

# News and Reviews vol. 7, No. 1 Winter 20

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

>> by Joanna Kirkpatrick

**T** aving 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 continued on page 6

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

## 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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# What's New?

## More Regional Resources pages

## http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/AsianResources/AsianResources.htm

E arly 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.

Sarah I. Barbour *Program Director* Asian Educational Media Service 805 W. Pennsylvania Avenue Urbana, IL 61801 Phone: 217-265-0642 Fax: 217-265-0641 E-mail: sibarbou@uiuc.edu Andrea S. Green *Publications Coordinator* Education About Asia 150B Patten, Dept. 4154 University of Tennessee at Chattanooga 615 McCallie Avenue Chattanooga, TN 37403 Phone: 423-425-2118 Fax: 423-425-5380 E-mail: edast@utc.edu

# Musume Dojoji

>> Produced by Shochiku Company Ltd. Starring Tamasaburo Bando. Hosted by Paul M. Griffith. 2003. 70 minutes.

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.

the best known shosagoto work. It is an indisputable classic created by the onnagata Nakamura Tomijoro in 1753. The play is based on a Noh play titled simply Dojoji (The Dojo Temple) and

its antecedent legends. The original story concerns a woman who falls in love with a priest and believes that he has promised to marry her. When he fails to fulfill his promise, the woman pursues him back to his temple (Dojoji), where a new temple bell is being installed. The priest escapes across a river to the temple com-

Musume Dojoji (Maiden at Dojoji) is probably

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.



Musume Dojoji is an omnibus work, incorporating at least nine different dances with as many costume changes and styles of music, including Takemoto, nagauta, and geza styles. It is a demanding, virtuoso piece for the mature onnagata who must perform "woman" at various stages of maturity and in a variety of moods, from playful and innocent to enraged and reptilian. Rapid costume

Performed by Tamasaburo Bando. unquestionably Japan's premier onnagata and a man who should be classified as one of the world's greatest actors in any genre, [this film] is a cinematic masterpiece.

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.

Musume Dojoji concerns the return of the spirit of Kiyohime to Dojoji in contemporary times as a new bell is being dedicated. She appears as a shirabyoshi dancer, whom the temple priests ask to perform. She obliges, but as she executes a series of virtuoso dances, her spirit becomes more and more

changes both on- and off-stage (hikinuki and hayagawari) are featured to achieve dramatic transitions from one scene to the next. The physical dexterity and artistic range required of the actor who tackles this work is breathtaking.

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.

Performed by Tamasaburo Bando, unquestionably Japan's premier onnagata and a man who should be classified as one of the world's greatest actors in any genre, it is a cinematic masterpiece. The urbane voice-over commentary by Paul M. Griffith is accurate and unfailingly helpful. The brief, interspersed scenes of Bando putting on his makeup and voice-over comments about audience conventions, props, and the like are also worthwhile.

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

a single class period, but teachers can either show the film in two sittings or fast forward through some scenes. If the voice-over commen-

little too long for

tary 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-

out the commentary in order to get an unmediated impression of the performance.

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 (СД-КОМ, 1998).

Musume Dojoji is distributed by Marty Gross Films Productions. Price for institutional use is \$125. Price for individual use is \$60.

## 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 Benoaq Dayak Resistance. A film by Sandeep Ray. 2000. 50 minutes.

ndonesia'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, Fretlin, 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 descendents can live. The film, made by Australians, tells the story of two women, Cidalia Pires and Elizabeth Exposto, whose parents and many relatives were among thousands of refugees who fled East Timor to Australia in 1975. The film portrays events in the lives of these two young women as they grow up in close and highly political refugee families in Melbourne, become Australian, but also engage in the struggle for the freedom of East Timor. Filming was done skillfully in the two countries and captures vividly the life and chaos in occupied East Timor and the women's activities and family lives in Australia. Filming is augmented with home movies and photos from family albums.

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.

A Trial in East Kalimantan, filmed on site in 1999, portrays the attempts by Benoaq Dayak people who are influenced by the new, post-New Order democracy to resist their exploitation by an Indonesian and foreign-owned company planting oil palms on their traditional hunting and farming grounds and on sacred burial sites. The company, lacking permission from Indonesian forestry or land granting bureaus, had only the permission of the provincial governor to take over thousands of hectares of land for its use, dispossessing the local Dayak. Such has been characteristic of many land grabs by the immensely profitable forest industry in both Indonesian and Malaysian Borneo. A group of Dayak villagers resisted by demanding to meet company and government authorities and to receive compensation. When company representatives failed to meet them, and they were offered what they considered to be a bribe by government officials, they burned down some company facilities and equipment. They were arrested, imprisoned for many months, and then tried. They gained support from human rights lawyers, student groups, and media which aided the men and demonstrated for them, voicing loudly their doubts about government concern for the people and the legitimacy of courts which, under the New Order, were often corrupted.





The film dramatically portrays the lives and opinions of those arrested and the situations of their families and the story is well constructed as it moves toward a suspenseful conclusion (which I shall not reveal). The filmmaking is not quite as slick technically as *Children of the Crocodile*, but is fine cinema verité as it shows the disputes between protesters, officials, and police, the prison situation and court proceeding, the home lives of the protesters, and the demonstrations and work of activists. Subtitling and translations are clear and well done.  $\blacklozenge$  **Clark E. Cunningham**, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, taught courses about Southeast Asia and did field research and teaching in Indonesia and Thailand.

*Shadow Play* is available from First Run/Icarus Films. Price is \$390 for purchase or \$75 for rental.

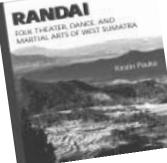
A Trial in East Kalimantan is available from Documentary Educational Resources. Price is \$194 for purchase or \$50 for rental.

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

# Randai: Folk Theater, Dance, and Martial Arts of West Sumatra

>> Created by Kirstin Pauka. CD-ROM. 2002.

K irstin Pauka effectively uses modern technology to present a cultural theatrical form. In 1998 she published a monograph on the randai theater of the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, Indonesia; four years later she released an interactive CD-ROM that complements the book.



Dance and theater have always posed a challenge to scholars. There are few aspects of cultural life that are harder to communicate and comprehend through the written word alone than performance. In his own monograph on randai, Mohd Anis Md. Nor (1986) includes 50 pages of Labanotation (movement notation) as well as ten pages of musical notation, but this is of little help to most readers. Pauka's combination of monograph and interactive CD-ROM makes randai widely accessible.

The Minangkabau are one of the most intriguing ethnic groups in Indonesia. They number about five million, of whom three million live in the home province of West Sumatra and two million live abroad. In Indonesia they are famous for their pattern of out-migration, for their matrilineal social organization combined with Islam, and for their spicy cuisine and fast food restaurants found across the country (and in some fortunate cities abroad). Dutch, Minangkabau, and other scholars have been writing about them for over a

> century and recently feminist scholars have taken particular interest in their matrilineal system.

Randai is a folk theater genre, quite different from the refined court genres of Java and Bali. Originally performed by men only, today most Minangkabau randai troupes include women. Randai performances act out traditional Malay stories through song and declamation, with much of the movement in the style of Minangkabau martial

arts accompanied by gongs, drums, flutes and fiddles.

Pauka's CD-ROM offers an ideal way to introduce students to an Asian folk genre. Any instructor with minimal computer skills should be able to use the disc in a lecture presentation or put it on reserve for more careful study. I tried the disc out with two volunteers, P, a computer professional, and M, moderately skilled. P found the disc easy to navigate, and M quickly caught on. The material is well planned for easy access. There is a main story line with cross-references, and both glossary and bibliography are conveniently located. The first chapter, "Socio-Cultural Background," sets randai in context. The following chapters are "Origins of Randai," "Martial Arts," "Randai Today," "Staging and Costumes," "Music," "Acting," and "Dance." The text on the disc consists of slightly abridged excerpts from Pauka's

## Rickshaw CD-ROM

continued from page 1

balance of my fieldwork. This allowed me to take advantage of my college's two-month winter breaks for travel to Bangladesh. Because of this freedom, after my third visit I found a chronological fix on how the ricksha art pictorial themes and designs changed or varied. My thinking about how I was going to present this material thus first explored these chronological changes and the fact that, like other vernacular or popular arts (Trinidadian Calypso music lyrics immediately came to mind), some of the art responded to political events going on in the country or even abroad. For example, In the seventies, I heard of a suitedup astronaut planting a Bangladeshi flag on the moon. In 1992 Saddam Hussein's portrait decked ricksha hoods and backboard panels. "Disco" rickshas appeared, with audio tape players of American disco music smuggled into the country on videos, inserted underneath their seats. The art's subversive tendencies were revealed when I observed changes resulting from the banning of art depicting human figures (movie stars) as some artists resorted to depicting courting birds and animals impersonating humans.

Eventually, I found one scholarly article published in a Swiss ethnography journal (1). It focused on thematic popularity: Movie material, and patriotic themes celebrating the new national identity, predominated. There was one more published source, an article by a Bangladeshi journalist (2). This article was a great help because it was one sort of emic document, i.e., the testimony of an insider—adding support to my outsider views. To my joy, he had hit on the same basic interpretive motive that I discovered after my second visit: that this art was about desire, or *icche puron*, literally, "old wishes;" or "wish fulfillment." In fact, monograph. The video clips (in Quick Time) of randai performances are passably readable on a computer screen, but if possible should be projected with a good quality system. To use the disc most effectively, an instructor would benefit from Pauka's monograph as well as the less-easily available one by Nor.

Pauka has shown the way. In the future we can surely expect monograph and interactive disc combinations of this quality for a wide range of performance genres from across Asia.

## 

Karl Heider is Professor of Anthropology at the University of South Carolina. He has done extensive fieldwork in Indonesia and for the last twentry years has been studying the Minangkabau. He is author of *Ethnographic Film* (1976), *Grand Valley Dani: Peaceful Warriors* (1997, third edition), and *Seeing Anthropology Through Film* (1997). He also is co-editor of *Films for Anthropological Teaching* (1995).

*Randai: Folk Theater, Dance, and Martial Arts of West Sumatra* is available from the University of Michigan Press. Price is \$65.

#### Suggested Reading

- Nor, Mohd Anis Md. *Randai Dance of Minangkabau Sumatra with Labanotation Scores.* Kuala Lumpur: Department of Publications, University of Malaya. 1986. Please contact the University of Malaya Press at terbit@um.edu.my for more information.
- Pauka, Kirstin, Theater and Martial Arts in West Sumatra. Randai and Silek of the Minangkabau. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies. 1998. Available from Amazon.com.

I originally aimed to title my work, "Transports of Desire," but decided that the title of the CD as it stands was more elegant.

As the collection continued to grow, I began to realize that I would not be able to find a publisher who would print even half of my color photos. (The CD has at least 1000 images on it, most of which are ricksha art.) Having devoted so much of my time, money, energy, and experience with the artists, ricksha makers, and my assistants; having gone through so much difficulty doing the fieldwork (see the CD article on this in the Readings file); having realized during my last visit that these arts of picture and décor were probably about to vanish, I had to find another way.

Knowing that it would never reach book form, I began to discuss my dilemma with a young high school student neighbor, a computer geek. He dropped by to visit often, had helped me learn to use my new PC, and loved the ricksha art photos.

## **Rickshaw CD-ROM**

continued from previous page

One day, with gratifying enthusiasm, he said, "Why not turn all of this into a CD-ROM? You could include all of your images, lots of texts, and even music and video." This hit me as a revelation and a marvelous challenge. I went for it. He found my designer/developer for me, a high school friend of his expert in writing code. We signed a contract and worked together on the overall design concept.

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. Rather, it began to resemble a combination of movie and slide show. I finally understood that instead of a table of contents there would be a window, called "Main Menu," that linked to the image files and their associated texts.

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 shapes, up one side and down the other on every page of text, seems to have been derived from commercial applications. I tried to avoid such features, asking my developer to make the windows look as much like book pages as possible. (See the CD to find out how we compromised.) My developer devised software, dubbed a "gallery creator," that I could load on a Jaz disk and open to insert and store scanned photos and texts. With this I built the CD. He first thought he would use Macromedia Director, but after months of dealing with it, he announced that he was shifting to HTML, software that he preferred.

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. ◆

## 

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

- Müler, Hans-Peter. "Rickshafahrer in Bangladesh. 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.

T hese 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 only 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-cvcle 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. continued on next page



# Japanese Music Series

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

Music of Bunraku tells the story of the puppet theater in Japan. It is one in the six part series on traditional Japanese performing arts, produced through the University of Oklahoma. The 29-minute video balances scholarly authority with several extended performance sequences, in most cases accompanied with enough background or commentary for the viewer to appreciate the elements in the performance.

The content centers on the national theater for bunraku in Osaka, starting with a glimpse of a drama in progress. Ethnomusicologist William Malm informs the performative aspects, while historian Sidney Brown fills in the historical background to the art form. The construction of the puppets themselves is introduced along with several performers who have been designated "Living National Treasures": stage narrator, shamisen player, and puppeteer.

The heart of the videotape centers on the story, "Massacre at a Geisha House" (*ise ondo koi no meta ba*). Starting with the opening scene Malm explains the storyline, and examines the music's structural features before turning to the narrator's libretto and finally discussing the recitation vocal styles employed. The real treat then is an uninterrupted 14-minute segment of the play. Malm and Brown close the presentation with a brief summary of bunraku music.

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.

## Bali and Indonesia

continued from previous page

Their difficulties and conflicts are nicely presented in the film. Like many such community rituals in Indonesia, this celebration affirmed traditional ways, but as elsewhere in eastern Indonesia the organizers also had to contend with political and religious changes underway locally and in the nation. Government representatives were unfriendly to such events, which they considered both "backward" and "wasteful" of animals slaughtered, and the conversion of many people to Catholicism led to tensions over how they should participate. Such conflicts did not characterize the Balinese cremation ceremonies because government officials there are Balinese and fully involved in such events Another video in the series, *Shinto Festival Music*, tells about the music, dance and drama of Japan's Shinto-based neighborhood festivals. The con-

tent includes a visual smorgasbord of Shrine related places, practices, and persons, along with close-up coverage of music, drama and festival-goers.

The opening scene introduces the sound of flute and drum, as well as a glimpse of a masked Noh performance in progress. Again, William Malm and Sidney Brown makes appearances, with Malm introducing the subject while historian Brown defines the Shinto religion by its word roots and essential elements, summing its familiar presence in everyday life as akin to "saluting the flag" in the USA.

Viewers are taken into Hachiman Shrine in Tokyo where they learn of the priest's recitations for special occasions. Several related musical and drama terms are explored to shed light on the qualities of Shinto music and dance. The wand and bell trees one hears are examined before the videotape dwells on the staging of Kagura, and the Sato Kagura type in particular, where national and local stories intersect somehow like the mix of family and nation for the Thanksgiving holiday in the United States.

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

which are part of the dominant religion.

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

**Clark E. Cunningham**, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, taught courses about Southeast Asia and did field research and teaching in Indonesia and Thailand.

*Releasing the Spirits* and *Celebration of Origins* are available from Documentary Educational Resources. Price for each is \$245 for purchase or \$40 for rental.

The other films mentioned in this review are also available from Documentary Educational Resources. Prices are as follows: and the lion dance are studied. The food and game stalls leading up to the devotional space are shown, followed by the course taken by a portable shrine to mark the parish boundaries. A children's portable shrine and the wheeled ensemble of flute

> and drum players, "matsuri bayashi," round out this capsule of the Sanja Matsuri.

The closing seven minutes are devoted to extended recording of the kagura (sacred music) performance of "Orochi Taiji" ("Dragon Troubles"), prefaced by the comedic interlude of demons being drubbed. After the summing up and credits, still more festival visuals follow including the banks of paper lanterns inscribed with donor names and donation

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. ◆

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*Music of Bunraku* and *Shinto Festival Music* are available from the Center for Music Television. Price is \$32.95 per video or \$174.95 for the entire series (six videos). **www.ou.edu/earlymusic** 

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.

*The Three Worlds of Bali:* \$145 for purchase, \$40 for rental.

*A Balinese Trance Séance:* \$245 for purchase, \$50 for rental.

Jero Tapakan: Stories in the Life of a Balinese Healer and Jero on Jero: A Balinese Trance Seance Observed: \$245 for purchase, \$50 for rental.

The Medium is the Masseuse: \$245 for purchase, \$50 for rental.

#### Suggested Reading

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.

he 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 dancedrama 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 Video Anthology of World Music and Dance 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 Video Anthology of performance is complete. The World Music and Dance 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 sagun 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.

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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 exam-

ples 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 accompacontinued on next page

# Mercy (Med-dah)

>> Produced by Jeanne Hallacy and Jamlong Saiyot. 2002. 50 minutes.

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.

*Mercy* takes place at a hospice in Klong Toey, Thailand, and focuses on thirteen-year-old AIDS orphan

Luk Nam, who besides the hospice caregivers, is the only person there not infected with HIV. She comes to the hospice because her HIV-positive sister Nam Fon misses Luk Nam and their parents, who have already died of AIDS. Even while she tries to support Nam Fon, Luk Nam is in turn supported by Poi, her best friend from school who is also dying of AIDS. By not only depicting Luk Nam's compassion and strength in taking care of her sister, but also her occasional coldness and obstinacy, the filmmakers never allow us to forget that this is a young child who is fighting to cope with these extreme circumstances.

*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



a compromise between expressing affection for their patients and employing the safety practices designed to prevent their own infection. By focusing on Luk Nam

and the workers as well as their dying loved ones, the filmmakers demonstrate how Poi and the others leave their legacies through the love and experiences they share before they pass away. As each character fades away and her survivors mourn her, the workers describe how they try to teach the children how to overcome their fears of

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

The film's strength lies in its empathetic portrayal of the different inhabitants of the hospice and through its lack of narration, its willingness to allow the audience to get to know them through their own words. The most frustrating aspect of the film is the makers' penchant for over-editing and the introduction of effects that tend to cheapen the genuine gravity of the film by giving it an "artsy" feel. Simply put, the characters are compelling enough on their own without slow-motion shots, cheesy music overlays, or the several scenes that feel arranged or posed.

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



global level. A few interviews with people who are knowledgeable about the realities of the AIDS situation in Thailand but work beyond the walls of the hospice might help viewers frame the hospice in the greater crisis.

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.

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

## World Music and Dance

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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.

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JVC 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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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.

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