

South Asia Program

Summer Bulletin, 2016



Cornell University

From the Directors

Iftikhar Dadi *and* Anne M. Blackburn

The academic year 2015-16 was a busy and productive time in the South Asia Program. We had extended research visits from Lotte Hoek, anthropologist at the University of Edinburgh whose research focuses on cinema in Bangladesh, and filmmaker Kannan Arunasalam, who also taught a course on representing conflict that included students' independent multimedia projects on conflict and diasporic experience. SAP hosted a full calendar of speakers in its Seminar Series during Fall and Spring semesters. These talks addressed a wide range of issues from across South Asia. In addition, during Fall 2015, the annual Tagore Lecture was delivered by the brilliant writer Mohammed Hanif, who read excerpts from his fictional work to a rapt audience of faculty

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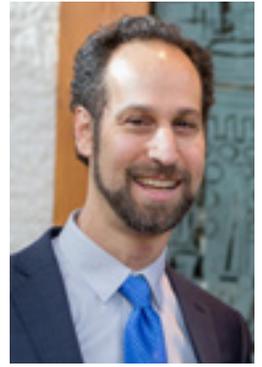
and students. And the SAP Development Forum during Spring 2016 that featured Sanjit “Bunker” Roy and Meagan Fallone—founder and CEO of Barefoot College in India—proved to be an inspiration for many students who attended it. The academic year closed with the Cornell-Syracuse Consortium Symposium titled *Gujarat/Guatemala: Marketing Care and Speculating Life*, which focused on issues of labor, surrogacy and emerging biomarkets that are being created globally due to advances in biotechnology. We were delighted to support this trans-regional and comparative symposium.

In language teaching, it is gratifying to note that SAP continues to offer comprehensive instruction in Bengali, Hindi/Urdu, Nepali, and Sinhala, as well as Sanskrit, Pali, Persian, and Arabic. In addition, Cornell students can avail themselves of video-conferenced learning in Punjabi and Tamil thanks to a Mellon-funded partnership with Columbia and Yale universities. Thanks to our National Resource Center (NRC) status and the Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) grants from the U.S. Department of Education, we have continued to support vital language teaching and research at Cornell and in the field. However, federal funding is not adequate to support Cornell’s language curriculum. It remains a matter of great urgency for Cornell to develop supra-college funding streams to support less commonly taught languages, including the languages of South Asia.

The 2015-16 academic year was also characterized by changes in staffing. Iftikhar Dadi’s one-term as Interim Director ended this summer, with Anne Blackburn back as director starting July 1. Administrative Assistant and Events Coordinator Durga Bor, who had been with SAP for many years, elected to retire in July 2016. Also during summer of 2016, Program Manager Bill Phelan transferred to a similar position in the Latin American Studies Program, which is also housed at the Einaudi Center for International Studies. Bill and Durga have served SAP with great dedication and enthusiasm over the years, and Bill generously assisted and advised SAP during the administrative transition over the summer.

INTRODUCING DANIEL BASS

We are delighted to announce that Dr. Daniel Bass has been appointed Cornell’s South Asia Program Manager effective 29 August 2016. Daniel was first exposed to South Asia when, as an undergraduate at Carleton College, he spent a semester in Sri Lanka on the Inter-collegiate Sri Lanka Educational program, an exchange program in which Cornell currently participates. This sparked a passion for South Asia that led him to an M.A. in South Asian Studies at the University of Michigan, with a thesis on tourism at Vijayanagara in Karnataka, India, and then a Ph.D. in Anthropology (also at Michigan), with a dissertation on Tamil tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka, understood as part of the Indian diaspora. This resulted in his first book, *Everyday Ethnicity in Sri Lanka: Up-country Tamil Identity Politics* (Routledge 2012). His second book, co-edited with Amarnath Amarasingam, *Sri Lanka: The Struggle for Peace in the Aftermath of War*, a multi-disciplinary analysis of legal, political and cultural changes in post-war Sri Lanka, will be published by Hurst in the fall of 2016.



Dr. Bass has considerable administrative and programming experience, including grant writing and reporting. Most recently, he was Sponsored Program Grants Manager for PAX-Program of Academic Exchange, overseeing two U.S. Department of State grants, which provide scholarships for high school students from over 50 countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and South America to study for a year in the U.S. Daniel has also served as Treasurer of the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies since 2010, active in the Institute’s Council of American Overseas Resource Centers grant process. He has taught at several public and private universities in Florida and Connecticut, speaks both Tamil and Sinhala, and hosts “Monsoon Radio,” a monthly radio show of South Asian fusion music. Daniel’s appointment is a return to Cornell, where he studied Sinhala on a FLAS Fellowship eighteen years ago.

Cornell Visit by Nepali Ambassador to the United States



ON MAY 6, 2016, Nepali Ambassador to the United States Arjun Kumar Karki gave a keynote lecture on Nepal's progress since the 7.8 and 7.3 magnitude Gorkha earthquakes in April and May 2015. This was Ambassador Karki's first visit to Cornell University, and he is now one of many Nepali Ambassadors to address Cornell students and faculty. Ambassador Karki's visit marked the end of a semester-long project by the Cornell-Nepal Earthquake Recovery Partnership (CNERP).

Since November 2015, Professor Kathryn March of the Department of Anthropology and the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs (CIPA) has worked with a group of 15 graduate students from City and Regional Planning and CIPA to conduct community assessments and design locally-driven project proposals for earthquake recovery in Nepal's Phyukhri Ridge, a remote region located northwest of the Kathmandu Valley where Professors Kathryn March and David Holmberg have worked since 1975. Ambassador Karki, along with former U.S. Ambassador to Nepal Scott DeLisi and former Director of Peace Corps Nepal Donovan Russell, were invited to Cornell to provide feedback on student project proposals. Ambassador Karki has a PhD in Development Studies from the University of East Anglia, UK and decades of experience in international and rural development.

Ambassador Karki's lecture focused on the Nepali government's plans for the physical reconstruction of private homes and community buildings. The Ambassador was in Nepal at the time of last year's earthquakes, and he began his lecture with a description of his experience. He then provided an overview of the government's efforts over the past year and showed a series of clips from World Bank's video about national reconstruction plans, "The 2015 Nepal Earthquakes, One Year On." The Nepali government has produced an extensive reconstruction manual for private homes, which contains detailed floor plans for one- and two-story houses using a variety of building materials. Every household is entitled to 200,000 rupees to reconstruct



their homes, but the government is still designing a process to distribute funds.

Ambassador Karki expressed hope that the government would soon distribute funds to help communities rebuild. The Nepali government recently passed provisions limiting the ability of international NGOs to provide funding to reconstruction projects in Nepal. These new regulations put added pressure on the government of Nepal to raise and equitably distribute millions of dollars for reconstruction. The Ambassador discussed the importance of building more seismically resistant structures. Geologists estimate that the April and May 2015 earthquakes did not release all of the seismic pressure along the Himalayan fault line and that even larger earthquakes may be in Nepal's future. Ambassador Karki explained that it is imperative to help communities develop the knowledge and skills to build structures capable of withstanding much larger earthquakes.

Ambassador Karki highlighted Nepal's resilience since the earthquake, stating, "We have not lost our hope and sense of community." Nepal has received over \$7 billion in donations and credit, but Ambassador Karki believes that Nepal must redevelop from within as well. The Ambassador cited and analyzed the concept of "building back better," which entails confronting social and economic obstacles, including gender, race and ethnicity.

Following his lecture, Ambassador Karki took a series of questions from the audience, which included Cornell graduate students as well as members of the Ithaca community. The 30-minute question and answer session brought up a variety of critical topics in contemporary Nepal, including the out-migration of young men, politics of local elections, and future government plans to facilitate reconstruction. Karki discussed the role of remittances from the Nepali diaspora, which have been instrumental in helping many households construct temporary shelters since the earthquakes.

A small group of CNERP students, led by Cornell South Asia Program's Anthropology Professor Kathryn March, visited Phyukhri Ridge this summer to conduct additional needs assessments. The student organization plans to continue working with Ambassador Karki and his staff to refine recovery project proposals. Their work is visible on the Facebook page "Friends of Phyukhri Ridge Reconstruction." 🌱

Please support earthquake recovery in Nepal:
<https://www.facebook.com/PhyukhriRidgeReconstruction/>

Cornell Students Assist with Emergency Relief in Nepal Earthquake.

Cornell Nepal Studies Program had 18 students out in the field when the earthquake struck in April 2015. All were safe and sheltered in place until they could be brought safely back to Kirtipur. Before they came home, they helped with emergency relief in the Kathmandu Valley.

Emily Graf, Laura Lin, Ann Lei and Rachel Sullivan assisting with emergency relief. Photo by Janak Rai.

Perlus Delivers Immersive Lecture at Adler Planetarium

BETWEEN 1727 AND 1734, Maharajah Jai Singh II of Jaipur constructed five astronomical observatories in west central India. The observatories, or Jantar Mantars, are the subject of recent research by Barry Perlus, associate professor of art and associate dean of AAP. On February 23, Perlus delivered an immersive lecture titled “Jantar Mantar: The Astronomical Observatories of Jai Singh,” to a sold-out crowd at Chicago’s Adler Planetarium. The event featured 35 panorama images of the observatories projected digitally inside the planetarium dome. “It was unlike any lecture I’ve done before,” says Perlus. “Having a 360-degree projection of each image was a first, and the images had to be scripted into a series that couldn’t be altered once it started. And, because the Adler is almost always in use, we didn’t really have time to rehearse — we had one run through the night before the lecture, and that was it.”

Another first for Perlus was integration of a tool called WorldWide Telescope into the presentation. The tool functions as a virtual telescope, bringing together imagery from ground- and space-based telescopes around the world to allow for the exploration of the universe. “WorldWide Telescope made it possible to seamlessly integrate Barry’s photos and the 3D models created by his students,” says Mark Subbarao, director of space visualization at the Adler Planetarium. “Starting in orbit above India, we could zoom into the city of Jaipur. Then we brought up the 3D models

of Jantar Mantar over the satellite imagery of the city, where we flew to the top of the giant sundial and then crossfaded to Barry’s spherical panorama taken at that location. Using WorldWide Telescope to transition between the photos and 3D model allowed us to put all of Barry’s photography in context.”

Perlus’s Adler Planetarium talk, which was part of his appointment as the Archaeological Institute of America’s Webster Lecturer in Archaeoastronomy for 2015–16, explored the sites’ relationship between astronomy, astrology, mathematics, architecture, design, politics, religion, and art. “This lecture had to be tailored not just to the environment, but also to the audience,” says Perlus. “The Webster lecture is typically an academic lecture, but I knew that the subject and venue would draw a much wider audience, so this presentation had to serve both. Lyon Leifer performed on the bansuri and Subhasis Mukherjee on tabla, both before the lecture and during two image sequences that were part of the immersive experience. At a few points in the presentation I stopped talking altogether, and just let the music accompany the imagery. That really helped bring the drama of the site to life.” The Webster Lecturer activities are an extension of the project The Astronomical Observatories of Jai Singh, for which Perlus received the Einaudi Seed Grant in April 2014. 🌿

—By *Rebecca Bowes*, Assistant Director of Communications, College of Architecture, Art, and Planning, Cornell University

SEE MORE AT:

<http://aap.cornell.edu/news-events/perlus-delivers-immersive-lecture-adler-planetarium#sthash.oS5c26XU.dpuf>



Perlus with Mark Subbarao, director of space visualization at the Adler Planetarium. (Photo by Jose Francisco Salgado)

NOTES

f r o m t h e f i e l d

Natalia Di Pietrantonio, a graduate student in the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies at Cornell University, was awarded an American Institute for Indian Studies Junior Fellowship along with the Asher Family Fellowship for her project “Erotic Visions: Poetry, Literature, and Book Arts from Avadh (1754-1857).” The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellowship previously supported her research.

These are her ‘Notes from the Field’ while in India:

AFTER SETTLING INTO Delhi, I visited my first archival site in India: the Raza Library in Rampur. The majestic building was constructed by the Navabs of Rampur in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and contains one of the finest collections of manuscripts and miniature paintings in India. During this trip, while collecting a wealth of material, I was attended to with great hospitality by the Raza Library’s staff. Endless cups of chai were freely provided. And after I had obtained my manuscript reproductions, my friend Neelam and I were treated to a tour of the mosques and dargahs around the library. The always-amiable librarian, Faisal, remarked that we were the first researchers to visit the surrounding area with the staff.

Usually I would have been that researcher who becomes so preoccupied with collecting and writing that they never explore the local sites. Archival research can feel endless. There are always more documents to read. There is always more to collect. In addition, in order to quench archival fever, as a researcher you discipline your body to remain in your chair during lunch breaks, staying silent, and reading incessantly. While such vigor is needed on occasion to meet deadlines, my experience at the Raza Library taught me that a conversation can yield as much knowledge as combing through a document. After coming

to this realization, on our final day at the Raza Library, the librarians even surprised Neelam and I by gifting us local sweets.

The manuscripts I collected at Rampur contained erotic miniatures such as representations of female nudes, amorous couples, same sex relations, and orgasmic episodes produced in and around the Indo-Islamicate court of the Navabs of Avadh. The Navabs of Avadh ruled during the dissolution of the Mughal Empire, the rise of Indic regional courts, and the influx of Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. They heavily sponsored miniature paintings which are executed on paper with the aid of a small, fine brush whose hairs were sourced from squirrel tail. As a result, miniatures’ painting strokes are delicate and precise. This medium was popular throughout the Mughal period and extended into the Mughal successor states such as Avadh, Murshidabad, and Hyderabad. Moreover, because the Navabs of Avadh were Shi’a, their art production figures within two disciplines South Asian and Islamic art history. One aim my project is to offer an intervention into the field of Islamic art history by showing that erotica is not outside the purview of Islamicate societies such as the Navabs’ court of Avadh.

To illustrate my point, one Avadhi miniature from the Raza Library collection shows a couple in the midst

of copulation (Fig. 1). The male figure’s erect penis is visible on the outside of the female’s thigh. There is also a small presence of blood indicating that this scene represents the female’s first act of sexual intercourse. This miniature is placed on the very last folio of the manuscript at the end of a masnavi, which is an extensive poem structured by rhymed couplets. Its placement prolongs the reader’s desire as the reader is forced to wait until the narrative’s closure for the union (vasl) of the two lovers who undergo a long period of separation (hijr) throughout the poem. The miniature also borrows symbolism from the Indic visual repertoire of ragamala which are paintings of musical modes (raga). For instance, there are floor lamps in the forefront which are iconographically similar to the paintings of the dipak raga series that often illustrate caressing lovers at night amidst lit candles. Thus this image functions within Indo-Persianate masnavi narrative structure but also straddles Indic visualities.

By examining this miniature and other similar visual material, I am currently working on an article which will unpack the taxonomical label of pornography, the heading by which many of these Avadhi miniatures are ascribed under. The label of pornography is present in large part due to the legacy of colonialism and nationalism. And yet, pornography as a classificatory

type can perform different kinds of epistemological work. Rather than merely elicit derision, pornography can also be a productive category in which representations of pleasure can become generative visuals.

My second site was Allahabad where I was able to examine records of patronage networks present in Indo-Persianate newspapers and courtly treatises. Much of my project is also about reincorporating calligraphy and text back into the visual genre of erotica. By doing so, I am trying to unpack whether pleasure is accentuated or diminished by viewing these sexual representations as part of the arts of the book. For this reason, I am also reading the manuscript entitled *Yadgar-i Bahaduri* which details the arts of calligraphy and painting in Avadh. The manuscript describes that the act of producing calligraphy as an affective experience. For instance, the *Yadgar* states that, "If someone writes the letter 'r' 200 times and keeps the note on Monday nights when the moonshine is clearly seen, they will be safe from curses and shall see wonderful events. If someone recites the letter 'z' 700 times and buries it in an old grave on a Saturday when the sun is going down, they will witness wonderful happenings." For the

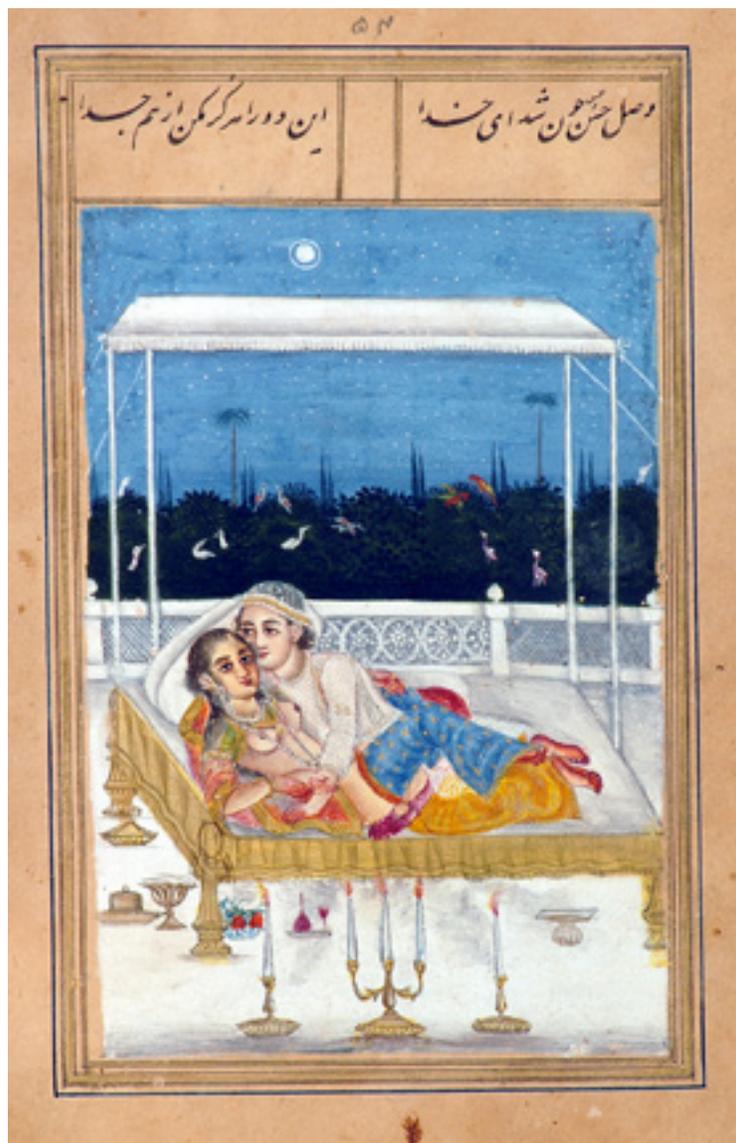


Fig. 1. Untitled from the Raza Library of Rampur

calligrapher or layperson, the act of writing can have talismanic resonances which can affect their worldview. By reading such passages, I was reminded that calligraphic text as well as erotic miniatures could be corporeally and socially transformative. To return to the miniature above, for instance, the representation of sexual acts signals to Sufic hermeneutics of lover and beloved, and the mystical union of God with mankind. This miniature painting could thus also be about the reader/viewer realigning his worldview to be closer to God. Thus by reading treatises on calligraphy and its transformative powers, I was reminded to investigate erotic visuals as also potentially offering a transformative experience for the artisan and viewer.

Because erotica is at times designated as obscenity, many of the paintings require special permission to view. This had been the case while I was conducting archival research in Europe. In India, so far, my objects of inquiry have continued to be labeled as vulgar and/or pornographic but they have not been allocated to special areas within their respective libraries. Surprisingly, I have been granted access much like I would have been viewing any other manuscript. 🌸

NOTES

f r o m t h e f i e l d

Katie Rainwater, March 12, 2016

AFTER FEASTING ON a meal of biryani, it was time for the much anticipated raffle, or “lottery” as it is called here in Khulna, Bangladesh where I am in the initial phases of conducting research on workers and farmers involved in export-driven shrimp production. The shrimp processing factory owner sat with his wife, widowed mother, and the company’s general manager at the front of the room, before a table covered in prizes — several mugs, bowls, three-piece plate sets, tiffin boxes — and the singular grand prizes — a blender, a rice cooker, and a cell phone. I joined the factory’s couple dozen female staff members, ranging in age from their late teens into their forties, in their wing to the left of the table. The 70-odd male staff workers were seated directly in front of the table. The ceiling fans pushed through the hot air offering little respite in the sweltering room. The women had come to the company’s end-of-the-year celebration party dressed in colorful saris, bangles spotted with fake diamonds adorning their wrists. Now they sat perched on the plastic chairs, clutching lottery tickets in sweaty palms. Each ticket was purchased for 10 taka (13 cents) — a price that amounted to a fraction of their monthly salary (approximately 4,400 taka or US\$56), but every purchase takes on significance when, after deducting the 1400 taka (\$18) for rent of a one room house, there is only 3,000 taka (\$38) remaining for food, fuel, medical treatment, school supplies, etc.

Nepa, the woman sitting to my right, had purchased four tickets (numbered 36 - 39) and now she sat frowning.

“All the numbers they are calling are well above 100! Where are the low numbers?” The workers exhorted the general manager’s chubby twelve-year-old son, charged with pulling the winning numbers from a large trash bin, to give the tickets a big stir. But to Nepa’s consternation this activity didn’t result in the selection of a wider range of numbers. Instead, the manager’s son led the workers in applause as the numbers of the factory owner’s wife and mother, each of whom held more than a couple dozen tickets, were repeatedly drawn. When this occurred, the prize in question would be pushed a foot down the table to rest before the owner’s female relatives. It seemed only too fitting that in this industry notorious for the exploitation of labor, workers competed with management in the lottery in spite their radically unequal purchasing prowess.

In other ways, too, the end-of-the-year celebration reflects broader social dynamics in the industry. As the men and women’s seating is segregated, so is men and women’s work. Most formally employed women in the processing factories work in packaging (i.e. placing shrimp in the plastic bags which line the shelves of grocery stores’ freezer sections), whereas men are found in the allegedly more arduous “cold storage” section (i.e. moving boxes of material and product) and in skilled positions such as machine operators. Moreover, the end-of-the-year celebration excluded the bulk of the factory’s workforce - the mostly male crews who unpack and grade (sort by size and quality) shrimp upon arrival, and the women who peel, devein and behead shrimp

under a contractor’s oversight.

I came to Khulna to study workers’ and farmers’ involvement in the shrimp industry —Bangladesh’s largest after readymade garments. I am studying the extent to which workers and farmers have the capacity to shape production processes and how their engagement in the industry impacts their ability to provide for themselves and their families. Understanding the consequences of engagement in export-driven aquaculture for workers and farmers is important given that the volume of food traded internationally is increasing as food systems premised upon national self-sufficiency are being disbanded in accordance with a World Bank and World Trade Organization vision of global food security achieved through international trade. Aquaculture is a forerunner in this development as seafood/fish is the most globally traded animal protein, and aquaculture is projected to supply an increasing proportion of the world’s seafood amidst a decline in natural fisheries.

Initially, I had worried that gaining access to workers would be difficult. In the mid-2000s, the US government began considering a petition to suspend Bangladesh’s tax privileges because of allegations of noncompliance with labor law and non-enforcement of freedom of association in the garment and shrimp sectors. Since this time, conditions in the industry had periodically been exposed in inflammatory journalistic accounts or NGO reports. In this context, I had worried that both workers and managers would be hesitant to open up to me, fearing



The Bagmara Neighborhood in the Rupsha Shrimp Processing District, Bangladesh

that I would cause further damage to the industry's reputation or that management would reprehend them for speaking with a foreigner. Fortunately, access has not yet been an issue — I have been fortunate enough to be welcomed into the humble one-room abodes of countless processing workers as well as the mansions of one or two factory owners.

In this context in which I am able to move relatively unimpeded through the shrimp processing districts, one issue that still confronts me is how to write about “shrimp workers” and “shrimp farmers” amidst considerable diversity in the industry. The majority of Khulna's 28 shrimp processing factories are situated on both banks of

the Rupha River alongside a densely populated two-mile stretch of road. Nevertheless, I've found that workers' horizons are surprisingly limited. Many workers seek employment in the factory most immediately proximate to their home — explaining that it allows them to avoid a long walk or the 5 or 10 taka rickshaw fare that a more distant site of employment would necessitate. Conditions of employment vary considerably from one factory to the next. Some factories comply with Bangladesh's labor law as it pertains to work hours by using three shifts of workers (8 hours per shift) to maintain their 24-hour production regimes. Other factories evade this requirement by engaging

two shifts, and thus requiring workers to pull seven 12-hours shifts per week.

In the farming sector, I am noticing an even wider range of variance in farmers conditions, spread out over even more space. Farmers experience in the shrimp industry varies according to whether there has been a virus outbreak, how conflict over land use in their community has been resolved, and whether shrimp is cultivated in rotation with a rice crop. As I settle into communities in which I will conduct ethnography, I am confronting the question of how to understand the peculiarities of my sites in the context of the wider industry. 🌿

Symposium

GUJARAT/GUATEMALA:

Marketing Care and Speculating Life Cornell-Syracuse Consortium Symposium

WITH DEVELOPMENTS like the CRISPR genome-editing tool and cerebral organoids proposing to improve the quality of human life, it is clear that we have ushered in a new era of biotechnology, where the natural and the engineered become irreversibly intertwined. But in a global system where social and economic wellbeing is becoming increasingly dependent on the modification and commodification of life, how can we assess structures of inequality and indices of violence in emerging biomarkets? What kinds of new ethical concerns arise with the blurring boundaries between life and technology? What role does governance play in remedying or exacerbating exploitation? How do particularly gendered forms of reproductive labor, including adoption and surrogacy, bring these questions into particularly sharp focus? On May 6 and 7, 2016, the Cornell-Syracuse symposium *Gujarat/Guatemala: Marketing Care and Speculating Life* explored these questions by putting South Asia and Central America in comparison. The symposium focused on the state of Gujarat in western India that has become an epicenter of global surrogacy, and Guatemala, which until recently was one of the main sources for international adoptees in North America. In an attempt to represent diverse voices and interests, organizers Anindita Banerjee and Debra Castillo designed an environment that brought together activists and scholars from a wide array of disciplines.

The symposium kicked off with the presentation of Karen Smith Rotabi (UAE University), distinguished for her fieldwork covering Guatemala's intercountry adoption economy. Rotabi began by seeking to dispel myths about why adoption occurred at such high rates in Guatemala, explaining that while communities had cultural mechanisms in place and adequate resources to take care of orphaned youth, a concentrated

effort to displace and institutionalize this youth led to a crisis where children were being taken away from their communities at alarming rates in cases of blatant "child buying." Rotabi then explained that global surrogacy began to rise in popularity after legal and social reform influenced adoption law in Guatemala, suggesting that this simple shift in services reflects attitudes that regard the third world as a durable source for satisfying "global demand for young, healthy children."

This economic system, where vitality and well-being in developed countries is literally provided by gendered, working-class bodies in the global South, has been dubbed "biocapital" in an eponymous book by Kaushik Sunder Rajan (University of Chicago), the symposium's second speaker. Rajan's presentation analyzed the subjection of a group of female students in Maharashtra to a clinical trial for an HPV vaccine. In his presentation, he explored claims that the company conducting the clinical trial failed to meet ethical standards that would have been met in developed countries, aided and abetted by the neoliberalization of the Indian economy and the resulting use of Indian citizens as a renewable resources.

Kalindi Vora (UC San Diego) discussed the connections between a biocapitalist system and the commodification of birth itself. Her presentation explored the historical context behind the transmission of "vital energy," best exemplified today by the popularity of gestational surrogacy. Vora argued that an established reliance on such a demanding, taxing form of labor has not only exacerbated the inequality between men and women, but also the inequality between the working class and the wealthy in India.

What happens when a state-imposed neoliberal policy allows for the degradation of indigenous citizens' rights and their way of life through

the depletion of natural resources? Guatemalan activist Gladys Tzul Tzul explored this problem in her presentation, where she introduced her community's way of life and explained how their ties to the earth differ from those of people within a global capitalist system. Because of her community's strong roots in the area where she grew up and the land's role in nourishing her community, a global economic system without regard for the local use of land should also be considered as a form of bodily exploitation, cutting off an important source of identity and livelihood.

If the descriptions of the presentations above suggest a world where the intertwining of human biology, technological development, economic ambition, and longstanding notions of gender and social class have created a deeply confusing and troubling current climate, perhaps the presentation of Sherryl Vint (UC Riverside), the symposium's final speaker, may offer some respite. Vint discussed prominent examples of science fiction that tackle the confusion and moral controversy surrounding a biocapitalist system. In providing these examples, Vint argued that science fiction is in a unique position to help the public conceptualize and process the speculative changes that the current system of bodily exploitation is bringing forth. By providing clever parallels to an alternate reality that forces us to understand the moral and biological consequences of a practice such as, for example, gestational surrogacy, science fiction can then act as a contemplative form for envisioning how society's economic and social behavior is shaping the outcome of humanity in the 21st century.

Armin Behrooz is a senior in City and Regional Planning 🌱

FINE ARTS

An Evening of Indian Music and Dance

On May 6, 2016, the South Asia Program at Cornell, together with the student group, the Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Among Youths (SPICMACAY) sponsored a concert in Barnes Hall Auditorium of North Indian classical music, referred to as Hindustani music, performed by Sanhita Nandi, with accompanist Aqeel Bhatti on tabla and Madhu Vora on harmonium. Sanhita practices a style known as Kirana *gharana*, and does not compromise the tradition as do many classical Indian music artists, who are influenced by western popular and other world music. After years of practice, and greatly influenced by her *gharana* maestros, she has assimilated the distinctive features of the style. Sanhita has established herself in recent years as an exceptionally fluent and lyrical vocalist with



a fine sense of mastery of *vilambit laya* (slow tempo) which distinguishes the Kirana style. Her performance alternates very gracefully between simpler and more complicated pieces in perfect pitch. She has been praised as brilliant exponent on the *aalaap* (slow opening piece of a *raga*) and *sargam taan* (the singing of very rapid melodic improvised combination of notes using vowels or the notes of the *raga* instead of words), which

is the pillar of this *gharana*. Even to those with little listening experience or understanding of this type of music, the beauty of Sanhita's vocal renditions of ragas Shudh Kalyan, a popular, but difficult raga, followed by the late night raga, Bageshree created a mystical atmosphere and pulled one in for a true *bhava-rasa* experience. Her performance commanded a standing ovation followed by an encore, of the beautiful morning raga, Jogia. Sanhita Nandi was trained under the late Pandit A. Kanan of Kirana Gharana and continues her training with Ustad Mashkoor Ali Khan.

Opening the evening was Odissi classical dancer Durga Bor, who has taught dance at Cornell for the past twenty-two years. Durga began her dance training 40 years ago, first at Naropa Institute (now Naropa University) in Boulder, Colorado. She went on to receive a five-year diploma from Triveni Kala Sangam, a school for the visual and performing arts in New Delhi. She learned with leading Odissi gurus including S.N. Jena, Kelucharan Mohapatra and Gangadhar Pradhan, and received two fellowships from the American Institute for Indian Studies, which enabled her to continue dance studies and do research in Bhubaneswar, India. The evening opened with a Mangalacharan to the goddess, or female principal in all her manifestations, followed by an *abhinaya* piece, Sakhi Go, based on a song from the *gotipua** tradition, sung in the Oriya language. She ended her performance with a non-literal, abstract piece, Mokshya, meaning liberation or release.

Odissi evolved out of temple dance from the eastern coastal Indian state of Orissa, and was reconstructed for the modern stage in the middle of the twentieth century. It is among the seven main schools of Indian classical dance and has become popular on a global scale.

This program was cosponsored by the Martin F. Hatch Fund.

*Gotipua are young male dancers, who dress as women, sometimes connected to a temple, but more often as a form of village entertainment and commonly trained by Odissi masters, so that the styles are very similar.



"Strings Attached"

Carnatic Violin and Veena Concert

Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh, a sixth-generation musician, has been captivating audiences around the world for thirty years and is one of the leading veena artists today. She began playing the veena at age three, and is one of the youngest veena artists to receive an A-TOP grading, the highest from All India Radio.

Kumaresh, the husband of Jayanthi, is a performer, composer, and teacher of distinction and the younger of the violin duo Ganesh-Kumaresh, who came to Cornell with Zakir Hussain during his "Masters of Percussion" tour in 2010. Kumaresh was trained by his father Shri T. S. Rajagopalan, a veteran violinist. He was hailed as a child violin prodigy, when he gave his first public performance along with his elder brother in the year 1972, when he was just five years old.

According to Jayanthi, "Strings attached is an expression of our conversation, trying to connect with the audience through our musical exchanges, converging and diverging points, climaxes, beginnings, thoughts most profound and most subtle." They grace the Barnes Hall Auditorium stage on Sunday, October 2, at 8 p.m. The concert is sponsored by the South Asia Program and the Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music among Youths (SPICMACAY), and made possible in part by a grant from Cornell Council for the Arts and the cooperation and support of the Department of Music.

South Asia Development Forum

FALL 2015

In the fall of 2015 the South Asia Program's Development Forum sponsored a presentation by Cornell Natural Resources Associate Professor Karim-Aly Kassam who spoke on "Speaking Truth to Power: The Challenge for Young Development Professionals." Professor Kassam noted both the difficulty and the necessity of development professionals and academic researchers of finding their voice and bringing the truth of what they learn in the field, whether as development actors or researchers, to the attention of decision makers who hold the power to effect change.

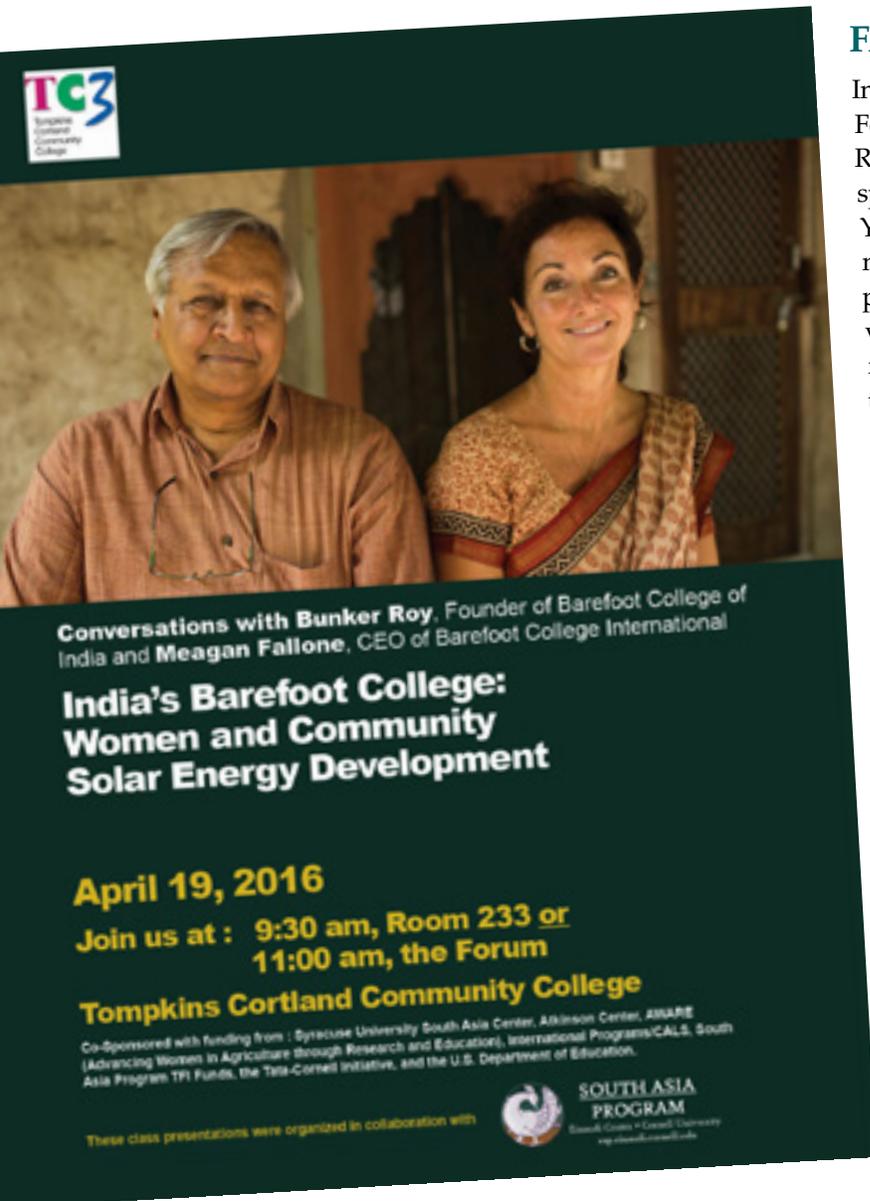
SPRING 2016

In the spring of 2016, the South Asia Program brought Sanjit "Bunker" Roy, founder of the Barefoot College, and Meagan Fallon, CEO of Barefoot College International, to both Tompkins-Cortland Community College and Cornell University campuses for three talks, addressing over a hundred students, faculty and community members. During presentations at both locations, Bunker and Meagan spoke about their "Barefoot Approach" to empowering communities towards self-sufficiency as an approach grounded in the lifestyle and work of Mahatma Gandhi. The Barefoot College, located in Tilonia, Rajasthan, is the only college built by and for the rural poor and has a focus on decentralizing and demystifying technology, placing it in the hands of those most in need.

Among their many initiatives, Barefoot College supports access to light, energy and electricity as a fundamental right. If one has light, children can study, women can cook in safer conditions, people can repair fishing nets, security in streets is better, and

babies can be delivered under the bright glow. The College has successfully trained women from throughout the developing world to be barefoot solar engineers so that they can bring electricity to remote villages. The non-literate and semi-literate village women (ages 35-50) learn how to assemble solar lanterns and entire solar panel systems and how to install and maintain them. The community approach starts with the initial contact with a village which has requested them to visit. In these conversations, before women are even accepted into the training program, the village in which they live must agree to collect the same amount in funds that they would pay each month to purchase their lamp kerosene, flashlight batteries, and candles. They pay this sum on a monthly basis to the trained engineers when they return to the village and after they have installed the solar system. In return, the entire village receives light and they have a trained barefoot engineer who can install, maintain, repair, and even build more systems for neighboring villages.

Principal partners in bringing Bunker and Meagan included: the Cornell University South Asia Program, Syracuse University South Asia Center, Syracuse University Humanities Center, and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Co-sponsors at Cornell University were: the South Asia Program internationalization funding, Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future, AWARE (Advancing Women in Agriculture through Research and Education), International Programs/College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Tata-Cornell Initiative, and the U.S. Department of Education SA National Resource Center grant. 🌱



 Conversations with **Bunker Roy**, Founder of Barefoot College of India and **Meagan Fallon**, CEO of Barefoot College International

**India's Barefoot College:
Women and Community
Solar Energy Development**

April 19, 2016

Join us at : **9:30 am, Room 233 or
11:00 am, the Forum**

Tompkins Cortland Community College

Co-sponsored with funding from : Syracuse University South Asia Center, Atkinson Center, AWARE (Advancing Women in Agriculture through Research and Education), International Programs/CALS, South Asia Program TR Funds, the Tata-Cornell Initiative, and the U.S. Department of Education.

These class presentations were organized in collaboration with

 **SOUTH ASIA PROGRAM**
South Center of Cornell University
www.southcenter.cornell.edu

Seminar Series & Events

Fall 2015 – Spring 2016

9/27 – Fareed Ayaz and Brothers, Qawwali Troupe from Pakistan

9/14 – “Fading Film and the Anthropology of Cinema in South Asia: 35 & 16mm Celluloid in Bangladesh”
Lotte Hoek, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh

9/21 – “Hysteria in India: Histories of Consciousness and Translation”
Sarah Pinto, Department of Anthropology, Tufts University

9/28 – “Sovereignty and the End of Empire: The Transition to Independence in Colonial Hyderabad”
Kavita Datla, Department of History, Mount Holyoke College

10/2 – Tagore Modern Literature Lecture 2015: “Places in My Heart”
Mohammed Hanif, novelist, journalist and playwright

10/5 – “Buddhist Monastic Extremism in Sri Lanka and Burma: Working Towards Education and Reconciliation through Film Making”
Kannan Arunasalam, Award-winning filmmaker

10/15 – “Rati Chakravayuh”
Ashish Avikunthak, Harrington School of Communication and Media, University of Rhode Island

11/2 – “The Emperor of Dhaka: Urdu Healing and Humoral History in Eastern Bengal, 1906-1947”
Andrew Amstutz, Department of History, Cornell University

11/9 – “Trial by Arati: Gogaji’s Muslim, Brahman, and Government Priests”
Carter Higgins, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University

11/16 – “Regional Imperialism in the Post-Colony: The Unfinished Project of Self-determination in South Asia”
Nagesh Rao Department of Philosophy, Colgate University

11/30 – “‘Illegal Bangladeshis’ in a Militarized Assam”
Navine Murshid, Department of Political Science, Colgate University

2/4 – “An Economist in the Real World: The Art of Policymaking in India”
Kaushik Basu, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist at the World Bank, Professor of Economics and C. Marks Professor of International Studies Cornell University

2/29 – “A Long History for a Prophetic Pakistan”
Manan Ahmed Asif, Department of History, Columbia University

3/7 – “Household or State? Debating Sovereignty and Sarkar in Early-Colonial North India”
Nick Abbott, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison

3/14 – “Iron Cage Dreams: Creativity, Ephemerality, and the Politics of Building Construction in India’s National Capital Region”
Namita Dharia, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University

3/16 – “‘Who is This Nazrul?’ Cross-Border Perplexities in the Study of a Bengali Literary-Cultural Hero”
Rachel McDermott, Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures, Barnard College, Columbia University

3/21 – “Temporality, Space and Sexuality in India”
Svati Shah, Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

4/4 – “Talent, Technique, Transformation: Musical Training and the Possibilities of the Self in Liberalizing India”
Anaar Desai-Stephens, Department of Music, Cornell University

4/11 – “Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity and Modernism in India, 1930-1990”
Sonal Khullar, Department of Art, University of Washington

4/18 – “Blindingly Clear: The Fate of Advaita Vedānta in Bhāratīrtha’s Garland of Vyāsa’s Reasons”
Frank Clooney, Department of Theology, Harvard University

4/19 – “South Asia Development Forum: India’s Barefoot College: Women and Community Solar Energy Development”
Sanjit “Bunker” Roy & Meagan Fallone

4/25 – “Of Panopticons, Pannomions, and the Corpo-Real: Bentham, Blasphemy and the Indian Penal Code”
Asad Ahmed, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University

5/2 – “Intimate Rivals: Women’s Labor in a Joint Family Household in Bihar, India”
Hayden Kantor, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University

5/6 – “An Evening of Indian Classical Music and Dance”
Featuring: Sanhita Nandi, Hindustani Vocal and Durga Bor, Odissi Dance

5/5 – “Gujarat/Guatemala: Marketing Care and Speculating Life”
South Asia Program, Cornell University & South Asia Center, Syracuse University, annual symposium

2016 Tagore Lecture

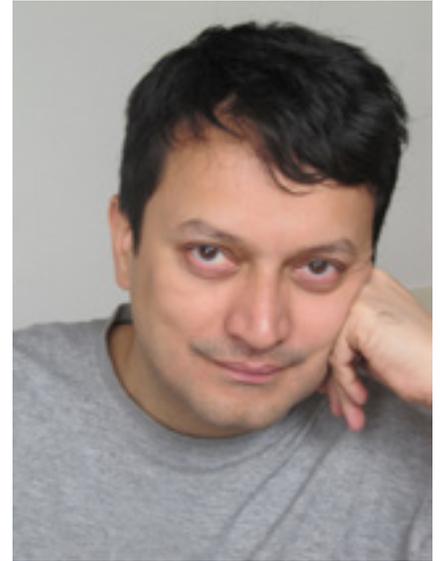
RANJIT HOSKOTE

*“The Soloist Performs
with an Orchestra of Events”*

September 23, 2016, 4:30 pm

A.D. White House

Reception to follow. Free and open to the public



RANJIT HOSKOTE has long been drawn to the form of the concerto, both for its own beauty and elegance, and as a metaphor for his practice as a poet. The poet is a soloist in this metaphor, while the outside world of events provides the orchestra, against and in concert with which the poet must unfold her or his explorations. The relationship between soloist and orchestra embraces a variety of modes: dialogue, contest, divergence, and collaboration.

In this year's Tagore Modern Indian Literature Lecture, Hoskote will address the relationship between contemporary poetry in India and the cultural and political circumstances of its articulation. He will discuss some of the contexts in which he writes his own poetry, including

diaspora, multilingualism, translation, ecological crisis, transcultural encounters, and the rise of illiberal demagoguery. Hoskote will read from his recent poems, which engage with the historic relationship between humankind and the ocean in a time of uncertainty.

The Endowment in Modern Indian Literature was established in 1999 thanks to the generous support of Professor Emeritus Narahari Umanath Prabhu and his wife Mrs. Suman (Sumi) Prabhu. Professor and Mrs. Prabhu sought to honor Rabindranath Tagore, a celebrated author, scholar, educator, musician, and Nobel Prize winner, recognized as one of the great luminaries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

BIOGRAPHY

Ranjit Hoskote (born Bombay, 1969) is a poet, cultural theorist and curator, and the author of 30 books.

Hoskote is a leading poet of his generation from South Asia. Writing in English, he has published five collections of his own work, among them *Vanishing Acts: New & Selected Poems 1985-2005* (2006) and *Central Time* (2014). His poems have been published in numerous anthologies, leading literary journals, and translated into German. Hoskote is deeply interested in a wide range of poetic expression from South Asia and beyond. As a result, he has translated of the poetry of the 14th century Kashmiri mystic Lal Ded, *I, Lalla: The Poems of Lal Ded* (2011) based on 20 years of translation and research, and a critically annotated edition of the work of the 20th century Indian poet, Dom Moraes, *Dom Moraes: Selected Poems* (2012).

Hoskote is the recipient of the Sanskriti Award for Literature, the S. H. Raza Award for Literature, the Sahitya Akademi/National Academy of Letters Golden Jubilee Award for Literature, the Sahitya Akademi Award for Translation, and the MUSE India Award for Translation.

Hoskote is equally accomplished in the domain of the visual arts as curator and cultural theorist. Since 1993, Hoskote has curated or co-curated 30 exhibitions of contemporary art. He was curator of India's first stand-alone national pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2011). He has authored numerous artist monographs, and his essays on art and culture have appeared widely in anthologies and exhibition catalogues. Hoskote is on the advisory boards of numerous international art organizations, and in 2015, served on the Jury of the 56th Venice Biennale, the most prestigious event in the calendar of international contemporary art.



Student Participation in Study Abroad Programs

The Nilgiris Field Learning Center (NFLC) is a unique partnership that aligns Cornell faculty and students with experts and community members in the Nilgiris, the “blue hills” of southern India. The NFLC learning community explores nutrition and health, land use, and livelihoods in a region recognized for its biodiversity. Students develop research skills in a collaborative, field-based environment. Cornell students who participated in NFLC during Spring '16 are: Wynne Hannan '17, Sinan-Saleh Kassam '17, Anastasja Moynihan '18, Jacqueline Sepulveda '17, Rachel Stein '18, and Rabindra Willford '17.

The Intercollegiate Sri Lanka Education (ISLE) Program is a consortium-run study abroad program affiliated with the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka. The semester-long program combines cultural immersion with academic study and research to give students the tools to understand Sri Lanka from a well-rounded perspective.

Above: NFLC students share results of their interactive mapping activity (Credit: Keystone Foundation)

Right: ISLE Program Director and Professor of Sociology Tudor Silva, University of Peradeniya and Professor of Archaeology, D.K. Jayaratne, University of Peradeniya, with Cornell's Rehan Dadi '16 and other ISLE students at the ruins of the royal palace of King Parakramabahu I, Kingdom of Polonnaruwa (1153-1186), during fall 2015 (Credit: Sam King)



Tata-Cornell Agricultural and Nutrition Initiative (TCI) Scholars

TCI Scholars include Cornell graduate students or Indian university graduate students who are in progress towards a Ph.D, Masters, or equivalent degree, who are actively engaged in research aligning with TCI's key research priorities.

Amit Anshumali

Ph.D. candidate, Development Sociology

Amit is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Development Sociology. Amit's work focuses on the connections between seasonal labor migration and local economic development in central India, spanning the fields of rural sociology, development economics and anthropology of labor.

Phil Frost

Ph.D. student, Crop and Soil Sciences
Phil's research lies in the field of Soil Health and the development of an appropriate Soil Health Assessment Framework for Indian agriculture. With soil health, as in all agriculture, measurement precedes effective management. He will be working in collaboration with Indian entities such as PRADAN in Jharkhand province.

Soumya Gupta

Ph.D. candidate, Applied Economics and Management

Soumya is a current PhD candidate in the field of Applied Economics and Management here at Cornell. Her research focuses on agriculture-nutrition linkages in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, India. Soumya is interested in studying how women's empowerment and participation in agriculture differs across farming systems and how participation in farm and non-farm employment may affect iron deficiency status.

Kathryn Merckel

Ph.D. student, Nutritional Sciences

Katy is a first year PhD student in the field of International Nutrition. She is interested in studying maternal and child nutrition in India, particularly the ways in which education and empowerment influence the consumption patterns of mothers and

their families. Katy has been involved with TCI in several capacities over the past two years, first as a summer intern, and then as a Research Support Specialist.

Vidya Bharathi Rajkumar

Ph.D. student, Applied Economics and Management

Vidya is a first year Ph.D student in the field of Applied Economics and Management. Vidya's research interests lie in the field of Development Economics and Public Policy. Prior to joining Cornell, Vidya worked with a team of economists on a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) in Chennai, India, aimed at understanding the impact of chronic physical pain on productivity and cognitive function.

Tanvi Rao

Ph.D. candidate, Applied Economics and Management

Tanvi Rao is a fourth year PhD candidate at Cornell University in the Applied Economics and Management (AEM) department. Her primary research interests are in the field of development economics and applied econometrics. For her dissertation and as a TCI Scholar, she is studying the demand for different types of higher (post-secondary) education in India.

Payal Seth

Ph.D. student, Applied Economics and Management

Payal is a first year Ph.D student in the field of Applied Economics and Management. Her interests include the economics of micronutrient malnutrition, agricultural markets and institutions, and econometrics. For her research, she plans to use sophisticated econometric techniques to explain facets of health and agricultural economics.

Anthony Wenndt

Ph.D. student, Plant Pathology
Anthony is a first year Ph.D. student in the field of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology. Anthony plans to engage with smallholders in India to characterize the extent of mycotoxin contamination in village-level food systems, and to develop context-specific survey methodologies for sustainable, scalable mycotoxin management.

Shiuli Vanaja

Ph.D. student, Applied Economics and Management

Shiuli is a second year Ph.D student in the field of Applied Economics and Management. Her research interests lie in the field of development economics and resource economics. She is interested in exploring the linkages between nutrition and poverty in a backward but natural resource-rich region of India.

Vidya Vemireddy

Ph.D. student, Applied Economics and Management

Vidya is a second year Ph.D student in the field of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell's Dyson School. Vidya is interested in Development Economics and, in particular, exploring the linkages between agriculture and development.

Maureen Valentine

Ph.D. candidate, Animal Science

Maureen Valentine is a second year Ph.D student in the department of Animal Science who is continuing as a TCI scholar after completing her Masters degree with the program. Dairy products are a critical source of income for small farmers and high quality nutrition for the Indian population. Maureen plans to work with women's dairy cooperatives to research how livestock feeding and nutrition could be improved.

T R A N S I T I O N S

Mary Katzenstein, former interim director of the South Asia Program (1994-95) and SAP faculty member, retired at the end of last academic year. However, Uday Mehta, distinguished professor of political science, and renowned political theorist at the City University of New York, noted that Katzenstein is not really retiring, because “it is impossible to retire from a life lived with scrupulous integrity, unstinting generosity and a brilliant mind that takes its cue from an ethical compass.” A professor in the Department of Government and the Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, Katzenstein was the first Stephen and Evalyn Milman Professor of American Studies. In a note read at the May 22 event, the Milmans described Katzenstein as a “first-rate scholar and a wonderful teacher.” Gretchen Ritter, the Harold Tanner Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, noted that she has known Katzenstein since she was a student at Cornell. “She was a very popular teacher, and I had to fight to get into her class,” Ritter recalled, adding, “one of the things I really admire and respect about Mary is she cares about things ... in a way that is really rooted in her deep sense of humanity. She is the kind of person who points out uncomfortable social issues in ways that people can hear them. She is, as she has been since I was a teenager, a role model for me.”



Katzenstein’s forty years of leadership, teaching and scholarship at Cornell were honored last spring at the A.D. White House. She was feted with speeches and gifts commemorating her leadership in the Cornell Prison Education Program (CPEP). Katzenstein was instrumental in securing funding and support to expand CPEP. The program now leads to an associate’s degree from Cayuga Community College. In recognition of her leadership, David Roth, supervisor of volunteer services at Auburn Correctional Facility, presented Katzenstein with a prison-made license plate bearing the word “volunteer” and a knitted gift from the Auburn knitting group Katzenstein co-founded.

“Every group initiative to create change in a difficult environment like Auburn Prison needs a person like Mary Katzenstein,” said Rob Scott, CPEP executive director. And a man who studied with CPEP while in prison recalled, “...the sight of this tiny woman crossing an exercise yard full of prisoners and braving the risk to teach us and bring us hope. I wish to thank Professor K on behalf of all those men you believed in and for possessing the courage to act upon those beliefs.”

Katzenstein’s prison research took her to India in 2012, where she visited Puzhal Prison north of Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu. There she observed a more humanitarian approach to incarceration than one would find in most Indian and American prisons, but still needed reform, particularly the problem of under-trials, that is prisoners languishing behind bars without charges or court trial. Another problem she observed was class or caste separation which she describes as “a holdover from colonial days” (SAP Newsletter, Summer/Spring, 2012, pg. 8, “A visit to Puzhal Prison”).

Katzenstein’s many accomplishments include seven books, thirty-nine articles and many awards, including three mentoring awards. She has written on feminist activism, politics and prisons cross-nationally, focusing particularly on the United States, Europe, and India. She is co-editor and author, along with Raka Ray, of *Social Movements in India: Poverty, Power and Politics* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2005). She has two other books which focus on South Asia, namely, *India’s Preferential Policies: Migrants, the Middle Classes and Ethnic Equality*, co-authored with Myron Weiner, (Chicago University Press, 1981) and *Ethnicity and Equality: The Shiv Sena Party and Preferential Policies in Bombay*, (Cornell University Press, 1979).

The South Asia Program wishes Mary Katzenstein an active and fulfilling retirement.

Excerpted in part from <http://news.cornell.edu/stories/2015/04/mary-katzenstein-honored-prison-education-program> by Linda B. Glaser.

Congratulations

Three Students Receive Fulbright Awards

Three Cornell students received Fulbright U.S. Student Awards to travel to South Asia to conduct research or teach English abroad in 2016-17, according to the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, which administers the program at Cornell. "Over the years, Cornell has consistently been recognized by the Institute of International Education as a top producer of Fulbright U.S. Student Program awards," says Gilbert Levine, Fulbright adviser and Cornell Professor Emeritus of biological and environmental engineering. "The continuing success of Cornell students in this increasingly competitive program is a source of pride for all of us associated with the program, and for the university more broadly. We congratulate all of our Fulbright recipients."



VINCENT BURGESS, a graduate student in the Department of Asian Studies will travel to India for his research project, "Renunciation and Environmentalism Amongst the Bishnoi of North India."



CATHERINE KLAPHEKE '15, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, will travel to Nepal to pursue an English teaching assistantship.



SADIA SHIRAZI, a graduate student in the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, will travel to India to continue her research on "History of Abstraction in Post-independence India."

Milestones and Language Instruction

Jervina Korkoya '16 teaching English to underprivileged children in Varanasi, India as part of Sujata Singh's Hindi Service Learning Winter Course.



Recently Graduated Students

Undergraduate and Graduate Students who Minored or Concentrated In South Asian Studies

Rishad Choudhury, PhD, History,
“The Hajj from India in an Age of
Imperial Transitions, 1707-1820”

Emme Edmunds, PhD, Development
Sociology, “Gender, Sexuality and the
Paradoxes of Taboo in Middle Class
Delhi, India”

Triveni Gandhi, PhD, Government,
“Layers of Subordination: An
Intersectional Approach to
Affirmative Action in Rural India”

Soumya Gupta, PhD, Applied
Economics and Management, “Three
Essays on Agriculture- Nutrition
Linkages: Women’s Iron Status and
Empowerment In Agriculture in
Chandrapur, India”

Carter Higgins, PhD, Asian
Religions, “Sainly Investments:
Pilgrimage Development and
Contemporary Hinduism in India”

Hayden Kantor, PhD, Anthropology,
“‘We Earn Less Than We Eat:’ Food,
Farming and the Caring Family in
Bihar, India”

Nidhi Mahajan, PhD, Anthropology,
“Moorings: Indian Ocean Trade and
the State in East Africa”

Linda Heimisdottir, PhD, Linguistics,
“The Phonology of Aspiration
in Icelandic: A Gesture-Based
Approach” with a concentration in
Bengali

Manasicha Akepiyapornchai, MA,
Asian Studies, “Vedāntadeśika’s
Interpretation of Rāmānuja’s Prapatti:
A Study Based on the Nikṣeparakṣā”

Chantal Croteau, MA, Asian Studies,
“Competing Modes of Remembrance:
Tsunami Commemoration in
Takuapa, Thailand”

Anna Brown, BS, Natural Resources

Rehan Dadi, BS, Development
Sociology

Zachary Pardes, BS, Nutritional
Sciences

Grace Robbins, AB, Feminist,
Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Ankur Srivastava, AB, Biology and
Society

Rachel Sullivan, BS, Agricultural
Sciences

Mahrusah Zahin, BS, Industrial and
Labor Relations

Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship Recipients

STEPHANIE COKER

Degree: Masters of Public
Administration
Language: Nepali
Research Interests: Implementation
and impact evaluation of private-
public partnerships at the
international level

KAITLIN EMMANUEL

Degree: MA, Asian Studies
Language: Tamil
Research Interests: Modern and
contemporary art from South Asia

AUSTIN LORD

Degree: PhD, Anthropology
Language: Nepali
Research Interests: Migration,
mobility, and hydropower in Nepal

KATHRYN MERCKEL

Degree: PhD, International Nutrition
Language: Hindi
Research Interests: Women’s
empowerment’s effect on nutrition
and the reduction of gender-based
discrimination within families

JENNIFER NERBY

Degree: Masters of Public
Administration
Language: Nepali
Research Interests: Disaster
Management

NILS SEILER

Degree: MA, Asian Studies
Language: Tamil
Research Interests: Indian intellectual
history, especially indigenous
standards of critical reflection

JACOB STOCK

Degree: Masters of Regional Planning
Language: Hindi
Research Interests: Nexus of
ecological and social engineering in
Indus Basin city planning

KELSEY UTNE

Degree: PhD, History
Language: Hindi
Research Interests: Commemoration
and public history in Modern South
Asia

Lucinda Ramberg's Book Wins Multiple Prizes

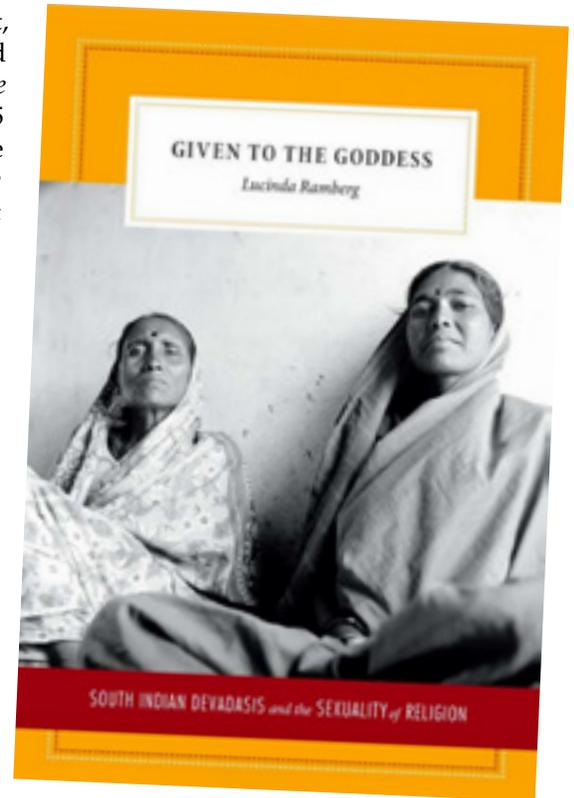
Lucinda Ramberg, Assistant Professor in Anthropology and Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies has published a book that has received multiple prizes. *Given to the Goddess: South Indian Devadasis and the Sexuality of Religion* (Duke University Press, 2014) has been awarded the 2015 Clifford Geertz Prize for best book in the anthropology of religion from the Society for the Anthropology of Religion, the first Michelle Rosaldo Prize for the best first book in feminist anthropology from the Association for Feminist Anthropology, the 2015 Ruth Benedict prize for outstanding monograph from the Association for Queer Anthropology, and honorable mention for the 2016 Bernard S. Cohn prize for the best first book in South Asia Studies from Association for Asian Studies. In the journal *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, anthropologist Cecilia Van Hollen writes, "[t]his book is a beautifully written and theoretically engaged ethnography about a community whose past has been fraught and whose future lies in the balance. . . . [it] makes an important contribution to the anthropology of gender, sexuality, kinship, religion, and modernity in India."

Based on two years of ethnographic research in Karnataka, this book takes the ongoing practice of *devadasi* dedication (conducted as a rite of marriage) and its reform to consider two broad questions: Whose practices and which ways of talking to god can count as religion? Who and what are sex and marriage for? The *devadasi* has been a key figure in critical histories of "the woman question" in relation to imperial rule, national formation, and caste politics in India. Her reformulation in the colonial period as a prostitute and exile from the temple has been understood to effect the purification of womanhood, caste and Hinduism. This ethnographic treatment of contemporary *devadasis* draws on these histories in order to specify the continuities between colonial and postcolonial projects of sexual regulation, caste distinction and modern subject formation. Within these histories, however, the religiosity of dedicated women has often been left to stand as superstition or as aestheticized ritual performance. *Given to the Goddess* departs from these histories in order to treat *devadasi* religiosity itself as a field of cultural production, a practice of worldmaking. This argument marks an intervention in devadasi studies and more broadly, in the secular character of much feminist theorizing in or about the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere. In Ramberg's words:

Making gender, securing wealth, reproduction over time—these effects of marriage have long been recognized by feminist anthropologists. The making and unmaking of persons through kin relations with gods and spirits, however, is not easily admitted into the house of anthropology. . . . anthropology tends to position the social as prior to the gods. People might make cultural meanings *through* gods, as products of human activity, symbolization, and consciousness. They do not, however, make culture (kin or words) *with* the gods, according to secular conceptions of religion and the human being (213-214).

Families give their children to the goddess to resolve the trouble (*kadaata*) she can send. These three terms—gods, gifts, trouble—frame the organization of Ramberg's book in three parts. The first section takes up the provocation that we do not have to "believe" in gods and spirits to see that they are alive and well in South Asia. In many accounts of Karnataka devadasis (or *jogatis* as they often call themselves in this region), an idolatrous, irrational religiosity is at the root of the persistent practice of dedicating daughters. These accounts frame peasant consciousness as mired in superstition from which it must be extricated in order to emerge into the promises of modernity. *Given to the Goddess* addresses a lacuna in South Asian Studies by refusing to relegate *devadasis* and the gods who animate their life world to a time before and space apart. Ramberg situates *devadasis* as producers of knowledge and culture and documents the worldmaking work they do in the way they tell and retell the history of their goddess, explain and perform forms of *puja* or worship, enter possession state, deliver oracles and comment on relations among human beings and between humans and deities.

The Ruth Benedict prize committee wrote: "*Given to the Goddess* is that rare book that fundamentally challenges our thinking across a range of disciplines, including anthropology, feminist and queer studies, South Asian studies, and religious studies. Concerning the lives and histories of jogatis, or people who consider themselves married to a goddess, this exceptional monograph asks provocative questions about the sexuality of religion, the mobility of queer theory, and the feminist politics of stigma. Vivid and compelling, *Given to the Goddess* is an example of extraordinary ethnographic writing and of the queering of queer anthropology itself." 🌿



Tamil Studies Initiative

Representing Conflict Through Visual Media: Sri Lanka & the Sri Lankan Diaspora in Photography & Film course

by Kaitlin Emmanuel, MA, *Asian Studies*, '17

As opportunities to study Tamil in the U.S. become increasingly limited due to low enrollment numbers, the Tamil Studies Initiative at Cornell is a critical and welcome resource. My research in particular relies heavily on the program given my interest in Tamil visual and literary movements that took place in Sri Lanka during the twentieth century. The program allows me to expand my ability to conduct fieldwork and archival research, but my interest in the language is also personal—I come from a large Sri Lankan Tamil family, but I never learned the language as a child. Though I feel most at home when I'm surrounded by Tamil language, food, friends and family, my inability to speak or understand Tamil always felt like a personal barrier to understanding my own identity and heritage.



Cornell is located at the crux of Sri Lankan studies: in addition to its commitment to Tamil studies, it is also the only university in the United States that teaches Sinhala. As a result, I began my program surrounded by peers with similar connections to Sri Lanka, both at a personal and professional level. Last fall, a concentrated group of us came together to take the Tamil Studies Initiative course *Representing Conflict Through Visual Media: Sri Lanka & the Sri Lankan Diaspora in Photography & Film*. The course was taught by visiting scholar and Sri Lankan filmmaker Kannan Arunasalam, whose work deals with identity politics within the Sri Lankan diaspora, specifically in relation to the country's 26-year civil war. Arunasalam approached the history of the war by looking at the conflicting narratives portrayed through documentary and feature films, photography, multimedia and narrative journalism. Each of us began the course with our own understanding of Sri Lanka's history with ethnic violence, which was constantly challenged and expanded upon due to our own conflicting accounts and perspectives.

For me, the course was an opportunity to trace and better understand my family's history of displacement from Jaffna during the war. As part of my final project, I filmed and conducted an interview with a close cousin who left Sri Lanka as a refugee. Though I had discussed her history with the war earlier, the interview allowed me reflect on themes of citizenship, belonging and community in a new light. The interview helped me better understand the complexity and entanglements embedded within Tamil identity and politics. The project jumpstarted my research into narratives of Tamil identity and nationalism during the twentieth century, on which I will continue to work on this summer in Sri Lanka.

I am grateful to Cornell and the South Asia Program for its dedication to Tamil studies and language, which has allowed me to fuse my academic and personal interests in such a meaningful way. I look forward to seeing the Tamil Studies Initiative expand and I hope more students can take advantage of the resources to generate new scholarship, questions and conversations. 🌿

Support for Faculty Initiatives

The South Asia Program supported several initiatives to promote faculty teaching and research.

K.V. Raman, International Adjunct Professor; Associate Director (Special Projects), received support to cover the partial expenses towards leading the IARD 402/602 (India module), a course he led this year to India with 25 Cornell students. Students from across Cornell were represented including CALS, Arts & Sciences, Vet School, Human Ecology, and the newly-formed Business School.

Andrew Willford made a two week visit in February/March 2016 teaching Cornell and Keystone students within the Nilgiris Field Learning Center spring semester. During this period, an MOU was also established between The Banyan, a health-oriented NGO based in Chennai (which also serves as a southern campus for the Tata Institute for Social Sciences [TISS]) and the Keystone Foundation in Kotagiri.

A curriculum development grant was awarded to Sujata Singh to work on developing Hindi-Urdu materials for intermediate and advanced Hindi students. Topics include cleaning up of the Ganges River, demolishing of historic buildings for commercial and tourism development, and the co-existence of westerners and locals in Banaras.

Anne Blackburn received a grant in support towards her research in Sri Lanka and Thailand towards her current book project, *Making Buddhist Kingdoms Across the Indian Ocean, 1200-1500*.

Satya Mohanty received a grant in support of a trip to Bhubaneswar, India, and the final trip needed to complete the English translation of the 16th century manuscript *Odia Lakshmi Purana*, an anti-caste and feminist text that is still read by Odia women during the ritual harvest season in November.

Mary Woods received a publications grant in order to support the reproduction of color images in her forthcoming book, *Women Architects in India: Histories of Practice in Mumbai and Delhi*.

VISITING SCHOLARS 2015-16

ABDUL WAHEED SHAIKH

Officer of Pakistan Administrative Services

My goal during my fellowship program is to strengthen my management capacity to develop a strong extension service in the province of Sindh. I would especially like to work in the field, regarding farm level value addition as a tool to eradicate rural poverty. In this regard, I have identified three areas.

1. Government friendly policies, to develop farm level value addition.
2. Developing an agriculture extension manual for farm level value addition.
3. Strengthen institutional capacity of extension services.



HALIMA ABDUL HOSSAIN

Faculty and Curriculum Developer at National Agriculture Education College (NAEC). Founder and Board Member of Mehrgan Women Association, Afghanistan

I would like to do research about women's role in sustainable agriculture in Afghanistan and to enhance my knowledge and technical skills about organic farming, food quality and safety management, project management, GIS and sustainable agriculture. I hope to establish an affiliation program and working relationship between my organization "Mehrgan Women Organization" and American organizations active in agriculture and women in business. This will enable American friends to experience cross cultural exchanges that will familiarize them with the situation in Afghanistan. Hopefully, the affiliation and working relationship will allow both sides to establish long-term partnership and sustained relationship.



NOSHEEN FAZAL

Deputy Director for the Environment, Punjab Irrigation and Drainage Authority, Pakistan

I plan to learn from water management organizations about regulation, conservation and pollution prevention of water resources. I would like to work with government organizations, like EPA, as well as international donor agencies like the World Bank, so that I may learn about opportunities for project funding in research and development.

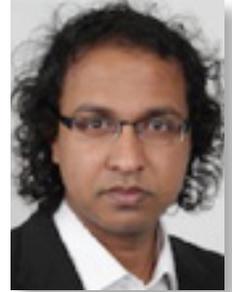


SHAHADAT HOSSAIN

Visiting Assistant Professor
City and Regional Planning

Shahadat Hossain's research and teaching examine power and politics in planning and urban citizenship practices in the Global South. More specifically, he is interested in urban informality, urban poverty, inequality, spatial (in)justice, and ethnographic approaches to urban (planning) research. His research explores the relations between citizenship claims and regulations, the translation of (western) planning ideals into planning institutions and practices in the South, and the global/local contestations that now define our cities. Within the past eight years, Hossain has completed several research projects in Tanzania, Ghana, and Bangladesh, and cooperated with a large body of researchers from Europe, Africa, and Asia. He has taught in several universities in Germany, Iraq, and Bangladesh. He also worked in development organization and in planning consultancy.

Hossain received a B.A. in urban and regional planning from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (2003), a M.A. in development management from the Ruhr University Bochum (2006), and a Ph.D. in spatial planning from the University of Technology Dortmund (2012).

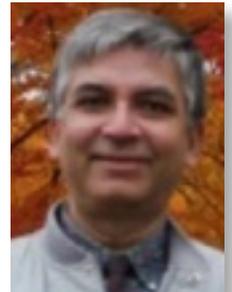


ARKADEV CHATTERJEA

Visiting Fellow
Industrial Labor Relations

Arka Chatterjea works primarily in the fields of economics of higher education and financial economics. He earned his M.A.-Ph.D. (Economics) from Cornell. He was a professor at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, and he has held full-time professorial positions at CU Boulder, IU Bloomington, and UNC Chapel Hill. In addition, he was a short-term visitor at the Helsinki School, Hong Kong UST, and IIM Ahmedabad, and he is a Research Fellow at UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School.

Arka has authored or co-authored research articles in international journals, a textbook on derivatives & risk management, and op-ed pieces in major newspapers. Arka is working on a book on challenges and issues facing Indian higher education. His earlier work on the topic led to two articles that were published in *The Oxford Companion to Economics in India* (2007 & 2012).



IMAGES CREDITS

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Museum of Art, Cornell University

Front Cover:

Pakistan or Afghanistan, Gandhara
Standing Bodhisattva

3rd century

Gray schist

Collection of the Herbert F. Johnson
Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and
Mrs. N. Battle Hales

Back Cover:

Charles T. Scowen
Giant Bamboo, Ceylon

ca. 1880s

Albumen Print

Collection of the Herbert F. Johnson
Museum of Art. Gift, by exchange,
of Arthur Penn, Class of 1956, and
Marilyn Penn; Christopher Elliman;
David Elliman; and Andrea Branch

The South Asia Program (SAP) is an interdisciplinary hub for Cornell students, faculty, staff, community members, and academic visitors. It coordinates teaching, research, and campus activities concerning the area comprising the nations of the Indian subcontinent – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan – together with the Maldives and Sri Lanka. The South Asia Program maintains distinctive strengths in areas of humanities, is well known for social, scientific, and applied research on South Asia, and for dedicated expertise in the languages and cultures of Nepal and Sri Lanka.

With the Department of Asian Studies, SAP is committed to teaching a number of modern and classical South Asian languages, including Bengali, Hindi, Nepali, Sanskrit, Sinhala, Pali, Prakrit, Punjabi, Tamil, and Urdu – Persian is taught in Near Eastern Studies. Our special resources include a library collection of more than 448,668 printed monographs and 9,859 serial titles in hard copy, faculty in 28 disciplines teaching 88 area studies courses and eight language lecturers teaching 55 language courses at levels from beginning to advanced, and extensive outreach materials including films, web-based curricula, and hands-on teaching aids.

SAP sponsors a weekly seminar series with presentations by local, national, and international scholars. It organizes an annual conference, and co-sponsors other workshops and conferences organized by Cornell faculty and students. It collaborates with student organizations on campus to bring South Asian cultural and performance events to campus on a regular basis, enriching Cornell and the surrounding communities. SAP also has a significant outreach program which makes training on South Asia available to educators from K-12, community college, and schools of education.

Since 1983, Cornell has been in collaboration with Syracuse University as a National Resource Center for South Asia, one of only eight nationally, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. SAP facilitates summer intensive language opportunities for students from Cornell and other universities on the Cornell campus, at the South Asia Summer Language Institute held at University of Wisconsin-Madison, and at the American Association for Indian Studies language courses held in India. The program nurtures Cornell Abroad's opportunities in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

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DENDROCALAMUS GIGANTEUS,
GIANT BAMBOO IN THE PERADENYA GARDENS,
SHOWING THE YOUNG SHOOTS AND A
SECTION OF ONE. SCOWEN & Co. CEYLON.