

The South Asia Newsletter

A Publication of Cornell's South Asia Program

Fall 1995

Cornell-Nepal Study Abroad Program: Continued Excellence

Focus on Banu Oja, Resident Director

"You should be willing to enjoy learning something by trying something new." This is the friendly challenge offered by Banu Oja, Resident Director of the Cornell Nepal Study Abroad Program. Since fall 1993, she has been with the Cornell Nepal Program in Kathmandu, Nepal. Previously, she taught Nepali at Cornell for seven years. As Resident Director she oversees the American and Nepali students as they interact and learn about each other, exchanging experiences in language, academics, culture, food, and dance. Students report that the experience of

living with a Nepali roommate, and being totally immersed in the Nepali culture, is definitely the most valuable part of the program. There were four students studying abroad in this program in Fall '94, and seven students in Spring '95.

The program is limited to fewer than 12 American students, who must be highly independent, motivated, and adventuresome. Field trips may include treks to remote mountain villages only accessible by foot.

Background of the program:

Banu Oja is part of a management team that includes the Cornell Abroad Program, as well as Cornell faculty members. Kathryn March, Professor of Anthropology, has played a pivotal role in the creation of the program, as well as its ongoing success. According to March, the program is part of a larger effort to

*Banu Oja,
Resident
Director,
Cornell-
Nepal
Program*



enhance research in Tribhuvan University in Nepal. This makes it rather unique in that not only American, but also Nepali students and faculty benefit from the experience.

The program has three areas: residential, academic, and field research. The academic courses are divided into Ecology and Environment, which includes biology, natural resources and other sciences; and Culture, History and Society, which includes the humanities and social sciences.

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"South Asia Association For Political and Academic Awareness" Recently Formed

A new student organization, South Asia Association for Political and Academic Awareness (SAAPAA) has been formed to address important issues concerning all students with interest or ties to South Asia at Cornell. The working charter states:

- The organization will be an umbrella organization to promote South Asian studies as well as awareness about political and intellectual issues related to South Asia on campus. It aims to help address the South Asia-related academic and intellectual needs of students.
- It will help raise political awareness about the region through speakers, symposia, reading/discussion groups etc.

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Two Prominent Nepali Professors Visit Cornell From Tribhuvan University

By Hari Sharma

Two professors from Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, Nepal visited Cornell University to become acquainted with the research methods and the Cornell library, so that they might better interface with the Cornell abroad students. Dr. Chaudhary has been involved in the Cornell-Nepal Study Abroad Program since its inception three years ago. Dr. Bhattachan has been a guest speaker, and has recently been appointed to the program.

On July 26, Dr. Krishna Bhattachan, Department of Sociology/Anthropology at Tribhuvan, gave a talk on "Grassroots and User-Groups in Nepal." He described the experiment in development over the last 30 years. His current

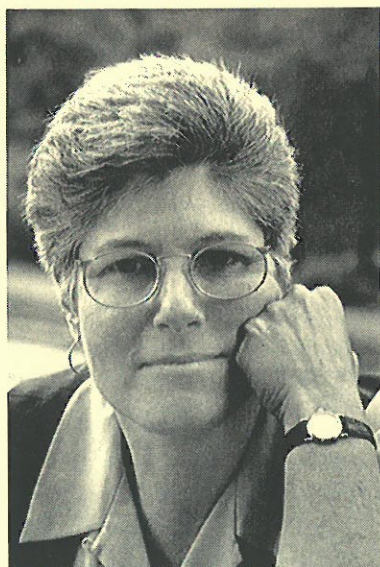
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Notes From The Director

As I return to the seasonal changes of Ithaca and the buzz of campus life in the Fall, it is with excitement and a bit of concern that I begin my work as Director of the South Asia Program. My excitement stems from the increased enthusiasm, ideas and challenges that have shaped the Program in the past year. The growing numbers of students engaged in and demanding a role in the activities of the Program have increased dramatically. I want to take this opportunity to thank Mary Katzenstein for her spirit and her stewardship during this past year of growing pains and intellectual excitement. We hope to continue this new tradition of town meetings and open exchanges that marked last year. This excitement is generated from an increasingly diverse campus and from the debates that are a growing part of campus exchange, whether they focus on identity politics, changing aid and trade regimes, struggles for democracy or the declining support for and the homogenization of culture as meaning and representation. I am hopeful that we can help center these debates by lively exchange, and even disagreement, in our quest for clarity and understanding.

My concerns also are a real part of what I bring with me after a year of leave. The news of belt-tightening, no growth or limited growth of campus positions, and a significantly tighter economic climate all have consequences for our Program. Federal shifts in interest and commitment pose a serious threat to "international" initiatives, and a growing dependence on private resources will undoubtedly effect our efforts for growth. This comes at a time characterized by positive interests expressed by both undergraduates and graduate students putting increased demands on all of our resources, the labor of staff, faculty and students as well as our budget.

Also of concern is how to respond to the intellectual shifts that underlie the meaning of "area studies." How does this 'map' of the world shape our understandings? How do we read and work within the boundaries that we have come to equate with the South Asia Program? How are contestations over these boundaries shaping how we think about "area studies" and how we organize our Program? How will these boundaries shape funding sources in the future? These questions, and many others, are grist for discussion and for program organizing and I hope we can jointly strategize in our response to this changing climate.



Shelley Feldman, Associate Professor, Rural Sociology
Director, South Asia Program

We have already worked toward responding to some of these intellectual debates by developing this year's seminar series and activities through the sharing of current research by students and faculty, and by opportunities to invite scholars and artists from outside the Cornell community to challenge and engage us. I also look forward to creating new fora for exchange, whether these include informal reading and study groups, workshops or just plain social events with dance, music and food. As we plan our 95/96 calendar I hope that you will work with us in developing our program and activities. Let me also encourage those of you who have worked on issues likely to be of interest to South Asians and South Asianists to consider giving a talk as part of our seminar series. We have officially scheduled our series for Mondays at 12:15 in G08 Uris Hall.

A note on faculty and staff news: Randy Barker retired to accept a position as Deputy Directory General at IIMI in Colombo, Sri Lanka. We will miss Randy and wish him our best in this new endeavor. We are pleased that Vijay Prashad will be teaching two courses this fall: one course on Gandhi and Non-violence, in conjunction with Peace Studies, and another entitled Empire and Imperiled States: South Asia. And, we warmly welcome our new Anthropology Professor, Viranjini Munasinghe, who will be teaching Ethnicity and Otherness: Asians in the New World. And I am especially sad to be saying goodbye to Susan Campbell, our Administrative Manager, who is leaving on November 1 to pursue her education. I am pleased to announce that Anne Patterson has accepted the position of Administrative Manager, and started on October 17. Anne joins us from the International Agricultural Program at Cornell. Previously, she was a program and administrative assistant in the Health and Human Services department at The Pew Charitable Trusts. We indeed look forward to an exciting and productive year with the new energy and the good wishes of those here and those who are leaving.

Let me also take a moment to extend a warm welcome to each of you and to send a wish for an enjoyable and successful year. I look forward to working with you in shaping our goals, solving our dilemmas and making our Program a most exciting and enjoyable place to spend time. Let me know if there are ways in which the South Asia Program can better serve your needs.

Associate Professor, Rural Sociology
Director, South Asia Program

Political and Academic Awareness continued...

- It will act as a monitoring organization for South Asia-related issues on campus such as institutional and personal racism or under-representation of South Asia on faculty, curricula, cultural events etc. It will also collaborate with other such organizations of minority groups on campus to help foster a genuinely multi-cultural and progressive political environment.
- For more information, contact: Anjana Samant 256-1048; Priya Gopal 277-4104; Kathy Rankin 257-1947; Bikku Kuruvila 257-5320.

Events

Himalayan Summer Film Series 1995

The Nepali Summer Program sponsored a film festival. For eight consecutive weeks, from mid-June to the end of July, 24 films were shown on Mondays and Fridays. The films covered a variety of issues, including Hinduism and Buddhism, agriculture, and caste. The "Voice of Nepal" described the mass movement during the Nepali struggle for democracy, and the 1990 political situation. There was also a film about child marriage and women's issues, and "Sherpas," which chronicled the well-known mountain people.

Upcoming Conference

The South Asian-American Women's Association sponsored a conference entitled "Women and the Law". It was held October 27 and 28 at the Corning Glass Center Auditorium. Invited to participate were members of the legal profession, ambassadors, and scholars from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the US. For more information, contact SAAWA Women and the Law Conference 1995, 60 East 4th Street, Corning NY 14830, or call 607-962-3277.

Economics Workshop

The South Asia Program will sponsor an Economics Workshop March 29 and 30, 1996. Details will be announced in the first quarter. This workshop will focus on the issues of economic liberalization.

India Day at the Johnson Museum

On Saturday, October 21 from 12:00 to 4:00, the Johnson Museum of Art presented "The Arts of India" as part of their International Series. Events included traditional dances, music, singing, costumes, painting of Rangoli St. Mehndi, calligraphy, storytelling, games, tours, foods of India, and hands-on activities for the children.

Languages

Summer Nepali Language Program

Reflection by Heather Hindman

(The Summer Nepali Language Program is an eight-week intensive course in the official language of Nepal, with emphasis on the spoken colloquial language. The following is a quote from Heather Hindman, student in Summer Nepali '95.) "The most

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L to R: Michael Wilmet, Susanna Pearce, Shambu Oja, Banu Oja, Yeon Jin Seong, Shara Niedell, Nicki Handy, Heather Hindman, Andrew Daly, Charla Britt-Kapoor

Study Abroad continued...

Judith Amtzis, the Academic Advisor in Nepal, spent two weeks this summer at Cornell to ensure the continuity of the Nepal program with the Cornell curriculum. She was joined this summer by Dr. Ram Chaudhary and Dr. Krishna Bhattachan from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. Their efforts help define the student's research interests. The capstone of the study abroad program is the period of extended, supervised research in the field, making it an important bridge to the practice of field research.

Ben DeWinter, Director of Cornell Abroad, noted that "now that the program is in its third year, Cornell Abroad wants to reach out to faculty on campus who may not be familiar with the opportunities available in Nepal, and host Cornell faculty who might be interested in working with faculty and students in Nepal, perhaps as part of their sabbatic or a research program in the region."

Banu Oja continues to challenge students to come to Nepal: come learn about a different culture; learn how to eat Nepalese food with your fingers; dare to make some mistakes and laugh as you learn...come and explore the other side of the world.

Prominent Professors continued...

work involves coordinating and monitoring the German project in the Dhading district. Bhattachan discussed the different development initiatives, which were sometimes community-driven, sometimes trickle down—depending on whatever worked for that region. He also talked about why the government initiative failed. The theory proposed by Bhattachan is that the people using the development initiative should also take responsibility for that project (as opposed to the government). He feels that there are two types of groups that benefit from the development projects: the user-group, and the community. Bhattachan put forth the idea that the user group is more active, and more durable, and thus is often a more suitable group than the community to take responsibility for the development projects.

Dr. Ram P. Chaudhary, Associate Professor of Botany, Tribhuvan University, spoke on the topic "Conservation and Management of Botanical Resources in Nepal." Since Nepal's geography spans the lowest sea level to the highest mountains, it is biologically very diverse. Understanding Nepal requires understanding a broad range of ethno-botanical issues. Botany can be used to study which herbs are most effective in healing, as well as aiding sustenance and survival.

Student Perspective

Bengali Program at Cornell

By Amit Mitra, '95

When I transferred to Cornell in the Fall of 1992, I was excited about the opportunity to explore my South Asian culture by enrolling in courses offered through the South Asia Program. I was especially pleased to see that Cornell offered a program of study in Bengali. I had grown up speaking Bengali at home, but I had not learned to read or write the language. By learning the Bengali script, I ultimately hoped to delve further into the subject by exploring great pieces of Bengali literature.

Under the instruction of Mrs. Dipali Sudan, several other students and I began our academic pursuit of the Bengali

language. In the first semester course, we concentrated on learning grammar, becoming familiar with the script, and enhancing our conversational skills. By the second semester, it became apparent that there were two groups of students in the class with differing interests and goals. The first group consisted of students who had not been exposed to the Bengali language before studying it at Cornell. They were mainly interested in the grammar, structure, and phonetics of the language. The other group consisted mainly of people like myself who had grown up with native Bengali speakers. We were more interested in learning how to read and write so that we could communicate with our relatives in India and Bangladesh, read Bengali newspapers and magazines, and explore the literature which ties us to our cultural heritage.

At this point, Mrs. Sudan divided the class into two sections because she was aware of our differing aspirations and interests. Without the alternate Bengali curriculum which emphasizes reading and writing in the first two years of instruction, I would not have been prepared to comprehend great works of Bengali literature in my third year Bengali course. The preparation that I received provided me with the foundation to understand complex pieces of literature by several distinguished Bengali writers including Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

Cornell should certainly pride itself on being one of the few universities in this country to offer a Bengali literature program. Programs like this should serve as a model for teaching languages at Cornell and other institutions.

Student Rally

By Bikku K. Kuruwila

The rally last spring outside the History department grew out of responses to Vijay Prashad's class on the South Asian diaspora. Numerous informal discussions held by students quickly grew into a real need for coordinated action. South Asian students met with the Dean of Humanities and Sciences, the Provost at the time, and the Department Chairs of the History and South Asia Programs to discuss long-term needs on campus.

The students called for the creation of a tenure-track position in South Asian history in order to institutionalize the teaching of these issues at Cornell. The students also called on the History department to reconsider its primary focus on European history, and for the South Asia program to re-evaluate the pattern or nature of courses offered. Greater participation in the decision-making processes of both these bodies was requested. The outgoing Provost commented that there was precedent for creating positions in area of demonstrated student interest, even in times of financial crisis.

All this activity culminated in a protest outside the History department last May. Over 100 students representing the various South Asian student organizations as well as all other minority student organizations participated in the rally. Consequently, a productive open meeting with the South Asia program was held. The students also met again with the Chair of the History Department. What is most difficult to capture, however, is the level of excitement that was generated by these events, and the implications this had for South Asian students asserting their interests at Cornell.

Bhakti

by Udai Krishan Tambar

Bhakti Society for Hindu Cultural Awareness is a new group on campus. We discuss Hindu philosophy and try to apply it to our daily lives. Previous topics have varied from reincarnation to women's role in the Hindu epics. This is not a lecture series, rather an interactive experience through which we learn from one another. No previous religious knowledge is required. Members of all faiths are welcome. Meetings are held weekly on Friday's at 7:00 pm in Room 160-162 Goldwin Smith Hall. If interested, call Udai at 256-5410 or just drop by a meeting.



If you are interested in more information in how to make the South Asia History position a permanent position, please contact the South Asia Program at 170 Uris Hall. If you would like to make a contribution toward an endowment to establish a Chair, please use the enclosed envelope and check the box marked "History Position."

Summer Nepali Program continued...

pleasant aspect of the Nepali program must be the people. Banu and Shambu Oja welcomed us, not only into the class but into their extended family of students. Their instruction technique combines rigorous knowledge of linguistics and language teaching methodology with an almost parental love for their students. The other great benefit of the program is the availability of many scholars, both on Cornell's regular faculty and visiting scholars from Nepal who are always present to lend advice and research support."

Alumni/a Corner

Philip Receives Position At Georgia Tech

Kavita Philip, Ph.D. '95, received a tenure track position at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Literature, Communication and Culture. She will be teaching what's known as the cultural studies of science. This is a new interdisciplinary department that began 4-5 years ago by combining English and Communication departments and hiring new interdisciplinary Ph.D.'s to bridge the sciences and the humanities.

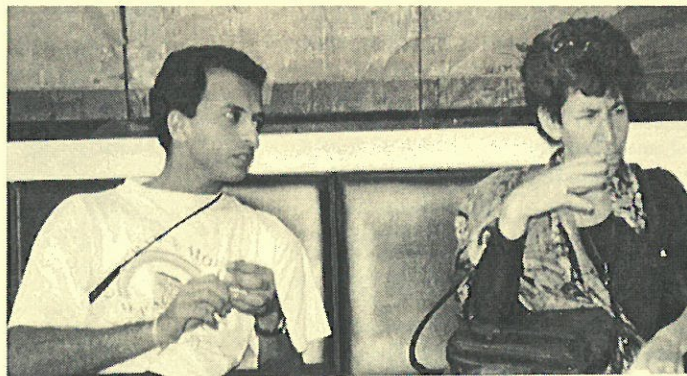
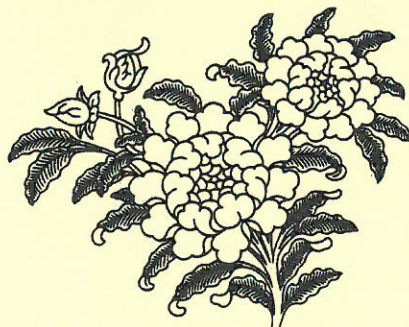
Krishna Describes Teaching Experience With Uphoff

"We worked with each student separately on a 'real-world' project that was developed in four parts. It was an extremely interesting group, since they were from several different countries. The class involved more than just theory—it helped them convert the theory into practical learning for the real world." This is how Anirudh Krishna (MPS-ID '95) describes Administration of Agriculture and Rural Development, a course he co-taught with Norman Uphoff in the Fall of '94. Prior to his work at Cornell, Krishna was with the Indian Government for 11 years, doing mostly rural development in the Indian Administrative Service. In 1993, Krishna came to Cornell as a Hubert Humphrey Fellow. He stayed for another year to work on a research project with Norman Uphoff, which will end in a two volume publication. "I've really appreciated the time I've had at Cornell to think and reflect, to do 'experience-sifting.' I had been in the field for eleven years; I believe that this research will help me to do my work better." Krishna found that teaching was particularly rewarding for him, and a real growth experience. He received his undergraduate and graduate degree in Economics from Delhi University, India. He also participated in a Masters in Public Policy Program at Harvard University.

Attention CU Alumni:

We would love to hear from you! We are soliciting articles for the spring newsletter, which will be published in February, 1996. Deadline for articles is January 31, 1995. Please let us know about professional activities, travel, or anything else of note. We are also interested in publishing viewpoints on controversial topics.

Please respond to Karis Dorfman, 170 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, 14853, Phone: 607-255-8493, E-mail address: krd5@cornell.edu



Alumni Reception

The Alumni Reception was held on June 9 in the Asian Studies lounge in Rockefeller Hall. The faculty of the South Asia Program and several alumni met to discuss new experiences and renew friendships. Possibilities were discussed for support to the South Asia Program, as well as alumni projects in India and in the field.

Agreement Signed Between Tolani, Birla, and Cornell

As a result of the vision of Dr. N.P. Tolani, prominent Indian businessman and alumnus of the college of Agriculture and Life Science, a foundation has been formed to establish a private university in Talegaon near Poona, India. The proposed Tolani University will focus on Management (including Hotel Management), Information Technology, and Engineering and Technology. A joint agreement was signed in May among the Tolani Education Foundation, the Birla Institute of Technology and Science, and Cornell. The agreement, coordinated by the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, establishes a willingness to collaborate between the parties.

In September, Dr. Venkateswaran, Consultant from Birla Institute, visited Cornell to discuss specifics of the agreement with the Hotel School. The Hotel School has made a proposal describing requirements for the Tolani University to become an associate of Cornell.

Tolani has purchased the land in Poona and plans to commence the building of the University soon.

Photo of Somir Somaiya, '93 MBA and Mary Katzenstein at the alumni reception

Faculty and Program Associate News

Mary Katzenstein received an AIIS fellowship to go to India in 1996 to work on a project about the feminist movement.

Ved Kayastha has been appointed as an Associate faculty member of the Asian American faculty. The program plans to use him in various capacities, such as advising and consulting.

Christopher Minkowski has been awarded a Fulbright to do research in India during the Fall of '96. He will be studying the nature of the Vedic ritual schools (sakhas) as they are described in various Sanskrit manuscript traditions and as they are understood among the last surviving groups still practising today.

Faculty Publications

Milton Esman, Anirudh Krishna, and Norman Uphoff have been working on a case-study-based research project with the objective of finding what can be learned from a substantial number of successful rural development efforts made over the last two decades. The database includes close to 30 projects from different sectors and countries, which have been managed by governments or by NGO's. Project design, implementation and evaluation are studies with an emphasis on the close relationships that exist among these domains. The case analysis and the lessons drawn up will be presented in a forthcoming two-volume publication by Kumarian (West Hartford, Connecticut). Volume I is entitled *Reasons For Hope—Remarkable Cases of Rural Development*. Volume II is entitled *Reasons for Success—Lessons From Remarkable Cases of Rural Development*.

David Henderson recently published a book entitled *Experiencing Geometry on Plane and Sphere* (Prentice Hall, August 1995). This book includes a chapter on Baudhyana's Sulbasutram.

David Holmberg and Kathryn March, along with Surya Man Tamang and Bhim Bahadur Tamang, recently published *Mutual Regards: America and Nepal Seen through Each Other's Eyes*. Kathmandu: Jivan Support Press. 1995.

Ved Kayastha has compiled "Master's and Doctoral Theses on South Asia accepted by Cornell University", forthcoming South Asia Program publication.

Kathryn March published "Childbirth with Fear," in *Mother Journeys*.

Rita Sharma and Tom Poleman published *The New Economics of India's Green Revolution*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

Talpur Researches In Indus Valley, Pakistan

Parveen Talpur teaches "Contemporary Pakistan and India" at Binghamton University, and has been a Program Associate with the South Asia Program from 1990 to 1995. She has been working on the decipherment of 4,000 year old symbols engraved on seals that were discovered from a number of sites in Indus Valley in Pakistan and Western India.

Her recent paper, "Evidence of Geometry in Indus Valley Civilization (2600-1900 B.C.): Principles of Button Seal Design" has been published by the University of Wisconsin, Madison in the Wisconsin Archaeological reports, Vol 3, 1994. A complete report of her research will be published from Pakistan.

Talpur at present is working on a text that looks into the recent social and cultural changes that have taken place in her home province of Sind, in Pakistan.

Henderson: Mathematics With A South Asian Emphasis

"Most of western history books downplay Vedic geometry—they say it is 'quasi-mathematics', or 'protomathematics'," stated David Henderson, Professor of Mathematics, in a recent interview. However, he found that it was a powerful teaching tool to use the Vedic *Sulbasutra*, the oldest known texts in geometry that have been translated into English, as a starting point for his History of Math 403 course. The *Sulbasutra* are Sanskrit texts written by Vedic Hindu scholars before 600 B.C. In a paper entitled "Square Roots in the *Sulbasutra*", Henderson presents "a method for finding the numerical value of square roots that was inspired by the *Sulbasutra*." "This method works for many numbers and will produce values to any desired degree of accuracy and is more efficient (in the sense of requiring less calculations for the same accuracy) than the divide-and-average method commonly taught today."

"Our Arabic numerals are really Hindu," explained Henderson. "They go back to early Sanskrit. They are called Arabic numerals because they were brought to the West by Arabic traders." In addition, it is commonly believed that the Pythagorean theorem is Greek. But Henderson noted that it can be found in the *Sulbasutra* before Pythagoras was alive.

There were twelve students in the History of Math class, four of whom researched South Asia significantly for their term papers. Students constructed geometric figures from the *Sulbasutra*, and read history books that contradicted each other and what they had read in the *Sulbasutra*, in order to see the various viewpoints. This course is currently not scheduled for 1995/1996. Students interested in seeing this course presented again should contact the Mathematics department for information.

Teaching Asia Through Cultural Media: A Workshop For High School Teachers

By Priti Ramamurthy

This summer, "Teaching Asia Through Cultural Media: A Workshop for High School Teachers" was held June 26-29 at the Kahin Center on the Cornell Campus. Approximately 30 teachers from all over the central New York area attended the conference.

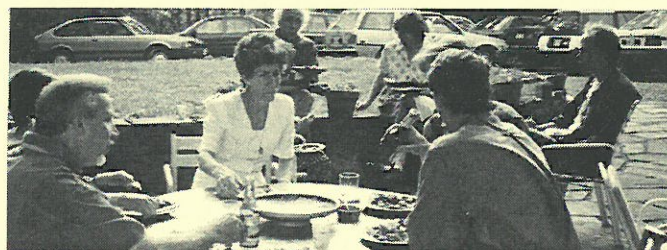
The Workshop was jointly sponsored by three National Resource Centers: East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. Each center spent a day sharing ideas and resources. Four segments were presented: Susan Wadley, Director of the South Asia Center at Syracuse, introduced the program and talked about storytelling and *The Ramayana* as a way of understanding Hindu culture. Cindy Duprey and Claire Castellino, high school teachers who have developed curriculum and taught *The Ramayana* in their schools, shared their experiences. After an enjoyable (and hearty) South Asian lunch, Neema Caughran, Anthropology-Syracuse, led a discussion on multiculturalism and racism in the classroom. Don Thompson, a high school teacher at East Syracuse-Minoa, explained how he developed the Mohenjo-Daro archaeological dig kit and demonstrated how it can be used. Priti Ramamurthy, South Asia Center Syracuse, demonstrated cooking Bhel-puri, a fast food, and led a discussion on the cultural ecology and sociology of fast food in India and the US.

The Mohenjo-Daro kit and Ramayana teaching materials are available from the South Asia Center, Syracuse University. For more information call 315-443-2553 or E-mail pramamurthy@maxwell.syr.edu.



Vijendran Rao with the class at Caroline Elementary

South Asia Party



On June 16, Mary Katzenstein hosted a South Asia Program get-together at her home. Facing camera, left to right: Guy DiCicco, (Corning Corporation), Mary Katzenstein. Also at the table: left to right, not facing camera: Prof. Asma Barlas from Pakistan, Nancy DiCicco, Peter Katzenstein. In the background, left to right: Martin Hatch, Susan Hatch, Gerald Wolfe

Meeting Held With Corning Corp.

In April, a meeting was held with Ralph Perkins, Vice President, Corning International Corp., Guy DiCicco, Director-Globalization for Corning Corp., Mary Katzenstein, and selected faculty and staff from the South Asia program. The faculty members included Kaushik Basu, Alaka Basu, Shankar Subramanian, Ron Herring, Porus Olpadwala, and Norman Uphoff. This meeting was held to initiate dialogue between business executives who have been active in local industries with interests in South Asia, and the South Asia faculty. Timely experiences and ideas were shared involving Corning's joint ventures in India, as well as some of the economic issues surrounding the Indian government's current liberalization efforts.

Discussion of these topics and more will be continued in the Economics Workshop to be held on March 29 and 30, 1996.

Outreach at Carolina Elementary

By Vijendran Rao

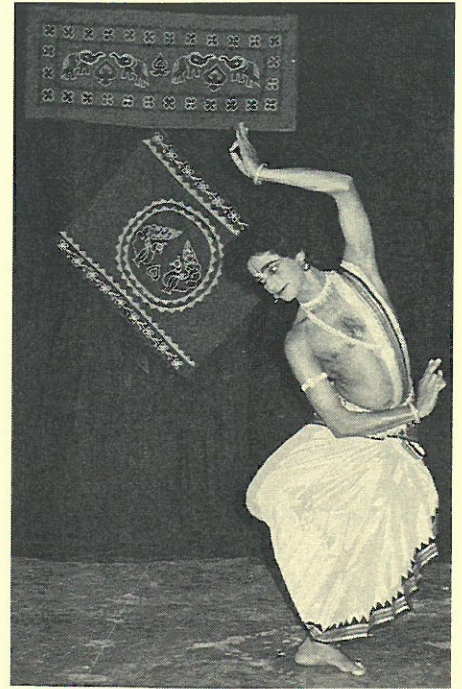
Caroline Elementary School held an International Week for their first graders in May. I was asked to talk to two groups of first graders, each of about 35 students. Many visuals were used in the presentation: a map of India, a video on festivals/celebrations of India, an assortment of Indian stamps, coins, greeting cards, paintings, medallions, audio tapes of Indian music, photographs of Indian marriages and functions, as well as some Indian snacks and sweets.

The children danced to Indian movie songs, asked questions about airplanes in India, and were especially interested in the elephants. They were not afraid to ask questions and interacted freely. I discussed the history and geography of India with comparisons to America and also about culture and religion, particularly the fact that all the religions are being practiced in India. The most impressive aspect of the children was their eagerness to learn and their open minds. No wonder all the religions consider children as closest to God. On the whole this has been a very rewarding experience and the pleasant feelings will last for a long time.

Fine Arts

Odissi Comes to Cornell

On May 6, 1995, the South Asia Program, together with Cornell Council for the Arts, Society for India, Cornell India Association, Center for Theatre Arts and the Music Department presented an evening of Indian Classical dance performed in the indigenous style of the state of Orissa, known today as Odissi. The dancers were Manoranjan Pradhan from the Orissa Dance Academy and the Odissi Research Center, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, who was in the United States as a guest of the World Music Association, San Diego, and Durga Bor, Visiting Dance Lecturer at Cornell. The evening began with *Mangalacharanam* danced as a duet. This was followed by another duet, *Batu*, dedicated to the horrific form of Siva, Batuka Bhairav. Manoranjan was at his best in Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra's rendition of *Das Avatara*, or the ten incarnations of Visnu. The first half of the performance ended with a guest artist, Nunuk Sri Rahayu, performing a traditional Javanese dance, *Golek Clunthang*. The second half of the program opened up with *Pallavi* set to *raga Kirvani*. This very beautiful and difficult piece was executed skillfully in a solo by Manoranjan. The next item was an abhinaya solo by Durga, based on the 12th century love poem *Gita Govind* by Sri Jayadeva. The evening ended with the excitement of *Moksha*, a Sanskrit term for release or liberation from human bondage. This is an up tempo, abstract dance which was performed by both artists.



Manoranjan Pradhan in Odissi pose

There is an urgent need for additional funding to continue the Odissi Dance course instruction at Cornell University. Interested individuals may use the envelope provided in this newsletter to make contributions. A heart-felt thank-you to those who have already contributed specifically to South Asian Dance:

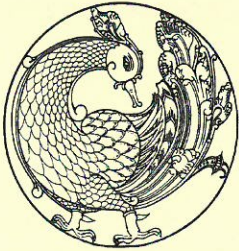
Ramana and Surya Adibhatla
Maya Srinivasan and Timothy Misner

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