

News and Reviews

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The Making of an Anthropological CD-ROM: *Transports of Delight: The Ricksha Arts of Bangladesh*

>> by Joanna Kirkpatrick

Having been invited to write about how I came to produce my research as a multimedia CD, I felt that my reflections on the process could be useful or encouraging to AEMS readers who might have thought of trying it someday. Do many of you use CDs in your teaching and studying? Today, some anthropologists and certainly more archaeologists are putting their data on disks. Perhaps as I write some are putting precious video records on DVDs, as well. If you are curious as to how my CD (reviewed by David Plath in the last issue) came about, I shall try to relate the story behind the story.

The story began in 1975–76 when I was a visiting scholar at a graduate social sciences institute at Rajshahi University in Bangladesh. While riding three-wheel cycle rickshas to and from the small

town of Rajshahi's bazaar, I suddenly saw the art painted on their backboards and began to photograph it. On visits to Dhaka (Bangladesh's capital) I also noticed the art there and was able to shoot photos, although not as often as I wished due to my job. I had already seen and enjoyed Bangladeshi fine arts—sculpture and painting—in Dhaka museums. I was surprised that nobody, it seemed to me at first, had done anything with ricksha art. Moreover, I realized how odd it was to find this kind of artistic expression in a predominantly Muslim country, an expression of and by the *choto lok* (the “small people,” the lower artisan classes) when only fine arts were noticed and respected, and so I jumped at pursuing the topic. I repeatedly returned for this purpose for five or six visits, including six months supported by a



Fulbright research grant (1986–87), and a final visit in 1998 to shoot video.

Right away during my next visit in 1978, I met my first ricksha artist with the aid of one of my former Rajshahi students, who accompanied me in Dhaka and interpreted for me, as I was not very fluent. While I did

receive a number of faculty research grants from my employer, Bennington College, I determined that I would not let lack of funding restrict the frequency of my field trips.

Thus, apart from the Ford Foundation funded job at Rajshahi University for one year, and the U.S. government Fulbright grant, I self-funded the

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COURTESY OF FIRST RUN/ICARUS FILMS

From Chris Hillton's film *Shadow Play: Indonesia's Years of Living Dangerously*. See review, page 4.

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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 audio-visual 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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What's New?

More Regional Resources pages

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/AsianResources/AsianResources.htm>

Early in 2002, we created our first "Regional Resource" page on Afghanistan in response to September 11 and subsequent events. That page proved so popular that we have been adding pages on other Asian countries and regions ever since. These regions now include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Kashmir, Malaysia, Mongolia, North Korea, Pakistan, The Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Having covered most of the less-taught regions of Asia we have finally added pages on China and Japan. As there is a wealth of resources about both these countries, the pages are a little bigger than the others, and we make no claim that they cover all available resources. However, we hope they will be an aid to students and teachers looking for more information on these fascinating places:

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/China/ChinaResources.htm>

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/Japan/JapanResources.htm>

As always we welcome suggestions of additional links for all our pages (only educational resources, please—no commercial sites unless they have significant educational content available for free). Please contact AEMS at aems@uiuc.edu with suggestions or comments. ♦

—Sarah I. Barbour, Editor

Call for Submissions

The Asian Educational Media Service and *Education About Asia* are pleased to announce that we will again be collaborating on an expanded media review section in *EAA*'s Fall 2004 issue. Sarah Barbour, Program Director of AEMS, will be editing this section, which will address the use of feature films, documentaries, CD-ROMs, videos, and DVDs in teaching about Asia. We are looking for reviews of these materials with an emphasis upon classroom use.

Although we welcome manuscripts on all areas of Asia, reviews of Southeast Asian media are particularly encouraged. Reviews should run approximately 500 words (two double-spaced manuscript pages); essays should run about 1000 words (four double-spaced manuscript pages). If you would like to discuss a topic or film for review, or have other questions, please contact Sarah Barbour by phone or e-mail. Please send one copy of your submission(s) by e-mail attachment to BOTH of the following people by no later than May 30th. ♦

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COURTESY OF MARTY GROSS FILMS PRODUCTIONS

Kabuki performances are often divided into three categories: *aragoto*, often translated as “rough style” but really indicating the appearance of a superhuman hero (*ara* means “to appear”). *Aragoto* is the wildly exaggerated style often proposed as the epitome of the *kabuki* spirit. *Aragoto* was a style associated with Edo *kabuki* and initiated especially by the Ichikawa Danjoro family. By contrast, *wagoto*, the “soft style,” featuring effeminate dandies and lovers from the demimonde, was associated with the Kyoto-Osaka area and was popularized by actors such as Sakata Tojoro. The third category is *shosagoto* or dance plays, which encompasses the broad repertory that focuses on movement rather than plot or characterization and features *onnagata* female impersonators.

pound. Unable to cross the river, the woman, Kiyohime, transforms herself into a serpent and pursues the priest, who takes refuge inside the bell. Enraged, the snake raps itself around the bell, circling rapidly until the bell becomes red hot, incinerating the unfaithful priest inside.

agitated with the memories of the past. The work climaxes as Kiyohime is overwhelmed by her memories and once again reveals her demonic nature. In the play's final scene, she climbs atop the temple's new bell, transformed into the venomous snake she always was.

Selected scenes from *Musume Dojoji* are included in many films and videos that introduce the art of *kabuki*. As far as I know, however, this 1995 film by the Shochiku Corporation is the only available film of the entire piece.

As a teaching tool, this film will be very useful to introduce the art of *shosagoto* and the technique of the *onnagata*. At seventy minutes, it may be a



ward through some scenes. If the voice-over commentary can be switched on and off on the DVD version (I have only seen the film on VHS), it may be helpful to view selected scenes with-

Translations of both the Noh play *Dojoji* and *Musume Dojoji* itself appear with commentary in Karen Brazell's marvelous *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays* (Columbia University Press, 1998). These should by all means be consulted by teachers and students who want to use this film. In short, this is an excellent film that belongs in any library of films about Japan. ♦

David G. Goodman is Professor of Japanese Literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His most recent publications on Japanese theater are *Angura: Posters of the Japanese Avant-Garde* (1999) and *Concerned Theatre Japan: The Graphic Art of Japanese Theatre, 1960 to 1980* (CD-ROM, 1998).

Suggested Reading

Brazell, Karen, ed. *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1998. Available from Amazon.com.

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Indonesia: The New Order and Beyond

- >> *Shadow Play: Indonesia's Years of Living Dangerously*. A film by Chris Hillton. 2002. 55 minutes.
- >> *Children of the Crocodile*. A film by Marsha Emerman. 2001. 52 minutes.
- >> *A Trial in East Kalimantan: The Benaq Dayak Resistance*. A film by Sandeep Ray. 2000. 50 minutes.

Indonesia's 30-year New Order began in 1966 with the overthrow of the country's first president, Sukarno, and his replacement by General Suharto who served as president until forced to resign in 1998. He was succeeded by then Vice President B.J. Habibie. The New Order was characterized by considerable economic and educational development, but also by military rule, ecological damage, human rights violations, and corruption in business and government. These films illuminate three violent points in the New Order's history: its beginning in mass killings following an alleged communist coup attempt; the occupation in 1975 of East Timor (after its decolonization by the Portuguese in 1974) which lasted until 1999; and conflicts which have arisen as new democracy is expressed following the end of the New Order regime and exploitative development projects are

**...before 1965, Australian,
British, and American
government representatives
and agents were
manipulating Indonesians
through propaganda,
misrepresentations,
monetary support, and
intelligence information...**

challenged. All three films would be suitable for high school grades 11 and 12, college, or adult audiences.

Shadow Play takes its title from popular puppet plays of Java and Bali, which portray the machinations and wars of kings in tales from India's *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and from Javanese history. Its subtitle is a play on the successful

Australian movie, *The Year of Living Dangerously*, which portrayed the chaos in Indonesia immediately before the fall of Sukarno. *Shadow Play* focuses on events surrounding September 30, 1965, when six Indonesian generals were murdered on one night, allegedly by supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party as part of a coup, which was put down within 24 hours by General Suharto. This led to a nationwide purge of sus-

pected communists and brutal killings in villages and towns, mainly in Java and Bali, but also other areas. Hundreds of thousands of people died and were buried in mass graves. Local scores were often settled following Indonesia's chaotic political and economic situation in the early 1960s. Many persons were imprisoned for the next several decades, and others were classified as communist sympathizers, and their job and educational possibilities were restricted.

The film's title, *Shadow Play*, also relates to its central argument that before 1965, Australian, British, and American government representatives and agents were manipulating Indonesians through propaganda, misrepresentations, monetary support, and intelligence information as part of the Cold War fear that Communism was spreading throughout Southeast Asia and that Indonesia, with a large communist party, was a prime target. The thesis is supported through interviews with a variety of governmental and private persons, including survivors of prisons and torture, as well as consideration of recently released documents of several governments. The film would be useful in classes concerned with Southeast Asia, the wider implications of the Vietnam conflict, and the history of the Cold War.

Children of the Crocodile concerns the aftermath of Portugal's withdrawal from Portuguese Timor in 1974. This event heightened anti-Communist fears in Indonesia's military elite, with the rise of a revolutionary and allegedly leftist political party in East Timor, Fretilin, and led Indonesia to invade and occupy East Timor in 1975, with tacit support from the United States and Australia. Timorese fought the Indonesians during a violent two decades in which as many as 200,000 Timorese may have died from fighting, displacement from farming areas, hunger and disease. Many East Timorese fled to Australia. After the fall of President Suharto, President Habibie offered the East Timorese a choice: become an autonomous region in Indonesia or become independent. In a referendum managed by the United Nations in East Timor and among overseas refugees, a resounding 78% chose independence to the surprise of the often misinformed Indonesians and the chagrin of the military. Violence by Indonesian-sponsored militia drove many people to flee or be driven from the area. A U.N. military force came to help protect East Timorese from the militia and, after a period of U.N. trusteeship, East Timor became a nation on May 20, 2002.

The film's title refers to a myth in which a Timorese man befriends a crocodile which eventually repays him by turning into the island of Timor where he and his descendants can live. The film, made by Australians, tells the story of two women, Cidalia Pires and Elizabeth Exposto,

The film shows the rich cultural life of the refugees and their many efforts to aid the struggle from overseas. It shows poignantly how the two women face and surmount different personal situations in relating to East Timor. Elizabeth eventually goes to East Timor and works with the U.N. agencies to improve the situation there, though she envisions her future in Australia. Cidalia, a performance artist, helps organize dance and music groups in Australia and also goes to East Timor to record music and dance to take back to Australia. Her family all return to East Timor, but she, being a lesbian, feels that she could not fit into Timorese society, though she can continue her engagement through the arts. The film highlights clearly the dilemmas of identity which face migrants and refugees in so many parts of the world, including many communities in the U.S. where this film might be usefully shown in classrooms.

COURTESY OF FIRST RUN/ICARUS FILMS

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Children of the Crocodile is available from Women Make Movies. Price is \$250 for purchase or \$75 for rental.

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I was still bemused by my erroneous idea of the CD looking like and acting like a book. It took a while for me to realize, as the disk's development progressed, that there would be no table of contents and no index; that the object seen on the screen would not look like a book at all.

Issues of hyperlinking and layout came up. Since I translated most foreign words in my text in parentheses, I chose not to hyperlink these to the glossary, nor were references cited in text hyperlinked, either. I also avoided hyperlinking to Internet sites because of their often ephemeral nature. There are features of electronic document style that to me are an aesthetic annoyance. Colored hyperlinking on a black font text and sprinkled all over it, for example, suggests a case of typographical measles. A good deal of electronic layout design, where information is spread among square or rectangular boxes of various sizes and

There were aspects of this research that I could not include on the CD due to limitations of field conditions and access. The biggest limitation was the reluctance of artists and mistris to give me the time needed to do detailed studies of the actual art-making process. They were, after all, artisans working for a living. With the exception of a couple of artists, the willingness of most of them I contacted to give up more than an hour of work time interacting with me was, therefore, limited. I did, however, revisit some of them several times.

I would like to conclude by briefly relating the process I went through trying to decide how to conceptualize and arrange my material. It developed gradually as I worked on scanning hundreds of photos, enabling me to study them more closely. I have already noted (above) how I initially thought of presenting the material along a chronological timeline. This aspect is present in the CD. But the main organization of my data was based on the themes that eventually emerged from the material and interviews. Thus, I employed both the topical classifications used by ricksha artists



and some unclassified by them but discerned by me. Pervading my interpretive discussions, finally, are my overall assessment of their significations as representing and expressing male desire: for women and power, and also for the good things of life as the artists and mistris saw them—the village home left behind, speed and technological progress, religious blessings, and in later years the wealth found abroad in the big cities of the industrial world, such as Sydney or London. More abstractly, I presented in my article on fieldwork and interpretation in the Readings file my concept of this entire cultural phenomenon of the passionately decorated rickshas, and their gorgeously decorated truck counterparts in Pakistan, as expressing the wish to appropriate desirable objects via the gaze, in cultures that stand for control over the gaze as well as over its objects. Thus: gorgeously decorated rickshas, made to be “seen at a glance,” as one artist put it.

While I've tried to convey the process involved in making this CD, readers who want to know more are invited to contact me. ♦

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Joanna Kirkpatrick is the author producer of *Transports of Delight. The Ricksha Arts of Bangladesh*. She is also a Cultural and Social Anthropologist who specializes in both South Asia is my regional area of studies, both India and Bangladesh. Since doing her first fieldwork in Punjab, India, in 1965–66, she has published in the fields of medical anthropology, women studies, and popular art in Bangladesh. She can be contacted at ricksha1@spro.net.

Related Web site: www.ricksha.org

Transports of Delight: The Ricksha Arts of Bangladesh is available from Indiana University Press. Cost is \$29.95.

References

1. Müller, Hans-Peter. "Rickshafahrer in Bangladesch. Eine Quantitative Studie Über Bilder und Weltbilder." *Ethnologische Zeitschrift, Zürich* 1:51–12, 1976.
2. Chaudhuri, Asad. "Abdul Mia Chitrakarma." *Robbar* 2:18, 4245 (December), 1979.



Ritual Traditions of Eastern Indonesia

- >> *Releasing the Spirits: A Village Cremation in Bali*. A film by Linda Connor, Patsy Asch, and Timothy Asch. 1990. 43 minutes.
- >> *A Celebration of Origins*. A film by E. Douglas Lewis, Patsy Asch, and Timothy Asch. 1992. 45 minutes.

These two films are part of a series on Bali and some islands of eastern Indonesia by ethnographic filmmakers Patsy Asch and the late Timothy Asch in collaboration with anthropologists. Both films illustrate aspects of complex ritual traditions characteristic of a number of societies in Indonesia and both complement each other in interesting ways, hence this joint review.

The Balinese are the people in Indonesia who still practice a form of Hinduism, which once was widespread in the archipelago. Like Hindus and Buddhists elsewhere, Balinese cremate the dead. Cremations are their most elaborate life-cycle rituals, though the Balinese are noted also for their numerous and beautiful temple festivals. Villagers of limited means pool their resources for a joint cremation ceremony in which the fire releases the spirits to become ancestors in the afterworld. The dead are actually buried while their survivors accumulate the resources to host grand ceremonies, one of which was held in 1978 in Central Bali and is shown and analyzed in this film. The previous such cremations there had been held fifteen years earlier. Many such cremations were held in 1978 in order to spiritually cleanse the island in preparation for the great purification ceremony, *Eka Dasa Rudra*, held in 1979 at Bali's most sacred temple

complex, Besakih, a ceremony held only once a century. The vicissitudes which marked that great purification ceremony are excellently shown and analyzed in the film by J. Stephen Lansing, *The Three Worlds of Bali*, which I discussed in an article in *AEMS News and Reviews* vol. 2, no. 1, 1999, page 15 (Spring 1999) and which would also be an excellent film to complement this one.

This film shows the ways in which the villagers prepared for and conducted the cycle of events around the cremation, including pre-cremation rituals and the post-cremation ritual of scattering of the remains. Given the length of time between burial and such a ceremony, the dead were not exhumed but were replaced by effigies of various types which were burned. The elaborate ephemeral art of wood, plants, and flowers at which Balinese excel is well illustrated. Apart from showing the diverse ceremonial activities, the film includes discussions of four Balinese participants filmed two years later as they watch videos of the events. Each person brings different perspectives to what they experienced and what they are viewing on the videos, and all of their discussions are clearly sub-titled.

It is worth noting here that one of the central participants was a woman, Jero Tapakan, who was

the subject of four previous Asch films also dealing with ritual, spirit possession, and healing in Central Bali. The five films are available from the distributor listed below. An accompanying monograph by Linda Connor, *Jero Tapakan: Balinese Healer* (1997) is also available.

The second film, *A Celebration of Origins*, is set in the Tana' Ai region of eastern Flores, the third island to the east of Bali. Unlike the Balinese who cultivate rich fields of rice by an elaborate irrigation system, the various peoples of Flores practice shifting agriculture and hunting and gathering. Unlike many societies on Flores which have become Roman Catholic, Tana' Ai people maintain their traditional religious and ceremonial system.

This region has seven ceremonial domains. That of Wai Brama is the largest and, according to myth, the oldest such domain, and is the setting for this film. The celebration is held to link the living with their original ancestors and to expiate the sins of the living which, in this case, were believed to have led to years of poor harvests and epidemics. The celebration displays the important principles of order in the society governing relations between men and women, human beings and the deity and spirits, and the clans and houses which constitute the domain. Poor harvests and epidemics had led to two decades of delays in conducting the celebration which was finally held and filmed in 1980. It had been initiated by a ritual leader called the Source of the Domain but he died before the event, leaving his young heir and other clan elders to cope with organizing the activities.

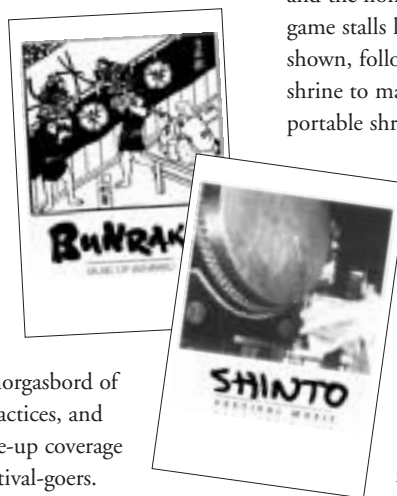
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- >> *Music of Bunraku*. 1991. 29 minutes.
- >> *Shinto Festival Music*. 1993. 30 minutes.

The presentation is easy to follow and includes only a few unfamiliar Japanese words. It strikes a fine balance between educating the viewers and letting the performance speak for itself. The performance segments alone can be enjoyed by all ages. The full 29 minutes is best suited for high school age and above.

Sato Kagura is illustrated for several minutes at central Tokyo's Sumiyoshi Shrine. Then the presentation moves on to festival spaces more generally, as seen in the Sanja Matsuri (Sanja Festival) that takes place for three days in Asakusa. Music



amounts. For an informed, insider's view of the many related performances connected to Shinto, a viewer could do no better than this half-hour study of Shinto Festival Music. ♦

For reviews of two other videos in this series, please see *AEMS News and Reviews*, vol. 5, no. 3, page 1 (Spring/Summer 2000), for a review of *Jazz in Japan* by E. Taylor Atkins, and vol. 3, no. 2, page 4 (Summer 2000) for a review of *Gagaku: The Court Music of Japan* by Kerim Yasar.

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The two films received awards from the Society for Visual Anthropology of the American Anthropological Association. ♦

Connor, Linda. *Jero Tapakan: Balinese Healer: An Ethnographic Film Monograph*. Cambridge University Press. 1997. Available from Amazon.com.

JVC Video Anthology of World Music and Dance: South Asia

>> Created by JVC, Victor Company of Japan. 1988. Approximately 50 minutes each.

The JVC Video Anthology of World Music and Dance (Volumes 11–15) is a collection of thirty volumes, five of which are devoted to the music and dance of South Asia. The South Asia section contains three volumes on India, one on Pakistan/Bangladesh, and one on Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan. Each volume contains clips representing classical or folk music and dance forms. The accompanying booklet provides background material regarding the culture in general and the clips in particular.

The first tape of the collection, Volume 11, contains four highly representative classical dance forms from India; Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Manipuri, and Kathak, as well as two folk dance performances from Manipur. The geographic locations of the dances are varied and well chosen. Bharata Natyam, from the south, is a solo temple dance; Kathakali, also from the south, is a dance-drama that defies any traditional definition of dance and drama; Manipuri from the northeast and the Hindu-Muslim Kathak genre from the north provide excellent examples that will stimulate much classroom discussion. The tape ends with two folk dances from the northeast, and a final Kathak excerpt from the *Ramayana*. It is important to note here that there is no narration provided for any of the videos, and only a few of the clips contain subtitles to the sung text accompanying the dances. Prior teacher preparation from the accompanying booklet and other appropriate materials in advance of showing the clips is strongly suggested in order to prepare the class for the content of the scene. For example, many of the dances are based on the great epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and it would benefit students to become familiar with the stories beforehand.

Volume 12 continues the dance traditions of India with two representative yet differing styles of Chhau masked dances. Chhau hails from eastern India, and can recount sacred stories from the epics or *puranas* (sacred Hindu texts) as well as general cultural tales. Also included is another dance-drama form from South India similar to the Kathakali piece found on Volume 11. This Volume concludes with examples of two devotional songs, one from the Hindu tradition and one from the Sikh, recorded in Hindu and Sikh temples, respectively.

Volume 13, also of India, introduces the classical music tradition, with a *vina* performance by Ustad Asad Ali Khan. While he is one of the best performers on this instrument, the cinematogra-

phy of this studio recording is often confusing and limited in scope, and the viewer ends up missing much of his masterful playing technique. The *tanpura* (drone instrument) is not shown for about half of the performance, leaving uninitiated viewers to believe that all of the string sound they are hearing emerges from the *vina* itself. Due to time constraints, a section of the *alap* (introductory section) is deleted. Despite these drawbacks, this is an excellent example of the classical instrumental form. The booklet outlines the main *gat*, or melody, so that it can be introduced to students ahead of time. The *pakhawaj* drum is also shown, and the *tala*, or rhythmic cycle, is also included in the booklet. The only other classical musical performance is that of the sitar accompanied by *tabla* (set of two drums). The performance included here illustrates a folk melody usually shown after the main classical performance is complete. The remainder of the volume is of folk traditions first from Rajasthan in the west then from Bengal in the east. The epic traditions of Rajasthan, shown here in the form of the *Pabuji-ki-phad* or hand-painted scroll, tell the story of the hero Pabuji. Of interest is the young son of the main singer who is learning the tradition from his parents who sing the main epic. The brief live performance clip of the puppeteers from Rajasthan is also valuable as it is a form now only performed for tourists. The Bengal folk songs are filmed in a “staged” concert and lack information that a performance context can give. The songs are stunning, however, and provide examples of the *nirgun* or metaphysical aspects of Hinduism contrasting the more commonly heard *sagan* or deity-centered performances that are typical of the first two tapes. The Bauls are a unique group of musicians, but again

bhajans (devotional songs) and folk songs are best experienced in a temple or other original settings, and the staged performance detracts somewhat from the songs.

Volume 14, of Pakistan and Bangladesh, contains two *qawwali* songs led by the late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Unfortunately, the performance practice for this genre all but requires there to be a live audience and the studio taping of these songs proves stilted and affects the form and response of the musicians. Again, despite the studio recording,

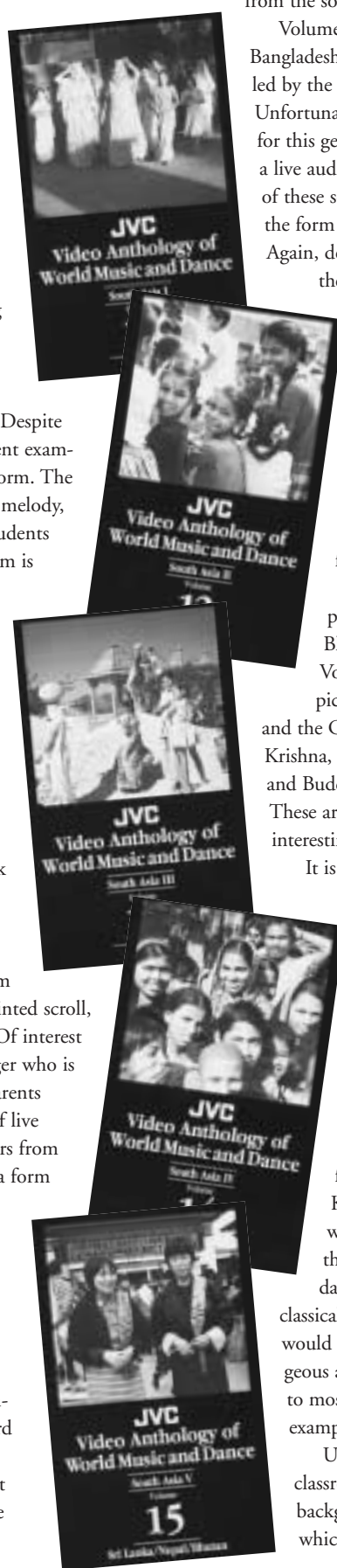
these are valuable and clear examples of the genre, and the translation of the poetry is helpful. The remainder of traditional musical examples from Pakistan include trance music, several folk instruments, and a sword dance. The volume concludes with three examples of folk dances from Bangladesh.

Volume 15, contains examples from Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. The highlights of the Volume are the Tovil ritual auspicious dance from Sri Lanka and the Gaine musician's song about Krishna, the *bhajan* (devotional song), and Buddhist ritual music from Nepal. These are all filmed in context, and are interesting and informative examples.

It is impossible for every genre to appear in any collection, and the JVC series wisely selected some of the best genres and performers available to represent a formidable number of classical and folk traditions. There are a few instances where additional footage would have benefited the collection. In Volume 11, for example, inclusion of Kuchipudi from southeast India would have nicely rounded out the collection of Indian classical dance forms. A longer and more classically oriented sitar performance would likewise have been advantageous as this instrument is familiar to most listeners. Also missing is an example of classical vocal music.

Use of each performance in the classroom requires a fair amount of background information, much of which is provided in the accompa-

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COURTESY OF DOCUMENTARY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The daily atmosphere of death and sickness that permeates a community hospice for HIV-infected orphans and families would hardly seem to lend itself to an uplifting documentary of any sort. Yet *Mercy*, through its constant reminder of the ephemeral nature of humanity, is an irrefutable testament to humans' ability to love and empathize even in such conditions.

a compromise between expressing affection for their patients and employing the safety practices designed to prevent their own infection.

death even while they combat their own fears about this deadly disease.

I can't decide whether the film was lacking in its failure to provide a broader view of Thailand. By only filming the people of the hospice, the emotional intensity of the film is retained, but the viewer doesn't get much context on Thailand or what can be done about the AIDS crisis on a

Mercy seeks to frame Luk Nam's story with broader information on the AIDS crisis through interviews with the hospice workers charged with caring for the sisters and the other wards of the hospice. Through the interviews, it also becomes clear how deeply the workers care for their patients and how much courage they need to find



Instructors should probably not utilize the movie as a stand-alone piece in a unit on Thailand, as even the details that students will learn from the film could lend to generalizations about the country as a whole based on the realities of the growing AIDS crisis. The film does provide very short scenes of the kids in a Thai school and occasional glimpses of Thai society that could be used as clips in a unit about Thailand, although such use would sap the emotional strength and purpose of the work.

Instead, the film is probably best used as a tool for teaching students about AIDS in the context of a unit on AIDS education or hospice care, or to teach students generally about empathy and love, life and death. *Mercy* falls into the category of documentary films that every person ought to see but that may be difficult to work into a conventional school lesson. ♦

[illegible]

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Mercy (Med-dah) is available from Documentary Educational Resources. Price is \$195 for purchase and \$50 for rental.

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nying booklet. The booklet is useful and informative; however, as material is often distributed between two different sections (the general introductory section for each tape and under the subsections for each clip), the reader is sometimes required to jump between sections to obtain all of the information needed to introduce a clip.

Overall, the performance production is uneven. Some of the world's finest South Asian musicians are included in this collection, but are sometimes displayed in less than informative performance contexts as some performances are taped live in their original contexts and others are studio

or staged concert performances. There are some positives to the staged productions, however, in that the lighting is excellent and musicians, costumes, and dancers are clearly visible, but the contextualized performances make the greatest impact on the viewer. As a whole, this highly ambitious collection is invaluable for anyone introducing the arts, culture or history of South Asia into their classroom. ♦

[illegible]

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IVC Video Anthology of World Music and

Dance: South Asia is distributed by World Music Store. Price is \$60 per video, \$15 for the accompanying booklet, or \$280 for all five videos and the book.

Suggested Reading

Shankar, Ravi. *My Music, My Life*. South Asia Books, 2nd Ed. 1995. Currently out of print. Please check your library.

Lal, A. *Rasa: The Indian Performing Arts in the Last Twenty-Five Years, Vols. I and II*. South Asia Books. 1995. A treasure of short articles on dozens of Indian classical and folk music and dance forms written by experts in each field. Includes illustrations that are highly useful and informative. Available from South Asia Books.

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910 South Fifth Street
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www.aems.uiuc.edu

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Organization
U.S. Postage

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Permit No. 75
Champaign, IL

Guide to Distributors

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

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

Center for Music Television, School of Music, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019. Tel.: 405-325-3978. Fax: 405-325-7574. Web site: www.ou.edu/earlymusic.

Documentary Educational Resources, 101 Morse Street, Watertown, MA 02172. Tel.: 800-569-6621. Fax: 617-926-9519. E-mail: docued@der.org. Web site: <http://der.org>.

First Run/Icarus Films, 32 Court Street, 21st Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11202. Tel.: 718-488-8900. Fax: 718-488-8642. E-mail: info@frif.com. Web site: www.frif.com.

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

South Asia Books, P.O. Box 502, Columbia, MO 65205. Tel.: 573-474-0116. Fax: 573-474-8124. E-mail: sabooks@southasiabooks.com. Web site: www.southasiabooks.com.

University of Michigan Press, 839 Greene Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-3209. Tel.: 800-621-2736 (USA) / 773-702-7000 (International). Fax: 800-621-8476 (USA) / 773-702-7212 (International). E-mail: custserv@press.uchicago.edu. Web site: www.press.umich.edu.

University of Malaya Press, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel.: 603-79574361. Fax: 603-79574473. E-mail: a8raj@umcsd.um.edu.my. Web site: www.um.edu.my/OfficePD/Index.html.

World Music Store, 56 Browns Mill Road, Montpelier, VT 05602. Tel.: 802-223-1294 or 888-409-0206. Fax 802-229-1834. E-mail: info@worldmusicstore.com. Web site: www.worldmusicstore.com.