

# News and Reviews Vol. 6, No. 3 Fall 2003

## Interview with Filmmaker Dai Sil Kim-Gibson

>> by Sarah Barbour and Xian Barrett

Dai Sil Kim-Gibson has directed six films about Koreans and Korean Americans. She is probably best know for her documentary Silence Broken, about



the Korean "Comfort Women" and their continuing quest for justice from the Japanese gov-

ernment. Her other films, about subjects as seemingly disparate as the Sakhalin Island Koreans and the Los Angeles race riots, reflect her dedication to human rights and her concern for individuals whose rights are violated. For more information about Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, her films, and the Comfort Women issue, please visit to her Web site: www.twotigers.org.

While she was on campus last April, we talked to her about her films. Following are some excerpts of our conversation:

AEMS: *Silence Broken* may be your best known film. Why did you make it?

I t is a story that has been silenced for half a century. It needed to be told.

The project started as a book, and originally, I wanted to do a feature film for theatrical release. I knew that there would be a paucity of visual

materials to make a documentary. More importantly, I believed that as a feature drama, it would attract more people. But I couldn't raise that kind of money. In the meantime, however, I was able to get a small grant to make a documentary. Writing the book and making the film went on at the same time and I published the book to coincide with the broadcast of the film.

...You know on Hitler alone there are over 100,000 pieces of work, including books, films, et cetera. However, when I was writing and making a film about Comfort Women, the books and



Dai Sil Kim-Gibson

films in English on this topic were less than ten. Still, many people said, "Hasn't there been a work on this topic?" Whenever I heard this, I couldn't even scream.

I could only feel my scream in the pit of my stom-

ach. Because there were a book or two, publishers were reluctant to print my book.

I found a small publisher who printed my book. My book sold over 5,000 copies, mostly through word of mouth, so there is an audience out there that is interested in this subject. But publishers and programmers think otherwise.

# AEMS: *Silence Broken* is a little unusual in that it lacks narration. Why is that?

Both the book and the film are collections of oral histories. It is not only the topic that is important but the methodology that gives these

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#### Asian Educational Media Service

The Asian Educational Media Service (AEMS) is a program of the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. AEMS offers information about where to find audiovisual media resources for teaching and learning about Asia, and advice about which ones may best suit your needs. In addition to *AEMS News and Reviews*, published quarterly, services include a free call-in/write-in service and a Web site. To add your name to our mailing list, request additional copies of the newsletter to use in workshops or to share with your colleagues, or ask for help in locating resources, please contact us.

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## Interview

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women a chance finally to tell their stories. Through narration, directors will often convey their own interpretations. Sometimes the filmmaker's voice is stressed over the people's voices. I wanted to let the women speak for themselves, and let viewers draw their own conclusions.

## AEMS: Why do you feel this is an important topic for Americans to know about?

You think Americans were not involved but they were very involved. After World War II ended, they ruled Japan for a long time and McArthur spearheaded the Tokyo International Tribunal in 1946. The trial did not deal with this issue. The Americans were reluctant to pursue justice for the Comfort Women. If the Americans had dealt with this issue properly in 1946, it wouldn't be an issue now. America bears a lot of responsibility for this because America ignored the issue entirely.

And this was not just the issue of sexual slavery of Asian women, but of wartime rape in general. This is still an issue today. We can't just ignore it.

#### AEMS: Some educators use the sexual nature of this topic as a explanation for their hesitance to teach about Comfort Women.

I do think that elementary school is too young to study this. But beginning from the last couple of years of high school and college would be appropriate.

AEMS: Before *Silence Broken*, you made *A Forgotten People: The Sakhalin Koreans* (1995), another documentary about a wartime injustice. Tell us about why you made that film.

These were Koreans who were taken from their homes by the Japanese and forced into labor camps on Sakhalin Island which now belongs to Russia. Even after World War II, these people were abandoned by the Japanese, and their own country, already entangled in the Cold War, forgot about them. The Russians did not want them to go home; they wanted to use them as workers. The forced labor situation was also largely ignored by the Tokyo Tribunal.

I deal with Koreans abandoned on Sakhalin island, their nostalgia, and their desire to go home. They'd been waiting for 50 years to go home when I went to make the film. This is not just a Korean issue, though. This is a timeless human rights issue. How many displaced people are there on earth now? So many people all over the world have been forced out of their homes and their human rights violated. This is not just a historical story, it is a universal story of displaced people.

AEMS: Your second documentary, Sa-I-Gu (1993), focused on the Los Angeles riots of 1992 and their impact on the Korean-American com-

# munity. Your most recent film *Wet Sand* (2003) is a sequel to that film. Why did you feel it needed a sequel?

It was the silenced voices of the victims, and the people and the society in general moving on as if everything is fine that prompted me to explore the aftermath of the 1992 L.A. upheaval.

Sa-I-Gu was in a way a reaction piece. I had very little money and time when I made it. The sequel is better researched, more comprehensive, and I had a little more time to try to raise money. I interviwed people from African, Hispanic, and white communities, in addition to the same Koreans in Sa-I-Gu. Many believe that race relations in L.A. have improved since the riot. I want people to be aware that this is not true. I wanted to remind people that Sa-I-Gu\* is not over. The message is that racism has not gone away. It has gone underground which is even more dangerous. The threat of another riot is very real to these people.

A lot of people just don't know about what happens beyond America or even in America. You'd be amazed at how South Central Los Angeles is isolated from mainstream America. Americans are a very privileged people, isolated even from their own society. The inner cities are like reservations, but no one realizes it.

I want to take *Wet Sand* wherever people need it. We desperately need a dialogue on racism and poverty in this country. Our government throws all of its attention to the war [in Iraq] and ignores what is going on here. We have to pay attention to race relations immigrants and African and white Americans. President Kennedy was right to call America "a nation of immigrants." The people who have chosen to live here, who aren't here simply as an accident of birth, *are* real Americans. In an ideal world, America should be a country where Native Americans were considered the hosts and the rest of us immigrants. ◆

\*"Sa-I-Gu" is Korean for April 29, the date that the riots took place in 1992.

The following films are available from NAATA: *Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women:* 

\$265 for purchase and \$85 for rental. *A Forgotten People: The Sakhalin Koreans*:

\$265 for purchase and \$75 for rental. Sa-I-Gu: From Korean Women's Perspective:

\$150 for purchase and \$65 for rental. Wet Sand: \$195 for purchase and \$125 for rental.



# *Women in Japan*: Memories of the Past, Dreams for the Future

>> Produced by Joanne Hershfield and Jan Bardsley. 2002. 53 minutes.

**T** omen in Japan examines the changing roles and status of women in contemporary Japanese society by documenting the personal narratives of six women of diverse ages and backgrounds, all of whom have spent considerable time abroad. Each woman tells her own story by reflecting on her past, her beliefs, and her identity as a woman living in Japan. The

Women in Japan conveys a clear sense of the diversity of women's attitudes and aspirations and points to changes in the social expectations that are placed on women in contemporary Japanese society.

international experience that these women share is not typical, but the majority of the women in this film identify their time abroad as an important component in shaping their views and aspirations as women.

The film includes profiles of four ethnically Japanese women (a community leader, a professor at a university in the United States, an artist, and the chair of a non-governmental organization) and two foreign women (both farmers) who are married to Japanese men and have chosen to make Japan their home. The breadth of the film's sample effectively discourages generalizations of "Japanese women" as a homogeneous group and an important theme that runs throughout the film. While many of the women in this film have children of their own, they all carefully point to the strong sense of obligation to domestic and familial responsibilities that their mothers shared. Yoshiko Nakata, Chair of the Women's Federation for World Peace, acknowledges that she has had opportunities that were not available to women of her mother's generation, explaining: "[My mother] lived by accommodating herself to her husband. She believed that her husband and her children should be her whole life." Through their work and their pursuit of personal goals, Nakata and the other women in this film are using the perspec-

demonstrates the

diversity of women's

experiences in Japan.

Each woman's

narrative begins with

her childhood memo-

ries and her own eval-

uation of how she

was able to achieve

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tives they have gained from their international experience to reshape the boundaries of the traditional feminine ideals that they feel constrained their mothers. In turn, they hope that future generations of young Japanese women will continue to follow the path they have chosen for themselves to become strong, independent women.

The final two segments of the film tell the stories of Lourdes Matsumoto of the Philippines and Rohei Shimada of China, who now live in Furano, Hokkaido, and came to Japan as a result of a "bride famine" in the Japanese countryside. Increased opportunities for women to work and get an education have led many women from farming families away from their homes and into urban areas, making it difficult for men in rural areas to find suitable wives. In order to compensate for this shortage, local governments in rural areas throughout Japan have begun to recruit women from Southeast Asian countries to marry their farmers. Although Matsumoto and Shimada struggled at first against homesickness and the expectations placed on them by family and friends in their home countries, they have become accustomed to life in Furano and are happily settled with their families.

Women in Japan conveys a clear sense of the diversity of women's attitudes and aspirations and points to changes in the social expectations that are placed on women in contemporary Japanese society. This film would be useful in high school and college classrooms because it touches on a broad range of topics related to women and to Japan. However, since the film focuses almost entirely on the narratives of these six women and provides little historical background, it would be most useful if supplemented with lectures and readings on topics such as feminist movements in Japan and Japan's wartime involvement. The filmmakers have created an informative Web site that provides instructors with lesson plans and other useful resources that should facilitate the use of this film in the classroom. Women in Japan should inspire students to consider questions of how women's roles have changed over the course of the last century and the effects of globalization on women's experiences in contemporary Japan. 🔶

For more information about the film and for teaching ideas, please see WomeninJapan.com.

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*Women in Japan: Memories of the Past, Dreams for the Future* is available from the producers at WomeninJapan.com. The price is \$150. VHS and DVD versions are available.

# Transports of Delight: The Ricksha Arts of Bangladesh

>> Created by Joanna Kirkpatrick. CD-ROM. 2003.

Born a decade too early sigh—to have had materials of this quality when I was a classroom teacher. Here is a disc where the format fits the content, the content is copius (1000 photos, 25 minutes of video, 5 essays, long bibliography), and navigation is smooth and easy. With motor vehicle body-painting on the uptick in the United States—especially on trucks and buses—there should be an audience delighted

to sample the eye-candy coating the threewheeled, pedal-powered passenger vehicles that still operate in parts of Asia.

"Ricksha" is local-speak in Bangladesh for what elsewhere in Asia would be called a trishaw or pedicab. (For the record: the classical East Asian counterpart—*jinrikisha* in Japanese—was a twowheeled affair powered by a man trotting between traces like a horse pulling a sulky.) At various points on the disc Kirkpatrick also casts a glance around the world at different types of humanpowered transport and different genres of vehicle painting such as those appearing on Philippine jeepneys or Afghan lorries.

Used together with essays and commentaries that Kirkpatrick weaves in with them, the images on this disc can serve as a handy, searchable archive of materials for student projects at secondary and university levels. Scholars on the prowl for free-range research topics will discover that the subject of vehicle art, with all its potentials for cultural comparison, has not yet been obfuscated by a pride of deconstructionists. And I have a hunch that the photos and videos, if not the text, will hook the interest of pupils in primary schools, even kindergartens.

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The author groups her materials into four sections. In the Introduction she provides basic information about life in Bangladesh, the role of ricksha transport, the ricksha painters and themes in their art, and Islamic attitudes towards visual portrayals, particularly of the human form. Orthodox Muslims in Bangladesh

prefer their popular art to be non-representational. Photos in this collection show how the Dhaka devout sometimes deface ricksha panels that display

pictures of Bollywood beauties.

In the Streets and Views section Kirkpatrick offers four segments of videotape that she shot from the window of a van driving around Dhaka. We are buffeted by the audiovisual assaults filling an arena where ricksha art has to compete with a plenitude of other attractions in the traveling circus that is life on Dhaka's streets. Samples of synch-sound are included on some portions of the videos, but the author took pity on our eardrums and replaced most of the location audio with local folk songs. A stop-frame button halts the chaos for micro-inspection; I would have welcomed a slowmotion control as well.

The main event on the disc is the Ricksha Art Images section with its hundreds of color photos of the art, of the artists, and of samples of related images from elsewhere. Images are archived in galleries, each gallery framed by a few sentences of discussion. You can enlarge the postage-stampsized images for closer scrutiny. And by using a toggle feature you can select up to four images at a time for comparison viewing.

Kirkpatrick blends an aficionado's itch for collecting—she has been assembling these materials for two decades—with a scholar's obligation to step back and ask critically what we might learn from what has been collected. She steps back at various places on the disc but above all in a section called Readings. There we find five essays on topics such as motifs in the art (she builds on ideas from Kenneth Burke), or on how the dream of a paradise-on-earth depicted on some ricksha panels contrasts with one painted on canvas by a 19thcentury American Quaker named Edward Hicks. In one essay she dilates on the frustrations of doing fieldwork as a woman in an Islamic society; I wish she also had discussed the ordeal she must have gone through back home while organizing and editing all of this stuff.

Her main line of interpretation is that ricksha art moves in a realm of male fantasy, portraying woman as cynosure and metaphor in public spaces where females are not supposed to be seen. The explanation seems to fit a fair fraction of the images—those of movie starlets or of macho figures such as Saddam Hussein—but it does not account for the many ricksha panels that portray flora and fauna, or visions of arcadia. One virtue of her galleries is that they give us ample evidence from which we may draw conclusions contrary to hers.

That's the good news. The other news is that the disc has problems of under-legibility and overaudibility. Too much of the text was processed in eyestrain city—printed against a clay-colored background that is twice as dark as it should be, in a small typeface stretching across the full screen in lines that are twice as long as they should be. And the audio track has an over-sufficiency of noise. Perhaps if you are fluent in geek-speak you can correct for this on your local machine. For the majority of us who are not geeks, the disc offers no suggestions as to what if anything can be done.



And the disc will run only on the latest Windows system. Why feed the Gates juggernaut when

juggernaut when Mac systems continue to be the industry standard among those of us engaged in audiovisual production? One of the five computers in my household happens to be a PC, but even it could not bring up more than a page or two from the disc. The disc's content is wonderful to have but in order to savor it you may be obliged to do as I did and ring your neighborhood ricksha stand for a lift to the campus computer center. While you are waiting for your ride you might look up Kirkpatrick's sam-

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pler of this material at www.ricksha.org. +

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*Transports of Delight: The Ricksha Arts of Bangladesh* is available from Indiana University Press. PC version only. Price is \$29.95.

## Mai's America

>> Produced by Marlo Poras. 2002. 72 minutes.

I n this unusual and thought-provoking documentary, we follow a vivacious, intelligent, extremely likable young Vietnamese woman from her home in bustling Hanoi through her experiences as an exchange student in America. To Mai, America is the country her father, a relatively prosperous businessman, fought and helped to defeat in "the American War." It is also a symbol of wealth, retaining for her its mystique as a land of glamour, promise, and shining opportunity. But the America Mai is soon to discover does not match any of her expectations.

Mai's journey begins with her arrival in rural Bible belt Mississippi, where she is a high school senior housed at first in a trailer with a host family of self-proclaimed "rednecks." Later, at her request, she is moved to the home of a young African American couple and their child. After completing her challenging, often lonely year of high school in Mississippi, Mai determines to undertake university study in New Orleans, but her financial situation forces her to give up her studies, and she lands in Detroit, where she desperately attempts to support herself and maintain her spirits.

Although the people Mai encounters along the way are not ill-intentioned, they are so consumed by their own struggles and problems that they cannot offer her a generous welcome. Nor can they really understand or relate to her possessing woefully limited knowledge of Vietnam, or, one might presume, of any culture other than their own. Their many prejudices are painfully apparent to the viewer and to Mai.

Among a few memorable exceptions is her high school history teacher, Mrs. Dunham, whose heartfelt lessons on Vietnam are shown in two short segments and who appreciates and cares about Mai. Also, her second host mother in Mississippi, LaToya, extends warmth to her in the midst of her own troubled marriage. Mai's only true friend in America is Chris/Chrissy, a transvestite who sees Mai's beauty and understands her isolation.

Though Mai does everything right, she cannot succeed in the America she encounters. Carrying the enormous burden of her Vietnamese family's hopes and expectations, she turns for advice to Vietnamese immigrants in her Detroit community, but they, too, are overwhelmed by the responsibilities and difficulties they face. As Mai struggles with herself and her situation, she is beset with feelings of confusion, self-doubt, and even selfhatred. But ultimately she gains a hard-won new identity and self-knowledge, having realized



relatively early in her stay that, as she simply states, "I don't think I'll ever be a typical Vietnamese woman."

The story behind the film is as fascinating as the documentary itself. While working in North Vietnam on an AIDS education project, filmmaker Marlo Poras encountered a group of high school students preparing for a year abroad. Realizing that most documentaries about Vietnam deal with returning veterans or adventure travelers-and aware that 40 percent of the people in the country are under the age of 25—she decided to look at the two countries through the eyes of teenagers. "In Hanoi all the people had parents who had fought against the United States and [who] were taught to be very proud that this nation of rice farmers had defeated the most powerful country in the world. There was this cockiness there, but at the same time, they were totally in awe of Hollywood and MTV, and that dichotomy was too compelling a starting point to ignore" (Interview with Film Freak Central, 2 June 2002).

Originally following four exchange students placed in different regions of the U.S., Poras soon decided to narrow her focus to Mai, mostly because "Mai stood out as a complete and utter natural in front of the camera." To her, Mai possessed "this innocence and this wisdom...this funkiness and this warmth." Poras says that Mai "loved being filmed" and found the experience to be very positive amidst all her troubles.

Having devoted nearly two years to following and filming Mai, Poras then whittled down approximately 170 hours of film to make this 70-minute gem, all the more remarkable as her first featurelength production. Though a documentary, the film, which has more than a few funny and offbeat moments, has the feel of an entertaining feature. As Poras explains, "I like to laugh and I like documentaries that make me laugh. People sometimes view documentaries as medicine and I don't like to take them that way." The film has received numerous prestigious awards and was broadcast nationally on the public television show P.O.V.

In cross-cultural terms, *Mai's America* poses intriguing questions and dilemmas. For the filmmaker herself, and for me as a viewer, one of the most interesting questions

has to do with the people and places that might be said to define America. Is Mai's experience a "typical" or representative one, or does she receive a slanted view? Another area for further examination has to do with the images that Vietnamese and Americans have of each other today. Also, the film is an excellent vehicle for exploring issues such as culture shock, assimilation, and prejudice in various guises, particularly homophobia.

I highly recommend use of this film in senior high school and university-level classes in sociology, intercultural communication, gender studies, ethnic studies, Asian studies, women's studies, American studies, and history.

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Ellen Summerfield is Professor of Intercultural Communication (half-time) at Linfield College, Oregon, and an independent consultant. Her books *Crossing Cultures through Film* and *Seeing the Big Picture: Exploring American Cultures through Film* (co-authored with Sandra Lee) are available through Intercultural Press.

*Mai's America* is available from Women Make Movies. Price is \$295 for purchase and \$90 for rental.



## Our Nation: A Korean Punk Rock Community

>> Produced by Timothy R. Tangherlini and Stephen J. Epstein. 2002. 39 minutes.

lthough Our Nation can be most easily described as an introduction to the South Korean "punk" scene, it offers a much larger portrayal. Namely, the documentary provides a window on South Korean youth, on a generation struggling both to make their way in a transformed South Korea (that is by no means all-new), and to try their hand at sculpting that new South Korea themselves. In Our Nation, Drug, the premier and first punk café and CD label, emerges as a frenzied, wild social space in which young people are trying on new identities as they fashion their futures. The documentary takes its title from the first compilation CD on the Drug label, featuring the first punk group, Crying Nut, to go big. Beginning with this title, directors Stephen J. Epstein and Timothy R. Tangherlini have fashioned a film that is wonderfully suggestive and decidedly not declarative. "Our Nation," as CD title, works precisely because its meaning and tone are not entirely clear; just as the sense with which Crying Nut chose this name cannot be easily pinned down, nor can the generation pictured in this documentary. The CD and video both challenge: to what extent do South Korean punk and its scene mean to provoke or to reject the mainstream? While Our Nation is informative, it refuses to instruct. This makes for a video that invites its viewers to reflect, to consider what, after all, the South Korean fin-de-siecle punk scene is all about. It is hard to imagine a high school or college student who would not be riveted by this film and its queries: why punk, why South Korea, why now,

and so what?

In keeping with the non-didactic mode of this documentary, the terms and styles, musical and otherwise, that make up South Korean punk music and its social scene are ones that Epstein and Tangherlini do not define or outline. Rather, Our Nation introduces its audience to the look. feel, and conversation of the scene. This is not to suggest that Our Nation is not a meticulously edited tableau (it is) but rather to underscore that the viewer is challenged to personally integrate a diversity of voices. Wonderful, for example, is that the film never defines South Korean "punk" (e.g., what makes it "punk," what makes it "South Korean" etc.) but rather lets us eavesdrop on its producers, musicians, and fans as they struggle variously over what it is, what it isn't, how it is transforming and so on. One thing does, however, become resoundingly clear: South Korean punk is not simply a Western import but rather a locally inflected work-in-progress. Again and again we listen to young people happy to proclaim that "Korean punk" need not conform to the musical, cultural, or stylistic confines of punk-past or punk-Western. As the not-so-young founder and manager of Drug offers, he doesn't care what it is as long as it is "singing about what's around us." Or as one performer basically puts it, "It's punk if I say it is."

If South Korean punk is its very own musical scene—one that viewers of *Our Nation* really get a feeling for—with its every breath *Our Nation* convinces that one cannot assume the meanings of South Korean punk. While the youths who have made punk go wild to tunes that challenge the musical mainstream and take on the South Korean establishment, theirs is not a simple wholesale rejection of prevailing South Korean values or visions. In a wonderful companion article to the film, Epstein goes so far as to coin the phrase "neo-Neo-Confucianism" to describe the affinities of the Drug scene and generation (Epstein, p. 2). The tension between (seeming) all-out rejection and conformity comes to life via vivid portrayals of punk performers and consumers. We listen, for example, as the lead singer of the only girl-band, Supermarket, talks about the joys of making kimch'i (pickled vegetables) and doing laundry by hand (we witness a suds scene). Our Nation viewers are thus privy to the interface between Drugthe under-ground (literally) music scene-and the minutiae of domestic life. In other scenes we follow a fan back to her middle class apartment, and again fans on their bus commute to a college in a satellite city of Seoul. In short, we get a feeling for how South Korean punk works its way into people's lives-we see it in its quotidian relief.

Despite the film's attention to the humdrum of (even) punk in people's daily meanderings, we nonetheless come to understand that South Korean punk must be appreciated in the context of the specificity of the lives of South Korean middle-class youth-foremost the enormous education pressure and anxiety about future wellbeing in a highly stratified and competitive society. We listen to one young man proclaim that he does not even want to think about high school (i.e., its misery) and again to many other accounts of the enormous pressure to succeed. In an even broader vein, we hear one young man offer in perfect English, "South Koreans have their share of things to be pissed about." Finally, the vicissitudes of academic pressures aside, viewers get a clear sense of the pressures to conform more generally, to look, act, and be a particular way. We hear punkers talk about wanting to "break the mold," "to live as they want to live," and so on. And we listen to one of the musicians from 18Cruk describe wanting nothing more than a South Korea where one isn't stared at like an animal in a zoo for being "different." As one young man put it, punk was for him, beginning in middle school, an oasis, an escape. Epstein's aforementioned article chronicles the social context of South Korean youth and thus works as a perfect reading to accompany the film.

Beyond the specificity of middle class youth the pressures they withstand and protest—*Our Nation* also considers the historical specificity of the birth and rise of South Korean punk in the early and mid 1990s. It thus sketches the conditions of possibility that made for this scene *continued on next page* 

## India News Stories

>> Produced by the Noodlehead Network. 2002. *Volume One: History* is 15 minutes, *Volume Two: Culture* is 14 minutes, *Volume Three: Religion* is 23 minutes.

hen I sat down to watch *India News Stories* I had high expectations. The threevolume set covered the broad but important topics of the history, customs, and religions of India. I was hopeful that I would find a unique and different introduc-

COURTESY OF THE NOODLEHEAD NETWORK



tion to India for my ninth grade students to use during the upcoming school year. These videos, each approximately 20 minutes long, promised "Kid-Powered Video" from the NoodleHead Network. The back cover of each video told me that "To create a video at the NoodleHead Network, we start by asking kids what is important to them. Then we get those kids involved in all phases of videomaking—from storyboarding to acting to editing. Because we believe kids learn more when they learn from each other."

A few minutes into *Volume One: History* I realized that great ideas do not always result in great finished products. The first problem with this series is the lack of any background information for the viewer. We are thrown in to the middle of what looks like a high school trip to India. I am speculating here because our narrator never tells us who he is or how he has come to speak to us. It is a bit disorienting for the opening of an educational video. The tape is rated by the producers as appropriate for grades 5–12. The conversational style of the presentation certainly makes it accessible to middle school students, but I would be hesitant to use it in my high school classroom because of the lack of depth given to any particular subject.

As far as the content is concerned, information about the British, Dutch, and Portuguese is accurately presented, as is a section on Partition. I felt that it was a bit strange to

begin the discussion of history with the colonial period. Those teachers looking for a discussion of the Dravidians or Moguls will need to look elsewhere. The next few segments are interesting but I feel are misplaced. They cover "Sarnath, Birthplace of Buddhism," "Traditional Village Life," and "Clothing through History." By far the most compelling of these is the segment on traditional village life. The filmmakers seem to have convinced a rickshaw driver to take them to his village home. It is a very fresh and honest look at life in rural India. However, it seems odd and out of place in a video that is supposed to focus on history.

Volume Two of this series tackles the topic of customs. This includes segments on the caste system, gender roles, cities, farming, schooling, food, and others. In this video in particular I felt that the topics were very much glossed over and not given the attention they deserve. For example, the segment on schooling is 54 seconds long. I find it difficult to see how this would add to or supplement the lesson of a classroom teacher. The segment on farming is interesting, but it is simply a re-edited segment of the visit to the house of the rickshaw driver that we saw in *Volume One*. If teachers were showing this volume in isolation, they would have to explain the back story to the viewers so they could fully appreciate it.

Volume Three deals with the fascinating and always difficult subject of religion. Of all three volumes this contains the most substantive information. We find another re-edited segment from Volume One discussing the birthplace of Buddhism. Additionally there are segments focusing on the practices of Hinduism as well as Jainism, Sikhism and Islam. With such a wide range of information I found myself again wishing for greater depth on many of the subjects discussed. I could see this volume being used as an introduction to a lesson on religion in India since the video does a fair and accurate job of presenting India as a religiously pluralistic society instead of a country of one billion Hindus, as many of our students believe.

Overall, I was disappointed with *India News* Stories. This is not to say that the videos were terrible. Certainly there are other videos on the market that do not cover the subcontinent with nearly as much honesty and originality. There are bright spots. The trip to rural India in *Volume One* and the majority of *Volume Three* are indeed worthwhile. The concept of "kid powered video" is wonderful; this particular outcome however leaves something to be desired.  $\blacklozenge$ 

Steve Kellner is a Social Studies teacher at West Chicago Community High School in West Chicago, Illinois. At the University of Chicago, he developed secondary school resources on Asia as a Graham School Fellow. He currently teaches Global Studies, an interdisciplinary class combining Geography and English.

India News Stories, Volumes One, Two, and Three are available for purchase from The Noodlehead Network. Price is \$89 each.

## Korean Punk Rock

continued from previous page

foremost the civilian presidency, economic ascendance, and escalating globalization. Epstein takes on these conditions at considerable length in the aforementioned article (Epstein, 2), asking, "Why did punk arrive in Korea in the mid-1990s and what meaning does it hold for its adherents?"

One of the fascinating things about *Our Nation* is its transnationalism: among the "South Korean" voices of this film, those of punk performers, fans, and commentators, are many voices that speak fluent and colloquial English, voices that have been nurtured abroad. I love the matterof-fact way in which English inhabits *Our Nation's* screen. In middle-class South Korea, such voices are in fact increasingly quite matter-of-fact matters. More specifically, we also learn about the transnational backgrounds of some of the punk artists. The South Korean punk scene is decidedly middle class, a matter explored in both the film and Epstein's article.

The film, like the scene it sets out to document, is fast-paced, youthful, stylish, and frenetic. It will hold and intrigue American youth audiences—who will no doubt have *much* more to say about the cultural and musical specificity of this South Korean scene than this 40-something reviewer! ◆

#### Reference:

Epstein, Stephen, "Anarchy in the UK, Solidarity in the ROK: Punk Rock Comes to Korea," *Acta Koreana* 3 (2000): 1–34.

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Nancy Abelmann is an Associate Professor of Anthropology, East Asian Languages and Cultures, and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; she is also a teaching faculty member of Asian American Studies. She has published books on social movements in contemporary South Korea, on Korean America, and on women and social mobility in post-colonial South Korea. Her co-edited volume with Kathleen McHugh, *Gender, Genre, and Nation: South Korean Golden Age Melodrama*, is forthcoming from Wayne State University Press. Currently she is completing *Korean Americans go to College: Education Across the Border.* 

*Our Nation: A Korean Punk Rock Community* is distributed by Filmakers Library. Price is \$295 for purchase and \$65 for rental.

#### Asian Educational Media Service

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## What's New?

### Visiting Filmmaker

In April, AEMS and the Asian American Studies Program co-sponsored a visit from author and documentary filmmaker Dai Sil Kim-Gibson. While here, she screened her documentary *Silence Broken* (reviewed in *AEMS News and Reviews*, Fall 2001). After the screenings, she spoke and answered questions from the audience. While she was here, Xian Barrett and Sarah Barbour had the opportunity to interview her about her work. Their interview appears on page 1.

### New Web Pages

The AEMS collection of Regional Resources Web pages continues to grow. In response to the SARS crisis last spring, we created a page of resources on the disease and its effects, both medical and social. This page can be found at: www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/SARS/SARS.htm.

This summer we continued to expand our collection of Regional Resources adding pages on Bhutan, East Timor, Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Mongolia. In addition to noting interesting media about specific countries, these pages refer users to sites on culture, geography, history, and the arts. To see the entire collection to date, please visit

www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/AsianResources/AsianResources.htm.

### **Education About Asia**

In the spring of 2002, Sarah Barbour guest-edited a special issue of *Education About Asia* that focused on film in the classroom. Our collaboration with *EAA* continues. This fall Sarah guest-edited the film review section which reviews media on, among other subjects, Pakistani music, Indian religion, Japanese women, the Vietnam War, and Asian immigrants in the American West. For more information about *Education About Asia*, please visit: www.aasianst.org/eaa-toc.htm.

-Sarah I. Barbour, Editor

## Guide to Distributors

>> A list of distributors mentioned in this issue of *AEMS News and Reviews* 

Amazon.com. Web site: www.amazon.com.

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Marty Gross Film Productions, Inc., 637 Davenport Road, Toronto, Canada M5R 1L3. Tel: 416-536-3355. Fax: 416-535-0583. E-mail: marty@martygross.com.

National Asian American Telecommunications Association, 346 9th Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103. Tel: 415-552-9550. Fax: 415-863-7428. E-mail: Distributor@ naatanet.org. Web site: www.naatnet.org

**The NoodleHead Network**, 107 Intervale Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401. Tel.: 800-639-5680. Fax 802-864-7135. E-mail: info@noodlehead.com. Web site: www.noodlehead.com

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