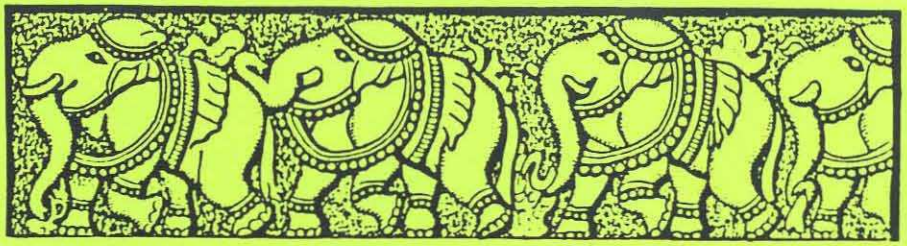


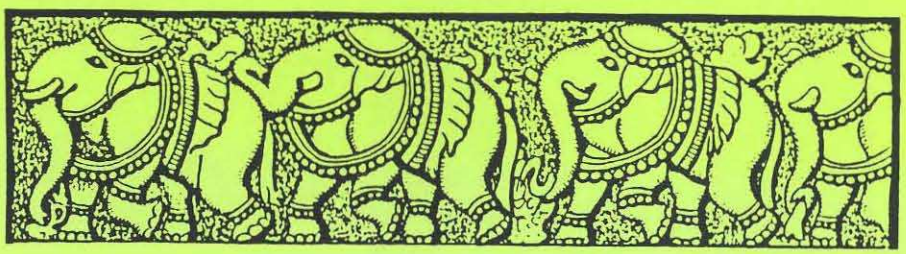
SOUTH ASIA AT CHICAGO: a history

by Richard H. Davis

foreword by Milton Singer

Committee on Southern Asian Studies
University of Chicago

COSAS NEW SERIES NO.1



Committee on Southern Asian Studies
The University of Chicago
1130 E. 59th St., Chicago, IL 60637

SOUTH ASIA AT CHICAGO: A HISTORY

Richard H. Davis

foreword by Milton Singer

COSAS New Series, No. 1
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Editor, David L. Gitomer

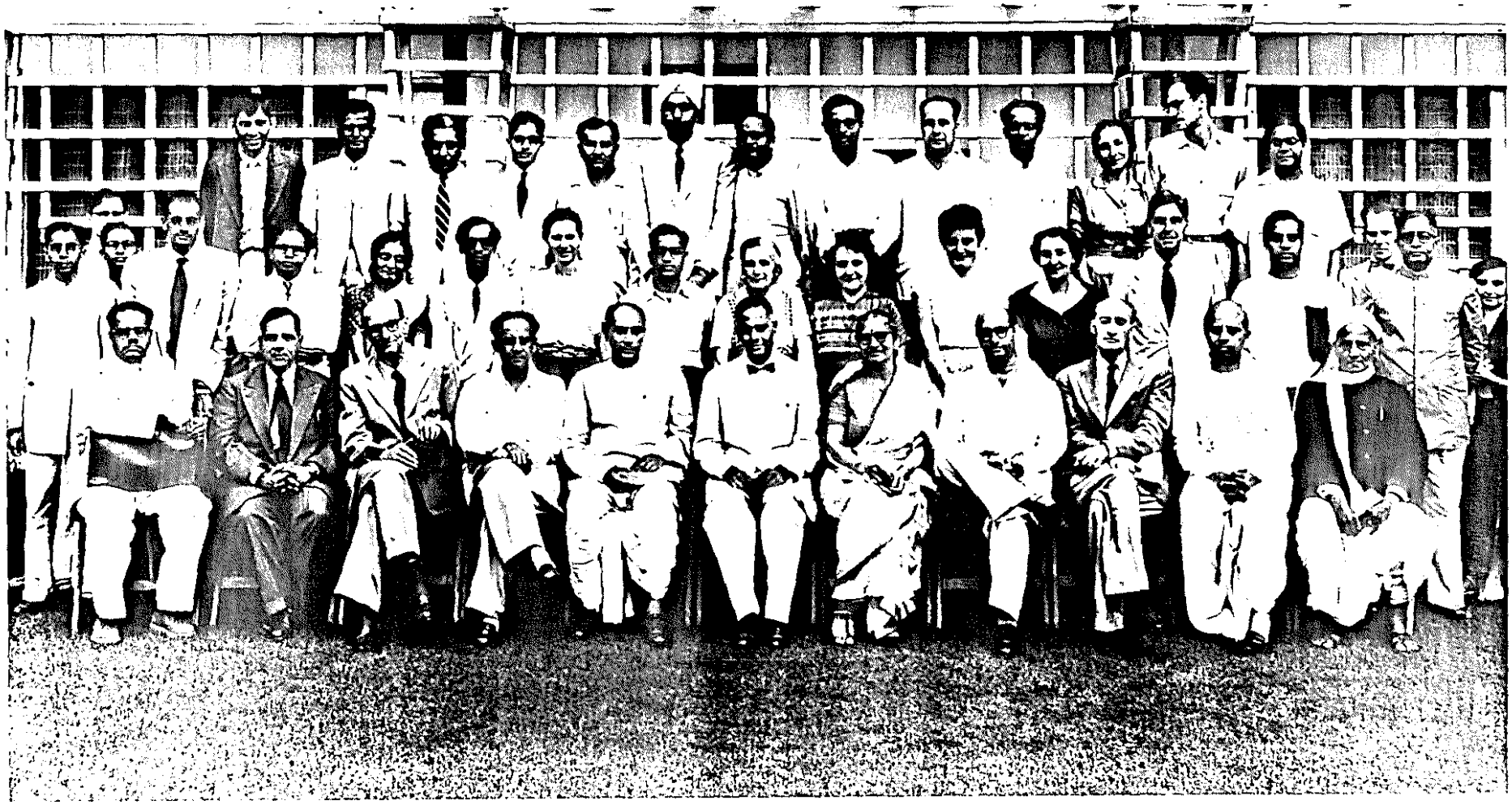
Photograph opposite: All-India Conference of Sociologists and Anthropologists, November 5-7, 1955, meeting under auspices of University of Madras and M.S. University of Baroda.

Among participants are:

(front row) A. Aiyappan (1), L.K. Bala Ratnam (2), U.R. Ehrenfels (3), Nirmal Kumar Bose (5), Irwati Karve (7), Robert Redfield (9), V. Raghavan (10), L.A. Krishna Iyer (11)

(second row) L.P. Vidyarthi (5), Pauline Kolenda (8), Margaret Redfield (10), Clarence E. Glick (14), T.K. Venkatesvara (15), Myron Weiner (16)

(third row) Indera Paul Singh (6), John Gumperz (9), M.N. Srinivas (10), Louise Harper (11), Edward Harper (12)



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FOREWORD

The study of South Asia is now organized at the University of Chicago under the auspices of five administrative units--the Committee on Southern Asian Studies, the College's "Introduction to South Asian Civilization" course and associated B.A. program, the South Asia Language and Area Center, Regenstein Library's South Asian Collection and the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations. The similarity in names of these units sounds as confusing as the personal names in a Welsh village! A major value of Richard Davis' History is that it dispels the confusion by telling how, when, under what circumstances, and for what purpose each of these administrative units was established. Even those of us who belong to the "ancestral" generation will find the story interesting and informative.

As a graduate student in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations who started his doctoral studies in 1978, Davis himself became curious about how the program originated and set about to research its "roots" by interviewing faculty, examining archival documents and correspondence, and reading reports, articles and books produced by the program. Since the Department was founded in 1965, it is testimony to the strength of academic departmentalization that its origins should already be buried in the mists of the past. The relationship of the Department's origin to the other administrative units is indeed complex, so it is not surprising that Davis needed to conduct an archaeological

"dig" into the Committee's files and into the memories of those involved with their development. Fortunately, the task is a feasible one because there are annual reports, biennial catalogues, decennial brochures and miscellaneous conference proceedings and personal histories. Davis has distilled a coherent and lucid story from this material.

One measure of the Committee's achievements is suggested by the fact that when it was officially organized there was no program of non-Western civilizations in the College, no South Asia Language and Area Center, no Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, no South Asian Collection, Bibliographic and Reference Services, and no South Asia Outreach. While the Committee cannot claim exclusive responsibility for bringing all these things about, it was certainly their sine qua non. By coordinating the teaching and research activities of faculty interested in South and Southeast Asia; implementing Robert Redfield's curricular model for how to think about a civilization; helping to raise funds from the Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford Foundations; and qualifying Chicago's programs for NDEA, PL480, AIIS grants and fellowships, the Committee set going much that was to follow in building the University's resources for South and Southeast Asia studies.

Davis' History points out that many of the Committee's founding fathers and mothers were "retooled" professors who became interested in South and Southeast Asia during the Second World War or in the immediate postwar period. He also observes that Professor George V. Bobrinskoy, the first Chairman of the Committee, was exceptional for representing a field of scholarship, Sanskrit and philology, which had a continuous history at Chicago beginning with the founding of the University in

1892. A prehistory of the Committee would note other exceptions--Fay-Cooper Cole in Anthropology, who specialized in the Philippines and Malaysia, Wellington Jones in the geography of India, Joachim Wach in the history of religions, Pierce Beaver in church history, Harley McNair in Far Eastern history, Theodore Schultz in economics, Robert Park in sociology. Except for Beaver and Schultz, these professors were no longer at the University when the Committee started to meet in 1954. But their students or successors--Fred Eggan, Norton Ginsburg, Gilbert White, Manning Nash, Edward Shils, Philip Hauser, Mircea Eliade, Joseph Kitagawa, Donald Bogue, Donald Lach, Gale Johnson, Richard McKeon, Bert Hoselitz, David Pingree, Eric Hamp, Stephen Hay, and Myron Weiner--became early members of the Committee and built on the legacy of their predecessors.

Davis' quote from my 1966 statement about Committee members performing a cosmic dance, a līlā, when taken along with his figures on the large percentage of graduates going into education rather than into government, business and other professions, may give the impression that Chicago's South Asia program is very idealistic and ivory tower. A corrective to this image would be to note his description of the wartime atmosphere in which "language and area" studies emerged and their strong predilection for "crash" programs that would produce instant "experts" on the languages, political geography, politics, economics, and cultures of the area. Robert Redfield's 1944 questioning of the educational value of such an approach to language and area studies and his plea for a longer-run historical and comparative approach to the study of living civilizations eventually influenced the Committee. In

1951 Redfield launched his cooperative international and interdisciplinary Ford Foundation project for comparing cultures and civilizations.

Several Chicago faculty members and graduate students participated in the Redfield project, especially in the seminar discussions or research on Chinese, Islamic, Indian, and Meso-American civilizations. Some of these, especially Gustave von Grunebaum, Marshall Hodgson, McKim Marriott, Bernard Cohn, and I, became members of COSAS and transplanted to it Redfield's comparative-historical approach in the study of South Asia. The representation of the comparative-historical approach was greatly strengthened on the Committee when it was joined by many members who shared the approach.

The study of economic, social, political and cultural policies in Southern Asia has been a persistent interest of some Committee members from the very beginning. In the early days this interest was perhaps more visibly expressed through the activities of a sister committee on the Comparative Study of New Nations, organized by Lloyd Fallers, Edward Shils, and Clifford Geertz. But economic modernization, population control, education and university reform, linguistic and political reorganization have been long-standing subjects for teaching and research by several Committee members. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph and their students have been particularly active in this area. An increasing number of graduates have been able to find positions in government, business, and the professions, as well as in teaching and academic research.

Most of us who started to teach the Introduction to Indian Civilization course in 1956 soon discovered that our students brought with them

popular images and stereotypes of India and Asia through which they approached the readings, discussions and performances in the course. More surprising was our discovery that we the staff shared some of these "scratches on our minds," as Harold Isaacs called them in his study of "experts." As a result of this discovery, I wrote "Passage to More Than India" in order to sketch the history of changing European and American images of Asia.

Davis refers in his History to an observation I made in 1966 on how student and popular images have been changing, away from exotic and uninformed stereotypes towards more realistic and practical knowledge of the area. At that time I also published an article "On Understanding Other Cultures and One's Own," which tried to show the mutual interdependence and interactions between knowledge of another culture and knowledge of one's own culture. Two decades later, and three decades after the Committee's founding, another change seems to be taking place: the "other culture" is becoming a part of our own culture. Indians, and other South Asians, may be worrying about the "Americanization of Indian culture" but they should realize that Americans are talking nervously about the "Indianization of America." This concern is evoked not only by the highly publicized spread of Hari Krishnas, Transcendental Meditators, assorted swamis and yogis. It is evoked by the less obvious increase of South Asian immigration to the United States. American students and teachers will find it increasingly difficult to maintain an image of "the mysterious East" in the daily presence of fellow students and fellow teachers who are South Asians. Perhaps such experience will lead them to view America as a polyphonic symphony of many cultures. As

they learn to listen to and play the music of other cultures in American halls perhaps they will also learn to soften the sounds and fury now being heard in international halls.

Milton Singer
Chicago
March, 1985

PREFACE

The University of Chicago has served as an important center for the study of the Indian subcontinent for almost thirty years, and it has become one of the major academic centers of South Asian studies in the United States. This is a history of the origins of the Chicago South Asian program, the story of how a particular program came into being. But through the account of this may be seen, as well, the evolution of modern South Asian studies in America. This history begins with the founding the University in 1892 and ends with 1966, at a point when the program had arrived at a state of institutional maturity. An epilogue briefly covers some developments of the nineteen years since that date.

The anthropologist Milton Singer, who was centrally involved in the development of the Chicago program, has written of it:

> The history of the program's development is neither a story of Topsy-like growth nor that of the unfolding and implementation of a foresighted grand and rational plan. It is rather a history of the interplay of changing perceptions of curricular needs, of one university's institutional structure, occasional special opportunities, administrators' vision and decisive support, availability of creative and concerned scholars, and of academic resources, both fiscal and scholarly. (Singer 1977:1)

I think this is an apt statement of the many forces and factors that go into the genesis and growth of a university program. Yet it would take a much fuller account than I am prepared to give to document and trace these many influences.

Accordingly, I have chosen to emphasize in this study the two facets I believe most important to an understanding of this program and the many American "area studies" programs like it: differing intellectual purposes, and historical circumstances reaching beyond the university. First I wish to delineate some of the differing perceptions of why it is important for Americans to study South Asia (or any area of the world), and of how it should be studied. And second, I want to show what particular combinations of historical events and circumstances provided a suitable context for the rapid growth of programs like Chicago's in the years after World War II.

As I have researched and written this account, I have wondered a great deal about what audience would be most interested in such a history. I decided to aim at two groups close-at-hand: current students in South Asian studies at the University of Chicago, and faculty members of the Committee on Southern Asian Studies (COSAS). I have been a graduate student in Indian studies departments now for eight years, and I have often been struck by the close interest, sometimes a consuming curiosity, I and other graduate students have about the programs in which we study. In interviewing professors who have been involved in the Chicago program, I have been equally struck by the strong and often conflicting opinions many of them hold about South Asian studies. My hope, then, is that this account can serve a purpose for both groups. For students, I would like to explain the origins of the organization where they study, an organization which frequently appears as an esoteric tradition or a maze of committees or subcommittees. For faculty, to whom much of this history may be known, I hope that it serves as a means of

reflecting on where South Asian studies at the University have come from and where they might go in the future. I trust that, by aiming at these audiences, I have not prevented others from finding this an interesting story.

Research on this essay was supported by a stipend from the Committee on Southern Asian Studies, University of Chicago. The Committee, however, has not sought to guide the contents in any way; this is not intended to be an "official" history. I am responsible for the contents, as well as for any errors of fact, interpretation, or emphasis that may occur.

Members of the University have been generous with their time and assistance. I wish to thank all those whom I interviewed or spoke with about this project: George Bobrinskoy, Bernard Cohn, Edward Dimock, Chauncy Harris, Ron Inden, McKim Marriott, Ralph Nicholas, Maureen Patterson, Frank Reynolds, Susanne Rudolph, Milton Singer, and George Stocking. I regret that I did not have time to interview more people. I was allowed access to unpublished files by the Department of Special Collections, Regenstein Library, and also to the relevant private files of the Dean of the College, the American Institute of Indian Studies, and the Committee on Southern Asian Studies. Frank Reynolds and Colin Masica, COSAS chairmen, at the beginning and completion of this project, have assisted me in several important ways. The Outreach Educational Project and its director, Joan Erdman, provided encouragement and typing, both greatly appreciated. Most of all, I would like to thank Milton Singer without whose interest, recollections, and many suggestions this project would have been greatly impoverished.

Richard Davis

CHAPTER I

THE ANCESTORS (1892-1945)

Although modern academic studies of South Asia began in the United States only after World War II, India figured as an object of study in American universities well before that. At the University of Chicago, as at other major schools, there were two main paths to the study of India during the pre-war period. The first was Sanskrit, taught in the context of historical philology. The second was centered around religion and motivated primarily by missionary concerns.

While courses in Sanskrit have been offered at the University every year since its opening over 90 years ago, the role of Sanskrit in the curriculum has shifted. In modern South Asian studies, Sanskrit is primarily viewed as a means of access to the classical tradition of Indian civilization. But before World War II, Sanskrit was considered valuable more as a part of a linguistic project, on account of its relation to other Indo-European languages.

The study of Sanskrit played an important role in the development of historical (or comparative) philology, which in turn was one of the paradigmatic sciences of the nineteenth century. Philology investigated the genetic relationships among languages by the comparison of their sound systems, grammatical structure, and vocabulary. By tracing the genealogy

of languages, it hoped also to discover the original source-language of the civilized world and the lines of cultural diffusion leading out from this source. Sanskrit, and particularly Vedic Sanskrit, was a crucial tool for philologists, because it was held up to be the recorded language closest in structure to proto-Indo-European, the supposed source of nearly all European and many Asian languages.

The modern American university was created virtually from scratch in the thirty years after the Civil War. Following German models, a small band of innovative educators radically altered existing colleges (as at Harvard and Yale) or else established entirely new institutions (Johns Hopkins, Chicago) setting a new pattern which American research-oriented universities have ever since followed. From the start, Sanskrit and historical philology was made part of the curriculum in these new universities. The first professor of Sanskrit in the United States was E.E. Salisbury, who returned from Germany "with a rich collection of Oriental Manuscripts," and began teaching at Yale in 1844. One of his few pupils, and by far his most important, was William Dwight Whitney. Whitney became interested in Sanskrit when his brother Josiah, who had been studying in Europe, brought back a Sanskrit grammar by Franz Bopp. The diligent Whitney devoured the grammar, sought out the only American Sanskritist then available, and within a year had learned everything Salisbury could teach him. He next went abroad to study with the great German Sanskritists, Albrecht Weber at Berlin and Rudolf von Roth at Tübingen. In 1869, the year Charles W. Eliot began transforming Harvard from a provincial training college for ministers into a modern university, Whitney got the appointment to a newly-created Harvard chair in Sanskrit,

where he remained for twenty-five years until his death. Whitney became the true patriarch of Sanskritic studies in America: corresponding secretary and president of the American Oriental Society (at times contributing as much as half the contents of its Journal), first president of the American Philological Association, and begetter of a small but dedicated second generation of Sanskritists. (Perhaps mahāpuruṣa is a more appropriate term for Whitney—an Indian pandit was even inspired to write the Viliyam-dvait-viṭani viduṣo jīvana-carita-kāvyam, a Sanskrit poem narrating the great deeds of "Viṭani.") Other universities took up Sanskrit as well, and by 1900 there were seven members of the Sanskrit club: Yale, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Pennsylvania, Columbia, California, and Chicago.

The University of Chicago, opened in 1892, was an ambitious attempt to create a "great university"—like the recently transformed Eastern schools--in the great city of the West. President William Rainey Harper, himself an Orientalist who taught Arabic and Hebrew in Chicago's early years, was anxious to appoint a full-time Sanskritist to the Chicago faculty. But there were limits to the Rockefeller largesse upon which the new University depended, and this was one place Harper found he could compromise. In Carl Darling Buck, an American then studying in Leipzig (Germany was still dominant in philology), he discovered a Sanskritist who could double as an all-purpose philologist. Buck was appointed to head--and was initially the only member of--the Department of Indo-European Comparative Philology. In his first year, he offered not only courses in Sanskrit and Indo-European philology, but also in Latin, Greek, Avestan, Old Persian, Lithuanian, and Old Bulgarian. (Not

bad for a beginning professor only twenty-six years old.) Buck's research interests led him increasingly to the European side of the Indo-European linguistic family, however, and in his long career he produced no significant work on Sanskrit.

Harper had agreed to hire another Sanskritist as soon as possible to relieve some of Buck's duties. First hired, in 1895, was a young Johns Hopkins Ph.D., Alfred W. Stratton. Stratton was at Chicago only four years, rather unhappy ones for him, before taking a more attractive position in India, at Punjab University. (Chicago was at that time still too "western" for some tastes.) Johann Jakob Meyer, who had just completed his Ph.D. at Chicago, replaced Stratton. Meyer switched after six years into the German Department, where he continued to do research in Sanskrit, but published it in German. (Meyer is best remembered for his Sexual Life in Ancient India, but he was also interested in artha and first translated Kauṭilya into German.) A third Sanskritist, Walter Eugene Clark, was hired in 1906, and this time the department managed to hold onto its new instructor. Clark took over most of the Sanskrit courses, leaving Buck free to teach European languages, and also taught non-language courses on Indian religion, philosophy, and history. In 1915, the name of the department was changed to "Comparative Philology, General Linguistics, and Indo-Iranian Philology," to deemphasize the Sanskrit component, but there was no significant change in the curriculum. The character of the South Asian offerings was by then fixed in tradition: two quarters of Sanskrit using Whitney's Sanskrit Grammar and Lanman's Reader, a quarter of Vedic, Kalidāsa's Sakuntala, Pāli, and

two or three non-language courses. This pattern did not change substantially until the 1950s.

George V. Bobrinskoy, a young emigre from the revolution in Russia, was appointed Sanskrit instructor in 1927, and Clark retired in 1929. Bobrinskoy carried on Clark's chores, and Buck--now emeritus--taught only an occasional course. In 1934, another departmental change took place that reflected both the declining importance of Sanskrit and philology, and the emergence of a new science of language. The Comparative Philology Department was dissolved, and its faculty placed in the newly-formed Department of Linguistics, under the chairmanship of Leonard Bloomfield. The Sanskrit curriculum was again maintained, but as a small component of a much larger department. The study of language--chiefly through the work of Chicagoans Bloomfield and Edward Sapir--was now more broadly conceived, and philology came increasingly to be regarded as a somewhat obsolete subfield of linguistics. Bobrinskoy rose to become Chairman of Linguistics, and eventually acted as a link between the older philology-oriented study of Sanskrit and the post-war development of South Asian studies. But that is a later chapter in the story.

Although Sanskrit was taught continuously at Chicago from the day that the University's doors opened, it was never an important part of the curriculum. It tended, if anything, to diminish in importance over the years before World War II. Enrollments were small, averaging about two per year, and the number of advanced degrees produced was smaller still. In forty years between 1892 and 1932, the Comparative Philology department produced sixteen Ph.Ds., and out of these, only two students (Meyer and Mary Belle Harris) took Sanskrit as their principal language. Five

others made use of Sanskrit as part of a comparative philological project--a typical example was George S. Lane's 'Words for Clothing in the Principal Indo-European Languages'. Nor was Sanskrit used significantly as a tool for research in other departments. Students writing dissertations on Indian religions in the Department of Comparative Religions, for instance, rarely made use of Sanskrit religious texts. There were virtually no students of Indian history, literature, or philosophy before the war.

Chicago was simply not a center for Sanskrit studies. Buck, Clark, and Bobrinskoy were all respected scholars in the field, but none left a mark on it in the way that Whitney, Charles Lanman (Harvard), Maurice Bloomfield (Johns Hopkins), or Franklin Edgerton (Pennsylvania, Yale) did. Similarly, Chicago did not produce graduates--with the exception of Meyer--who went on to do work in Indology, as did these Eastern schools. (Even the Eastern centers were not then geared to the production of large numbers of Sanskritists, because there were very few places for such scholars to teach.) While the University of Chicago did keep a small fire burning in the West, it was clearly peripheral to the main terrain of Indological studies in the United States, which formed a narrow line along the Eastern seaboard from Cambridge south to Baltimore.

A much more popular route to the study of India at the university was through the medium of religion. Such studies could be accommodated in several different departments and could focus on a variety of subjects, but all show the clear influence of the missionary movement.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, missionary organizations sent far more Americans abroad than any other institution. And, as Robert McCaughey points out (1980:4), it was from the writings, lectures, and sermons of the returned missionaries that many Americans received their most direct contact with the world "beyond the bounds of Christendom". Finally, India, with its overflowing population of heathens, was recipient of more American missions than any other part of the globe. So it comes as no surprise that studies inspired directly or indirectly by missionary Christianity were the principal way that Chicago students chose to learn about India.

The American missionary movement was launched in 1810 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and was revitalized in the late nineteenth century when the Student Volunteer Movement began vigorously recruiting prospective missionaries on college campuses across the country. The first two American missionaries left for India in 1815, and by 1912, there were 1,890 of their progeny in India, an American 'Christian Army' there second only to that of England. Meanwhile, missionaries made their efforts known back home by publication and by hitting the lecture circuit upon their return. In the early editions of the American Oriental Society's Journal, roughly two-thirds of the articles were written by missionaries (Young 1951:122). This percentage fell off after the Civil War, once Whitney and his students began writing for it. The observations and studies of missionaries had great intellectual standing during the nineteenth century, and often missionaries became recognized experts on the society in which they had lived. Perhaps the best example of this type of missionary expert was Samuel

Wells Williams, a missionary printer sent to China in 1833. In the mid 1840s, he returned to the United States for several years, during which time he delivered over 100 lectures in New York and Ohio, and was surprised to discover that many Americans were highly interested in what he had to say about China. Later, he collected these talks into The Middle Kingdom, which became for many years the standard text on Chinese culture. And in 1875, when Williams returned from China for a second time, Yale appointed him professor of Chinese, the first such university position in the United States.

The aims of missionary activity in the non-Western world and of the scholarly study of it were seen as compatible and mutually supportive. To my mind, no one has set forth this view with more clarity than John Pickering, a polymath Boston lawyer and founder of the American Oriental Society (AOS). Speaking at the first annual meeting of the AOS in 1842, he noted the many 'favorable circumstances' for the founding of such a society: "All the nations of the world . . . are at peace," the non-Western nations are becoming more willing "to encourage a free intercourse with them," and the improving means of travel are making scholarly enterprises abroad more convenient. Most important, however, is the great number of American missionaries now working around the globe.

> While these indefatigable men,—aided by resolute American women, who with characteristic devotedness fearlessly accompany them even to martyrdom,—have been impelled by a sense of religious duty, to the task of peacefully disseminating the benign principles of Christianity, they have also been making lasting additions to our knowledge of the moral and social condition of those distant nations; and . . . they have greatly extended our acquaintance with the languages and literature of the oriental nations, and have furnished the most valuable additional materials towards the history of the human race and the completion of the science of ethnography.

> Thus in the wisdom of providence has it happened, that, while the propagation of Christianity, on the one hand, is opening to us new sources of information in different languages--which are the essential instruments of all knowledge--on the other hand, the progressive acquisition of those languages is constantly placing in our hands new means of disseminating religious instruction. (Pickering 1848:2)

At the University of Chicago, there were several departments in which a student wishing to become a missionary could profitably study: Comparative Religion, in the Graduate School of Arts and Literature, and Systematic Theology, Religious Education, Practical Theology, all in the Graduate Divinity School. Each emphasized an adherence to the Christian faith as part of the curriculum. The purpose of graduate study in divinity was to confirm and broaden one's Christian faith. Systematic Theology was certainly the most confident, even strident in its self-description:

> the aim of this department will be to set before the student the essential truths of Christian Theology in their unity and logical continuity . . . . Theology, in this form, will be taught as being the science of sciences, the philosophy of philosophies, and the ultimate solvent of all the great questions, political, social, religious, which have agitated the minds of men. It will also devolve upon the instruction given in this department to refute errors which have arisen through false interpretations of Scripture, through undue emphasis being laid on individual doctrines to the disparagement of other doctrines, or the discredit of system as a whole, or through more direct opposition of skeptical and antitheistic thinkers. (UC Register 1899-1900:321)

But even the more dispassionate Department of Comparative Religion showed a marked predilection toward demonstrating the superiority of Christianity over other religions studied.

The programs in the Divinity School were geared to professional preparation. The Divinity School curriculum in the 1920s offered four "chief fields," or programs tailored to specific professional options: preparation for pastorate, for religious education, for social service,

and for foreign mission service. The foreign mission curriculum was based on the recommendations of a national Board of Missionary Preparation (UC Register 1919-20:323-28). A goodly number of Chicago students followed the foreign mission option and went on to serve overseas. As of 1919, there were forty-five Chicago graduates living in British India alone, the large majority of whom were working as missionaries.

The Department of Comparative Religion, like that of Comparative Philology, was a small and not particularly noteworthy program. For most of its fifty-odd years, it struggled along with only one faculty member at a time. True to its title, the department always managed to offer a broadly comparative range of courses, requiring the professor to know and be able to teach something about everything from "Indo-European religion" to Hegel and Schleiermacher. Perhaps it was because of this heavy teaching load that none of the faculty who taught in the department--George S. Goodspeed, George B. Foster, and Albert B. Haydon—published anything of significance in the field. (Foster is remembered primarily as the center of a storm of controversy among Baptists, set off by some liberalized views he propounded, which led to his being shunted out of the Divinity School and into Comparative Religion.) Comparative Religion folded in 1944 with the death of Haydon, but the comparative study of religion was revalorized at Chicago shortly after the war when European scholars of the Religionswissenschaft tradition--first Joachim Wach (1947), then Mircea Eliade (1956)—arrived to teach in the Divinity School's new program in the History of Religions (HR). In HR, the assumption of Christianity's superiority to other religions has been much more successfully submerged than in Comparative Religion, and the in-

fluence of missionary practice on the scholarly study of religious phenomena has receded nearly to the vanishing point.

The Divinity School did not offer instruction specifically pertaining to South Asia, but students preparing for missionary activity in India were encouraged to take whatever appropriate courses they could find in the Comparative Religion and Comparative Philology departments. They were also encouraged to take courses on history and practice of missions, taught in the Church History department. Alonzo Ketcham Parker, first professor of "missionology," had never served as missionary to any place more foreign than Amenia, New York; on the other hand, Archibald Gillies Baker, who taught missions in the twenties and thirties, had spent eleven years in Bolivia before returning to Chicago to write his dissertation and teach. Neither, in any case, had any direct experience of India.

Today, historians often see missionary Christianity as a handmaiden of colonial regimes, but this is not how missionaries and prospective missionaries of the early twentieth century viewed themselves. Though colonial control set the stage, as it were, for the entrance of missionaries, they usually considered missionary work as an antidote to colonial domination. Archibald Baker's thesis, for instance, sees the Catholic missionaries for whom he had worked as a force for democracy, aiding the Bolivian people in their struggle against an autocratic colonial rule. (One discerns here an ancestor to what we today term "liberation theology.") However, this political insurgency on behalf of the "natives," such as it was, was often accompanied by a thorough denigration of indigenous culture whenever that culture failed to measure up to "Christian standards." Missionaries generally considered that they were

working to reform the regressive practices of the natives, in order that the natives could eventually rule themselves.

This missionary attitude, of counter-colonial politics, cultural defamation, and Christian reformism, is clearly apparent in the theses written by Chicago students studying to become missionaries. The earliest missionary studies at Chicago were predominantly concerned with religion. The most common type was the comparative study of South Asian religions and Christianity, showing points of doctrinal similarity and difference and always concluding with the superiority of Christianity. Pre-missionary students were particularly challenged by Buddhism because it appeared to be the great competitor of Christianity. As an evangelical gospel that outstripped Christianity in number of adherents, Buddhism was an opponent worthy of a student's refutation. Una L. Works' 1917 thesis, "The Kingdom of God Ideal of Jesus and the Nirvana Idea of Buddhism: A Comparison," serves as a good example. After a summary of parallels and divergence, Works concludes with the fundamental consideration:

> What is the distinctive message of each? Buddha negatively says: apart from Nirvana life is not worth living; by resignation and passivity one may reach a state in which existence ceases forever. Jesus constructively says that in spite of the various difficulties of life in the world, it may yet be a thing of joy, and he affirms that there is coming a <u>good time</u> in which the highest and noblest in individual and social life shall be realized, and there shall be perfect happiness forever. (Works 1917:27)

No doubt this conviction would have served her well in dealing with the complexities of missionary work, but she instead married and went with her husband to Saskatchewan.

Another genre of study took on a more practical question: how does one get the Christian message across to the natives? The best of them,

such as Bertha Davis' "The Adaptability of the Old Testament to the Religious Education of the Burmese," were based on prior missionary experience, and read like mission handbooks. In these studies, we see a softening of the missionary's stance of cultural superiority: native culture is not something to be rejected outright, but is to be used. The best way of getting a Christian message through is by being sensitive to native ideas and ideals. Davis, for instance, advocates a strategic choice of those portions of the Old Testament best suited to reaching the Burmese villager. The effective missionary must know her people.

Beginning after World War I, there was a gradual shift of interest among pre-missionary students away from religious questions and towards matters of reform. Students of the twenties and thirties studied the Indian educational system, the status of women, the prohibition movement, health-care reform, and problems of agricultural development. A few titles will be enough, I think, to give a general sense of the character of these studies: "An Application to Rural India of Methods of Educating Backward Peoples" (Woods 1923); "The Attitudes of the People of India to Spiritous Drink" (Stanley 1922); and "Health Problems and the Missionary Program in the Indian Villages" (Gamboe 1929). Pre-missionaries became imbued with the spirit of "social work"; the problem was no longer how to convert the people of India, but how to help them. The missionary intent survived in the conviction that American students know what South Asians need, while the evangelical flavor was removed.

All these early studies of India by Chicago pre-missionary students seem to come from a different world than that of recent South Asian studies. Many of the axioms of modern "area" scholarship--use of indi-

genous sources, study of a culture in its own terms, objective "scientific" style, and so on--are nowhere to be found in them. Yet these studies had a direct and unproblematic connection to practical activity. The students who wrote these theses had been or wanted to become missionaries; so far as I can tell, none went on to become academics. And the way they knew India was always formed by what they planned to do when they got there.

Since World War II, missionary work as a career option for students has diminished, particularly in areas like India. At the same time, the attitude of the Christian community, with the exception of some fundamentalist groups, has become much more egalitarian with regard to other religions. As a result, missionary studies have largely faded from the intellectual horizon.

CHAPTER II

A NEW CLIMATE

Modern international studies evolved in the twenty years following World War II as the result of a new intellectual climate created by the war and by the character of America's international role in the post-war world. South Asian studies at the University of Chicago is very much a member of this intellectual and institutional species, most often termed "area studies," and so it is important to see just what constituted this new climate.

Prior to World War II, the academic study of India, and of much of what was then called the "non-Western" world, was at best in a holding pattern. Sanskrit was entrenched in a few universities, but hardly capable of new growth. The missionary movement and its influence on campuses was diminishing. Anthropology in the United States was only beginning to look beyond the North American continent for societies to study, and the other social sciences were myopically concerned with Western societies. There were, of course, occasional calls for expanding Asian studies in the universities, generally delivered by Asianists. Charles Lanman's address, delivered at a memorial service for the Buddhologist H.C. Warren in 1918, is a good example. "This supremest of human follies," says Lanman, speaking of the world war just ended,

> is in the last analysis a failure--as between two peoples--to understand each other and so to trust each other. For us all,

> as members of the world-family, no obligation is more urgent than that of mutual understanding . . . To interpret the East to the West, to set forth to the West some of the principal phases of the spiritual life of the East as they are reflected in her ancient literature . . . to bring the best and noblest achievements of the East to bear upon our own life--such are the inspiring tasks of the Orientalist, tasks in vital relation with the practical and political needs of today. (Lanman 1918:389)

Lanman's attempt to assert the political relevance of non-Western cultural history was a theme which would be sounded frequently after another war had come. But during the isolationist twenties and the depressed thirties, universities were hardly interested in or capable of heeding his advice.

It would be difficult to overstate the degree to which World War II altered this situation for American universities.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States suddenly found itself engaged in military activities in parts of the world which, previously, it had hardly known existed. During the war and then continuing after it, there came about a redefinition and radical expansion of what the United States considered its "foreign interests." An international role which was more or less thrust on America by the war was deliberately maintained and enlarged afterwards by government leaders. The Marshall Plan and other massive foreign aid programs, the creation of NATO and other treaty organizations, the doctrine of "containment" of Communism, United States' sponsorship of the United Nations—all grew out of a postwar period of foreign policy consensus, or bipartisan support for this new American expansiveness, which lasted largely unchallenged until the war in Vietnam in the mid-sixties. With the disintegration of the European colonial empires (including the demise of British

rule in India), United States policy-makers felt obliged to fill the "power vacuum" before Communist or anti-American forces could gain a foothold. Under the aegis of American responsibility for the entire non-Communist world, our political, economic, and cultural ties with the rest of the world spread like the branches of a banyan tree.

Throughout this period, both during the war and after, there was a commonly perceived need for American "expertise" about the rest of the world. For the United States to act, it had to know. Knowledge of the non-Western world was considered essential, and yet it was a resource of which we were in short supply.

During the wartime mobilization of 1942, America's lack of intellectual preparedness quickly became apparent. The military needed persons with specific kinds of knowledge about specific parts of the world, and there were few such people around. What was worse, we lacked even the means to train new specialists. A Department of State bulletin speaks retrospectively of this situation: a "lack of specialists to organize and carry out training programs," a "lack of basic knowledge about many foreign areas," even a "paucity of the most elementary training materials" (Department of State 1954:v). Clearly, the kinds of knowledge of other countries produced in the older academic traditions--philological, missionary training--were not particularly useful in wartime endeavors. What were needed were competence in modern spoken languages and expertise in such newer social-scientific disciplines as geography, psychology, and anthropology as they related to specific world areas. But this kind of knowledge was not widely available. Only

a very few American social scientists had taken an interest in the non-Western world before the war.

The universities were soon enlisted in the war effort. Wherever expertise and information were available, they were put into service. Many academics trooped off to Washington. For example, W. Norman Brown--professor of Sanskrit at the University of Pennsylvania, with considerable experience in India both as a missionary's son and as a scholar--served in the Office of Strategic Services as head of the Indian division, bringing with him to Washington several other academic Indianists. Even an undergraduate like McKim Marriott, with only a year of university Japanese under his belt, was sent off to India to decode Japanese messages. A small Yale anthropological project called the Cross-Cultural Survey (later to become the Human Relations Area Files) which before the war had ambitiously set out to classify by topic all anthropological information on human societies, spent the war years rapidly assembling a series of "strategic bulletins" on Oceania for the U.S. Navy. In the wartime mobilization, university research was more than ever before directed toward useful ends, and these ends were largely defined by American military and strategic needs.

Most important to the development of areas studies, the U.S. Army in 1943 established a number of crash foreign-language training programs on campuses around the country. Army Specialized Training Schools (ASTP) in foreign language and area study were set up in fifty-five American colleges, and Civil Affairs Training Schools (CATS) in ten; The University of Chicago hosted both programs. Their purpose was to train officers to carry out administrative tasks in occupied territories. To do this,

trainees would need to know something about the place being occupied, to be able to speak the language, and to understand the problems of occupational administration. Fred Eggan, an anthropologist who had done some previous research in the Philippines, was put in charge of the Chicago CATS, for training officers destined for the Far East. In two years Captain Eggan, with a little help from several anthropology colleagues, turned out a good proportion of the military administrators of occupied Japan. Although these programs were set up with little planning and operated always under severe time constraints (often only three months to learn a language), most of the people involved judged them a major success. A number of observers went on to suggest that the universities adapt some of these military methods in their language courses after the war.

The wartime experience affected the universities in a number of important respects. It pushed universities in the direction of curricular relevance, particularly with respect to international studies. The universities and faculty gained practical experience with new educational methods, particularly in intensive language training and the interdisciplinary study of world areas. These new methods in turn furnished a new model for more academically-oriented postwar programs in area studies. And finally, the war fostered a more cooperative relationship between government and academia. Government began to see the universities as "a major national resource for personnel, research, and training in non-Western language and area studies" (Mildenberger 1964:25), and the universities reciprocally began to realize that government could help them financially in establishing new programs, useful to "the national interest."

The sense of educational need—the need for useful knowledge about the non-Western world and the need for trained specialists competent to deal with it—did not subside after the war. With the maintenance of America's overseas presence, expertise was required just as much (if not more) in peacetime as it had been during the war. The urgency may have been diminished, but the need was still as great.

It was the universities that largely took the responsibility for producing this expertise. As far as I can tell no major debate occurred over the question. There were simply no other institutions capable of such training, and the idea of establishing national Institutes for such training seemed too centralized and "un-American". The universities had proven themselves adaptable to the national interest during the war, and so the government naturally turned to them again. A greatly expanded working relationship between governmental agencies and academia developed in many intellectual fields during this period, but in perhaps no field were the effects of this relationship as strongly felt as in the social sciences concerned with the non-Western world.

This relationship soon came to be mediated by a third partner: the large foundations. The country's three largest foundations (Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford) began to enter the field of education in a big way, pouring in "seed" money to grow a new crop of university programs. Of the three, the Ford Foundation is most important to our story, so let us take a look at how it got involved.

In 1948, as the settlement of Henry Ford's estate proceeded, it became apparent that the Ford Foundation—which up to now had been a small agency concentrating on local philanthropy in the Detroit area—was going

to come into a great deal of money. Henry Ford (died 1947) and his son Edsel (died 1943) had owned between them nearly all Ford Motor Company stock. To pass this stock on to the rest of the family would entail a 77 percent inheritance tax--thus requiring the Fords to sell much of the stock on the open market in order to pay taxes, and hence lose control of the company. To avoid this, 90 percent of the stock was to be given over to the Ford Foundation, a tax-exempt institution, making it suddenly into the world's largest foundation. What would it do with all that money? Henry Ford II appointed a blue-ribbon committee chaired by H. Rowan Gaither to find out. The Gaither Committee drew up a set of principles to guide the foundation's donations, specifying five "program areas" as ways the foundation could best work towards "advancing human welfare". Their choice of problems was closely aligned with the new internationalism of American foreign policy, stressing the "transcendent importance of preventing war and preserving peace"—through foreign aid programs and so on--as its first area of activity. (This internationalism laid the foundation open to charges from isolationist right-wingers; a 1951 Chicago Tribune headline proclaimed "Leftist Slant Begins to Show in Ford Trust.") A second major priority of the committee was education. In the dignified words of the report,

> The Ford Foundation should support activities to strengthen, expand, and improve educational facilities and methods to enable individuals more fully to realize their intellectual, civic, and spiritual potentialities; to promote greater equality of educational opportunity; and to conserve and increase knowledge and enrich our culture. (Ford Foundation 1949:79)

Area studies, it will be noted, lay at the fortunate intersection of two of the primary concerns of the Ford Foundation: the lesser-developed

countries and higher education. The Ford Foundation chose to help meet the national need for "expertise" about the non-Western world by supporting programs within the universities. Their decision came at exactly the time many universities were considering the possibility of establishing area studies programs. In such a case, money not only talks, it makes decisions. The Ford Foundation ploughed $190 million into international studies in the universities, as well as $35 million in graduate fellowships, over the next two decades, and the universities were only too glad to put it to use.

Meanwhile, scholarly associations and university faculty already concerned with the non-Western world were busy attempting to stake out the intellectual perimeters of this new field of area studies. Conferences were held, evaluations of existing resources made, proposals for new programs put forth, and reports published. The universities were by no means passive recipients waiting for the foundations to dole out the dollars. They were bringing new territory under cultivation, and this called for the employment of entrepreneurial skills just as much as for intellectual endeavor. According to George Taylor,

> Important as were the contributions of the foundations and the federal government, they could never have been made without the original commitment of the major universities to the promotion of non-Western studies. (Taylor 1964:4)

To sell the idea of area studies, the universities had first to define it, and then to offer it as a desirable commodity.

What should area studies be? How should they be organized as programs in the universities? What would they produce? Out of all the

conferences and reports, a consensus began to emerge. Area study, in William Fenton's widely-accepted definition, involved

> the focusing of all the disciplinary competencies (geography, history, economics, language, and literature, philosophy, political science, and the like) upon a cultural area for the purpose of obtaining a total picture of that culture. (Fenton 1947:82)

In this way, area studies programs were intended to offset academic parochialism of two kinds—both in what the universities studied, and in how they studied it. Area studies were meant to "absorb the non-Western world into higher education," to make the universities less provincial in what they considered worth studying, and in so doing "to overcome vast areas of ignorance" (Taylor 1964:2). They expanded the intellectual interests of the universities onto an international scale just as broadly as American policy-makers had expanded the political and economic interests of the United States. At the same time, area studies called upon the resources of many disciplines, used in cooperation to study particular area-units. This interdisciplinary approach was intended to help break down what many felt were overly-rigid boundaries between academic disciplines. Reports and proposals continually stressed the cooperative relationship between disciplines, invoking the imagery of "teamwork." Area studies were to be carried out by teams of specialists, each member of a team bringing his own disciplinary expertise to bear on the problem at hand. No more would poor Mr. Clark have to teach Sanskrit, philology, Indian history, philosophy, and religion—in short, the entire South Asian curriculum--all by himself. He would be replaced by a squad of cooperating South Asianists.

Area studies were to be predominantly concerned with the contemporary shape of the societies they studied. Although history and classical languages were not to be expelled from area studies, their role was clearly reduced. As Fenton put it,

> In taking a functional view of contemporary civilizations, [area study] jeopardizes the strong position which the historical method holds in academic thinking . . .; it offers concentration on the present situation with its latent historicity in place of long developmental curricula running from Aristotle to modern times, and it calls on the method of the culture historian to develop the major themes in a civilization, delving deep enough into the past only to make the present understandable. (Fenton 1947:81-82)

Fenton's notion of "latent historicity" was reminiscent of Lanman's assertion thirty years earlier, that cultural history is relevant to contemporary matters, but now history was being placed in a position subservient to the social sciences. The social sciences study present society directly; history is seen as only an indirect means of rendering the present comprehensible. Similarly, area studies would place greater priority on the study of modern languages than on that of classical languages. Classical languages like Sanskrit would continue to be taught, but the thrust of the new area studies program would be towards developing instruction in contemporary Indian languages.

The institutional question of how and where to implant these new fields in the universities proved to be somewhat less tractable. It is one thing to describe what an ideal area studies program should be; it is quite another to set up such programs. Part of the problem was that area studies did not easily fit into the existing university layout. Fenton acknowledged that

> integrated area study threatens the regular departmental organization of the university since by its very nature it calls for a realignment of subject-matter fields and methodologies in order to concentrate them on the total civilization of a region. (1947:81)

No one was quite sure how best to squeeze area studies in--should they create new "area departments" with faculty recruited from various disciplines, or should they create an "area committee" outside the existing departments with faculty holding cross-appointments? Each new area studies program had to be, in some sense, an experiment in adaptation, and every program came to reflect "the peculiar and sometimes unique conditions prevailing on its own campus" (Department of State 1964:vii). But area studies proved itself to be a fairly adaptable species, adjusting to whatever new home it found itself in.

In the course of many experiments the "center" approach became the most prevalent institutional arrangement. An area studies center was

> an administrative unit especially established with the purpose of encouraging and coordinating teaching and research programs on a subject of common interest among a group of faculty members working in various disciplines. (Axelrod and Bigelow 1962:16)

An area studies center left the departmental organization of a university intact, while establishing a set of cross-cutting allegiances to the study of a geographical area-unit. The center would cut across disciplinary boundaries without physically or intellectually removing its members from their respective disciplines. For this reason, a center arrangement had two major advantages over the creation of a new area department: it did not seriously threaten the existing departments, and it did not require extensive new hirings. An area center could work with faculty already hired, retraining them into area specialities if necessary. Yet whenever

the university had a new position available, the center could lobby for its own interests.

The products of these new area studies programs were to be "specialists," persons who would have

> a broad general knowledge of the area, a high level of scholarly ability in their own disciplines, a considerable field experience in the area as well as competence in the languages of the region. (Department of State 1964:vii)

These specialists were needed, first, to set up and staff still more area studies programs at other universities, and second, to apply their expertise in assisting American government agencies and businesses in their relations with the rest of the world. These specialists were to spread out like members of some new species, throughout academia and beyond, combatting parochialism wherever they went.

The climate of post-war America was favorable and area studies programs proliferated. In 1951, Wendell Bennett carried out an inventory for the Social Science Research Council of "integrated area programs" in the United States and found a total of twenty-nine; by 1964, a Department of State inventory listed 154 programs meeting the same criteria. In 1951, there was only one area program concerned with South Asia (at the University of Pennsylvania); by 1964 there were fifteen. Even in a period of overall university growth, area studies programs were remarkable for their rapid multiplication. Observers spoke of this as the "take-off" phase, borrowing a bit of terminology from the space program. The image is apt. In the twenty years following World War II, area studies "took off" in American universities, propelled by a potent mixture of

government encouragement and foundation money, and guided by university faculty intent on crossing old boundaries and exploring new territory.

Let us now turn to the biography of an individual area studies program, and see how it grew from infancy to early maturity during this period.

CHAPTER III

THE REDFIELD PROJECT

The post-war program in South Asian studies at Chicago really began with a project that did not set out to study India. Robert Redfield's "Comparative Civilizations Project," funded by the Ford Foundation from 1951 to 1961, was concerned broadly with the comparative study of all contemporary civilizations. The project aimed, at its most visionary, to aid in developing "a world community of ideas." Falling somewhat short of this goal, it did have a stimulating effect on several fields of scholarship. Perhaps the most enduring result of the project was the initial impetus and intellectual direction it gave to the development of the Chicago South Asian program.

Three main tributaries fed into the Comparative Civilizations Project. The first was the trajectory of Redfield's own academic interests, which led him increasingly to a concern with what he called "the great traditions." Second was Redfield's criticism of the war-time area studies programs as lacking a clear intellectual purpose, and his effort to develop an alternative with greater scholarly substance. Third, Redfield was profoundly affected by the war and by the bombing of Hiroshima. The Comparative Civilizations Project was one of several paths through which Redfield sought to make a contribution to the cause of a peaceful post-war world.

Robert Redfield was one of the first anthropologists to do fieldwork with a peasant community (Tepoztlan, Mexico) rather than with a "primitive isolate." This provided him with a set of questions somewhat new to anthropology. How are peasant communities different from primitive societies? How do primitives come to be peasants? What are the processes of cultural change by which peasant communities come to be urbanized? How did primitive societies transform themselves into civilizations? Are there degrees of civilization? Out of these questions, which occupied Redfield's entire career, he developed a neo-evolutionary approach to anthropology, viewing the human career as the passage from precivilized to civilized life. Charles Leslie has noted how the process of civilization was the guiding concern of Redfield's research, giving to his work a "consistent, continuously developing" elaboration.

> The processes that interested him, and that he considered to be at the center of the social sciences, were the transformations of mind and spirit that occur in civilizations. His conception of these processes evolved through empirical research that began with the simple study of a peasant community in Morelos, advanced to the controlled comparison of communities in Yucatan, proceeded to the broad evolutionary analysis of The Primitive World and Its Transformations, and concluded by exploring concepts that would enhance the complementarity of humanistic and scientific studies of Asian civilizations. (Leslie, 1976:150)

In this view, an urban civilization once developed acts to transform everything around it. A "primitive" society is one that remains largely outside the sphere of influence of urban civilizations; a "peasant" community has been conditioned in important respects by its dependence on the city. But what is this urban civilization, and why should it exercise such authority? By the late 1940s, Redfield had begun seriously to investigate some of the world's major civilizations. The Comparative

Civilizations Project offered a way for him to continue his inquiry on a much larger scale, by engaging other scholars in many of the same questions he was asking.

As Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences, Redfield was involved in the negotiations to set up a war-time Civilian Affairs Training Schools (CATS) program at Chicago, and by 1944, when he was invited to participate in a Social Science Research Council conference on the future of area studies programs, he had come to some sharp conclusions about their limitations. He did not share in the unmitigated enthusiasm of some of his colleagues.

> The sword we find in our hand today may be sharp and bright--for war--but before we plough with it let us be sure that we are indeed using it to turn the furrow and that we have indeed beaten it into a better ploughshare than the one we left rusting in the barn. ("Area Programs in Education and Research," Robert Redfield Papers)

Redfield saw the military area programs as designed to give people "particular competencies to do particular kinds of things," while the purpose of a university education was "to make intelligent citizens, or to train the mind for intelligent action." Consequently, he had doubts about the continuation of area programs after the war as a useful part of general education. Programs designed for military training, he argued, are not necessarily appropriate for university education in times of peace. Yet this was not to say that the "integrated scholarly study of the great civilizations" should not be a part of the university's research interests. As an alternative to the military area programs, Redfield rather tentatively proposed the long-range development of "area institutes."

> Such an enterprise would look to the long future, and would be content to develop a few first-rate scholars dealing with one aspect or another of the region chosen, and talking often with each other about their work. Such an enterprise would combine the study of books and texts with field study of the people living in the area today. The organization would include both representatives of the humanities and social scientists . . . These students would all be concerned with a traditional way of life that had maintained a distinguishing character over a long time, to great consequence for mankind. (Ibid.)

As Milton Singer has noted (1976:194), this proposal is probably the earliest statement of Redfield's idea of a "social anthropology of civilizations," but several years and several modifications were required before the enterprise could be undertaken.

Redfield's own ethical commitments were evident throughout the Comparative Civilizations Project. He always insisted that the project was intended to promote peace—"to advance the movement toward common understanding among the peoples of mankind"--through the medium of men's attitudes toward one another. The mid-and late 1940s was a time of both great anxiety and great hope for Redfield, as for many scholars. Anxiety inspired by the war was at least partially compensated for by hopes for a more peaceful world order. Would not the nations of the world, faced with an unprecedented and terrifying destructive capacity, be eager now to adopt some form of "world constitution?" Would not men be forced by their own technology to understand one another and coexist peacefully?

The atomic bombing of two Japanese cities focused Redfield's alarm, and at the same time confirmed his resolution to work somehow for the cause of peace. Two weeks after Hiroshima, Redfield wrote his daughter Lisa a long, searching letter.

> What does one think of now but the new world, with its fear, and the hope that grows large out of the very bigness of the fear?

> One muses, and one wonders why this crisis in the world, the immense leap in the preposterous acceleration of man's technology, this threat, greater than all other threats, to man's existence--and one wonders why it should come when you and I are alive, just now, in this generation.

He goes on to describe how people around him have responded:

> Sol [Tax] always wants to do something about a difficulty, no matter how desperate . . . . Sol wants Prometheus to put the fire back. He wants to get the physicists to admit that utter destruction is a possibility, and with this admission to compel an international agreement to make atomic research everywhere illegal . . . .
>
> Your mother always reacts with courage to adversity. So when she read the story of How to Make an Atomic Bomb in Six Easy Lessons in Time she said she felt better . . . . She said it meant that a really effective international organization must be made, and she added that it could.
>
> R.M. Hutchins has reacted similarly, although probably less hopeful. But the bomb has converted him to international organization.

Redfield for his part has been thinking about the president of the Rockefeller Foundation and how all that money is spent.

> If I were President of that Foundation, I would have a sudden sickening sense of futility. I would think that here I am, president of the greatest foundation for the advancement of human welfare, with millions to spend each year, and all I can think of doing is to help control typhus in China and uncover some hints as to cancer research . . . . Is anything more important, to work on, but the problem of the control of this exploded technology, this cancer-cell of human invention? ("Personal Correspondence," Robert Redfield Papers)

But what can be done? Redfield joined with Hutchins and Mortimer Adler a year or so later in forming a "Committee to Frame a World Constitution," and in cooperation with the Atomic Scientists of Chicago he and Edward Shils set up within the University an Office of Inquiry into the Social Aspects of Atomic Energy. But in his letter to Lisa, Redfield speaks of "the field of education and propaganda" as one place to begin. I think

it is apt to view the Comparative Civilizations Project as Redfield's own way--as an educator and an anthropologist--of addressing the fears aroused by mankind's new capacity for destruction. Redfield's project grew out of this anxiety, and was phrased in the postwar language of hope.

The idea was there, but it took a while to be formulated properly. By 1949, Redfield and Robert M. Hutchins (who was then Chancellor of the University) proposed an "Institute of Cultural Studies" to the Carnegie Corporation. The scope of this project was too large for Carnegie to take on, and it was rejected. But in 1950, a more receptive atmosphere developed in the newly-enriched Ford Foundation. The report of the Gaither Commission singled out international education and the non-Western world as two areas of particular interest. Appropriately, the Foundation chose as its director Paul Hoffman, a businessman of internationalist propensities (he administered the Marshall Plan), and as associate director Hutchins, whose conversion to "international organization" we have already observed. Redfield set to work revising his Carnegie proposal for submission to Ford and made, Milton Singer (who was working with Redfield on the proposal) associate director of the Comparative Civilizations Project.

Redfield's project was approved by the Ford Foundation in 1951. During the first four years the project received about $400,000; in its final years the project was administered with funds left over from this amount.

The Comparative Civilizations Project was scaled down from Redfield's original plan of establishing an institute, yet in another sense it aimed to be more far-reaching than the institute plan. The strategy of the plan

was now to act as a catalyst, administered through the University of Chicago, but involving scholars at many institutions. The purpose was "to affect work of scholars and scientists" already working in related fields. Redfield often spoke of this as "pump-priming," getting things started, stimulating particular fields of cultural studies. The project would accomplish this aim through several enterprises: finding out who was doing what in cultural studies and establishing scholarly networks, preparing critical reviews of such studies, sponsoring conferences and publications on topics of interest, and granting assistance to groups working on the study of particular civilizations.

Yet the stimulation was to lead in a specific direction—namely, towards "greater comparability." The Comparative Civilizations Project was meant, as the title suggests, to get those working on particular cultures to begin comparing them. What is true of all "great civilizations?" What is distinctive about each? In the long run, Redfield hoped, this process of comparison would result in the understanding of "the persisting and influential characteristics of the principal cultures of the world." As with area studies, the project sought cooperation among humanistic and social scientific disciplines, but it tried also to establish lines of communication between scholars of different world-areas. The operative image was that of "crossing": crossing disciplinary boundaries, cross-cultural studies, cross-fertilization of ideas.

There was at times an evangelical tone to the task. Singer, for instance, wrote Redfield in 1954 of some "missionary work for our Chicago project" that he had done among the natives of university programs at Pennsylvania and Berkeley. Missionary work implies faith, and the

Comparative Civilizations Project was based, as I see it, on two kinds of faith--the hope that the project could help establish a new comparative method bridging the humanities and the social sciences, and the conviction that this method could aid the cause of peace.

Throughout the project, Redfield and Singer planned to co-author a "Handbook of Method for the Comparative Study of Culture," systematizing the strategies of their inquiry. In the files of the project are several outlines to this handbook, more or less elaborate, altered over the years to accommodate new lines of investigation. But in the end, the handbook never appeared. Much of the material to be included in it was published in other contexts--such as in Redfield's Uppsala lectures on The Little Community and in Peasant Society and Culture--but Redfield's early illness effectively ended the manual. (However, even then the plan was not entirely abandoned. Shortly before his death in 1958, Redfield wrote Singer a letter outlining "a small book on civilizations." Yet this outline was scaled down, a much less ambitious proposal than earlier versions of the handbook.) So, although a great deal of thinking about the method of comparative studies went on in the project, no single systematic exposition of what this method was to be ever came out of it.

In an early version of the handbook outline, Redfield posed himself the question: why write such a book? This book can make a contribution to peace and the hope for a peaceful world community, he answered, through "the identification of common elements of value in different world traditions," through "the understanding and appreciation of differences among cultures," and finally by enabling us to understand something of the conditions for "peaceful, selective, and gradual interactions of peoples

of different cultures." These same hopes permeated the project as a whole. There is no talk of "training experts" or of undertaking more practical enterprises in accord with national interests. The atmosphere was to be "free of immediate responsibility to governmental auspices," serving instead the higher goals of international understanding. The underlying conviction of the project was that the route to peace is through ideas acting on the attitudes of men.

Of course, such highmindedness invited the satirical touch. Dwight Macdonald wrote a light essay in the New Yorker (later part of a book) on the Ford Foundation and poked a bit of fun at the project:

> One thing Professor Redfield hopes to accomplish is an "improvement of understanding of the persisting and influential characteristics of the principal cultures of mankind." Another is to further "the movement toward common understanding . . . at a level of systematic thought brought into relation with the special knowledge of the scientist and scholar." A third is world peace, just like that. The budget reads like an academic WPA. (1956:164-5)

But the historian, not the satirist, gets the final say in these matters. It is not uncommon for intellectuals to overestimate the capacity of ideas to affect the world, and it would be futile to judge the results of the Redfield project in achieving "world peace." It is more to our purpose to evaluate the project's influence on the academic study of South Asia.

In the first years of the project, a greater proportion of support and attention went to other world areas--China, Europe, and Islamic civilization--than to India. This emphasis reflected the fact that there were more scholars already working on these cultures. But gradually the focus shifted. Singer began to learn about India, first spending half a year (1953-54) at Pennsylvania and Berkeley studying with Indian-

ists like W. Norman Brown and David Mandelbaum, and then visiting India (and making ethnographic observations) for six months in 1954-55 and for seven more months in 1960-61 and 1964. With the help of McKim Marriott (who had come to Chicago after his war-time stint in India to complete an anthropology degree), Singer and Redfield sponsored a 1954 seminar on "Comparison of Cultures: The Indian Village." This seminar was subsequently published as Village India, bringing together the work of many of the first anthropologists to study Indian peasantry. The following year (1955), Redfield himself attended a conference in Madras, and then set out to do field work in Orissa. But while he was in Calcutta outfitting himself, he became ill and had to return home. Back in Chicago, his illness was diagnosed as leukemia. Three years later he died.

The shift towards India was given its most explicit expression in a memo from Singer to Redfield written shortly after Singer's return from India in 1955. In it, Singer argues for committing the next five years of the Comparative Civilizations Project solely to India.

> India remains, in my opinion, the best place to study the interaction of little and great traditions, the social organization of tradition, "cultural structure," and related problems. The coexistence of different levels of culture over a very long period of time has produced types of mutual interaction and continuity which in other civilizations can only be guessed at but which in India can be observed first-hand. The understanding of civilizational processes which will come from a study of the Indian case will I think yield concepts and methods that will also help us to understand other civilizations as well, for India is a kind of microcosm of the world's intercultural relations.

The pump-priming has achieved its purpose, claims Singer, and now the project should concentrate on producing original research.

> What is now needed to affect and advance the work in the characterization and comparison of civilizations is a concrete

> and detailed example of developed method for at least one civilization. And I believe that if we were to apply some of our present ideas to the case of India for the next five years, such an example would be forthcoming. (Robert Redfield Papers)

In its final five years, the project largely reflected this new strategy, but because of Redfield's illness and the reduction in funding, it did not achieve what Singer's memo had envisioned. Its unfinished agenda largely passed on to new programs just starting up at Chicago: the Committee on Southern Asian Studies and the year-long College courses on non-Western Civilizations. The project helped support these activities, but did not itself undertake many new enterprises.

What did the Comparative Civilizations Project achieve? One can, first of all, point to its concrete results: it sponsored a number of conferences, and was responsible for an eight volume series of publications, some of which--like Village India--were quite influential within their fields. It facilitated a sort of scholarly network among humanists and social scientists concerned with India and other civilizations. But beyond this, the project established a model of cultural study which, largely through the continuing efforts of Singer, was transmitted to the South Asian program at Chicago. The project emphasized study of other cultures for broadly humanistic reasons, not (as was fashionable in the 1950s) tied to any governmental definition of the "national interest"; it aimed not at producing useful expertise, but at influencing men's ideas about one another. The project stressed the study of India as a civilization, not (as most area studies did) as a geographical or political entity. This led in turn to a relatively greater awareness of the pan-Indian classical tradition and of cultural

history in the Chicago program, an emphasis which is still present today. And finally, the project posed a set of questions and advanced some analytic terms (such as the well-known distinction of "great" and "little" traditions) which furnished a starting-point for many scholars of India. While Redfield's project may not have achieved its grander plans, either of setting forth a systematic method for the comparative study of civilizations or of fostering a world community of ideas, it did have a crucial influence on the formation of Chicago's program in South Asian Studies.

CHAPTER IV

THE TAKE-OFF (1955-1966)

At a university such as Chicago governed largely by faculty, where faculty interests are able to determine curriculum, there is really only one sure way for a new program to get off the ground. Student interest, administrative suggestion, and external funding opportunities may all have an orienting effect. But it is only when several members of the faculty share an enthusiasm or see the usefulness of a common project that a new program takes shape.

This is what occurred at the University of Chicago in the early 1950s when a number of professors arrived independently at a shared interest in studying South Asia. By 1954, these professors were beginning to meet as an informal planning committee, which in 1955 became the Committee on South Asian Studies (COSAS). (The name was later changed to the Committee on Southern Asian Studies, reflecting the contribution of Southeast Asian specialists as well to the program.) By 1956 they were working actively to build a program by coordinating courses and recruiting new faculty. And by 1961, they had largely achieved their initial goals. This is the period of take-off for the South Asian program at Chicago.

Formation of the Committee

We have seen how American universities became concerned with the non-Western world in the years after World War II. India, a newly-

independent democracy with a long historical tradition, was a particularly apt focus for academic interest. And new opportunities for research abroad, via Fulbright and Rockefeller grants, made it possible for many already-established professors to test out their disciplines in new cultural environments.

The project on comparative civilizations brought Redfield and Singer to a concern with Indian civilization. Singer had been able to study at two Indian studies programs in the United States (Pennsylvania and Berkeley) and to do preliminary field work in India under the auspices of the project. Meanwhile, other Chicago faculty were arriving at the same point by other routes. The sociologist Edward Shils travelled to South Asia to study the Indian educational system. Richard McKeon, professor of philosophy, became interested in India through his work with UNESCO. The economic historian Bert Hoselitz did field studies in India on the effects of cultural factors in economic development. Even Milton Friedman travelled to India, where he criticized Nehru's Second Five-Year Plan. Others still--historian Donald Lach, sociologist Philip Hauser, geographer Gilbert White, educator Francis Chase--also made trips to Southern Asia in the early 1950s. Returning to Chicago, they formed a beachhead of interest and support for the establishment of a program in South Asian studies.

In 1954, Robert Crane of the History Department called together a number of Chicago faculty members who had an interest in India. The group met informally, and began to discuss how they might implement some kind of South Asian program at the university. Faculty interest was clearly there, and the group was aware that foundations had funded some similar

programs. It would probably not be difficult to persuade the administration of its viability, but university finances were very tight. A new department was not therefore a feasible objective. Besides, the professors involved represented many different disciplines, and they were not about to abandon their own departments for a new and uncertain South Asian department. But there was an alternative: forming an interdisciplinary committee would give the informal group more structure and status in the university, but would not pose any budgetary requirements. A committee could coordinate courses about South Asia in the various departments without having to mount any courses of its own. It could lobby departments to hire faculty interested in South Asia when vacancies occurred, but would not have to worry about hiring faculty itself. A committee seemed like an ideal way to begin building a program without threatening anyone. There was a long tradition at the university of faculty members with similar interests forming committees—some lasted many years, others fell apart when professors' interests diverged. A similar committee had been formed a few years previously to coordinate Far Eastern studies, so there was a clear precedent for an area-based committee.

The informal group became an official committee of the university in 1955. In its statement of purpose, COSAS emphasized that it was not a degree-granting body, but asserted that it would "co-operate with the several departments and committees within which work on South Asia can be pursued by students desiring to specialize in that area." The statement specified four major aims of the committee: coordinating research activities, recommending and preparing undergraduate-level teaching materials,

developing advanced programs for graduate students specializing in South Asia, and providing facilities and guidance for South Asian students.

Membership in the committee grew, from twelve in 1956 to nineteen in 1958 and twenty-six in 1961. Among the earliest members of COSAS, the majority were "retooled" professors, or, as Singer has called them, "first-generation" South Asia faculty: "mature faculty, usually full professors, who took advantage of the opportunities that became available in the 1950s for travel and study in the area" (Singer 1977:6). These retooled faculty had received their formal training in a discipline—most often a social scientific discipline--and generally had little or no South Asian training prior to their travels abroad. Retooled professors clearly provided the motivating force of the new committee, but other interests were represented as well. George Bobrinskoy had been teaching Sanskrit as well as courses on India in the Department of Linguistics for almost 30 years. R. Pierce Beaver was Professor of Missions in the Federated Theology Faculty. Their presence on the committee, in a way, represented continuity with older traditions in the study of South Asia, pre-war Indology and missionary studies. Also on the committee were professors whose primary interests were Islam (Gustave von Grunebaum, Marshall Hodgson) or the Far East (Earl Pritchard, Joseph Kitagawa). This had the effect of increasing the numbers of COSAS, and also of maintaining an informal means of communication between scholars of different areas of Asia.

Within a few years, several young faculty with more specialized training had been hired. Stephen Hay replaced Crane in the History Department, McKim Marriott was hired to teach anthropology, and Myron

Weiner was appointed in the Department of Political Science. Each one had received doctoral training in his discipline with a South Asian specialization. This "second generation" group of South Asianists (which by 1962 also included Kali C. Bahl, Edward C. Dimock, Jr., Marc Galanter, Colin Masica, C.M. Naim, Maureen L.P. Patterson, A.K. Ramanujan, J.A.B. van Buitenen, and Norman Zide) generally had a more thorough grounding in their area of study and a greater command of Indian languages than the first generation committee members they joined. By the mid-sixties, these more specialized faculty members formed the core of the South Asia program.

Indian Civilization

The committee soon received an opportunity to test out its notion of what an interdisciplinary committee might achieve in the way of cooperative enterprise. This was the one-year course on Indian Civilization, taught in the College beginning in 1956. The idea for an Indian Civilization course resulted from an independent series of events, but it turned out to be just what the committee needed. One of the initial purposes of COSAS was "to recommend and prepare teaching materials and study programs dealing with South Asia at the undergraduate level for purposes of general education," and the Indian Civilization course was a chance to do just that.

When Lawrence Kimpton became president of the University of Chicago in 1951, one of the primary items on the agenda was to reintegrate the College into the rest of the university. Under Hutchins, his predecessor, the College had developed an experimental, widely-admired program centered

around the classic books of the Western civilization and a set of comprehensive exams. It had also become precariously independent from other parts of the university, with its own faculty and a curriculum that discouraged any specialization. Kimpton wished to maintain the general education features of the College program while adding a year of more specialized training in a student's chosen field. This would give a college student both a liberal background and some exposure to a particular discipline.

By 1954, committees were set up to investigate the possibilities of joint programs between the College and each of the four university divisions. Among those appointed to the six-member committee for a "joint College-Social Science B.A. program" were two members of COSAS--Francis Chase from the Department of Education, and Milton Singer--and the chairman of the College course on "Western Civilization," William McNeill.

Chase, McNeill, and Singer proposed that the College create a number of year-long courses on "non-Western civilizations," and managed to persuade this committee that such courses could be an important part of a liberal education. As their report to the College faculty argued, courses on non-Western civilizations

> would, we believe, not only familiarize the student with a civilized tradition other than his own, and thus permit him to glimpse the world and his own civilization as others see them, but might also enable him to understand his own cultural heritage by comparing it with another.

These courses--initially with Far Eastern, Indian, and Islamic civilizations--would be modeled on the Western Civilization sequence, aiming for "strategic selection" and thematic unity rather than "comprehensive

coverage" of the civilizations as historical entities. They would be introductory, but would use primary sources as much as possible.

Singer recalls this proposal as being controversial, but nothing in the minutes of the College faculty meetings indicates substantial disagreements. One can imagine that, in a college so closely identified with "the great books of the Western world," it would not be an easy thing for every faculty member to admit that the non-Western world might also be worthy of serious study. In any case, McNeill and the deans of the Social Science Division (Chauncy Harris) and the College (Robert Streeter) strongly supported the idea, and it was approved.

Proposing was one thing. Finding the resources necessary to put together the new courses was another. Another of the items on Kimpton's agenda was to balance the university's budget, which had dipped dangerously into the red during Hutchins' tenure. So the University was short on venture capital. But fortunately, the College found an interested outside partner, the Carnegie Corporation, to put up some initial funding. Dean Streeter, with a little help from COSAS, applied to Carnegie, and the College received an initial grant of $75,000. This, and subsequent grants from the foundation totalling over $100,000 helped provide the material and staffing needs of the course: library acquisitions, reproduction of teaching materials, audio-visual aids, visiting lecturers, and (most important) teaching fellows. The Carnegie internship program gave an opportunity to young pre- and post-doctoral scholars to gain teaching experience in an interdisciplinary setting, and it gave the university a way of recruiting promising new staff for the South Asian program. In the 1958-59 course, for instance, the Indian Civilization

interns were Edward Dimock and Maureen Patterson, both of whom stayed on and benefited the program immensely.

The course was an initial success in several ways. Enrollments were encouraging, faculty seemed to enjoy participating, and it met the needs of the College curriculum. It gave COSAS members a shared activity. Bobrinskoy, Crane and Singer drew up the initial course outline, and each year other professors added their own perspectives. Over time, most faculty members on the committee participated to some degree in the course, and so it is instructive to look a bit more closely at the evolution of the course on Indian Civilization.

The best way to view the peculiar development of this course, it seems to me, is in terms of an intellectual assumption and a pedagogical problem.

The intellectual assumption is that India is best studied as a civilization, that is "a living, organic entity characterized by a distinctive culture and social organization" (Singer 1959). Here the influence of Redfield's ideas is strong; his essay "Thinking About a Civilization" was often used as the initial reading of the course.

This assumption distinguished the Chicago course from other introductory courses on Asia then being taught in the United States, and it posed an ambitious task for the course. To deal with India as a civilization implies that one can find and specify some unity to it, that one can think of Indian civilization as a "thing." Yet where does one locate that unity? No civilization lends itself to a simple characterization. How does one integrate the many different ways of approaching or knowing something as multi-faceted as a civilization?

The pedagogical problem grew out of that task. To get across the sense of an entire civilization to a largely undergraduate class in one year is no simple job. The problem, roughly, was to find a proper balance in the presentation of India as a civilization between complexity and coherence. Both complexity and coherence were regarded as virtues. On the one hand, it was desirable to portray the diversity of India, and to "eliminate simple-minded stereotypes" that beginning students might hold about India. On the other hand, it was necessary to portray India as something intelligible, so as not to demoralize students. "An undergraduate in his first confrontation with the civilization," wrote Susanne Rudolph in her 1965-66 course report, "needs to understand broad strokes, to give him/her some sense for the shape of the phenomena he confronts."

Redfield's orientation, and that followed in the initial stages of the course, was towards a multi-disciplinary approach. Indian civilization is one thing, but—like the elephant in the Buddha's parable of the five blind men--it must be apprehended from several different directions to know it properly. Each discipline has its own value in the collective enterprise of knowing India. The course was designed to reflect his conviction. Different professors or visiting scholars, representing different disciplines, would lecture each week; students would also meet in weekly discussion groups whose purpose was to attempt to integrate lectures and readings into an understanding. Consequently, a great deal of the responsibility for putting the diversity into a unity fell upon the discussion leaders and on the students themselves.

The Indian Civilization course reflected the growth of the South Asian field, and at least by 1965 this growth resulted in a new problem:

disaggregation. An initial poverty of teaching materials, Rudolph's course report noted, had been replaced by an "embarras de richesse." Historical and cultural studies of the past ten years had created a much more multi-faceted conception of Indian civilization. Using these new materials in the introductory course enabled one to present a more complex, sophisticated picture of India, but this complexity threatened to overwhelm the students.

> At almost every point in the course, there is some pressure towards disaggregation of the phenomena in sight, to stress the internal diversity of the subject under review, to avoid generalizations and state, rather, a variegated truth.

Rudolph delineated the problem, and argued for a simpler initial presentation, in "broad strokes." Yet this simplified coherency was regarded as a heuristic device, to be supplemented, or exploded, by later courses that would demonstrate the real diversity of India.

McKim Marriott redesigned the Indian Civilization course in 1966-68, and the "new design" addressed some of Rudolph's concerns. It also added a twist to the course, latent in Redfield's own emphasis on a civilization as a constructed object of thought, but never before built into the course. Marriott rejected what he called "textbook summaries" of India, which made India appear as an object of positive knowledge, and reorganized the course around a variety of contrasting holistic interpretations of Indian civilization: those of Redfield, D.D. Kosambi, Louis Dumont, and so on. Each was treated as a "construction" of India, alleging to depict India holistically. The operating assumption of the course--India as a civilization--remained, but the focus shifted. No longer was the student required to formulate his own construction of

Indian civilization; now he had to evaluate and mediate between various constructions which conflicted with each other. How can one tell whether a given model is adequate to the phenomenon it purports to explain? In one sense, the new design simplified the task of the course by presenting unitary views of India. But in another sense, it added a new complexity. It was not simply that India itself was a phenomena of great diversity, but moreover that scholars, in trying to depict India as a unified phenomenon, had presented diverse and conflicting interpretations and constructions.

For many years, the Indian Civilization course was one of the central activities of Chicago South Asianists. Not only was it a common enterprise for COSAS faculty, it was also a prime way of creating an interest in Indian studies among students. The lectures, movies, and concerts given in association with the course often appealed to an audience beyond enrolled students. And finally, the course was an experiment in pedagogy, an on-going attempt to find a way to introduce the civilization of India to a class of undergraduates.

Grantsmanship

Shortly after the Committee on South Asian Studies and the course on Indian Civilization were underway, two financial developments took place which were to have profound consequences on the growth and direction of the South Asian program. The two of these together—passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and a heavy investment in "International Education" by the Ford Foundation—enabled the new program to expand at a rate far greater than anyone could have anticipated. Within

a three or four year span, South Asian studies at Chicago moved from a peripheral pursuit of a small community to becoming an established, well-funded program.

It would be a mistake, however, to view the matter as a simple cause-and-effect relationship: government and foundation money the cause, the South Asian program as a result. The university, and specifically COSAS, had to plan, anticipate, negotiate, and report—in short, engage in grant entrepreneurship--to receive and make use of the new sources of money. If COSAS had not already been formed, the University of Chicago would not have been able to take advantage of the new possibilities. If committee members had not had at least some experience in working together in the Indian Civilization course, they probably would not have been able to respond so successfully to the new situation. And their plan for growth had to be a realistic and viable one for either the government or the Ford Foundation to make their investments.

The first major source of capital for the Chicago program, and for similar area studies programs across the country, was Title VI of National Defense Education Act (NDEA). This provided for federal funding of university language centers where students would be,

> trained in such languages [as] are needed by the Federal Government or by business, industry, or education in the United States . . . . where adequate instruction in such languages is not readily available in the United States.

These were called the "neglected" languages, and a number of major Indian languages, including Hindi-Urdu, Bengali, and Tamil, were among them.

NDEA was a direct response to the Soviet launching of Sputnik in October 1957 and the widespread fear of an "education gap" that Sputnik

ignited in the United States. The Act had truly bipartisan support, but conservatives and liberals tended to view it from different perspectives.

Conservatives spoke of NDEA as a form of mobilization in the war against Communism. The Communist threat was real and imminent; it had to be countered on every front. Senator Lister Hill, a conservative Democrat from Alabama and chairman of the committee which heard testimony on the Act, opened the hearings in January 1958 with a strong statement:

> These hearings open at a time of great decision. A severe blow--some would say a disastrous blow—has been struck at America's self-confidence and at her prestige in the world. Rarely have Americans questioned one another so intensely about our military position, our scientific stature, or our educational system . . .
>
> We Americans are united in our determination to meet this challenge. We Americans know that we must give vastly greater support, emphasis, and dedication to basic scientific research, to quality in education, to instruction in the physical sciences, to training in foreign languages, and to developing to the full our intellectual, cultural, and scientific resources. We Americans know we must mobilize our Nation's brainpower in the struggle for survival . . .
>
> Since it was placed in orbit last November, the second Soviet earth satellite has by now revolved over our heads more than 2,000 times, a constant grim reminder that for the first time in the life of our Nation we are all looking down the cannon's mouth. The United States truly has reached a historic turning point, and the path we choose to pursue may well determine the future not only of Western civilization but freedom and peace for all peoples of the earth. (U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare 1958:2)

The apocalyptic struggle was begun, and even things a conservative would normally oppose, like federal aid to education, were justified in times of war.

The education lobby, which had long been pushing for increased federal money, immediately recognized the new trump card: picturing education as a weapon in the great conflict enlisted the support of

enough conservatives to assure passage of the bill. In one of the most-often repeated examples, the physicist Edward Teller told the committee that in Russia, 500 students were learning Hindustani in a single school, while in the United States not one school teaches India's national language. "Yet at stake," one senator echoed, "are 400 million people, whether they go for Communism or whether they go the free way." Another educator pointed out that "when their delegates arrive [in Andhra], they can speak Telugu." Ours, of course, could not.

Liberals, on the other hand, emphasized language training as a bridge to "international understanding"--not necessarily abandoning the premises of the Cold War, but seeking to downplay them. To make evident our good intentions to the peoples of the world, "to export a full measure of our good will along with our products and skills," we Americans had to be able to speak in many different languages. The notions of active benevolence and expanded responsibilities were uppermost to liberals. Yet they also recognized that all the sabre-rattling of the anti-communists was working to their benefit. Senator William Fulbright, who had previously introduced a number of unsuccessful aid-to-education bills into Congress, remarked on this:

> I think that if we are to do anything in education, we need all-out support from the Army, because when the Army and the Navy speak, the people's fears are raised and they will do it. When a professor speaks, everybody is out to discount him as being a dreamer and not knowing what he is doing. (U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare 1958:1379)

For conservatives and liberals alike, language-learning had practical consequences. It was a necessary preliminary training for activities useful to the national interest, however that interest might be defined.

In its first five years, NDEA ploughed over one billion dollars into education, of which $74 million went into foreign language programs. The effects of this Act on the entire education industry in the United States were profound, but perhaps nowhere more so than on the field of area studies.

The NDEA was designed to encourage training in language and area studies by assisting universities in setting up or expanding their programs. This policy, said Marion Folsom, then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, was to preserve the traditional values of American education, that is, to avoid nationally-controlled education. The role of government was "to encourage and assist private and local effort," not to set up federal institutes. Universities would apply with a specific proposal to the Office of Education, and the commissioner would determine whether the proposal qualified as a "language and area center," in which case the program became eligible for federal funds. Similarly, students of "critically needed" foreign languages could apply to the Office of Education for fellowships, and certain types of research pertaining to language instruction could be supported.

Fred Eggan and Milton Singer paid a visit to the Office of Education in Washington while NDEA was under consideration, and learned that the Chicago program might very well qualify as a language and area center. When they returned and made a report of the conversation to members of COSAS, the committee quickly decided to apply. Singer immediately drafted a letter of application and circulated it among interested faculty. On October 27, 1958, very shortly after NDEA was enacted, the letter was sent off to Homer Babbidge at the Office of Education.

Meanwhile, another set of negotiations was in progress. In 1957, members of the committee had learned through informal conversations with Ford Foundation officials that the Foundation was becoming interested in international studies. COSAS responded promptly. A three-member subcommittee consisting of Stephen Hay, Marriott, and Singer was formed to draft a proposal. By March 1958 a formal request had been sent off to the Ford Foundation, opening up a long series of discussions.

The two requests were substantially the same, in the hope that what NDEA did not provide, Ford would. Both outlined a plan of development intended "to guarantee the continuance of what is being achieved and to provide for advance in those directions which seems more certain to prove of profit." They discussed the steps already taken to build the Chicago program, and listed specific measures needed to assure continuing growth. Chief among these measures was the need to develop language instruction, specifically by creating an endowed professorship in Indology (Sanskrit) and another four-year position in Contemporary South Asian Language and Literature (preferably Bengali). The requests mentioned that the committee already had candidates in mind for these posts: J.A.B. van Buitenen, a Rockefeller fellow teaching at Chicago, for Indology, and Edward Dimock, an Indian Civilization intern, for Bengali. Money was also needed for library acquisitions, research grants, fellowships for graduate students, and administration.

Both grants came through. But both were, as usual, less than the original requests. The Ford grant provided $249,000 over three years, scaled down from a five-year $822,500 request. The NDEA grant, it turned out, was oriented towards specific purposes. Bengali was designated a

"neglected language" and hence fundable, but Sanskrit—albeit neglected--could hardly be considered critical to the national interest. Producing delegates who could speak Sanskrit when they got there might impress a few pandits, but could not be expected to help offset the Communist menace. NDEA could provide fellowships for graduate students (which it still does), and it could support specific language-research projects. This last provision proved to be an unanticipated boon and yet frequently bothersome. A great deal of faculty research was funded on this basis for instance, Dimock's Introduction to Bengali, An Urdu Reader by John Gumperz and C.M. Naim, and Kali Bahl's Studies in the Semantic Structure of Hindi. The Office of Education was always more interested in such practical language-training materials than in the more basic linguistic research which the Chicago faculty viewed as having first priority.

By a judicious mixing and matching of Ford, NDEA, and university funds, van Buitenen and Dimock were hired, and then Norman Zide to teach Hindi. Students began to receive NDEA language grants in 1959. Things were looking good. And then the prospect of a still larger grant appeared.

In 1960, the Ford Foundation let it be known that it was considering making substantial gifts for international studies centers, "long-term grants designed to help selected American universities make non-Western and international teaching part of their permanent academic programs." So COSAS began another round of negotiations. This time, Chauncy Harris, who had just stepped down as Dean to the Social Sciences, acted as principal spokesman for the university, but it was still up to the Committee to put together a request. By now, committee members were

getting to be old hands at this sort of thing, and they compiled by October 1960 a rather substantial document, a fifty-one page "Operational Plan for an Area Training Research Program in Southern Asia at the University of Chicago, 1961-70." The plan lays out priorities for development, again emphasizing expansion of faculty, library acquisitions, and support for research.

Foundation officials must have been impressed by the plan, because they granted almost everything Chicago asked for. The request was for $5.6 million for all Chicago area programs over ten years, and Ford granted $5.4 million, including $1,786,000 for the South Asian program. With this major new source of funding, and with the continuation of NDEA money, the position of the South Asian program at Chicago was assured. University administrators had to look favorably on any program that could bring in that kind of outside funding. There were now sufficient finances, over a guaranteed ten-year period, to hire more new faculty. The number of graduate students began to rise. The program was now on solid ground within the university.

The period of grantsmanship appears in retrospect as one of heady growth. New sources of funding were turning up practically as fast as proposals could be drawn up. Yet for those involved most centrally in the grant negotiations, it could be a difficult, taxing time. An extraordinary amount of time had to be devoted to finding out what the foundations were thinking, to formulating plans, to approaching officials in the proper manner, to "keeping one's hand in" once the proposal was made by continuous correspondence, and to informing other faculty members and

administrators of what was going on. It may have been heady, but it also produced many a headache.

Grant entrepreneurship required that one place the interests of the program ahead of one's own interest. For tenured professors this was perhaps less of a conflict, but for young faculty the convergence of personal and institutional interests was not always apparent. Involvement in time-consuming negotiations took time away from one's own research, and research was the most important factor in academic reputation and tenure decisions. As Stephen Hay wrote to Singer, at a time in 1958 when negotiations were particularly wearing,

> . . . my first obligation is to my own professional obligations to write and publish first-rate work. It would be nice to have continued foundation money for various things . . . but when it comes to choosing between these things and my own work, I choose the latter . . . . After all, what use is there to having a lot of money if the people we already have here can't publish books which will attract first-rate students and researchers to spend the money on?

The sacrifices of time made by Hay and many others finally did pay off, however, in a period of unprecedented rapid expansion of South Asian facilities at Chicago.

The South Asian Network

I have singled out these three elements--the formation of COSAS, the Indian Civilization course, and the grants from the Office of Education and the Ford Foundation--as the crucial ones in this period of take-off. The formation of the Committee created a coordinating structure for the implementation of a South Asian program, a structure that was loose and yet capable of acting quickly to push for its interests. The Indian Civilization course brought South Asianists from many departments together

in a common pursuit, providing a model of the "interdisciplinary cooperation" that was one of Chicago's selling points. The NDEA and Ford grants gave the program a fiscal foot in the door of the university, enabling several crucial hirings to be made, as well as helping out with library acquisitions, research grants, and administrative facilities.

But there were other developments during the same period that played a necessary and supporting role, and contributed to the coalescence of the program here and to South Asian studies in general. At the same time that Chicagoans were building their program, there developed a "South Asian network" linking the growing number of American universities that either already had or were beginning to put together South Asian departments. Berkeley, Chicago, and Pennsylvania had the strongest voices in this community, but many other universities were also involved.

In 1955, three South Asianists (Richard Lambert, Richard Park, and Phillips Talbot) approached the scholarly organization of Far Eastern studies, the Far Eastern Association (FEA), and reported that most South Asian specialists felt a mutuality of interest with the FEA. The FEA, in contrast to the much older American Oriental Society, was committed to both pre-modern and modern studies, involving both humanistic and social scientific approaches. The new breed of post-war South Asianist tended toward modern, social scientific studies, and hence did not feel particularly welcome in the AOS. Consequently, the delegation asked the FEA if a group of South Asian academics might be given semi-autonomous status within the association. After some deliberation, the FEA Board of Directors approved inviting their South Asian colleagues into the group; in 1956 the FEA became the Association of Asian Studies (AAS) and their

quarterly was renamed the Journal of Asian Studies. The South Asianists quickly formed their own committee within the AAS, which became a very useful lobbying and coordinating device.

Adequate library resources are crucial to the development of a research-centered program, and it was clear by the mid-50s that substantial acquisitions of South Asian materials would have to be made to support the many new programs that were getting underway. A preliminary conference was held at the Library of Congress in 1957, and a subcommittee on library resources was created within the AAS. Acquisitions were needed, but where was the money to come from? As it turned out, the Indian government owed the United States a large sum of money for wheat loans made in 1951. For India, it was desirable to pay off the interest of this debt in goods rather than dollars; for South Asianists, it was desirable that some of these goods be Indian books for American libraries. The academic community lobbied, and in 1958 Representative John Dingell introduced an amendment to Public Law 480 that provided for acquisition of all kinds of Indian printed books and periodicals. The law passed, but the Senate Appropriations Committee failed to appropriate the funds. It wasn't until 1961 that money was appropriated, and then only about one-seventh the originally-requested amount. Nevertheless, eleven American university libraries, including Chicago, paid a $500 annual participation fee to get in on the action, and in 1962 the books began to arrive in force. Public Law 480 was later extended to include purchases from Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Fortunately for Chicago, Maureen Patterson--who had come in 1958 as an intern for the Indian Civilization course—had been appointed as part-

time (and later full-time) bibliographic specialist for South Asian materials. She had already done preliminary surveys of Chicago holdings, and with faculty advice had formulated a tentative ten-year plan for acquisitions. Consequently, Chicago was more prepared to deal with the Public Law 480 barrage than most universities. It was easy for a library to get swamped by uncatalogued Indian materials in a bewildering variety of languages. In the first six years of Public Law 480, the University of Chicago library received 39,543 South Asian monographs, nearly doubling their previous holdings. They came in twenty-five different languages. Patterson and her staff had the unenviable task of processing and finding shelf space for the thousands of Indian books. Yet once set in order, the Public Law 480 acquisitions had the effect of multiplying the resources for South Asian research many times. As of 1985, the Chicago library containes 180,000 books and 5,400 journals related to South Asia, and Patterson could call it, without much argument, "the strongest collection on South Asia in North America, and probably in the world."

Wheat loan money helped out South Asian studies in another way. For many years Professor W. Norman Brown of the University of Pennsylvania had dreamed of creating an institute for Indian studies in India, oriented primarily to Americans doing research abroad. Before 1958, he had never seen a way to make this dream a reality. But in the late 1950s, with foundations and the government making investments in international studies and with the growing network of South Asianists, he began to think more seriously about trying to implement his plan. He got together a group including Dimock and Singer to discuss the possibilities of an Indian institute. There were a fair number of problems to be ironed out, since

many parties were involved: Indian and American governments, foundations, American universities both public and private, university administrators and faculty members. But most of the problems were ultimately solved, and in October 1961 the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) was incorporated with fifteen participating universities. Brown was its first president. (Singer was later made vice-president and Dimock is current AIIS president.) An Indian office was set up in Poona. The Ford Foundation provided a half-million dollar grant, and the Institute received permission to use Public Law 480 funds available in Indian currency. And so another element important to the growth of South Asian studies was established. From 1962 to the present, the AIIS has been the principal fellowship-granting institution for American professors and graduate students carrying out research in India.

By 1961 or 1962, all the pieces were in place for the consolidation of the program. The take-off phase was completed. The next few years were ones of less hectic, but steady growth--years of putting plans into effect. In 1965 the University established a Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations in the Humanities Division, making it possible for a student to specialize in South Asian languages and literatures rather than in a particular discipline. In 1966 another large Ford Foundation grant for international studies came through, not directly covering South Asia but indirectly benefitting the program in many ways.

In a 1966 "Midway Report" prepared by COSAS halfway through the Ford ten-year grant, the results were evident. Singer wrote,

> A comparison of the situation in 1959-60 with that which is described in the present report will show that most of the

> targets set by the Operational Plan for the ten-year development period have already been achieved or exceeded. (Singer 1966:4)

He goes on to list many of these "tangible indexes of progress": growth in language instruction, in number of students receiving fellowships, in number of degrees granted, in support for faculty research, in library resources, and so on.

> When the Committee was begun, [South and Southeast Asian] studies were regarded as highly exotic and irrelevant to the main affairs of the University. In 1966 the flavor of exoticism may not altogether have faded, but the program has become a familiar and essential feature of the University, and the new Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations is now considered one of the most distinguished in the nation. (Singer 1966:6-7)

In short, South Asian studies had arrived at the University of Chicago.

CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE (1966-1985)

The "Midway Report," written at a high point of optimism for the Chicago South Asia program, offers a fitting place to conclude what is primarily a tale of origins. By 1966, most of the basic constituents of the program were in place--the institutional structure had been built. A history of the more recent period would need to deal with matters different from those I have treated here. One would have to look at intellectual currents and achievements of individuals within the program against a background of relative institutional stability, rather than of the efforts to build that institutional structure and the contexts in which it was built. But it is necessary for the sake of completion to say a bit about some developments of the nineteen years since the report.

There is no question that the winds that blew so favorably for area studies programs in the 50s and the early 60s have shifted. The atmosphere has chilled somewhat. Although most area programs at Chicago as elsewhere are firmly established within their universities, their circumstances have become more constricted. The growth of the earlier years has stopped, and the predominant institutional response has been to try to hold steady against cutbacks. The new species has had to show its instinct for self-preservation.

The first signs of this shift began to appear in the mid-60s as government, foundations, and universities each began to draw back from the partnership which had previously proven so fruitful for international studies.

One of the first moves came from the foundations. In 1967, McGeorge Bundy, the new president of the Ford Foundation, released a "Presidential Review" of Foundation activities. According to the review, the Foundation's program on International Training and Research had achieved its goals. "We have wrought a revolution," exclaimed Bundy. "The study of [the non-Western] world has become a necessary, built-in element of the American academic establishment." Between 1951 and 1966, Ford had poured over $300 million into 30 universities through this program, and had done what it set out to do. "Now we want to take our men and money to the next table."

There were several motives behind Bundy's decision. One was the financial situation of the Foundation, whose assets had been reduced by inflation and dipping into its principal. Another reason was that many area studies programs had, in fact, become built-in departments of their universities, with the bulk of their support coming now from university funds. Foundations generally favor providing start-up funds for new programs over long-range, continuing support for established ones. Perhaps most important, the Foundation believed that the government--through NDEA and the new International Education Act--was taking on the lion's share of fiscal responsibility for international studies.

The last assumption was not altogether accurate, for the Johnson administration was at the same time beginning to express its own reserva-

tions about international studies and higher education. The war in Vietnam was expensive, and so were the many Great Society programs passed through Congress in 1965. The budget had to be cut somewhere. Besides, the administration was getting too much criticism from campuses over its policies. In 1966, President Johnson announced plans to cut out funding for NDEA, but that year Congress blocked his move.

Educators, meanwhile, were pinning their hopes on the International Education Act (IEA) then being considered by Congress. The IEA had two major advantages over NDEA, which it was designed to replace. First, it involved more money. Second, it took the word "defense" out of international studies at a time when "national defense" was becoming a suspect term on many campuses. President Johnson first introduced the IEA in the Great Society package of bills in 1965, but subsequently lost interest in it. The bill stalled in Congress, and was finally pushed through only on the last day of the session. But there was one catch: the Senate Appropriations Committee refused to appropriate any of the money the bill required. Members of the committee claimed they hadn't been previously consulted. In effect, they killed the act.

The following year, appropriations for NDEA were cut fifteen percent. Cuts in federal funding of higher education continued--and increased—during the Nixon administration. By 1969, academics in South Asian studies were complaining of "a crisis in external funding" which they viewed with "considerable alarm." These terms—"crisis" and "alarm"--indicate the new attitude which came to characterize area studies programs in their relationship with funding agencies. They began to

portray themselves as beleaguered institutions, attempting to hold the line against budgetary restraints and government indifference.

The sense of crisis has at times certainly been overstated. As Robert McCaughey (1980) has recently argued, the field of international studies has fared no worse than other humanities and social scientific fields during the past decade and a half, and better than many. The crisis, such as it is, is university-wide, not specific to international studies programs. Area studies programs have perhaps felt the "crisis" more acutely simply because of the special consideration to which they had been previously become accustomed. But the alarm within the field has been real nonetheless.

At the same time that the funding of international studies began to slip, another kind of crisis hit the field. This one was more moral than financial, and was centered within the university. As the war in Vietnam escalated between 1965 and 1970, so did opposition to it on American campuses. The war elicited a questioning not only of American policy in Southeast Asia, but of the rhetoric of "national interest" upon which that policy had been based. Area studies had grown up a child of the national interest, supported on government funds; its legitimacy as an academic field had to be brought into question.

Several specific exposés of the mid-60s gave solid ammunition to the university critics of area studies. In 1964, the U.S. Army's Special Operations Research Office made the largest grant ever provided for a social scientific project. Project Camelot was, in its own neutral words,

> a study whose objective is to determine the feasibility of developing a general social systems model which would make it

> possible to predict and influence politically significant aspects of social change in the developing nations of the world.

But academics in the "developing nations" did not view it in such benign terms. They publically refused to participate, charging that the real objective of the project was to develop effective techniques of counter-insurgency against indigenous movements for social change. The ensuing controversy led to cancellation of Camelot in 1965.

The following year, the leftist periodical, Ramparts, printed a lengthy expose of the "Vietnam Project" carried out between 1954 and 1962 by Michigan State University. The article showed that this "academic project" had carried out police training, supplied guns and ammunition to President Diem's security forces, and acted as a CIA front for five years.

The most scandalous things about these projects, argued critics within the academic community, was the ease with which many social scientists had enlisted in enterprises of dubious intellectual value and suspect political morality. As the repentant Stanley Sheinbaum (an economist who had served two years as coordinator of the MSU Vietnam project) wrote, such projects were to be seen as symptoms of "two critical failures in American education and intellectual life:

> The first and more obvious is the diversion of the university away from its functions (and duties) of scholarship and teaching. The second has to do with the failure of the academic intellectual to serve as critic, conscience, ombudsman." (Sheinbaum 1966:13)

Area studies, a field which had to do with how the United States knew about and responded to the rest of the world, was centrally involved in the moral reckoning.

The "special relationship" of government, foundations, and universities on behalf of international studies came unraveled in the late 1960s, and has never been rewoven. Area studies have not become an endangered species, of course, but proliferation has been stopped cold since about 1970. Area programs that had become established within their universities by the mid-1960s have managed to hold steady, at a time when universities have had to face a drop in the college-age population and an over-abundance of Ph.Ds. seeking employment. But it has not been easy. The optimistic and confident tone of growth in the field of the early years has been gradually replaced by the more defensive tones of those protecting what they have built. It is not clear what the future holds for university international programs. We may not see another period of major institutional growth in such programs for many years. Yet consideration of the years between 1955 and 1961 has clearly shown that circumstances influencing the studies of international studies programs in universities can change with great rapidity. It is not implausible to suppose that--as the world grows ever more interdependent--these circumstances may again shift in a favorable direction.

The South Asian program at the University of Chicago has fared relatively well during this period. It has held the line financially more successfully than most area studies programs, thanks to some timely grantsmanship and a generally-supportive university administration. Although the university did not escape the climate of intense moral scrutiny of the late 1960s, it was less riddled than most major universities with research involvement in the war in Vietnam or similar government endeavors. A University Senate rule, passed in the early 1960s,

stipulated that the university would not accept any funds for research whose results could not be published--closing Chicago doors to the CIA. Members of the South Asian program have therefore been free, Milton Singer once suggested, to pursue their research and teaching as what he terms a "līlā."

> For them, "participation in this growing world-wide exchange of knowledge does not generally spring from practical political, social, or economic necessities. It represents rather a līlā, in the Indian sense, that is, 'sports' or activities generated spontaneously from their creative energies and motivated only by the intrinsic satisfactions that come from adding to international understanding and good will. (Singer 1966:7)

Whether by play or by work, the South Asia program at Chicago has managed to maintain into the eighties a reputation it earned in the sixties as one of the top South Asian centers in the United States.

The academic reputation of any research-oriented program rests primarily on the contributions made by its faculty members (and to some extent its graduate students) to a common intellectual enterprise shared by a wider community of scholars in the field. Institutional stability only provides a setting conducive to such research, a perhaps necessary but not sufficient cause. Chicago faculty have certainly made more than their share of contributions to the study of South Asia over the past twenty years. One thinks immediately of such major scholarly publications as J.A.B. van Buitenen's translation of the first five books of the Mahābhārata and Maureen Patterson's comprehensive South Asian Civilizations: A Bibliographic Synthesis. Almost as quickly, other translations come to mind—those, for instance, of Edward Dimock (In Praise of Krishna) and of A.K. Ramanujan (Interior Landscape, Speaking of Siva), which have helped present to a broader audience some of the

riches of Indian poetry. One thinks also of the studies and translations of South Asia's vast body of myth by Wendy O'Flaherty (Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva, Hindu Myths), and the studies of Sanskrit and Urdu literature by Edwin Gerow and C.M. Naim (as in Literatures of India: An Introduction). Basic linguistic research such as the areal typological approach to South Asian languages developed by Colin Masica (Defining a Linguistic Area: South Asia), or the work done on Austroasiatic languages by Gerard Diffloth and Norman Zide, has engaged the attention of Chicago faculty. So has the preparation of new pedagogical materials for more efficiently teaching South Asian languages; Kali Bahl (Hindi), Dimock, Seely (Bengali), James Lindholm (Tamil) and Naim (Urdu) have all participated in writing grammars or readers for students of these languages.

Chicago social scientists working on South Asia have made an equally substantial contribution to the field. The development and application of an "ethnosociological" method by Ronald Inden, McKim Marriott, and Ralph Nicholas ("Caste Systems," Kinship in Bengali Culture) has suggested a new way of understanding Indian social phenomena such as kinship and caste. The eighty-seven volume Amar Singh diaries, a huge editing project undertaken by Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, are making available a uniquely rich body of material relating to princely and imperial India of the early twentieth century. Bernard Cohn's study of the symbolism of power during the British Raj ("Representing Authority in Victorian India") has posed one answer to a fundamental question in the history of colonial societies: how are a few alien rulers able to legitimate their control over a large native population? This brief resume of faculty

research indicates that the līlā of Chicago South Asianists has been in large part a productive one, and that institutionalization of the program has not dampened their creativity.

To maintain its funding, the South Asia program has been able to rely primarily on regular university money. By the mid-1960s, most of the program had been rooted into the normal university structure, following the "Center" approach, and consequently had become less dependent on outside sources of funds. Ongoing contributions from outside the university, such as Title VI foreign language and area grants, American Institute of Indian Studies language and research grants (based on PL 480 and foundation funds), and the PL 480 books procurement plan have, of course, helped things along. Still, any new growth in the program did require special grants, and several such grants have come through. Most important of these was the Ford Foundation challenge grant of $600,000 approved in October 1975. Approval of the grant set a whole new phase of grantsmanship in motion, since it was no longer enough to receive the grant in the first place—now, the money offered by Ford had to be matched two-for-one by new contributions from other non-governmental sources. Meeting this "challenge" was not exactly a līlā, but the program managed to raise the necessary funds.

In the seventies and eighties, problems of morale in university programs have often seemed just as ominous as problems of finances. In 1982, the Baker Commission report on graduate education at Chicago, for instance, speaks bluntly of the sense of 'malaise' in the humanities:

> Throughout the country, the humanities have been disproportionately affected by the rampant voluntarism and vocationalism that

> struck higher education in the 1970s. (UC Commission on Graduate Education 1982:149)

And:

> This national sense of malaise has had painful local repercussions. Morale in the Division of Humanities is low. When faculty members talk freely, they seem inclined to complain about their lot.

This malaise, argues the report, grows out of shrinking enrollments, limited opportunities for graduates, inadequate salaries, shrinking funds for research, and a sense that humanities programs are not receiving treatment equal with other parts of the university. Students or faculty in the South Asian program at Chicago may not have escaped this loss of morale. But several indications suggest that the malaise has been less severe there than elsewhere. For instance, while many individual departments in the Humanities Division have suffered precipitous drops in enrollment, and overall the division declined by 35 percent between 1968-69 and 1981-82, enrollments in the South Asian Languages and Civilizations Department held almost steady during that period. The number of advanced degrees completed with some bearing on Southern Asia, after a strong growth throughout the sixties, had not fallen off up through 1976. In the past nine years, the number of Ph.Ds. completed has continued steady, although the number of M.As. has distinctly fallen. Finally, it is worth noting that a large proportion of Chicago's South Asianist Ph.Ds. have wanted to and have been able to find academic positions. A COSAS tally in 1969 found that of 86 known Ph.Ds., 78 were employed in higher education. The list of Ph.Ds. published in 1977 and a more recent unpublished list prepared by COSAS suggest a similar proportion of graduates are still going on to teach. A higher proportion of graduates of the South

Asia program continue in academia than is true for Chicago Humanities or Social Sciences graduates in general.

If health is the ability to maintain sound vital functions even in a threatening environment, then the South Asia program at the University of Chicago can certainly be called healthy. Members of the committee, past and present, can be proud of what they built in the 1950s and early 1960s, when circumstances were so favorable; they can also be proud that they have been able to maintain a program of high quality into the 1980s, when the climate has shifted against it.

Yet as the Committee on Southern Asian Studies prepares to celebrate its thirtieth birthday, it would be a good occasion to look beyond maintenance. It is a good time, I believe, for faculty and students to think about the purposes of South Asian studies, to raise questions that have not been much discussed in recent years: Why study South Asia? In what sense does the academic study of South Asia by Americans yield useful or significant knowledge? Does this knowledge have any role to play beyond academia? A healthy program should also welcome such a consideration of its own goals.

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