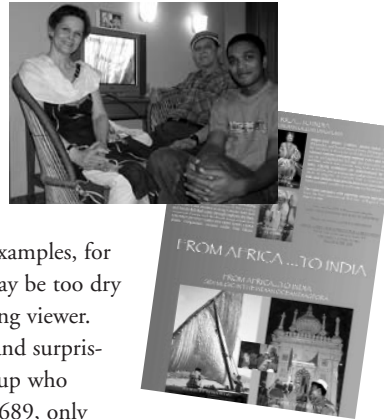


News and Reviews

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From Africa to India: Sidi Music in the Indian Ocean Diaspora

>> A film by Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, 2003. 74 minutes.



From left: Filmmakers Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, and Abdul Hamid Sidi (Sidi research assistant, second cameraperson, and dancer in the tour group).

This excellently informative documentary of the history, music, and religion of the Sidis is the latest in a series of valuable educational videos by the noted ethnomusicological team Amy

Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy. Although Sidi people are diverse and their specific

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historical origins varied, “Sidi” remains a common term in the Indian subcontinent for all people believed to be of African descent. Some Sidi musical and ritual terminology can be traced to Swahili; other terms derive from Arabic. The video commences with a narrative of Sidi history, illustrated with paintings and maps, and interspersed with maritime clips. Some teachers might wish to summarize this material orally and skip to the

most gripping musical examples, for the opening narrative may be too dry and detailed for the young viewer. Some facts are exciting and surprising, such as the Sidi group who conquered Bombay in 1689, only to lose control after 16 months.

The videographers began the project hoping to find traces of African heritage in Sidi music. Viewers are left largely to draw their own conclusions about these traces—probably a good tactic, for the musical data remain ambiguous. Informative subtitles alert one to “call and response singing in thirds,” for example. Some such antiphonal forms are typical among non-Sidis as well, especially in the performance of *ziker* (literally “remembrance”; here, reiterative verbal

formulas). Parallel third singing is a better marker of otherness, since parallel harmony is relatively uncommon (but not unheard of) in South Asia.

The video proceeds from Uttara Kannada in the Deccan, where Hindu, Christian, and Muslim Sidis use music in their various educational, social, and religious practices, to Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, where Muslim Sidis are descendants of a regiment known as the “African Cavalry Guards.” The bulk of the video centers on Sidis of Western India. The patron saint of Muslim Sidis of Gujarat, Bombay, and some other regions is Gori Pir (or Baba Gor), whose emblematic instrument is the musical bow (*malunga*), a prototypically “African” musical

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COURTESY OF APSARA MEDIA FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Ethnomusicologists Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy present examples of Sidi music and dance in *From Africa to India: Sidi Music in the Indian Ocean Diaspora*.

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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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For more information, contact:

AEMS, Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
230 International Studies Building, MC-483
910 South Fifth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Telephone: 1-888-828-AEMS (1-888-828-2367)
or 217-265-0642
Fax: 217-265-0641
E-mail: aems@uiuc.edu
Web: www.aems.uiuc.edu

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What's New?

Annual Advisory Board Meeting

AEMS and the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies have had a busy spring semester. AEMS held its annual Advisory Board meeting on March 3, the day before the annual meeting of the Association of Asian Studies began. We were fortunate that AAS was held in San Diego this year and those of us from the Midwest were able to enjoy some sunshine in addition to the good company of our Board members and other associates. As always, our Board members had lots of good advice and ideas for future projects, which we will be letting you know about in the coming months.

This year, we welcomed a new Board member, **Gary Mukai**, Director of the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE). Gary has more than twelve years of experience teaching K–12th grades and has published numerous books and articles that focus on the Asia/Pacific Region and U.S.–Japan relations. In 1997, he was awarded the Franklin Buchanan Prize for the development of curricular materials on Asia and U.S.–Japan Relations. His knowledge of K–12 teaching needs and curriculum material development has already proved to be a great asset to AEMS and we look forward to working with him.

I would like to thank **Diana Marston Wood** and **Sharon Wheaton**, Board members who have resigned over the past year. Both have served on the Board since its inception. Diana, who is currently the Assistant Director of the Asian Studies Center at the University of Pittsburgh, brought to AEMS an understanding of the needs of K–12 teachers and helped AEMS effectively expand its outreach to better meet their needs. Sharon has worked in educational technology for many years and has worked with David Plath on several MPG productions. Her expertise has proved invaluable to AEMS.

The staff of AEMS and the Center thank all our Board members, past and present, for the help and encouragement they have given us over the years.

Transnational Chinese Cinema Series

In March, the Center hosted its second annual Asian film series. This year's series was titled "Transnational Chinese Cinema," and featured films from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China. For a complete list of the films we screened, please see www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/calendarS04.html (and check back periodically for information about next year's series!). ♦

—Sarah I. Barbour, Editor



Japanese Feature Film Clips Project

in focus A new web site at www.umich.edu/~wittevee/filmlist.html is the early stage of a low-tech project intended to list especially rich passages in Japanese feature films that one may cue for classroom use. If well used, the web site may be a model for other world areas, too. In this shared project, the idea is for each person to contribute at least one example that gives time marks along with a remark about what may interest others who are learning about life in Japan. One day the entries could be set in a database for easy keyword searching. But for starters, a simple list of significant observation spots is the goal.

The late Itami Juzo's many social satires are rich ground, of course (*The Funeral*, *A Taxing Woman*, *Tampopo*). Yoji Yamada's *Otoko wa Tsurai Yo* (*Tora-san*) series is another obvious gold mine. If each volunteer would view and annotate a favorite film, it will not be long before an educator could find scenes such as the environments of school, home, workplace, or examples of popular culture (food places, karaoke sessions, neighborhood festival events). For more details visit the web page, or write directly to Guven Witteveen with your film title or any questions at wittevee@umich.edu. ♦

Wedding Through Camera Eyes: A Trilogy of Wedding Photography in Korea

>> A film by Kijung Lee. 2002. 45 minutes.

This documentary features one of the most popular and interesting cultural practices in contemporary South Korea: the making of a photo album with photographs taken before, during, and after the wedding. Through interviews with three couples and their professional photographers, the film introduces a trilogy of wedding photos, underscoring the centrality of such visual records in the rite of passage. Following a brief introduction of each couple and the filmmaker himself—a native Korean author and recent recipient of a Ph.D. in visual anthropology—the documentary unfolds the stories of the newlyweds over the pre-wedding, wedding, and honeymoon photography, evenly divided into three 15-minute segments.

Under the subtitle, “Dream on Fantasy Wedding,” the first story introduces the process of making a pre-wedding photo album, also known as “outdoor shooting.” A professional photographer leads the prospective bride and groom to a number of carefully selected locations, such as the exotic amusement park Lotte World and a traditional palace ground, to create romantic images of the couple through photography. When interviewed at their new home, with an enlarged pre-wedding photo hung on the wall, the groom explains his motive and satisfaction in making the pre-wedding album which gave him the opportu-



The film suggests that the particular manners in which such popular and highly commercialized wedding photography is practiced can reveal certain social values and ideas that are embedded in contemporary South Korean culture.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIJUNG LEE

Filmmaker Kijung Lee

efforts to follow the carefully staged poses and expressions for the photographer, the one-day hero and heroine change their costumes several times throughout the photo-shoot from Western style ceremonial clothing to *hanbok*, traditional Korean clothing.

The second segment, “Wedding as a Rite of Passage,” takes place in a commercial wedding hall. It begins with an introduction of the chronological order of the Western style wedding ritual, and moves on to talk with the bride and groom about the elaborate photographing practice during and after the ceremony. Their comments on the

nity to make his dream come true when he held his bride in her wedding dress for the camera. An interview with the photographer follows, elaborating on the meticulous skill and technique required to create these permanent images of the couple through photography. While making their best

photos from their traditional Korean ceremonial greeting, or *pyebaek*, which consists of the last part of the wedding hall’s ritual package, are particularly interesting: the bride recollects her feelings of unfamiliarity toward the “traditional” Korean ceremony not knowing much about the meanings of the detailed practice, while the groom tries but keeps failing to identify some of his extended family members in the photos who were receiving his traditional bow according to their age and genealogical ranks. The bride also recalls that her family was not allowed to participate in the traditional bowing due to the opposition from a wedding hall employee who claimed that there

is no such practice in “tradition.”

The film then takes us to a photographed honeymoon of a couple at Jeju island, one of the most popular destinations in South Korea, for the last story of the trilogy: “Wedding into Tourism.” The three-day honeymoon package includes a tour bus and professional photography service. The newlywed tour group visits various popular shooting locations that are predetermined by the Jeju Tourist Association. The photographer claims that “honeymoon tour means nothing without photographing,” while the

young couple express their expectation for the role the honeymoon photos will play in their married life—however awkward they have felt during moments of rather unnatural construction to create romance and intimacy while in the eye of the public following the photographer’s detailed directions. The groom recalls the uneasy feeling he had one time thinking, “Do we really need to do this much for the sake of photos?” Yet the couple seems to treasure their honeymoon photographs as a visual record of their very special moments together.

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Asian Educational Media Service
Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
230 International Studies Building, MC-483
910 South Fifth Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820
www.aems.uiuc.edu

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Asia for Kids, 4480 Lake Forest Dr. #302,
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242. Tel: 800-888-9681.
Fax: 513-563-3105. E-mail: sales@afk.com.
Web site: www.afk.com.

Documentary Educational Resources,

101 Morse Street, Watertown, MA 02172.
Tel: 800-569-6621. Fax: 617-926-9519. E-mail:
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Suite 500WS, New York, NY 10013. Tel: 212-
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