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Illinois Wesleyan Professor Earns Fulbright Grants

September 28, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - Illinois Wesleyan University professor Brian Hatcher is the recipient of a Fulbright Hays Faculty Research Abroad Fellowship through the U.S. Department of Education, as well as a grant from the Fulbright Council for International Exchange of Scholars Traditional Scholars Program.

Hatcher, a professor of religion and humanities, will be spending from November 2006 to June 2007 doing research in both Kolkata, India, and in the United Kingdom on his sabbatical project, "Pandits in the Public Sphere: Sanskrit Scholars in Colonial Bengal."

Hatcher teaches courses on Asian religious literature and practice, the Hindu religious tradition, Buddhism in India and Tibet, Hindu-Christian encounter, and the interpretation of religious experience. His ongoing research interests include transformations in the lives and activities of Sanskrit pandits in colonial Bengal and the hermeneutics of religious reform in modern India.

He is the author of "Idioms of Improvement: Vidyasagar and Cultural Encounter in Bengal" (1996) and "Eclecticism and Modern Hindu Discourse" (1999). He currently has a new book, "Bourgeois Hinduism, or the Faith of the Modern Vedantists: Rare Discourses from Early Colonial Bengal," in production with Oxford University Press.

His other publications include studies of Sanskrit pandits in colonial Bengal, issues in the historiography of modern Bengal, and selected topics in the development of modern Hinduism. In addition, he has published a variety of translations from Sanskrit and Bengali, including several short stories by Saradindu Bandyopadhyay.

Hatcher, who joined the IWU faculty in 1992, has a bachelor's degree from Carleton College, a master's degree in divinity from Yale University and master's and doctorate degrees from Harvard University.

The Fulbright Scholar Program

The Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Fellowship Program is designed to contribute to the development and improvement of modern foreign language and area studies in the U.S. by providing opportunities for scholars to conduct research abroad. The program funds fellowships to faculty members who propose to conduct research abroad in modern foreign languages and area studies to improve their skill in languages and their knowledge of the culture of the people of these countries. Funds support travel expenses to and from the residence of the fellow and the country or countries of research, a maintenance stipend for the fellow related to his or her academic year salary, and an allowance for research-related expenses overseas.

The Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES), under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State, administers the Fulbright Scholar Program for faculty and professionals. Each year, the traditional Fulbright Scholar Program sends some 800 U.S. faculty and professionals to 140 countries to lecture, do research or participate in seminars, and some 800 foreign faculty members come to the U.S.

In addition to Hatcher, Valerie Orlando, who has since moved to the University of Maryland, also received a Fulbright Scholarship as an IWU associate professor of French last spring.



Brian Hatcher