

Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs,  
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs,  
Syracuse University

# SOUTH ASIA CENTER

OUTREACH BULLETIN

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## From the Directors' Desk

Life is circular and to say that we are all connected seems like a trite way to begin a welcome letter, but it has proven true in my case. As I write this, I am struck by one simple fact—if I had not met Susan Wadley, my Co-Director of the South Asia Center, in 1999, my life would not be what it is today.

Thanks to Sue, I attended nearly every event of the Spring 2000 Speakers Series and it inspired me to begin my own research on Indian cinema which has resulted in my regularly teaching a course on the subject, taking my filmmaking students to “Bollywood” for month-long internships, and a soon-to-be published book of conversations with Indian film directors. The Syracuse University Human Rights Film Festival, which just completed its 10th anniversary in Fall 2012, began as the South Asia Human Rights Film Festival in 2003 under the aegis of SAC. The documentary on Mithila Art that Sue and I are currently editing came from our collaboration over the years on other projects and committees. Most importantly, SAC has given me a sense of belonging and community and I have met some of my closest friends through it. I am extremely honored and grateful to be SAC’s current Director and to finally have a chance to give back in some small way. My sincere hope is that I can now help students, faculty and the community as much it has helped me.

A lot is going on at the South Asia Center. We are now a member of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies and the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies, and we continue to be a member institution of the American Institute of Indian Studies, which strengthens our academic involvement in South Asia. We have also increased some of our study abroad options and you can read about them on page 6.

We continue to offer Hindi-Urdu at Syracuse University during the academic year. In addition

to our academic year students, in Summer 2012, we had two students study Hindi in Jaipur, two at SASLI in Madison and one at Harvard.

This Fall, we hosted a successful Speakers Series with a wide range of topics: the changing role of devadasis on the border of Karnataka and Maharashtra, the history of Marxism in West Bengal, India’s role as a political power in Asia, and Pakistani Cinema in the 1960s and ‘70s, to name a few. Our Spring 2013 line-up is equally dynamic and you can find out more details on page 11. In February 2013, we will hold the NESSA Conference on Indian-Occupied Kashmir and in April, we will co-host a conference at Cornell titled Agrarian Crisis in India? More details are on page 3.

You will also find a newly designed website if you search for us on the Internet. And keeping up with the times, we have increased our presence on social media, so look out for us on Facebook ([facebook.com/sac.syr.edu](http://facebook.com/sac.syr.edu)) and Twitter (@SouthAsiaSU).

On behalf of the South Asia Center staff, I wish you all the best in the coming year.

**Tula Goenka**



Left to Right: Sue Wadley, Tula Goenka, Dulari Devi and Parmeshwar Jha in Madhubani, Bihar.

## New Faces at the South Asia Center

-Nitika Sethi



We are happy to welcome **Dr. Rashmi Gangamma** to the SAC community this year. An assistant professor in the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, Rashmi's appointment is within the Marriage and Family Therapy department.

She joins us from Ohio State University, where she earned her Ph.D. in Couple and Family Therapy and conducted post-doctoral research. Prior to that Rashmi spent her childhood and early academic career in Mysore, a city located in the southwestern state of Karnataka.

Rashmi began studying Psychology at the University of Mysore before transitioning into social work. She says of India, "There, social work is not established as a separate discipline." This fixed structure inspired her to look abroad for further, more interdisciplinary study. Her work looks primarily at fairness in relationships among heterosexual couples. Her approach is a symptomatic one; she views distress in a relationship as symptomatic of something going on in the larger system of an individual.

Additionally Rashmi is working with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences in Karnataka to build a training program for therapists in India. Rashmi has a warmth and kindness that instantly puts one at ease, qualities which certainly make her an asset to her field.

**Anisha Saxena** comes to Syracuse as a Fulbright fellow from New Delhi. Her scholarship focuses on contested sacred spaces in India, specifically in Kutch, Udaipur, and Jodhpur. Anisha's research involves understanding religious pluralism in the world's largest democracy. She seeks to explore how different populations and different faiths have found their own significance in the same sacred spaces.

While she is in Syracuse, she will dedicate the bulk of her time to research and writing, taking full ad-



vantage of her fellowship. When she leaves in June, Anisha plans to return to India to submit her dissertation. In the future, she hopes to continue her academic work on South Asian spaces.

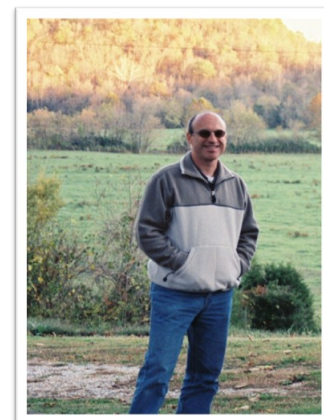
Anisha began her academic career with a Master's program at the National Museum Institute in New Delhi. She is a trained art historian and completed her Master's thesis on early Harappan pottery motives. This initial work generated her interest in the role of symbols in religion.

In her free time, Anisha is fond of gardening and visiting museums. She has spent a great deal of time abroad, traveling and furthering her academic career. Find out more about her research when Anisha gives a talk on Tuesday, February 5 in 100 Eggers at 12:30 pm.

**Dr. Lars Rodseth** is a new faculty member in the Anthropology department. He came to Syracuse University last year after spending 17 years teaching at the University of Utah. He identifies himself a theoretical and historical anthropologist.

His initial interest in the South Asian region, which continues in his current work, began in Nepal in 1990. Lars conducted long-term fieldwork in Nepal studying marriage systems, religious associations, and the political history of a Tibetan Buddhist town. Shortly thereafter, the political situation in Nepal bubbled over and this area became a less accessible research site for Lars leading him to expand upon an early interest in comparative perspectives by shifting his fieldwork to the United States.

These days he is beginning a project on a particular community of Indian Americans, who originate from the West Indies, specifically Trinidad and Guyana. He has made preliminary visits to the Richmond Hill neighborhood of Queens, where there is a large Indo-Caribbean population. In Fall 2012, he taught a first-year graduate core course in addition to a new, experimental course called *Ungoverned Spaces*. He uses these curricula to delve deeper into South Asian topics, including the implications of geographically removed spaces in this region of the world.



## 2013 NESSA Event Explores Life in a Militarized Zone

On Friday, February 8 Syracuse University's South Asia Center will host an afternoon focusing on Indian-Occupied Kashmir, the location of one of the world's most long running conflicts as part of the on-going series of talks organized under the aegis of the North-east Scholars of South Asia (NESSA), a group of faculty members at nearby colleges and universities.

Indian-Occupied Kashmir has been a contested site between the Indian government and those who want independent Kashmir for over 50 years. Armed conflict, the imposition of curfews, and the constant presence of an estimated half a million Indian military and paramilitary forces has resulted in the insinuation of violence into Kashmiri people's everyday lives.

The South Asia Center will explore the implications of this militarization from the perspective of average Kashmiris living in this militarized zone. Our keynote speaker is an expert on the situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir, Haley Duschinski, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Ohio University. Her research has focused both on violence within Kashmir itself and the ways in which militarization has far reaching impacts on the lives of Kashmiris living outside of Kashmir.

Following her talk, we will screen *In Shopian*, a short documentary by former SU graduate student and independent filmmaker, Chris Giamo (SU MA '11) and Kelsey Kobik (SU BA '10). Filmed in 2010, *In Shopian* focuses on the double murder of two Kashmiri women amidst the social unrest in the capital Srinagar. It features rare on-site interviews with separatist leaders Syed Ali Geelani, Yasin Malik, and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, as well as street battles between local youths and security forces. The film provides a contextualized example of the plight of ordinary Kashmiris, and an aesthetic portrait of present-day Kashmir as a war-torn paradise.

The event will culminate in a roundtable discussion that will include Duschinski, Giamo and Kobik as well as Wajahat Ahmad, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology. Ahmad has lived and worked in Kashmir; he plans to focus on Indian-occupied Kashmir for his dissertation research. The discussion will be moderated by Christopher Lee, (PhD '02) and Associate Professor at Canisius College. In presenting this event, we hope to begin a dialogue about the issue through the experiences of common people who live their lives within this highly militarized space with the hopes that it might foster a just and lasting peace in Kashmir. We hope that it will be of interest to scholars of South Asia as well as those who want to learn more. The event will begin at 2:30 pm on February 8 in 060 Eggers. A reception will follow the discussion in 204 Maxwell. The event is free and open to the public.



## Bring South Asia to Your Classroom!!

Faculty and graduate students from the South Asia Center are available to present on topics of interest which satisfy New York Learning Standards for Social Studies (2-5) such as: geography, food and dress, family life, language, technology and development, folk arts and oral narrative traditions, history, religious practice, the environment, historical and contemporary political systems, the growth of India as an economic power, and migration within and from South Asia.

Check out page 9 to see some of the outreach activities we helped organize in 2012! In addition to classroom visits, we can work with teachers to design or revise lesson plans. We are particularly interested in working in rural school districts whose students may have limited experiences with South Asian cultures. Contact Emera Bridger Wilson (elbridge@syr.edu) for more information.



## Consortium Conferences Tackle Contemporary Issues in South Asia

### Spring 2012 Conference: Food, Health and Agriculture in South Asia

Each year the Cornell-Syracuse South Asia Consortium organizes a conference that addresses contemporary issues in South Asia. During this grant cycle, the themes of these conference range from water to food to textiles, but each hopes to highlight interdisciplinary work and their intersections of the physical and social sciences. Last spring, SAC hosted the conference which focused on “Food, Health and Agriculture in South Asia: Contemporary Issues and Future Trends.”

This two day event kicked off on March 30, 2012 with a screening of the film, *Still, the Children are Here*, directed by Dinaz Stafford. This poignant film looks at the plight of the Garo people of Northeastern India, whose traditional agricultural practices and the crops that they grow are quickly becoming obsolete. We were able to have a Q & A session with Ms. Stafford, who was in London, over Skype.

On April 1, we hosted a number of scholars that addressed different aspects of health and nutrition in South Asia. Our opening keynote address by Dr. Krishnendu Ray, Professor of Food Studies at NYU examined the ways in which food and cultural identity are



Dr. Krishnendu Ray during this keynote address.



Panelists discuss intersections of health, food and medicine (left to right): Professor Sudha Raj, and graduate students Monica Sathyamurthy, Jaapna Dillion and Karen McNamara.

linked both in South Asia and in the diaspora. The conference ended with an engaging, humorous and thought provoking talk by Rema Nagarajan, journalist for the Times of India and visiting scholar at Harvard University, on the role of technology and policy in combatting hunger in the developing world.

Several Syracuse University graduate students participated in the conference on the panel concerning the intersections of health, food and medicine as well as our Fulbright Scholar, Chandani Liyanage.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the conference organizers-- Syracuse University's Professors Tim Dye and Sudha Raj and Cornell University's Saurabh Mehta, Assistant Professor of Global Health, Epidemiology, and Nutrition.

### Spring 2013 Conference: Agrarian Crisis? Seed and State in India

The next Consortium conference, “Agrarian Crisis? Seed and State in India” will be held at Cornell on April 5-6, 2013 and will engage the current state of the agrarian sector India through the lens of “crisis.” Characterizations and causes of the current agrarian crisis in academic and popular studies are multiple and divergent, but cotton receives the most prominent media coverage. Debt resulting from liberalization of farm credit runs through others. Crop failures figure prominently, whether from failure of government monitoring of counterfeit or risky seeds or biological changes in specific agro-ecologies. Water shortages are held to reflect some combination of climate change and a tragedy of the commons built by populist political competition. The rate of growth in factor productivity has declined sharply, even as cuts in input subsidies have narrowed the margin between costs of production and value of output. State acquisition of farmland by eminent domain works with market diversion of land from farm to consumption in some accounts. Running through these multiple causes for crisis is absence or misdirection of state response. How should we understand the framings of crisis? If there is crisis, how do we understand the political impotence of those afflicted in a vigorous democracy? For more information on the upcoming conference, check out the conference website: [sap.einaudi.cornell.edu/node/8371](http://sap.einaudi.cornell.edu/node/8371).

## Notes From the Field

### Many Hindis

Jocelyn Killmer, PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology

English is the official language of medical education in India. When I return here next year for my dissertation research on the place of morality in medical students' career choices, many of my interactions with research collaborators will be in my native tongue. Nevertheless, because the English-speaking world of doctors represents only one aspect of the culture of medicine in India, I am currently spending eight months in Jaipur to sharpen my Hindi conversational skills. I want to be able to observe—and understand—all kinds of interactions that take place in the teaching hospital between students and nurses, techs, patients, and patients' families. What I have come to realize since I arrived two months ago is how many Hindis I actually have to learn in order to accomplish this feat.

I go to school every morning to learn "pure" Hindi. We discuss literature and films and speak in grammatically correct—and necessarily slow and painstaking—sentences. But when I leave school in the afternoon, this form of Hindi doesn't get me very far. No one wants to wait around for a grammatically perfect sentence to emerge fully formed from my mouth. And while mastery of "pure" Hindi is useful for reading and writing, speaking in such a register usually leads only to confusion. Moreover, this is certainly not the register I will encounter during my research in the teaching hospital.

The obvious—and happy—solution to this problem involves lots of good conversations with Hindi speakers over lots of cups of chai. I have been lucky enough to find several Hindi-speaking families who have the patience to wait out my haltingly slow speaking style. This has led to holidays and weddings celebrated together, gift exchanges, comparisons of our two countries, and lots of laughter at my strange ways. And during all of these fun-filled encounters I'm doing "work" to improve my Hindi! Needless to say I'm having a fantastic year and am thoroughly enjoying the chance to exercise my mind in a new and different way.



Jocelyn Killmer (left) and her husband doing a puja (Hindu ritual).

### A Cautionary Tale

Dan Cheifer, PhD Candidate, Department of Religion

When I first arrived in Delhi on the way to start my fieldwork, the foreigner's registration office there told me I needed to register in the city where I intended to reside, Haridwar. When I got to Haridwar, the corresponding office there told me I

needed to register in the city specified on my visa, Delhi. "Don't worry," they told me, "it's an easy process," a claim I regarded with deep skepticism. Back at the Delhi office, someone competent suggested I go to the visa office, where I could get permission to register in a city not specified on my visa. Unfortunately, the illustrious bureaucrats at the visa office only grant audience to petitioners who arrive weekdays between ten and noon, and since it was about 2 pm on Friday, I got to spend a lovely weekend in Paharganj rather than actually doing my fieldwork. When I finally got to the visa office Monday morning, I was given a number. When that was called, I explained why I was there, whereupon I was given another number. About four hours later that number was called, I gave a man some documents and he gave me, you guessed it, another number, and sent me on my merry way with all assurances that I'd be able to register in Haridwar the next day.

About a week later I learned that I had not yet been able to register because of the following problem: the visa office in Delhi could communicate by e-mail but not fax whereas the FRO in Haridwar could communicate by fax but not e-mail. Once I sorted this out, I learned that the visa office had requested that the FRO recommend that the visa office give the FRO permission to let me register in Haridwar. The registration officer in Haridwar required me to hand deliver his recommendation to Delhi and also gave me another unrelated piece of mail he wanted me to deliver to the Burmese embassy.

Another trip to Delhi. Another number to get another number to hand someone an envelope and get another number. And then back to Haridwar again. When the letter granting permission to register in Haridwar finally came from the visa office, the registration officer in Haridwar (continued on page 8)



Dan Cheifer outside Chotiwalla in Rishikesh.

## SANOC recognizes South Asia-related books for children

The South Asia Book Award, administered by the South Asia National Outreach Consortium (SANOC), is given annually for up to two outstanding works of literature, from early childhood to secondary reading levels, which accurately and skillfully portrays South Asia or South Asians in the diasporas, that is the experience of individuals living in South Asia, or of South Asians living in other parts of the world. Up to five Honor Books and Highly Commended Books will also be recognized by the award committee for their contribution to this body of literature on the region.

The 2012 recipients of the SABA Book Award for children was *Same, Same but Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw (Henry Holt and Company, 2011). Pen pals Elliot and Kailash discover that even though they live in different countries—America and India—they both love to climb trees, own pets, and ride school buses. *Island's End* by Padma Venkatraman (G.P. Putnam's Sons, division of Penguin Young Readers Group, 2011) was the committee's pick in the Young Adult category. A young girl trains to be the new spiritual leader of her remote Andaman Island tribe, while facing increasing threats from the modern world. Padma created a Virtual Lesson plan about the book, including photographs of the Andaman Islands, and some of the people she met who inspired characters in the book, which you can find on our website.

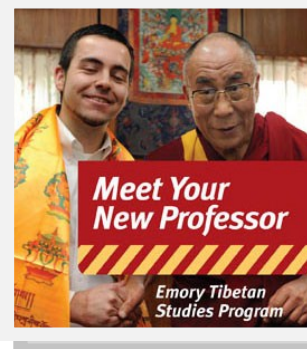
Among the honorable mention books is *Following My Paint Brush* by Dulari Devi and Gita Wolf (Tara Books Pvt. Ltd, 2010). This book tells the story of Dulari Devi, a domestic helper who went on to become an artist in the Mithila style of folk painting from Bihar, eastern India. For more information about the award, please see the SABA website: [southasiabookaward.org](http://southasiabookaward.org).



## SU Expands Study Abroad Opportunities in India

SU has approved two new programs for study abroad in South Asia, in addition to the SITA program in Madurai in South India. This expands our offerings to include environmental issues in the Himalayas with Pitt in the Himalayas as well as Tibetans with the Emory Program in Dharamsala.

**Pitt in the Himalayas** offers students the opportunity every fall to study and live in the foothills of the Himalaya Mountains. Taught by Anthropology professor Joseph Alter, the program is located in Mussoorie, originally a British Hill Stations. Students will spend a semester in India taking up to 15 credits in anthropology, with extensive academic excursions to apply course content and take advantage of the program's spectacular setting. In addition to offering Hindi language training, the Pitt program offers courses on Himalayan ecology, religious traditions, medical systems, and health and on the geography of the region. For more information, visit [abroad.pitt.edu](http://abroad.pitt.edu).



The **Emory Tibetan Studies Program** is located in Dharamsala, headquarters of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan community in exile. This spring-only program fully immerses students in the life of the Tibetan exile community's intellectual, cultural, and political capital. Established in 2001, the program's unique combination of academic rigor, cultural immersion, contemplative studies, and field research has quickly made it a life-transforming experience for students and one of the finest Tibetan study-abroad programs in the nation. For more information, visit [cipa.emory.edu/tibetan/](http://cipa.emory.edu/tibetan/).

**SITA, South Indian Term Abroad**, is a run out of George Washington University by a consortium of schools. Students live in Madurai, in the state of Tamilnadu. With semester-long home stays and rigorous academic training and research opportunities, SITA immerses students in the complexity of Indian culture in one of its most famous temple cities. Courses in ethnographic methods and Tamil language are required. Additional offerings include courses on religion, the environment, the media and literature. Details can be found at [sitaprogram.org/](http://sitaprogram.org/).

## Book Review: *Contradictory Lives: Baul Women in India and Bangladesh* (Lisa I. Knight, 2011)

—Nicole A. Wilson

*Editor's Note: The author, Lisa Knight, is a SU Alumna (PhD 2005). She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Furman University. The reviewer, Nicole Wilson, is a PhD Candidate in Anthropology at SU. Her research examines the construction of middle class womanhood in Tamil Nadu. Both women have been deeply engaged with the South Asia Center.*

In her 2011 ethnography, *Contradictory Lives: Baul Women in India and Bangladesh*, Lisa I. Knight builds on the intellectual pursuits of scholars such as Mahmood (2005) and Mohanty (1991) as she argues for multiple feminisms and conceptions of agency that highlight the capacity to act among her Baul interlocutors in West Bengal and Bangladesh. She contends that women's actions should not be whittled down to whether or not they conform to or subvert patriarchy, and further, if women choose to conform to societal norms, that too should be understood as an agentic act.

As is clear from the title, Knight finds that contradiction is endemic to how Baul women explain themselves and construct meaningful lives. This contradiction lies primarily between two sets of expectations, those ascribed to authentic Baul women and those that illustrate proper South Asian womanhood. As Baul women, Knight explains, her interlocutors conceive of themselves as somewhat "outside and even critical of normative society" (pg. 23). They often criticize societal norms in their singing performances for wider Bengali and Bangladeshi society, lamenting the continuing existence of the caste system and calling for gender, class, religious, and caste equality. However, Baul women in West Bengal and Bangladesh also speak of the immense societal pressure to be a "good" South Asian woman. "Good" South Asian women are required to participate in the practice of *purdah* (veiling, seclusion, and/or silence), as well as give deference to their fathers, husbands, and sons. Knight eloquently reveals the multifarious negotiations of her interlocutors as they navigate both sets of expectations in their daily lives and reinvent femininity and gendered spaces.

Knight's work is multi-sited, providing the reader with a wider perspective of how Baul women are implicated in political and religious life across the span of two countries. She also briefly mentions Bauls living and performing in cities like London and New York (pg. 14). While it was not within the scope of this ethnographic project, I do feel that further exploration of Baul performances in western countries, as well as the Baul diaspora more broadly, would be significant in expanding our under-

standing of Baul womanhood. While many Baul women express the constant push and pull of Baul and broader South Asian societal expectations, how might Baul women experiencing western social norms understand what it means to be Baul? How might the dialogic nature of Baul women's performances in London and New York influence their self-perceptions? Who are the audience members? How would the motivations and expectations of performer and audience inflect self (re)fashionings?

Although Knight readily acknowledges that self-reflexivity in anthropological writing is nothing new, I did find her presentation of personal fieldwork experience to be especially genuine and instructive when reflecting on my own encounters in the field. She tactfully acknowledges and lays bare often unspoken confessions of the anthropologist, discussing a researcher's internalization of local prejudice, as well as admitting the initial dismissal of some individuals who would later become invaluable to her project. These types of admissions are not only endearing, but also lend credibility to Knight's inherently partial interpretations of Baul life.

Knight's work addresses specific aspects of Baul communities and also challenges scholarly and lay assumptions about freedom, agency, and renunciation in a clear and concise fashion. It is an important contribution to many disciplines and is accessible to students and professors alike.

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1991 "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds. Pp. 51-80. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.



## Transforming the Landscape of Education in Afghanistan

—Amy Friers (BA '11)

In October 2012, Akbar Quraishi (SU BA '09 and MA IR '11) and I opened Afghanistan's first specialized International Relations university with the help of several of our Afghan friends and colleagues. Despite many difficulties with financing and government red tape, we have managed to have a successful first semester at Diplomacy and International Studies Institute of Higher Education (DIS). At DIS, we believe that it is crucial to build professional capacity in the fields of diplomacy, negotiations, governance, development and security studies so that young Afghans are prepared and have the necessary skills to take over as foreign presence is reduced in the coming years. We are struggling against the traditional strict lecture and memorization culture which has dominated the Afghan educational system for centuries. At our university, we focus on providing access to up to date information and teaching critical thinking skills to our students. In class, we encourage questioning, group work and open discussion to ensure that students are able to generate creative solutions to Afghanistan's current and impending problems. DIS grants scholarships to female students and students from high conflict areas in an attempt to provide opportunities and to provide a more balanced voice in the Afghan government. We truly try to live up to our motto: transforming education, transforming Afghanistan.

For more information please see the DIS website at: [www.dis.af](http://www.dis.af) or Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/DISKabul](http://www.facebook.com/DISKabul).



The DIS opening ceremony. Amy Friers is pictured to the right of the bow in the green scarf. Akbar Quraishi is to her left.

*(Cheifer's Note From the Field continued from page 5)*

had me bring it to his commanding officer in a suburb of Haridwar that was about an hour away by auto-rickshaw. Having obtained his permission to act on the visa office's permission, the registration officer sent me out to make photocopies of the registration documents for him. He informed me of the fine I would have to pay since it took me more than two weeks to register, and somehow that was my fault. Paying this fine required another trip to the same suburban office where his superior officer worked. When I brought back proof of payment, hey presto, I was registered!

I learned too late that this can usually be avoided by claiming that you are taking frequent trips to your field site while actually residing in whatever city your visa specifies. Even if it doesn't quite reflect the reality of the situation, it's better than driving yourself insane while wasting day after precious day of fieldwork time. I hope that by writing about these experiences here, those of you who might be headed to the field sometime soon will not repeat my mistakes and the rest of you at least enjoyed a bit of healthy *schadenfreude*.



Tula Geonka and SUBollywood students at the Taj Mahal in 2012.



Anand Dwivedi and Sue Wadley at the 2012 Consortium Conference.



## South Asia Center in the Community

During the 2011-12 Academic Year, the South Asia Center had the honor of participating in a variety of outreach activities, both in local schools and in the community. For the 4th year in a row, we participated in the Asian Elephant Extravaganza at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. Local Bharatanatyam students—Shibani Ramadoss, Pranathi Adhikari and Anupama Irri—performed.



Three local Bharatanatyam students performed at the Syracuse Zoo (left to right): Shibani Ramadoss, Pranathi Adhikari and Anupama Irri.

In the Spring, we shared the diversity and tastiness of South Asia food with local school children. We took part in the Pine Grove Middle School’s Career and Diversity Day. We shared *dal* (lentils), rice, and *kheer* (rice pudding) with the students. In Mrs. Garofano and Mrs. Brennan’s Global Foods class at Cicero-North Syracuse High School, we demonstrated how to make *bhangan bharta* (roasted eggplant and a South Indian chickpea snack). We also showed the students how to make *roti* (Indian flat bread). We took part in the Crouse School of Nursing’s International Night where Carly Dwyer provided henna tattoos, which were incredibly popular.



Emera Bridger Wilson shows a student how to make *roti* (Indian flat bread).

In addition to these events, we were pleased to support an initiative by a group of graduate students working under the aegis of SU Program for Refugee Assistance (SUPRA) who provided English tutoring and other services for Syracuse’s

Bhutanese Nepali refugee population. With over a dozen teachers and nearly 100 students, it was a great experience for both groups. This work continues for the 2012-2013 year under the leadership of Alicia Wright, a graduate student in Media Studies and a current FLAS recipient.

## DIYers Improve Women’s Lives in Assam

**Deborah Fry** (MA IR ‘06), who by day is a researcher at the University of Edinburgh/NSPCC Child Protection Research Centre and previous Research Director at the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault and in the evening is a vintage sewing enthusiast and runs a successful sewing blog called ‘My Happy Sewing Place’ ([fashionsfromthepast.blogspot.com](http://fashionsfromthepast.blogspot.com)) is launching globally a social enterprise called ‘Weaving Destination’ as of December 2012. She states on her blog, “We are passionate about creating financial independence for women and connecting women globally. Our social enterprise called Weaving Destination, aims to promote the finest ethical silk and vintage-inspired cotton print fabrics and products hand-woven by indigenous women from Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Assam, India to the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and sewing communities in Scotland and globally.”

Weaving Destination includes three weaving centers in remote villages of the BTC, Kokrajhar, Assam, a sewing unit, and a group of females trained in yarn extraction. Besides the 65 women engaged in the three weaving centers, many more have been trained and are employed in the sewing unit and yarn extraction process. One of the young women trained at the sewing unit runs her own sewing training center with support from NEDAN Foundation.

Engaging and empowering women—economically

and socially—feeds back to empowering families and communities they belong to. The Weaving Destination is a social enterprise primarily for creating employment and livelihood opportunity for ethnic, indigenous local women. NEDAN Foundation, the charity organization through which the project runs works towards other significant issues in the area such as child protection, education, health, peace building and overall community development aspects in the villages the women come from and where the weaving centers have been established.

Want to learn more about how you can support Weaving Destination through the purchase of hand-woven scarves and fabrics? Visit [fashionsfromthepast.blogspot.com](http://fashionsfromthepast.blogspot.com) for the latest updates and watch for the addition of their shop on [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com).



Debi Fry and Javita Narang, co-Founders of Weaving Destination

## Faculty Updates

**Tej Bhatia** has been named a Forensic and National Security Sciences Institute Faculty Fellow at SU. Institute Fellows will conduct research, work on interdisciplinary teams, teach courses, and use shared instrumental resources to further aspects of their scholarship that are within the framework of the FNSSI.

**Tula Goenka** taught "Bollywood & Beyond: An Intro to Indian Cinema" for the third time in Spring 2012 and took her fourth group of students to India for the SU Abroad "Bollywood Snapshots: Internships in Mumbai" program in May-June 2012. She is the new Director of the South Asia Center along with Susan Wadley.

**Ann Gold** has had two publications come out in 2012. "Scenes of Rural Change" appears in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture* and "Yogic Language in Village Performance" in David White's *Yoga in Practice*. In addition to these publications, Gold has given a number of invited lectures at the University of Iowa, University of Michigan, Amherst College, and University of London, University of Oxford, UK.

**Prema Kurien** was the author of a chapter in the book *Public Hinduisms*, which explored the nature of American Hinduism and had an article in *Qualitative Sociology* which focused on the intersections of religion and ethnicity among second-generation Indian American Christians. Kurien also received the Jack Shand Research Award from the Society of Scientific Study of Religion.

**Iswari Pandey** has a new book in the works. *Global English, Remedial English: Caste, Class, Nation* is going to be released by Routledge in summer of 2013. The book is based on his research conducted in India in 2010.

**Sudha Raj** presented "Integrating the Art of Healing with the Science of Food" at the National Conference on

an Integrated Approach to Healing with Foods at Women's Christian College, Chennai. Additionally she gave four presentations on Integrative and Functional Nutrition and Ayurveda as a compliment to Modern Dietetics, which were presented at Lady Irwin College, Nirmala Niketan-College of Home Science, Ethiraj College for Women and JBAS Women's College in August.

**Romita Ray's** book, *Under the Banyan Tree: Relocating the Picturesque in British India* (Yale University Press 2013) is hot off the press. She also just completed 2 major research projects about the art collections of Elihu Yale (the chief benefactor of Yale University) and portraits of Elihu Yale at Yale University. Both projects focus on Yale's career as an East India Company administrator and diamond merchant in Fort Saint George (Madras/Chennai) in the late 1600s/early 1700s. The results of these projects are being published in the December 2012 volume of the Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin.

**Cecilia Van Hollen** received the 2012 Steven Polgar Paper Prize from the Society for Medical Anthropology for the Best Paper Published in Medical Anthropology Quarterly in 2011-12. She also gave a talk titled, "Birth in the Age of AIDS: Women, Reproduction, and HIV/AIDS in India" as part of Georgetown University's "Global India" Series in February 2012. Cecilia was also a Visiting Professor at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown this Fall.

**Susan S. Wadley** presented a paper, "Likhiya: Mithila Women 'paint' their Stories" at the American Anthropological Conference annual meeting in November. In May, she presented a paper "Narrative Styles in Mithila Art" at the folklore conference in honor of Margaret Mills at Ohio State University. She also published, "Intensive Village Studies in India" in *Changing Village India*, edited by Brij Raj Chauhan and S. Satyanarayana.

## Graduate Student Updates

**Jocelyn Killmer**, a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology and **Elizabeth Mount**, PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology received scholarships from the American Institute of Indian Studies to pursue language study in India during the 2012-13 Academic Year. Jocelyn is studying Hindi; she discusses her experiences on page 5. Liz is studying Kannada in Mysore, Karnataka.

**G. Oliver Elliot** has been named a Robertson Fellow. He is interested in global and national security, particularly in South Asia.

**Faris Khan**, PhD Candidate in Anthropology, has received a Pre-dissertation Grant from the Institute of Pakistan Studies to continue his work with the *khawaja sira*.

**Mitul Baruah**, PhD candidate in Geography, and **Lalit Narayan**, PhD candidate in Anthropology, received funding from the Taraknath Das Foundation to conduct their dissertation fieldwork.

**FLAS FELLOWS 2012-13**

The South Asia Center has named eight 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. For the 2012-2013 academic year, Foreign Language Area Studies fellowships were awarded to:

Ngan Diep	PAIA; Economics
Alicia Wright	Media Studies
Prea Persaud	Religion
Lisa Ward	Anthropology
Ross Freedenberg	Anthropology
William Morat	PAIA
Steven Johnson	Anthropology
Iti Maloney	International Relations
Laurel Rodman	International Relations

**BHARATI SUMMER RESEARCH GRANT 2012**

The friends and family of Agehananda Bharati established a memorial grant in his honor in the early 1990s. Each year, awards are made to doctoral students in the Maxwell School for research leading to their dissertation research on South Asia. This year's recipients were:

Nicholas Armstrong	Social Science
Nidhi Vij	Public Administration
Lalit Narayan	Anthropology
Retika Rajbhandari	Anthropology
Steven Johnson	Anthropology

**SPRING EVENTS 2013**

**Tuesday, January 29, 12:30 pm**  
 341 Eggers  
*The Caste of English*  
 Iswari Pandey, Syracuse University

**Tuesday, February 5, 12:30 pm**  
 100 Eggers  
*Memory, History, Conflict and Claim: Rishabhdeo Temple, Rajasthan*  
 Anisha Saxena, Fulbright Scholar, Jawaharlal Nehru University

**Friday, February 8, 2:30 pm**  
 Global Collaboratory, 060 Eggers  
*Life in a Militarized Zone: Experiences from Indian-Occupied Kashmir*

**Tuesday, February 12, 12:30 pm**  
 341 Eggers  
*Explaining Democratic Deepening in India*  
 Anoop Sadanandan, Syracuse University

**Wednesday, February 20, 4:00 pm**  
 Global Collaboratory, 060 Eggers  
 Screening of *Stir, Fry, Simmer* and discussion with Filmmaker Vani Subramanian

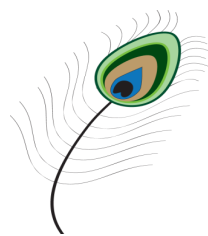
**Tuesday, February 26, 12:30 pm**  
 341 Eggers  
*Bhashani as an Icon*  
 Sravani Biswas, Syracuse University

**Tuesday, March 26, 12:30 pm**  
 341 Eggers  
*Forging Faith: Ambivalent Globalization, Neo-ness and Innovative Religion in the Temple Publics of Bangalore City*  
 Tulasi Srinavas, Emerson College

**Friday-Saturday April 5-6**  
 401 Physical Sciences Building, Cornell University  
*Agrarian Crisis in India? Seen and State in India*

**Tuesday, April 9, 12:30 pm**  
 100 Eggers  
*Gender and Sexuality in Mughal India: Historical Narratives, Medicine and Jurisprudence*  
 Poonam Deol, Jawaharlal Nehru University

**Tuesday, April 16, 12:30 pm**  
 Global Collaboratory, 060 Eggers  
*Politics of Assam*  
 Sanjib Baruah, Bard College



The South Asia Center newsletter is official outreach bulletin for South Asia Center, Moynihan Institution of Global Affairs, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.

*Directors*

Tula Goenka  
Susan S. Wadley

*Associate Director*

Anand Dwivedi

*Outreach Coordinator*

Emera Bridger Wilson

## SOUTH ASIA CENTER

Funded 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 Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, 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 lectures and discussion programs, cultural programs, and other public events. In addition, Outreach loans a wide variety of educational materials to educators at 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 media items may be obtained by sending us a request with a self-addressed stamped envelope to South Asia Center, 346 Eggers Hall, Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244 or on our web page at: <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/programs/sac/>. Our email is [southasia@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:southasia@maxwell.syr.edu). You can also find us on Twitter, [@SouthAsiaSU](https://twitter.com/SouthAsiaSU), and Facebook, [facebook.com/sac.syr.edu](https://facebook.com/sac.syr.edu)

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