



# South Asia

## Newsletter

A Publication of Cornell University's South Asia Program

Spring 2003

### ***SRI LANKA: Dynamics of Violence, Challenges of Peace*** by Cynthia Caron

To mark the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the cease-fire agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a conference was held on February 7 & 8. The conference organizers and *lines* (an online editorial collective; [www.lines-magazine.org](http://www.lines-magazine.org)) brought together U.S.-based and international scholars and activists to discuss the dynamics of the peace process and what, if any, realized outcomes had been achieved since February 2002.

Dr. Arjuna Parakrama of Colombo's Center for Policy Alternatives delivered a keynote address entitled, "Accounting for Peace as Violence by Another Name: Heretical Thoughts from the Margins of the Sri Lankan Ethnic Conflict." Dr. Parakrama, a grassroots activist who works in the border zone villages of the North and East, passionately presented a series of observations on the peace process and its realization 'on the ground'. He provided a chilling account of how there has been a ninefold increase of child abductions and disappearances for LTTE conscription since the signing of the MOU, threats to civilian populations if they reported cease-fire-related indiscretions to the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), and the overall reduction of peace talks to a dialogue between the two perpetrators (the Government and LTTE).<sup>1</sup> The opinions and experiences of civilian populations and many civil-society organizations appear seemingly irrelevant within the negotiations' current political climate. If this is what peace looks like, Dr. Parakrama asked, is this not just violence by another name? Dr. Parakrama, also a well known poet, ended his talk with lyrical prose in which he stated that 'this peace is killing me' closing with the fact that he was going to take a short break from the pursuit of peace.

The conference's first session featured papers on issues of Sinhalese, Muslim and Tamil identity and cleavages within these three communities. Dr. Chandra R. de Silva, Professor of History at Old Dominion University, sent a paper that illuminated internal differentiation within the Buddhist monastic or *bhikku* community. His paper, "Categories, Identity and Difference: Buddhist Monks (bhikkus) and Peace in Lanka," made three salient points. First it highlighted differentiation within the Buddhist *sangha* itself and how differences between Sri Lanka's three major monastic orders influenced their support for the peace process. Second it made a

distinction between the concept of a single state in Sri Lanka and the idea of a unitary or single Sri Lanka. For the devolution proposal to go forward (devolution of powers to Tamil-dominated areas), the idea of a united Sri Lanka needs to be separated from the idea of a unitary state in Sri Lanka. Finally, his paper illustrated how monastic education might be improved in order to create a more stable environment for peace. The present monastic syllabus does not include any instruction on the history, religion, and culture of Sri Lanka's minority communities (i.e., Hindu, Muslim, and Christian). Drawing on the adage 'we are what we know', the paper

concluded that to overcome the idea that non-Buddhist traditions were a threat to a united Sri Lanka, the *pirivena* or monastic curriculum should include information about the island's other minority communities. In so doing, young monks would have a broader education and knowledge base upon which they could make better-informed decisions about their role in sustaining the peace process.

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict is often portrayed as a conflict between Tamil-Hindus and Sinhala-



*Seyed Bazeer, Patricia Lawrence, and Arjuna Parakrama*

Buddhists. Attorney-at-Law, Mr. Seyed M.M. Bazeer of London's Sri Lankan Muslim Information Center contributed much-needed insight into the plight of Sri Lanka's Muslim population. Sri Lankan Muslims, as Tamil speakers, historically have been considered as part of an undifferentiated Tamil community. Mr. Bazeer illustrated how over the past 20 years the Muslim community's aspirations and culture have not been fully recognized by the LTTE leadership or by the central government. One turning point in Muslim-LTTE relations occurred in 1990 when the LTTE leadership expelled the entire Muslim population from the Jaffna peninsula, violating the Badiudin-Kittu (Muslim-Tamil) Accord of 1988. Mr. Bazeer asserted that Sri Lankan Muslims need to be recognized and treated as a distinct ethnic group within a larger Tamil-speaking nationality. He also cautioned that the Sri Lankan Muslim population itself is not homogenous and that different regional constituencies have distinct needs. For example, the expulsion of northern Muslims demands a safe repatriation option for them. Muslims residing in the Eastern Provinces have been expropriated from much of their land. Land reform and a decolonization process are essential in the Eastern Province. Negotiations should include a broad range of nonpolitical Muslim organizations and religious institutions in

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## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

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Dear Friends and Colleagues of the South Asia Program,

As the snow melts and as it becomes possible at last to don the South Asian colors and fabrics that winter had consigned to dark cupboards, the South Asia Program at Cornell too joins in the cheer by supporting a host of cultural activities. Some of these will be over with by the time this newsletter actually gets into print. And we hope that many of you will have had a chance to watch, listen and participate in the high and popular culture that various groups on and outside campus will have brought to us. In particular, I hope at least some of you will have watched the Bharat Natyam performance by Alarmel Valli on the first of April. Alarmel Valli is probably the leading exponent of Bharat Natyam today and I can tell you from my experience how difficult it is to get a ticket for her performances in India and how exhilarating it is when one does actually manage to do so. I last saw her dance at the Siri Fort auditorium in Delhi a few years ago and it was one of the few times when I forgot my usual awkwardness and pushed, jostled and cajoled to get a good seat. So I would like to thank SPICMACAY in advance for bringing her and her troupe to Cornell. Indeed, I think those interested in South Asian culture owe a special and ongoing debt to SPICMACAY for introducing students all over the world to the exquisite pleasures of the classical arts of India.

Student groups on campus have been busy with their own enthusiastic shows as well and Cornell Bhangra in particular is now so mainstream that it seems presumptuous to claim it in a newsletter devoted to South Asian activities. The Sitara show on 29 March had a large and appreciative audience. All in all, a good celebration of spring and the hopes it brings.

Spring may be here, but these continue to be difficult times politically and the South Asia Program is therefore pleased to be able to continue its academic program to reflect on some of these political matters. The seminar series on 'Social Activism and Policy in South Asia' has been drawing large audiences and we now have more interesting speakers than seminar slots. Moreover, in addition to looking out for interesting potential speakers who might be in or passing through the Northeast, we have been able to tap the talents and expertise of our own graduate students. Until I took over the Directorship of the Program, I had no idea that there were all these students on campus doing such formidable work on the social and political issues of a region

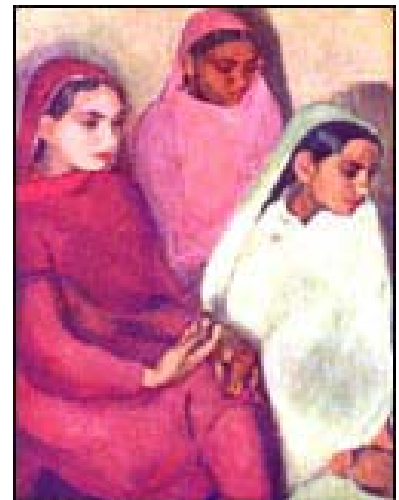
that is suddenly no longer of purely academic interest. This is one trend we shall certainly keep up; by inviting more of our own students and faculty to speak, we will also get around the winter travel problem that can make some of our lectures in December and January (and even February and March) so uncertain.

Finally, a word to our undergraduate community. I would like so much to be able to draw more undergraduates into our activities; I know they have the great physical energy to put up these wonderful cultural and social events. What I would love is more undergraduate energy going into some of our academic activities as well. For a start, I would like to publicize one of the most attractive ways of becoming addicted to South Asia – the Cornell Abroad Program. I have recently been hearing more about the Cornell Abroad Program in Nepal and everything I hear makes me wish I could be a young Cornellian today. I would certainly have jumped at the chance to go to Nepal for a semester, to study with the local students, be taught by local experts, do a Nepal centered research paper; and to do all this with the comfort and backing of Cornell's own supportive services to run to for any kind of help, curricular or extracurricular. I would urge even mildly curious undergraduates to give some thought to spending a semester in a country in South Asia – I know from people who have done this that the experience can be a turning point in your life.

But to get that first touch of mild curiosity, I would like to invite more undergraduates to come to our academic and cultural activities on campus. Think also about taking one of the several South Asia related courses being offered every semester. I know there is already too much on your plates, but at least look at us before declining our helpings.

Sincerely,

Alaka M. Basu



*Painting by Amrita Sher Gill*

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## OUTREACH/SEMINARS

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### *International Studies Summer Institute, 2003, Coming Soon!*

Presently, the outreach coordinators of the area studies programs at Cornell are developing this summer's International Studies Summer Institute for secondary and post-secondary educators. Working on a theme, "Cultures in Transition" past attendees of the ISSI are being polled to identify a specific topic which would encompass the most regions of the world and be most applicable to their instruction. Suggested topics so far have included: the impact of globalization on local cultures; war and terrorism; and the politics of economics or the economics of politics. We are suggesting the date of June 30, 2003 for the ISSI. This is expected to be a full day of presentations by members of the Institute for European Studies, the Latin American Studies Program, and the East, South and Southeast Asia Programs with significant time devoted to general discussion and sharing of past practices.

A full description of the program, registration form and associated information will be available soon on our website, <http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/southasia/outreach.html>

Please contact Anne Stengle for further information, [amp18@cornell.edu](mailto:amp18@cornell.edu) or (607) 255-8493.



**South Asia Program, Cornell University**  
**Seminar Series: Spring 2003**  
**URIS HALL ROOM G-08 12:15 p.m.**  
**SOCIAL ACTIVISM AND POLICY IN SOUTH ASIA**

As state-civil society relations come under closer scrutiny worldwide, South Asia has become an exciting and significant arena of action for all kinds of social activists to influence state policy. A growing public sphere today sees decision makers, citizens, the media and interest groups engaging on a range of issues: human rights, the environment, gender. Ethnic assertion and the search in critical regions for negotiated peace between governments and insurgent groups also often hinge on non-state actors in South Asia today. The relationship of scientific or technical expertise to the evolution of policy has also been the subject of intense debate in the region.

The South Asia Program at Cornell University is organizing a series of talks in this area by scholars actively involved in researching these issues. The Program invites you to these talks and to engage with these speakers.

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| Monday, February 10 | Mahesh Rangarajan, Visiting Professor, Cornell University, <i>Battles over Nature: Citizen Activism and Wildlife Conservation in Contemporary India</i>  |
| Monday, February 17 | Anuradha Chakravarty, Cornell University, Ph.D. Candidate, <i>The Naga Ho-Ho: Civil Society Networks, Armed Insurgency and Reconciliation</i>  |
| Monday, February 24 | Dia Mohan, Ph.D. Candidate, Cornell University, <i>The 'Theatre of the Oppressed' in a Communist State: Jana Sanskriti in West Bengal, India</i>   |
| Monday, March 3:    | Saadia Toor, Cornell University: <i>The Left in Pakistan: A History and the Prospects for Future Activism</i>  |
| Monday, March 24:   | Dr. Gregory L. Possehl, Professor of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia: <i>Transformation of the Indus Civilization: What Happened at Mohenjodaro?</i>  |
| Monday, March 31:   | Michele Gamburd, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Portland State University, Oregon: <i>Family Feuds and Affiliation in Sri Lanka</i>  |
| Friday, April 4:    | Salima Hashmi, Dean of the School of Visual Arts, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, Pakistan, and Shoaib Hashmi, Professor Economics (ret.) Government College, Lahore, Pakistan: <i>Social Comment and Protest: the Visual and Performing Arts in Pakistan, 1970 - today</i> |
| Monday, April 7:    | Robert Barnett, Lecturer in Modern Tibetan Studies and International Affairs, Columbia University: <i>Street Resistance and Party Cadres: Women's Activism in Tibet 1987-1996</i> co-sponsored with the East Asia Program  |
| Tuesday, April 8:   | Ashutosh Varshney, University of Michigan: <i>Civil Society and Hindu-Muslim Riots</i><br>co-sponsored with the Department of Government   |
| Monday, April 14:   | Prachi Deshpande, Colorado State University: <i>Rescuing Shivaji from the Nation? History and Society in Modern Maharashtra</i>  |
| Monday, April 21:   | Kalyani Menon, Five College Women's Studies Center at Mount Holyoke College: <i>Engendering Nationalist Memories: Folklore and Hindu Nationalist Women in India</i>  |
| Monday, April 28:   | Nina Bhatt, The World Bank, Washington, D.C.: <i>From Hunting Tigers to Tracking Pugmarks: Changes in the Discourse and Practices of Wildlife Management in Nepal</i>  |
| Monday, May 5:      | Michael Lewis, Salisbury University: <i>Our Man in Delhi: The Smithsonian Institution, Indira Gandhi and Scientists as Policy Advocates</i>  |

**ALL SEMINARS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO ALL**

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## VISITORS

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### *Digitizing and Distributing Visual Resources from the Himalayas* by Mark Turin

Digital Himalaya is a pilot project to develop digital collection, archiving and distribution strategies for multimedia anthropological information from the Himalayan region. Based at Cornell and Cambridge Universities, the project began in December 2000. The initial phase involves digitizing a set of existing ethnographic archives comprised of photographs, films, sound recordings, field notes and texts collected by anthropologists and travellers in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian Himalayas from the beginning of the 20th century to the present. One of the primary archives consists of 100 hours of 16 mm ethnographic film shot by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, Professor of Asian Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and a grandfather of Himalayan anthropology.

The project has three long-term objectives: (a) to preserve in a digital medium valuable ethnographic materials that are degenerating in their current forms; (b) to make these resources available in a searchable digital format to scholars and the Himalayan communities from which the materials were collected; and (c) to develop a template for collaborative digital cataloguing that will allow users to contribute documentation to existing collections and eventually link their own collections to the system, creating a dynamic tool for comparative research.

In January 2003, members of the Digital Himalaya team travelled to Gangtok (Sikkim) and Mustang (Nepal) with the purpose of returning usable digital copies of archival footage from the 1930s and 1960s to the communities concerned. While we made use of laptop computers and high quality colour prints, it became clear during the field visit that DVD technology provided a powerful yet unexplored medium of exchange.

A DVD-based archive, functioning as a self-contained portable resource requiring neither Internet access nor a computer, is particularly suited to remote areas. Such an archive can provide access to non-literate users through controlled inter-activity combined with high quality playable content using voice overs in local languages. With the advent of small battery-operated DVD-Video players, it is possible to play DVDs in regions with no infrastructure or electricity supply, such as rural Nepal and Sikkim. Challenges remain, however, since the viewership of any DVD is constrained by limitations on the physical distribution of discs. Moreover, the pace of technological change suggests that DVD, in its current incarnation, has but a limited life-span. These factors make DVD a risky choice as a long-term archival medium.

High quality compressed films from the 1930s onwards can be freely viewed and downloaded from the Digital Himalaya website. Broadband Internet offers exciting ways of making such



*Khendzong Yapla (Secretary to the Government of Sikkim and local cultural historian), his mother and Mark Turin (Digital Himalaya) in Gangtok, Sikkim, January, 2003.*

an archive available to a geographically diverse audience. In large parts of the West, however, and certainly in the Himalayan region, the bandwidth necessary to transfer large digital files with ease is still unavailable. Even if the appropriate hardware and software were in place, many of those who might like to view images of their own communities are not literate in English or familiar with the basic computer skills needed to search an online database. While the construction of a multilingual search tool remains a challenge, Digital Himalaya continues to investigate the use of Unicode fonts for Nepali and Tibetan. Please take a moment to view the unique footage on our website: [www.digitalhimalaya.com](http://www.digitalhimalaya.com)

**Mark Turin**, *Visiting Scholar, Department of Anthropology, was trained in Social Anthropology at Cambridge, United Kingdom, and in Descriptive and Comparative Linguistics at Leiden, the Netherlands. He has been working in Nepal for twelve years, first among the Thakali community of Mustang district, and more recently among the Thangmi populations of eastern Nepal. His grammar of the Thangmi language, together with a textual corpus and a multilingual lexicon will be published in 2003. Other interests include teaching the Nepali language (he has written a course in Dutch entitled Nepali Voor Beginners) and journalism (he has columns in newspapers in the Netherlands and Nepal). He is presently Director of the Digital Himalaya Project ([www.digitalhimalaya.com](http://www.digitalhimalaya.com)) and continues his own research on ethnolinguistics in the Himalayan region. He divides his time between the universities of Cambridge (UK) and Cornell. His articles have appeared in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers and Contributions to Nepalese Studies. He recently edited the proceedings of a conference held in Kathmandu, Nepal, which is now published as Themes in Himalayan Languages and Linguistics (2003, South Asia Institute of Heidelberg and Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu). Mark arrived at Cornell in September 2002 and has a half-time appointment for three years funded by the US Department of Education through the University of Virginia and Cornell University's South and East Asia Programs. Turin is also working together with Shambhu Oja, Lecturer in Nepali, to develop an on-line Nepali dictionary and supplementary multimedia content for language instruction. Another mini-project relates to the Williamson Collection, an archive which includes 1,700 photographs and 23 reels of 16 mm film taken in Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan between 1930 and 1935 by the British colonial officer Frederick Williamson. The films and photos are now fully digitized and will be transferred to DVD for accession into the Kroch library, where students and faculty at Cornell will be free to make use of the footage for teaching and research.*

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## FACULTY BRIEFS

**Alaka Basu**, Department of Sociology and South Asia Program: Meetings/Lectures: Meeting of the Governing Board of the Population Council New York, Dec. 2002; meeting of the Governing Council of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Paris, Nov. 2002; meeting on Global Challenges and U.S. Higher Education at Duke University, Jan. 2003; Seminar on "Women's status and falling infant and child mortality," at Harvard University, Dec. 2002; "The Social Impact of Economic Reform," at the Workshop of Economic Reform of the Global Development Network, Cairo, Jan. 2003; presentation (with Kaushik Basu) to the US Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. on "Labor market laws and gender discrimination in South Asia," Feb. 2003; presentation to the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, New York, March, 2003; two papers (with S. Amin), "Popular perceptions on changing mortality" and "Two regimes of natural fertility," to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Minneapolis, May 2003. Publications: (edited), *The Sociocultural and Political Aspects of Abortion: Global Perspectives*, Greenwood Press, Feb. 2003; "Why does education lead to lower fertility? A critical review of some of the possibilities," *World Development*, 2002; (with S. Amin and R. Stephenson), "Spatial variations in contraceptive use in Bangladesh: Looking beyond the borders," *Demography*, 2002; Entry on "Women's Health in South Asia" for the *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Womens Studies*, 2002; Entry on "Caste and Demographic Behavior," for the *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Population*, forthcoming 2003.

*Women's Studies*, 2002; Entry on "Caste and Demographic Behavior," for the *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Population*, forthcoming 2003.

**Kaushik Basu**, Carl Marks Professor of International Economics: Meetings/Lectures: organized a session on "Law and Development" at the Oslo conference of Development Economics of the World Bank, June 2002; spent July 2002 as the First Bhabatosh Dutta Visiting Professor at the Center for the Study of Social Science Calcutta; spent late July and early August as Malcolm Adiseshiah Visiting Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies; participated in a small group meeting with Mr. Paul O'Neill, the then U.S. Treasury Secretary, in Washington, concerning the Indian economy and prospects of Indo-U.S. Economic Cooperation, Nov. 2002; gave the main keynote address to the conference on Development Economics at Jadavpur University, Calcutta, on "The concept and role of coercion in economics", Dec. 2002; public lecture on contemporary economics to school children at the Ramakrishna Mission School at Belur Math, Belur, Calcutta, Dec. 2002; gave the keynote address at the South Asian regional meeting of the Econometric Society in Lahore, Dec. 2002; gave a lecture on "Punctuality," to the Game Theory conference in Mumbai, Jan.2003; made a presentation (with Alaka Basu) to the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. on "Labor market laws and gender discrimination in South Asia", Feb. 2003; gave a plenary lecture on "Globalization and the Millennium Development Goals." at a conference organized by CUTS in New Delhi. March 2003. Publications: "Strategy for Economic Reform in West Bengal," (with 8 other economists), *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct. 2002; co-edited with H. Horn, L. Roman and J. Shapiro, *International Labor Standards*, Basil Blackwell, 2002; ed. *Readings in Political Economy*, Blackwell Publishers, 2003; ed. *India's Emerging Economy: Performance and Prospects in the 1990s and Beyond*, forthcoming, MIT Press; *India's Half a Century and Other Essays*, forthcoming, Oxford University Press; (edited with P. Nayak and R. Ray), *Markets and Governments*, forthcoming; Oxford University Press; (with Garance Genicot and Joseph Stiglitz) Unemployment and Wage Rigidity when Labor Supply is a Household Decision", in K. Basu, P. Nayak and R. Ray, ed. book just mentioned; (with Tapan Mitra), "Aggregating Infinite Utility Streams with Inter-generational Equity: The Impossibility of Being Paretian," forthcoming, *Econometrica*; "Child Labor: Its Economics, Its Sociology and Its Politics," forthcoming *Scientific American*; (with Zafiris Tzannatos) "The Global Child Labor Problem: What do we Know and What can we do?" forthcoming, *World Bank Economic Review*; (with A. Narayan and M. Ravallion), "Is Literacy Shared within Households? Theory and Evidence from Bangladesh", *Labour Economics*, vol. 8, 2002; "A Note on Multiple General Equilibrium with Child Labor," *Economics Letters*, vol. 74; (with Patrick Emerson) "Notes on Efficiency Pricing, Rent Control and Monopolistic Landlords," forthcoming, *Economica*; (with Jorgen Weibull), "Punctuality: A cultural Trait as Equilibrium," forthcoming in Arnott, R. et al (eds.), *Imperfect Economics*, MIT Press; monthly column appears in *Business Standard* newspaper.

**Anne M. Blackburn**, Department of Asian Studies, taught two new seminars in Spring 2003, "Monks, Texts, and Relics: Transnational Buddhism in Asia" and "Religion, Colonialism, and Nationalism in South and Southeast Asia." She gave invited lectures to Harvard University's Buddhist Studies Forum and the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell, participated in a workshop on undergraduate pedagogy at the University of Chicago's Divinity School, participated in a panel on Buddhist Education at the Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, and served as co-facilitator for the SSRC/IDRF Program's workshop for returning fellows. She is on leave during Fall 2003 but expects to teach an accelerated introduction to Pali in Spring 2004. She is planning a new course "Religion, War, and Peace: Sri Lanka" for the 2004-2005 academic year. Coordination of Cornell's unique Sinhala language program is a top priority for Blackburn. In addition to research and teaching, she is working with SAP and Asian Studies staff and colleagues to strengthen course offerings related to Sinhala and Sri Lanka studies.

**Daniel Boucher**, Asst. Professor, Department of Asian Studies, gave a paper last Dec. in Bangkok at the XIIIth Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies entitled, *A Missing Piece Among the New Discoveries of Gandharan Buddhist Literature*.

**Kenneth A. R. Kennedy**, Professor of Ecology, Anthropology, Asian Studies/Section of Ecology and Systematics of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, invited lecturer for the Mind and Memory course. February 10, 2003. Lectures: "Personal identification of the skeletal remains in mass disasters: Role of the forensic anthropologist," Cornell University. Publications: "Megalithic Pochampad: The skeletal biology and the archaeological context of an Iron Age site in Andhra, Pradesh, India," *Asian Perspectives* 41 (1) Pp.103-128. 2002; "The search for fossil man in South Asia: Retrospect and prospect". *Indian Archaeology in Retrospect* Vol. 3: *Archaeology and Interactive Disciplines*. S. Settar and R. Korisetar, eds. Pp. 87-92 New Delhi: Manoharlal 2002; "Biological anthropology of human skeletons from Harappa". *Indian Archaeology in Retrospect* Vol. 2. S. Settar and R. Korisetar, eds. Pp. 293-316 New Delhi: Manoharlal 2002; "Paleoanthropology of South Asia". *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*. D. Levinson and K. Christensen, eds. Pp. 208-216 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 2002; "Paleo-ecological factors in the relative isolation of populations in the Indian Mesolithic" *Mesolithic India*. V. N. Misra and J.N. Pal, eds. Pp. 67-81 Allahabad: University of Allahabad 2002.

**Mahesh Rangarajan**, Visiting Assistant Professor, South Asia Program and Department of History, South Asia Program, February 10, 2003, *Battles over Nature: Citizen Activism and Wildlife Conservation in Contemporary India*; International Studies in Planning Seminar, February 2003, *Conflict and Coexistence: Lions, People and Parks in India's Gir Forest*; Rural Sociology Seminar, February 28, 2003, *Polity in Transition: India under Vajpayee*; Smith Hall, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, Thursday, March 6, *The Struggle Within: Contesting Nature Conservation in India*; South Asia Colloquium of the Pacific Northwest (SACPAN); University of Washington, Seattle, March 8, 2003, *Ideology or Governance: India's BJP at a Crossroads*; Ithaca College, March 24, 2003, *Princely Symbol to Conservation Icon: The Political History of the lion in India*

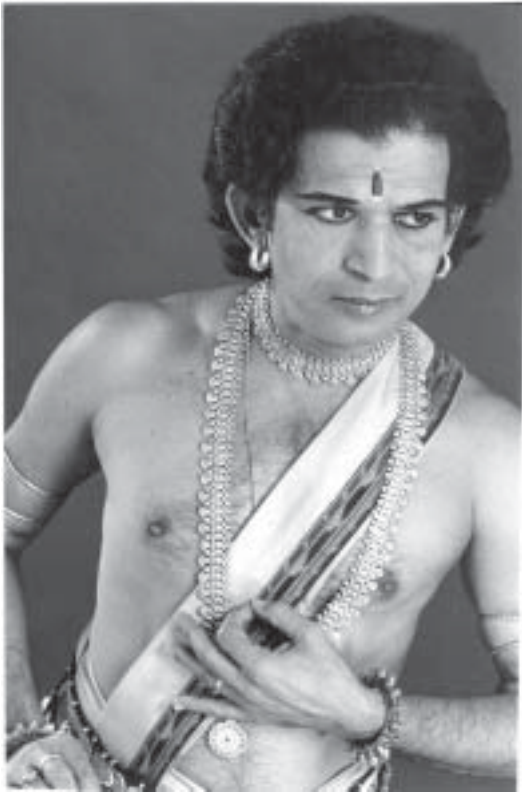
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## FINE ARTS

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### *Eminent Dance Guru to be Visiting Artist-in-Residence at Cornell for Fall 2003 Semester*



The South Asia Program, together with the Department of Asian Studies and the Department of Theatre, Film and Dance is pleased to announce that during the Fall 2003 semester eminent Odissi dance master, Guru Gangadhar Pradhan, will be teaching courses in Odissi classical dance at both beginning and intermediate levels. **DANCE 307** will be offered for beginners and **DANCE 317** (also listed as **ASIAN 308**) will be at the intermediate level. Pradhan will also offer courses in *mardala* or *pakowaj*, the cylindrical drum used to accompany Odissi, which will be listed as **MUSIC 321**. This is part of the four-year Asian Artist-in-Residence Program initiated through the Department of Asian Studies.

Guru Gangadhar Pradhan's training began at the age of six, when he was given to the Balunkeswar temple in the village of Dhimirisena (Puri district, Orissa) to be trained as a *gotipua* dancer. The *gotipuas* are young male dancers who dress as women and whose history goes back at least three-hundred years. The *gotipuas* are partially responsible for the preservation of what is known today as Odissi classical dance. The main Odissi gurus hail from the *gotipua* lineage. Pradhan was trained by eminent gurus like Banchinidhi Pradhan, Chandrasekhar Patnaik and Mahadev Raut. He later went on to become a student of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyala, Bhubaneswar, and received further training under Pankaj Charan Das, Deba Prasad Das, Dr. Minati Mishra and Dhirendranath Patnaik. After his graduation he received advanced training from Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. He also received intensive training in *mardala* under the legendary master, Singhari Shyam Sundar Kar and Guru Banamali Maharana. Guru Pradhan is known both nationally and internationally for his excellent accompaniment of famous dancers such as the late Shrimati Sanjukta Panigrahi.

Guru Pradhan founded the Orissa Dance Academy in Bhubaneswar in 1972, which imparts training not only in Odissi dance, but in other forms of regional dances as well. The Academy organizes and participates in cultural programs

throughout the year. It has several affiliated branches in different parts of Orissa, India, U.S.A., Canada and the Netherlands, where Guru Pradhan performs periodically and imparts training to hundreds of students. He has trained and guided a number of well-known accomplished dancers and teachers, namely, Dipti Sahu, Aruna Mohanty, Minakshi Behera, Nandita Patnaik, Chapala Mishra, Mamata Nayak, Sarat Priya Patjoshi, Anita Babu, Kanduri Charan Behera, Bichitrananda Swain, Manoranjan Pradhan, Somnath Pradhan, Bibhuti Bhushan Balabantaray, Ramesh Jena, Sangeeta Hazarika, Durga Bor and Ellora Patnaik.

Guru Pradhan has started *Adarsh Utkal*, a cultural family for social and cultural development. But his life's ultimate dream is the *Konark Natya Mandap*, which began over a barren piece of land in 1978 at the remote, but historic village of Konark, and has developed it into a lush haven for art and culture, which sponsors cultural programs on a stage in natural surroundings throughout the year. The highlight is the annual three-day festival of music and dance always held the third week in February, which first began in 1986 and has since grown in quality and popularity. Guru Pradhan's main goal is to develop Konark Natya Mandap into an international performing and teaching point for artists from all over the world and to maintain a Gurukula Ashram there. He has been active initiating cultural education and performances in other remote villages of Orissa.

Guru Gangadhar Pradhan has to his credit several choreographies and dance dramas for both stage and television and may be regarded as one of the most dedicated masters and dynamic organizer for proper development of Oriya culture. He received the State Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1993 and the National Sangeet Natak Academy award in 1998.

#### **Upcoming Exhibition and Performances**

In conjunction with the Guru's visit, there will be several events held throughout the Cornell campus. From **August 30 to November 2**, the Johnson Museum is exhibiting textiles from Orissa and other parts of India. The "star" of the exhibition is a nineteenth century silk shawl once worn by the wooden statue of Lord Jagannath in the Jagannath temple, Puri, where Odissi dance once flourished, and was performed by temple dancers known as *maharis*. Guru Pradhan's *mardala* guru, the late Singhari Shyam Sundar Kar, belonged to the Singhari caste, whose job it was to dress the idol in the temple. Perhaps Singhari handled this very shawl! It is inscribed with passages from Jayadeva's 12th century poem, *Gitagovinda*, which at one time, was the only song allowed to be danced to or sung in the temple. Also exhibited will be *kantha* (Bengal) and *telia rumals* (Andhra). The opening reception for this exhibition will be held on Friday, **September 5, at 4 p.m.** At 5 p.m., Pradhan will perform both a drum solo and a dance from the *Gitagovinda*. On **Sunday, November 2, at 3 p.m.** in Barnes Hall Auditorium, Guru Pradhan will dance as well as accompany an Odissi recital by Durga Bor along with other musicians.

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## STUDENTS

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*"The main hope of a nation lies in the proper education of its youth" Erasmus*

**Asha for Education** ([www.ashanet.org](http://www.ashanet.org)) is an international action group with secular principles, dedicated to socioeconomic change in India. In pursuit of this goal, Asha focuses on basic education, in the belief that education is a critical requisite for socioeconomic change. It was founded in 1991 at the University of California, Berkeley. Over 40 chapters have been created since.

In the past 11 years, Asha has supported more than 600 different projects spanning about 20 states of India. In terms of project funding, more than \$2,000,000 has been disbursed to these projects since Asha's inception. Each chapter identifies, researches and raises financial support for projects; and more importantly tries and develops a long-term personal relationship with the project and the local community via multiple site visits and close monitoring of their activities.

Asha is a nonprofit, voluntary funding agency with a difference – it is a zero-overhead group of over 1,000 dedicated volunteers, worldwide, from various walks of life. All donations to Asha for Education are tax-deductible and go directly to the projects being supported in India. Asha for Education is registered as a federally tax-exempt organization under IRS Code Section 501(c).

The **Asha-Cornell** chapter came into existence in 1993 and has since made quite a difference by supporting projects like the Institute of Social Work, West Bengal (primary education in the suburbs of Kolkata); Odanadi, Karnataka (rehabilitation of children of sex workers); Kaingkarya, Tamil Nadu (transit school for children of migrant labourers); Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha (a great effort to educate the children in a remote island in the Sunderbans, West Bengal) to name a few.

Over the last 8 years, we have organized fund-raising events to financially assist our project partners in India. These have ranged from small bake-sales to large fund-raising dinners as well as concerts (Hariprasad Chaurasia concert in Fall 2001). We have also raised awareness about Asha and Asha's mission through the annual Diwali and Holi shows at Cornell, and through film-screenings. In addition, we invite speakers to discuss issues related to children, education, and poverty and participate in local community service.

**Join ASHA! Email [asha@cornell.edu](mailto:asha@cornell.edu) to get onto our mailing list. Web site: <http://www.ashanet.org/cornell> Meetings: Tuesdays at 6:15 p.m. in Goldwin Smith 162, on the Cornell Campus.**

### *Cornell Bhangra Club Hosts 2nd Annual "Pao Bhangra"* by Niyati Trivedi, '03

On March 1st, 2003, the Cornell Bhangra Club hosted *Pao Bhangra 2*, an exhibition of Punjabi culture and dance.

Bhangra groups from New York University, the University of Rochester, and Rutgers University along with Cornell Bhangra's three dance teams performed in front of a sold out audience of 900 at Statler Auditorium.

Bhangra is a folk dance which hails from the Punjab region in northwest India and Pakistan. This dance is traditionally performed in villages to celebrate festive occasions such as good harvests.

Over the past decade, Bhangra has caught the attention of the next generation and has grown into a phenomenon among South Asian students at American universities. There are now at least ten major intercollegiate competitions held nationwide with representatives from over fifty universities. At Cornell, what started out as a group of just twelve dancers has over the past few years

expanded to an organization with over thirty members. Cornell's Bhangra team is now one of the most active in the U.S. and has been recognized and awarded at many of these competitions.

After traveling the country to compete, *Pao Bhangra 2* was the Cornell Bhangra Club's way of spreading the Punjabi culture back at home in Ithaca. What was notable about *Pao Bhangra 2* was the diversity of the



audience. "If you looked into the audience that night, you saw that at least 50 percent of it was non-Indian, and even most of the Indians were not Punjabi. The diversity of the audience and the Bhangra team in general shows how strong the Punjabi culture is and how strong the Cornell Bhangra Club is in portraying it," said Tarun Subrahmanian '03, Cornell Bhangra Club president.

Overall, *Pao Bhangra 2* and the Cornell Bhangra Club have increased popularity and awareness of Bhangra both on Cornell's campus and at other universities as well.

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## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

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### *Farhana Ibrahim*

*Farhana Ibrahim is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Cornell.*

January 26th of this year was the second anniversary of the earthquake that almost decimated large parts of Kutch in the Western Indian state of Gujarat. Cities like Bhuj suffered the greater damage as there were more concrete buildings to come tumbling down, unlike the villages which had a much smaller number of durable constructions. Two years after the earthquake, relief and reconstruction in the cities is almost negligible while the villages are doing rather well for themselves, where people have cashed in on the compulsions of various donor agencies, who have at their disposal large sums of money all of which they are compelled to consume for the task at hand. Never mind that that has entailed in practice, in rural Kutch, an almost wanton construction of brand new houses regardless of family size, size of prior landholding or any thought about how this is going to further entrench caste hierarchies and corresponding inequities. "Basically, we had all this money to spend," the Director of an International NGO based in Bhuj for earthquake reconstruction tells me, "so whoever asked for a house, we just built them one". We could not get into paperwork at the time so we just gave them what they asked for. (This ranges from homes to water, electricity, schools, even computers, contributing to furthering the prestige and the wealth of the already rich and powerful who are, not surprisingly, the ones doing the demanding the Director alludes to). In one village some people had acquired so many new houses that they had begun using the extra ones to store grain, cattle, even their scooters!

This is the typical pattern in the villages. The town of Bhuj, which has been home to me for the past six months, tells a different story. The horrendous scenes of death and destruction in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake have abated somewhat, but only just, even though two years have passed. What is left is something like a ghost town. I am walking with a friend and an award-winning artisan of the traditional tie-dye that Kutch is so famous for. He has finally finished the scarf he has been working on for me, and we are going to his home which since the earthquake doubles as his work place, to collect it. It is dusk, and we walk through vast tracts of open land, what looks like wasteland except that it is land on which once there stood an enormous cluster of houses, the old residential colonies of Bhuj, which were flattened in the earthquake. We walk, stumbling now and then over the odd stone and boulder, in the eerie half-light provided by the odd tube light, but mostly in the gathering dark, the call to prayer from a nearby mosque echoing steadfastly in the emptiness. There are some houses, or parts of houses, a slice of a wall here, a gate there, still standing, but totally empty, devoid of habitation. There are some other houses where residents had decided, perhaps due to economic reasons, perhaps the overwhelming nostalgia that is borne out of attachment to a home, perhaps the only one they have ever known, to move back in, hastily patching up the cracked walls as they did so. Even though this means that they are reminded every minute of the devastation that wiped out their neighborhood, that destroyed their world, leaving them with no neighbors, the landscape a meagre and bleak reminder of how their world shook on that freezing morning in January 2001. For now, these houses are few and far between;

where they were formerly sandwiched cheek by jowl with hundreds of other houses, now they stand alone, with empty land between them. I wonder how many bodies were crushed under the rubble on this very ground that I am trampling through now. Whose kitchen stood here where my foot falls now, and whose bedroom, as we walk on, moving ahead in the direction that I am being led, moving as the crow flies, where once we would have had to follow narrow winding streets as they looped along and around the old structures, full of the sound of everyday life. Today it is dead silent.

The piles of rubble remain in places, but in most cases it has just been dumped outside the city, the former residents of these plots of land are now living in makeshift and temporary shelters usually far away from what used to be the centre of their existence. They are now far away from the markets and the areas they were familiar with once upon a time, traveling vast distances for their daily needs, waiting to hear from the newly-arrived town planning authorities what the fate of their land will be before they even contemplate the task of reconstruction. The authorities' vision for the future includes wide roads that will skirt the city, others that will be built inside the extant walls of the old fortified city of Bhuj. The original walled city, like many others in South Asia, consisted of primarily the royal palace at the centre encircled by a high wall, and outside the immediate palace grounds was the bazaar on one side and the residential localities all around. Closest to the palace grounds lived those communities that have historically provided various services to the royal court. Over time, the population increased, increasing the pressure on land and there was an extremely dense, interlocking network of old houses, with narrow winding streets between them, temples and mosques and shrines scattered all over. By building these new wide roads in this part of town, the town planners are essentially working with limited space constraints. If the street becomes any wider, the houses, or rather the plots where the houses formerly stood, get smaller. This is the big predicament in Bhuj today. Does or doesn't your plot get "cut" in the town planning? This is the burning question doing the rounds of all the street-corner tea shops and homes. The town planners have an answer to this, like they do for most things: those who lose their land to the new planning rules will be relocated to a new spot. They will be given a new plot of land, of exactly the same proportions as the one they had earlier. Only this new plot or in some cases, a glitzy housing society, will be in a newly-constructed suburb of Bhuj, areas which until a few months ago, were considered by old-time inhabitants of the city as "jungle", unmapped and incomprehensible. And then, what of sentimental attachment to space, to land, to neighborhoods, to temples and to mosques? The owner of a restaurant I often eat at in Bhuj tells me that he has been told his family will be relocated to a new space as the spot where his childhood home once stood, has been earmarked for a recreational park. The classic problem of conservation verses development plays itself out here every single day. No doubt, a new city has to be planned which must be earthquake resistant and modern, but what of the people and what of history? Can it all just be wiped out, and begun afresh on a fresh new slate?

*Continued on back page*

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## Karthika Sasikumar



*Karthika at Fatehpur Sikri*

*Karthika Sasikumar is a PhD candidate in the Department of Government, Cornell University. She is in India for field research in 2002-03. Her study deals with India's relationship with the international security regimes on nonproliferation and counter-terrorism. She is there on an American Institute for Indian Studies Research Fellowship.*

While my colleagues were preparing to set sail for Rwanda or Russia, I was congratulating myself on going 'home' for my year of field research. I was confident that once in India, I would be happier and more productive.

Doing interviews in India would be easy, I thought, because I know that Indians love to talk. I discovered that my interviewees could talk for hours, but wouldn't come close to answering my questions. In fact, I would stagger out of an interview, confused about what my question was in the first place. Indian libraries are also tricky to negotiate.

The ones that aren't dusty and disorganized are guarded by librarians who consider researchers to be in the 'pest' category. My sleek little laptop is viewed with suspicion in most institutions (for fear that it could be a bomb, or a device that will cause their electricity bills to skyrocket) and I have to apply for special permission to use it (which the American Center refused to give).

I also found myself in the strange position of 'spokesperson for America'. I was asked to explain why the US wanted to bomb Iraq, why Americans want to hold on to their nuclear weapons, and why the divorce rate is so high. Often, I was scrutinized for signs of 'Americanization', and when I passed (no accent!) I detected a note of disappointment.

It took me a couple of months to stop calling my apartment in Ithaca 'home'. It's taken longer to relearn skills for dealing with bureaucracies and snoopy neighbors. I found that my lungs could no longer deal with the higher pollution in Indian cities. I learned to explain my research project in different terms to different audiences. I realized that I had to make it relevant to the world that most Indians endure, and convince myself of its relevance. The most important thing I learned was that going home means affection, familiarity and free laundry; it also means duty, distraction, and endless explanations of my 'jobless' state.

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## Holi Hai!

According to Hindu belief, there lived a demon king named Hiranyakashipu in ancient India. He wanted to avenge the death of his younger brother. The brother, also a demon, had been killed by Lord Vishnu, one of the supreme trio, monitoring the life and death in the universe. To take on Vishnu, the tyrant king wanted to become the king of the heaven, earth and the underworld. He performed severe penance and prayer for many years to gain enough power. Finally, he was granted a boon. Powered by the boon, Hiranyakashipu thought he had become invincible. Arrogant, he ordered all in his kingdom to worship him, instead of God. The demon king, however, had a very young son, named Prahalad. He was an ardent devotee of Vishnu. Despite his father's order, Prahalad continued to pray to Vishnu. So the demon king wanted to kill his son. He asked the favor of his sister Holika who, because of a boon, was immune to fire. They planned that Prahalad would be burned to death. A pyre was lit up and Holika sat on it, clutching Prahalad. Yet, at the end Prahalad emerged unscathed by the fire, and Holika, the demon, was burned to ashes. The earnest devotion and complete submission to Lord Vishnu saved young Prahalad. Thus was the triumph of Prahalad, the representative of good spirits, and the defeat of Holika, the representative of evil. Later, even the demon king, Hiranyakashipu, was killed by Lord Vishnu. But that is quite a different story. It is from Holika, that the Holi originated. This legend is relived even today on the Holi eve when the pyre is relit in the form of bonfires on the eve of the full moon night of the Holi to burn the spirit of the evils. Hence the story associated with the soul of the celebration.

How did the celebration of Holi assume a colorful face? It

is linked to yet another legend, the legends of Krishna. Though of much later origin. According to the Hindu belief, Krishna was a reincarnation of lord Vishnu himself. It was Krishna, or, Krishn, the king of the ancient city of Dwarka, who popularized the tradition of Holi. The origin of the colorful and frolicking tone of Holi lies in the boyhood of Krishna. It all came up as part of his pranks, he used to play with his boyhood mates of Gokul and Vrindavan. Situated in north India, these are the places where he spent his childhood. It was at this time of year, Krishna used to play pranks by drenching the village girls, with water and colors. At first it offended the girls, but they were so fond of this mischievous boy that soon their anger melted away. And, it did not take long for other boys to join in, making it a popular sport in the village. Later, as Krishna grew up, the play assumed a new dimension. It added more colors to Krishna's legendary love life, the legend of Krishna's courtship with Radha, and playing pranks with the 'gopi's. (The girls in the dairy village of Gokul were mostly milkmaids, and, hence locally known as the gopis.) The same tradition has transpired through the ages, turning it into a community festival of the masses. As time kept flowing, the culture spread roots to other regions of the country. The Holi play of Krishna is documented in hundreds of ancient paintings, murals, sculptures and scriptures found across the subcontinent.

*The Hindu Student Council will celebrate Holi, Saturday, April 19, 2003, from 1 to 4 p.m. in the Anabel Taylor Courtyard. Enjoy color, games, mehndi, food and more! If you are interested in helping, please contact hindu@cornell.edu.*

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FILM SERIES

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**The South Asia Program Presents**  
*illuminating Oppression*  
**A Film Festival on**  
**Human Rights in South Asia**

**All films shown on**  
**Fridays at 4 PM in G08 Uris Hall**

*Free and open to all*

**March 28: Underground Labor**

Backstage Boys: India's Labour Goes Global (Meera Dewan, India, 30 min)

My Migrant Soul (Yasmine Kabir, Bangladesh, 30 min)

In the Flesh (Bishakha Datta, India, 53 min)

**April 11: Conflict**

11.00.01: September 11 (Mira Nair's, U.S.A. 11 min)

Evil Stalks the Land (Gauhar Raza, India, 34 min)

Paradise on the River of Hell (Abir Bazaz and Meenu Gaur, India, 30 minutes)

Tell Them the Tree They Had Planted Has Now Grown (Ajay Raina, India, 30 minutes)

**April 18: Children**

Fiddlers on the Thatch (Trisha Das, India, 30 min)

The Children We Sacrifice (Grace Poore, USA, 61 min)

**April 25: Organ Trafficking**

Deham - Body (Govind Nihalani, India, 120 minutes)

**May 2: Gender and Violence**

*Mann ke Manjeere* - Rhythm of the Mind

(Sujit Sircar & Gary for Breakthrough, India, 5 min)

*Babul* - Father (Prasoon Pandey for Breakthrough, India, 4 min)

Born to Die (Usha Albuquerque, India, 30 min)

Life on the Margin (Arun Kumar, India, 34 min)

Women in Conflict (Radhika Kaul Batra, India, 30 min)

*The South Asia Program would like to thank the South Asia Center,  
Syracuse University, Tula Goenka, and Breakthrough for making this film festival possible.*

addition to the politically-recognized Sri Lankan Muslim Congress's (SLMC) leadership.

Dr. Yamuna Sangarasivam from Ithaca College spoke of a recent trip to Jaffna in a paper entitled, "Who's Keeping Who Safe?: Space, Place and the Politics of Security." Having lived in Jaffna during the LTTE administration, she was able to compare and contrast the physical landscape of military or peacekeeping security under Sri Lankan government occupation. Methods of surveillance under military occupation, she stated, were overt. Bunkers and checkpoints have been erected in neighborhoods creating a militarized environment in places where people walked more freely under LTTE administration.

Cornell alumnus, Dr. Kanishka Goonewardena now based in the Geography Department at the University of Toronto, spoke about how the National Ideology (*Jathika Chinthanaya*) of Sinhalese-Buddhism, while a critique of globalization and Western modernity can also be seen as a form of extreme nationalism tending towards neo-fascism. As a form of cultural nationalism, Dr. Goonewardena pointed out that *Jathika Chinthanaya* considers Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims as belonging to basically the same culture and therefore does not accommodate nor have tolerance for the particularities that constitute Sri Lanka as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society.

The final set of papers addressed issues of how civilians cope with the grief and suffering that directly have resulted from years of sustained violent conflict. Dr. Patricia Lawrence from the University of Colorado, and Dr. R. Cheran of York University, suggested actions that need to be undertaken by both the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in order to initiate peace within and between ethnic communities as well as provide a space for social justice.

Dr. Lawrence has conducted research in Batticaloa district of the Eastern Province for nearly a decade. She recounted how one massacre of Tamil civilians in 1990 has marked local history and marred the community's collective memory in her paper, "Unhealed Wounds: Social Transition in Eastern Sri Lanka." On the evening of September 9, 1990, 185 Tamil villagers from four villages were gathered by about fifty armed men, some from the Sri Lankan army and others wearing civilian clothing. As the armed men moved from house-to-house through the Tamil hamlets some warned the households of people, "Muslims are coming and they are killing people on their way." They ordered the frightened residents to come out of their houses and come with them. They told some households that the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the Saturukondan camp wanted to see them. The people collected on the road and went with the soldiers to hear the OIC's advice. Within the next seven hours all of the villagers were killed and the bodies were burned inside the camp, with the exception of one survivor who managed to drag himself to safety. Sixty-nine of those who were executed were children twelve years of age or younger. Sixteen elders, seventy years old or older, also walked to the army camp. Most of the victims were female. To date the Sathurukondan massacre has not been publicly acknowledged by the Sri Lankan Government, as it has been

shrouded by denials of senior military officers. Dr. Lawrence argued that the government's public acknowledgment of this massacre, and others like it, is essential to addressing the collective experience of grief and suffering in the district and the country if peace and justice is to be had in any meaningful form in the future.

Dr. R. Cheran addressed the silencing of events and the writing of history by demonstrating how only certain holidays may be celebrated and only certain types of monuments may be erected in Tamil-dominated areas including the diaspora in his presentation, "When Memory Dies: Erasure and Social Control in the Nationalist Discourses of Sri Lanka." Borrowing the title from the 1997 novel, *When Memory Dies* by A. Sivanandan,<sup>2</sup> Dr. Cheran discussed two key themes. The first theme considered the role of the Sri Lankan State in erasing any memory, records, and acknowledgments of massacres of Tamil civilians and the continuous destruction of Tamil monuments.

The second theme focused on how LTTE-sanctioned holidays such as the celebration of Great Hero's Week and commemoration of other events such as Sacrificial Motherhood (women fighters and their suicide warriors) reordered the Tamil nationalist narrative in the constitution of what are considered historically-significant acts of sacrifice and bravery. Some earlier and significant events, for example, the first suicide by Tamil student leader and militant Sivakumaran by taking cyanide in the early 1970s is one event that has received no attention. Other experiences of suffering within the Tamil community, commemoration of other militant leaders/ factions and the massacres of Muslims, for instance, cannot be publicly recognized without risk of repercussion from the LTTE. The selective sanctioning of specific acts of sacrifice allows the LTTE to control and to create a history for Tamil nationalism. Selective memory then becomes a form of social control within a set of relations of ruling applicable not only in Sri Lanka, but also internationally (the LTTE expects their sanctioned holidays to be celebrated by the Diaspora too). Dr. Cheran stated that creating monuments to those who disappeared or were killed during massacres is a necessary step towards a more accurate and inclusive Tamil history.

The conference ended with a round-table discussion moderated by Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan, a visiting professor at Cornell. The three coeditors of *lines*: Dr. Vasuki Nesiah, Mr. Ahilan Kadirgamar, and Mr. S. Nanthikesan as well as invited guest, Mr. Selvarajah Aathivan briefly outlined positions for future actions to be taken within the current political environment. Dr. Nesiah presented progress made within the international human rights agenda in terms of pursuing justice and accountability. Mr. Nanthikesan and Mr. Kadirgamar discussed how economic systems also create structural conditions for violence focusing on how macroeconomic policy and the neoliberal agenda created suffering for many Sri Lankans, especially those in the North and East where the conflict has destroyed the agricultural economy and interregional trade. Mr. Nanthikesan pointed out that Sri Lanka's model of economic development as a planned economy as well as after liberalization has not been socially inclusive.

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*New South Asian Courses for  
Fall 2003/Spring 2004*

*Sri Lanka...con't. from page 11*

**HEALTH AND SURVIVAL INEQUALITIES**

SOC 410; 4 Credits; Tue and Thurs: 2:55 - 4:10 p.m.

Instructor: Alaka Basu

Course Description:

Historical inequalities in health and survival continue to exist today. This course will cover some of the markers of such inequalities, including region, class, race, gender and age and examine some of the biological, socioeconomic and political determinants of these differences. Macro as well as individual and family level determinants will be examined. Policy prescriptions will be evaluated and new innovative approaches proposed.

**THEORIES OF REPRODUCTION**

SOC 421, Spring 2004, 4 Credits. Time: TBA

Instructor: Alaka Basu

Course Description

This course will examine the contentious debate on what makes women have any, few, and many children. It will cover theories of population growth and changing fertility in both historical and contemporary populations. Demographic concepts like 'the demographic transition' and 'natural fertility' will be discussed. Primary attention will be given to 'socio-cultural' and 'gender-based' explanations of reproductive behavior. The course will also look at theories about the place of the state in women's lives.

*(The credits for these courses can be applied towards a concentration in South Asian Studies.)*

*Continued from page 10*

I hear from another old resident of Bhuj that the Government has declared sole ownership over all the land in Bhuj. "What does that mean? That all the hard work of our fathers and our forefathers who went to such extremes to acquire land and build homes for their families has all come to nothing? People own their land and they have a right to it, the government cannot take this away from the people. We want a right to our land. It's as simple as that", he says to me.

As we walk across the debris that once was a town, my companion tells me that in order to reach *jannat*, the proverbial garden of paradise, you have to suffer much in the present. This is part of the upheaval that will create for us our long-awaited *jannat* he says.

Mr. Aathivan, on leave from the Movement for the Defense of Democratic Rights in Sri Lanka, recounted several recent work-related accounts that illustrated the urgent need for institutional links between non-governmental organizations and social-justice collectives based in Colombo and those based in Jaffna. The language gap between Sinhala and Tamil-speaking activists was noted as an obstacle that still needed to be overcome.

*SRI LANKA: Dynamics of Violence, Challenges of Peace* provided a unique opportunity for activists and scholars to discuss contemporary processes of social and political change taking place in the country today and to build a network to share perspectives, ideas, and resources for peace. There was general consensus that the peace negotiations themselves must be reconceptualized as a negotiation between more than two parties or perpetrators: the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government. The process needs to be devolved to lower levels to include a wider range of groups within civil society. The experience of Sri Lankan Muslims as a distinct ethnic community must be taken into consideration. If the peace process continues to exclude constituency groups at the level of national-policy formulation, there is little hope that the current peace negotiation will led to meaningful change on-the-ground.

Conference papers will be made available online in a forthcoming issue of *lines* ([www.lines-magazine.org](http://www.lines-magazine.org)).

**(End notes)**

<sup>1</sup> For up-to-date information on the peace process, please consult special reports of the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) available online: <http://www.uthr.org/>

<sup>2</sup> A. Sivanandan. 1997. *When Memory Dies*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India.

*This article has also appeared in Economic and Political Weekly, March 15 issue.*

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