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Michele Friedner with students from the St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind in Chennai

Focus on Which Family?: Deaf Identity and Social Movements in India
by Michele Friedner

I have spent the past year living in Bangalore, India researching the lived experiences of sign language using deaf young adults in this city. For most of my informants, deafness is not considered to be a disability but rather is a unique ontological state that requires different modalities of communication. Deaf people are not very much a part of the mainstream disability movement (although there is a new National Association of the Deaf that has been forging ties with the national Disability Rights Group) due to the fact
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AIIS – India International Centre (IIC) Lecture Series

AIIS continued holding its well-received lecture series for its fellows in conjunction with the India International Centre in Delhi. On April 27, 2009 Mandavi Mehta, AIIS Junior Fellow and Doctoral candidate in the Department of History of Art and Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania spoke on the subject: “The Mouse who could be king: Innovating tradition in the state of Chamba.” The program was chaired by Professor Mridula Mukherjee, Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and Professor of Modern Indian History at CHS-JNU. Professor Bernard Bate, AIIS Senior Fellow from the Department of Anthropology at Yale University spoke on the subject, “Political Tamil and the Tamil Political, Madras 1905-1919” on May 18, 2009. That session was chaired by Dr. Dilip Menon, Reader at the History Department, Delhi University. Dr. Rashmi Sadana, AIIS Senior Fellow and visiting Associate Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology at Columbia University, gave a lecture on the subject “The Delhi Metro: Ethnography of the ‘New’ India” on June 18, 2009 in a program chaired by Professor Sanjay Srivastava, Professor of Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi. Finally, Professor Akhil Gupta an AIIS Senior Fellow from the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles spoke on “Refashioning selves, re-imaging futures: Media and Mobility in Call Centers” on July 22, 2009. This program was chaired by Professor Zoya Hasan, Professor of Political Science at Jawaharlal Nehru University.



AIIS Welcomes Two New Member Institutions in 2009

The Trustees of the American Institute of Indian Studies, at their annual board meeting in March 2009, voted to admit two new member institutions: Boston University and Washington University St. Louis. AIIS now has a record number of 62 member institutions.

Boston University’s new Center for the Study of Asia will provide a platform for the university to develop its resources in Asian Studies in general and South Asia in particular. The center sponsors a variety of activities, including scholarly lectures and conferences, film series and musical performances, and cultural events. It also contributes to curriculum development, faculty recruitment, and acquisition of library and audiovisual resources, and helps to manage community outreach programs. Course offerings related to India include “Culture, Society, and Religion in South Asia” in the Anthropology Department; “Islam in South Asian Politics” in the Department of International Relations; and “Culture, Society, and Religion in South Asia” in the Department of Religion. This year, the annual lecture in religion is being given by the noted Indian ocean historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam of UCLA. Boston University also plans on starting a regular South Asia lecture series as well as moving ahead with an exchange program in New Delhi. Boston University president Robert Brown has decided to make India a priority in creating a “global BU.” To this end, he has put together a four-person team to develop a long-term strategy to connect Boston University with India. The trustee from Boston University is Frank Korom, of the Department of Religion. Professor

Korom is the author of, among other books, *South Asian Folklore: A Handbook* (2006) and *A Village of Painters* (2006). In 2006 he received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship to support the completion of a book tentatively titled *Singing Modernity*. His research and teaching interests range from South Asian expressive traditions and contemporary religion to diaspora studies and transnationalism, which is reflected in his work on East Indians in the Caribbean and the global community of Tibetan refugees. He is also interested in film, ritual, and performance studies.

Washington University St. Louis offers a wide range of undergraduate courses on South Asia and a minor in South Asian Languages and Civilizations is offered in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures. Hindi is taught at the beginning and intermediate levels. The International and Area Studies Program facilitates undergraduate study abroad in India through four programs, including WUSTL’s Village India Program in Kalleda Village, Warangal District in Andhra Pradesh. WUSTL’s McDonnell International Scholars Academy recently established institutional affiliations in Mumbai, at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and in New Delhi, at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Faculty with research interests in South Asia include WUSTL trustee and former AIIS language fellow Catherine Adcock of the History Department. Her research interests include the religious traditions of South Asia, religion in political culture and religion and colonialism; Asad Ahmed of

the Department of Asian Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, whose interests include early Islamic history, provincial economy and administration and Islamic historiography and prosopographical literature; Sunita Parikh of the Department of Political Science, who just completed a book

manuscript on ethnicity, economy and the politics of violence in contemporary India; and Winifred Poster of the Department of Women and Gender Studies, who studies gender and the work place, particularly in the high-tech and call center industry in India.



AIIS Summer 2009 Language program

This past summer 143 students participated in thirteen different programs: Bangla in Kolkata; Gujarati in Ahmedabad; Hindi in Jaipur, Kannada in Mysore; Malayalam in Thiruvananthapuram, Marathi in Pune; Pali/Prakrit in Pune; Punjabi in Mohali; Sanskrit in Pune; Sindhi in Pune; Tamil in Madurai; Telugu in Visakhapatnam; and Urdu in Lucknow. This summer was the first time AIIS had held a Sindhi program. This summer's Sanskrit program was also the largest ever, with 15 students. Fifty-six students studying Bangla, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu were supported by the Critical Languages Scholarship program, funded by the U.S. State Department and operated by the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.



AIIS Urdu students learn about Sufism

This summer the Hindi program moved into a new facility in Bapu Nagar. The building has bright, clean rooms with state-of-the-art equipment and very good air conditioning. In addition to numerous computers and flat-screen video monitors, one large classroom on the ground floor is equipped with an overhead digital projector for large-group screenings of films, Power Point presentations, etc. The equipment is comparable to what one would expect in a well-equipped U.S. university.

Some highlights of the summer program included the Hindi program's field trip to a village called Tilonia, located about 90 kms from Jaipur, and famous for the Barefoot College. This college provides technical, educational, health and socio-economic services to the villagers around Tilonia. The students visited four following centers: the Rural Industry Center where women work with leather workers and weavers in order to generate more income for their families; assistance with raw materials, marketing, design, and credit; the Solar Energy Center, which makes solar lanterns and solar ovens. There are more than thirty women interns from nine African countries in Tilonia learning to assemble lanterns. After finishing their training, they will go back to their respective countries to open new training centers and train people there; the Communication Center, where villagers use traditional media like



AIIS Punjabi students enjoy the Tej Festival

puppetry for educational and awareness programs; and the Community Radio Station, which is run by women from the rural community. Students and teachers from the Malayalam program visited Sivananda Ashram which is very near the Lion Safari Park in Neyyar Dam. The group first traveled on the lake by boat and then walked through the forest and saw a deer park and a crocodile park. Later they went to the Ashram. Students were able to speak with the guide and other native speakers in the Ashram. Marathi students traveled to Kolhapur for an overnight field trip. They visited the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Museum, Mahalakshmi Temple, Anandrao Powar center of Ancient War art and Siddhagiri Museum. Students also went to the Deputy Commissioner's Office and interviewed Mr. Ganesh Deshmukh, the deputy commissioner of Kolhapur Municipal Corporation in his office. This visit was reported in three local daily newspapers: *Tatun Bharat*, *Pudhari*, and *Lokmat*. It was also reported on Zee News TV.

The American Institute of Indian Studies Language Programs in India Summer 2010 and Academic Year 2010-2011

The American Institute of Indian Studies welcomes applications for its summer 2010, academic year 2010-2011, and fall semester 2010 language programs in India. Programs to be offered include: Hindi (Jaipur), Bangla (Kolkata), Tamil (Madurai), Marathi (Pune), Urdu (Lucknow), Punjabi (Mohali), Telugu (Visakhapatnam), Malayalam (Thiruvananthapuram), and Sanskrit (Pune) and Pali/Prakrit (Pune). We will offer other Indian languages upon request. All academic year applicants should have the equivalent of two years of prior language study. For Sanskrit we require the equivalent of two years of prior study; for summer Bengali, Hindi, Tamil and Urdu we require the equivalent of one year of prior study. We can offer courses at all levels, including beginning, in other Indian languages for the summer. Academic year students are eligible to apply for an AIIS fellowship funded by the U.S. Department of Education which would cover all expenses for the program. Summer students should apply for funding, such as FLAS fellowships, from their home institutions. A number of grants will be available to summer students in Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu through the Critical Languages Scholarship program, funded by the U.S. State Department. AIIS will have some financial aid available for other summer students. AIIS is also offering a fall semester program. Instruction in Hindi and Urdu will be offered at any level for the fall semester, but for other languages students should have the equivalent of two years of prior language study. Students need to provide their own funding for the fall semester program. The application deadline is January 31, 2010. Applications can be downloaded from the AIIS web site at www.indiastudies.org. Questions can be directed to aiis@uchicago.edu or 773-702-8638.

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that deaf people do not see themselves as having similar concerns and issues to other disabled people. As the Indian state has been deficient in creating an appropriate education system for deaf children and as there is no formally recognized or accepted sign language (nor is there an acknowledgement that sign language is a real language in and of itself), communication can never be taken for granted. My research intends to look at what possibilities and constraints exist for deaf young adults when they finish their secondary schooling in light of the fact that in many cases they emerge from school semi-literate at best. I chose to situate my research in Bangalore as it is unique in several ways: it is the Information Technology (IT) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) hub of India and it has been discursively imagined as a place of infinite possibility; deaf people move to Bangalore from all over India in search of employment; it has an interesting missionary past as a result of which American Sign Language was brought to Bangalore and one of the country's best deaf schools and training centers was established here; there are many non governmental organizations (NGOs) which provide vocational training for deaf young adults; and the deaf communities of Bangalore are not very politically organized and they rarely are mobilized to make claims against the state.

As I am interested in how deaf young adults create and envision futures, I chose to situate my work in four areas: vocational training programs run by NGOs where deaf young adults go for training to learn basic computer skills, actual sites of employment including BPO corporations, data entry operation (DEO) offices, coffee shops, tailoring shops, pickle factories, and machine making factories, deaf churches, and multi-level marketing business meetings. I circulated through these four spaces with deaf young adults as they lived their every day lives. As there was a lot of "waiting" that took place: waiting for vocational training courses to start, waiting for employment opportunities, and waiting to earn money, I was interested in understanding what this experience of waiting meant for my informants and what their understanding of patience (a word which they often used) meant. I also conducted home visits with quite a few of my informants which posed interesting methodological and ethical issues. It is a common complaint and lament among deaf young adults that they have very little

communication with their families; their parents often do not know sign language and according to my informants, communication can often be limited to "Are you hungry?" and "Do you want to sleep now?" and so on. When I went for home visits, I would bring a Kannada or Urdu translator and then I would be responsible for interpreting for the deaf young adults unless there was a relative or friend present who knew sign language. And very often, there would seem to be multiple interviews happening at one time as answers elicited from the deaf young adults were very different from those received from their families. On a few occasions, I did not bring an interpreter and I had the deaf young adults themselves act as the communication mediator. This was helpful as I was interested in understanding how they were able to communicate with their families. Spending time with families was in no way the most important part of my research as deaf young adults often stated that they felt alienated from their families and that they felt a greater sense of belonging with other deaf people. Therefore my research was based more heavily in so-called public spaces like NGOs, churches, and deaf outings at coffee shops. I was also very lucky as the location in which I chose to live, Kammanahalli, a newer Bangalore Development Association layout in the northeast of Bangalore, had many deaf young adults living there and there were two deaf churches located near my house. I would occasionally have late night dinners with one of the deaf pastors at the Keralan place where he ate every night, and deaf people would come by to my house to ask my husband and me questions or say hello. I also conducted research in Chennai, the site of some of the oldest and most famous deaf schools in India, and Mysore, the site of a polytechnic institution for disabled students of which over 80 percent are deaf.

Currently there are three major NGOs providing computer training and employment placements to deaf young adults. Deaf students from all over India come to these NGOs as a result of their reputations. What was interesting to me was that deaf young adults often circulated between the three centers: they would do a one year course at one NGO (which they had to pay for), then they would go to another center and do a three month free course, and then finally, there was a third NGO which provided BPO training and which functioned as a "finishing school" of sorts. What was interesting too was that all three of these NGOs promised placements to deaf young adults

and with the exception of the third NGO whose managing trustee formerly worked in the corporate world, had excellent connections, and knew how to “talk to the talk” of the corporate world and therefore reassure corporate executives about the value of hiring disabled workers, the NGOs were extremely poor in their placement records. In fact, one NGO, in an attempt to ingeniously mislead funders, decided to define placement as “giving a candidate an address for an interview.” As trainers were overextended at these NGOs, very often deaf young adults would sit around and talk about the other NGOs providing services, where deaf people were getting jobs, and which church in Bangalore was the best. There are eight deaf churches in Bangalore, as everyone told me, and most deaf people have visited at least one of these and a few regularly attend one or two. As deaf young adults at these trainings came from all over India, although mostly from the South, church songs (in sign language) and teachings became a common locus of affinity and conversation. Jehovah’s Witness halls in Kerala teach the same thing as those in Tamil Nadu and the songs that “The Family” teaches in Mysore are the same as those taught in Coimbatore.

I learned rather unfortunately that talking about churches and religion can be a sensitive topic and at one point one of the NGOs that I was conducting research at decided that I was a missionary operating with the intention of converting deaf people to Christianity. In fact this was an interesting and important (albeit a bit tense) year to be conducting research on churches in Bangalore due to the anti-church violence in Karnataka and Orissa which resulted in people asking difficult questions about the role of secularism and religious tolerance in India. While one of the churches, a small storefront church, lost its lease due to anti-church sentiment, the deaf churches seemed largely insulated and removed from these tensions. In contrast to the hearing NGO management at this one NGO which feels that religion is a sensitive topic which should not be discussed in public, deaf young adults publically and openly will debate the positive and negative attributes of the different deaf churches in Bangalore. These church goers often engage in complex negotiations with their families over attending these churches: some lie and tell their families that they are going to school, some tell their families that they are going to church to learn English, and others argue and plead with their

families in order to be permitted to convert. As the majority of these churches have either deaf pastors and leaders or excellent sign language interpreters (in a city where such interpreters are scarce), it is interesting to think about what possibilities these churches offer for communication and development. Many deaf young adults have told me that they were never taught anything about Hinduism or Islam by their families and that they don’t understand their families’ religious practices. Yet, they say that when they go to church they are able to understand. Some of these churches use innovative power point presentations for teaching English words and have elaborate sign language choirs, other churches provide free lunches, and still others offer multimedia learning materials and individual tutorials. It is going to be an interesting challenge to unpack the role of the churches within the fabric of everyday deaf life in Bangalore and what “conversion” means for deaf young adults. These churches are relatively new phenomenon as they started developing in the early 1990s and each has a unique story. In interviews with older deaf people, I learned that prior to the development of these churches, there were few deaf social spaces outside of schools. As part of my research, I spent almost every Friday night and Sunday morning at a different church although I focused my research most heavily on one particular church started by an older deaf man and his hearing daughter which is affiliated with a large hearing evangelical church in India (which was embroiled in the conversion controversy in September- October 2008). The church brought a young deaf man, formerly a weaver from Tamil Nadu, who had been trained by an international deaf missionary organization to preside over the deaf church. When I first started attending the church in August of 2008, it was very much the “underdog” church with only 15 attendees. However, by August 2009, as a result of the young deaf pastor’s energetic recruitment of deaf young adults at various NGOs, training centers, bus stands, and through word of mouth, the number of attendees had doubled. As a person of Jewish faith, it was interesting for me to spend so much time in (sometimes anti-semitic) churches and to constantly be witnessed to. I explained my role as a researcher again and again to no avail; I was often seen as a potential convert. Also, as someone who was known to attend multiple churches within the very competitive religious field of deaf churches. I was often asked questions by pastors and church leaders

about what *other* churches were doing and who was going to these churches.

I often spent time with the same people who I interacted with at training centers and at churches as I wanted to understand the different aspects of their lives. Because of security issues, it was difficult to gain access to multinational BPO companies in order to observe deaf employees working. It was particularly rewarding for my research when I managed to gain access to one multinational company where 14 deaf young adults trained by one of the NGOs had been placed. I was therefore able to interview and spend time with them both at the NGO and at the workplace where I took breaks with them and enjoyed the lovely free coffee in the break room. As India does not have a disability protection or rights law that applies to the private sector, these corporations and companies have no legal mandate to hire people with disabilities and so they do so under the mandate of “corporate social responsibility” (CSR). In addition as “normal” workers have higher rates of attrition compared to disabled workers, these companies have realized that deaf and disabled people provide them with a more stable workforce for which they *also* get brownie points for. There is one DEO office in Bangalore which only hires people with disabilities: it features a sign outside its offices which says “Only physically handicapped people need apply”. In an interview with the chief executive officer and owner of this company, she told me that initially they hired “normal” people but they would leave very quickly and then she realized that if she hired disabled people they would stay on the job longer. She has won national awards and publicity for her work- even though she pays very poorly. Deaf people are increasingly being tracked into the BPO/DEO sector; on visits to NGOs, I observed NGO workers advising deaf job seekers: “You are deaf and so you should work with a computer. This way you don’t have to communicate with normal people”. As this sector is largely populated by young people, it will be interesting to see what happens in the future. What opportunities will these deaf youth have to develop within these jobs? What will happen to India Shining as these young adults enter later twilight years?

These rather precarious employment “opportunities” are perhaps why more and more deaf people, including young adults, are turning to multi-level marketing (otherwise known as

network marketing) schemes in which social capital is turned into financial capital. These schemes also serve as “deaf businesses” and deaf people often told me “hearing people have businesses so why can’t we?” As part of these businesses, deaf people invest between Rs 7000 (around 150 US dollars) and Rs 32,000 (around 800 US dollars) to join and they often receive some kind of product. They then go out and sell the business to other deaf people in order to get them to join under them; deaf people from all over India are joining and so a team can have people from multiple states. As there were multiple deaf teams in Bangalore and only a finite amount of deaf people, it was interesting to watch deaf people fight over potential members and unfortunately this has led to great disharmony and animosity within the deaf communities of Bangalore. In one case, a young deaf man turned against his former deaf mentor (who interestingly enough happens to be a Hare Krishna guru cum network business leader) to start his own team in Bangalore. As these schemes are very vertical in nature and are premised upon having a deaf leader, they raised interesting questions for me about hierarchy, horizontality, and togetherness within the deaf communities. I was extremely uncomfortable at one point when I went with deaf leaders of one team from Pune to Coimbatore in search of new members. I watched these affluent city slickers reach out to poor tailors and blacksmiths in an attempt to get them to join their team. When I asked people why they were joining, the common refrain was “Well, what else can we do? The government doesn’t take care of us and this is an opportunity for the future.” It seems to me that these network marketing businesses function very similarly to churches as they are about deaf people, motivated by the idea of “deaf deaf same”, or a shared sense of being in the world, recruiting other deaf people. The theme of “deaf deaf same” was ever present in my interviews with deaf people.

I will be returning to Berkeley in October 2009 where I will analyze my data and write my dissertation. I hope to conduct future research among deaf people living in Coimbatore/Tirupur in order to compare the experiences of deaf young adults living in Bangalore with those working in the garment industry in these areas; I am interested in the possibilities and constraints engendered by different forms of labor and labor structures. Also, I wonder what the deaf

experience is like in a city that is not as “exceptional” and shiny as Bangalore.

Michele Friedner is a Ph.D. candidate from the University of California, Berkeley. She was an AIIS junior fellow from October 2008 to September 2009.



The American Institute of Indian Studies is pleased to announce that the following scholars and artists have been awarded fellowships to carry out their projects in India in 2009-2010:

Amit Basole, a graduate student in the Department of Economics at the University of Massachusetts, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, “Muslim Voices: Oral Histories of Post-Partition South Asia.”

Pratyusha Basu, an assistant professor in the Department of Geography at the University of South Florida, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out her project, “Cows and Capital: The Future of Dairy Farmers in Suburbanizing Delhi.”

Joel Bordeaux, a graduate student in the Department of Religion at Columbia University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, “The Light of Kali in the King’s Heart: Power, Poetry and Raja Krishnacandra Ray.”

Namrata Gaikwad, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, “Men Against Matrilineage: Contestations Around Gender Politics in Shillong.”

Robert Goldman, a professor in the Department of South and SE Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, was awarded senior short-term fellowship to carry out his project, “The Final Chapter: Introduction, Translation and Annotation of the Uttarakanda of the Valmiki Ramayana.”

Kathryn Hardy, a graduate student in the Department of South Asian Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, “Filming the Rural in the City: The Urban Production of Rural Values in Bhojpuri Film.”

Stephen Hughes, a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at The School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out his

project, “Itineraries of Film: Distribution, Exhibition and Audiences in South India.” Professor Hughes’ fellowship is being funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Anil Jacob, a graduate student in the Department of Political Science at Rutgers University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, “Business-State Relations in Post-Liberalization India.”

Dipti Khera, a graduate student in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, “Urban Imaginaries Between Empires: Mapping from Udaipur to Jaipur, 1707-1832.”

Peter Knapczyk, a graduate student in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Texas, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, “Marsiya, 1650-1800: Literary Traditions and Religious Identities.”

Douglas Knight, Jr., a musician, was awarded a performing/creative arts fellowship to carry out his project, “Performance in the Family Style of T. Balasaraswati.”

Riyad Koya, a graduate student in the Department of History at the University of California, Berkeley, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, “India Diaspora and Personal Law: From Imperial to National Citizenship.”

Leah Lowthorp, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, “From the Local to the Global: Kutivattam as UNESCO Intangible Heritage of Humanity.”

Akshay Mangla, a graduate student in the Department of Political Science at the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Welfare of the Voiceless: Explaining the Persistence and Decline of Child Labor in India." Mr. Mangla is the seventh recipient of the Priscilla M. Boughton-Stanley Kochanek Graduate Fellowship in Indian Studies.

Durba Mitra, a graduate student in the Department of History at Emory University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Examining the 'Prostitute': Medicine, Sexuality and the Body in Colonial Calcutta."

Anne Murphy, an assistant professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out her project, "Seva (Service) and the Making of Sikh Ethical Practice."

Vangal Muthukumar, a graduate student in the Department of South and SE Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Literary Culture in Post-Medieval Tamil Nadu."

Iswari Pandey, an assistant professor in the Program in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric at Syracuse University, was awarded a senior fellowship to conduct research on the topic, "Ways of Writing: Composing (in) Global English, Globalizing Composition." Professor Pandey's fellowship is being funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Anand Pandian, an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out his project, "Landscape and Emotion in Tamil Cinema."

Bhavani Raman, an assistant professor in the Department of History at Princeton University, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out her project, "Document Raj: Office Politics, Writing and Authority in Early Colonial Madras, 1771-1860."

Anne Reinhardt, an assistant professor in the Department of History at Williams College, was awarded a senior fellowship to conduct research on the topic, "Cultures of Capitalism in China and India, 1920-2000." Professor Reinhardt's fellowship is being funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Peter Allen Roda, a graduate student in the Department of Music at New York University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Making Banares Tabla: An Actor-Network Approach to Musical Production."

Lloyd Rudolph, an emeritus professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out his project, "Romanticism's Child: Essays on and Documents Related to James Tod."

Suzanne Shulz, a graduate student in the Department of Radio-Television-Film at the University of Texas, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Speaking to the City: First Person Voices in Lucknow's Urdu Media."

Seema Sohi, an assistant professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out her project, "Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Empire and Indian Anti-Colonialism."

Kaushik Sunder Ranjan, an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Irvine, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out his project, "Experimental Values: Global Clinical Trials in India."

Amanda Weidman, an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Bryn Mawr College, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out her project, "Female Voices in the Public Sphere: Playback Singing as Cultural Phenomenon in South India." Professor Weidman's fellowship is being funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Max Zbiral-Teller, a musician, was awarded a performing/creative arts fellowship to carry out his project, "The American Santoor."

AIIS Provides Services to Group Projects Abroad and other Programs

AIIS provides a variety of services for American study programs in India, including Groups Projects Abroad, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Among the programs recently supported by AIIS:

Teaching South Asia Through Material Objects and Performance Events, was a Group Project Abroad organized by the North Carolina Center for South Asian Studies and held in the summer of 2008. The project brought to India six faculty teaching at four universities and eight teachers from four International Baccalaureate (IB) secondary schools in Raleigh NC that are piloting a new outreach initiative of the Center to integrate international studies of South Asia into the IB curriculum. The goal was to create curriculum that reflected a changing India and especially the way that crafts and performance -- aspects of visual culture -- have been harnessed to address these changes and to expand undergraduate area studies offerings at the three Center campuses already offering South Asia courses. According to the project abstract posted on the Department of Education's GPA web site, "... the focus on material objects will move out from the objects themselves to the conditions that shape transactions and define the arenas in which they occur. The "material" arena will be broadly understood to encompass urban spaces and architecture, including temples, shrines and mosques as well as civic buildings associated with rulers; material culture (from musical instruments to textiles to medical *materia*); inscriptions; and literary tracts and posters (and their printing, sale, and consumption). The resulting curriculum will examine how material worlds reflect, but also create, dynamic processes by which forms of community are defined and interact to form civil societies and how these patterns change over time. Complementing this materials-based focus will be work on what is now broadly defined as performance events, ranging from dance and musical productions to politically- and religiously-prompted processions, to storytelling and devotional or folk song genres as well as other oral presentations... These objects and performances can be analyzed for the ways they enable citizens to talk about values, rights, responsibilities and roles in particular contexts, and about the relationship between an individual and the state."

The group spent a month in India visiting Delhi, Agra, Rajasthan, Mysore and Kerala. AIIS staff met the group at the airport, arranged for hotels, organized the logistics for three of the four regions,

and hosted a half-day workshop at the end at the Gurgaon campus. AIIS fellows joined the group for outings and meals. Some results of the project have included: 1) the school district has provided significant publicity to the project (beginning with a press release that made its way into the local paper, and including videos on its website); 2) two middle school teachers have turned themselves into school-wide resources, creating a cart with material objects from the trip and prepping fellow teachers in any subject area that lends itself to study of India, as well as visiting these classes when requested; 3) two high school teachers have lent their support and new knowledge to a new service-learning trip being planned to Rajasthan, which will provide students with an opportunity to work in two NGO-conducted projects.

Religious Pluralism in India: Islam, Hinduism and other Traditions, was another Group Project Abroad, organized by the University of Colorado.

The South, Southeast, and West Asia Outreach Program (SSEWA) of the Center for Asian Studies (CAS) conducted a four-week seminar project in July 2009 for 12 secondary school teachers. The program addressed the need for 1) integration of international studies, specifically religious studies with a significant component focusing on Islam and Hinduism, into the secondary social sciences and humanities curricula; and 2) professional development that enhances secondary educators' content knowledge about India and South Asia, emphasizing the major world religions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Christianity, cultural study, and cross-cultural pedagogy. Participants were asked to consider such questions as: 1) How can the study of religions of India, specifically with a significant component focusing on Islam and Hinduism, be integrated into the social sciences and humanities?; 2) What are the most significant aspects of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism and Christianity, as they are lived and practiced in contemporary India? How do current practices differ from historical practices?; 3) How are the essential philosophies of these traditions reflected in temple and shrine design and decoration?; 4) What is the relationship between current pop culture expressions, such as Bollywood film and poster art, and Hindu mythology?

AIIS representative met the group at the International Airport on arrival; arranged hotels in Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Pushkar, Ranakpur, Dharamsala, Amritsar and Varanasi; arranged transportation and tour escorts in

all those cities; arranged visits to various temples, museums, muths and Ashrams and religious institutions including the Central Higher Tibetan Institute and settlements of the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, Chaitanya Prema Sansthan in Vrindavan and the International School for Jain Summer Studies in New Delhi; arranged lectures in each city; arranged cell phones and data cards for internet use and provided the group with an LCD projector for their time in India.

South Asian Visual Culture and Expressions of Religious Identity, Social Construction, and Nation, a project of Denison University, that was funded by the Mellon Foundation Project brought eight faculty members to India from July 26 to August 16, 2009. The project's goal was to produce a traveling exhibition, and accompanying didactic materials, documenting South Asian visual culture, including 19th century antique chromolithographic prints and early 20th century "mythological" films, photographs, advertisements, Hindu TV serials of the great religious-themed literary epics (*Ramayana*,

Mahabharata), films and film accoutrements (posters, costumes, etc.) and 21st century animated and interactive online programming. Participants were encouraged to advance their own scholarship on South Asian visual culture and its relationship with religious practice, globalization and construction of identity. The participants, in consultation with experts in the field and scholars from South Asian institutions, interviewed individuals active in each of these modern and postmodern "traditions," with the goal of producing essays and didactic materials for the exhibition. The exhibition will premiere at the Denison Museum in the 2010-2011 school year. The group first went to Chennai to interview billboard artists, then went on to Sivakasi, to Bangalore where their visit included the Centre for the Study of Communication and Society, Mumbai to visit Bollywood directors and set designers, and finally Delhi, where the group visited the Jawaharlal Nehru University School of Art & Aesthetics. AIIS met the group upon arrival in Chennai, and arranged transportation and hotels in each city.



Exhibition and Conference on Ashoka held in New Delhi

The Conference on Ashoka and the Making of Modern India was a project of the University of Texas, Austin in collaboration with Jawaharlal Nehru University, AIIS and the India International Centre. The conference took place between August 3-10, 2009 and included 24 scholars. The conference had two major foci: the ongoing reassessment of evidence relating to Ashoka and the consideration of his significance in historical memory. Political reforms as well as the politico-religious ideology that Ashoka promulgated made him a pivotal figure in later Indian history and elsewhere in the world. Scholarly papers presented at the conference also addressed some of the ways that Ashoka has been re-imagined in India as well as in other parts of the world, such as China, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The program also included a public lecture by Professor Richard Salomon of the University of Washington, who spoke on "The Problem of the Origin and Early Development of Writing in India."

A travelling photo exhibition titled "As Long as the Sun and Moon Exist: Looking at Ashoka's Traces in India" was organized in conjunction with the conference at the IIC. Most of the photographs, drawings, maps and old documents featured in the exhibit were drawn from the AIIS Center for Art and Archaeology's photo archives and library. Other materials came from collections such as the Archaeological Survey of India and the Alkazi Foundation for the Arts in New Delhi as well as private collections. The exhibition was curated by Professor Janice Leoshko of the University of Texas, the chair of the AIIS art and archaeology committee, with assistance from the CA & A staff. The purpose of this exhibition was to highlight the different places and types of evidence in which traces of Ashoka have been found in the subcontinent including pillars, rocks, coins, sculptures and archaeological materials. While the exhibits demonstrated a vast variety of materials known so far, it also underscored the fact that how less is known about this king and his empire. The exhibition also acknowledged the ongoing dialogues of the past with the present, particularly its significance for the newly independent India which adopted the Ashokan capital from Sarnath along with the statement "*satyameva jayate* or truth alone triumphs" as the emblem of the new Republic. The exhibition has been displayed at the AIIS's campus in Gurgaon. The Nehru Memorial Museum & Library has also requested the Center to exhibit it in their museum for public viewing.





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