

SOUTH ASIA CENTER: OUTREACH SERVICES

Founded as a National Resource Center by the Department of Education, the South Asia Center at Syracuse University serves as a liaison between Syracuse University faculty with research interests in South Asia, educators, and the wider public in the Central New York area.

Our resources and faculty interests cover the South Asia region, broadly defined as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Our audience includes educators in area schools and colleges, the general community, individuals interested in the region, and the Syracuse University community.

South Asia Outreach presents workshops, seminars, lectures, film and video screenings, school and college lecture and discussion programs, cultural programs, and other public events. In addition, Outreach loans a wide variety of educational materials to educators and no cost. These resources include books, maps, videotapes, slide sets, comic books, and "hands-on" kits. We also have curriculum units and our staff is available to offer teachers advice on curriculum development. A list of our comic books and videotapes may be obtained by sending us a request with a self-addressed stamped envelope, or on our web page at <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/gai/Programs/sac.htm>

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The South Asia Center News is the official outreach bulletin of the South Asia Center, Maxwell School of Citizenship, and Public Affairs, Syracuse University

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The South Asia Center News

The Outreach Bulletin of the South Asia Center * Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University Spring 2004

Two Feminist Scholars Join SU South Asian Studies

Cecilia Van Hollen comes to Syracuse University via the University of Notre Dame. The newest member of the Anthropology Department, Professor Van Hollen brings both an adoration of South Asia and a concern for the social ramifications of medical issues with her to this school. She first fell in love with South Asia as a child, when she lived in Sri Lanka with her family for four years. Upon returning to the region some time later, she "felt that going back to India was like a homecoming."

Professor Van Hollen is currently in India as a Fulbright Scholar. During her six month long project she will examine the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS, and how gender roles may deter testing for many women. She will explore the pros and cons that must be weighed before a woman decides whether to be tested. The social ramifications of HIV testing, which include being ostracized by families, communities and even by hospitals, play a large role in the spread of HIV. Her recently released book, *Birth on the Threshold: Childbirth and Modernity in South India* (University of California Press, 2003), compares the experience of childbirth in Chennai and its outlying rural areas. She deals with the clash between the contemporary and the traditional through the choice women make about hospitals and midwifery. Whether on childbirth or on HIV/AIDS, she focuses on projects that have implications on social issues.

Next fall she will return to SU to teach courses on South Asia and on Medical Anthropology. In Tamil Nadu, though, she will surely eat plenty of dosai and idli, definitely with coconut chutney, and smell the sweet fragrance of jasmine flowers. Professor Van Hollen smiled as she described these favorite memories of the region, proving what she expressed at the start of the interview: "South Asia has always been the center of what I do, and it is how I identify myself as a scholar."

Prema Kurien moved across the country from the University of Southern California to join the Sociology Department and the South Asia Center at SU. She was attracted to SU by the strong qualitative program of the Sociology department and the fact that SU has "a strong South Asian presence and a strong South Asian program."

Her current research focuses on religion and ethnicity among Indian Americans and she is completing a book on Hindus and Hinduism in the U.S. Her interest in this topic stemmed from her dissertation work, now an award-winning book, *Kaleidoscopic Ethnicity: International Migration and the Reconstruction of Community Identities in India*. She examined the large-scale migrations of three distinct religio-ethnic communities from Kerala to the Middle East. Through her research, she strived to define ethnicity and how it "shapes the everyday lives of people." The perfect extension of this project was to look at what it means to be an Indian American. "On the one hand, it's a story of privilege, but on the other hand, it's a very poignant story of discrimination, of being misunderstood." Balancing these two conflicting aspects, along with melding both American and Indian cultures, can be a tricky business. Professor Kurien claims that this is becoming easier with the establishment of Indian communities in which communication between families is opening the minds of both parents and children to the challenges involved in this process.

Her next project examines the transnational dimensions of an Indian Christian denomination based in Kerala. She is particularly interested in why some people gravitate toward particular identities, whether secular or Hindu, Indian or American, or other ethnicities. Prema visited India in December to introduce her son to India, she will teach courses in sociological theory, qualitative methods, and the Indian diaspora, along with continuing her research.

Fulbright Scholar Travels to India to Teach about Intercultural Communication

Richard Buttny, Professor of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, recently returned from a trip to India, where he had been giving lectures at universities in the North for six weeks. A Fulbright recipient, he traveled to Punjab to teach sessions of Intercultural Communications, a topic near to his heart. This course was taught to first year graduate students, while he presented sessions on qualitative methods to second years. All the students were candidates for Master of Arts degrees in subjects such as journalism and mass communication. According to Professor Buttny, most of these individuals had never been outside India. He taught the students about such topics as culture shock, media and culture, and understanding differences.

Buttny did not teach entire courses, but instead supplemented existing ones with occasional lectures of his own. This schedule allowed him to travel away from the Punjabi University in Patiala to two other schools in the states of Punjab and Haryana. He laughed as he recalled his experience on the trains, saying with some dismay that personal space isn't really an option on Indian trains. Overall, though, "I felt much more important than I really am," he explained in regards to the royal treatment he received as a distinguished foreign lecturer. He chalked this behavior up to the out-of-town effect.

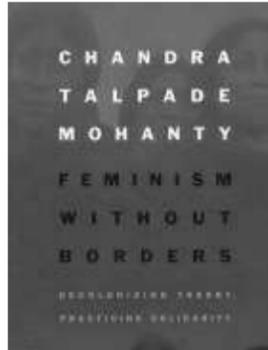
Following the six weeks of speaking and traveling, his wife joined him for an extended stay in the country. They journeyed down to Kerala, following their urges to relax on a beach. Buttny said that the highlight of their vacation was a music festival in Chennai. However, his favorite part of the entire trip occurred during his teaching sessions. According to Buttny, "the best thing was having conversations with faculty or students or regular citizens...about a variety of topics like arranged marriages or American policy in Iraq." Connections with individuals on topics of importance proved to be the highlight of his stay.

His experience in India proved to be a good one. He had never been there before, and all he previously knew of the region involved Indian food and music. He appreciated the time he spent there, but realized something profound in the process. Professor Buttny discovered that perhaps "we overplay the impact of culture in communication," and in truth, humans, no matter where they live, are not so different after all.



New Faculty Member Ponders the Role of Women in a Transnational World

Chandra Mohanty, renowned feminist and scholar, will be joining the faculty of the Women's Studies Program later this semester. She will be teaching a six week course beginning in March called "Practice of Transnational Feminisms." This class reflects her academic interests in the field of women's studies. She has examined the issues of identity and gender in dealing with transnationalism. Mohanty has stressed the importance of understanding self-classification and the role of feminism within the sphere of racialization. A self-proclaimed "antiracist feminist of color," she has studied the place of race, multiculturalism, and identity in a world where the boundaries between countries are becoming increasingly blurred. All of these issues come forth in her recent book, *Feminism Without Borders*.



This more current research stems from her previous work, which also dealt with women's studies in an international setting. She combined praxis with a theoretical framework involving issues of imperialism, post-colonialism, and capitalistic states. Mohanty stressed the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to current political and social environments throughout the world before examining the place of women within them. In other words, comprehending the history of the Third World, and the effects of transnationalism on it, helps in grasping the position of women in these countries.



Mohanty recently attended the World Social Forum (WSF) in Mumbai. The WSF focuses on realistic, non-neo-liberal methods of resisting the framework developed at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Following the MSF, which concluded on January 21, she has been traveling throughout India. She will return to the United States and will be at Syracuse starting in March.

South Asia Center 2003-2004 FLAS

The South Asia Center has named thirteen Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellows for this academic year, whose studies will reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the Fellowship and its focus on language. We are proud to welcome to the Center's family the following individuals:

Vipin Arora: (International Relations and Public Administration), is studying Hindi because of his heritage and interest in North India. His research focuses on the national security of India and prospects for the future. Vipin has made multiple trips to the region, including India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. He hopes to join The Foreign Service upon completion of his degree.

Alicia DeNicola: (Anthropology) is doing dissertation research in Bagru, North India and furthering her command of the Hindi language. Her research focuses on the Hand-Block printers of Bagru and how its products index a complex hub of globalization, urbanization, national and ethnic sentiments and local identities.

David Gunter: (International Relations) is studying Hindi as part of his degree focusing on South Asian political affairs. He interned in the Area Studies Division of the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. State Department over the summer. This helped in broadening his understanding of South Asia and its language and culture.

Angela Herral: (Anthropology) is currently doing fieldwork in India. Her research focuses on spiritual tourism to India, and constructions of spiritual reality regarding India in the west.

James Klapps: (International Relations) is studying Hindi to advance is hoped for career in the Foreign Service. His research interests include: the role of religious parties in Indian and Pakistani politics, Indo-Pakistani relations, and comparative analysis of the separatist conflicts in Kashmir and Sri Lanka.

William Kuracina: (History) is studying Hindi to enable him to further his dissertation research in the National Archives of India.

Karen McNamara: (Anthropology) She plans on researching how religion, gender, and ethnic identities create conflicts and shape worldviews within Bangladesh.

Sandip Mehta: (International Relations) is studying Hindi to help him establish a career with the diplomatic and national security organizations of the United States government. His research focuses on examining political violence and terrorism in South Asian nations.

Cassidy Perreault: (Anthropology) is studying Hindi and will focus on immigrant Sikh populations in Western countries.

Jennifer Smith: (Civil Engineering) is studying Hindi as a tool to help her with her research to evaluate the technological, political, and cultural aspects associated with the use of natural erosion control materials, such as jute and coir, in third world countries, especially India.

Vandana Tivary: (Anthropology and Information Studies) is studying Tamil, she seeks to examine how Tamil women in Tamil Nadu, India, and the Tamil nationalist movement in Sri Lanka, have both aided and been assisted by their respective sub nationalist movements and governmental interventions.

Ian Wilson: (Anthropology) is currently studying Hindi in Jaipur, India. His research concerns the history of Bharatpur district in India, and more broadly, the Jat community.

Erin Zipfel: (International Relations and Law) is studying Hindi to enhance her language skills to assist with observing women's legal aid organizations in India.

Graduate Student/Alumni Updates

Chaise LaDousa (Anthropology, PhD, 2000) is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Southern Connecticut State College.

Jagdish Chander (PhD Candidate, Education) has received a grant from the American Institute of Indian Studies for research on the disability rights movement in India.

Ruzena Brar (International Relations, MA, 2003) has been hired as Executive Assistant at an NGO called Trickle Up, which funds microenterprose projects all over the world.

Manju Sadarangani (MA candidate, International Relations) is Assistant Director at the South Asia Center, Columbia University.

Dissertation Defended

Providing a Home for Out-of-Town Indians

by Aarti Jhaveri

Through the sincere effort to increase student participation, the Syracuse India Association (SIA), under the leadership of its three co-presidents, Monisha Makhijani, Mahua Baral, and Savitree Hanif, is determined to achieve its much-desired purpose this school year. It reaches out to virtually anyone who is interested in learning about South Asian customs and beliefs in order to fulfill its overarching mission-to promote the richness of the South Asian culture throughout the entire Syracuse University community.

In addition to holding its traditional perennial events, including Bollywood movie nights and the Diwali and Navaratri celebrations, Makhijani, Baral and Hanif are working on larger, more interactive programs this year, including "Cultural Fusion 2004," an event they planned for this semester. The program will bring various organizations together in order to "spread cultural awareness and understanding in the Syracuse community," according to Makhijani. The SIA will join forces with groups such as the Asian Students in America (ASIA) and the Caribbean Student Association in order to present a unique mixture of songs, dances, skits and poetry. This program will end with a grand finale featuring both a cultural fashion show and a feast.

Another anticipated spring event includes the "I Am South Asian" series, which will allow students of South Asian descent to reflect on their identities. "We hope to compare and contrast the issues of being born and raised in the United States versus living in America when one comes from abroad," said Makhijani. Such issues will be explored through numerous short movie clips, poems, skits and discussions-a great deal of which will not succeed without student participation.

Students interested in taking part in any of the events are encouraged to email the executive board members at siasyracuse@hotmail.com.

Giving Children Hope Through Education

by Radha Ganesan

'Asha for Education' is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising funds and supporting projects that provide primary education to the marginalized and underprivileged children of India. It was founded in 1991 by graduate students at U.C. Berkeley, who wanted to contribute to the economic and social change in India. The idea caught on. Today there are over 45 chapters in the US, 14 in India, and 7 in Europe, Singapore and Australia.

Asha-Syracuse had its humble beginnings during late 1991. Since then, it has grown a long way from being a fountainhead of thought to becoming an organization that blends thought into action. For 2003-2004, a year of much activity, we are in our third and final year of funding for TRY (\$2200) and Rajasthan Mahila Kalyan Mandal (\$2300); and Ushagram (\$2600), which is in its second year of funding. Additionally the chapter has also decided to support three other projects: Tribal Empowerment (\$2000), Sikshana Trust (\$2500), and Maithri Foundation (\$1200). All of this would not have been possible without the contributions of our generous donors. You can see full details about the projects by visiting the website: <http://www.ashanet.org/syracuse/projects.html>

We are constantly seeking fresh minds to reinvigorate our cause and extend hope (asha) to the millions of underprivileged children in India. Please visit us online (<http://www.ashanet.org/syracuse>) to know more about us and our activities.

More importantly, we would like to serve as a medium for channeling your personal donations towards activities that will serve to change the status of education in India from that of a 'privilege' to that of a 'right.' We know that you are aware of the abject problems that beset India and its people - we want to present you with something by way of a solution, not grand and revolutionary, but something with hope - **Asha**.

Indian Folk Art Travels to Iceland and Back



Beneath the Banyan Tree, an exhibition of folk art curated by Syracuse University's South Asian Center, which debuted at the end of 2002, has traveled throughout the country, visiting numerous locales. Most recently, different portions of the exhibition have resided at the University of Washington's Suzzallo Library as well as at Niagara University's Castellani Art Museum. Both locations displayed three different forms of folk paintings: mithilas, mythology-inspired paintings created by Bihari women; patas, Bengali scrolls portraying epic stories; and pars, large storytelling scrolls from Rajasthan. The expositions at both locations concluded at the beginning of January. Before separating and traveling to the two universities, the exhibition spent some time at the Akureyri Art Museum in Iceland. Along with the three styles of North Indian paintings, Akureyri's presentation included brass sculptures created using the Lost Wax Casting method. Furthermore, the Museum displayed postcards of late-19th Century India as well as the photographs of Richard Lannoy, which transported museum-goers into the religious world of Benaras.



The South Asia Center Teams up with Local School

The South Asia Center and the New School of Syracuse, NY have joined forces to have an India year at the New School. The New School is an alternative elementary school, which focuses on different types of education for young children. Jishnu Shankar, the Associate Director of the South Asia Center and Hindi instructor for SU, has been teaching Hindi to thirteen 4th, 5th and 6th graders at the New School. In addition to Hindi lessons, he has also been teaching Indian Culture classes to the entire elementary school, which ranges from K-6th grade, lessons have focused on Indian food (Samosa) and sweets, how to wear a sari, Indian music and dance, art and architecture, aspects of Hinduism, classical stories and Indian films. This project has been a huge success and may be repeated at different schools in the coming years.



Jishnu Teaching Hindi

एरन एडन भान्दे कोरा
डेनियल डेलिया डेयन
डोरा ईधन फ्लेचर जैस्मिन
कियोशी नोरा सरोना
रोनन स्लोफी थियोसटा टॉमी
टायलर विल जैक



Jishnu and Students on Sari day

Notes from the Field: The Dishonorable Side of Honor

By Namoos Zaheer

Honor is a very nebulous idea to understand. One can somewhat conceptualize what honor entails, but one would be hard pressed if they tried to formulate an all encompassing definition of 'honor.' Honor has many faces to it: Honor can be a symbol of respect, i.e. to be the guest of honor. Honor can also be a privileged act; i.e. to have the honor of inaugurating an event. For most Pakistani women however honor has a very one-dimensional definition: honor for us is limited to so-called moral behavior and a good reputation. Women in our cultural context shoulder the great burden of being symbols of honor for their male custodians.

Having spent a great part of my life in the West, I have always grappled with my construction of identity. Having straddled two worlds for most of my life, I have always struggled to understand where my home was and as such what my real identity was. I always thought this convoluted identity crisis was the bane of my existence, but on a recent trip to Baluchistan, I realized what a privilege it is to be able to define for yourself what your identity is. You might ask why I started off this article by trying to define honor and then made the swift jump to identity constructions. The answer being, that in my meandering musings on honor I have come to the conclusion that identity and honor are very intertwined concepts.



The construct of the 'self' is very different from the West in our cultural context. The notion of 'self' is very central to Western consciousness. This notion of the centrality of the individual is a poignant social requirement for the flourishing of Capitalism, but it finds its roots in Christian ideals of personal redemption. Islam on the other hand is a very communal and social faith system. The individual is viewed as a marker of his community and community loyalties are a big part of Muslim psyche. As such, we have a tendency to value social perceptions of ourselves quite dearly. As such, our yardstick of self worth is society. We strive to not only bring good name to our community, but also to achieve respect within it. In the late capitalism of the West, the fundamental identity marker is class. An individual, due to the relative fluidity of the class structure, finds that his identity is somewhat malleable. In our part of the world, identity is still pretty much determined by lineage. This makes our identity somewhat rigid.

Our rigid identity along with our fixation with social acceptance makes for a very explosive mental make-up. One taint on family honor can tarnish the identity and good name of

generations to come. We in Pakistan are fixated with our 'honor'. In most cases, the honor of a family is limited to the sexuality of its womenfolk. As I was told in Baluchistan, 'A woman is like a white sheet, one splash of dirt and the whole world can see it'. A woman therefore is the marker of her family's honor; she must strive to make sure she brings no shame to her people, as this will bring ill-name to her family and ruin the social standing of not only her living family but also generations to come. The identity of women is very tied to the identity of her male custodian. A woman is marked as a symbol of honor, but the honor in question is not necessarily hers, it is the honor of her father, brother, husband which she is the custodian of.

The female body is therefore a symbol of family honor. Honor is very much the bedrock of masculinity in our culture. A man who is unable to preserve the honor of the women under his care is deemed effeminate or morally corrupt. A woman has very little agency in determining her own criteria of self-worth and personal honor. Society stands as the woman's mirror and in a rigid patriarchy like Pakistan's, a woman is the instrument in honor games, never the principal of them.

Having met numerous women who escaped from the social evil of 'honor killings' in Baluchistan, I came to see for the first time what institutionally

sanctioned social vulnerability looks like. Our legal infrastructure can do very little to undo or even mitigate the mindset which allows for socially sanctioned acts of murder. Most of the implementers of the law themselves view women as icons of family honor. Social constructions of honor are very intertwined with Pakistan's cultural make-up and the population's consciousness. Convoluted constructs of honor have been internalized and propagated by our rigid patriarchy.

There is no doubt that honor should be the bedrock of every society, and the force which breeds a harmonious social fabric. Unfortunately the honor, which bleeds through our society, has a very ugly face. The honor we are haunted by is fierce and vengeful; it devours rather than nurtures. We as a nation need to redefine what constitutes honor, and we need to recognize that the burden of honor has to be shared by both genders. Honor needs to be grounded in dignity and humanity, only then can we hope to banish the dishonor that now poses as honor

Faculty Updates

Carol Babiracki, Fine Arts, published "The Illusion of India's 'Public' Dancers." In *Women's Voices Across Musical Worlds*, ed. Jane A. Bernstein. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004. She also brought Kabir folk singers from India here to demonstrate their musical style.

Tej Bhatia, Languages, Literatures and Linguistics, Participated in the International Symposium on Indic Scripts: Past and Future, he presented "The Gurmukhi script and other writing systems of Punjab: History, Structure and Identity". Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. He is currently working on a book with William Ritchie a "Handbook of Bilingualism". Oxford: Blackwell.

William Bentley, Forest Policy and Management, spent two weeks in India this summer, and gave four talks at different venues: the Institute for Integrated Learning and Management (IILM), Winrock India and the Commonwealth Forestry Association (CFA), Indira Gandhi National Forestry Academy, Dehradun (IGNFA), and Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal (IIFM).



Tula Goenka, Television, Radio and Film. Prof. Goenka organized last winter's film festival, "Illuminating Oppression: A Film Festival on Human Rights in South Asia", as well as the one to be held this February. She also screened her documentary on Joanne Shenandoah at different film festivals, the film was shown on PBS in September 2003. She also spent the fall of 2003 in India doing research for her new book on Indian film directors.

Ann Grodzins Gold, Religion. Prof. Gold received the Chancellor's Citation for Exceptional Academic Achievement, Syracuse University. She also published "Vanishing: Seeds' Cyclicity". *Journal of Material Culture* 8 (3):255-272 and "Foreign Trees: Lives and Landscapes in Rajasthan." In *Nature in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia*.



Susan S. Wadley, Anthropology. Prof. Wadley curated three art exhibitions: "Narrative Paintings from India", Castellani Art Museum, Niagara University, "Undir Fikjutre", Listasafnid a Akureyri (Akureyri Art Museum, Akureyri, Iceland), "Under the Banyan Tree", University of Washington, Seattle. She published eleven articles in *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia* (Special Reference) Routledge Press as well as gave several conference papers.

Indian Civil Servants Visit Maxwell to Learn about Public Policy

The Maxwell School served as host to a group of 30 senior civil servants from India from September 15 through October 31. About half the group consisted of members of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), with the others representing such diverse services as the Indian Railways, the Indian Police, the Forestry Service, and Telecommunications. The program participants have had from eight to twenty-three years of experience in service.

The group is currently enrolled in the Post Graduate Program in Public Policy and Management at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIMB). The primary reason for their visit to the Maxwell School was to take a class titled Public Policy in an International Comparative Setting. The course, organized by Professor of Public Administration, Larry Schroeder, included 19 lectures by Maxwell faculty on a variety of public policy issues facing the United States or other countries. The students also wrote a policy analysis paper on an issue of their own choosing and presented it at the 8th Symposium on Global Issues in Public Administration, which was sponsored by the Global Affairs Institute.

In addition to six weeks on campus, the students spent one week in Washington DC where they visited a number of federal government offices in addition to the World Bank and an internationally-oriented think tank. They attended several social events in Washington, as well as numerous others sponsored by the South Asia Program throughout their stay in Syracuse.

This is the second year that the IIMB students visited the Maxwell School. The effort is sponsored by the Government of India and the United Nations Development Program. The Maxwell School's Executive Education Program serves as the administrative unit and coordinates all events.

SU Faculty Member Wins Book Prize

Ann Grodzins Gold and her co-author **Bhoju Ram Gujar** have been selected to receive the 2004 Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy Book Prize by the Association of Asian Studies for the best book on South Asia published in 2002-03. This award is given for their book, "*In the Time of Trees and Sorrows: Nature, Power, and Memory in Rajasthan*"

An Interview with Prakash Jha

Director of *GangaaJal - The Holy Weapon*

By Tula Goenka

Prakash Jha has come a long way. Born and brought up in rural Bihar and educated at a military academy, Jha rarely saw movies and always thought he would become a painter. But when he announced his dreams of being an artist to his family, his father asked, "What will you do? Will you paint signboards?" recalls Jha. Nevertheless, Jha left for Bombay with three hundred rupees in his pocket to join the prestigious JJ School of the Arts. He and his father did not speak to each other for more than five years.



Once in Bombay, things changed and Jha discovered the art of the moving image. To make ends meet he taught English to Gujarati businessmen and worked in a restaurant. One day he accompanied his neighbor, an art director, to a film set. Jha says, "I was there all day watching the shifting of lights, the moving of the furniture, the movement of the camera. I came back that night and I couldn't sleep. I thought this is what I want to do. It has almost everything you can think of: art, science, and theater." It was only natural that in less than a year he would end up at the Film & Television Institute of India in Pune for a course in Film Editing.

The award-winning director of more than 8 feature films, 25 documentaries, and 3 television series, Jha is best known for his hard hitting socially relevant themes and realistic style. His films, including *Mrityudand - Death Sentence* and *Parinati - The Inevitable*, always generate a buzz both among critics and audiences. In fact, in 1985 Jha won the Golden Lotus, the highest National Award in India, for his very first feature film *Damul - Bonded until Death*. Jha is one of those rare directors who switch effortlessly between dramatic films and documentaries. In 2002, he won the Golden Lotus for the Best Documentary for *Sonal* - a documentary on dancer Sonal Mansingh. In 2003, Jha was the Chairperson of the National Film Awards Jury.

GangaaJal - The Holy Weapon is the third part of a trilogy (along with *Damul* and *Mrityudand*) set in feudal Bihar. "They are a study of the human mindset. I have taken different aspects of society and studied societal relations. You take characters within your parameters, you set up drama and you hope it will have the desired effect."

GangaaJal is the story of a young and idealistic police officer Amit Kumar (Ajay Devgan) who is posted to a small district in north India against the wishes of his wife Anuradha (Gracy Singh). As the new Superintendent of Police, Amit is determined to curb corruption in a town where frustrated citizens and a disillusioned police force constantly lose the battle for justice. The shackles of the corrupt system are too strong. A weapon of revenge is accidentally discovered and people take the law into their own hands by disfiguring and blinding undesirable individuals with liquid acid. This weapon of revenge becomes a symbol of purification in the hands of the common people. Amit struggles with this acid - "gangaaJal" or holy water from the river Ganges - and a community poisoned by prejudice to secure peace and keep his sanity. He knows what is socially just is not necessarily morally right. There are no easy solutions.

The idea of *GangaaJal* is loosely based on the horrific events that took place in 1979 when police poured acid into the eyes of more than thirty prisoners in Bhagalpur, Bihar. Jha says, "I was a bit apprehensive about showing the film to the censor board but they passed the film without any changes except a word here and there. They wanted young people to go and see the film and learn from it." Although the film is "rough," it has an anti-violence message and makes people question their role in society.

GangaaJal is the opening film of the second **Illuminating Oppression: A Film Festival on Human Rights in South Asia**. It will be screened at 5:00 pm on Friday, February 20, 2004 at Gifford Auditorium (Huntington Beard Crouse) on the Syracuse University campus. Prakash Jha will attend the screening.



Website Provides Introductory Information About South Asia

With a few clicks of your mouse and a free registration, you can enter a website that provides a plentiful supply of information and tools in regards to South Asia. Sponsored by the American Forum for Global Education, "South Asia at 50" presents numerous articles written by a slough of contributors. The website, conceived of in 1992, acts as a starting point for researchers and teachers wanting to introduce the world of South Asia to students and other professionals.

Hundreds of articles fill this site with information about politics, economics, society, and culture. They touch on hard-hitting topics, such as the Maoist rebellion in Nepal, to topics of relative lightheartedness, such as whether women in Sri Lanka should wear skirts or saris. Furthermore, these articles range from easy to difficult, allowing the researcher to pick topics best suited for his or her particular research question and audience. In addition, the information spans subjects important to five of the countries that comprise South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

For those individuals who would like to teach others about South Asia, this website has lesson plans already developed, from "Protecting Holy Cows" and "Nepal in the Family" to "Coup-Operation in Pakistan" and "An Eye for an Eye Makes the Whole World Blind." The lessons provide objectives, activities, vocabulary, and reflections. Many are for younger middle school students, while some extend to high school as well. In addition, the site has an excellent list of bibliographic and internet-based resources on numerous different topics. In essence, "South Asia at 50" provides an excellent opportunity for a person's interest in the region to be piqued, and then lists the resources to help that person continue learning. Visit the site at <http://www.teachingsouthasia.org>.

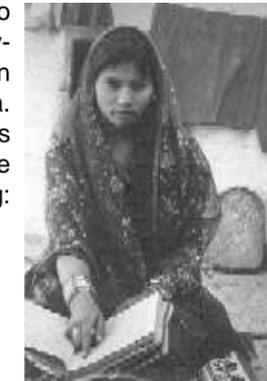
Bharati Memorial Lecture: Professor Examines the Trading Practices of an Ancient Civilization

The Bharati Memorial Lecture will be given on April 15 at 4 pm in 220 Eggers Hall by Greg Possehl, Professor of Anthropology and Curator of the Asian Section at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. A leading expert on the Harappan civilization, Greg will talk about maritime trade, particularly between the ancient cities of Gujarat and the societies further west.

Agehananda Bharati taught at SU from 1963 until his death in 1991. Author of the *Tantric Tradition* and *The Ochre Robe*, amongst many other books and articles, Bharati was a key figure in the study of tantra by Western scholars. His wide-ranging works also included research in both Sri Lanka and East Africa. The Bharati Memorial Fund provides research monies for Syracuse doctoral students doing pre-dissertation fieldwork. The 2003 recipients are Payal Banerjee (Sociology), Kasturi Gupta (Sociology), Sanjukta Mukherjee (Geography), and Namooos Zaheer (Anthropology).

India Development Practicum

The South Asia Center at Syracuse University, in conjunction with the International Relations Program in at the Maxwell School has formulated a program to facilitate internships with non-government organizations (NGOs) in the State of Madhya Pradesh, India. These are well-established NGOs doing remarkable public service work on a range of issues including:



Women & Children's Development
Education & Empowerment
Environment
Crime Prevention
Literacy
Narcotics
Social Change and Anti-Dowry
Rural Health & Development

Maxwell has established a seminar program focused on issues relating to global development that is held during the fall semester in Washington, DC. Students interested in the regional development issues of South Asia, particularly



India, are encouraged to participate in this seminar program and complete an internship in the nation's capital with an organization that specializes in these issues.

The India Development Practicum is intended as a follow-up to the Washington Global Development seminars and would be completed in a student's fourth and final semester. This Practicum provides the student with the opportunity to gain field experience in development work in India. The program would run from January through March and each student would be in close contact with the Director of the practicum. Students would work full-time form one of twelve NGOs, and would complete a final exercise to receive credit for their field experience. Students would be responsible for the costs of room and board, however there will be financial awards available to students to help cover travel expenses.



Illuminating Oppression: A Film Festival on Human Rights in South Asia
February 20 - February 22, 2004
Syracuse University

Syracuse University's South Asia Center and the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, in conjunction with Breakthrough, an international non-profit organization, present for the second year a series of dynamic feature films and documentaries by well-known South Asian directors addressing issues on human rights and social justice (including poverty, sectarian and civil conflict, caste oppression, women's issues, migrant labor, etc.) that draw from the India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh experience. The screenings will be followed by a discussion on the issues that the film and/or set of documentaries focus on with some of the filmmakers and other experts.

All screenings will be in Gifford Auditorium.

Friday, February 20, 5:00 pm.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

GangaaJal - The Holy Weapon (Director to be present)
 Prakash Jha, 150 minutes, 2003, India
 A searing look at the intractable issue of police corruption in India.

Saturday, February 21, 11:00 - 12:30
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Looking for Kannan
 Yasir Khan, 16 minutes, 2002, Sri Lanka
 The director's journey to see if a 15 year old LTTE member is being rehabilitated by the Sri Lankan army.

The Unseen
 Pallav Das, 24 minutes, India
 The vulnerability of street children to HIV/AIDS in urban India.

Swara, A Bridge Over Troubled Water
 Samar Minallah, 40 minutes, 2003, Pakistan
 A depiction of the Pukhtun practice of giving minor girls in marriage as reparation for serious crimes.



Saturday, February 21, 1:30 - 4:00 pm
IDENTITY AND CONFLICT

The Living of Jogimara
 Mohan Mainali 38 minutes, 2002, Nepal
 The continuing civil war in Nepal and the story of 17 missing construction workers from Jogimara.

Gurudasi - A Certain Liberation
 Yasmine Kabir, 37 minutes, 2003, Bangladesh
 The impact of the violence of the 1971 Bangladeshi war of liberation on Gurudasi Mondol and her strategies for survival.



Resilient Rhythms
 Gopal Menon, 64 minutes, 2003, India
 The continuing state of human rights violations based on caste.

Saturday, February 21, 5:00 - 6:30 pm
WOMEN AND POWER

Swaraaj (The Little Republic)
 Anwar Jamaal, 90 minutes, 2003, India
 Women's search for empowerment through the prism of gender, caste politics and access to water in Rajasthan.

Sunday, February 22, 2:00 - 3:30 pm
CIVIL STRIFE

Kannathil Muthamittal - A Peck on the Cheek
 Mani Ratnam, 130 minutes, 2002, India
 A ravaged Sri Lanka seen through the eyes of a nine-year old refugee child.



Ray Smith Symposium
Syracuse University
"Drawing a Line in Water: Religious Boundaries in South Asia"
 Sponsored By South Asia Center & U. Encounter
April 1-3, 2004

All sessions will be held in 500 Hall of Languages, The Killian Room

Thursday April 1, 2004
4:00 PM

Welcome by Jim Watts
 Director, Religion and Society Program, Syracuse University

Struggle for Women's Empowerment in Pakistan: Challenging Theological Assumptions & Cultural Practices
 Inaugural Lecture by **Riffat Hasan**, University of Louisville

Friday April 2, 2004
9:00 AM: Transcending Boundaries
Beyond Ethnicity?: Being Hindu and Muslim in South Asia
 Shail Mayaram

Unmaking Partition in Punjab: Staying in Malerkotla
 Anna Bigelow
 North Carolina State University

In a Class of Their Own: Categorizing Difference in the Processions of a North Indian Village
 Peter Gottschalk
 Wesleyan University

12:30 PM: Porous Boundaries
Liminal Hindus: Sindhi Hindu and the Tensions Between Strict Religious Borders and Inclusive Practices
 Steven Ramey
 Furman University

Muslim or Bangladeshi Saints?
 Sufia Uddin
 University of Vermont

The Wish-Fulfilling Tree: Fluid Boundaries and Religious Inclusiveness among Bauls
 Lisa Knight

3:15 PM: Drawing Boundaries
Religious conversion and the expression of difference in pre-colonial Gujarat
 Samira Sheikh

Fluid Boundaries and the Assertion of Difference in Low-caste Religious Identity
 Nancy Martin

"From Liminal to Social in the Modern Age: Transcendent Sacrality and Social Service in the Aghor Tradition"
 Jishnu Shankar
 Syracuse University

7:00 PM Keynote
 Vasudha Narayan, University of Florida

Saturday April 3, 2004
9:00 AM: Hybrid Boundaries
Synergy and Sin: The Hindu Christian Church in Nineteenth-Century Tamil Nadu
 Eliza F. Kent
 Colgate University

How to pray well with Others: The paradox of diversity and the unanimity of unity at Husian Tekri
 Carla Bellamy
 Columbia University

'Oriental' Literature and Hindu-Buddhist Contacts in 19th-century Colombo
 Anne Blackburn
 Cornell University

A "third space": the creative religious encounter of identity and difference in the Ismaili Ginans.
 Tazim Kassam
 Syracuse University

1:00 PM: Attractive Boundaries
Sufis and Movie Stars: Charismatic Muslims for the Hindu Middle-Classes
 Daniel Gold
 Cornell University

A South Indian Muslim Healing Room as a Religious Crossroads
 Joyce Flueckiger
 Emory University

Yoginis, Sufis and Princes: Religious Interaction and Courtly Identity in the art of Bijapur
 Deborah Hutton
 Skidmore College

Concluding Talk 3:30 PM
 Faisal Devji
 Yale University