Letter from the Director:

This newsletter marks the end of my first full academic year as Institute director, and what a year it has been. Apart from our terrific long-standing seminar series, the last year has seen conferences and workshops, the release of a major report, a teach-in, eminent visitors from the US and South Asia, and an outstanding film series. For me the year began in May 2007, at the end of the spring semester, when the Institute hosted a day-long retreat at the aptly named House on the Hill in the Westlake area of Austin. This was an all too rare opportunity to meet with Institute-affiliated faculty — who are spread over so many departments, schools and colleges — and for us collectively to reflect on the state of South Asian studies at UT. This was an invaluable experience and reaffirmed for me a simple truth, namely, that without collaboration — intellectual, personal, institutional — there is no South Asia Institute. The long (not so hot, surprisingly) summer passed in a flash as we reorganized the Institute: former outreach coordinator Rachel Meyer took over the running of the Title VI program, two new staff members joined us, Jeff “Pirate” Brewer as office manager and Don “Bajaj” Arntz as IT swami, Erin Collins continued as accountant, and the rapidly expanding Hindi Urdu Flagship program settled into new quarters at Rainey Hall. And then, the news of Cynthia Talbott’s (History) amazing trifecta — a Guggenheim, a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study and an NEH grant — promised a very good year to come.

Martha Selby of Asian Studies organized a dynamic and very well attended fall seminar series on southern India. Speakers from the US and UK addressed topics ranging from HIV-AIDS to music and humor. (The full list of speakers can be found at the end of this newsletter). Towards the end of the fall, with events in Pakistan dominating the news, and the possibility of the end of the dictatorship becoming very real, faculty and students organized a teach-in on the democracy movement in Pakistan. With hardly any notice, we were able to fill a room at the Union with over 60 students and faculty, which led to a collective petition being sent to all members of the Texas Congressional delegation. Congressman Charles Gonzalez from San Antonio wrote us to say that he agreed that the US “has failed to appreciate the consequences” of blindly supporting General Pervez Musharraf. It came as a
pleasant surprise to find out that a 2007 visitor to Austin, political
scientist Husain Haqqani, had been appointed the new Pakistani
ambassador to Washington. Given this, it was appropriate
that the spring seminar series, ably organized by Kamran Ali
of Anthropology, focused largely on Pakistan and Bangladesh.
In that context, two visitors in particular need mention for the
impact they had: Ahmed Salim, the writer, activist, and archivist
from Islamabad, and Arif Hasan, architect, urban planner, and
public intellectual from Karachi.

Much of my time since arriving in Austin has been spent
working on a report commissioned by the National
Security Education Program (NSEP), the agency that funds the
Hindi-Urdu flagship program, on the state of foreign language
learning and abilities in the state of Texas. With the help of Elaine Phillips,
a foreign language pedagogy expert, the
Institute released its report in November 2007. What stood out for me was the
remarkable finding that there is currently a shortage of qualified Spanish speakers
in Texas. Hospitals, courts, social service offices and other state agencies all need
more expertise in foreign languages; this lack has led, in some instances, to
ineffective medical treatment and the denial of civil rights. To the extent that
today’s students see language learning as a pragmatic decision, and there is
considerable evidence that they do, this report should give them good reason
to develop expertise in languages other than English, even if they don’t intend to
travel abroad. The report was launched at the Blanton Museum in the company
of State Representative Mark Strama, Assistant Secretary of Defense David Chu, UT Provost for International Affairs Terri Givens, and LBJ School professor Bobby Inman.

One of the issues I consider central to the mission of the Institute is
the mentoring of graduate students and finding ways of incorporating them into
our work. I am pleased that one initiative begun last year has worked well, namely, making it possible for graduate students
presenting conference papers to do a practice talk before heading out. A number of students have taken advantage of this initiative
and the results have been very positive, thanks to the faculty
who have given willingly of their time to listen and comment on
these presentations. A number of graduate students have also
helped the Institute’s outreach program by preparing materials
for curriculum units and giving talks in local secondary and high
schools. The outreach program has been working with local
schools for some years now, and Janice Leoshko (Art History)
continues to be a great resource in developing new programs
and initiatives directed at schoolteachers. In the coming year,
the outreach program will have additional responsibilities as
Texas is reviewing its social studies curriculum and textbooks.
There is little question that much can be done to improve the
content of many texts—as one of our faculty members who has
been a consultant to the California Attorney General has made
clear—but the process has also been heavily politicized by some
community groups. The Institute intends to monitor and be
involved in the textbook revision process in Texas, and fortunately,
faculty like Kamala Visweswaran and Patrick Olivelle have a lot
of experience in this regard. I think you will all agree that helping
to improve the content of international education in the state is one of the core
responsibilities of faculty at any university, and especially at UT.

A brief word about money. The
Institute created a new fund in the spring of 2008, to help support Kerala
studies at UT. As you know, UT is the only major university in the country that
teaches Malayalam. In order to ensure that we can continue to do so, we have
turned to the Kerala community in Texas for their help. In a few short months,
community leaders, particularly in Dallas, have raised over $10,000 for this purpose
and we hope that these invaluable contributions will continue. We are also
fund raising for an endowed chair in Pakistan studies that will be named for
the former representative from Texas, Charlie Wilson. This endowment, which
will create the first permanent chair of Pakistan studies that will be named for
the former representative from Texas, Charlie Wilson. This endowment, which
will create the first permanent chair of Pakistan studies in the country, began with
an extremely generous contribution of $500,000, and the College’s development
officers are currently seeking to matching funds for the remainder. Finally, so
much of what we do in the Institute is made possible due to the support of the
Meyerson Endowment. Our sincere and
continuing thanks to Marlene and Morton Meyerson.

The coming year promises to be just as exciting. Take a deep
breath!

Itty Abraham
Director, SAI, Marlene and Morton Meyerson Centennial Chair
As an architecture student at UT Austin my education thus far has addressed the concept of a city from a Euro-centric perspective. I felt that there was a major gap in my knowledge which my education simply has not been able to fill. This gap was the conception of a South Asian city. There are aspects of our culture that show up in our cities and simply have no parallel in a European city. For example, the bazaar is a place to meet people, to gossip, to haggle and to spend time in addition to being a place to do one’s shopping. In this sense, it perhaps has a counterpart in the town square of a European city. However, a bazaar is not synonymous with a town square and therefore cannot be substituted with one. It is of a fundamentally different organization, and has a different function. Yet, you could say that it is as important to a South Asian city as a town square is to a European one. But there is nothing in modern city planning in India that makes provision for a bazaar. Instead, many Indian cities have had American-style supermarkets and malls take the place of the bazaar in recent years. In doing this, an opportunity for the imagining of the South Asian city is lost.

Ever since I took a course in the History of Architecture and realized that in fact it did nothing to equip me with an understanding of how to design buildings that belong to Indian cities (something that I want to do eventually), I have been wondering how to fill this gap in my knowledge. I recently had the opportunity to hear two distinguished city planners and architects, Dr. Arif Hasan and A.G. Krishna Menon from Pakistan and India respectively, speak at a lecture organized by the South Asia Institute at UT. I also had the opportunity to interview Krishna Menon as a reporter for Nazar.

You mentioned Doshi’s Vidhyanagar and his conception of an urban Indian city in your speech. What are some key elements of an Indian city that makes it different from a European one (or one in any other part of the world)?

The city must be thought of as a “lived experience”. The way South Asians live reflects their culture, the way they socialize. Replicating NYC in India would simply get a grid, a neutral field. It is not a South Asian city. Using a grid in a South Asian city similar to NYC or to Chicago would get a neutral city which wouldn’t suit our cultural situation. Shouldn’t these cultural needs be respected? Catered to? Most people usually counter this by saying that although this may be true, we shouldn’t be hung up with the past because if we do, we can never progress. This debate is superimposed by another debate where even in the West, people are concerned with neutrality and coldness of environment. They want something more to human scale, human needs, not something mechanical. South Asian cities have never lacked character, and I assert that they can be modern AND South Asian. I don’t believe in resurrecting the past, but I believe that tradition has a strong role to play in making us happy in the environment in which we live. Stability, familiarity and comfort are important. It’s the same as the difference between your bedroom and a hotel room. Benares is one of the holiest cities in India. Yet, it does not have to be a city of the past. It can be a city of the future. Computers and agraharams can go together. Modernity is NOT rejecting the past. Quite often we must modify the environment rather than tear it down and build it anew. The dress should fit you, rather than you trying to fit into the dress. The city serves society. It has to serve society.
In that case, what models CAN we emulate? What precedents can we draw upon to build a truly South Asian city?

American cities are built on the premise that almost everyone has a car. This is not the case in India. Should the city be transformed to suit the car? There are many other ways of getting around in India that are equally valid: by bus, cycle and by walking. Today, engineers design towns. They build straight roads and straight sewer lines and all of us are forced to live on that straight road. Earlier, we had curved roads which followed the contours and also made it easy to walk on. So what if the road is longer? But making straight roads nowadays is cheaper and hence more efficient. Usually, the cheap is the enemy of the good. An engineering solution must not define the purpose of a town plan. Rather, we must look at the patterns of life that existed before the invention of the car, and before the superimposition of a grid plan in order to understand the needs and wants of a South Asian city. By building cities in South Asia which cater to pedestrians and cyclists, we will also be more sustainable in the long run. The only answer to the question of precedents is that we must try to create a modern South Asian city that still has an essence which is timeless, and more practically, sustainable.

In fact, there is no precedent for a modern South Asian city. Megacities such as Mexico City are certainly not the answer in the Third World. We must come up with our own solution. Gandhi wanted villages to develop. The debate between Nehru and Gandhi has today led to the victory of the Nehruvian model of development. However, today, we realize that Gandhi was prescient. There is enough in the world for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed. America consumes seven times its ecological footprint to maintain the lifestyle it maintains. Gandhi advocated that we eat what is grown within five miles of us, build with materials found within five miles of us and hence minimize our ecological footprint so that it remains well within a sustainable area. This image is not “sexy”, so we don’t fall for it. It doesn’t exactly conjure up the images of development that are dominated by mega-malls and expressways.

Patrick Geddes was an English town planner in the early 20th century. After careful study of several Indian cities, he said that Indian cities should not be broken down and rebuilt. Rather, the solution must be to extend them and improve them. There must be diagnostic surveys and conservative surgery. If there is a problem with the arm the solution is not to cut it off but to repair it. Geddes was also a biologist and used the metaphor of the biological process and extended it to the city. In fact, the truth is we in India know how to live with less. We automatically conserve things as a way of life. It is believed all the problems are in the East and all the solutions in the West. This might change. The West has problems now for which the East may have answers.

We cannot ignore the effects of globalization in today’s world. How do you view globalization as it affects architectural form and town planning activities in South Asia?

The trend today seems to be to follow the American suburban model. Wealthy gated communities are cropping up on the outskirts of Delhi and Mumbai. The path of least resistance is to give in and allow this to happen. However we must fight for the South Asian city. Reason tells us that this is unsustainable, simply by the fact that it has its own problems even in America. The dilemma an architect often faces is whether he or she does what the client tells them to do or whether they tell the client what to do. After all, the client is paying. Isn’t it one’s professional responsibility to satisfy the client? And yet what if their preferences directly conflicts with what you know is the right thing to do? A client wanting a glass house in the hot Indian climate is certainly not thinking sustainably. What is the right answer? It lies in one word: negotiation. The best architecture occurs when there is a dialogue between the client and the architect. The best work in my personal experience took place when this dialogue happened. Post-liberalization in India, the middle class has become greedy because it is suddenly in the spotlight after a long drought. As a society we want to be “India Shining”, not recognizing that this is a suicidal path.

Consider colonial era buildings in many major South Asian cities? (VT in Bombay comes to mind). Do they belong in a South Asian city? How do we deal with the colonial past and its effect on architecture in South Asia?

In 1835, Macauley published his famous Minute on Education. He wanted to create an Indian brown in colour and English in our thinking. Colonialism has had deep roots. We can’t throw it away. But we must transform, we can’t let it be as it is. This transformative process is what we’ve got to learn. This is a good conservation principle. Everyone’s natural psychology is to conserve. So why not incorporate this in planning and in culture? Let us live with our colonial past, but transform it. The object of education is not to give to you the knowledge of the West but to help you transform yourself to meet your needs. VT is as much India’s heritage as the West’s heritage. We should not knock it down. It is familiar, it is ours. Some people say “Let’s go back to the Mughal times, Gupta times.”. Absurd. No one wants to go back, but to go forward. From VT, Europe also went forward. Should we follow the same path? We can diverge from VT and yet be equally influenced by it.
The term “Indian architecture” is interesting. In fact, there is no such thing as Indian architecture, or Indian music, or Indian food. “Indian” is a very problematic term. The British couldn’t distinguish between different regional architectures, and they only saw “Indian architecture” as a collective. That’s why we’re in this trap. We too aren’t trained to look at differences. We must train ourselves to look. And to look at ourselves more critically.

Indian architectural history too has mainly been written by European scholars. They have their biases. Classical biases. They describe Indian history as Buddhist, Hindu, Islam and Colonial. They imply that there were well-defined periods of time in which each of these occur. There is a tendency to periodize Indian architecture. But the truth is all of them overlap, continue, and influence each other. Sensibilities and visualization continues. They become more and more hybrid until we can no longer find the pure.

Since we are discussing education, what is your opinion on architectural education in India and does it succeed in transforming our colonial experience?

Architectural education in India is a big problem. Most architecture schools still follow the colonial model. There are only 140 architecture schools in India and more than half have horrible teachers. This is not education. A major colonial hang-up that still lingers on in architectural education is the pairing of engineering with architecture. Most engineering colleges offer architecture as one of the disciplines. When the British started architectural education, they wanted draughtsman. So they started draughting colleges. Since then, there has been absolutely NO transformation. In fact, until very recently, you had to do Physics, Chemistry and Math to even apply to an architectural school. Now, it is only Math that is required. That is one small success. We live in a culture of scarcity. A million people want to be architects and there are not enough seats. So we think of ways to eliminate them rather than on how to attract the best talent. Aptitude tests are urban biased. This is not a fair system where everyone has equal opportunity to become an architect.

The trend today is that design and handicrafts are becoming more expensive. It is very hard to fight that trend, and it is inevitable. Everything will soon become mass produced. What is saving India is that we are a poor country and labour is cheap. This is also a tragedy. And yet, our best bet is to use methods and materials that are labour-intensive. Mechanization in the current situation simply does not make economic sense.

There are various influences on Indian architecture as it stands today, and there are many people who are working to find an architecture that is true to its roots and yet a part of the modern world. Laurie Baker, the Gandhian and champion of low-cost building using local materials in Kerala comes to mind. Corbusier, too, built an India. He cannot be ignored when considering the masterpieces of Indian architecture in the 20th century. Auroville near Pondicherry, too has many designers who are successfully bridging this gap in their own small ways.

And with this, I was left with the hope, and with the determination that I too would find my way to an architecture that is genuine and true to its roots.

Nazar – A South Asian Perspective, is a new online student magazine that caters to the South Asian population at The University of Texas at Austin. nazaronline.net
Filmmaker Sanjay Kak

In commemoration of Gandhi’s birthday, the South Asia Institute presented two films by Sanjay Kak that address the failures and successes of Gandhian nonviolence in South Asia. The screenings were well attended and the filmmaker was present to speak and answer question about both films. In addition, both films can be checked out from our lending library.

“Words on Water” looked at the more than 20 year history of non-violent struggle of displaced farmers and tribals in the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement).

“Jashn-e-Azadi” (“How We Celebrate Freedom”) examines the more than 50 year history of violence in Kashmir’s struggle for Independence. Read the Jashn-e-Azadi blog at http://kashmirfilm.wordpress.com/

Four Films by Prasanna Vithanage

The South Asia Institute screened four films by acclaimed Sri Lankan film director Prasanna Vithanage during the spring 2008 semester. All of his films can be checked out from our lending library.

“Anantha Rathriya” (“Dark Night of the Soul”) 1996, Color, 87 min

“Pawuru Walalu” (“Walls Within”) 1997, Color, 85 min

“Purahanda Kaluwara” (“Death on a Full Moon Day”) 1997, Color, 74 min NHK Co-Production

“Ira Madiyama” (“August Sun”) 2003, 35mm, Color, 108 min
The South Asia Institute sponsored an evening with Buddhist monks from the Gaden Shartse Monastery of Mundgod (India), on May 2, 2008. In its Indian exile this monastery perpetuates the tradition of the first monastery that the founder of the dGe-lugs-pa school of Tibetan Buddhism, Tsong-kha-pa, established in the 15th century. At the event, the Buddhist monks met with students and faculty to talk about the continuation of Tibetan Buddhist traditions in exile, about personal experiences of leaving the Tibetan homeland, and about the current political situation. The event lured an audience of more than 80 persons on campus—a remarkable number, given that it was the last day of classes. While in town, the monks also performed a number of healing and blessing ceremonies and created a sand mandala in the Austin City Hall. A mandala is a colorful circular diagram that symbolically represents certain aspects of Buddhist cosmology. It is used as an aid for visualizing transcendent places and deities in meditation. The ritual destruction of the sand mandala after its long and painstaking creation illustrates the impermanent nature of all conditioned things.

Oliver Freiberger holds a Ph.D. from the University of Göttingen, Germany and is an Assistant Professor with the Department of Asian Studies, UT Austin.
Recognizing the extent to which research on sexuality in South Asia has grown and changed in the last decade, the South Asia Institute organized a workshop bringing together some of the leading scholars in the field on May 2-3, 2008. The conference was supported by funds from the College of Liberal Arts and the Meyerson Endowment, and cosponsored by a range of campus units including the Departments of History, English, Asian Studies, Religious Studies, LGBTQ/Sexualities Research Cluster, and the Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice.

The first speaker was Geeta Patel of Wellesley College. Patel’s provocative talk built on her ongoing research on risk, and sought to reaffirm the connections between sexuality research and the study of capitalism more generally. Shifting between conceptions of risk and at-risk, she argued that neo-liberal “capital turns into feeling, calculus into accountability.” She was followed by Martha Selby from the Department of Asian Studies who offered a careful textual reading of “wind” (vata/vayu) as a humoral category in Sanskrit texts. Discussing the problem of consumption which comes from the checking of natural urges and worry, she went on to elaborate on [rikta goma, the tumor and distortions] [Itty: replace this with rakta gulma, a “blood tumor” caused by an excess of wind]. The third speaker in the opening session was Sanjay Srivastava of Deakin University in Melbourne. Drawing on material presented in his recent book, Passionate Modernity, Srivastava discussed how certain Hindi magazines commodified pleasure for the middle class urban Indian woman. He argued for the possibility of sexualized pleasures and consumption emerging without reference to reproduction, indicating what he called a “retractable” modernity.

Anjali Arondekar of the University of California, Santa Cruz, began the next session. Her presentation focused on the need to go beyond the colonial archive that has been the primary source of our knowledge of the history of sexuality in India. She discussed the processes of subjectification that come through archival work and stressed the need to examine the “forensics and metaphors of the trace.” Carla Petievich of the Department of Asian Studies followed with a paper on the problems of locating the erotic in Urdu poetry. Noting the instability of the subject in (gender in the ghazal, the sexual subject in the archive), she discussed the slippage between what is allowed in relation to the divine and the profane.

The final session of the afternoon was a roundtable discussion led by Ann Cvetovich and Neville Hoard, both of the Department of English, representing the LGBTQ sexuality research cluster. Issues discussed ranged from area studies and sexuality research to the politics of publishing.

The next morning began with a presentation by Sandya Hewamane of Drake University. Her paper dealt with the transformation of the Sri Lankan women’s pulp publishing industry and new forms of collective reading that were emerging. She proposed that some of the changes in the industry were the result of a moral panic and an effort to reintegrate transgressive female garment workers in to a capitalist economy of desire and labor. The second paper was by Kamran Ali of the Department of Anthropology, on the complex economies of sexual freedoms and sexuality in Pakistan. Discussing the work of the female Urdu poet Sara Shagufta, he discussed the “missing” archive, and the need to be aware of the crossover between gender, class, and ethnicity in Pakistan. Jeff Reading of Yale Law School was unable to attend and his paper on doing sexuality research in Pakistan was read aloud to the audience. The final paper of the workshop was delivered by Svati Shah of Wellesley College. Her presentation problematized the issue of agency, as typically understood in feminist theory. Using the example of migrant females who shuttle between laboring on construction sites and sex work, Shah preferred to reflect on the questions her research produced in relation to the political economy of work and labor, rather than choice and compulsion. As in the previous day, the session ended with a wide-ranging discussion of a variety of issues in a roundtable format.

The Political and Cultural Economies of Water

UT’s four Title VI area studies centers -- South Asia, Middle East, Eurasia, and Latin America -- joined hands to cosponsor an international conference on the Political and Cultural Economies of Water on March 28 and 29, 2008. There were four papers relating to southern Asia. Kathleen O’Reilly of Texas A & M University spoke on her fieldwork on the politics of toilets in Rajasthan, Shinee Varughese of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in Minneapolis gave a paper on the right to water, Ben Crow of the University of California, Santa Cruz, spoke about river water sharing agreements between India, Bangladesh and China, and Jim Spencer of the University of Hawaii presented his findings on water use and resources in urban areas of Vietnam. This was the first conference jointly sponsored by all of UT’s area studies centers, and it was agreed that this model of international collaboration held great promise for the future.
SAI's Outreach Program has had a busy year. Graduate students kept busy with presentations and exhibits for a wide range of events – as part of cultural and diversity programs at local schools, providing insights into a reading of the novel “God of Small Things” in a high school English class, and working with more than 1000 children on word writing in South Asian scripts and henna hand painting at Explore UT, to name just a few. SAI’s outreach coordinator, Rachel Meyer, traveled around the state and nation to present newly developed curriculum at district and regional teacher professional development sessions and social studies conferences in San Diego and El Paso.

The institute also brought together eighteen K-12 teachers for the latest in the series of AIMSA workshops, “The Significance of Buddhist Travels and Texts.” The workshop examined pilgrimage as an important practice in Buddhism and a significant factor in this religion’s development in South Asia and its phenomenal spread beyond. UT faculty Janice Leoshko, Associate Professor of Art History and Asian Studies, and David Sena, Assistant Professor in Asian Studies, provided historical background and strategies for interpreting travel accounts as primary source materials. Max Deeg, Professor of Religious and Theological Studies at University of Cardiff, presented his work on the written accounts of Xuanzang, who lived in the seventh century and traveled from China along established trade routes to India in search of traces of the Buddha. The workshop demonstrated how such accounts provide details about Buddhism that otherwise would be unknown and considered how various cultures can be compared through religious practices.

For more information on SAI’s outreach program and events. Please visit our website:
http://www.utexas.edu/cola/insts/southasia/outreach/
In March 2007 UT History graduate student Amber Abbas, South Asia Institute Outreach Coordinator Dr. Rachel Meyer and Austin High School geography teacher Jamison Warren began brainstorming for a curriculum project entitled “Partition in the Classroom: Teaching Migration through 1947 India.” In November, they led a workshop introducing it at The National Council for the Social Studies Conference in San Diego, CA.

Abbas, Meyer, and Warren share an interest in South Asia nurtured through travel and research, but each brought unique expertise to this project. Both Abbas and Meyer have conducted research in South Asia focusing on the experiences of individual men and women and sought to add these voices to the traditional political history of partition. Warren’s understanding of teaching pedagogy and the challenges of the classroom environment helped the group to ensure the unit would be challenging to students and compelling for teachers. Don Arntz and the SAI provided support for packaging and distributing the unit to teachers locally and nationwide.

The unit contains several different types of resources intended to introduce students to the history and geography of the 1947 partition of India, the major themes of studying migration, the particular issues of women, and skills for research in primary historical sources including oral narratives, photographs short stories, and political cartoons. This combination of content and research methods represents the teaching “best practice” of Disciplinary Learning in which students study and analyze primary sources. “Partition in the Classroom” suggests ways to configure the activities as a one to five-day unit, allowing teachers flexibility and providing additional extension activities for students who would like to learn more.

Using activities included in the unit, teachers initially gauge the students’ general knowledge about the partition of India. This strategy allows teachers to determine what themes to emphasize. Students are asked to synthesize content from diverse sources that reveal the complex choices that individuals and communities faced during the partition. At the end, students create their own representation of the challenges of partition: a skit, a comic strip, a political cartoon, or written analysis. These choices for an individualized final project allow teachers to address the needs of Multiple Intelligences by encouraging students to choose a form of expression suited to their skills.

One unique aspect of this collaboration was the opportunity the group had to “test-drive” the curriculum materials as they were developing. Before presenting the materials at the November NCSS conference, the group taught from them three times at Austin High School. Each time, students were invited to offer feedback on the lessons that the group used to further develop the unit to encourage a high level of student engagement.

During the NCSS presentation, the participating teachers were excited to see the collaboration of skills that went in to the development of this unit. The teachers were impressed by the actual student work samples they saw, and enjoyed hearing student feedback! In spring 2008, the geography teachers at Austin High School taught from the unit as an example of Disciplinary Learning. In Fall 2008, the unit “Partition in the Classroom: Teaching Migration Through 1947 India” will be available on the South Asia Institute’s redesigned website and available to teachers worldwide.

Visit http://www.utexas.edu/cola/insts/southasia/news/current/aisdcurriculumunit/ for more information and to download the curriculum. Amber Abbas is a history graduate student at the University of Texas.


Nasira Jabeen, visiting scholar and Professor of Public Administration at the Institute of Administrative Science, University of the Punjab, Lahore published “Good Governance in South Asia: Constraints and Possibilities” with Dr. Zafar Iqbal Jadoon, Pakistan Management Review, Second Quarter 2008


Sankaran Radhakrishnan, Asian Studies, was invited to speak at the International workshop on Tamil epigraphy in Paris, 1-11 July, 2008. His talk was on “Tamil and South Indian Studies”

Martha Ann Selby, Associate Professor of South Asian Studies, was appointed Directeur d’Etudes, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and Institut d’Etudes Avancees de Paris Ile de France for the months of May and June 2008. Her most recent book, “Tamil Geographies: Cultural Constructions of Space and Place in South India” was published by SUNY Press in May 2008 and was coedited with Professor Indira Viswanathan Peterson of Mount Holyoke College. The book is a collection of essays from a variety of disciplines on issues of cultural geographies as they manifest in a wide range of literary, historical, architectural, religious, and domestic contexts.

Graduate Students


M. Raisur Rahman presented “Neither Towns nor Villages: Making Sense of Islamic Locales of Qasbahs in British India.” at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association (SSHA), November 15-18, 2007, Chicago and “Mera Mazhab: Religion in the Lives of qasbah-based Muslim Intellectuals.” presented at the 36th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, October 11-14, 2007, Madison, WI.
**Fellowships & Grants**

**Dean Accardi:** Jacob K. Javits Fellowship

**David Brick:** Graduate School Fellowship

**Ishan Chakrabarti:** Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship

**Cary Curtiss:** Graduate Student Professional Development Award

**Neil Dalal:** Graduate Student Professional Development Award

**Isabel Huacuja:** Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship

**Amy Hyne:** Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship

**Peter Knapczyk:** American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Junior Fellowship; Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Abroad Fellowship

**Mark McClish:** Graduate Student Professional Development Award

**Jacqueline Pallardy:** Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship

**Urmila Patil:** Endowed University Continuing Fellowship

**Natasha Raheja:** American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Language Fellowship

**Nikola Rajic:** South Asia Graduate Fellowship

**Suzanne Schulz:** Popular Art Fellowship from Tasveer Ghar. Topic: Outside the Imambara: The Lives of Pilgrimage Souvenirs

**Keely Sutton:** Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship

**Nathan Tabor:** American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Junior Fellowship; Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Abroad Fellowship; Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grants

**Ian Woolford:** Lewis and Clark Field Research Grant

**Recent Ph.D. Graduates**

**Laura Brueck** will begin a tenure-track assistant professor position at the University of Colorado in fall 2008.

**M. Raisur Rahman** will begin as an Assistant Professor (tenure-track) of South Asian History, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC.

**Kristen Rudisill** is now a tenure-track assistant professor at Bowling Green State University, Ohio.

**New South Asia Graduate Students**

**Asiya Alam** has a Masters from the University of Chicago in Social Sciences and will complete a Masters degree in History from the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill this summer. As a Ph.D. student in our Asian Cultures and Languages program, she plans to research gender studies and family.

**Emilia Bachrach** has an MTS in Divinity from Harvard and a Bachelors in Religion from Smith. She joins our Asian Cultures and Languages Ph.D. program to work on South Asian religions.

**Elizabeth (Libby) Bowers** has just completed her Bachelors in Asian Languages and Literature from the University of Minnesota. She plans to work on Hindi/Urdu linguistics, language and nationalism, and religion and nationalism as a Masters student in our Asian Cultures and Languages program.

**Max Bruce** has a Bachelors in Philosophy from UC Santa Cruz. He plans to work on Urdu language and literature as a Masters student in Asian Studies.

**Manomohini Dutta** has a Masters in History from Jawaharlal Nehru University and a Bachelors in History from the University of Calcutta. As a Ph.D. student in our Asian Cultures and Languages program, she plans to research Sanskrit epics, Vedic and Puranic religion. Manomohini will be a Hindi language TA.

**Bob Gallagher** is a retired postman who is coming back to school so he can pursue a second career. Bob has a Masters in Asian Languages and Literature from the University of Seattle and a Bachelors in Linguistics. As a Masters student in Asian Cultures and Languages program, he plans to work on Sanskrit, Hindi, and Indo-Aryan linguistics.

**Priya Nelson** has just completed her Bachelors in Anthropology with a minor in South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Priya joins our Masters in Asian Cultures and Languages program in order to study Indo-Muslim history and culture, literary trends, and Pakistani identity politics.

**Daniel Rudmann** has a Masters in Hinduism and a Bachelors in Religion and English from George Washington University. Dan is a student of Alfred Hillebeiteil. After getting married this summer, Dan and his new bride will move to Austin so that he can join our Masters in Asian Cultures and Languages program in order to study religion, literature, and art.

**Jonathan Seefeldt** will join our Asian Cultures and Languages Masters program in order to work on the history and languages of slums, and migrant workers of Delhi. Jonathan has a Bachelors in English from Wheaton College.
SAGAR, a graduate research journal published by students at the University of Texas at Austin, has recently published volume 17, and will soon publish volume 18. Both volumes are a special series presenting some papers from the University of Texas Asian Studies Conference, held on October 13-14th, 2006. As the conference was not exclusive to South Asia, our journal’s scope in these two issues is broader than usual.

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Beyond the Academy

In late 2006, I had spent some 25 years doing research in India and Pakistan on Urdu literature and other aspects of Indo-Muslim cultural history. Most of this work was textual and involved months in libraries and other archives, trying to retrieve literature that could help reconstruct a cultural history that was disappearing, either through neglect or deliberate suppression. This is the kind of work for which scholars are trained, but we are also citizens of the world of Here and Now.

My commitment to teaching pulled me increasingly toward the need for education on the ground in South Asia. There is a grave irony in studying the “high” literary traditions of yore in countries where so many people have little or no access to letters today. In Pakistan—according to official statistics—one adult in three is literate; only one child in four has ever been to school; women’s literacy is measured at half that of men’s. Yet where girls and women have access to formal education, they excel. They are consistently the top performers at every level, up to university. Clearly, the fact that female literacy is so low in Pakistan must be explained by girls’ and women’s very limited access to schooling in the first place. Development literature tells us that quality of life is closely linked to education levels, and that female literacy raises a family’s standard of living in greater proportion than that of males. Unfortunately, the state has failed spectacularly to make this happen, and the greatest part of the slack has been taken up by madrasas, with truly dire consequences for families, for secular society, and for female literacy (madrasas are overwhelmingly devoted to a narrow religious education for boys). As a feminist and citizen of the world it was only logical that I focus on doing something constructive in a part of the world that had given me so much. Trying to increase access to secular education for girl children seemed the place to start.
In January 2007, I left my full-time teaching job in the New York area and formed the Hoshyar Foundation with the support of family and friends. It is a non-profit entity dedicated to secular education for girls in Pakistan and other underserved parts of South Asia. I travel there several times a year to work with partners who are looking to establish girls’ schools in their communities, but who lack the resources to make it happen. Where schools exist, co-education is usually available through the 5th standard. In Pakistan sex segregation is mandated thereafter. If a village has a school for middle grades or high school, it is usually for boys, and the girls are obliged to drop out. This is where Hoshyar can make a difference. Our major partnership is with the Al-Hamd Educational Girls High School, in Baagarian Village outside of Lahore.

The school was established by a single family in 2005 with the purpose of fighting illiteracy in their community. Supervised by the Al-Hamd Citizen Community Board, the school provides free admission, textbooks, uniforms, medical check-ups and evening tuition to 176 students. But in less than 2 years the founders began to run seriously short of funds to keep things going. Mutual acquaintances brought Al-Hamd and Hoshyar together and we formed a partnership in April 2007. Since then Al-Hamd has moved to a larger facility, established a computer lab, initiated computer training, and has expanded its program of instruction to include high school for girls. In 2008 it became the Al-Hamd Education Girls High School. Based on this model of partnership we are hoping to establish further partnerships with schools in Tarogil Village and Sheikhupura, both of which also lie on the outskirts of Lahore.

Hoshyar takes no government money and runs entirely through donations by individuals. One of the most inspiring donations we received was from a 13-year old girl in New Jersey who was concerned about kids in other parts of the world with far less privilege than she enjoyed. As a result of her gift, we decided to get more children involved in what Hoshyar was doing, and have since formed a relationship locally, with the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders in South Austin. About six months ago I carried a shipment of books to Al-Hamd with me, all donated by Ann Richards students.

We are open to ideas for expansion of our activities, and seek donations of money, supplies and time from all those who have them to give. To get involved, and for volunteer opportunities, please visit our website at www.hoshyar.org or contact

Carla Petievich  
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or

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Outreach & Volunteer Coordinator  
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Itaxied into Madurai, Tamilnadu, India with a traveler’s backpack, drooping eyelids, and optimistic projections for the coming nine months. I envisioned bustling streets filled with flower vendors and tea stalls, reckless auto-rickshaw drivers swerving through a sea of pedestrians, gurus in saffron vestments, and the lingering aroma of jasmine. I was eager to discover South India, develop my proficiency in the Tamil language, and explore this foreign culture as a student resident rather than a fleeting tourist.

I passed the first few weeks reeling from culture-shock and attempting to comprehend the public transportation system’s convoluted bus schedules. Navigating through a city of over a million proved intimidating and the language barrier occasionally frustrated matters. I recall employing my fledgling Tamil through conversation, flexing my rigid tongue into foreign contortions of oral yoga, only to elicit baffled expressions and an occasional chuckle in response. The initial transition was difficult; my body adjusted to a twelve-hour time lag, a newly acquired vegetarian diet, and the scorching Madurai sun. Although, the cordiality that I encountered helped ease the social transition. Local families treated me, a seemingly misplaced foreigner temporarily inhabiting their neighborhood, with a blend of curiosity and hospitality. I was warmly welcomed around many dining tables laden with dosai, idly, and an array of chutneys, and frequently invited inside for tea and sweets. In true Tamil fashion heaping portions of food were placed before me on a banana leaf and I slowly learned to maneuver my right-hand as a primary utensil.

During the following months I explored the surrounding culture and completed an academic curriculum that featured language and history coursework at local universities. I witnessed countless religious and cultural festivals ranging from Jellikattu—vaguely reminiscent of a rodeo minus horses, lassos, and safety precautions—and the Chittirai Thiruvizha festival during which over one hundred thousand Tamils celebrated the Tamil New Year in Madurai. Standing on a bridge in central Madurai at 5am and watching this seemingly infinite sea of devotees celebrating the arrival of Lord Alagar was an awe-inspiring and absolutely humbling experience. These festivals offered a rare glimpse into the vibrant festival culture of Madurai.

Popular cinema often portrays the booming metropolises and sprawling urban landscapes of India. Conversely, I was struck by the natural beauty of south India, where the geography is just as diverse as the colors in the Madurai flower market. I passed weekends trekking tea-plantations amidst the rolling hills of Munnar and relaxing along the coastal enclave of Pondicherry. Private and government buses made exploration feasible, not to mention affordable. I feel that my study abroad experience in Tamilnadu really did offer me a chance to immerse myself within Tamil culture. My program emphasized learning through daily travels and interaction, rather than limiting learning to the traditional classroom setting.

Although my initial projections may have predicted some of the sights that I would invariably witness—oxen-pulled carts, countless tea stalls, and auto-rickshaws swerving through bustling streets—I never could have foreseen the transformative impact that this experience could influence over my future goals. I did not simply leave Madurai with a new set of photographs, course-credits, and memories; I left with a renewed vigor to study the Tamil language and culture, not to mention an impulsive desire to return as soon as possible!

Michael Collins is a current senior in the Plan II Honors Program. His academic interests include the Tamil language and history as well as ethnic politics in contemporary India. After graduating Michael plans to pursue graduate studies in Modern South Asia followed by a career in international public policy.
As part of the Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program, the Institute welcomed three new teaching assistants in August. Shilpa Parnami, Madina Bano, and Sadiq Rahman 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.
Escaping the call center:

Urban anthropology is elusive. Even as you pick a site that you hope will encompass and pin down your object of research, it escapes into the city. A supposedly tangible and yet forever elusive urban space. Over 2006 and 2007, I spent fifteen months in the Western Indian city of Pune, hoping to chronicle and explore the ways in which call centers have influenced the texture of urban life in the city. Pune is not new to me; I spent my undergraduate years as well as some part of my working life in this city. My memories are of narrow roads, cycles and scooters, teeming students and an ever-present predilection to siestas. Pune’s character was historical and its charm lay in its slowness. It was known for its rich cultural past, its old-world lifestyle and a palpable air of high culture. But over the course of several summers and my long fieldwork stint, I had occasion to revise this pastoral and nostalgic portrait. The city that used to be known as the Oxford of the East has over the first ten years of the twenty-first century become host to myriad Information Technology (IT) outfits as a result of rampant investment and enthusiastic government support. It has re-invented itself from a retirement haven and an educational center boasting genteel, curmudgeonly and taciturn Puneris into a bustling, crowded metropolis of traffic jams, malls and multiplexes. Although it is still possible to topographically separate the old from the new, it is no longer kosher to talk about one without the effects of the other.

Call centers are variously located on the outskirts of Pune city and in newly developed business centers spiraling on the edges of older cosmopolitan areas. A large portion of work in the industry is performed during the night to service the workday of the American or British consumer or business. Workers live across various residential areas and call centers are required to provide cab services in order that they can safely travel to their workspaces at night.

Call center cabs ply the city landscape seeking to make sense of the organized and not-so-organized matrix of roads, lanes, dirt roads and flyovers. My fieldwork, although concerned with call centers, could not escape references to Pune in its all seeming paradoxes. I spent most of my waking day meeting call center workers at various coffee shops across the city. The traffic had gotten worse than I remembered, the motorists more and more dangerous and the roads more cramped. The cars were swankier, the languages more numerous, and the retail spaces tighter and brighter. Yet, many signs of the old Pune persevered and strode tall. For example, right off Dhole Patil and Boat Club Roads, diagonally opposite Sohrab Hall with its retail stores and fashion houses stands Vohuman Café. While positing an old Irani café in the face of new capital is perhaps the laziest way to signify the persistence of the past, it remains truthful albeit a platitude. The menu at Vohuman has not changed in many years; it has been the haven for hikers, bikers, all night partiers and a definite end to early morning rides from Sinhagadh fort. The cheese omelettes and toast are worth the bleary eyed wait at the café’s patio. The café even boasts a fan club on Facebook with 54 members no less. These Irani cafes perhaps best signify the lore on the unfriendliness of a mythical, insular Pune.

Nissim Ezekiel writing on Irani cafes in Bombay says:  
No talking to cashier/No smoking/ No fighting/ No credit/ No outside food/ No sitting long/ No talking loud/ No spitting/ No bargaining/ No water to outsiders/ No change/ No telephone/ No match sticks/ No discussing gambling/ No newspaper/ No combing/ No beef/ No leg on chair/ No hard liquor allowed/ No address enquiry/ — By order

Old Pune also persists in Pune of the peths, many of the administrative regions named after a day of the week, the day signifying when the local market would set anchor in that area. The peths are each significantly different from each other, but also symbolize the parts of Pune that have modernized with caution. So billboards for netcafes jostle with
homeopathic clinics and hole in the wall stores. Call center cabs are at their ignorant worst when attempting to ply workers out of dimly lit streets and unnamed apartment buildings in the peths. The peths also boast some of the best food in the city. A lot of my fieldwork days ended with a thali dinner at Durvankur and then a walk across the bridge from old Pune to young Pune at Fergusson College road to work off the many helpings of kadi chaawal and phirni. Food is also a highly important component of fieldwork I discovered. Call center workers who often surface early in the evening before setting out to work are to be found frequenting restaurants and bars that often turned into my fieldwork sites. Koregaon Park of former Osho and hip renunciation fame and ABC Farms with its swanky restaurants were favorite hotspots. Even if my recordings were often noisy and my respondents’ speech slurred, the actual process of fieldwork turned out to be a lot of fun.

My often unexpected and most informative respondents were wayfarers and old city-dwellers as much as call center workers. Rickshaw drivers told me about how the outsiders, meaning the new blue and white collar workers from northern India had changed the fabric of the city and made urban space more dangerous; a Baskin Robbins franchisee owner shared stories of quitting a call center because it hurt his pride to be corrected every time he spoke English and a hip retail store owner expressed hope that the rising salary scales would allow consumers to refine their clothing tastes (and hence buy from her store). My homeopath who functions out of Rasta Peth also shared with me his experiences of call center maladies and young patients with high stress levels and bad backs.

So I fancied myself a flaneur and found myself rediscovering Pune even as I examined the call center industry. Urban anthropology is apparently, unavoidably urban. In tentatively ending this long short tale, I have no one story to offer. No interesting epiphany and no moral at the end of an event. Just endless cacophony and patois; and the story of Pune as much as the story of the call center.

**Mathangi Krishnamurthy** is an Anthropology graduate student whose research interests include Anthropology of Work, Globalization and urban studies.
South Asia Seminar Series

Itty Abraham
UT Austin
Travancore in the Annals of the Cold War, 1945-47

Richard Wolf
Harvard University
Convincing Combinations: “Voice” in Shi‘i Genres of Iran and South Asia

Thomas Trautmann
University of Michigan
An Orientalist Lost and Found: F. W. Ellis and the Dravidian Language Family

Amrit Srinivasan
IIT Delhi
Casting a Shadow? India’s Knowledge Economy

Susan Seizer
Indiana University
Women with Swords, Women with Guns: Fierce Funny Women in South India and the U.S.

Cecilia Van Hollen
Syracuse University
HIV/AIDS and the Gendering of Stigma in Tamil Nadu, South India

Daud Ali
University of London
The Anthology as a Social Artifact: Rethinking Ethics in Medieval India

David Ludden
New York University
Imperial Modernity: Power and Inequality in the Space of Globalization

Sankaran Krishna
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Comparative Assassinations: the changing moral economy of political killing in South Asia

Mary Hancock
University of California at Santa Barbara
Vernacular Cosmopolis: Spaces of Cultural Memory in a Globalizing Tamil Village

Mrinalini Sinha
Penn State
Civis Britannicus: The Strange Death of an Imperial Ideal

Sajeda Amin
Population Council, New York
Bangladesh as a Model of Development
Stewart Gordon  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
Spices and Scales of Analysis: Social Networks in Pre-Modern Asian History

Kamran Ali  
UT Austin  
Women, Work, and Public Spaces: Conflict and Co-existence Among Karachi’s Poor

MSS Pandian  
University of Hawaii  
Nation Impossible

Dilip Menon  
Delhi University  
A Local Cosmopolitan: Kesari Balakrishna Pillai and the invention of Europe for Kerala

Krishna Menon  
Delhi  
Arif Hasan  
Karachi  
The Future of the City in South Asia

Willem van Schendel  
University of Amsterdam  
Bangladesh and India: Riddles of sovereignty, legacies of misperception
Established in 2006 with an award of over $700,000 from the Institute of International Education (IIE) for each of its first two years, UT’s Hindi Urdu Flagship Program (HUF) completed its first year of teaching in 2007-2008 under the direction of Herman van Olphen. As the first Hindi Urdu Flagship Program in the nation, HUF assumes a special place within the larger community of the national Language Flagship, which is composed of intensive language learning programs administered at a variety of universities across the U.S. and partner institutions abroad. With a view towards meeting the demands of a rapidly diversifying culture, the Language Flagship’s goal is to create global professionals who command a superior proficiency in targeted languages through a unique partnership of government, education, and business.

In its inaugural year of teaching, HUF enrolled a diverse group of ten undergraduate students and is expecting an intake of ten to fifteen more in each successive year, eventually enrolling up to sixty students. Students entering the program in 2007-2008 were chosen for their academic excellence and promise in language learning. Although the group included both heritage and non-heritage learners, each student had prior knowledge of Hindi or Urdu, which is an entrance requirement of the program. HUF’s first group represents a variety of degree majors, including business, pre-medicine, government, communications, and engineering. In addition to their coursework at UT, students will spend their junior year in India. HUF is currently developing its study abroad program through a joint arrangement between the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) and the University of Texas.

The first intake of Flagship students was challenged with a rigorous curriculum developed by Flagship instructors (Herman van Olphen, Director; Rupert Snell, Associate Director, Hindi; Akbar Hyder, Associate Director, Urdu; and Jishnu Shankar, Senior Lecturer) in keeping with the national Language Flagship’s intention to foster innovative language learning. Further innovation in the area of curriculum is underway with the award by IIE of $150,000 for the first year of a three-year project titled ‘Language for Health: The Practice of Medicine in Hindi and Urdu,’ which will be carried out in collaboration with New York University and ...
Columbia University. Working with UT’s Texas Language Technology Center directed by Carl Blyth, Rupert Snell is developing a ‘Spoken Thesaurus,’ an innovative pedagogical project designed for dissemination through podcasts; this effort focuses on vocabulary building through the exploration of words with related meanings. Several other such innovative audio-visual teaching aids are also being developed by the HUF team. In November 2007, HUF hosted the “LEARN Workshop,” which brought together Hindi and Urdu instructors from around the country to discuss pedagogical issues and innovative language projects. In summer 2008 HUF will collaborate with UT’s Department of Asian Studies to offer an intensive course in Hindi. The course, developed by Jishnu Shankar, is designed to enable talented language students without extensive knowledge of Hindi and Urdu to enter the program in fall 2009.

This year’s Flagship Speaker Series, organized by Akbar Hyder and Herman van Olphen, provided unique opportunities for students to learn about current scholarship in Hindi and Urdu and to interact with distinguished scholars in the language classroom. Open to the public, the series included talks by Ali Mir, William Paterson University, “Romance and Revolution in Bollywood Songs”; Frances Pritchett, Columbia University, “How to Read Ghalib”; Mehr Farooqui, University of Virginia, “Quranic Exegesis and the Development of Urdu in the 18th Century”; and Susham Bedi, Columbia University, “What Does Home Mean to Me? Journeys of an Indian Immigrant.”

Special student initiatives for the year included the organization of a radio program in Hindi-Urdu which was aired on UT’s Student Radio station; the presentation of two Qawwali performances open to all UT students, faculty, and staff; a banquet; and a regular Flagship study hall.

The national Language Flagship has identified an urgent need to develop programs that incorporate language learning at the earliest levels of school. Thus HUF is supporting teacher training workshops established through Startalk grants which were awarded by the National Foreign Language Center to New York University and the HEB School District in Dallas. Further development of linkages between HUF and K-12 educators is anticipated.

Sarah Green holds a Ph.D. in Asian Cultures and Languages and is Associate Director for Student and Community Relations in the Hindi Urdu Flagship Program, UT Austin.
The South Asia Institute in collaboration with other campus units proposes to organize a conference on the tenth anniversary of Eqbal Ahmad’s death. The conference will be held in Austin on April 23-24, 2009. Its purpose is to bring scholars and activists together to discuss how Ahmad’s writings and life’s work might help us understand and negotiate the struggle for justice and against tyranny in this new century.

Journalist, writer, political activist, and academic, Eqbal Ahmad was born in British India and grew up in Pakistan. He participated in the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria and was at the forefront of the anti-Vietnam war effort in the United States. A true citizen of the world whom Edward Said called the most original anti-imperialist analyst of the post war period, Eqbal eventually returned to South Asia to build a world class university in Pakistan, Khalidunia. His untimely death in May of 1999 cut short that project.

Organizer: Kamran Ali, Anthropology (asdar@mail.utexas.edu)
An International Conference

ASOKA AND THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA

Sponsors: University of Texas at Austin; Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Indian Council for Historical Research; India International Centre; American Institute of Indian Studies Centre for Art and Archaeology.

Romila Thapar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India.
B. R. Mani, Archaeological Survey of India
Vidula Jaiswal, Banaras Hindu University, India
Devendra Handa, Panjab University, India
Harry Falk, University of Berlin, Germany
Oskar von Hinuber, University of Freiburg, Germany
Herman Tieken, University of Leiden, Netherlands
Osmund Bopearacchi, Sorbonne University, Paris, France
Grant Parker, Stanford University, USA
Shailendra Bhandare, Oxford University, UK
John Strong, Bates College, USA
Max Deeg, University of Cardiff, UK

Patrick Olivelle, University of Texas, USA
Juhyong Rhie, Seoul National University, Korea
Charles Hallisey, Harvard University, USA
Sizuka Sasaki, University of Tokyo, Japan
Ali Nadeem Rezavi, Aligarh Muslim University, India
Richard Salomon, University of Washington, Seattle, USA
Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, ICHR, India
Janice Leoshko, University of Texas, USA
Himanshu Prabha Ray, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
Bhagawan Josh, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
Professor Sudha Pai, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
Virchand Dharamsey, Independent Scholar, Mumbai, India

VITAL SIGNS:
PREDICTION, PROGNOSIS, AND DEATH IN SOUTH ASIA

February 2009

This two-day symposium will be devoted to the roles of prediction and prognosis in various South Asian cultural settings, particularly within the social contexts of death, dying, and grave illness. The goal of the symposium will be to arrive at multiple understandings of the ways in which prediction and prognosis give death and dying a “voice” in South Asian cultures.

Organizer: Martha Selby, Asian Studies (ms@uts.cc.utexas.edu)
With over 50 faculty members in a dozen schools and departments, the University of Texas at Austin has one of the most distinguished South Asia programs in the country.

The South Asia Institute was established as part of a university initiative to promote South Asian programs, especially those pertaining to contemporary issues, across the entire university and in the larger community. As a National Resource Center for South Asia funded by a Title VI grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the institute sponsors major conferences, scholarly symposia and a weekly South Asia Seminar. The institute also provides Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships to students pursuing graduate degrees relating to South Asia in any department or school of the University.

Additionally, the Title VI grant also provides resources for outreach programs to K-12 schools, post-secondary institutions, business and civic organizations, and the Texas community at large. Another central mission of the Institute is to promote the study of contemporary South Asian languages in cooperation with the Department of Asian Studies and the Hindi-Urdu Flagship Program. Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Tamil and Urdu are currently taught in the department.

The South Asia Initiative underscores the University’s commitment to making the University of Texas South Asia program the best in the country within the next several years.