges in the Developing World confirmed the ever-growing popularity of Hemispheres. During the past two years we have expanded our participant limit to 40 and last summer’s offering filled two months ahead of the event. The workshop focused on the varied influences—historical, geographical, political, economic, and cultural—that shape current affairs in the developing world. Planning in underway for the 2007 Summer Institute, Restoring Women to World Studies. The workshop is designed to address state standards and objectives, including the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), for social studies that deal with topics related to women in citizenship, culture, and history.

Of final note is the number of schools and school districts Hemispheres has visited during the past year and the engagements we have on the calendar for district in-service days scheduled for the spring 2007 school year. In spring 2007 we visited Brownsville Independent School District (ISD), San Benito ISD, and Pearland ISD. We also are set to conduct training at a Region III conference in Victoria and Region XI conference in Ft. Worth.

IN THE FALL 2005, THREE OF OUR FACULTY, Joel Brereton, Akbar Hyder, and Janice Leoshko were invited to participate in a course of study offered by UT’s Odyssey a noncredit, personal enrichment program featuring short courses taught UT scholars and leading professionals. Enrollment is open to all in the community. As part of the course Asia: Global Crossroads, Akbar Hyder, Assistant Professor of Asian Studies & Islamic Studies, presented the talk “Diversity in Muslim Societies of South Asia” in September. In October Joel Brereton, Associate Professor of Asian Studies, presented “How an Image Means: The Representation of the Gods of Classical India” and in November Janice Leoshko Associate Professor Art and Art History and Asian Studies, presented “Constructing the Romance of the Taj Mahal.”

In 2005-2006, AIM: South Asia also conducted two professional development workshops for college educators and three workshops for teachers from school districts in the Austin area. In the fall, Akbar Hyder and Sarah Green, Associate Director of the South Asia Institute and Ph.D. candidate in Asian Studies were invited by Tulsa Community College to conduct a workshop, Learning about Islam: Realities and Perceptions, in Tulsa Oklahoma to an audience of over 600 people from academia and the general public. In spring 2006, the South Asia Institute conducted a two-day workshop, Teaching India Through Film, for 16 college educators that came from all parts of the United States. This workshop had the potential to impact over 1440 students nation-wide. The participants were scholars in a variety of fields: South Asian Studies, Film, Ethnic Studies, Humanities,
and Religious Studies just to name a few. It was very exciting for us to find that over half the participants were attending a South Asia Institute workshop for the first time.

In addition to our post-secondary workshops, AIM: South Asia continues to promote the study of South Asia in our local community by offering K-12 educator workshops. This year three workshops were offered: In September Buddhism in South Asia Past and Present and in November we conducted Islam in India. These workshop topics reflect the desire of teachers to learn more about world religions, as often requested in our evaluations. In the spring, we held another very popular workshop, The Significance of Buddhism in Rudyard Kipling’s Kim, that drew teachers from social studies and language arts backgrounds. Many of these teachers were new to the South Asia Institute and were attracted by the cross-disciplinary nature of this workshop. In fall 2006, we conducted an additional K-12 workshop on Photography as Evidence, which examined nineteenth-century photographic techniques and photographs of South Asia. The workshop is described in detail below.

**AIM Workshop: Photography as Evidence**

THE SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE CONTINUED ITS AIM: South Asia outreach initiative with a workshop entitled Photography as Evidence: Interpreting South Asian Photographs, which took place on September 16, 2006. Fourteen high school teachers from Austin and Round Rock ISDs attended the training session. The workshop examined the use of photographs as historical evidence, focusing specifically on nineteenth-century photographs and photographic albums of India. Participants were challenged to consider their assumptions about how photographs work to create truths about the world and their use as primary source material. University of Texas faculty members Michael Charlesworth (Associate Professor of Art and Art History), and David Coleman (Curator of Photography at the Harry Ransom Research Center) introduced and discussed nineteenth-century photographic processes, techniques and methods used to manipulate images. Janice Leoshko, Associate Professor of Art and Art History and Asian Studies, continued the discussion with her presentation on how historical photographs reveal insights into imperial-colonial relationships on the Indian subcontinent.

The workshop ended with a trip to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas for a hands-on examination of original colonial-era photographs housed in the Gernsheim Collection. The Gernsheim Collection holds the third largest collection of nineteenth-century photographs in the nation. Participants viewed many of the original photographs included in the morning’s presentations, as well as a group of nineteenth-century photographs taken in India and still contained in an original album that was carefully assembled in the nineteenth-century. Participants also view first-hand the original work of Felice Beato, who photographed views of buildings and villages, primarily in Lucknow, but also in Calcutta and Delhi, following the events of the 1857 War of Independence (often referred to as the Sepoy Rebellion).
Fulbright Teaching Assistants

AS PART OF THE FULBRIGHT LANGUAGE TEACHING ASSISTANT (FLTA) PROGRAM, THE INSTITUTE welcomed three new teaching assistants in August. Zaheer Iqbal, Keerti Nair, and Zahida Sharmin are native speakers of Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali respectively. Under the direction of faculty mentors, they assist with teaching various Department of Asian Studies language courses. Read their personal introductions below...

**ZAHEER IQBAL**

I belong to Peshawar, Pakistan where I earned an MA in English at the University of Peshawar in 2001. In 2000, I started my career as an instructor of English at Khyber Institute of Modern English Language. In 2004 I was appointed as lecturer in English at City University Peshawar Pakistan. In 2005 I was offered the position of lecturer in English at the prestigious University of Peshawar. I am the founder and still an active member of an NGO called Forum for Development which works on health, education and cultural issues. Research on foreign language pedagogy and comparative literature are my main interests. I write poetry in Pushto, Urdu and English and write short stories in English.

**KEERTI NAIR**

I hail from Trivandrum, Kerala. I did my Masters and M.Phil in English Literature from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and my area of special interest is postcolonial literature. I have written for The Literary Criterion, an Indian journal and worked as an editor with Cepha Imaging, a publishing house based in Bangalore, India. I love reading and traveling. Coming to UT Austin has been a dream come true for me. If you want to mix work with fun and meet interesting people, nothing better than being an FLTA at the South Asia Institute. This place has given me loads of fun-filled memories to carry back home...what's the weight limit???

**ZAHIDA SHARMIN**

I am an FLTA from Dhaka, Bangladesh. I completed my MA in English Literature from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2003 and was a faculty member in the Department of English at East West University in my country. Teaching Bengali at UT is a novel experience for me as I had never taught my first language before but I am enjoying it. When I came to Austin, I was told that it was a city to experience, not just a place to live in and after six months, I can honestly say that Austin has lived up to my expectations. I am glad that I am here.
In fall 2006, Oxford University Press released Asceticism and Its Critics: Historical Accounts and Comparative Perspectives by OLIVER FREIBERGER, Assistant Professor of Asian Studies. The book grew out of an international conference he organized here at UT in 2003 when he was a Harrington Faculty Fellow. The chapters (five on Asia, five on Europe) present individual cases of critical attitudes towards asceticism. The book analyzes this criticism in a comparative perspective.

KATHRYN HANSEN, Professor of Asian Studies, received a UT Faculty Research Award and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship in 2005-06, to work on her research project on autobiographies of actors from 20th-century South Asia. During summer 2006, she spoke on her research at a number of European centers for South Asian Studies, including Heidelberg, Leipzig, Oslo and Uppsala. She was invited by the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations to present several lectures in Singapore and also spoke at JNU (Delhi) and University of Pune on the same trip. In December, her article, “Ritual Enactments in a Hindi ‘Mythological’: Betab’s Mahabharat in Parsi Theatre,” was published in the Economic and Political Weekly of India.


In 2006, Yale University Press published A’iye Urdu Parhen: Let’s Study Urdu, An Introductory Urdu Textbook by AKBAR HYDER, Assistant Professor of Asian Studies and Islamic Studies. The volume was co-authored with Ali Asani, Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard. This textbook for beginning Urdu students has already received acclaim as an effective and authoritative tool for teaching Urdu.

The Syntax of Negation and the Licensing of Negative Polarity Items in Hindi authored by RAJESH KUMAR, Lecturer in Asian Studies, came out with Routledge in 2006. His book studies the syntax of negative polarity items and their interaction with sentential negatives in Hindi. It outlines the clause structure of Hindi and locates the syntactic position of sentential negatives as well as constituent negatives within the structure.

The institute also welcomed MADHAVI MALLAPRAGADA in the fall of 2006. She joined the Radio-TV-Film faculty as an Assistant Professor and comes to UT from Indiana University, where she served as Assistant Professor in the Department of Communications and Culture. Her research interests include new media and cultural studies, diaspora and transnational studies, postcolonial studies, television criticism and media minorities. She obtained her doctorate degree from the University of Wisconsin in 2003 and has numerous articles, book chapters, and presentations to her name.

GAIL MINAULT, Professor of History and Asian Studies, is currently in India on a short term research grant from the American Institute of Indian Studies to conduct research on an intellectual history of the city of Delhi in the early nineteenth century.

PATRICK OLIVELLE, Mossiker Professor and Chair of the Department of Asian Studies will be a Visiting Scholar at Wolfson College of Oxford University in Fall 2007. His book Asectics and Brahmins: Studies in Ideologies and Institutions is due to come out in 2007 with the University of Florence Press and Munshiram Manoharlal in Delhi.

MAGGIE RONKIN joined the Department of Asian Studies as a Lecturer in Spring 2007. She has co-edited three volumes on sociolinguistics and is completing her dissertation thesis from Georgetown University in sociolinguistics and anthropology on the discursive construction of identity in a Pakistani domestic worker’s narratives. Her work has been supported by Georgetown University, the National Science Foundation/Linguistic Society of America, and the American Institute of Pakistan Studies.

In 2007, Permanent Black in Delhi will release, Gandhi Is Gone: What Now? A Discussion at Sevagram Six Weeks after 30 January 1948, featuring the translation work of RUPERT SNELL, Associate Professor of Asian Studies. The book is a transcript of a previously unpublished colloquium held at Sevagram shortly after Gandhi’s assassination. The discussions, featuring Jawaharlal Nehru, Vinoba Bhave, Maulana Azad, Acharya Kripalani and many others, were in Hindi, and are here presented in the original (edited by Gopal Gandhi) and as an English translation (by Gopal Gandhi and Rupert Snell).
The South Asia Institute would like to congratulate **George Sudarshan**, Professor in Physics, on his recent honors. In January 2007, he received India’s second highest civilian honor, the Padma Vibhushan, granted by the President of India. In the same month, The University of Texas awarded him the Presidential Medal, after already receiving The University of Texas Presidential Citation in October 2006. Sudarshan also has the honor of being nominated six times for the prestigious Nobel Prize in Physics in recognition of his world-renowned work in the field of physics, most notably for his contributions to quantum mechanics and particle theory. He authored several books and more than 500 articles, introducing, among other theories, the V-A theory of Weak Interactions and the Quantum Theory of Optical Coherence, which predicted the existence of tachyons, particles traveling faster than light, contrary to established wisdom. Colleagues describe his work as not only innovative, but also succinct and elegant.

**Cynthia Talbot**, Associate Professor of History and Asian Studies, was awarded fellowships from the Institute for Advanced Study and the National Humanities Center for the 2007-2008 academic year. She also received a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship for 2008-2009. Her project “Recasting the Medieval Indian Past: Memories of a Hindu Martial Hero” examines historical traditions relating to Prithviraj Cauhan, the late twelfth-century king defeated in battle by Muhammad Ghori, with particular emphasis on the Prithviraj Raso epic.

**Patricia A. Wilson**, Professor of Community and Regional Planning, received a Hogg Grant for her comparative study of Resilient Communities in US, Peru, and India. Her co-authored book with Varun Vidyarthi Development from Within: Facilitating Collective Reflection for Sustainable Change is due out this summer, 2007.

The South Asia Institute welcomes **Madhavan R. Unnithan** who joined the Department of Asian Studies as a Lecturer in Malayalam in Fall 2006. He earned his Ph.D. in Malayalam Literature from the University of Madras. Unnithan comes to UT from the L.B.S. National Academy of Administration where he worked as an instructor of Malayalam and Kannada.

**Indian Administrator Exchange Continues**

The institute is now in its fourth year of sponsoring an exchange program with the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie, India. In February 2006, two Senior Deputy Directors at the LBSNAA, Rajiv and Vasudha Mishra, came to the University of Texas, and Professor Herman van Olphen went to the LBSNAA. At the LBSNAA, van Olphen was attached to the Language Section where he taught Hindi to probationers from South India, gave presentations on South Asian language teaching and observed classes in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Kannada and Malayalam; since the probationers may be stationed as ICS officers anywhere in India, most of the official languages of India are taught at the Academy. In October 2006, LBSNAA Senior Deputy Director TK Manoj Kumar came to the University of Texas. Kalpana Dube, also a Senior Deputy Director at LBSNAA, arrived in January 2007. Academy Deputy Director, Rajiv Mishra, with Herman Van Olphen in Mussoorie.
This spring I spent seven weeks in Renu Village, an agricultural community in northeastern Bihar, India. The village is named after its most famous resident, the Hindi writer Phanishwarnath Renu (1921-1977), whose literature is filled with characters taken from the Bihar countryside. They speak the local language, sing the local songs, and face the same problems plaguing the area today.

Dr. Kathryn Hansen introduced me to Renu’s works in her Hindi course at UT and told of meeting him many years ago. He sounded like quite a character himself, so I decided to read his novel Maila Anchal while at the American Institute of Indian Studies Hindi Language Program in Jaipur last fall. Nothing I have read has shed so much light on my research in villages in eastern Uttar Pradesh. I had to see Renu’s homeland for myself. Thanks to the help of people I met on the road, I found my way without incident—despite warnings from friends in Jaipur about the dangers of traveling to Bihar unaccompanied and only fuzzy knowledge of the village’s location taken from Renu’s fiction.

The author’s family welcomed me into their home. His wife, one of his daughters, his sister, his three sons, and several grandchildren live in the village. I spent time interviewing them and other village residents. As each day passed, I felt the boundaries between fiction and reality slip away. Renu’s characters are based on actual residents of Purnia and surrounding districts. I met some who are still alive today.

It’s not hard to imagine Parameswar as a character in a novel. He is known throughout northeastern Bihar as “Parameswar The Thief,” so at first I had to sneak to his house at night lest people know where I was going. But by my fifth visit everyone knew and loved the digital pictures of us sitting side by side. Parameswar was two years younger than Renu and considered himself Renu’s student—but not in literature. They fought together in the 1942 movement against the British, planning attacks and raids that would loosen the British hold on India. He described Renu’s intention to set fire to the Simraha railway station. “But that is our own station,” Parameswar argued, successfully convincing him to abandon the plan. What a change from Renu’s childhood dream.

He writes of boyhood fantasies of being a Simraha ticket collector.

Parameswar also told the story of Renu’s second marriage to Padma Ji. Her father insisted, “This wedding will not happen!” Renu’s father said, “Yes it will!” Parameswar and fifteen other men grabbed their rifles, took Renu to her house, and the wedding “took place.” They weren’t served food, as required by custom, but came back with Padma Ji, who still lives in the village today. “I’ve never heard this story about my parents,” Renu’s youngest son told me. “It’s like a fairy-tale.”

My training has been in folklore and ethnomusicology, so I arrived wondering if the songs in Renu’s writing were still performed in the village. I recorded many genres, including devotional bhajan singing, women’s wedding songs, songs of Holi, rice-planting songs (“Songs of the Twelve Months”), and Vidyapati, a dramatic transformation of the texts of a fourteenth-century Bihari poet. When I talked with Ram Prashad, the head singer of Vidyapati, he told me that Renu was his singing teacher. “Renu?”

(continued on p. 23)
Graduate Research Trip to Pune Focused on Archival and Manuscript Research

In May 2006, Department of Asian Studies Chair and Alma Cowden Madden Centennial Professor Patrick Olivelle led a group of eight graduate students on a trip to Pune, India. Over the course of ten days Olivelle instructed them in the techniques of conducting research using palm-leaf and paper manuscripts of Sanskrit texts. The students in attendance, representing a variety of different research interests, were Master’s students Justin Fifield and Nikola Rajic and Ph.D. students David Brick, Neil Dalal, Peter Knapczyik, Elliot McCarter, Mark McClish, and Matthew Sayers.

Pune has long been a center of learning in India and is famous for the quality and breadth of its educational institutions, including many centers for the study of Sanskrit and other traditional South Asian disciplines. As such, it is the location of an office of the American Institute of Indian Studies as well as the home of several of South Asia’s most extensive manuscript archives, including the Anand Asrama, the Vaidika Samsodana Mandala, the Bharatiya Itihasa Mandala, the Deccan College, and the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. At each of these institutions, Olivelle and the students were granted generous access to their respective holdings.

Until the advent of modern printing techniques, texts in South Asia were transmitted either orally or via hand-written copies made on palm-leaf or paper. As such, investigation of these manuscripts is the backbone of research into the Sanskrit language and its texts. This, however, can be very difficult work for a variety of reasons. First, as these manuscripts come from all across the subcontinent they utilize a number of different scripts and an array of varying orthographic conventions. Simply to read any given manuscript requires the development of a number of specific skills and areas of expertise. Second, in the process of copying and recopying, any number of emendations, interpolations, and lacunae will invariably be introduced. Careful and laborious comparison between many manuscripts, then, is essential to identify such transformations and placing the variants of each manuscript in relation to all the other manuscript versions of a given text.

Olivelle designed the trip to train...
the graduate students to overcome each of these attendant difficulties. In addition to taking the students to some of the largest and most important archives and introducing them to the scholars who curate the holdings, Olivelle guided the students through the process of comparing various manuscripts of a single text (a process known as collation) and, based on that comparison, producing a version of the text that seeks to reconstruct the oldest recoverable version of the text by putting the variants from each manuscript in logical relation to one another. A version of a text that takes into account the various readings of a sufficiently representative number of manuscripts is known as a “critical edition.” Critical editions are fundamental to the study of Sanskrit and Sanskrit literature because they provide scholars with versions of Sanskrit texts that better reflect the breadth of the actual manuscript evidence found in South Asia.

In addition to receiving world-class instruction in manuscript research from one of its foremost experts, the students were also exposed to a number of important projects underway in Pune, including the massive Deccan Sanskrit Dictionary (Deccan College) and the testing of critical edition software (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institution). Several tours of important historical sites in the area were organized for the students as well. Notable among these excursions was a truly magnificent tour of the rock-cut caves and temples of Ellora and Ajanta as well as the fortress of Dalautabad. These visits enhanced the connection of the students to their historical subjects by enlivening their appreciation and understanding of the cultures and peoples of South Asia’s past.

The consensus opinion among the students was that the experience was without parallel and was certain to have a great impact on the direction and quality of their individual research. Through this trip, Olivelle created a unique environment for the young scholars to learn the techniques of manuscript research, guided by his prodigious expertise and enthusiasm, under the very same conditions wherein they are likely to undertake this difficult work in the future.

MARK MCCLISH

Graduate Students Receive Funding for Study and Research of South Asia

This year many of the graduate students affiliated with South Asia Institute received scholarships and fellowships. Ten graduate students received the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for the 2006-2007 academic year: Cary Curtiss (Asian Studies), Justin Fifield (Asian Studies), Peter Knapczyk (Asian Studies), Ann Kolbeck (Asian Studies), Dana Kornberg (Asian Studies), Daniel Majchrowicz (Asian Studies), Elliott McCarter (Asian Studies), Sanvita Sample (Asian Studies/Public Affairs), Nathan Tabor (Asian Studies) and Jolie Wood (Government). The FLAS Fellowship is an award given by the U.S. Department of Education for the study of a modern Indian language. The University of Texas currently offers instruction in Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, and Urdu. The Department of Education also offers a Summer FLAS for language study that may be used for study abroad. David Brick (Asian Studies) received the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Junior Research Fellowship, which provides funding to conduct dissertation research in India. Mathangi Krishnamurty (Anthropology) received the American Association of University Women International Dissertation Fellowship and the National Science Foundation Dissertation Enhancement Grant for her fieldwork in India. Tanvi Madan (LBJ School/Public Affairs) received the Donald D. Harrington Doctoral Fellowship from the University of Texas; and Reena Patel received the New Professional Scholarship awarded by the Textile Society of America. Amber Abbas was awarded a Churchill Scholarship from the British Studies Program at the University of Texas; and Reena Patel received a Meyerson Travel grant.

Many students also acquired funding for dissertation research and study abroad. David Brick (Asian Studies) received the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Junior Research Fellowship, which provides funding to conduct dissertation research in India. Mathangi Krishnamurty (Anthropology) received the American Association of University Women International Dissertation Fellowship and the National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Enhancement Grant for her fieldwork in India. Tanvi Madan (LBJ School/Public Affairs) received the Donald D. Harrington Doctoral Fellowship from the University of Texas; and Reena Patel received a Meyerson Travel grant. Many students also acquired funding for dissertation research and study abroad. David Brick (Asian Studies) received the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Junior Research Fellowship, which provides funding to conduct dissertation research in India. Mathangi Krishnamurty (Anthropology) received the American Association of University Women International Dissertation Fellowship and the National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Enhancement Grant for her fieldwork in India. Tanvi Madan (LBJ School/Public Affairs) received the Donald D. Harrington Doctoral Fellowship from the University of Texas; and Reena Patel received a Meyerson Travel grant.
is currently conducting research in Pakistan; and Wood is conducting research in India.

**UT Graduate Students Present Research at Conferences**

Many University of Texas graduate students focusing on South Asia participated in local, national, and international conferences during the course of this last academic year. Raja Swamy (Anthropology) presented a paper titled “Hindutva, California Textbooks, and ‘Model Minority’ Dreams” at the Abriendo Brecha IV: Activist Scholarship Conference that was hosted at the University of Texas. Reena Patel (Geography and Environment) will present “Working the Night Shift: Gender and the Global Economy” at the American Association of Geographers in San Francisco in April 2007. Kristen Rudsill (Asian Studies) presented papers titled “Performance of Culture, Performance of Self: the Perfect Tamil Brahmin Marriage” at the 22nd Annual South Asia Conference at the University of California at Berkeley; “Comedic Exclusions: Tamil Political Satire and Serious Indian Drama” at the 35th Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin, Madison; and she will present “Sabha Comedy: Content, Aesthetics, and Patronage” at the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Meeting in Boston in March 2007.

For the AAS, Rudsill organized and will chair the panel “Sabhas: Changing the Landscape of Chennai’s Music, Dance, and Drama.” Ian Woolford (Asian Studies) presented “Renu Village: Writing an Ethnography of North Indian Fiction” at the 35th Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies. M. Raisur Rahman (History) presented a paper titled “Mahatma and Maulana: Gandhi, Mohamed Ali, and the Minority Politics” in the all-India conference “Rethinking the National Legacy: Gandhi and the Freedom Movement,” which was hosted by Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi, India. Another graduate student to present a paper at an international conference was Anjum Khurshid (Public Affairs). Khurshid presented a paper titled “Public Policy Training and Civil Service Reform” at the 22nd Annual Conference of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics in Lahore, Pakistan.

**Graduate Student Publications**


**South Asia Institute Forms Student Advisory Committee**

Graduate students Amber Abbas (History), Martha Berry (Asian Studies), Shannon Sayers (Asian Studies) founded the South Asia Institute Student Advisory Committee (SAISAC) in fall 2006. The mission of this organization is to facilitate communication between the Institute and graduate and undergraduate students with an academic interest in South Asia. SAISAC will help bring interested students and relevant organizations into contact with the Institute, will represent student interests to the Institute, and will assist the Institute in making students aware of information, resources, and events related to South Asia. Rupert Snell has graciously volunteered to serve as the faculty advisor.

SAISAC seeks to balance representation of students studying South Asia from throughout the university. To this end, SAISAC has five officer positions: two elected graduate students from within Asian Studies, two elected graduate students from departments beyond Asian Studies, and a fifth appointed student who may be a Flagship or upper-division undergraduate student in Asian Studies or from a joint-degree program. The first round of elections will be held in September 2007. SAISAC officers will meet regularly with Institute administrators and staff to ensure that its mission and goals are being fulfilled.

The first official SAISAC event is a student reception on Monday, March 5, 2007 welcoming Itty Abraham, the Institute’s new Director. SAISAC expects to hold open meetings each semester to give students an opportunity to learn more about SAISAC and SAI, to meet the officers, and to raise and discuss any issues of interest to students. To learn more and to be added to the SAISAC mailing list and gain access to SAISAC’s Blackboard site, email Matt Sayers at <mrsayers@mail.utexas.edu>.
MICHAEL BEDNAR (Ph.D., Candidate, Department of History) accepted a tenure-track position as an Associate Professor of South Asian History at the University of Missouri at Columbia beginning in Fall 2007.

LAURA BRUECK (Ph.D., 2006, Asian Cultures and Languages) is a Freeman Postdoctoral Fellow in Asian Studies in the Comparative Literature Department at Hamilton College in upstate New York. For her dissertation, Rethinking Resistance: Constructing a Hindi Dalit Literature Identity in Contemporary India, Brueck won the George H. Mitchell Award for Excellence in Graduate Research and the American Association of University Women’s Dissertation Fellowship. Her dissertation focuses on contemporary Dalit literature from a broad range of Hindi-language media sources. Her work demonstrates the ways in which Dalit literature has matured beyond the initial outcry of an oppressed people finding their voice to a richly textured tapestry of short and long fiction, poetry, theater, autobiography, and literary criticism that challenges “traditional” Indian aesthetic codes. During the 2006-2007 academic year, Brueck is teaching courses titled “Living Indian Epics,” “Postcolonial Literature of South Asia,” and “Caste in Indian Society and Literature.”

ROBERT GOODDING (Ph.D., 2002, Department of Asian Studies) currently teaches as an adjunct in the Department of Religion at both St. Edwards University (Austin) and Southwestern University (Georgetown).

STEVEN LINDQUIST (Ph.D., 2005, Department of Asian Studies) has accepted a tenure-track position in the Department of Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University. He currently teaches Introduction to Eastern Religions and Introduction to the Hindu Tradition.

Alumni News

South Asia Seminar Series, Spring 2007
Modes of Narration in South Asian Histories and Religions

Feb 1, 2007
Zoe Sherinian, University of Oklahoma
“Transforming Social Identity in South India: the Reception and Re-creation of Musical Liberation Theology by Dalit Villagers”

Feb 8, 2007
Sharmila Rudrappa, University of Texas at Austin
“Braceros and Techno-Braceros: Mexican and Indian Guest Workers in the mid-and late 20th century United States”

Feb 15, 2007
Amrita Basu, Amherst College
“Unbounded Violence: When State, Party and Movement Collude in India”

Feb 22, 2007
Sheldon Pollock, Columbia University
“Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World”

March 1, 2007
Angana Chatterjee, Calif. Institute of Integral Studies
“Violent Gods: Hindu Nationalism in India’s Present”

March 8, 2007
Banu Subramaniam, Uni. of Massachusetts-Amherst
“Narrating Helical Stories: Genetics, Nation, and the Politics of Belonging”

March 29, 2007
Samira Sheikh, Institute of Ismaili Studies
“Religious Change and Political Institutions in Gujarat, c.1400-1550”

April 5, 2007
Bishnupriya Ghosh & Bhaskar Sarkar, UC Santa Barbara
“Nation & Globalization:Arudhati Roy & Cosmoplastics”

April 12, 2007
Beena Sarwar, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy
“Re-claiming Spaces: A Personal Political View of Media, Politics and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan”
account of cultural and nationalist state politics, issues of development, and disruptions of community in a Sri Lankan dry-zone village. Brow plans to retire from his teaching and research to his gardening in May 2007.

Among Brow’s many strengths as director were his consistent and gentle honesty, his steady guidance, and his ability to always create goodwill and find consensus when faced with divergent viewpoints. The even and compassionate tone he set at the Institute, made it a pleasure to work harder than we might otherwise have been capable. He will be missed by us all. We wish him well.

with South Asian expertise in disciplinary departments within the College of Liberal Arts and in professional schools.

I came to know Richard in the Fall of 1972, when we both entered Graduate School at the University of Pennsylvania. At that time, our concerns were not in building programs but in mastering the difficult Sanskrit language. Richard’s contributions in academic administration may tend to overshadow the strong research contributions he has made to his field of research. He is one of the leading scholars in the world on ancient Indian law and his contributions to the history of the legal tradition in India have been seminal.

It was as the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts from 1999 to 2006, however, that he made his greatest contributions to the University of Texas and to the South Asia Program. Richard recognized the geopolitical importance of South Asia long before India came into prominence as an economic power in the late 1990s. As Dean, he had the resources to implement his vision. Richard convinced Provost Sheldon Eckland-Olson and President Larry Falkner to make South Asia an institutional priority in international programs. This resulted in the creation of the South Asia Institute in 2003 and the strengthening of South Asia across the disciplines and schools.

Richard always thought about students first, both as a faculty member and as Dean. It is fitting, therefore, that as a parting gift the College of Liberal Arts established the Richard and Janis Lariviere Graduate Fellowship endowment in the South Asia Institute.

All of us in the South Asia Institute wish Richard and Jan the very best in their new home at the University of Kansas.

- PATRICK OLIVELLE

The next panel, Islam: “Traditional” or “Modern”, had papers by Abdulkader Tayob and Laura Adams and explored the role of Shariah and Muslim identity in different geographies. The final panel, State and Civil Actors: Islam in Diverse Spaces, discussed secular Muslim cultures that are trying to reclaim Islam, especially in Central Asia and Turkey.

The conference drew to a close with the remarks by Barbara Metcalf, Professor of South Asian history at the University of Michigan, who asked the question “what other Islamic movements got missed?” in the discussions. She also observed how the two days of deliberation seemed to coalesce around the nation-state and its boundaries, and this was in direct contrast to the constant discussion one hears in academia of trans-boundary issues linked to Islam. In her opinion, all papers sought to de-exoticize Islam and contextualize the research by placing their argument within the modern nation-state and in particular geopolitics and histories.

I said, pointing to the picture of the author hanging on the mud wall of the house. He seemed amused by my astonishment and answered all of my questions patiently. “Of course Renu was a singer.” “Of course Renu played the mirdang drum.” “Of course I sing songs Renu taught me.”

“You have come to a foreign land,” Ram Prashad explained. “In your country your wife waits in sorrow. Renu taught us this song: ‘Oh the month of Jeth is upon us, so flowers are blooming all around. I pick the blossoms and prepare a bed of flowers, but without my darling the bed is empty.’ These are your wife’s words.”

“I came here asking about Vidyapati, about ‘Songs of the Twelve Months.’” Renu’s oldest son said to me, “These songs are my father. This is the real Renu.” Could it be that the village song tradition is Renu’s true work, that has remained alive and will continue to thrive amidst the poverty and illiteracy of twenty-first century Bihar?

I can’t thank the people of Renu Village enough for their hospitality and for their help. Leaving was difficult, and we promised this was only a beginning. I left on the same train taken by Hargobind in Renu’s story “Samvadiya.” On his journey Hargobind is comforted by the song of a blind singer: “Don’t cry brother. This is the way of fate.” When a blind singer entered my train car, I pushed my way through the crowd intent on fulfilling a personal vow. I took out a large note and closed his right hand around it: “Take this, Surdas.”
THE SOUTH ASIA SEMINAR SERIES FOR FALL 2006 focused on the theme “Modes of Narration in South Asian Histories and Religions” and featured distinguished South Asian specialists from universities in the United States and abroad. The papers and ensuing discussions this fall were illuminating and provocative.

For this series, the South Asia Institute was excited to host scholars from Thailand and Sweden, as well as those from within the U.S., including several scholars from the University of Texas at Austin. The series commenced with Cynthia Talbot (Department of History, University of Texas) delivering a paper titled “Constructing a Glorious Past: James Tod and the Mewar Court.” Talbot’s paper focused on the ways in which Tod, a British officer, transmitted a glorified reinterpretation of the Mewar Rajput dynasty as a means to restore the Rajputs to their former glory, prior to the coming of the Marathas.

Sunil Sharma (Department of Modern Languages and Comparative Literatures, Boston University) presented a paper titled “Crossing Boundaries in Mughal Persian Literature.” Sharma spoke on the theme of mobility and movement in 16th and 17th century Persian literary genres. Anna Bigelow (Department of Religion & Philosophy, North Carolina State University) and Peter Skilling (Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand) presented papers on the partition in Muslim India and the evolution of the Buddha’s biography, respectively. Peter Shalk (Department of History of Religion, Uppsala University, Sweden) spoke on the Buddhist population in Medieval Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka.

For the series’ spotlight lecture, Gananath Obeyesekere (Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Princeton University) presented preliminary findings in his groundbreaking research on competing discourses in histories of the Theosophy Movement. In front of a large audience at the Harry Ransom Center’s Prothro Theater, Obeyesekere highlighted the effect of the Enlightenment and its counter movements in shaping the story of Madame Blavatsky and
Theosophy. The following week, as a fitting counterpoint, Gananath’s wife, Ranjini Obeyesekere (Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Princeton University) presented a comprehensive account of the wife of the Buddha in the popular imagination.

Ruby Lal and Gyan Pandey, both from Emory University, delivered provocative papers on the re-reading of Nazir Ahmad and on the comparison of class in the history of African-Americans and Dalits. The series concluded with Rupert Snell (Department of Asian Studies at University of Texas), who presented a humorous and informative piece on translating old Hindi poetry.
Clockwise from top left: Peter Skilling (Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation), Ruby Lal (Emory University), Sunil Sharma (Boston University), Peter Schalk (Uppsala University, Sweden)
Clockwise from above: Ranjini Obeyesekere (Princeton University), Gyan Pandey (Emory University), Anna Bigelow (North Carolina State University)