

RAKA STEPS DOWN AS CHAIR OF CSAS

— her tenure as CSAS Chair remembered by CSAS friends & Faculty —

Raka's role as Chair of the CSAS over the last nine years has not only had a profound impact on the breadth and depth of the Center's activities, initiatives, and programs, but the CSAS' stature on campus, in the Bay Area community, in Washington D.C. and in South Asia has grown under Raka's capable leadership. The entire staff has had the privilege and pleasure of working closely with Raka over these past years. Aside from all the things she has accomplished, she is just so much fun to have around! We have laughed together, cried together and shared so many meals, outings, and memories. She is certainly much more than a faculty director to all of us: she is a mentor and a very close friend. We will miss her, but look forward to her continued engagement with the CSAS in various capacities. **Sanchita Saxena, Puneeta Kala, & Behnaz Raufi, CSAS**

Although you are stepping down as the chair of CSAS, your legacy will continue to be felt by the Center and its supporters for many years to come. The entire Bengali community of the Bay area remains grateful to you for introducing the Bangla Program at Berkeley. Thank you for encouraging us to participate in the development of the Program. Our children and grandchildren thank you for your visionary leadership. **Kimi & Shankar Bhattacharya**

It is hard to imagine CSAS now without Raka Ray at its helm...at a time of diminishing funding and expectations, she broadened the center's ambit, built further ties across the diversity of South Asian communities in California and beyond, raised money for language teaching, visiting scholars, multiple programs, and a series of major conferences, brought an exceptional staff to the Center, and did all this while fundamentally rethinking a critical question in the sociology of South Asia, that is the intimate violence of labor politics in the study of domestic service. **Lawrence Cohen, Anthropology**

Raka has meant - and continues to mean - so many things to so many people. Not surprising, given her many talents and the warmth of her personality. Intellectually sparkling, ready to listen to new ideas, uncompromisingly fair, she has been - and will continue to be - the face of Berkeley South Asia. **Vasudha Dalmia, South & Southeast Asia**

Over the past few years I have worked extremely closely with Raka on two initiatives at Berkeley: one for Urdu and the other, Pakistan. There are many things about Raka's leadership of CSAS that have left a deep impression on me: her incredible capacity to energize and inspire, her approachability and willingness to listen to others, and her excellent instincts regarding people and moments. My deepest admiration, however, is reserved for Raka's clear moral and ethical compass. I have never known her to cut any corners on this score. For me, this is the difference between a good and great leader. Raka certainly has been the latter these past nine years. **Munis Faruqi, South & Southeast Asia**

In my more than forty years at Berkeley I cannot think of a CSAS Chair with whom I found it more pleasant or more productive to work than Raka Ray. When she came on board at the Center she brought a freshness and enthusiasm to the job that has paid off in both bringing the campus' South Asia faculty and student fully into the unit's many activities and in energetically opening up new programs, initiatives and development opportunities. It would be impossible here to list all the excellent programs and initiatives that have been developed under Raka's watch but one cannot overlook her pioneering Cities Conference, the Bangla and Telugu initiatives, the Pakistan and Urdu program with its lively Guftugus and the Center's increasingly close working relationship with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. But above all I will recall fondly the cheerfulness and seriousness with which she and her excellent staffers, Sanchita, Puneeta and Behnaz, have organized and run the innumerable scholarly and cultural events the Center has hosted under Raka's chairmanship. It has been a great pleasure to have had the opportunity to work with Raka on some of the Center's events and I look forward to her continuing involvement with the unit for which she has done so much in the years to come. **Robert Goldman, South & Southeast Asia**

I was Raka's predecessor as Center chair prior to my retirement in 2003. Since I know how hard it can be to keep a Center like ours functioning, I certainly have been impressed with Raka's energy, enthusiasm, and hard work on behalf of the Center for almost now ten years. I was pleased when she was selected as my successor, and I have looked on with pleasure from outside as she has made the Center a vital part of the campus. The funding crisis, the struggles with my own department to put Indian history back together - none of this has fazed her. She will still be here, but she will be missed. **Tom Metcalf, History (Emeritus)**

My enduring image of Raka comes from a committee meeting at the Center a few years ago. She somehow managed to send out volleys of e-mails and put out a fire or two via cellphone, all while attending to the conversation around the table far more alertly than the rest of us. What impressed me, then as now, was not so much her formidable capacity to multi-task as the intelligence, generosity, ethical principle, and good humor she brought to each of those many interactions. Her ambitious and inclusive sense of the Center's mission made it both a welcoming and generative space for many of us: an institutional home of comparable significance to my own department during my years at Berkeley. Such leadership is all too rare in academia these days, and will be sorely missed. **Gautam Premnath, English**

Raka has been simply a magnificent chair. With the wonderful staff that she assembled around her, she has been indefatigable in so many different ways, hosting conferences and symposia, organizing talk programs, launching and supporting a wide range of fund-raising initiatives, overseeing the Title VI program with the FLAS awards, etc., etc. Maybe even more important, she has succeeded in drawing together the divergent faculty on campus who work on South Asia in one way or another, made us faculty feel at home in the Center and turned all of us into the Center's stakeholders, by supporting us in whichever way she could. The universal respect and admiration that she has earned during her tenure have made her also an effective spokeswoman and staunch advocate for all things South Asian on campus. It is a very hard act to follow her, but I believe the basis Raka has built bodes well for the future of South Asia Studies on campus. **Alexander von Rospatt, South & Southeast Asia**

Bursting with energy, and potentially at any moment, bursting into infectious laughter—that is how I think of Raka as she welcomes all to events at the Center. That energy is evident in the most serious of conversations as well; it has been an element in her stewardship of South Asia interests across campus. Even as economic woes hit the campus, she has planned for the future—but not just planned. She has shepherded initiatives to propel us forward just when energy might lag. (That's everyone's energy but hers, of course.) On to great things, Raka, with thanks. **Bonnie Wade, Music**