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The University of Chicago is one of the leading centers for the study of Southern Asia. Countries in which we have scholarly expertise include in South Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, and Tibet (as an autonomous region); and in Southeast Asia, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia (Kampuchea), East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The Committee on Southern Asian Studies is an interdepartmental and interdivisional committee that coordinates research and teaching dealing with the countries of South and Southeast Asia. The committee formerly worked closely with the South Asia Language and Area Center, which was inaugurated in 1959 with grants from the Ford Foundation and the United States Department of Education under the National Defense Education Act, Title VI.

The committee works to enhance opportunities available to scholars both in the United States and in South and Southern Asia and to foster intellectual and scholarly communication and inter-disciplinary collaboration among the students and faculty at the University of Chicago and the wider Chicago and Southern Asian Studies communities.

The committee does not offer degrees, but cooperates with the several departments, committees, and schools within which specialized work on South or Southeast Asia may be combined with a degree program. These include the College; the Departments of Anthropology, Art History, Comparative Human Development, Comparative Literature, Economics, English, History, Linguistics, Music, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and South Asian Languages & Civilizations; the Committees on History of Culture, International Relations, and Social Thought; in the Divinity School, the fields of History of Religions, Church History, Philosophy of Religions; and in the Law School, International and Comparative Legal Studies.

Advanced degree programs with specialization in Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Pali, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Tibetan, and Urdu languages, literatures, and civilizations are available in the Department of South Asian Languages & Civilizations. Persian and Arabic are available through the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations. A limited number of fellowships, scholarships, and grants in aid are awarded by the committee in support of training or research dealing with South or Southeast Asia. Students in all disciplines interested in training in South Asian languages may also apply for Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships under Section 602 of Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended. For further information, please write to the Associate Director.

The University of Chicago Library has a very strong and well balanced collection of South Asian books, government documents, journals, and maps. It includes extensive holdings in all South Asian languages, as well as publications on the subcontinent from major publishing centers around the world. The library has been a comprehensive participant since 1962 in the Library of Congress Foreign Acquisitions Program for South Asia. The library’s membership in the nearby Center for Research Libraries, and in its South Asia Microfilm Project (SAMP), provides ready access to additional valuable research materials. The library’s South Asia Collection staff coordinates acquisition and processing, and provides specialized reference service. A smaller collection of Southeast Asian materials is limited to Western language works on the area from Burma to the Philippines.
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