



# SOUTH ASIAN NEWS

Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii, Manoa  
www.hawaii.edu/csas

Spring 2007

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### *Letter From Director / S. Shankar*

Diaspora, belonging, translation: the work of the Center for South Asian Studies over the last year has touched on these and related ideas in a number of ways. In April 2006, CSAS held its annual symposium under the rubric “Margins and Migrations: South Asian Diasporas Across the World.” And, of course, if there is diaspora, there must also be belonging. In obvious ways, there is a connection between migration and change on the one hand and rootedness and yearning for belonging on the other. And so last year’s annual symposium topic is complemented by this year’s—“Roots and Branches: Articulations of Longing and Belonging in South Asian Contexts” (April 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> 2007). The purpose is to bring sustained attention to such notions as the vernacular, the folk, and the indigenous— notions through which longing and belonging are often articulated.



Some members and the staff of the CSAS Executive Committee

### *Moving Forward and Looking Back* *Translating the Night Life of Trees Evening Reception*

(continued on page 2)

by Amy Donahue



Gayatri Spivak urged in her workshop presentation at the International Symposium on Translation this January that “the responsibility and accountability of the translator is toward the vulnerability and fragility of the quotation marks around the original.” She also warned in her public address that for ethical translation to be possible, the translator must know both traditions well enough “for love to pass between them.” Incidentally, as part of its Spring 2007 Symposium, which is titled *Roots and Branches: Articulations of Longing and Belonging in South Asian Contexts*, the CSAS will hold an evening reception centered on the various media of *The Night Life of Trees* exhibit from 6:45 to 8:00pm on Thursday,

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### *2006 CSAS Spring Symposium Prompts Special Issue of Cultural Dynamics*

CSAS Executive Committee members Monisha Das Gupta and S. Charusheela are co-editors with Katerina Teaiwa of an upcoming special issue of the UT Austin-based Anthropology journal, *Cultural Dynamics*. The volume, entitled “Margins and Migrations in South Asian Diasporas,” emerged from the CSAS’ 2006 Symposium. Most of the presenters agreed to contribute. The issue examines marginalized South Asian diasporas, particularly those in the global South long disavowed by the homeland because of association with coolie pasts.



Diwali in Honolulu  
(see page 14)

## *Letter From Director*

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Aside from lectures and panels devoted to the exploration of this theme from various perspectives, CSAS is organizing an exhibition of contemporary tribal paintings from Central India. I am hopeful that this unique exhibition of Gond paintings of trees, which will continue our tradition of making cultural programming an integral part of the symposium, will prove a vivid and colorful expression of the themes of the symposium.

Translation. In January, CSAS co-sponsored a multi-disciplinary symposium on the topic. "Translation: Theory, Practice, Trope" (January 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> 2007) brought in scholars from around the world. Others from various UHM departments joined them for two days of discussion and literary readings. I was one of the organizers of the symposium. In addition, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak of Columbia University gave the keynote address and Arindam Chakrabarti, of the Department of Philosophy here at UHM, made a presentation. So South Asian perspectives were well represented at this symposium, which aimed to bring special attention to Hawai'i and the Pacific while at the same time opening up a dialogue about translation amongst various linguistic and cultural traditions. CSAS is proud to have played a key role in this symposium.

As part of the Rama Watamull Collaborative Lecture Series, CSAS sponsored the visit of Purnima Bose of Indiana University in Spring 2006; and under the same program, Jael Silliman of Ford Foundation and Eli Franco of the University of Leipzig will visit UHM later this semester. Aside from her work as a program officer at Ford, Jael has done pioneering work on the Jewish diaspora in India, on reproductive rights, on feminist practice, and a host of other issues. Eli is a well known scholar of Indian "skeptical" traditions and of Buddhist logic and epistemology. We look forward to their visits.

Over the summer of 2006, CSAS also sponsored two J. Watamull scholars for research and study in India. The J. Watamull scholarships provide opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students to initiate a scholarly relationship, hopefully long-standing, with India. They are one example of the multiple ways the Center for South Asian Studies serves UHM and the larger academic community in forging links with South Asia.

This issue of the newsletter provides a record of a few of these multiple ways as well as of developments at UHM of relevance to the South Asian Studies community. One such development deserves special mention. Assistant Professor Ned Bertz has joined our Department of History to teach Modern South Asian History. CSAS is happy to welcome him to UHM.

## *CSAS Funds Support Innovative South Asian Feminist Pre-Conference*

by S. Charusheela

The feminist pre-conference at Madison has become one of the most exciting spaces at the South Asia conference, a place for taking up key issues facing those of us who work within/through South Asian feminist perspectives. The support from the Center for South Asian Studies at UHM for the past two years has been vital for creating and nurturing this important event.

Fall 2006's theme, South Asian Feminism beyond Borders: Contradiction, Contestation, and Alliance in Transnational Context, emerged from discussions about the question of complicity in South Asian feminist research and practice. We identified transnational forces and issues as the ones that were repeatedly named in taking up or discussing complicity. The presentations and discussion at the pre-conference ranged from the literary and historical to the ethnographic-social-political, and the questions posed ranged from the transnational in terms of globalization, to the transnational in terms of engagements within and across the borders and boundaries of nations in the region.

At the pre-conference, it seemed as if the actual practices and epistemologies of engaging with materials emerged as a key theme in discussions and presentations. It looks like the practices, shapes of our work and our scholarly interventions as South Asian feminists will be a key emerging theme for next year!

(Charu's full report is available at [www.hawaii.edu/csas](http://www.hawaii.edu/csas))

## Congratulations!



Ned Bertz was recently hired to the UH Faculty with an appointment in History. His areas of specialization include South Asian, African, and Indian Ocean History. See our interview below for more information!

### *Spotlight On*

Interview with Professor Ned Bertz  
by Amanda Gomes

#### **How did you become interested in South Asia?**

**Professor Bertz:** I always find that one of the toughest questions because it just happened naturally and organically. I didn't have one of those moments or events that put me on to it. That is, it came about in an academic way more than anything. I became interested in India late in my undergraduate career. I studied abroad in Scotland and something about being in the UK, the land of the former empire, got me interested in subaltern history. I focused on both South Asia and Africa, particularly East Africa. I did my graduate work at the University of Iowa with joint fields in South Asian and African history. Part of the reason for this combination is dissatisfaction with the way that scholarship has approached history as nationally-based or continentally-based. My work is an attempt to recognize that a person's identity isn't necessarily bound up with a nation-state or continent.

#### **What led up to your PhD Dissertation and what kind of work did you do?**

**Professor Bertz:** I immediately began studying both Indian and African history when I got to Iowa. I did the linguistic

training and course work to prepare me to research on two sides of the Indian Ocean. Before my fieldwork I made five or six trips to India and East Africa, including a memorable first-ever visit to India. That occasion found me staying with rural villagers in Madhya Pradesh who were with the resistance movement against a proposed huge dam which would destructively flood all the neighboring villages. Following these preliminary visits, I did three consecutive years of dissertation fieldwork. I conducted research in the national archives in New Delhi looking at British colonial records of movements and transaction between East Africa and India. Then I moved down to Bombay where I worked in the Maharashtra state archives which has a fabulous repository of Indian Ocean world records as well. I also did extended fieldwork trips through Punjab and Gujarat. I took addresses from people I knew in Tanzania, Indians in East Africa, who have relatives in both Gujarat and Punjab. I would show up on their doorstep and explain who I was. Inevitably, incredibly, I would be welcomed into people's homes, sometimes for a week or longer. I could then have conversations with people about their family histories, and the way the Indian Diaspora and Indians in western India in particular have positioned themselves all around the Indian Ocean world in the past. It was a remarkable experience.

#### **Are there any highlights from your experience?**

**Professor Bertz:** The most amusing experience that I had included performing in a Hindi film, which was kind of exciting. The film was called *The Legend of Bhagat Singh*. They needed people to play British colonialists for the background in a dance scene. You can see the outline of my head on the final product, so I suppose we could say that I didn't exactly set the screen on fire. The film, however, went on to win an award for best film of the year.

#### **What are some of your current interests?**

**Professor Bertz:** I would like to apply similar themes in the future to a wider history of Partition, placing Partition in the historical context of transnational movement and exchange. The focus of this project is on the Kutch, Gujarat and Sindh border between India and Pakistan. It's an area that hasn't been looked at nearly as much as the Punjab or Bengal.

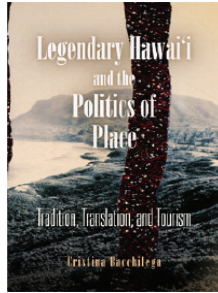
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## Faculty and Student News

### Cristina Bacchilega (English Department)

Cristina's book *Legendary Hawai'i and the Politics of Place: Tradition, Translation, and Tourism* was released in January 2007 through the University of Pennsylvania Press.



year term (January 2007-December 2009, her second stint on the board, having served a term from January 2003-December 2005). She has had an equally productive and busy Spring semester, presenting talks at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the Cultural Studies Association meeting in Portland, Oregon, and Pennsylvania State University, and teaching two graduate seminars (Feminist Theory and Reading Marx).

### Ned Bertz (History Department)

Ned Bertz has two publications forthcoming in 2007. The first is "Indian Ocean World Travellers: Moving Models in Multi-Sited Research," in Helene Basu, ed., *Routes and Roots: Western South Asia in the Indian Ocean World* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman). He acted as a panelist and presenter last October at the India Trilogy Forum, including an invited lecture, "'Mera Joota Hai Japan': The Historical Trajectory of India and Japan," hosted by the Japan-America Society of Hawai'i, Honolulu. Last November he chaired and organized a panel of South Asianists discussing the Indian diaspora in East Africa called "Making Place in Urban Spaces: East African Asians Create Global Localities," which included his paper presentation, "Moving Images: Bollywood Cinema and the City in Tanzania," at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco.

### Monisha Das Gupta (Women's Studies/Ethnic Studies)

Monisha Das Gupta's book, *Unruly Immigrants*, (2006 Duke) was released last November. Along with Charu Gupta and Katerina Teaiwa as co-editors, she has submitted a special issue entitled "Margins and Migrations in South Asian Diasporas" to the journal *Cultural Dynamics*. The volume came out of the 2006



Spring Symposium entitled "Margins and Migrations: South Asian Diasporas Across the World." Most of the presenters at the symposium agreed to contribute to the volume. The volume rethinks South Asian diaspora studies through the Center's location in the Pacific by examining the marginalized diasporas, particularly those in the global South that the homeland has long disavowed because of their association with coolie pasts.

### S. Charusheela (Women's Studies)

S. Charusheela returned to UH this past fall from her sabbatical leave (2005-2006). Charu's sabbatical year included talks at Delhi, Oregon, Seattle, and presenting at the Annual conference of the International Association for Feminist Economics at Sydney, Australia. Since her return, Charu has been presenting papers at the South Asia Conference at Madison in October ("Engendering Feudalism: Modes of Production Debates Revisited"), at the Social Science History Association conference at Minneapolis in November ("A Limit to Martha Nussbaum's Universalist Ethic"), and at the Allied Social Sciences Association meetings in Chicago in January (joint with Colin Danby, "When is the Household?"), in addition to presenting her work ("A Limit to Martha Nussbaum's Universalist Ethic") at the Women's Studies Colloquium series at UHM in November. Charu was also re-elected to the Board of Directors of the International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) for a three-

### Chennat Gopalakrishnan (Natural Resources and Environmental Management)

Chennat Gopalakrishnan served on the Scientific Advisory Committee of the International Conference on Integrated Disaster Risk Management held in August 2006 in Istanbul where he also gave an invited talk on "Integrated Disaster Risk Management: A Survey and Synthesis of Key Concepts." Gopalakrishnan also talked on the theme of "Natural Disasters and Extreme Climate Change: Impacts and Implications for Water Resource Management" at the opening plenary session of the World Water Week held in Stockholm in August 2006. Gopalakrishnan's new book on *Water and Disasters* (Routledge) is scheduled to be published in early 2007.

### Muthusami Kumaran (Public Administration/Population Studies)

Muthusami Kumaran's article "The Civil Society in India" has been accepted as a chapter in the upcoming book titled *Civil Society in Comparative Perspective*. Another

article titled “The Role of NGOs in Tsunami Relief and Reconstruction in Cuddalore District, South India,” has also been accepted as a chapter in the upcoming book *The Indian Ocean Tsunami*. This book chapter was co-authored by Tricia Eidsmoe, who received a Watamull Scholarship and spent two months in the Summer of 2005 in South India, assisting NGOs involved in tsunami relief.

### **Jaishree Odin**

#### **(Interdisciplinary Studies Program)**

Jaishree Odin received a UH Research Relations Award for \$5,000 to do research in India on the Indigenous Sufi Tradition of Kashmir in the Spring of 2007.

### **Roy Perrett**

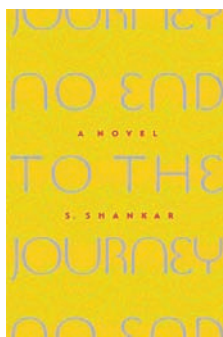
#### **(Philosophy Department)**

Roy Perrett had two publications released last year. The first is the chapter “Atomic Theory in Indian Philosophy” in D.M. Borchert (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Macmillan). His review of S. Cromwell Crawford’s book *Hindu Bioethics for the Twenty-first Century* was published in the *Journal of Religion*. In July of last year, he gave a presentation on “Quality, Substance, Action: Classical Indian Theories of Consciousness” at the Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference, Australian National University, Canberra.

### **S. Shankar**

#### **(English Department)**

Since the last newsletter, S. Shankar received a grant from UH-EH and URC to research his next fiction project in India. With Cristina Bacchilega and Susan Schultz, he raised funds and organized an international symposium on translation (Translation: Theory, Practice, Trope, held in January 2007). In May 2006, an excerpt from his novel *No End to the Journey* was featured and discussed on the website <[www.anothersubcontinent.com](http://www.anothersubcontinent.com)>. In October 2006, he presented the lecture “Postcolonialism and the Problem of Translation” as part of the International Cultural Studies Certificate Program at UHM. Also in October 2006, he was part of a roundtable on minority discourses in literature and film at the Annual South Asian Studies Conference at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and in December 2006 he presented at the Modern Language Annual Convention on Bollywood and globalization. His current



writing projects are a critical book tentatively entitled *Flesh and Fish Blood, Comparativism, Translation, and the Vernacular* and a novel tentatively entitled *What Truth There Is*.

### **Rama Nath Sharma**

#### **(Hawaiian and Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures)**

Rama Nath Sharma, Professor of Sanskrit, was invited to give a special presentation at the World Vedic Conference (at Ujjain, January 13-17), by Vacati Upadhyaya, General Secretary of the Conference, and Vice-chancellor of the Lal Bahadurshastri Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi. Sharma chaired two sessions, and read his paper on *Vak, Brahman and Veda*. He was invited to speak at the plenary session to express his appreciation of content and organization of the Conference. His chapter “Systematization of Sanskrit Grammar” in D.P. Chattopadhyaya, et al (ed.) *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization, Vol III, part IV* was published through the Center for Studies in Civilizations in New Delhi. “Sphotavada,” his chapter in D.P. Chattopadhyaya, et al (ed.) *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization, Vol. III, Part IV*, was also published through the Center for Studies in Civilizations in New Delhi. His chapter “Some Thoughts on Vipratishedha” in Kapil Kapoor (ed.), *Sanskrit Studies* (Vol 1, 2005) was published through the Special Center for Sanskrit Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Finally, he contributed a major chapter, “Indian Linguistics Tradition and Panini,” in D. P. Chattopadhyaya, et al (ed.) *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, (Vol. VI, part IV) which is forthcoming.

### **Sonja Sironen**

#### **(Theatre and Dance)**

In January 2006 Sonja Sironen presented a paper on the South Indian dance ritual *arangetram* at the “Dance Ethnography Forum” in Leicester, England. Later in the year she presented another paper on *arangetram* at the CORD conference (Congress on Research in Dance) in Tempe, Arizona. She received an Award from the Arts and Sciences Council, to help undertake fieldwork for her MA thesis. She will study Bharatanatyam *arangetram* in Chennai, focusing on women who discontinue dance practice after the performance of an *arangetram*.

## THE J. WATUMULL SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE STUDY OF INDIA

The J. Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India aims to promote understanding of India through scholarship support of University of Hawai'i students who present a focused and well-developed proposal to study for a minimum of two months in India. The scholarship is generously supported by the J. Watumull Fund.

The scholarship supports University of Hawai'i students in areas of study such as the visual and performing arts, history, philosophy, religion, and politics, as well as any other field including the professional schools and community college programs. These students are expected to be enrolled in courses at a recognized Indian institution or to be conducting some pre-approved independent study overseen by a faculty member at UH in cooperation with a scholar in India. Students may also choose to participate in an approved study abroad program sponsored by another U.S. institution.

Scholars are asked to report on their J. Watumull-funded studies in India after returning to UH Manoa. The following are the 2006 J. Watumull scholars' reports. Complete versions and further information about the J. Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India are available on the CSAS' website: [www.hawaii.edu/csas](http://www.hawaii.edu/csas).

### Report by Cedar Louis

Thanks to the Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India, I was able to spend 2 ½ months in India, during the summer of 2006, on an exploratory, pre-dissertation trip to learn more about contemporary issues related to globalization, development, agriculture, environmental degradation and biodiversity. My goal for this trip was to understand how to focus my research on sustainable agriculture so that it would be beneficial and relevant to the current issues faced by small farmers.

I spent my first month in India with Navdanya, a program initiated by the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE) to conserve agricultural biodiversity. Navdanya places farmers at the center of agricultural biodiversity conservation and empowers them to take control over the political, ecological and economic aspects of agriculture. RFSTE, which was founded in 1982 by Dr. Vandana Shiva, works on agro-biodiversity conservation and protecting people's rights from threats to their livelihoods and the environment by centralized systems of monoculture in forestry, agriculture and fisheries.

In my month with Navdanya, I learned a great deal more about the complex issues affecting farmers, from seed sovereignty and corporate control, to drought, pests and volatile agricultural markets. I spent a week in Delhi volunteering at Navdanya's organic store and three weeks at Bija Vidyapeeth, Navdanya's seed school in Dehradun, which included an organic farm, a seed bank, and a soil research lab. Most of my learning occurred through working in the fields with the farmers, listening to their conversations, and talk-

ing to them about their lives and the issues that confront them. Bija Devi, one of Navdanya's oldest members and a repository of knowledge on traditional agriculture, shared with me her perspectives on agricultural biodiversity, gender and livelihood issues in rural areas.

My visit to India coincided with the failure of the Doha Round of the Free Trade talks due to disagreements on agricultural subsidies in developed countries. In addition, many farming communities were experiencing high rates of suicides due to crop failures, the cause of which have been attributed not only to drought, but also to farmer indebtedness from purchasing fertilizer and pesticides necessary for growing hybrid and GMO cotton varieties.

I am convinced more than ever of the potential of sustainable agriculture to address the many adverse impacts of the current global economic system on livelihoods, pollution and degradation, biodiversity, economics and food security, natural resource management, and cultural and social practices. As a result, for my doctoral research, I have decided to examine the effectiveness of the sustainable farming movement in India in mitigating the impacts on small and subsistence farmers. The larger questions of how India should proceed on its development path, and, more specifically, my concern that the current neo-liberal development policies and accompanying emphasis on free-trade promotion are not conducive to an environmentally sustainable and socioeconomically just progress, are my main motivations for choosing this research topic.

## Report by Jeremy Henkel

In my application for the J. Watumull Scholarship, I indicated that spending this summer in India would help me accomplish two things: improve my knowledge of the Sanskrit language and help me understand the environment in which Buddhist thought originally developed. By these two measures, my trip this summer was a huge success. Between my arrival in Pune in June and my departure two months later, I learned more about the Sanskrit language than I would have in a full year of study at an institution in the United States.

While participating in the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Advanced Summer Language Program I spent four hours per day in class, with different classes dedicated to grammar, vocabulary, textual reading and translation (both literature and philosophy), listening skills, and oral presentation skills. I also had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a tutor, reading a text of my choosing. We read the Nyayabindu of Dharmakrti, a primer of Buddhist logic. At the beginning of the summer, I struggled to work through a verse even with a dictionary. During one particularly good day near the end of the program, I found I was able to sight-read and translate eight consecutive verses without assistance either from my tutor or from my dictionary. This is precisely the sort of Sanskrit improvement I went to India seeking, and I'm thrilled that I was able to accomplish it.

Classes at AIIS were conducted in Sanskrit, and students were expected to speak in Sanskrit while in class. These requirements reflect a different understanding of the nature of Sanskrit learning than one finds in the United States; an understanding of Sanskrit as a living language, which can be used to communicate contemporary ideas and not just as a means of accessing the writings of pre-modern Indian thinkers. Recognizing the Sanskrit language as part of a living culture rather than as an artifact is an important step toward what I expressed as my second goal of traveling to India.

During my summer in India, I learned many things. Some will help me complete my studies in philosophy at UH. Some alter the way I perceive the world around me. And some I think about only when I tell people about the first time I went to India. But all of them were made possible by the J. Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India. And I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to the Committee for awarding me the scholarship, and thus the opportunity to have the experiences I had this summer. Thank you.

Congratulations  
to the 2006 J. Watumull  
Scholars:

Jeremy Henkel  
(Philosophy)

Cedar Louis  
(Geography)

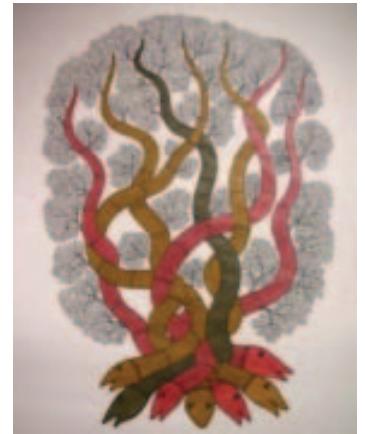


## Translating Night Life of Trees

(continued from page 1)

April 12 in the lobby of the Korean Studies Center. These media include handcrafted and individually printed books published by Tara Books, original prints and ink sketches prepared by three renowned Gond artists, Ram Singh Urveti, Durga Bai, and Bhajju Shyam, and a DVD describing the manufacturing process of the *Night Life* books. The books and prints will be made available for purchase by a local Tara representative.

If you join the CSAS for *The Night Life of Trees* evening reception, and hopefully you will, and if you buy a piece of Gond art, you will be positioning yourself in some capacity as a potential future translator, if only to your future self. Accordingly, if Spivak is right, we coincidental organizers of this event might owe it to you personally, as potential future translators, to help you to feel love for and from the exhibition.



By Bhajju Shyam



Spivak's anti-capitalist arguments should not be used to justify a marketing tactic. To the contrary: Spivak tells us that if you look only at the Gond paintings and their accompanying stories – at what the artists will seem to say to you *via* Tara and the CSAS – you will be bound to fall short in your obligations as an evening reception guest. You would be a consumer rather than a love bearer of the Gond originals. As Dr. Gilbert's Fall 2006 CSAS Colloquium presentation seemed to suggest, unconstrained appetites for caricatured surfaces may land people seats at colonial dining tables.

It is impossible to say, in this context and without caricaturization, what the "Gond originals" are. "Originally," Gond artwork of the sort featured in *The Night Life of Trees* exhibition decorated walls and floors of Gond homes. But these motifs and styles which are rooted in Gond culture have migrated from the forests to Bhopal, and now seem to be traveling from walls and floors of Gond homes to necessarily experimental incarnations as commercially-valued art objects in Honolulu. The prints themselves are partially hand-drawn by the artists. So they are originals. But they are also prints from indefinitely limited collections.

If Spivak is right, you will bear love from and for the exhibition only to the extent that you are attentive not only to the prints and the *Night Life* book, lovely though they are, but also to the "quotation marks" pasted precariously around them. The DVD we expect to watch that evening should give some hint of the unintelligibly complex nexuses of coincidences required to bring each print in the *Night Life* book into existence. But it will not even touch that equally infinite (or infinitely greater?) collection of individually transforming, transgressing, and obfuscating moments required to bear them, lovingly or otherwise, to your future eyes here in Honolulu. These unthinkable contingencies form part of the background context of the fragile future present form of the commodity the local Tara representative and the CSAS will market to you. And, as with any presentation, it will be this background context and the actual care invested in and through these peripheries that will give the surface its substance and depth, and, perhaps, make it love-worthy. As organizers, we can only gesture toward them, while simultaneously distracting you from them. For example, if they affect you as they have me, you will find the trees on campus especially invigorated by the *Night Life of Trees* artwork.

There will always be temporal and referential slippage between production and representation. Perhaps this is what Spivak meant when she said in her workshop presentation, "the essence of the original is to elude essence."



By Durga Bai

*Join the CSAS' 24th Spring Symposium's  
Night Life of Trees Evening Reception*

Thursday, April 12, from 6:45 - 8:00pm, in the Center for Korean Studies

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES\* | THE NIGHT LIFE OF TREES

THE NIGHT LIFE OF TREES exhibition features art by three of the finest living artists of the Gond tribe of central India, all of whom are currently living and working out of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, India. While they share the same art tradition and mythical cosmos, each of them has a distinctive style and creative source that is uniquely their own.

### BHAJJU SHYAM



Bhajju Shyam is one of the best-known artists of his tribe, marked out by his careful and intense canvases. As was customary, he grew up helping his mother paint the walls of their village home. At the age of sixteen, he moved to the city of Bhopal where he became an apprentice to his uncle, the famous artists Jangarh Singh Shyam. Bhajju's prowess as an independent artist quickly grew, and in 2001 he received a state award for Best Indigenous Artist. In 2004, *The London Jungle Book* was published -- a visual travelogue of his first visit to a western metropolis. The book was launched at the Museum of London, along with the accompanying exhibition, and it has now been published in Italian, Dutch and French. His work has since been exhibited in the UK, Germany, Holland, Italy and Russia, making him the best known artist of his tribe today.

### DURGA BAI

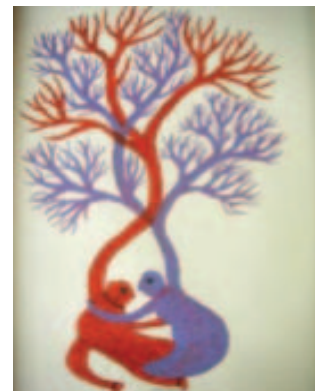
Durga Bai is a young artist who constantly re-works and pushes the boundaries of the Gond art form to create work that sparkles with a distinctive energy. She is the illustrator of two children's books, *Sultan's Dream* and the award-winning *One, Two, Tree!*, a delightful counting book that has been translated into Dutch, French, German and Japanese.



### RAM SINGH URVETI



Ram Singh Urveti is a quiet and brilliant artist whom many other Gond artists respect for his fine technique and sophistication. Creating a world of fantasy and metamorphosis that comes alive through finely detailed organic forms, his work has spread the myths and stories of the Gond community throughout Asia, Europe, Australia and South America and has won awards nationally and internationally.



\*Text included with THE NIGHT LIFE OF TREES exhibition materials.

By Ram Singh Urveti



**The Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Hawai`i**  
**24th Annual Spring Symposium:**

**“Roots and Branches: Articulations of Longing and Belonging in  
South Asian Contexts”**

**April 11-13, 2007, in Honolulu, Hawai`i**

**Special Exhibit:** *The Night Life of Trees Exhibition* – paintings by three renowned Gond artists – **Durga Bai, Bhajju Shyam,** and **Ram Singh Urveti**. A reception and discussion of tribal art will accompany the exhibit.

**Invited Lectures by:**

- ❖ **Sadhana Naithani**, folklorist and scholar of comparative literature based in the School of Language, Literature, and Cultural Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, will speak on folk cultural practices.
- ❖ **Adnan Morshed**, scholar of architecture and architectural theory based in the School of Architecture and Planning at The Catholic University in Washington, D.C., will speak on the vernacular and architecture.
- ❖ **Jangam Chinnaiah**, historian and scholar of anti-caste ideas and movements based at Wagner University in New York City, will speak on caste, politics and India.

**Film Screening** of **Sudheer Gupta**'s new documentary film on folk artists, *Anant Kalakar*, followed by a Q & A with the director.

For more information, please visit the Center for South Asian Studies  
website at:

<http://www.hawaii.edu/csas>

As part of its 2007 Spring Symposium, the CSAS presents:

**ANANT KALAKAR**  
(TIMELESS ARTIST)

(33 Mins./DVCAM/HINDI with subtitles in English)

*A state-of-art report in film about Folk-Artists & Folk Arts in the state of Rajasthan in 2006*

*To be followed by a Q&A with the Director*

Screening begins at 4:45pm on April 12<sup>th</sup> in  
The Center for Korean Studies Auditorium

The state can really make a difference by helping folk-artists.

Children of folk-artists need special education in their traditional arts.

As a knowledge-bearer, a folk artist without a degree can be a school teacher too.

The rural-urban & the local-global interface of folk-artists.

Folk-artists in urban space.

Folk arts internationally.

Folk-music to hip-hop.

Tourism, hotels, city stage-shows have led to –

Attrition, corruption, dilution of folk-traditions.

The *Jajman* or traditional patrons of folk artists -

Need to be reinvented with changing times.

Folk-artists cannot continue to be discriminated as low-caste.

Support is needed for makers of local musical instruments.

Film & Music industry steals from folk-artists.

Issue of intellectual property rights of tradition bearers.

Pension & medical insurance of senior artists.

Free passes for awarded artists on train/air travel.

**“ANANT KALAKAR” welcomes policy-makers to take on the pleasant duty of making practical changes in the life of at least 50,000 folk-artists in the state of Rajasthan alone, who practice more than a 100-odd varieties of folk-arts as their profession with more than 50 indigenous and beautiful sounding traditional musical instruments.**

**This film attempts to present the strong talent amongst children of the folk-artists, their home-based training, lack of better facilities, and their invariable attraction to education. At the same time it also reaches out to the dynamic, ever-evolving and contemporary expression of folk-artists.**

**Human development of folk-artists could be seriously thought of in every Indian state, where they live in large numbers as in Rajasthan. Apart from achieving a culturally sustainable development of our society, it is also important from the point of view of people’s alternate sources of livelihood, especially in a state like Rajasthan, where total dependence on agriculture is not possible.**

*Film crew: Sudheer Gupta, Von Brian Saxena, Amit Kumar, K. S. Sivadas, Sanjeet Kumar.*

*Produced by Sudheer Gupta at SARJANA FILMS, New Delhi in 2006 for FTII.*

*All copyrights with Film & Television Institute of India, Pune.*

*Supported by UNDP & Planning Commission, Govt. of India.*

## *CSAS' Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series Promotes Interdisciplinary Attention to South Asia Related Topics*

We live in a time of unprecedented change across the world, much of it concerning the South Asian region. Every week brings fresh evidence of the growing significance of South Asian studies and culture within the contemporary world. To help augment South Asia related knowledges and perspectives at UHM, the Center for South Asian Studies works with various UHM departments and programs to bring speakers with a background in South Asian studies or South Asia related topics to campus as part of its Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series.

Thanks to the Watumull family's generous support, the CSAS is able to help UH departments and programs host speakers whom they would like to invite to deliver a lecture on South Asia related research or material for a departmental or program colloquium series. The invited speaker should also participate in a workshop with faculty and graduate students on the relationship between South Asia and / or South Asian studies and the specific concerns of the department or program.

In spring 2006, as part of the Rama Watumull Colloquium Series, the CSAS helped the Department of English host Dr. Purnimar Bose of Indiana University. This April, the CSAS will help the History Department and the Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies programs to host a series of presentations by Dr. Jael Silliman of the University of Iowa. We will also help the Philosophy Department to host presentations by Dr. Eli Franco of the University of Leipzig. As partial sponsors of Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series events, the CSAS helps to bear invited speakers' reasonable costs of travel, lodging expenses, and honorarium costs.

The CSAS intends this collaborative project to be interdisciplinary and ongoing. Departments and programs interested in making use of this opportunity should submit proposals to the CSAS Coordinator (Moore Hall, 416), preferably within the first month of a fall semester. Proposals for Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series assistance should include a) the name of the prospective invitee, b) a brief rationale for choosing the speaker, with the dates of the visit, c) a CV or other biographical information, and d) a budget.

## *2007 International Symposium* *Translation: Theory, Practice, Trope*



CSAS Executive Committee members Cristina Bacchilega and S. Shankar organized a symposium on theory, practice and tropes of translation with their UHM English Department colleague, Susan Schultz in early 2007. The International Translation Symposium was held from January 22nd to the 23rd with partial CSAS support. Dr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Avalon Foundation Professor of the Humanities at Columbia University, participated as keynote speaker. Funds provided by the Rama Watumull Distinguished Indian Scholars Program made her visit possible.



## *Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series Funds Support Visit by Dr. Jael Silliman, April 22-23, 2007*

Dr. Jael Silliman, author of *Jewish Portraits, Indian Frames: Women's Narratives from a Diaspora of Hope* and Associate Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Iowa, will join scholars in the History Department and Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies programs from April 23-24, 2007 thanks in part to Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series funds. During her visit, Dr. Silliman will also meet with senior UHM administrators.

In the cosmopolitan Indian city of Calcutta, a vibrant Baghdadi Jewish community thrived in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but today only a handful of elders remain. In the UHM Art Auditorium from 4:30pm to 6pm, Dr. Silliman will speak publically on Monday, April 23 about how the Jews of Calcutta made their way in multiple worlds as British imperialism gave way to an independent India. Through the lives of several generations of remarkable women in her family, Dr. Silliman will discuss how Indian and Jewish identities frame the history of a community that finds home, and hope, through transnational movement and changing local traditions. These life portraits reveal the often untold story of women within a Jewish diaspora, while highlighting these women's roles in the contested emergence of India across the turbulent twentieth century. The History Department will organize the event, with support from Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series Funds, the UH Fund for the Promotion of Jewish Life and Studies, and other units on campus. A reception will follow.

On April 24, Dr. Silliman will speak on reproductive rights at an afternoon colloquium jointly organized by UHM's Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies programs. Her research examines women's organizing at local, national, and transnational levels, with particular attention to the dynamics and politics of movement building and the erasure of women's concerns in many of these movements. Her talk will be followed by a reception with graduate students in Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies.

During her visit, Dr. Silliman is also expected to meet and discuss funding initiatives with members of the UH Foundation, senior UH administrators, the College of Social Sciences and Women's Studies.

## *Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series Funds Support Visit by Prof. Eli Franco, University of Leipzig*

by Roy Perrett

Professor Eli Franco (University of Leipzig) will visit the UH Manoa Philosophy Department from 30 March to 7 April, 2007. His visit has been generously supported by a grant from the UH Center for South Asian Studies under the auspices of the Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series.

Professor Franco is a leading contemporary researcher in the field of classical Indian philosophy, with an extensive publication record (see further his website at <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~indzaw/doc/staff/franco>). He is particularly well-known for his work on Indian scepticism and on the Buddhist epistemological tradition.

During his visit Professor Franco will give two public presentations, both of which members of the CSAS community are warmly invited to attend.

On Monday 2 April, 3:30-5 pm, in Sakamaki C-308, Professor Franco will give a talk in the Philosophy Department Colloquium series entitled "On the Relationship Between Religion and Logic in South Asian Buddhism". The talk will illustrate the relationship between religion and logic in the Pramana-School of Buddhism by examining the particular case of proof of rebirth. On Wednesday 4 April, 1:30-3:30pm in Sakamaki D-302, Professor Franco will lead a Faculty/Graduate Student Workshop on Scepticism in Classical Indian Philosophy.

## Spotlight On Ned Bertz

(continued from page 3)

I would like to construct the history of movement in this region, and how people were connected to one another both before and after Partition, and see how nationalism affected people's mobility and identity. In a smaller way, I am also interested in the history of development in South Asia, including grassroots resistance movements, as well as in popular culture, specifically Bollywood films.

### How did you end up at Hawaii and what are your impressions so far?

Professor Bertz: This place has an excellent focus on South Asia. The Center was a real draw for me, with its large accumulation of affiliated faculty. It gave me a sense of support for my research and teaching interests. The history department is also strong. I find Hawaii interesting too because it has a lot of historical similarities to places I research and teach about. Right now I am teaching a course on modern Indian history and we are dealing with the process of colonization and resistance and nationalism. I've been struck by the number of students who come up to me after class and compare this history to what has happened in Hawaii.

### What courses have you taught so far?

Professor Bertz: A two-part survey of Indian history, with enrollments each semester of over 30. In the fall I also taught a lower-division course on Asian Civilizations, 1500 to the present. This semester I am teaching Historiography for undergraduate majors. And I just put in the papers to offer a 400-level course next year on the transnational history of the Indian Ocean World.

### Any final thoughts or comments?

Professor Bertz: I am thrilled to be here. I am particularly thankful to receive the support of a Watamull grant to assist in bringing a visitor to campus in April. Dr. Jael Silliman will hold several events including a lecture titled "Reinventing Community and Finding Home: Notes from a Diaspora of Hope," about women in the vibrant Baghdadi Jewish community of Calcutta.

For more information about Dr. Jael Silliman's visit please see page 13.



## LOTUS celebrates Diwali Festival with Honolulu Mayor, Mufi Hannemann

by Rohan Kalyan

On Saturday, November 4th, the LOTUS (Lord of the Universe Society) group, a Hindu religious and cultural organization, held its annual Diwali festival at McCoy Pavilion in Ala Moana Beach Park. Though primarily a religious holiday, the celebration of Diwali "provides the basis for a shared sense of common culture within India that has little to do with religion," according to the Indian writer Shashi Tharoor.

Outside of India, the celebration of Diwali is a chance for the Diaspora community to come together to dance, sing, and eat Indian food. Children performed dances and sang religious songs, while older groups of men and women choreographed their own performance, to the delight of the eager audience.

The mayor of Honolulu Mufi Hannemann attended as a special guest speaker, posing for photos with children and speaking about the value of cultural diversity in a place like Honolulu. As a mainlander, I was surprised to see such an enthusiastic response to our holiday of Diwali. The overall experience was definitely an encouraging sign of tolerance and respect for cultural difference that exists in this community.



Diwali celebration photos by Alexandria Ham

## *Review of the CSAS' 2006 Colloquium Series:*

The CSAS coordinates and sponsors interdisciplinary colloquium presentations related to South Asian Studies throughout the academic year. This colloquium series is in addition to public lectures that the CSAS organizes as part of its annual Spring Symposium, and South Asia-related colloquia presentations delivered by Rama Watumull Distinguished Visiting Scholars through their host departments.

In April 2006, the CSAS and the UHM Department of English co-sponsored a Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series presentation (see pages 12 and 13) by **Dr. Purnimar Bose** of Indiana University. Her talk, entitled **“Hindutva Abroad: Tempest in a Textbook,”** explored the ways that conservative Hindu nationalism, or Hindutva, reconstructs the Hindu tradition’s promise of “authenticity” within the US diaspora as “kinder” and “gentler” than US conceptions of rugged individualism and egalitarianism only by glossing over violence against women, lower castes, and religious minorities. By taking recent controversies over textbook adoption in California as a case study, Dr. Bose showed how Hindutva abroad negotiates these contradictions. She is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Cultural Studies Program at Indiana University, and is also the author of *Organizing Empire* (Duke UP, 2003). She is currently working with Professor Laura Lyons of UHM’s English Department on an edited collection, titled *Corporate Genealogies*.

**Dr. Marc Jason Gilbert** presented a paper called **“Eating Colonialism: Dining as Political Ritual in Colonial India”** through the CSAS in October 2006. His paper analyzed the act of dining in colonial India as political theater and examined representations of colonial-era dining rituals in post-colonial literature and cinema. Dr. Gilbert is NEH Endowed Chair in World History at Hawai‘i Pacific University. He is also a past President of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies. He served for many years as co-Director of the University System of Georgia’s programs in Mumbai and Chennai, Vietnam and the Philippines.

In November 2006, East-West Center Graduate Degree Fellow, 2006 J. Watumull Scholarship Recipient (see page 6), and Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography, **Cedar Louis**, led a CSAS colloquium titled, **“Reflections on the Causes and Impacts of Sustainable Agricultural Practices in Neo-Liberal India.”** Ms. Louis discussed her efforts to understand why sustainable agricultural practices are taking root among small farming communities in India. She hypothesized that though such smallholder agricultural practices run counter to the intentions of India’s recent national and state economic liberalization policies, they are caused by these policies’ adverse environmental, economic, and cultural consequences. Her presentation was built on the basis of J. Watumull-funded summer research in India.

Also in November, the CSAS and the Department of English hosted a colloquium by Senior Fulbright Fellow and Professor of English at the University of Peradeniya, **Carmen Wickramagamage**. Her talk, titled **“Bearing Children, Bearing Arms, Bearing Witness: Rethinking (Women’s) Rights in a Time of War in Contemporary Sri Lanka,”** contended that the subject-positions and life options that are either assigned or adopted by Lankan women in a time of war in contemporary Sri Lanka are determined by and imbricated in the master narratives of globalized capital and nationalist politics. Her presentation ended with critical contemplation of the possibility of feminist coalition politics within and across borders due to differences in the materiality of being and life options that divide women both nationally in Sri Lanka and internationally.

To receive regular updates about upcoming CSAS colloquia and other South Asia or South Asia Studies events, please e-mail the CSAS Coordinator at [csas@hawaii.edu](mailto:csas@hawaii.edu) and request to be added to the CSAS listserv. If you would like to present at a CSAS colloquium or would like to nominate another scholar, please contact the CSAS Director at the same e-mail address.



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## About Our Organization...

Strategically located, and with a multicultural heritage, the state of Hawai'i has always been uniquely international in outlook. The people, traditions, and cultural milieu of this island state in the Pacific provide a strong and continuing bond with Asia.

Beginning with the establishment of the Oriental Institute in 1935 and a still ongoing series of East-West Philosophers' Conferences in 1939. This emphasis continued with the establishment of the journal "Philosophy East and West" in 1951 and the Asian Studies Program.

The Center for South Asian Studies was created in 1985. Since then the objective of the Center has been to coordinate and integrate, by juxtaposing humanistic with scientific scholarship, and historical and contemporary data. The Center thus serves to illuminate specific questions of regional interest, and complements and bridges the disciplinary departments directly related to it.

The Center guides and assists study of both past and present societies and cultures of South Asia and promotes faculty interaction across departmental lines to foster comparative and interdisciplinary research on the region. South Asia includes contemporary Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands), Lakshadweep, the Maldiv Islands, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tibet.

24th Annual Spring Symposium

## "Roots and Branches: Articulations of Longing and Belonging in South Asian Contexts"

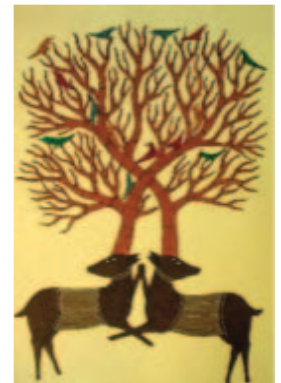
April 11-13, 2007, in Honolulu, Hawai'i

Featuring *The Night Life of Trees*

Invited Lectures by:

Sadhana Naithani  
Adnan Morshed  
Chinnaiah Jangam

**Film Screening of Sudheer Gupta's**  
new documentary film on folk artists,  
*Anant Kalakar*, followed by a Q & A  
with the director.



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