SubalternSpeak:
An Indian Soldier’s ‘Travelogue’
of China, 1900-1901

a talk by
Anand Yang
Professor of International Studies and History at the University of Washington, Seattle

This talk will offer a close reading of Gadadhar Singh’s 1902 Hindi account of his thirteen months in China as a member of the British Indian force that was part of an eight-nations International Expedition mobilized to lift the siege of the Foreign Legations in Beijing. It examines his text to highlight his extraordinary ‘inter-Asian’ perspective on a China seemingly on the verge of foreign takeover and his role as a subaltern in a colonial army ostensibly on a civilizing mission in a ‘barbaric’ land. Singh’s story of China is also about India, and about the ties that bound the two countries together.

Anand A. Yang is Professor of International Studies and History at the University of Washington, Seattle. Between 2002 and 2010, he was Director of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies and the Golub Chair of International Studies. Prior to joining UW in 2002, Yang taught at Sweet Briar College and the University of Utah, where he was chair of the History Department and, subsequently, Director of its Asian Studies Program.

Yang received his BA from Swarthmore College and his PhD in History from the University of Virginia. His publications include books on The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India and Bazaar India: Peasants, Traders, Markets and the Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar; an edited volume on Crime and Criminality in British India; and numerous articles in journals in Asian Studies, History, and the Social Sciences. His most recent publications are a co-edited volume on Interactions: Transregional Perspectives on World History (2005), articles in the Journal of Asian Studies (2007), Education About Asia (2006), Asia Policy (2010), and a chapter in an edited collection on The Boxers, China, and the World (2007). Currently, he is working on two book projects: coerced Indian labor in Southeast Asia; and Chinese and South Asian labor migrations across the globe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A former editor of The Journal of Asian Studies and Peasant Studies, Yang is currently on the editorial boards of several journals in Asian Studies and in History. He is also the editor of two book series in world history, one with Oxford University Press and the other with University of Hawaii Press.

A member of several national and regional boards, including of the American Council of Learned Societies, the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, and the World Affairs Council of Seattle/Tacoma, he is also active in several professional organizations. In 2006-7, he served as the President of the Association for Asian Studies; in 2007-9 he was the President of the World History Association.