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A Note from the Editors

We are very pleased to present the Fall 2009 Issue of *ASIANetwork Exchange* with its special focus on India. For all teachers and scholars of Asia, India has increasingly become a country whose impact on the rest of the continent—and indeed, on the rest of the world—cannot be ignored. Even those readers whose focus might be on East Asia or Southeast Asia have likely found that India enters the picture, in fields ranging from the history of religion to comparative economic development. With our entire readership in mind, therefore, we are highlighting a number of articles in this issue that offer new insights on this important country in the heart of South Asia.

It has often been the case that articles published in fall issues of the *Exchange* have been edited versions of papers presented at the annual conference of ASIANetwork held the previous spring. This past March, we heard from a number of conference attendees—and we experienced ourselves—that the overall scholarly content of the panels and discussions had taken a leap forward. A number of participants commented that the conference was extremely stimulating in simultaneously addressing the needs we face as teachers of Asia in our liberal arts settings and in allowing for high-level, yet collegial scholarly exchange of ideas and information. We are especially happy, therefore, that several of the articles we present in this issue reflect these high qualities of this 2009 conference.

Our lead article is Professor Catherine Asher's (University of Minnesota) transcript of her keynote address at the conference, which illustrates the role of politics in religious practice in India as she explores the nature of shared and contested Hindu and Muslim sites, including the Taj Mahal itself. Professor Catherine Benton (Lake Forest College) also contributes to our "Research of Note" with her study of the tradition followed by Muslim women in India of wearing a veil— a practice at the center of controversy in much of the West. Tinaz Pavri (Spelman) shifts the focus to important questions

of India's contemporary political economy. Mary Hanneman (University of Washington-Tacoma) provides a study of comparative intellectual history in her article on the "fathers of fascism" in India and Japan, V.D. Savarkar and Kita Ikki. Brian Hatcher (Illinois Wesleyan University) rounds out the India focus with his critical reflections on teaching his new course, "Imagining Modern India."

Chinese environmental, economic, and anthropological issues are conjoined by Mark Dailey (Green Mountain College) in his insightful study of forestry practices in contemporary Fujian Province. Adam Cathcart (Pacific Lutheran University) contributes to "Teaching about Asia" with his discussion of how and why he incorporates North Korea into his course on Modern Japan. Finally, David Tyer from Adam Matthew Digital shares with readers an overview of a new "Media Resource," the electronic publication of new primary documents from the British National Archives, including diplomatic correspondence from the early years of the PRC. We hope readers will find all the articles enlightening and useful.

Announcement – Guest Editor, Spring 2009 Issue of *ASIANetwork Exchange*

We are delighted to announce the selection of the Guest Editor for next spring's issue of the *Exchange*: Jennifer Prough, Assistant Professor of Humanities and East Asian Studies at Valparaiso University. Professor Prough's proposal, "Popular Culture of Japan," was chosen from among the truly excellent applications for Guest Editor that we received this year. We look forward to working with Professor Prough and her contributors, and we encourage readers to consider submitting new proposals for the position of Guest Editor for future spring issues. The guidelines for proposals can be found on the ASIANetwork web-site at asianetwork.org/exchange.html.

Tom Lutze and Irv Epstein
    Co-Editors

About the Contributors

Catherine Asher
Catherine Asher is a Professor of Art History specializing in Indian and Islamic art at the University of Minnesota. She has written extensively on the art and architecture of India from 1200 to the present. She is best known for *Architecture of Mughal India* (1992; 2002) and her co-authored book *India before Europe*, both published by Cambridge University Press.

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Catherine Benton teaches Asian religions and literatures at Lake Forest College. Her research interests include religious story literature and the contemporary religious practices of Hindu and Muslim communities in India. She is the author of *God of Desire, Tales of Kamadeva in Sanskrit Literature*.

Adam Cathcart
Adam Cathcart is Assistant Professor of History at Pacific Lutheran University, where he teaches courses on China, Korea, and Japan. His current research analyzes anti-Japanese nationalism in China during the U.S. occupation of Japan and also delves into the contemporary North Korean-Chinese frontier. Cathcart has co-authored several articles with his students, including publications in *Twentieth-Century China* and *China Quarterly* (with Patricia Nash) and *Journal of Korean Studies* and *Review of Korean Studies* (with Charles Kraus).

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Mark Dailey is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Asian Studies Program at Green Mountain College. He is an environmental anthropologist with research interests in China, wild resources, globalization/localization, and the conservation of social and ecological diversity.

Brian A. Hatcher

Brian A. Hatcher is McFee Professor of Religion at Illinois Wesleyan University and Chair of the Religion Department. His research focuses on religious and social change in colonial India, especially developments in nineteenth-century Calcutta. His most recent monograph, *Bourgeois Hinduism, or the Faith of the Modern Vedantists*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2008.

Mary L. Hanneman

Mary L. Hanneman is Associate Professor of Modern Asian History at the University of Washington-Tacoma. Her Ph.D. is in Modern Japanese History from the University of Washington and she is the author of two books on Japan. The comparative intellectual history of late 19th and early 20th century Japan and India is a new area of research for her and she welcomes any comments or input in that area from ASIANetwork members.

Tinaz Pavri

Tinaz Pavri is Associate Professor and Chair of the Political Science department at Spelman College. Her interests include international security, globalization and human rights and her geographic area of expertise is South Asia in general and India in particular. She is the author of numerous articles, book chapters and monographs and the recipient of numerous grants and awards for her research and scholarship.

David Tyler

David Tyler is one of the founder directors of both Adam Matthew Publications and Adam Matthew Digital. After studying history at the University of Liverpool, he worked with Harvester Microfilm and then Research Publications in the 1980s. He has been actively involved in the development of a diverse digital portfolio, exploring relevant aspects of new technologies, travelling frequently to meet with scholars and librarians, as well as constantly exploring new archives all over the world.

RESEARCH OF NOTE

Belief and Contestation in India:
The Case of the Taj Mahal

Catherine B. Asher
University of Minnesota

Of all the buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal is one of the most famous. It is renowned for its beauty, and, for many, it is a symbol of romantic love. Yet surprisingly the Taj Mahal is increasingly becoming a highly contested site. Recent challenges include questioning its Muslim Mughal patronage, its function as a royal tomb, and even its 17th-century date of construction. This probably sounds to you like scholarship as usual, but before I

The Taj Mahal
17th century
Agra, India

address the uncritical nature of these claims, I'd like to think about the larger issue of religious belief and contestation of

religious sites in South Asia. That may help contextualize the case of the Taj Mahal.

Let me make a few observations. Contested religious space is not a notion new to India, despite a tendency to see it as a legacy of colonialism.[1] Let's start in eastern India at Bodhgaya's Mahabodhi temple because it suggests multiple fields of contestation. This is the site of the Buddha's Enlightenment, a place that has been both shared and contested through its history.[2] The future Buddha went to Bodhgaya because it was and remains a place of considerable importance for Hindus. That is, Hindus come to the city of Gaya, on whose outskirts Bodhgaya lies, to propitiate recently-deceased relatives so that their souls might go to heaven as they engage in a ceremony, which, like the Buddha's final meditation, concludes under a great pipul tree. While presently we distinguish between the two towns, Gaya and Bodhgaya, that distinction is largely artificial; but it is one that neatly identifies the Buddhists' space as distinct from that of the Hindus. Bodhgaya, however, has not been without contestation. For example, a seventh-century Hindu king, as an act of war, uprooted the sacred Bodhi tree,[3] the very tree beneath which the Buddha had sat and obtained Enlightenment. Until the time of its desecration, this tree formed the central ritual focus of the Mahabodhi temple, as shown in ancient sculptures. This king's uprooting of the tree is one of many acts of religious violence in time of war, ones that need to be problemetized rather than simply dismissed as acts of bigotry or iconoclasm. The Bodhgaya temple site, by the way, continues to be contested, though now in an on-going court case. The issue is quite clear: Does the temple belong to the Mahabodhi Society, a Buddhist administrative group that claims it, or is it the property of Bodhgaya's Hindu priest in charge of Shiva worship there?[4] And like a lot of claims, the arguments invoke history, often an invented history, since the Society is relatively new, and the Priest's lineage cannot be traced back much farther.

My concern with contested and shared space was triggered by the momentous destruction of the so-called Babri Masjid at

a place in northeastern India called Ayodhya in 1992. This was an act that profoundly changed the way that I and others think and teach about Indian art—a field that is so often divided into specific religious categories according to historical time frames, all of which are colonial constructions. Erasing this colonial understanding of the rigidity of South Asian linear history, and replacing it with a grasp of the multiplicity of Indian cultures through diverse time frames would perhaps end such violent acts.

While most believe this mosque was constructed by the first Mughal emperor Babur, inscriptions show it was built by one of his nobles in 1528.[5] In fact we have no proof that the Mughal emperor Babur had ever visited Ayodhya. Many Hindus claimed that the mosque had been constructed on the site of the birthplace of the god Rama, where they believe a temple commemorating the precise locus of his birth stood prior to the mosque's construction. These Hindus, mostly instigated by right-wing Hindu political parties, had for some time threatened to demolish the mosque and replace it with a temple rededicated to Rama. The stand-off became a charged political one, debated in both state and federal legislatures. It pitted a well-organized and wealthy group of Hindus more against police who had been ordered to protect the mosque than against any organized Muslim community. As tension mounted, a mob finally stormed the police lines on December 6, 1992 and demolished the mosque, while the police themselves did little to stop its desecrators. Following the mosque's destruction, riots involving the killing of Hindus and Muslims broke out across India; the most massive violence was witnessed in Bombay, known today as Mumbai, where at least a thousand people were killed.

Following the mosque's destruction, the debate has centered and continues to do so, much more on whether a temple had been demolished in order to make way for the mosque than on any other issue. Virtually never debated was the ethics of righting one wrong—if indeed a temple had been demolished—by perpetrating another, in fact, seeking retribution more than 450 years after the event; nor was there any debate over the notion of sacred space itself.

The Case of Katra Buddha

Let me move to a situation quite comparable to the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya. My starting point here, however, is not a temple but rather a famous image called the Katra Buddha because it was found at the Katra Mound in Mathura—a city about 100 miles south of Delhi and only about 50 miles from the

Katra Buddha
2nd C CE
Mathura, India

Taj Mahal. Few scholars ask precisely where this Buddha image comes from, yet its find spot tells a story of present-day importance.

The Katra mound is in Mathura, an ancient city and one associated with several of India's religions, most prominently with the Hindu god Krishna. Mathura's Katra mound is located close to another mound, where extensive Buddhist remains were excavated, and less than a mile from a site associated with the Jain religion, which is similar to both Hindu and Buddhist traditions.[6] This suggests that it was a site used by several religions. In addition to the Jain and Buddhist images were also Hindu ones.[7] We also know that Katra was the location of a large Hindu temple, built in the early 17th century, which was dismantled under the orders of a Muslim emperor who replaced it with a great mosque that still occupies the space.

That last change was clearly intentional and sequential, that is, a Hindu temple was replaced by a mosque. But should we assume that during the entire history of the Katra mound, there was a sequential occupation, that is, first by Buddhists, then Hindus and finally Muslims?[8] This assertion, following and reinforcing commonly held beliefs, assumes exclusive propriety of a sacred site and changes, when they occur, coming in

sequential order. That is a notion that fits well with the assumptions of art history, a field that is committed to sequences. But is that notion, we must ask, more a construct of a present-day world in which territory is more often contested on religious grounds than simply shared?

Let me add one important piece here before moving on to the site today and its precarious situation. The temple that was destroyed in order to construct the mosque there had been built at the beginning of the seventeenth century by a Hindu Raja Bir Singh and subsequently supported by imperial Mughal grants, that is, grants for this Hindu temple from a dynasty of Muslim monarchs. The Hindu Raja who had provided this temple was much admired by a Mughal emperor, and, at the emperor's behest, he killed the confidant of his predecessor on the throne. The temple was only about 50 years old when it was destroyed in 1669. Moreover, it was specifically associated with a person whose memory remained alive at the time when the temple was destroyed in retaliation for political uprisings in the area around Mathura. Mughal losses were massive.[9] What was destroyed, in a very real sense, was the Mughal's own temple, and it was replaced by a very large mosque.

That's not the end of the story, for the site of the temple and mosque has been imbued with a new meaning. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries the site became identified as the precise locus of the god Krishna's birthplace, and now, immediately abutting the mosque, a large temple complex has been constructed.

Mughal Mosque (17th century) and modern Hindu Temple dedicated to Krishna

Both mosque and temple are heavily guarded by police and security is tight. The space is not just contested; it is

highly charged. While few visit the mosque, which is surrounded by armed police and barbed wire, thousands every day descend upon the new temple dedicated to the birthplace of the god Krishna. The mosque remains, although photography is now prohibited, but the same right wing Hindu groups responsible for destroying the Babri mosque remain intent on its demolition. All the same, here we have a situation of a shared but highly contested space.

Shared, Yet Uncontested Spaces

In contrast to the example above, there are many conventional instances of shared yet uncontested space. Insofar as religious space can be defined by procession and ceremonial, we might note examples in the past where Hindu rulers participated in processions during a Muslim commemorative festival, and Muslims took part in Hindu celebrations."[10] One of most sacred sites of Islam in all South Asia, the Shrine of Muin ud-Din Chishti in Ajmer, is venerated and visited by Hindus as well as Muslims and other Indians, irrespective of their religion."[11] Hindus still visit a number of Muslim shrines and ask for intercession from the saints buried there for children, health, and other favors. An excellent case in point is the shrine of Shahul Hamid, a mystic saint who lived during the 16th century.[12] It's located in Nagore in south India.

Shahul Hamid's shrine is unusual not in that Muslims, Hindus, and Christians come in equal numbers from considerable distances to pay homage, but rather in that customs practiced at the shrine have embraced the sort of ritual usually only found at Hindu temples. Hagiographies describing Shahul Hamid give him the powers typically associated with a Muslim saint, but what is less common are references to the saint that are usually associated with Hindu gods, offering clues not to the saint as a historical figure but to his legend and the traditions that have built up around his shrine.

Visiting the Nagore shrine is like the visit to many crowded holy sites; it is an experience that engages the senses of sight, smell, taste, and sound. This experience is close to that of a visit to a large Hindu temple. As scholars have noted, Islam in

south India, especially in the context of a Muslim shrine, is much more likely to embrace Indic traditions than Islam in north India. This is not to suggest that south Indian Islam is a watered-down version of standard Islam, for many scholars of classical Islam have flourished in these very communities, but rather that long-standing Indic traditions have been widely embraced by south India's Muslims.

The Nagore shrine is visited equally by Muslims and Hindus, most of whom are seeking cures for ailments, an end to barrenness, and safety in travel. Those who wish to be healed or to secure safe journeys purchase plaques with an image of the afflicted body part or a ship, a car, or even an airplane, which they offer to the shrine. Not far from Nagore is the Church of Our Lady of Health, a pan-Indian pilgrimage site for Christians, where nearly identical offerings are made. My sense is that while these sites are separate, multiple religious communities happily visit all of them.

Scholarly literature and popular images dwell on the ecumenical nature of south Indian society. On the road between Nagore and the church is a free-standing gate, dedicated to the cooperation of religions, featuring centrally placed Hindu temple flanked on either side by images of the Church of Our Lady of

Gateway in south India
21st century

Health and the Nagore shrine. I also observed an illustration on the back of a bus that featured a similar scenario, with an image of a Hindu god replacing the temple. Although in each case, the Hindu image is the largest and is centrally placed, I'm not suggesting an absence of inter-community harmony. What I am suggesting is that in spite of this harmony, the tendency is to respect the existence of other religious traditions, but at the same time believe your own is the proper path.

Rethinking Religious Identity

But we need to ask—is it only Hindus who are willing in the modern era to cross into Muslim domains? I myself have observed—with a degree of wonder that was probably unnecessary—a burka-clad (that is, completely veiled), and thus obviously Muslim woman, at a famous south Indian Hindu temple. This observation underscores the need to consider with care the meaning of religious identity in South Asia. To what extent is that sense of identity with a religion, as opposed to identity with a community, a colonial legacy, perhaps most closely associated with the census, which mandated counting individuals by religious affiliation that fit British-conceived categories? Certainly we know cases of communities, including of course the individuals who comprise those communities, which identify as *both* Hindu and Muslim.[13] But even in cases such as those, I wonder if the members of these communities imagine a dual identity, as we might construe it, rather than simply an identity with the community and its culturally instilled practices.[14]

There are many other examples of shared space in India, and perhaps I should stress this before turning to one last example of contested space—one which you might not tend to think of as a contested—that is the Taj Mahal. The situations of contested space I've spoken about at the outset of this essay are well known. The destruction of the Babri mosque commanded international attention. The Mathura situation is well publicized in India. Information about them is easily accessed on the web and in hard print format. Less known are more insidious attempts to rewrite Indian history. Perhaps the best example for our purposes is India's most famous monument,

the Taj Mahal, built in the mid-17th century by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58).

The Case of the Taj Mahal

This garden complex was built as a tomb for Shah Jahan's favorite wife who died in 1631 while giving birth to her fourteenth child; thus one common association with the Taj Mahal is a notion of romantic love. But we must consider that the emperor Shah Jahan was buried in the Taj Mahal as well after being imprisoned for the last years of his life.[15] The Taj's official name, the Illumined Tomb, an epithet shared with the Prophet Muhammad's tomb in Medina, suggests that Shah Jahan always intended the Taj Mahal to be his tomb as well. He perceived himself, like the Prophet Muhammad, to conform to the Islamic theological concept of a Perfect Man. In this same manner, the tomb's interior is designed so that the centrally placed royal cenotaphs can be circumambulated as is done at saints' shrines in India, thus suggesting a link between royalty and sanctity. In addition, chapters from the Quran, the holiest text in Islam and believed to be divinely revealed, were chanted 24 hours a day in the complex, underscoring its religious nature. So, too, the enormous garden in which the Taj Mahal sits is intended to represent paradise on earth. Paradise in the Muslim tradition is the reward for all true believers on the Day of Judgment. In essence the tomb was built as a shrine in which the deceased royals are given a semi-divine status. For many Muslims in India, it indeed is a shrine. Other communities, however, perceive the Taj differently, but are far from unanimous in their perceptions.

The Taj Mahal today enjoys fame far beyond its religious importance. True, it was admired by the Mughal family, members of the nobility and European travelers throughout the Mughal period and beyond, but it essentially marks the end of the tradition of building large-scale tombs. But today it, more than any other building in the world, is equated with excellence. Over the last twenty years advertisements featuring the Taj Mahal have been associated with fine china, aged spirits, luxury cruises and more. Even the Government of India features this

garden tomb in glossy page advertisements inviting tourists to the ultimate experience—paradise on earth. Others wish to emulate the Taj Mahal. The inlay on the Taj Mahal was the inspiration for the multi-millionaire Doris Duke's bathroom on her estate, Shangri La in Hawaii. Today a wealthy filmmaker in Bangladesh is making a so-called replica of the Taj to the tune of $58 million dollars outside of Dhaka.

The association of Shah Jahan's white marble mausoleum with high quality products is harmless—perhaps the proud emperor would have been delighted with this universal acclamation of his architectural output. But understanding how this attitude came about is instructive to understanding the mausoleum's visual appeal as well as to its increasingly contested nature.

Much historical information is known about the Taj Mahal, but scholars disagree on its symbolism. One scholar has argued that the Taj is a representation of the Throne of God as envisioned on the Day of Judgment, while others disagree strongly.[16] It is interesting that those who know relatively little about the Mughal Empire and its architectural tradition admire this essay, while scholars of Mughal Indian art tend to dismiss it. Whatever its larger meaning, the extensive use of white marble must have been intended to evoke a sense of divine presence, for by the time of the monument's construction, white marble was used exclusively for the tombs of saints and for buildings intended solely for the emperor's use, thus employing architecture as a way to accentuate the Mughal emperor's semi-divine status.

While today the Taj is commonly seen from the entrance gate, in fact, relatively few ever saw it from this vantage. In Mughal times the public only viewed it from the river. Its exterior would loom large on the landscape, but access to the garden or mausoleum was denied to most. This may help to explain why it had less impact than commonly imagined. By the mid-17th century, monumental tombs almost completely lost favor, in part due to financial restraints, but also as a reflection of the increased popularity of orthodox Islam. Modest grave markers, more in keeping with orthodox Muslim practice, replaced large structural

tombs such as the Taj Mahal, even for the Mughal royals.[17] While the architectural legacy of the earlier Mughals held great value for the later Mughals, the Taj Mahal itself played a minor role in this.

If there was relatively little interest on the part of Indians in the Taj Mahal, how did this monument become supersized; that is, how did it become central to the imagined memory of so many as they think about India? How did it come to be the subject of all those European artists who visited India?[18] The awe expressed by Francois Bernier, whom I will discuss below, appears to have set the tenor of European reactions to a building, transforming it from a private tomb to an object of public wonder.

A number of Europeans were present in 17th-century Mughal India, and some engaged in writing memoirs. Among those writing on the Taj only the account of Francois Bernier, a physician to the royal family, is fully credible.[19] Bernier writes about the tomb in a way that underscores his own uncertainty on how to appreciate Indian architecture, an attitude I argue at least continues into the early 20th century:

> Last time I visited Tage Mehale's mausoleum I was in the company of a French merchant, who, as well as myself, thought that this extraordinary fabric could not be sufficiently admired. I did not venture to express my opinion, fearing that my taste might have been corrupted by my long residence in the Indies; and as my companion was come recently from France, it was quite a relief to my mind to hear him say that he had seen nothing in Europe so bold and majestic.[20]

Thus, the Taj's harmoniously balanced composition appealed to western sensibilities as early as the 17th century. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Taj Mahal was immortalized by a number of European artists. Throughout the 19th century, Europeans continued to admire the Taj, and for the British it was the favored picnic spot.

The building's preeminent position today reflects the original but short-lived imperial view of its importance that was re-

created in the 19th and 20th centuries by a British colonial construction of India's past. In 1876, James Fergusson, the first European to write a history of Indian architecture, compared the Mughal mausoleum to the Greek Parthenon, stating that the Taj Mahal was a magnificent specimen of balanced architecture and ornament. But then he goes on to argue that "the Parthenon belongs… to a higher class of art, its sculptures raising it into the region of the most intellectual branch of … art." Fergusson ends by noting that although the Taj's inlay was exquisite, it still lacked the "intellectual beauty of Greek ornament."[21] Thus Fergusson's colonial mind saw the Taj Mahal as a structure not quite equal to European architecture and as one whose decor reflected the inferiority of the "native" mind.

E.B. Havell, writing in 1913, had a very different notion of the Taj Mahal than did Fergusson, and it is Havell's view that fueled the views of P.N. Oak, a Hindu fundamentalist, who started writing in the late 1960s, and Oak's followers. Contrary to the work of Fergusson and others, Havell argued that the Taj Mahal has nothing in common with Islamic architecture outside of India, although the Mughals were descended from the Central Asian Timurids, who were famous for their architecture. Havell argues that the Taj is in fact essentially Indian—here we should read pre-Islamic India—in origin. He writes at length about how its plan, motifs and design elements symbolize ideals found in ancient pre-Islamic Indian art, not Islamic art.

I will only give two examples, but any scholar will see that they are fallacious. Havell argues that the overall appearance and plan of the Taj Mahal is not found in the Mughals' own architectural tradition, but rather in Hindu temples built some five centuries earlier. He argues that the dome of the Taj Mahal does not derive from other similar Mughal domes but in Buddhist stupas built centuries earlier, although he fails to acknowledge that the Mughals had no knowledge of these stupas.

The common view is that Havell was suggesting that all Indians—Hindus, Muslims and others—were valid Indian subjects of study. But recent work by the scholar Osman Jamal suggests that this innocent view is a misleading one, arguing that Havell was in fact more subversive than commonly

believed.[22] Jamal claims that in Havell's mind, only those historical features that date to India's ancient pre-Islamic past are validly "Indian," and that Havell was anti-Muslim. Havell's insistence that the origins of the Taj Mahal were to be found not in the buildings built recently by Shah Jahan's own predecessors but in ones unknown to the Mughals and built long ago would support Jamal's notion that Havell believed the "real" India was one rooted in its ancient pre-Islamic past.

What is important to note here is that while both Fergusson and Havell had radically different ideas about the origins of the Taj Mahal's form, they were nevertheless wrestling with its extreme beauty each in his own way. For Fergusson it was to admit its superlative appearance, but regard it as inferior to a recognized Greek masterpiece. For Havell it was to reject its Islamic origins by claiming ones originating in an ancient Indic past. Both men were carrying forth the tradition established by the Frenchman Bernier, who transformed the Taj into an object of wonder. And from those who treated it as a sublime work of art, it came to be treated as an object of popular culture, accompanying the use of India's historic past in indigenous advertising.[23] And from there, the Taj entered the broader public domain; it was featured in the work of ad agencies worldwide as they used it not as a tomb but rather as a symbol of elegance and luxury, a residence for the living more than a repository for the dead.

Other modern associations are more pernicious, and only based on a skewed understanding of history. For example, land for the Taj Mahal had been purchased from a Hindu, a fact distorted by authors, in particular the late P.N. Oak, from west India, associated with the Institute for Rewriting Indian History. He has presented the Taj Mahal as a product of earlier Hindu patronage, not the later Muslim one.[24] Oak's arguments appear compelling—except to knowledgeable scholars. The problem is most people lack this knowledge so his conspiracy theory wrapped in inflammatory rhetoric is compelling to those who wish to believe.

The material written by Oak is readily available on a number of Internet websites.[25] Most of these sites are stridently anti-

Muslim. The BBC posts a discussion site which gives a traditional version of the origins of the Taj Mahal and then below it Oak's version, which is recounted in greater detail.[26] Respondents to this site are either appalled by the Oak version—they are often Muslims—while others are taken by his argument. What we see here is that a new myth, or memory, of the Taj Mahal—one whose implications are both far-reaching and frightening—is being developed by Hindu fundamentalists, who through a massive network of electronic and paper publications, are attempting to reshape the Taj Mahal's past to meet their own immediate concerns. Recently a member of the Indian Parliament attempted to introduce a bill to officially declare the Taj a Hindu temple. A model of the Taj sold in tourist shops bears a trident, a Hindu symbol, on the dome,[27] transforming this souvenir into a Hindu temple or palace. Such claims employ revisionist histories and artistic creation to discredit Muslims, thus undermining the very basis of India's constitutional secular democracy.

Today various governmental agencies control the Taj Mahal and its surroundings. They have had to deal with a number of deep concerns, from pollution to separatist organizations threatening to blow up the Taj Mahal, and, more recently, the construction of a massive shopping centre nearby, which poses the potential of damaging the Taj's foundation. The shopping complex derives from an earlier scheme devised by an American university. The use of American, not Indian expertise has understandably created a huge controversy. The project was rooted in a desire to protect the complex from excessive tourist traffic and from terrorists, and in a desire to raise revenues. To achieve these goals, the visitor first purchases a dual priced ticket—25 cents for Indian nationals and 20 dollars for all others. The visitor then goes through metal detectors and other searches. While the concern for security is reasonable, the dual pricing, for which there is not even a student rate, has engendered a good deal of anger.

More controversial is the manner in which human traffic is now controlled. Until recently the Taj was open for seven days a week and Fridays were free. Now Friday is a closed

day. This decision appears to be targeted at the local, large, poor Muslim community who for years used the Taj as a place to relax on their weekly holy day. Muslims are allowed to use the mosque inside the complex for Friday prayers, but they are denied its use as place of leisure. The fee, 10 rupees—about 25 cents— for other days, seems low to the well-to-do or for foreigners, but for large Muslim families to pay this amount significantly restricts their visits. Certainly, they can not visit it once a week as they had done in the past. Tim Edensor, who interviewed local Muslim visitors to the Taj Mahal before these strictures were enforced, heard complaints from older men who already felt constrained when activities such as playing cards at the Taj were banned. One noted, "In the old days it used to be fun…; now… we are not allowed to do anything but sit here and look."[28] Another local Muslim complained that tickets shouldn't be required for a religious building they loved. Tickets, he argues, are simply an obstacle to a locale he feels belongs to the citizens of Agra.[29]

Recently these issues have been eclipsed by a new development that potentially might affect the very survival of this massive complex. Like the current situation at Bodhgaya, a controversy has emerged over who has rightful authority over this sacred site. In 2005, the Muslim Trust Board claimed the Taj Mahal was their legitimate responsibility and not that of the Government. Each side has filed a law suit on who should be the rightful protector of this complex that costs millions of dollars annually to maintain.[30] Due to the nature of Muslim Trust Board laws, this claim has more legitimacy than it might seem on the surface. This case of contestation is pending a decision by the Indian Supreme Court, and now that the Taj Mahal has recently been included among the Seven Wonders of the World, the issue is all the more loaded.[31]

What we have seen is that when one religious group—in this case majority Hindus with considerable political clout—decides that a structure built earlier by what is today a minority group—in this case Muslims—is on a spot that has become sacred to Hinduism—here we can read recently—that site becomes highly contested and charged. In the case of the Taj Mahal there are several contesters—the Indian government,

Hindus and Muslims, and tourists—all wishing to claim South Asia's most famous monument. Despite such fierce contestation at a number of religious sites, however, there still exist shrines, ones such as Shabul Hamid's, where ordinary people come together in respect for the spiritual and moral authority of saints. These are the sites that tend to remain uncontested, for they remain outside the realm of the political, serving only the interests of the average person, who is concerned with safety, spiritual welfare, and health.

Endnotes

[1]C.A. Bailey, "The Pre-history of 'Communalism'? Religious Conflict in India, 1700-1860." *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 19, 2 (1995), 177-203, especially, 177-181.

[2]Most of my information on Bodhgaya comes from years of discussion with Frederick M. Asher. Also see Frederick M. Asher, *Bodh Gaya: Monumental Legacy*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008.

[3]The record of desecration comes largely from the Chinese pilgrims. See, for example, Xuan Zong's account in Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*. London: Trubner & Co., 1884, 121-22.

[4]For a perspective on the current dispute, see D.K. Barua, *Buddha Gaya Temple and its History*. Buddha Gaya: Buddha Gaya Temple Management Committee, 1981.

[5] Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 29-30.

[6]See Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Reports*, vol. I, reprint ed., Delhi: Indological Book House, 1972, plate XXXIX for a map of Mathura that shows the site, there called Katara.

[7]See V.S. Agrawala, "Catalogue of the Mathura Museum; III. Jaina Tirthankaras and Other Miscellaneous Figures," *Journal of the U.P. Historical Society*, vol. XXIII (1950), 46 and V.S. Agrawala, "Catalogue of the Mathura Museum; II. A Catalogue of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva in Mathura Art." *Journal of the U.P. Historical Society*, vol. XXII (1949), 109-110.

[8]Cunningham, vol. I, 235.

[9]Much of this history is summarized in C. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*. 162-164.

[10]*Madhya Pradesh District Gazetteers, Gwalior*. Bhopal: Government Central Press, 1965, 56, quoting a previous edition of the Gazetteer.

[11]*Rajasthan District Gazetteers, Ajmer*. Jaipur: Government Central Press, 1966, 715, quoting a previous edition of the Gazetteer. See also Bayly for many other examples of sharing both space and ritual.

[12] Vasudha Narayanan, "Nagore: Dargah of Hazrat Shah al-Hamid," in *Dargahs, Abodes of the Saints*, edited by Mumtaz Currim and George Michell. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2004, 136-47.

[13]Harjot Oberoi, *Construction of Religious Boundaries.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, 10-12.

[14]Oberoi, 8-9, makes the case that the 19th century imposed a classificatory model for religious identity that did not necessarily reflect indigenous reality.

[15] See Begley and Desai, *Taj Mahal: the Illumined Tomb,* for the Mughal sources on the Taj Mahal. Also see Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006), 256-57. Koch, 97-101 provides a detailed account of progress on the tomb based on her readings of original sources.

[16] Wayne E. Bagley, The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of Its Symbolic Meaning," *The Art Bulletin* 61 (1979), 7-37 and Koch, 250.

[17] For an example see Asher, *Architecture of Mughal* India, 296.

[18] See Koch, *Complete Taj Mahal*, 231-40 for an overview of European artists illustrating the Taj Mahal.

[19] See Begley and Desai, *The Taj Mahal: The Illumined Tomb*, 291 for issues of unreliability.

[20] Begley and Desai, *The Taj Mahal: the Illumined Tomb,* 296- 98.

[21]James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 2 vol. 2nd ed. rev. James Burgess and R. Phene

Spiers (London: John Murray, 1910), II:284; 316. The first edition appeared in 1876.

22 Osman Jamal, "E.B. Havell: The Art and Politics of Indianness," *Third Text* 39 (Summer 1997), 3-19.

23 For examples see, Samantha Harrison and Kajri Jain, *India Bazaar: Vintage Indian Graphics* (Koln: Taschen Books, 2004), pages not numbered; Sirish Rao, V. Geetha, and Gita Wolf-Sampath, *An Ideal Boy: Charts from India* (Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publications in association with Tara Publications, 2001), 103-04.

24 P.N. Oak, *The Taj Mahal is a Hindu Palace* (Bombay: Pearl Books, 1968) and his *The Taj Mahal is a Temple Palace* (New Delhi: Institute for Rewriting Indian History, 1974). Oak has a number of books along this same line.

25 Examples include:

http://www.swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/editorial/editorial.html

http://www.stephen-knapp.com/ was_the_taj_mahal_a_vedic_temple.htm

26 http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/alabaster/A5220

27 See: http://www.heritagearcade.com/themes/gifs/taj-mahal-model-big.jpg

28 Edensor, *Tourists at the Taj,* 118.

29 Edensor, *Tourists at the Taj,* 116.

30 For example, "Taj Now Waqf Property, ASI to Move Court," *Hindustan Times*, July 14, 2005, 1; "Government Rejects Waqf Claim on Taj," *Hindustan Times* (Lucknow edition), July 16, 2005, 1.

31 The summer when I spoke to officials at the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) they claimed that the Waqf Board issue is not a problem, although this is not necessarily true.

Behind the Veil in Khuldabad, India:
14th Century Sufi Saints, 21st Century Islamic Reformers, and Muslim Women

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In January of 2009, I traveled to India to interview women in Khuldabad, a small Muslim town in the state of Maharashtra, about religious customs and rituals. With the help of my multilingual friend and colleague from this area, Surekha Shah, I interviewed twenty-nine women using a blend of Urdu and English. These women[1], from different economic and social levels, invited me into their homes. Their dwellings ranged from single, earthen floor rooms to family compounds built around ancient courtyards housing several generations. The rough streets and well-worn pathways, bounded by high stone and wooden walls, give the feel of a small medieval town with goats and people and bicycles meandering through, but the autorickshaws and state buses belching blue-purple smoke anchor one in the more nuanced mix of centuries that is Khuldabad. Behind the purdah of walls and veils, women welcomed me with warmth and openness. And each time I left their homes, they graciously invited me to return.

The focus of my research was to gain firsthand knowledge of women's religious traditions in this ninety-nine percent Muslim town established in the fourteenth century by north Indian Muslim saints with names identifying them with Baghdad, Shiraz, and parts of Central Asia. During earlier travels to this area, I had visited the town's dargahs (shrines) built around the tombs of revered Sufi saints, and I had photographed several of the family rituals that take place in the open spaces of these dargahs'

Zar Zari Zar Baksh

inner courtyards where men and women pray and offer petitions.

In December of 2002, supported by an ASIANetwork Student-Faculty research grant, I had conducted research in Khuldabad with three Lake Forest College students at the beautiful dargah constructed around the tomb of the saint known as Zar Zari Zar Baksh (the giver of the essence of gold). At that time, our research focused on the powerful singing ritual, the qawwali, performed by men but open to all members of the community and intended to evoke an experience of the divine. The music recorded in 2003 and the images of this dargah can be found at: http://www.lib.lfc.edu/collections/benton/data/research/Ellora/pages/muslim.html

Six years later, the focus of my research was to learn from the women of Khuldabad how they conceptualized the decades old religious rituals they performed at these saints' shrines. However, by January 2009, I found the women were not so sure about praying in the dargahs. Muslim teachers from outside Khuldabad were preaching that dargah rituals were un-Islamic. And while many women still hoped for help from the saints they had prayed to for generations, their visits to the dargahs had become less frequent. Women carefully explained to me that they went to the dargahs now only to enjoy the grounds, not to petition the saints. Dargahs were becoming off-limits to women preserving their status as good Muslims.

In Khuldabad, the dargahs had always been one of the few public spaces where Muslim women could visit, picnic, pray, and enjoy rituals. But views are changing and women who like to pray at the dargahs court conflict with husbands, siblings, in-laws, and neighbors who argue vociferously that seeking the blessing or intercession of a saint is not Muslim practice at all. Indeed, some believe that praying at a dargah is a violation of the core Islamic belief in absolute monotheism. Prayers should be offered directly to God, not to intermediaries such as saints or prophets. Women drawn to the centuries old custom of turning to the saints for help and protection now find themselves caught in a swirl of opposing perspectives. Not willing to give up completely the peacefulness of the dargahs, these women are also not prepared to argue with those trying to make them purer Muslims. One woman in her mid-fifties said she was too old to start covering her face or worrying about whether some of her hair was visible when she left her house. Still, not wanting conflict, she simply finds ways to avoid the men always ready to preach to her.

Khuldabad, molded by the rituals and festivals celebrated at the shrines of the Sufi saints who lived there, is now a town of opposing Islamic worldviews: the worldviews represented by the history, rituals, and perspectives of the dargah culture and the worldviews of Muslim organizations identified with more conservative interpretations of Islamic scripture and history. In

the streets of Khuldabad, almost every woman wears full burqa and niqab, allowing only her eyes to be seen by those she meets. Fewer and fewer women feel comfortable walking into the shrines of the saints who founded Khuldabad and remained the core of its identity for 700 years.

Khuldabad's Dargahs: Being Blessed by the Saints

Khuldabad was established in the fourteenth century by disciples of a famous Chishti Sufi teacher who lived in Delhi, Nizam al-Din Awliya.[2] Among these disciples was the highly-respected teacher, Burhan al-Din Gharib, who brought elite Sufi practices to the Deccan, including the sama' ritual of listening to qawwali music in an attitude of prayer and with the desire to reach the Divine. Revered as a saint, Burhan al-Din Gharib is buried in the heart of Khuldabad behind large shrine walls that surround a courtyard within a courtyard that holds the saint's tomb, a mosque area, cemetery, and an expansive outer courtyard with a cooking alcove containing the large cauldrons used to prepare food for thousands of pilgrims on festival days.

Directly across from the Burhan al-Din shrine is another shrine complex constructed around the tomb of his successor, Zayn al-Din Shirazi, and the tombs of several other Chishti saints. Just inside this complex is the simple tomb of the last Mughal emperor of India, Aurangzeb, understood to have repented his life of warfare and bloodshed as he neared death, choosing to be buried in the company of these revered Sufi saints rather than as a king like his father, Shah Jahan, whose tomb is enshrined in the Taj Mahal.

Although tombs of holy people are scattered throughout the Khuldabad area, the town's largest and most beautiful shrine preserves the tombs of Burhan al-Din's mother, Bibi Hajira, and his brother, Muntajib al-Din known more familiarly by his epithet, Zar Zari Zar Baksh, giver of gold. The Zar Zari Zar Baksh Dargah, located at the edge of town at the foot of a rocky desolate hill, has traditionally attracted the largest numbers of pilgrims throughout the year, as the saint and his mother are understood to be powerful mediators. People travel long

distances to petition the saints' help with such matters as conceiving a healthy child or finding a spouse.

In 2003, I photographed family groups at the Zar Zari Zar Baksh Dargah celebrating children who looked to be 10 months to 2 years old. Families who have given birth to healthy children after petitioning the saints, routinely return to the shrine to perform a thanksgiving ritual in which the family offers the weight of the child in sweetbreads to the dargah community, and then enjoys a picnic in the outer courtyard of the shrine. During this visit, I also photographed a group of high school students on a class field trip from Aurangabad, a large industrial city about 35 kilometers away. Both boys and girls had great fun posing for my photos, the girls quickly arranging their scarves (dupattas) over some part of their heads or shoulders. Especially on Thursdays and Fridays at the dargah, I encountered groups of women, Hindu and Muslim, sometimes with spouses but often not, unwrapping picnic baskets and watching the children play in the of the dargah courtyard.

All who travel to the dargah are understood to be blessed by being in the presence of the physical remains of the saint. Although women are not allowed to touch the tomb, male shrine workers brush the tomb with peacock feather bundles and then touch these bundles to the head and shoulders of the women to convey the saint's blessing physically. Some women make offerings of cloth or flowers at the tomb, receiving small sugar balls in return. Others tie bangles over the Bibi Hajira doorway as symbols of their petitions.

Five years later, in 2008, I returned to the Zar Zari Zar Baksh Dargah and learned that most of the women visitors to the dargah were no longer from Khuldabad, but from towns farther away. A woman I had talked with extensively in 2003 told me that men from the Tablighi Jamaat and Ahle Hadith were pushing people to reject the dargahs, preaching that petitioning the saints at the dargahs was forbidden by Islam. Tablighi preachers teach that Muslims should pray only to God, she said, not to the saints or prophets, even as intermediaries. Praying at the shrine of a saint is idolatry (*shirk*), the worst sin

in Islam.[3] According to these preachers, devotion to saints and their shrines was a practice brought by illiterate Mughals ignorant of the true teachings of the *Qur'an* and hadiths.[4]   Thus, the petitioning of a saint was worse than useless; it was sinful.

Still, many of the residents of Khuldabad were not persuaded by this perspective, and certainly my friend was not. She said these men were arrogant and pushy, always telling her to cover more of her body and to give up the dargah. She had studied the *Qur'an* herself and did not agree with their teachings. Her husband had worked at the dargahs for many years as a musician and maker of musical instruments, and much of her life had been spent at dargahs in Khuldabad and Mumbai where she had grown up. She loved the dargahs and continued to visit them even after the death of her husband two years earlier. At the same time, she recognized that things were changing in Khuldabad, as more people had begun listening to the forceful teachers of the Tablighi Jamaat and Ahle-Hadith, the two Muslim missionary organizations whose preaching challenged the traditions of the dargahs.

The Ahle Hadith (People of Hadith[5]), founded in India in the nineteenth century, advocates a theology based on literal adherence to the *Qur'an* and hadiths, and a mission to purify Islam of superstitions and idolatries. Ahle Hadith teaches that invoking any prophet (including Muhammad) or saint in prayer, visiting the tombs of saints or prophets, or the celebration of saints' feasts, is a polytheistic practice, deeply heretical in light of Islam's foundational teaching of the oneness of God. Consistent with their goal of purifying the practice of Islam, Ahle Hadith ban photographs, tobacco, and any celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, a popular custom in many Islamic cultures.

Although the Ahle Hadith has a small presence in Khuldabad, especially through those husbands and brothers doing contract work in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, the larger influence appears to be that of the Tablighi Jamaat. Many townspeople know the fundamental teachings of the Tablighi Jamaat and their Saturday classes. Not only are women more fully covered

with burqa and niqab, some men in Khuldabad have begun wearing the beards and white kurta pajamas advocated by the Tablighi Jamaat.[6] Reformers and missionaries, Tablighi Jamaat preachers travel widely as part of their religious mandate to teach brother and sister Muslims their view of authentic Islamic practice, and they now have a strong base of followers in the Khuldabad-Aurangabad area.

Tablighi Jamaat Origins: 20th Century Reform and Missionary Zeal

The Tablighi Jamaat was founded in north India in the1920s to spread the teachings of a prominent Islamic seminary in Deoband, and to provide a counterweight to twentieth century Hindu shuddhi (purifying) campaigns. These campaigns had been organized to convert or possibly "reconvert" Muslim villagers before they were counted in the British census being used to determine Hindu and Muslim representative seats in the British colony's legislative body.[7] The British had decided to establish a representative legislative assembly based on religious identities. But this question was complicated in India where villagers often participated in the religious festivals and rituals of several religious traditions. Religious practice in South Asia did not have the same kind of rigid boundaries as in England where Anglicans would not worship with Roman Catholics or Jews. In South Asia, while people strongly identified with their birth-communities, their jatis, they often participated in whatever religious rituals were thought to bring blessing, a practice that caused confusion for the British trying to establish clear categories for their census. Several Hindu groups saw in this situation an opportunity to convince villagers that they had been Hindu before the Moguls had arrived in India, and thus could be Hindu again. As communities of Muslim villagers were "purified" and returned to their former Hindu identities, the Hindu share of assembly seats began to increase.

When members of the Islamic Deobandi seminary recognized that groups of illiterate Muslim villagers were being lost to Islam, they realized their responsibility as Muslims and

clerics to teach authentic Islam in the villages, even though such travel posed a great change in lifestyle for these learned scholars accustomed to the status and amenities of city life. Focused on teaching authentic Islamic practice and belief to village Muslims, the Tablighi Jamaat (people devoted to preaching) was established.

In the eight decades since their founding, the Tablighi Jamaat have grown into a worldwide network, deeply rooted in the Muslim populations of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and in the diaspora South Asian Muslim communities of the UK, Australia, Europe, and North America. Tablighi missionaries have also established strong presences in Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Africa. Each year, thousands of Tablighi missionaries come together in India (Bhopal), Pakistan (Raiwind), and Bangladesh (Tongi) for annual gatherings, called Ijtema. In January 2009, the Bangladesh Ijtema drew 3 million Tablighi participants, a gathering of Muslims said to be second in size only to the Hajj in Mecca.[8]

The Ijtema offers Tablighi missionaries spiritual renewal and learning, as they attend lectures focused on foundational teachings. These formative teachings are summarized in their six principles (*chhe baten*)[9]:

1. Exclusive belief in one God and his Prophet, i.e. reciting the shahada (confession of faith) correctly in Arabic.
2. Prayer five times a day, saying and performing namaz (prayer) correctly, including ritual ablutions.
3. Knowledge and remembrance of God, i.e. learning basic obligatory rituals such as fasting, zakat (almsgiving), and meditating on God, in addition to reciting the *Qur'an* and reading hadith (words of the Prophet Muhammad).
4. Treating others with honor and respect, especially elders and scholars of Islam ('ulama).
5. Performing all actions for God to win divine recompense rather than worldly or material rewards.

6. Sparing time to preach, following the example of the Prophet. Tablighs are strongly encouraged to spend defined periods of time traveling to spread the pure form of Islam.

Guided by these principles, Tablighi men (though women are allowed to travel, in practice, the itinerant preachers in India are primarily men) reach out to other Muslims preaching pure Islam as they understand it to have been practiced by the Prophet Muhammad.

The Tablighi Jamaat, like other religious communities rooted in divine revelation, must decide which interpretation of the divine revelation–fixed in the *Qur'an*–most accurately represents God's meaning. For the Tablighi Jamaat, this interpretative authority rests in their founder, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas and his successors, who follow what they describe as a Deobandi interpretation of Hanafi jurisprudence.[10]

Tablighi Jamaat in Khuldabad: 21ˢᵗ Century Changes for Women

How has the missionary work of the Tablighi Jamaat among Maharashtra Muslims affected the women of Khuldabad? In 1993, I saw Khuldabad for the first time through the windows of a bus traveling to the Ajanta Caves, the site of 2000 year old rock-cut Buddhist caves about 100 kilometers away. I noted the minarets of mosques towering from behind high walls and the many scattered Muslim tombs in fields along the road, testifying to the Muslim history and identity of this area. In the town center, women in black or brown burqas (long robes worn over their clothes) shopped or walked with children, their faces clearly visible as they went about their daily activities beneath shop signs in Urdu and English.

When I returned to Khuldabad in 2001 and 2003, there were indications of change. During the previous decade of intensifying Hindu-Muslim tension, in India generally and in Maharashtra specifically, the conservative Hindu Shiv Sena had constructed a bright orange Maruti Temple devoted to the Hindu

monkey god in the middle of this ninety-nine percent Muslim town, demonstrating the growing political power of this strongly pro-Hindu organization and pushing Muslims to interact only with other Muslims. Also, fewer women appeared to be shopping in the center of town, though the dargah was still filled with women, particularly on Thursdays and Fridays.

By 2009, changes among the women were undeniable. Outside the home, almost every woman in Khuldabad now wears full burqa with niqab (face-covering). Older women and women on the lower rungs of the social and economic ladder still might wear only the loose black robe, or burqa, with a simple head covering in public. But younger women, especially those who are educated, of marriageable age, or married to men working in Saudi Arabia or Dubai, are always fully covered, allowing only their eyes to be seen in the street. All schoolgirls at the Maulana Azad Government School (elementary and high school age) now wear some form of head covering though with faces open. Even a few four-year-old girls are wearing small gray or white burqas and head coverings (with faces open), though most girls under the age of seven or eight still wear the typical bright colored dresses with no burqa or head and shoulder covering.

In 2009, when I asked the women about their reasons for wearing the burqa and niqab, I heard that

- the burqa is mandated for women by the *Qur'an*
- the *Qur'an* says in Surah 33 that women must observe purdah of the cloth and men must observe purdah of the eyes (i.e. averting their eyes)
- women should follow the behavior of the Prophet's wives who were veiled
- only sinful or ignorant women deserving of no respect would appear in public uncovered
- one of the hadiths reports that the body of a woman who is not fully covered in her life will be burned by Allah when she dies
- a female physician explained that the Prophet knew the

health-giving properties of the burqa/niqab in protecting the wearer from lung pollutants and bronchial infections 1400 years ago. In addition to lungs, the burqa also protects the wearer's ears, eyes, skin, and throat.

These women knew with absolute certainty that wearing the burqa/niqab was the purest way to live as a Muslim woman, as it had been mandated in clear terms by God and recorded in the *Qur'an*. When asked how they had learned the *Qur'an* and hadiths, the women explained that Tablighi Jamaat classes, held most Saturdays at a location nearby, and lectures broadcast on the Peace TV television channel offered learned interpretations of the *Qur'an* and lessons on proper Muslim conduct. A woman in the group explained that if one woman went to the Tablighi classes and learned something new, she would bring it back for all of them to learn.

Although most of the women I interviewed liked the Tablighi *Qur'an* classes, most also said they tended to ignore the men when they began instructing them on proper behavior for women. When I asked what annoyed them in these lectures on being a good Muslim woman, they simply looked disgusted and said they had no time for "all that."

In terms of general attitudes toward the Tablighi Jamaat, the women I interviewed reflected a spectrum of responses. Some appreciated the sureness of knowing they were following the word of God and the example of the Prophet's wives, while others voiced more nuanced views. Strong agreement with Tablighi teachings was most pronounced among educated women in their twenties and thirties (secondary school, bachelors, or masters degrees), while women in their forties, fifties, and sixties, along with women in lower social and economic positions, were more ambivalent. For example, while all the women agreed with the Tablighi teaching that women belong in the home rather than the workplace, older women and those socially disadvantaged were less like to follow that directive in their own lives. Staying out of the workplace is a

luxury available only to women with income-earning and committed husbands. Other women must work outside the home for their own survival and that of their families. In Khuldabad, widows with no children and little education routinely collect alms at the dargah to survive, and young women from families with little money drop out of school to stitch clothes, work at food stalls, or do other semi-skilled or unskilled work. One woman widowed at a young age raised eight children by taking over her husband's flower business. This woman, quite proud of her successful business selling flowers at the dargah, has no patience for what she described as the arrogance and hypocrisy of the Tablighi preachers who come to the dargah to scowl at people, while privately making their own donations to the shrine.

In fact, the Tablighi Jamaat appears to hold a contradictory stance regarding women and work. While formal Tablighi teaching urges women to stay out of the workplace, among Tablighi supporters, there is great respect for women working as teachers, college professors, physicians, pharmacists, and computer engineers. The reason articulated within Tablighi circles for supporting female education is that educated women will be better Muslim mothers. But these same Tablighi circles voice respect for the status of professional women, women who obviously work outside the home. The contradictory message conveyed by supporting advanced female education while discouraging women from practicing their professional skills was said not to be a problem for the women I met. But the tension posed by these contradictory directives was apparent in the words they used to describe their work choices.

Two highly educated women, both with Masters' degrees and secure finances, said they had chosen not to work in order to more closely follow the example of the Prophet's wives. One of these women had, earlier, been an elementary school teacher but left that job when she learned it was improper for her to work outside the home. Another woman, currently teaching at an elementary school, expressed disappointment with herself that she was working and not living the purer life

modeled by the Prophet's wives who remained inside their homes.[11]

These women are caught between the influences of education and modernization pulling them toward professional education and careers, and the Tablighi teachings pushing them to practice female Islamic purity by staying out of the workplace.

Dargah as Communal Center and Mosque

Dargahs, especially for women, have existed in Khuldabad as centers of Muslim life. In contrast to mosques in India, most of which have long forbidden women, dargahs have welcomed women, offering large courtyards where children can run, women can socialize, and older people can spend leisure time. Prominent dargahs host annual festivals commemorating the death anniversaries (urs) of the saints and draw crowds of thousands. Many of the women I interviewed talked about the annual festivals as times to enjoy music, food, shopping, and visiting. Although the singers of qawwali and their musicians are traditionally men, women enjoy these performances both as religious experience and entertainment.

In addition to being communal centers, dargahs also function as mosques. Indeed, all large dargahs contain an internal courtyard with a platform area designed to be used as a mosque.[12]   At prayer times, men in the dargah and men from the local area gather in this mosque area, while women in the courtyard continue their activities, sitting in front of the tomb, talking with friends, praying off to the side. Inside the walls of the dargah, the men's prayer time is simply another activity near the saint's tomb and women continue to come and go.

The openness of the dargah's architecture and rituals seamlessly blends the presence of women into the male prayer space, without overtly challenging the custom of separating men and women for prayer. And in this subtle blending of women and men in the inner courtyard area, the dargahs reflect a view of women that differs sharply from that of most South Asian mosques, where prayer spaces are completely closed to women.

Woman in burqa at prayer time in dargah

One day, I happened into the quieter dargah of Burhan al-Din Gharib just before midday prayer. Out of respect for the prayer time, I sat on a small stone bench a few yards from the saint's tomb and the rows of praying men. After a few minutes, I noticed a woman had sat down near me, fully covered in burqa/niqab. She sat perfectly still through the prayer and left when it was over. Though I did not talk with her, I wondered whether she had walked into the dargah expressly for the noon prayer, knowing this was a place for prayer where she would be accepted.[13]

In Khuldabad, Sufi dargahs have functioned as centers of religious and social life for both women and men. But while men had, and continue to have, many options for socializing outside the family compound, respectable women had only the dargah. Still, women strongly committed to Tablighi teachings explained to me, in unequivocal terms, that men and women should never mix in public, and certainly not in dargahs or mosques where women might distract men from prayer, causing them to sin. Women, they continued, should pray only in the closed quarters of their homes.

Determining Authentic Islam Sparks Family Conflict

While her husband continues to work in the Gulf, Muna and her three children live in her family's courtyard home with her parents and her brother and his family. Strongly professing the principles of the Tablighi Jamaat, Muna, her husband, and brother have tried to teach her parents and younger sister (who lives close by with her husband and three children) to leave the dargah culture, but so far, they have not been successful. Still, the members of this close extended family appear to get along well, in spite of their opposing views of what it means to be a good Muslim. Her sister talks openly of going to the dargah for rituals and lets her head scarf fall around her shoulders in conversation, while Muna's head covering stays tightly wrapped around her face, even at home.

Other women describe opposing views of the dargah rituals as a source of deep family conflict. One of the most popular of these rituals is called "the Bismillah" and entails a blessing at the dargah for children at the age of 4 years/4 months/4 days before their first day of school. With this blessing and the protection of the saint, the child is safely launched into the outside world, the world outside the family. This ritual has been performed for generations and confers a sense of security as the child is placed in the care of God and the saint. But when asked about this ritual, many women expressed uncertainty and internal conflict. Although the Tablighi teachings make it very clear that this is a practice contrary to Islam, these mothers want to protect their children. One woman said that her husband had forbidden her to perform the Bismillah at the dargah, but he said they could perform the ritual for their son at home. Another woman said she had taken her older children to the dargah for the Bismillah, but, to keep peace with her in-laws, was considering not taking her youngest child. A third woman, commenting on this issue from the Tablighi perspective, said that she and her husband were at odds with her in-laws who, in this case, wanted the parents to do the Bismillah for their child. When she and her husband refused, things got so bad they had to find another place to live.

These complex family dynamics are often intensified when sons, brothers, and husbands return from multi-year contracts in the Persian Gulf or Saudi Arabia where they learn narrower interpretations of Islam. While their husbands are abroad, women and their children often live with her parents and siblings, who typically continue the traditional rituals. But when the men return to Khuldabad, often for short durations of a few weeks or months, the wives learn that their husbands no longer accept the dargah traditions of their parents and grandparents. Problematically for some, they expect their wives also to conform to their newly formed ideas of Muslim purity. One woman told me her husband demanded that she wear not only the full burqa and niqab, but also long black gloves and stockings to cover her hands, wrists, and feet. Although she thought such dress was ridiculous, she said her husband supported her well and she could manage for the few weeks out of every three years that he returned to Khuldabad. Among the twenty-nine women I interviewed, this woman was the only woman who asked specifically not to be photographed, as her husband was a strong follower of Ahle Hadith, who advocate practices that include the proscription of all photography. He had explained that photographs for enjoyment are prohibited. And she would follow her husband's wishes.

Although she wore burqa and niqab, this woman was also the only person who directly questioned the teaching that women should wear the burqa as a way to protect men from sinning. Men, she said, can see through the burqa fabric if they choose. Though she believed that women should follow the purdah of dress (veiling) for the sake of modesty, she said that it was just as important for men to observe purdah of the eyes. As she spoke in a small group of six to seven women, the other women listened intently. Though no one actively agreed with her, no one disagreed either.

Indeed, all the women I interviewed expressed complete agreement on two issues impacting the purity of women: (1) women should be covered (i.e. burqa and niqab) in public, and (2) women should never enter a mosque. As prescribed by the

Qur'an and hadiths, and by the example of the Prophet's wives, women must be fully covered in public and women should never pray in mosques. When I mentioned that women in Muslim countries like Turkey did pray in mosques in separate areas designated for them, they were horrified and said those women could not be good Muslims.

Conclusions and Further Research

The twenty-first century is clearly a time of transition for the Muslim women of Khuldabad. It is difficult to say what will happen to the dargah culture as the teachings of the Tablighi Jamaat continue to reach Khuldabad via television, internet, and classes. Although the Tablighi message is that the dargah traditions were initiated by illiterates with a wrong understanding of true Islamic faith and practice, in fact, the Chishti Sufi tradition was brought to the Deccan by highly educated men versed in Arabic and Persian commentaries on Islamic law and theology, in addition to the esoteric teachings of the Sufi tradition. These men worked primarily among elite, educated Muslims, who wanted to learn contemplative Sufi practice and study[14], though a few Sufi rituals were taught to the broader community, most prominently, the popular qawwali performing and listening rituals. But as the generations passed, fewer master Sufi teachers resided in Khuldabad and the care of the dargahs passed through generations of shrine families, some receiving stipends from wealthy patrons and some supported by donations to the dargah. I asked about the possibility of meeting Sufi teachers and saints today, but even the oldest people had never met such a holy person. There are still a few highly trained, qawwali musicians who perform at the Khuldabad dargahs, as well as at other dargahs in the larger Muslim communities in the Deccan where *urs* festivals are sponsored with great fanfare and celebration. But, for the most part, the dargahs survive as they have for most of the last few hundred years, as beautiful places, some maintained better than others, where ordinary people can connect to the divine.

In South Asia, the fierce debates continue between the supporters of the shrines[15] and their opponents, primarily the Tablighi Jamaat and Ahle Hadith in India, over what constitutes authentic Islamic practice. But as these debates have boiled and simmered and boiled in Islamic circles for more than 1200 years, most likely they will continue. The physical survival of the dargahs in Khuldabad, however, may be determined not by these debates, but, more prosaically, by whether they continue to receive the funds necessary to maintain the roofs and walls and gardens that give form to these sacred spaces.

Caught in the active discussions of how to live as a pure Muslim woman in the twenty-first century, the women of Khuldabad must determine their own beliefs and practices. Though the continued influence of the Tablighi Jamaat and Ahle Hadith are hard to predict, these movements currently appear to have strong followings in this area. A large residential boys school teaching a conservative Islamic curriculum, Al-Irfan, has been built at the far edge of town, with money said to be from the Gulf,[16] though girls still attend the government school. Committed teachers at the government school bemoan the

Girls at Maulana School

school's lack of resources and the high dropout rate for girls, mostly between the ages of ten and fifteen, to work and marry. The choices for most of the girls are quite limited, given the restrictions of poverty and poor literacy. As these girls take up the responsibilities of womanhood, what Islamic worldviews will shape their thinking? Will those girls with the family resources and support to pursue higher levels of education ultimately choose to take up careers as physicians and computer engineers working alongside men?

My hope is to return to Khuldabad to continue my conversations with the women living between the dargahs and the Tablighi Jamaat. I would like to talk to high school and college age girls about their perceptions and aspirations as they prepare for their responsibilities as adult Muslim women. In addition to being influenced by their teachers, parents, and the social movements around them, the more affluent young women may also be exposed to the range of ideas flowing through the ever-increasing number of Muslim blogs and discussion sites on the web.

Khuldabad, like much of the rest of the world, is beginning to sample the array of perspectives available via youtube, blue tooth, and Google. During my first afternoon in Khuldabad, one woman offered to give me a five-minute video of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina that her brother-in-law had taken with his cellphone camera when he was on Hajj. When I asked how she could "give it" to me, she asked me rather incredulously, "Don't you have a cellphone?" Still not getting it, I offered her my friend's cellphone, which she immediately placed on the floor for the transferal of the video–via bluetooth. As I stared at the two cellphones on the earthen floor, transferring video bits-and-bytes, bluetooth icons blinking, she enjoyed seeing my naïve surprise. And indeed, there is something amazing to me still about this video of the holy city of the Prophet that now sits on my laptop.

But this episode evokes a larger question, how technology is shaping the lives of the women in Khuldabad, these woman striving to be good students and good teachers, good mothers and good wives, good friends–and good Muslims. Will the

teachings of the Tablighi Jamaat and other Islamic reform movements, broadcast through the internet and lecture videos transferred through cellphones, persuade women that purdah is the only way for them to cultivate inner purity? Or will technology, by offering access to the views of Muslims around the globe, introduce the women of Khuldabad to other possibilities and paradigms for living in purity, and in the world, as a Muslim woman?

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Endnotes

[1] To protect the identities of the women, I have used only fictitious names in this paper.

[2] For a full discussion of the Chishti origins of Khuldabad, see the extensive work by Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics in a South Asian Sufi Center*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992.

[3] Yoginder Sikand, *Origins and Development of the Tablighi-Jama'at*, *(1920-2000),* New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002. p. 90-94.

[4] Conversation with an educated woman, with an M.A. in English Literature, who is a vociferous proponent of Tablighi teachings, January 2009.

[5] hadith: saying of the Prophet Muhammad. Hadith collections are an authoritative source of teaching in Islam.

[6] http://www.sunniforum.com/forumshowthread. php?t=45832&highlight=tablighi The sunniforum.com site responds to questions posed by Muslims trying to adhere to Tablighi teachings. This response, dated 12 May 2009, explains the legal basis for Tablighi practices in the Hanafi school of shariah law. These practices are wearing the niqab (face veil), fist-length beard, and trousers above the ankle.

[7] Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi-Jama'at (1920-2000),* New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002. pp. 24-66.

[8] *Kuwait Times*, January 26, 2009 http://www.kuwaittimes.net/ read_news.php?newsid=NTAwMTAzMzUy

[9] Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi-Jama'at (1920-2000),* New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002. pp. 71-72.

[10] Mohammad Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007. p..135.

[11] This view of the Prophet's wives is taught by the Tablighi Jamaat, but is not supported by historical documentation. According to historians, several of the Prophet's wives took leadership positions in the early Islamic community, most famously, his wife Aisha who led troops into battle.

[12] The literal meaning of mosque (or *masjid* in Urdu) is a place of prostration which describes the nature of Islamic prayer.

[13] In the teaching of some Sufi saints, traveling to the dargah for prayer can even be the equivalent to performing the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. So women unable to make the Hajj can fulfill this important Islamic duty by travelling to the dargah and offering prayers. However, it is not clear whether this teaching was popular among the Khuldabad Sufis.

[14] Carl Ernst, *The Eternal Garden*, pp. 155-165.

[15] The most prominent of the groups defending the bonafide Islamic nature of the shrines are called Barelwis, but other Sufi groups are also part of this debate.

[16] Though I could get no information about what Islamic organization runs the school or even the age range of the boys, I did meet the wife of an Al-Irfan teacher who was one of the most articulate and strongest proponents of Tablighi teachings I encountered.

Economic Take-off's Looming Questions:
Democracy, Human Rights, and Civil Society in the "New India"

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In the last two decades, India has come into its own as its economic trajectory has "taken off" and entered new heights. Much of the world is taking notice of its new-found success and confidence. In many parts of the developed world, India is now looked upon as an economic rival rather than a charity case, a country with the brain and human-power to become the strategic and economic powerhouse that might someday soon be a potent, competitive force.[1]

Much has been written about the "new India" and the majority of the writing is celebratory, praising the economy's growth and the country's potential, while cautioning about hurdles only as a second thought. A glance at the world's leading newspapers confirms the almost-giddy interest in India's growth. Regular articles that address some aspect of the new prosperity, on the development of technology, or on industrial sector innovation grace the pages of the *Financial Times* or *Economic Times*. Indians themselves seem to believe in the new self-image, with national magazines such as *India Today* and newspapers such as the venerable *Times of India* running laudatory articles continuously on some aspect of the new economic growth. Major new books herald India's place in the world, including Nandan Nilekani's *Imagining India* and Edward Luce's *In Spite of the Gods: The Strange Rise of Modern India*.

In this article, I recognize the distance that India has come. I document the real economic growth that has taken place and the real hope for continued success in upward social mobility, increased salaries and the expansion of the middle class that has occurred in its wake. However, I also sound a cautionary note about India's future that has less to do with economic indicators of success and more to do with the vital democratic "infrastructure" that I argue is critical to India's final emergence from developing to "more developed" and developed status. This infrastructure is today somewhat battered and dilapidated after sixty-two years of service and is in need of a major overhaul that includes attention to both procedural and substantive aspects of democracy.[2] While the procedural elements are quite strong, their endurance underlined again by a successful 2009 election conclusion, I believe that an overhaul should include a new understanding of civil society, and an embrace of all Indians as citizens rather than the class and caste-fueled view of citizenship that has largely existed in the post-Independence era. It should pay greater attention to the troubled relationship between majority Hindus and minority Muslims, roiled in the wake of increased terror attacks on Indian soil in the last fifteen years. It should nurture values of philanthropy that encompass with compassion the "losers" in the "new India," the poorest and the destitute who even today have no hope in their future, while more Indian billionaires are created every year. If India recognizes and addresses these vital areas in need of repair in its socio-political fabric, I argue, it will feed into the eventual success of the economic reform agenda and make for a stronger state and polity.

Recent Economic Growth: Cause for Optimism

As has by now been recorded in international newspapers, journals, and a spate of new books on the "new" India, real changes have been visible across the economic spectrum since the early 1990s, when the Congress party government of P. V. Narasimha Rao first embarked on a serious unfettering of the economy from the restraints posed by Nehru's mixed-economy model.[3]

A visit to India's major cities leaves one with the impression that a new consumer culture, fueled by increasing salaries (some of which are becoming globally competitive) across the board, but particularly in the technology, medical, and services sectors, is running amok. A dizzying array of restaurants, luxury-goods boutiques, and art galleries are filled to capacity on any given evening with Indians who have the capacity to buy. New money has fueled a new growth of the most discerning and rarified markets. Indian painting and sculpture, for instance, is finding many patrons and is entering a new phase of success.[4] Clothing and jewelry designers are in high demand as weddings are lavish affairs. New high-rise buildings are being constructed in record numbers in some suburbs of Mumbai, threatening to wipe out the character of residential areas that have existed over centuries. Apartments in Mumbai are at their highest prices ever, many routinely in the millions of dollars range.

Economic relationships in the big cities are slowly changing. For instance, domestic servants for the first time are able to negotiate greater clout in their working hours and salaries, and are becoming better able to defend their interests. In interviews with the author, many women domestic workers mentioned that they routinely now take on two to three jobs per day, staying only a couple of hours at each one and earning much more than what would have been possible in the past through their allegiance to only one employer.[5] This also gives them the flexibility to design their day, and increasingly this can be designed with the interests of *their* families in mind, rather than those of the families of their employers. They mentioned the high value that they place on their children's education, gaining their admission in English-medium schools at great cost so as to buy them tickets into the Indian dream.

In its new rise, the Indian economy is proving to be an innovative one. While many in the West are now familiar with the Indian "call center" phenomenon, where customer service in a wide range of industries including banking and the airlines are outsourced to Indian centers and representatives are trained to answer customer questions around the clock today. India is

innovating to address global demand in other sectors, including the health field, to answer gaps in Western economies' ability to fulfill their own consumer needs. For instance, "medical tourism" is becoming important in major cities with hospitals like Delhi's Apollo Medical Center treating scores of western patients who have come specifically to have surgeries like hip-replacement that are not only much more expensive in the West, but may also face insurance hurdles in gaining permission for the latest cutting-edge technologies.

Many more Indians than before are returning to India after their studies in the West, in a "return brain-drain" phenomenon that is testimony to the increasingly competitive salaries in the technology, management, engineering, and, most recently, legal fields. Indeed, Infosys, India's well-known technology company, is offering jobs to American graduates to work in its Bangalore offices before returning to the U.S. In another twist, increasingly competitive Indian companies, such as Tata and Wipro, are opening branches across the world to meet demands in those places, underlining in the process Indian economic actors' new clout and willingness to do whatever it takes to stay competitive in a fluid world economy (Giridharadas, 2007).

And, Indians are aware and proud of their new-found success. As Indian companies acquire prestigious global brands, such as the Tata company's recent acquisition of Corus Steel and the buyout of Jaguar and Land Rover, and Laxmi Mittal's takeover of France's Arcelor industries, Indians are savoring their new position in the world. When, in January 2008, Tata's CEO Ratan Tata unveiled the famed Tata "Nano" small car, the world's cheapest (at approximately $2,000) small car that has all standard features, Indians were dizzy with pride, if newspaper accounts and blogs are any indication. Ratan Tata's narrative about his inspiration for the car being the lack of safety of the quintessential moped, used by Indian middle class family of modest means with the father driving, one child in front of him, and the mother sitting in the pillion with another child in her lap, resonated with all Indians. The car's unveiling was received with great fanfare.

There is also some evidence that economic growth is in fact trickling down to rural India. In the last couple of years, small towns and villages have seen a great increase in internet connectivity and usage (Yee, 1997). Credit is available to rural parts of India, allowing those families to become bigger consumers. Citibank is creating an ATM machine specifically for rural areas that will allow illiterate Indians to still be a part of the organized banking sector, and Nokia is developing the prototype for a cheap cell phone for the low-income Indian consumer.

Democratic Legacy and the State of Democracy in the "New India"

In 2007, India celebrated its sixtieth year as an independent democracy with justifiable pride. Upon independence from the British in 1947, it was not at all clear that India would survive as a country, let alone become regarded as a consolidated democracy. The institutions and structures left by the British: parliamentary system, a complex and inefficient but working bureaucracy, political parties that had roots that were decades old, but ones that had a history of fielding winning candidates, a national standardized educational system that was highly rigorous, all came together with Indians' desire for self-rule to ensure that democracy not only survived the first couple of decades, but also flourished and deepened. Although the Indian National Congress (INC), the party of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, which won the first post-independence election in 1947, continued to be re-elected continuously until 1979, Indians from all socio-economic levels voted enthusiastically in percentages that were greater than established Western democracies, and this trend has continued into the present day.[6]

From the beginning of the post-independence period, there was also a plethora of smaller parties that ranged the ideological gamut from conservative to socialist, even communist and Marxist, a phenomenon which is still true today. Since the All India Muslim League, an independence-era political party that

formed around Muslim needs, was diminished in strength after the creation of Pakistan, the Congress party became a catch-all party, one whose independence-era associations combined with its secular roots to make it the acceptable choice for a wide swath of Indian citizens.[7] Eventually, Indira Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter, and the country's third Prime Minister, and her Congress party were voted out of office in 1979, after she instituted a highly unpopular two-year period of emergency rule, where basic civil liberties were curbed and opposition was silenced.

Since that time, India has undergone many elections and changes in leadership at the center. Often, violence and corruption have accompanied these elections, but for the most part, this has been localized, and the elections have been an exercise in citizens' democratic rights and have been robustly defended. From the 1990s, the political scene has also seen the rise of a Hindu nationalist political party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has espoused the primacy Hindu rights and whose ascendance has contributed to deteriorating relations between Hindus and Muslims. From its dominant one-party roots, then, parliamentary democracy in India today is one that regularly results in coalition governments at the center since no one political party has been able to secure a majority of the vote in the parliament for the last few elections.

Substantive Democracy, Civil Society, and Rights: Need for Further Examination

Hence, the procedural elements of democracy appear to have weathered the many storms in India's sixty-two year-old life. They may be battered and bruised, but they do not seem to be in danger of disintegrating into any other form of government. However, other elements of civil society have not fared as well, and it is to these aspects, some of which may also be recognized as substantive aspects that democracies aspire toward, that we now turn.

Hindu-Muslim Relations

Hindus and Muslims have had a long history of uneasy co-existence, at times united in brotherhood, at other times divided by religion. The Islamic presence in India has pre-dated Muslim conquests from the 8th century, and has included both a history of conquest and shared governance. In the modern period, partition took a grave toll on the two communities and the relationship between them. Both fledgling countries were rife with stories about killings and rapes of their citizens by the other side and indeed, millions of Hindus and Muslims lost their lives during the partition.[8] This bitter legacy continued into the post-independence era, but in India was softened through three decades of Congress rule where the secularism that the constitution enshrined was promoted as an important party platform.[9] More recently in the last two decades or so, the BJP's overtly Hindu fundamentalist platform and the support it has received from a large percentage of Indians has exacerbated embittered relations between the two communities.

On many levels, Muslims would appear to be very well integrated into the life and fabric of India. More than one President has been a Muslim; Muslim candidates abound in the Lok Sabha (Lower house) and Rajya Sabha (Upper house), and at many levels, Muslims are respected professionals in all fields. Many of Bollywood's most popular superstars are Muslim, including the three big "Khans," Salman, Sharukh, and Aamir, as are many successful directors and industry experts.[10] In big cities, the different religions that make up Indian society live, work, and play together. However, there are troubling signs that all is not well between these two largest of India's religious groups. The most obvious of these have been the spontaneous pogroms against Muslims that have taken place every time Islamic militants who express sympathies with Kashmir or Pakistan engage in terrorist activities in Indian cities.[11]

Other signs of division are more subtle, but very troubling. Whereas religiously-defined (or, in India, "communal") neighborhoods have always existed, in all other areas, different

communities have shared buildings and housing choices freely. Recently, however, there has been a growing trend in cities like Mumbai toward buildings designated as "vegetarian," which would effectively preclude apartments being sold to Muslims, Christians, or other minorities who typically are not vegetarian. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the Indian civil code that prohibits such housing discrimination, and the result has been to fuel resentment on the part of the religious minorities who see this as yet another ploy to restrict their space as citizens of India. I would argue that laws against discrimination in all its guises need to be strengthened if India is to supplement its economic progress with advancements in civil society. There are other worrying signs. Schools that were traditionally integrated, the country's famed Catholic schools, for instance, can now become oriented to one religion seemingly overnight. In interviews with parents, it was noted that one Mumbai school, Sacred Heart Convent, had seen the loss of its integrated student body when other communities felt that a number of Muslim students had reached the point of "critical mass" in that school. Parents vaguely cited safety issues and repeated other stereotypes when questioned about taking their children out of the school. The stories that were heard were reminiscent of "white flight" scenarios under different conditions in the U.S.

As the scrutiny on Muslims has increased, they have expressed anguish about the questioning of their place in India. In a recent survey, a majority of respondents felt that they were under the microscope with regard to their loyalty to the country when bombs attributed to Islamic radical groups went off, and over 70% stated that they were aware of someone who had experienced job discrimination or had experienced it themselves. (Prasannan, 2007).

India has a lot to do in terms of bridging the gap between these two communities. Although there are government-sponsored and non-governmental programs and public service announcements aimed at preserving communal harmony, and although there exist forms of affirmative action that help place minorities in educational institutions, there does not seem to be

a concerted effort at wiping out a legacy of discrimination in the fashion of U.S. or western states' campaigns of this nature. There are certainly no laws, such as in Britain, against the common use of language that demeans certain religions or ethnicities in everyday life.

Class, Caste, and their Place in the New India

Rigidly defined social classes have existed from ancient through colonial times to modern India. For much of independent India, human life at the lowest end of the social spectrum simply did not count for as much as did life at the middle and highest ends. Even though India's constitution enshrines rights for each citizen regardless of her/his class or caste, India's poorest citizens have had a hard time experiencing the country's protection of their liberties.

For most of post-independence India, the justice system had been viewed as corrupt and slow. It is well-known both that court cases could take decades to be decided, and that if poor Indians were involved, justice would be harder to receive.[12] All Indians are familiar with stories of poor servants or laborers who, if arrested for the flimsiest of reasons, could well languish in jail for years without ever being charged. They are also familiar with stories of rich Indians engaged in the vehicular homicide of poorer citizens who were not charged because bribes were made to police and court officials.

India is slowly becoming more conscious of this inequity and more Indians are finding this condition unacceptable. In the last few years, famous Bollywood actors Sanjay Dutt and Salman Khan were both sentenced to rigorous jail terms for the offenses for which they had been convicted.[13] Blogs and letters to the editor in the press during this time revealed Indians' notice of, and pride in, justice that finally seemed to have acted in a class-blind fashion. In another recent case, a wealthy Mumbai youth, Alaster Pereira, killed a number of pavement dwellers as he drove into them while driving inebriated. Indians have heard this kind of story before, and many a time the perpetrator goes free, but this time the moral outrage and mass

soul-searching appears to indicate that Indians are not willing to continue living in a two or three-tiered class-based society anymore, at least as far as fundamental rights are concerned (Pereira gets three years…2007).

If the laws are to matter in such cases, Indians also need to address their civil society on other related levels. For years, "hit-and-run" may have been the only recourse taken by drivers involved in accidents, even when serious injuries to the other party occurred. Many drivers know that to stop for assistance might mean putting their own lives in the hands of an enraged mob. Mob justice has often resulted in serious injury or death to the driver of a vehicle who is pointed to as being at fault. This kind of mob behavior cannot continue to be the norm in a country that hopes to move into the ranks of important global powers. That it happens repeatedly in the world's largest democracy where, in theory, all citizens' rights matter and are protected, is even more poignant.

On the other hand, conditions for the countless domestic workers who labor in middle- and upper-class families are undergoing positive change. Although there are no laws outlining a minimum wage or amenable working conditions, the economy has dictated that their services are highly sought after and that they have more negotiating clout than ever before. As previously noted, in many interviews with domestic servants, I was told that they are now able to lay down conditions of employment, and that many mothers choose to take on two or three different jobs a day that they structure around the schedules of *their* children and families, rather than merely the schedules of the employing family. They further revealed that their work now made it possible to send their children to school and college, and even the sought-after English-medium school. But working conditions continue to be unregulated and often abusive, and a legal protective structure has not grown around this kind of employment in the new India, although the need for it exists.

The stubborn Indian caste hierarchy existed prior to British colonialism, and has continued until the present day.[14] Politically, the lowest castes have come into their own as lower-caste-

based parties have assumed power at the center in northeastern states, such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. But on other levels, caste continues to be a fault-line around which much oppression continues. In remote villages, life has not changed for the better for many in the lowest castes, and they are also among India's poorest and most destitute. In the 1990s, the film *Bandit Queen* (1994) outlined the horror-filled life of a young lower-caste girl whose humiliation at the hands of the upper-caste village men finally drove her to become an "outlaw" seeking revenge, and then finally propelled her to political office in Uttar Pradesh state. These dual realities are still the case for many in the lowest caste. While some have become rich and politically powerful, others continue to live lives of unspeakable degradation and deprivation.

It should be recognized that some of independent India's greatest efforts have been devoted to the caste question, and affirmative action policies exist in colleges and government jobs that seek to promote the integration of lower castes into Indian society and the economy. Much remains to be done, however, by individual citizens embracing their own rather than simply the government protecting those who are most vulnerable. Again, concerted public service campaigns to make Indians aware of the evils of the caste system, and to strengthen civil society, thereby could certainly be given much greater play than has been the case. As it is currently, the fruits of India's new economic success have not been diverted toward the improvement of the lowest castes in many towns and villages, and the lowest castes are often those who are struggling the most with issues of daily existence.

Struggle for Rights of HIV+ citizens

In the last 20 years, as the rate of HIV infections has risen in India, so has the response from governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. Even a decade ago the HIV response policy was uncoordinated, haphazard, and one that dealt in denials more than responses. A government agency to

examine the crisis, the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), along with a strategic plan to address the growing pandemic, was only set up in 1992 (Pembrey, Graham. 2005). It would appear that India's emergence on the world scene and its rapid globalization have combined to put the plight of HIV-infected citizens on the radar screens of those who are prominent in the new India (Bollywood actors, celebrities, artists, and designers) and those in NGOs who might have silently championed the cause, but did not previously have the clout to reach large audiences in India.

Certainly, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's donations of millions of dollars, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's and Congress party president Sonia Gandhi's personal action and interest in the cause have had an impact on the plight of HIV positive individuals in India, and have resulted in a more forward-looking AIDS policy. However, I would argue that the biggest change has come about through globalization's breaking down of traditional taboos and structures so as to allow Indian society to more freely address issues of sexuality and practices of safe sex as prevention strategies. Such frank public service announcements or concerted governmental and non-governmental efforts would have been impossible two decades ago, when all public talk of issues involving sex were non-existent.

The plethora of new TV talk shows, current affairs programs, radio talk shows, celebrity endorsements, and the influence of a celebrity-obsessed culture have emboldened people to take on previously taboo subjects. NGOs who are partnering with organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation now have greater flexibility to target populations at the highest risk,sex workers, homosexuals, drug users, and to design hard-hitting prevention programs around them (www.gatesfoundation.org/globalhealth/pri_diseases). A recent rally for gay rights attracted over 500 people in the middle of New Delhi. Although most of the participants wore masks to cover their true identities, a reflection of how far the acceptance of alternative lifestyles still has to go, many participants were

filled with an ebullient feeling that this was the turning point in the articulation of the rights of gay Indians (TOI June 30, 2008, pg.1). In the past few years, prominent Indians, such as Manvendra Singh Gohil, the son of the Maharaja of the formerly princely state of Rajpipla, have come out of the closet and vowed to fight discrimination. For Singh, this is doubly hard, being the heir to the throne of a very conservative former princely kingdom. He was initially disowned by his parents and jeered by his "subjects." Since that time, however, Singh appears to have made his peace with his people and his family seems to have accepted him back into the fold. He spends his time working for an organization that benefits gay causes.

The changes in some of these arenas show, I believe, a maturation and liberalization of Indian democracy and civil society. Although most of the changes remain representative of cities rather than rural India, the differences from a decade or two ago is quite stark. More Indians are willing to examine the true meaning of equal rights for all citizens, including gay citizens, as promised under the constitution.[15]

Growth versus Compassion

In other arenas, change has been harder to come by. One of the consequences of India's rapid growth has been an increase in some post-industrial or post-materialist problems, such as drug addiction (although one could argue that such addictions are also the result of developing world poverty and despair). While addicts in the highest socio-economic bracket find easy recourse to discrete treatment facilities, those in the lowest rungs are left on the streets, literally, to die, because social services for the destitute are so few and far between. In India's big cities, it is easy to spot these addicts, lying in open gutters lining the streets, sniffing glue over an open flame, oblivious to people who walk around or across them.

In an India that was poor and developing, there might have been excuses to be made for such a shocking disregard of life. In the "new India," such excuses are harder to make. New economic success stories are aplenty in the new India. India,

along with China, shows the biggest increase in millionaires per year, and the country has its fair share of new billionaires. One of the biggest industrial houses, the Ambani family, a business house that has grown from very modest beginnings to become one of the biggest and most diversified in India, has made its heirs two of the richest men in the world. When Mukesh Ambani recently began building an $80 million residence in Mumbai, the news was simply taken in stride. Although there has always been a wide gulf between rich and poor in post-independence India, such newly shocking displays of wealth in a country where 400 million still live below the poverty line are unseemly and seem to display a tone-deafness as to what good citizenship and inclusion mean.

Amidst this growing wealth, we have not seen a parallel growth in philanthropy or a rise of a culture of giving. Rather, those who are prospering are enjoying the fruits of their success without a thought for the poor and destitute who are all around them. I would argue that a deepening of democratic principles and a respect for civil society warrants more individuals, businesses, and organizations to become more concerned about their fellow citizens, and this can only happen when they recognize and embrace the poor as full citizens of their country, a phenomenon that has not happened yet. A country that is getting richer in the spectacular kinds of ways that India is, certainly does not need to depend only on a limited state to provide for its most hopeless; indeed it is only the non-state actors who will be able to fill this increasingly wrenching gap in contemporary Indian society

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Conclusion: A Future in the Balance

There is little doubt that high growth will continue to characterize the Indian economy in the next several decades. Some analysts claim that India has the potential to embark on an as yet unprecedented growth boom that will continue for the next twenty-five years and will bring it much closer to becoming a developed world actor of global repute. The next Carnegies and Rockefellers, it is predicted, will be Indian business houses

such as the Ambanis and Tatas, and the economic growth underway will have the same transformative quality as the economic development in the west during the 19th and 20th centuries (Joe Leahy, 2008).

The real question will be what this growth means to democracy, civil society, and human rights in India? Will it strengthen the procedural democracy India already enjoys and finally enable it to explore substantive aspects such as the right to an education and protection against poverty and hunger? Will civil society be strengthened so that Indian citizenship truly represents the equal opportunity for all that the constitution guarantees? Will Indians treat their poor, sick, and HIV-infected with greater compassion and care? Will they channel their new wealth in ways that will help their most helpless in private and philanthropic acts? And will communalism, as especially viewed through the relationship between Hindus and Muslims, be rejected for a more stronger union? These are the vital questions on which India's future will turn.

Although there is no way to predict the future, we can make informed guesses based on India's post-independence history and its record on the different issue areas discussed in this article in the past few decades. I would offer that a country that has remained territorially united (for the most part) and fiercely proud of its democratic traditions, and that has further opened its society to scrutiny in the new globalized era in ways that may not always come naturally to it, will have the will to overcome the considerable challenges that it faces. In the final analysis, Indians themselves will decide their future as well as how they feel about it. Currently, indications are that they feel good about themselves. Recent surveys have shown that Indians have a great sense of optimism about what is to come and score among the highest in the world on different "happiness" indices (www.nriol.com/content/articles/article1.html). The challenge will be to ensure that all Indians will feel the same way about their country and their future.

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Endnotes

[1]In fact, Mira Kamdar's premise in *Planet India* (2007) is that with its new-found economic dynamism and its established and nurtured democratic roots, India offers a new and hopeful model to other states in search of one; indeed, India, in this view, provides a model for the entire world.

[2]Political Scientists distinguish between procedural aspects of democracy (free and fair elections, equality before the law,

universal adult franchise, etc.), which are viewed as necessary in order to consider a country democratic, and substantive aspects (healthcare, jobs, quality of life) which are considered desirable.

[3]Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first post-independence Prime Minister and Fabian socialist, firmly espoused a mixed-model economy that allowed for private enterprise and industry in some sectors but placed other, key industry in public and state control only.

[4]This new enthusiasm encompasses the "old masters", such as the established Indian painters Gaitonde and M. C.Hussain, as well as young new artists such as Abhijit Bhattacharya.

[5]These were conducted during July-August 2007 in Mumbai, India.

[6]Some political scientists have argued that a country cannot be considered truly democratic if the same political party continues to be re-elected to office for a long period of time (for instance, Chalmers Johnson has written about Japan in this vein). A majority, however, emphasizes free and fair elections and if these are present among other procedural elements, have no problem with classifying the country as democratic.

[7]In 1947, when British India became independent, the country split into two along religious lines, secular India and Pakistan, which derived its identity from its Muslim population. This partition of British India came at great cost; around three to four million lives were lost in one the greatest displacements of human population the world had ever seen, and relations between Hindus, India's majority religion, and Muslims, the overwhelming majority in and raison d'etre of independent Pakistan, plumbed the depths.

[8]There is a rich store of "partition literature" that addresses this traumatic period. One of India's foremost men of letters, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan,* is a well-known example of this genre.

[9]The legacy of partition has also included thorny relations between India and Pakistan from the time of independence.

Three major wars have been fought between the two countries, and countless other crises have been resolved short of war.

[10]India's film industry, situated in Mumbai (Bombay), is also the world's largest.

[11]One of the most infamous of these riots took place in Gujrat in 2002, under the watch of a BJP-ruled state government. However, in an encouraging sign, the 2008 Mumbai blast did not see any scapegoating of Muslims.

[12]It should be noted that India's Supreme Court has generally been regarded as fair and upstanding, and that the taint of corruption permeates the lower courts. It should also be noted that individual lawyers have over time stood out as impartial and fair, for instance the late Nani Palkhiwala, a constitutional and tax lawyer who was regarded almost as a judicial institution unto his own.

[13]Sanjay Dutt was convicted under the Arms Act, and Salman Khan for a poaching incident. Both are currently out on bail, but both spent time in very austere jail cells.

[14]The rigid system of social differentiation into Brahmins, or priests; Kshatriyas, or warriors; Vaishyas, or traders; and Sudras, or "untouchables" has distinguished between communities based on their historical employment and social status. For instance, the lowest caste, the Sudras, have traditionally had to do the work of cleaning waste and working with dead animal carcasses. Each caste is further divided into dozens of sub-castes that are higher or lower on the scale. This system is thousands of years old, recognized in some of Hinduism's most ancient texts, and has led to tremendous oppression of the lowest castes by the highest.

[15]It should be noted that a colonial law punishes homosexual acts with 10 years in prison. The law, punishing "acts against the order of nature" is being debated in the Delhi high court, and is a matter of great concern for the rights community even though it has not often been enforced (www.newshopper.sulekha.com/newsitem/apnews).

"Mission in Asia":
Kita Ikki, V.D. Savarkar
and
Radical Nationalism in Early 20th Century Japan and India

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In the course of the decade spanning the late 1930s to the late 1940s, two men, one in Japan, one in India, were arrested and tried for murders it was known they did not physically commit. One was found guilty, the other was acquitted for lack of evidence. In Tokyo, Kita Ikki was found guilty of ideological contributions to the February Twenty-sixth Incident, the 1936 coup d'etat attempt that resulted in the deaths of three leading figures in the Japanese government. He was executed by firing squad in 1937. Just over ten years later, in Delhi, lack of evidence led to the acquittal of V.D. Savarkar, tried for having made ideological contributions to the assassination of Mohandas K. Gandhi.

These men's lives contain many parallels. Not only do they share a birth year and notoriety for their "ideological contributions" to nationalist violence and murder, but both authored influential books whose ideas helped inspire violent action against the status quo and both were tried as "ideological accomplices" in political assassinations. More important, however, are their shared radical nationalist visions. Savarkar and Kita were controversial figures, and continue to be today; their ideas have been embraced by both left and right and they

have been celebrated as heroic nationalist revolutionaries and excoriated as fascists and thugs.

Although Savarkar's India was colonized and Kita's Japan was colonizer, both men and both nations confronted dominant Western imperial power and presence and both grappled with the question of how their nations should best assert themselves in light of this. Historian Brij Tankha has written that Kita, "needs to be located in the context of the dominance of Western imperialism and how in that environment Japanese intellectuals sought to confront the West and in doing so became supporters of a Japanese imperial mission." In India on the other hand, Savarkar's "mission" focused on independence from British colonial rule. Tankha has noted, "Kita and his contemporaries [Savarkar among them] were not traditional intellectuals grappling with the problems of modernity but were themselves a creation of the modern world. The problems they faced were not reducible to either the simple binaries of Western and indigenous, traditional and modern…."[1] These men's analyses of their countries' relationship with the West and Western imperial power, and their prescriptions for maintaining and asserting national identity in a changing world show striking similarities.

After a brief biography of each, this paper will focus on these men's overlapping ideas. Kita elaborated on the Japanese idea of *kokutai*, or "national polity," which described a superior and unique Japanese nation and state. Savarkar developed the concept of *Hindutva*, writing that it described a unique and superior group, the Hindus, who were, he argued, not merely demarcated by religious belief but more inclusively a group unified by a common religion, geography, blood and civilization. Both wrote of their nation's unique missions in Asian and world culture. Although their most influential books on these issues, Kita's *Plan for the Reorganization of Japan* and Savarkar's *Hindutva*, are very different, both display the radical nationalism that is at the core of their authors' thinking. While Kita's *Plan* laid out a specific program of political action designed to strengthen the nation internally and make it the leader of Asia, *Hindutva* was a wide-ranging and impressionistic argument

about the nature of the Indian nation, a cultural and spiritual rallying cry to "Hindudom" to assert itself against foreign domination and take its rightful place in world civilization. Most strikingly, both men have been called fascist, labeled (some might say libeled) as the "father of fascism" in their respective countries. This paper will examine the ideas of these two men, controversial nationalist icons in their respective nations.

Biography

Kita (Terujiro) Ikki was born on Sado Island, Niigata prefecture, Japan, in 1883, the son of a prominent sake brewer. A bright and precocious student, his formal education ended in 1900 after he completed middle school. Moving to Tokyo, he attended lectures at Waseda University, developed an interest in socialism and fraternized with a variety of socialists, leftists and anarchists including Kotoku Shusui. In 1911, Kita travelled to Shanghai to observe China's anti-Qing revolution and in 1915 published *A Private Account of the Chinese Revolution.* By the late nineteen-teens, however, Kita had abandoned his socialist roots, and a growing reputation as a pan-Asianist and critic of imperialism gained him the attention of some of Japan's leading nationalists. In 1919, he was recruited from China by Okawa Shumei for membership in the newly formed ultranationalist *Yuzonsha*, an association that called for Japan's national reorganization as a military state and promoted "pan-Asian goals abroad to rescue Asia from the grip of Western imperialism".[2]

Although the *Yuzonsha's* activities were limited and it disbanded in 1923, in his most significant work, the 1918 *Plan for the Reorganization of the Japanese State*, Kita developed upon *Yuzonsha* ideas, laying out detailed plans for a military coup after which the Emperor would enact political and economic reforms, suspend the constitution, and take direct control of the country. Japan would then fulfill its mission of liberating Asia from Western control. Kita's plan inspired the failed coup d'etat of February 26, 1936, undertaken by young officers in the Imperial Army and resulting in the deaths of three governmental figures. Two days after the coup was launched, and prior to its being put down by the authorities,

Kita was arrested. He was imprisoned, tried in camera, and, "[t]hough no convincing evidence was produced against him he was sentenced to death and executed in [August], 1937."[3]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was born in 1883, the second son of a Maharashtrian landowner. Two boyhood events motivated him to devote his life to the cause of Indian independence: as a ten year-old boy, he led a gang of friends in an attack on a mosque in response to Hindu-Muslim rioting, and later, as a teen, he reacted to news of the hanging deaths of two pro-independence terrorists. In 1906, an Indian expatriot in England funded Savarkar's travel to London, where he studied law. There he helped organize the group, "New India," which engaged in various terrorist training activities and advanced plans to assassinate Lord Curzon. Arrested in 1910 for suspected involvement in the killing of an official in the India Office, he was extradited to India for trial. En route to India, he jumped ship in Marseilles, seeking asylum from the French authorities. Denied asylum, he was repatriated and in 1911 was sentenced to imprisonment in the Andaman Islands, where his elder brother was already serving time for terrorist activities of his own.[4] Released from prison in 1924, Savarkar's activities continued to be circumscribed by the authorities until 1937, at which time he reentered the political arena and was elected to the first of seven consecutive terms as president of the Hindu Mahasabha.

Savarkar's 1909 book, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, offered one of the first interpretations of the 1857 Mutiny as a unified nationalist uprising aimed at expelling the British from India. Regarded as seditious and inflammatory, the book was banned in India until after independence. With his 1924 book, *Hindutva*, which, deprived of pen and paper, he allegedly first scratched into his prison walls, Savarkar endeavored to empower and unify the Hindu nation, sounding notes against the Muslim minority in India and implicitly calling for unity against British rule. Savarkar was arrested in 1947 and stood trial for complicity in N.V. Godse's assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Accused as Godse's "ideological mentor"[5] and of ideologically contributing to the assassination, Savarkar was acquitted due to a lack of evidence linking him directly to

the crime. He subsequently retired to Bombay where he died on February 26, 1966 (the 30th anniversary of Japan's February 26th Incident).

Comparative Ideas: Fascism

Japanese historian Christopher Szpilman writes, "Some condemn Kita as an ultra-nationalist, the symbol of Japanese fascism; others see in him the first authentic Japanese revolutionary."[6] Similarly, the writing on Savarkar is either laudatory—"Veer ('Hero') Savarkar"—or denunciatory, stating that Savarkar was "obsessed with violence, revenge, retribution and bloodshed….[and that his] ideological-political legacy is best left where it belongs: in the dustbin of history"[7]

Just as striking as the parallels in their life trajectories are the parallels in their ideas. I will focus on the ways in which both Savarkar and Kita can be described as fascists, with particular emphasis on their views about their nations' roles and "missions" in Asia and the world. Though India was not a fascist *state* in the early 20th century and Japan arguably was, both men's ideas show a distinctly fascist bent.[8] Many American scholars have now abandoned "fascism" as a paradigm for 1930s Japan but the concept continues to animate discussions, and it appears repeatedly in the literature about both Savarkar and Kita. Acknowledging that a concise and universally accepted definition of fascism is elusive and contentious, I will offer a more or less standard definition of fascism. Fascist systems and ideologies are typically characterized by extreme, chauvinistic nationalism; they emphasize race and racial superiority as a unifying factor, exalt racial and national myths, reject communism, individualism and pacifism, agitate against real or fictive enemies, advocate territorial expansionism, and glorifiy military build-up and war.[9] Using this general definition of fascist ideology (if not of the fascist *state*), we can assess how both Kita's and Savarkar's ideas fit the fascist mold. From that somewhat more "universal" standpoint, the article will examine the two men's ideas about their nations' *missions* in Asia and the world.

Ideological Overlap

Kita's *Plan for the Reorganization of Japan* and Savarkar's *Hindutva* reveal the similarities in Savarkar's and Kita's thinking, if not necessarily in their concrete approaches. These books delineate the general parameters of their authors' fascism, closely following the brief description provided above. Both men adopted and adapted ideologies with which they attempted to define and describe their nations' identities, enabling them to grapple with the question of "What is Japan [or what is India?] and what should its role be in Asia and in the world?"[10] While Savarkar's focus is on "*Hindutva*," or "Hinduness," one of the central elements in Kita Ikki's writings (indeed in the writing of many Japanese intellectuals of the early 20th century) is the concept of *kokutai*, usually translated as "national polity." Roy Andrew Miller writes, in a passage also apropos of *Hindutva*: "*Kokutai* had become a convenient term for indicating all the ways in which they [the Japanese] believed that the Japanese nation, as a political as well as racial entity, was simultaneously different from and superior to all other nations on earth." Again reminiscent of definitions of *Hindutva*, *The Cambridge History* suggests that the term *kokutai* "captured in a single verbal compound the entire range of ideological virtues that defined what it meant to be Japanese, as opposed to the 'other'."[11]

Kita and Savarkar both rejected mystical elements in their conceptualization of *kokutai* and *Hindutva*, instead focusing their definitions on concrete elements. Kita viewed *kokutai* in concrete terms, distinguishing himself from many Japanese ultra-nationalists of the Showa period who trumpeted the Japanese spirit. Kita's *kokutai* followed the lines laid out by Ito Hirobumi, who held that the *kokutai* "'was a general name for the land, people, language, clothing shelter, and institutions of a state….'"[12] Similarly, "Hindutva," Savarkar wrote, "embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole Being of our Hindu race." Four central qualities comprised Savarkar's formulation of *Hindutva*, of which "Hinduism," he wrote, "is only a derivative, a fraction, a part…" These qualities were a

shared geography, a shared race, a common culture, and common law and rites.[13]   For both Kita and Savarkar, *kokutai* and Hindutva embodied the essential elements or expressions of the nations' identities.

An emphasis on race, and race as a primary basis for national unity, a hallmark of fascist ideology, runs throughout Savarkar's writings on *Hindutva*. According to Savarkar, it was race–*jati*–or "blood," not religion, that was the foundation of Hindu unity: "We, Hindus, are all one and a nation, because chiefly of our common blood. All Hindus," he maintained, "claim to have in their veins the blood of the mighty race incorporated with and descended from the Vedic fathers, the Sindhus."[14] This imparted an unassailable unity to the race which was underscored by their shared culture.

Kita, too, viewed race as a basis for national unity, as evident, for example, in his arguments on the annexation of Korea. Korea, he wrote, disregarding the coercive and exploitive nature of Japan's rule in Korea, was "neither a vassal nation nor a colony of the Japanese," but instead was "like a part of Japan, just as Hokkaido is." This was because the Koreans were the "closest among all races to the Japanese."[15] "The Korean problem," Kita argued, "is not a problem of racial discrimination, since we belong to the same race."[16]   Kita used race as the basis for national unity in his somewhat ironic argument in favor of Japan's colonial control over Korea.

Racially-based national unity was reinforced by an emphasis on the group over the individual, and a strong anti-individualist strain was evident in both men. While neither called for an end to private property, both viewed individualism as dangerous to national unity. Private interests, they believed, should be "subordinated to the requirements of the nation."[17]   Savarkar called on his nation to "strengthen … those subtle bonds that like nerve-threads bind you in one Organic Social Being," and to consolidate themselves until they were "individualized into one Being."[18] In similar fashion, Kita "…dismissed [individualism] as a negative force in modern history because it weakened the living body of the state."[19]   Instead, he wrote,

the Japanese people believed "that a nation is an organic, indivisible, great family, a modern social organism....."[20]

Both Savarkar and Kita believed racial unity and the precedence of the organic social whole over the individual contributed to the cultural superiority of their nations. Savarkar asserted that early in its formation, India became "the very heart –the very soul–of almost all the then known world."[21] The Hindus, Savarkar wrote, "…can build on this foundation of Hindutva, a future greater than what any other people on earth can dream of–greater even than our own past…"[22]   Kita strongly believed in Japan's cultural superiority, predicting a "renaissance" of Asian thought, which would be "Japanized and universalized, [and would]…enlighten the vulgar, so-called civilized peoples."[23]   Interestingly, Kita linked Japan's cultural superiority to India's, writing of the "great belief of the Japanese people seeking to open …the unlocked treasure [Buddhism] of the Indian civilization...."[24]

Savarkar and Kita both asserted their nations' cultural superiority over other peoples, reinforcing these claims by pointing to an external enemy. For Savarkar it was the Hindu-Muslim antagonism: his was an "attempt to unify the majority under a *homogenized* concept, 'the Hindus,'" and to foment a "sense of cultural superiority vis-à-vis … an excluded minority [the Muslims]."[25] Savarkar clearly recognized the utility of an external enemy, and throughout *Hindutva* he persistently beat the drum of animosity and antagonism toward Muslims. The arrival of Islam in India marked the beginning, Savarkar wrote, of "the conflict between life and death."[26] "Nothing can weld peoples into a nation and nations into a state as the pressure of a common foe. Hatred separates as well as unites."[27]

Kita also recognized the function of an external foe and identified Japan's enemies repeatedly throughout his *Plan*, denouncing the international community for its "hectoring of Japan." "Britain," he maintained, sits "astride the world…, and Russia is landlord of half the northern world."   "The time to debate about whether to go to war with England to protect China has long passed," Kita asserted. [28]

Both men espoused strong messages of their nations' missions in Asia and the world. In their conceptions of national mission, both argued that the existence of external enemies necessitated the build-up of military power. In his famous slogan, Savarkar called on his countrymen to "Hinduize all politics and militarize Hindudom."[29]   Savarkar urged Hindus to join the military, writing during WWII, "'[S]hall we lose this golden opportunity to acquire military strength…?'" If we don't work in the British factories, he warned, the Muslims will, thus "'strengthening a second enemy.'"[30]   Kita wrote at length on the military's role in Japan's future, asserting Japan's "right to initiate a war," and declaring, "If all the people in Japan desire as apostles of the Heavenly Way to follow the road, then it is necessary to have a militarist organization.…" Kita even linked Japan's militarism with India's quest for independence: "Militarism will be a title for Japan and she will be the Jehovah of Indian independence."[31]

Military power would be used not merely for defense, but for territorial expansion, enabling the nations to fulfill their missions of spreading their cultures throughout Asia. In *Hindutva*, Savarkar wrote:

> Thirty crores of people, with India for their basis of operation, for their Fatherland and their Holyland with such a history behind them, bound together by ties of common blood and common culture, can dictate their terms to the whole world. A day will come when mankind will have to face the force.[32]

"Nothing," continued Savarkar, "can stand in the way of your desire to expand. The only geographical limits of Hindutva are the limits of our earth!"[33]

Kita advocated territorial expansion to advance Japan's mission in Asia. Kita's was a more specific plan, calling on Japan to liberate Asia by advancing into Australia, the Pacific, Manchuria and Mongolia, thus fulfilling its destiny in Asia: "…[resulting in] the real awakening of the 700 million people

of China and India…; on the road to Heaven there is no peace without War."[34] "Japan, with true kindred love, will, in a short period, carry out its moral destiny, and for this it must destroy the policy of the white people who want to profit from other races through the so-called colonial policy....The sovereign people themselves will … sweep away the original rich white settlers, then it will become possible to lay the foundations of a true paradise for world brotherhood."[35]

Both men looked to Buddhism (Savarkar regarded Buddhism as a permutation of Hinduism) as a basis for that pan-Asian and global unification. Savarkar wrote, "[w]henever the Hindus come to hold such a position when they could dictate terms to the whole world–those terms cannot be very different from the terms which the *Gita* dictates or the Buddha lays down."[36] More stridently, Kita called on Japan to "lift the virtuous banner of an Asian league and take the leadership in a world federation that must come. In so doing let it proclaim to the world the Way of Heaven in which all are children of Buddha, and let it set and example that the world must follow."[37]

Conclusion

Neither Savarkar nor Kita have been relegated to the "dustbin of history," though Kita's ideas have been less durable than Savarkar's. A fervent devotion to Kita's ideas animated the Japanese, particularly those in the military, until the end of the Pacific War. Since then, his ideas have belonged to the fringe groups of ultranationalists, occupying a position well beyond the mainstream of contemporary Japan. Just as Savarkar outlived Kita, so, too, have his ideas had a longer life in India. Savarkar's *Hindutva* remains central to the saffronized political ideologies of the Sangh Parivar, the group of political parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party, that carry forward the ideas of the Indian nationalist group, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Both men have been icons of radical nationalism in their respective countries.

Endnotes

[1]Brij Tankha, *Kita Ikki and the Making of Modern Japan: A Vision of Empire*, (Global Oriental, 2003) xv; 158.

[2]Wilson, 94.

[3]Szpilman, 472.

[4]W.M. Theodore deBary, ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 2, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958) 327.

[5]Sukumar Muralidharan, "Understanding Savarkar," in *The Savarkar Controversy,* (New Delhi: Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT), 2004) 6.

[6]Szpilman, 467.

[7]Praful Bidwai, "Savarkar–Great Patriot of Rank Traitor?," *Navhind Times*, 9 September, 2004, reprinted in *The Savarkar Controversy,* (New Delhi: Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT), 2004) 64-5; 66.

[8]Peter Duus and Daniel Okimoto rejected the use of the term "fascist" in relation to prewar Japan on the grounds that "the Japanese case is so dissimilar [from European fascism] that it is meaningless to speak of Japan in the 1930s as a 'fascist' political system." Peter Duus and Daniel Okimoto, "Fascism and the History of Pre-War Japan: The Failure of a Concept," *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. XXXIX, no. 1 (November, 1979) 65.

[9]Maruyama Masao, "Ideology and Dynamics"; Also, Maruyama Masao, "Nashonarizumu, gunkokushugi, fuashizumu," ("Nationalism, Militarism and Fascism") in *Gendai seiji no shiso to kodo*, 1963.

[10]Tankha, viii.

[11]Roy Andrew Miller, *Japan's Modern Myth*, 95; Cambridge History, XXX.

[12]Ito Hirobumi quoted in Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths,* (Princeton, 1985) 145.

[13]Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindutva*, (Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, Fifth ed., 1969), 3; 82-99 *passim.*

[14]Savarkar, 4; 39; 84.

[15] In Brij Tankha, 208.

[16] Eiji Oguma, *A Geneaology of Japanese Self-Images*, David Askew, translator, (Trans-Pacific Press, 2002) 140.

[17]V.S. Patwardhan, "Savarkar's Economic Thinking," in Grover, *Political Thinkers of Modern India*, (Deep and Deep Publications, 1990-1992) 422.

[18]Savarkar quoted in SIT, 334-5; *Hindutva*, 45.

[19]Szpilman, 474.

[20]Kita in Tankha, 216.

[21]Savarkar, 17.

[22]Kita in SIT, 333.

[23]Kita in Tankha, 229.

[24]Kita in Tankha, 219.

[25]Prabhat Patnaik, "The Fascism of Our Times," *Social Scientist*, 21:3-4 (March-April, 1993) 69-70.

[26] Savarkar, 42.

[27] Savarkar, 43.

[28] Kita in Tankha, 217; 221; 224.

[29] Savarkar in SIT, 328.

[30] Savarkar quoted in Patwardan, 328.

[31] Kita in Tankha, 221; 223.

[32] *Hindutva*, 141.

[33] *Hindutva*, 119.

[34] Kita in Tankha, 229.

[35] Kita in Tankha, 212; 215.

[36] Savarkar, 141.

[37] Kita, *Plan*, quoted in SJT, p. 961.

Rural Resiliency:
Sources of Sustainability in the Chinese Countryside

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Rural China, where approximately 800 million citizens live, is experiencing a set of challenges similar to rural areas in other countries. Worldwide, although rural regions are the main sources of natural resources and human capital that feed the economic growth of urban-industrial cores, these regions at the headwaters of globalization are comparatively overexploited, underdeveloped, undervalued, and underappreciated. China's rural-urban relationship deserves special attention, though, because of the uniqueness of some features of its current transformations, and the speed and volume with which they are occurring. In the following essay, I draw on environmental anthropology, human ecology, and resiliency theory to examine these transformations and challenges, and to propose a fundamental thesis: that China's rural regions are sites of critically important (1) *cultural and biological diversities* and (2) embedded and comparatively durable *knowledge and practices* that are critical to the resiliency of rural systems in particular and, by extension, Chinese society as a whole.

Why Rural?

In ecological terms, China's rural areas are "sources" and its urban areas are "sinks": the countryside produces a net surplus of nutrients and energy that travel along a rural-urban continuum that supplies urban areas, whose nutrient and energy budgets operate at a perennial deficit. The vast majority of agricultural products, timber, water resources, and cheap labor originate in the countryside. As these resources travel along a transect from rural production to urban consumption, their natural

and human capital is converted into the market capital responsible for China's global economic surge. Yet along the way, another interesting transformation occurs. Ironically, as rural goods and services increase in economic value as they travel to urban cores, there is a countercurrent of ideological "backwash" that denigrates the countryside and its inhabitants.

The rural-urban continuum thus becomes what Xin Liu calls a "moral transect"[1] and what Arianne Gaetano, borrowing from Mikhail Bakhtin, labels a "chronotype," or literary device by which time is mapped onto space, "whereby residing in the countryside and being a peasant imply being left behind temporarily in the drive toward progress, and lacking the moral 'quality' (*suzhi*) required of citizens to advance socialist modernity."[2] The geographic line from rural to urban thus becomes a symbol of unilinear evolution, with rural residents "trapped" in a "backward" state, and with urban regions representing the finish-line of modernity, progress, and development. The ubiquity of this construct in China is exhibited in a wide variety of public discourses, from vernacular language to popular television shows to eating rituals to material symbols, and is undoubtedly familiar to those who study or have experienced contemporary Chinese society.[3]

If the ideological countercurrent that denigrates rurality is ecologically and economically unfair, it is nevertheless bedrocked on a real, significant, and measurable divide between rural and urban opportunities. A brief overview of some statistics provides evidence of this structural divide and of mounting challenges facing rural areas, economically, environmentally, and demographically.

Economically, China's rural-urban income divide is the highest in the world, with urbanites earning 3.2 times the income of those in the countryside.[4] Although millions have been raised out of poverty in the countryside since Deng's reforms began in 1979, the difference between rural and urban incomes has also continued to widen, from 400 yuan in 1980 to 4000 yuan in 2000.[5] Furthermore, approximately 400 million people in the countryside are also unemployed or underemployed and

considered "surplus agricultural labor."[6] The countryside is also not immune to the environmental challenges so visible in cities. Rural industrial development; environmental degradation of soil, air, and water; deforestation; salinization; and desertification—all these, when combined with land seizures, displaced 20-30 million farmers in the 1990s and may displace 40 million more by 2025.[7] These economic and environmental "push" factors, in tandem with the "pull" factors of urban jobs, relaxed political enforcement of *hukou* residency permits, and the appeals of modernity, have induced an exodus of an estimated 140 million Chinese citizens from the countryside into the cities, constituting the single largest internal episode of human migration in history. The implications for China's rural human ecology are significant, and will be considered in the next section.

Rural areas are the vital sources of natural and human resources that sustain the productive growth of China's cities and national economy. An unsustainable countryside by definition renders China's entire human ecological system unsustainable. In an era when the Chinese countryside is experiencing often convulsive changes economically, environmentally, demographically, politically, and ideologically, a set of key questions emerges: How much can rural China transform and still sustain its critical role as a source of natural and human capital? What features of rural life enhance its resilience, and should therefore be the foci of conservation efforts? How can scholars study and contribute to the long-term health of rural regions when these regions are often cast pejoratively in dominant discourses?

Why Resiliency?

Resiliency is a concept initially applied by systems ecologists to describe the ability of some biotic systems to maintain systemic coherence—in a word, to remain stable—in the face of disturbances.[8] Since approximately 2000, a rich literature on resiliency theory has mushroomed across scientific and social scientific disciplines.[9] Following an abandonment of homeostatic, equilibrial and neo-functionalist models in biological sciences

such as ecology and in social scientific disciplines such as anthropology,[10] resiliency theory recognizes that ecosystems— especially human ecosystems—are always in flux and sometimes pass thresholds and transform into significantly different systems. Resiliency theorists also explicitly recognize that all ecosystems are shaped simultaneously by a variety of interacting social and ecological variables. The major goal of resiliency theory is therefore to understand, model, and explain the resiliency potential of social-ecological systems (or "human ecosystems") and also to apply these lessons to a wide variety of policy-driven issues.

Significantly, many of the variables generally agreed to enhance social and ecological resiliency are well-rooted in rural areas. The Chinese countryside, in other words, is not only a source of goods and services that sustains core production, but also the home-place of key features that contribute to human ecological resiliency. These include, but are not limited to, wild and agricultural biological diversity, social diversity, complex and flexible adaptive strategies, and a shared reservoir of cultural memory. Let us consider in turn the role each of these plays in the functioning of rural Chinese human ecologies, and how they enhance the resiliency of a countryside facing enormous challenges.

Wild and agricultural biological diversities tend to be richest at the "margins" of societies—that is, among the interpenetrating wild and agrarian landscapes of the countryside. The diversity and functional redundancy of these diversities (according to many but not all theorists) provides ecological insurance, or an ability to absorb and withstand perturbations. This biological reality is interwoven with human cultural activity as well, and authors such as Gary Nabhan and Virginia Nazarea have written eloquently about the human variables that correlate with such biological richness. Nabhan argues, for instance, that biotic conservation of endangered species is greatest among populations with the least mobility,[11] and Nazarea points out that biological and cultural diversities at rural margins not only tend to co-occur, but to reinforce each other.[12] Mutually

reinforcing diversities, in short, provide rural dwellers with a richer palate of alternatives by which they can negotiate with and adapt to intrusive changes wrought by economic, political and climatic forces.

These alternatives are both cognitive and behavioral—that is, they are internalized in systems of knowledge and enacted in patterns of social behavior. A rich literature on traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and ethnoecology, for instance, investigates the comparatively durable systems of knowledge that smaller-scale and less mobile populations have regarding the panoply of resources and systems upon which they depend.[13] A similarly rich literature examines the social mechanisms by which rural peoples regulate production and exchange, including those such as kin-based modes of production and common-property resource management strategies less visible to (or respected by) state and/or development experts.[14] Discussions of community-based conservation efforts have likewise noted their adaptive advantages over non-local, "expert," and introduced management schema: local strategies tend to retain functional complexity,[15] operate with greater energetic efficiency, avoid unforeseen problems, and ensure lower-cost and higher-quality transmission of training and knowledge to future practitioners.[16]

Importance of Land Use Rights

Rural dwellers and rural economies also provide hedges against economic uncertainties through their flexibility (although this flexibility is dependent upon certain conditions, as will be discussed shortly). Farmers, herders, and gatherers in the countryside, as long as they have access rights to land, can flexibly choose between production for subsistence and production for sale. This simple feature—of having some choice between the use and exchange value of products—tremendously enhances rural resiliency (and indeed the resiliency of Chinese society as a whole) for at least two reasons.

First, in times of economic downturns—often precipitated by global forces and beyond the predictive capacities of

anyone—millions of jobs can be lost in the cities. A 2009 *New York Times* article estimated, for instance, that the current global economic crisis has led to job losses for 20 million rural Chinese migrants who had initially found employment in the cities.[17] The most feasible option for newly unemployed migrants is to return to the family farm in the countryside. Indeed, the economy of most Chinese rural households is already a mixture of urban wages and subsistence farming. When jobs are lost, one merely emphasizes one strategy more than another.[18] Although one's wage labor prospects may have dampened, the family farm can usually absorb one more prodigal relative and produce enough food to sustain one more mouth.

Rural areas thus provide an important kind of "refugia" during economic downturns, with rural villages and homes functioning as kin- and subsistence-based alternatives to market-based livelihoods. This rural option is available, however, only as long as rural citizens still control use-rights to their land. This disclaimer is especially significant for China today, since current threats to rural land-use rights include land seizures, urban expansion, and (more subtly) the new policy (as of October, 2008) that allows villagers to lease, exchange, or sell their leases to others. I provide an ethnographic example of this latest development in the next section.

Second, flexibility of choice between subsistence and market production benefits rural households in another way: the same wild or domesticated product can be consumed or sold, depending upon a range of factors that include: seasonality; relative crop failure or success; relative wild abundance or scarcity; current market demand and value; and availability and cost of replacement products. For a particular product, the blurry, conditional line between subsistence and market provides dual options that, flexibly navigated, allow villagers to minimize threats and maximize opportunities.[19]

Importance of the Local

Not all cultural features that enhance rural resiliency are directly correlated with resource use, however. Rural residents,

in fact, may draw on a suite of *localized* practices and perspectives to resist undesirable changes and impositions of unwanted power. Kinship ties, popular religious practices, village unity, and the desired security of the village family, for instance, all serve as important "institutional and symbolic resources" in the mobilization of grassroots resistance to unwelcome changes.[20] One particularly interesting feature—and one easily overlooked by studies focusing exclusively on ecological or economic factors—is *cultural memory*, or memories shaped, held, and shared by members of a social group that function to signify, express, and negotiate group identity and values.

Localized memories embed people in particular places in ways that enable them, in the words of anthropologist Virginia Nazarea, to maintain "marginal niches and sovereign spaces" that "constantly [replenish] what modernity drains."[21] Cultural memories, then, are powerful forces of resistance and thus resiliency. Just as choosing to consume a plot of sweet potatoes instead of selling them provides an alternative that enhances the resiliency of a rural economy, so, too, do localized memories create a cognitive web of shared, localized reference points and meanings that provide villagers with social alternatives to the hegemonic tendencies of discourses of modernization and development.

These memories often are embedded in cultural objects and landscapes, are eternally refashioned in narratives (or the stories that people tell each other), and are embodied in the senses.[22] Local culinary traditions reenact belonging and identity at every meal, for instance, and the use of certain plants—the ceremonial use in southern China of wild herbs with antiseptic properties (*ai cao* and *cang pu*) to rinse newborns, for example—remind people of the particular ecologies they inhabit. Stories of changing species and landscapes, furthermore, enable people to consider the changing environmental contexts that gird their local practices, simultaneously allowing them to imagine the acceptable limits of environmental change. "Local knowledge and cultural memory are crucial for the conservation of biodiversity," Nazarea asserts, "because both serve as

repositories of alternative choices that keep cultural and biological diversities flourishing."[23]

The discussion of Chinese rural resiliency so far has been largely theoretical. I now turn to an ethnographic case-study, based on preliminary research in Fujian Province in 2008. The localized details that follow point to a critical transformation currently occurring in the countryside: the new state policy that allow citizens to lease or sell their land-use rights

Preliminary Research in Fujian Province

While taking a group of American students to a small city in interior Fujian Province in 2008, I was able to conduct some preliminary research about changes in the countryside. After mentioning to our college liaison that I was interested in how people used forests and wild resources, he generously arranged an interview for me with a new kind of social actor in China: the forest investor.

Over a few cups of strong and generously proffered coffee in a teahouse, I talked to a man in his early thirties—the owner of the establishment—about the new "forest investment groups" springing up in this hilly and forested region. He and two investment partners had formed such a group, following the new government policy that allowed citizens to lease or sell land-use rights.[24] They had been actively mobilizing capital and purchasing the leases to tracts of forest in Fujian. They already have purchased the rights to 14,000 mu of forest and plan to purchase 7,000 more in the near future (one mu is approximately one-sixth of an acre). Their current plots range in size from 2,000 to 10,000 mu. According to one of his investment partners, whom I interviewed a few days later, they had the advantage of learning about the new policies before peasants because one partner had been a government official; in another interview I conducted, a professional forester, while saying that the new forest policy was an improvement over past policies, also quietly mentioned that corruption was nevertheless an issue.

The teahouse owner-forest investor described how his group worked. After deciding to purchase the lease of a particular

patch of forest, they hired a local retired forestry professor to conduct an inventory of all economically useful plants, focusing on the herbal plants used in traditional Chinese medicine and timber species. (He gave me a copy of the inventory for their 2,000 mu plot: it is 44 pages long, contains 60 photographs, and inventories 160 plants, providing for each the Chinese and Latin names, a physical description of the plant, and a brief summary of its economic/medicinal uses.)

He emphasized that they were "patient," and would not cut the timber for perhaps 20 years. First they would explore other economic benefits, focusing especially on the extractive potential of medicinal herbs. In fact, he mentioned that he had spent the earlier part of the day touring one forest plot with the head of a regional pharmaceutical company. The visit was merely social, he said, and they would "talk business" later. In this way, he said, his group planned to use the forest in multiple ways. Because of China's New Village Construction policy (*xin nongcun jianshe*) and new Forest Reform Policy (*linye gaige*), he emphasized, their mode of development would be "harmonious" and a vast improvement on the destructive approaches of the past. For instance, he pointed out, after harvesting the timber, they would be responsible for either replanting or somehow developing the plot before its 30-year lease expires.

As another cup of strong coffee was placed before me, my host continued: even though they have mostly invested in forests, they also are purchasing leases for agricultural land that is "being abandoned by farmers." Sometimes the plots are next to the forest and sometimes they are in the forest. They recently had bought a 500-mu plot and were considering various experimental plantings. Another one of their goals, he added, was to sell shares of these development initiatives to the villagers.

The ethnographic snapshot provided by this small set of interviews raises interesting questions about the resiliency of both social and ecological dimensions of rural forest use in Fujian. There are positives: China's new more market-oriented land-rights policy enhances rural development, increases income for

some segments of the population, and reduces producer uncertainty by commodifying and thus clarifying access-rights, a condition which ample literature correlates with greater investment and productivity.

But a number of concerns are also raised by the privatization of land-use rights. As discussed earlier, rural areas and the resources they hold provide critical subsistence alternatives to market (and other) vagaries beyond the control of villagers. As tracts of forested and agricultural rural land are privatized, villagers will become increasingly cut off from sources of both subsistence and income.

Resiliency correlates with social and ecological diversity, and one concern is that privatization diminishes both.[25] Although traditional ecological knowledge (e.g., of medicinal plants) will not necessarily be lost, with privatization it will become increasingly centralized, specialized and standardized. A subset of business investors, pharmaceutical interests, and professionally trained botanists and foresters will become the empowered gatekeepers of gathering activities that procure, distribute and benefit from useful wild plants. Decreased access and restricted gathering also threaten social reproduction of forest-related knowledge and practices: if commoners lose access to areas in which they are accustomed to gathering, older experts will likely be less able to transmit localized botanical knowledge to younger generations, decreasing one form of social diversity. At the same time, China has no clear intellectual property rights with which the productive knowledge of commoners can be protected; the privatization of knowledge accompanies the privatization of lands. Privatization, then, despite arguable benefits, threatens to reduce rural income, subsistence possibilities, occupational diversity, affordable health care options,[26] and the trans-generational durability of wild resource knowledge.

Finally, since knowledge, practices, and cultural memories relating to wild resources are embedded in everyday objects and experiences, privatization and restricted access to wild areas literally disconnects villagers from some of the information- and symbol-rich sites through which they continually construct

local human and natural relationships. Anna Tsing, for instance, has brilliantly evoked this indivisibility of natural and social space in her ethnographic research on human-forest interactions in the Meratus Mountains of the South Kalimantan region of Indonesia. "When Meratus discuss their location in the forest," she observes, "they talk not only of the history of vegetation in that place but also of the social connections that tie those plants to particular people. The forest, whether young or old, is never a homogeneous 'wild' place; it is a finely differentiated set of simultaneously social and natural locations."[27] Wild products, in other words, are converted into cultural meanings and social relationships when people gather wild products, eat local food dishes containing wild ingredients, treat illnesses with herbal plants, remember geographic shifts in housing sites and rural trails, correlate historical landscape changes with human events, and recall the shifting distribution (and perhaps regional extinction) of plant and animal species. Restricted access to private areas may thus also lead to an attenuation of localized and shared meanings that *differentiate* locals from outsiders and that provide alternatives to the "homogenizing forces that erode identity, agency, and diversity."[28] One cannot enact what one cannot remember.

Areas for Future Inquiry

The wave of privatization that followed the "market triumphalism" of neoliberal capitalism in the 1990s has sharpened resource-access issues in rural communities around the world. Simultaneously, China's unparalleled rate of economic growth, modernization, rural infrastructural development, and rural-to-urban migration has shifted the social and ecological landscape of rural life in that country. This paper has argued that the adaptive strategies and mutualistic diversities that exist at rural margins are vital to the resiliency of rural life—and by extension, the whole of Chinese society. I now would like to suggest a few topical areas ripe for academic and applied research. The following list of three potential research topics is shaped by my own particular interests and is not meant to be exhaustive. I

hope, however, that they identify relevant questions for rural research in China.

(1) How are resource-access regimes being negotiated by various actors "on the ground" and "below the radar" of official discourses in rural China? How do villagers, local and state officials, NGOs, outside investors, and professional foresters and botanists each represent the agenda and consequences of privatized access to formerly common areas? In their article "Anthropology and the Conservation of Biodiversity," Benjamin Orlove and Stephen Brush[29] identify poaching and intellectual property rights as two areas worth ethnographic investigation in regulated park areas; the same topics would also be relevant to ethnographic case-studies of new, access-restricted landscapes in rural China. Finally, what are some of the ecological consequences of these shifting relationships and practices?

(2) What might a commodity chain analysis of particular rural products reveal?

Commodity chain analysis is the study of the cultural and environmental relationships that form at each nexus of exchange as a product travels from its site of extraction or production toward it site of consumption.[30] This multi-local ethnographic approach to traveling commodities asks a fundamental set of questions: What are the different stages a commodity goes through from point(s) of origin to point(s) of consumption? What actors are involved? What are the environmental impacts at various points in the commodity chain? How do differences in cultural background and power shape the meanings associated with the commodity as it "travels"? How do consumer tastes shape the chain? How do people at different stages of the chain conceptualize the whole chain?

A commodity chain analysis of traditional Chinese medicinal herbs (gathered in rural areas) would raise a number of interesting questions.[31] Traditionally, Chinese herbal medicine practices are pluralistic. Would the desire for standardization and predictability by pharmaceutical companies and global markets exert a pressure for standardization upon these formerly

pluralistic practices? How might world demands and perceptions shape the practices of rural herb-gathering and the landscape ecologies in which they are embedded? What representational discourses (i.e., of "traditionalism" and "authenticity") might be employed by distributors and consumers, and how will producers at sites of origin negotiate these representations?

(3) State forestry departments in China conduct regular botanical inventories of forests, according to Fujian informants during my 2008 visit. Indeed, in a number of different forests I visited, it was common to see small signs tacked to trees that identified their Chinese names and Latin binomials. As mentioned earlier, the emerging investment teams that are purchasing lease-rights to tracts of forests are also conducting their own botanical surveys with hired professionals. It is important to remember that these systematic, textual inventories of forest species are produced from specific points of view—bureaucrat, investor, forester, conservationist—and thus from particular positions of social power. Another interesting research project, then, could examine the social contexts and ecological consequences of the textual production of botanical knowledge in rural China. How are these texts used to justify certain actions? What is the relationship between stakeholders who are generating different texts? Are certain assumptions or intentions implicit in the narrative style of these catalogues? To what degree does the production of scientific inventories legitimate access and centralize control over resources? And importantly, what is the relationship between those producing text-based inventories and those dependant "only" on oral transmission of botanical knowledge?

If the hypothesis is correct that increasing privatization of (and restricted access to) wild resources will contribute to an erosion of localized knowledge, an opportunity also opens for applied work in rural China. Perhaps researchers and local people can collaboratively document local knowledge and practices relating to wild and agricultural botanical diversity for posterity. Ideally, local botanical knowledge would be

documented *in situ*, in local cultural context. Virginia Nazarea's work on "memory banking" offers one such working model that conserves the linkages between environmental information and cultural memories, meanings and practices.[32]

Conclusion

Henry David Thoreau has famously proclaimed that "In Wildness is the preservation of the World."[33] With a syntactical twist and nod to Thoreau, I propose the thesis that "in the countryside is the conservation of the social and ecological whole of society."

Rural regions everywhere are sources of the human and natural capital that feed the consumptive urban-industrial sinks in which the majority of economic growth occurs. This paper argues that inherent features of rurality—including higher social and ecological diversity at the margins; enduring pockets of subsistence production; and the embedded knowledge, practices and memories linked to local adaptive strategies—provide rural regions the ability to endure occasional and even severe disturbances. In a word, the countryside is critical to the resiliency of entire social-ecological systems.

In China in particular, the countryside is currently experiencing significant transformations: 140 million migrants have temporarily left the countryside, agriculture faces numerous threats, and 690,000 km of new rural roads in two years[34] are paving a more frictionless rural-urban continuum. Perhaps most significantly access to rural land and its resources is being privatized, creating future uncertainties for rural livelihoods and ecologies. It is therefore more important now than ever before to conserve, dynamically and creatively, the social and ecological diversities inherent in rural areas. Biologists, ecologists, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, economists, environmentalists, NGOs, and legal and policy experts all have a role to play. Perhaps collaboratively we can reverse the ideological tides that denigrate the countryside and the economic undertows that seek to deplete its enduring wealth.

Endnotes

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[13]Julian Inglis, *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Concepts and Cases* (Ottawa: International Program on Traditional Ecological Knowledge and International Development Research Centre, 1993); Stephen Lansing, *Priests and Programmers: Technologies of Power in the Engineered Landscape of Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Virginia D. Nazarea, ed., *Ethnoecology: Situated*

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[17]Andrew Jacobs, "China Fears Tremors as Jobs Vanish From Coast," *New York Times* (February 23, 2009).

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[28]Nazarea, 2006, 320.

[29]Benjamin S. Orlove and Stephen B. Brush, "Anthropology and the Conservation of Biodiversity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25 (1996), 329-52.

[30]A. Haugerud, M. P. Stone, and P. D. Little, eds., *Commodities and Globalization: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); in that volume, particularly useful is Jane L. Collins, "Tracing social relations in commodity chains: The case of grapes in Brazil," 97-109; also see Tsing, 51-54.

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TEACHING ABOUT ASIA

Imagining Modern India:
The Genesis and Goals of a Course-in-the-Making

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By training I am a South Asianist, specializing in the transformation of Hindu traditions during the colonial and postcolonial era. However, when I joined the Religion Department at Illinois Wesleyan University in 1992, I was the sole 'Asianist.' As such I was asked to provide coverage of the religious traditions of both South and East Asia. Accordingly, over the years I created a range of lower- and upper-level courses dedicated to such topics as 'Asian Religious Literature,' 'Asian Religious Practice,' and 'Religion in Contemporary Japan,' along with selected courses focusing on South Asia and Hinduism.

The recent addition to our department of an East Asia specialist (Professor Jin Tao), has allowed me to turn more of my attention to the teaching of South Asia. Simultaneously, a sabbatical leave during 2006-07, during which I returned to West Bengal for research, inspired me to develop a new course that would address some of the issues that stand behind India's remarkable transformation over the past several decades. Comparing my most recent trip to India with my first visit in 1986-87, I decided it might be worthwhile developing a course that explored the origin and meaning of guiding concepts like Swadeshi and Swaraj, while playing these off the kinds of values that have come to the fore in India after economic liberalization,

the rise of globalization, outsourcing, call centers, and hi-rise apartments.

As I saw it, the course would not attempt a straightforward history of modern India as much as provide an intensive introduction to the guiding voices and conflicting ideals that make India what it is. Let Gandhi and Tagore face off; throw Amedkar into the mix. Read Nehru and then consider Gurcharan Das. Ponder the wonders of India's development against the backdrop of Arundhati Roy's critique. Not only is this likely to be the first time students encounter such figures, but such debates raise pressing questions even today. I admit that in many ways it represents an odd fit within a Religion Department curriculum, but at the same time this course helps expand the curriculum in Asian Studies at IWU. And as I see it, the consistent emphasis on exploring the visions and values, the philosophies and works of art that contribute to the imagining of modern India makes this an ideal humanities course.

I offered the course for the first time in the spring of 2008 under a rubric for experimental courses. It was under-enrolled and nowhere near fully realized in all its parts. Nevertheless, the few students I had seemed to love it and I thought it showed promise. I went ahead and proposed it for a regular course number and offered it again the following spring. The syllabus that follows is from the spring of 2009. I have to say that I remain disappointed with the syllabus on all levels—basic coverage, range of readings, formal assignments, etc. The premium I place on engaging with complete works (such as novels) necessarily means time taken away from canvassing more material, such as one might get from an anthology like *Sources of Indian Tradition,* volume 2. I also privilege primary texts over secondary scholarship, meaning both basic history and more advanced postcolonial readings do not really get their due. Finally, of course, there is the problem of including as many voices as possible. I am not satisfied with my coverage of Muslim intellectuals. I may go back to a novel I have taught before, Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, but would welcome suggestions from readers.

Beyond these concerns, I fear the course suffers from a genetic flaw of my own doing. On the one hand, I want it to offer what is for most students a first-time exposure to India; I want it to hook their interest, get them reading, watching, and listening to as many dimensions of modern Indian culture as possible. But on the other hand, I have given the course an upper-division number, so it ought to include not just significant reading but also serious student research. While research work is included in the current iteration, I know it could be improved. What is the best way to achieve a good balance between my overall objectives?

In its introductory mode, the provision of a chance for students to 'brief' the class on topics of interest has proven popular. Naturally, we have had our presentations on *Slumdog Millionaire* and have watched our share of YouTube videos, but we have also heard reports on the Communist Party of India, the songs of Lata Mangeshkar, and the Narmada Bachao Andolan. Looking toward its upper-level mode, the two book review projects are my attempt, early in the semester, both to expose students to the range of academic writing on India and to develop their skills at processing sophisticated scholarship (I provide a list of possible books to consider at the end of the syllabus). I cannot say there has been an obvious payoff in terms of a higher standard in the research papers, but I do think reading and commenting on scholarly reviews has helped students get a better appreciation for scholarship as argument. Nonetheless, the research papers, even as sequenced over the final weeks of the semester, remain hit-and-miss. But that is not unique to this course, I know.

Some may question my decision to assign only South Asian authors in the required readings. I admit that it is a rather artificial constraint, not without problematic theoretical implications. I would only say that what this allows me to do is to put India in the spotlight for students with little or no prior knowledge of its history, literature, politics, or religion. Naturally, early in the course, when discussing India and Europe and the problem of colonialism, issues of Western Orientalism and the construction

of India are raised. Such concerns serve to provide tools for reflection throughout the course; after all, one cannot really read *Hind Swaraj* as merely an 'Indian' work. And certainly in the research paper, students are given free rein to use and interrogate all sources relevant to their topic.

With this brief preamble, I offer the syllabus to the readers of *ASIANetwork Exchange* for their consideration. Needless to say, the course remains a work in progress. I hope readers may find some ideas in it that intersect with aspects of their own teaching. For my part, I would particularly welcome suggestions for ways to improve the course, pedagogically as much as at the level of content. For those of you working in other fields—like media, gender studies, or visual culture—how would you encourage students to imagine modern India?

Imagining Modern India

Religion 309   Spring, 2009
Professor Brian A. Hatcher

Over sixty years into its existence as an independent nation, India faces a variety of challenges, from poverty to illiteracy to politicized religion and communal violence. But with a growing economy, a rising middle class, and nuclear capability, 21st-century India is also emerging as a major economic and strategic player. Just what is the story of modern India? How have Indians attempted to define their nation? What can we learn about India from studying the many acts of imagination that have contributed to its identity? And how might this help us appreciate India's role in the contemporary world?

India's postcolonial identity turns upon a variety of overlapping and often conflicting ideals: patriotism and internationalism, democracy and socialism, industrial development and village handicrafts, religious pluralism and Hindu nationalism, to name but a few. This course examines a

range of political, moral, religious, and artistic voices that have contributed to the shaping of modern India, from Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi to Amartya Sen and Arundhati Roy. As Martha Nussbaum has noted, 'a liberal state needs public poetry' (*The Conflict Within*, 2007). In this course, students will meet some of India's greatest public poets. In fact, we will give preference throughout to Indian voices, rather than the voices of outsiders commenting on modern India (rich and important though this literature is). On one level, the course offers students a chance to discover the complexities and marvels of modern India; on another level, it encourages students to think of India as an 'imagiNation,' to borrow the coinage of Shanti Kumar in his book *Gandhi Meets Primetime* (2005).

This course will be run largely as a seminar, with a premium placed on reading and discussion. Active student participation is essential!

Course requirements and grade percentages:

Preparation for and participation in class
  discussion   ——20%
One in-class briefing   ——10%
Two book review projects (15% each)   ——30%
Research project (topic/thesis/biblio=10%;
  final paper=30%)   ——40%

Books for purchase:

Bankimchandra Chatterjee, *Anandamath, or the Sacred Brotherhood*, trans. J. Lipner

M. K. Gandhi, *Gandhi: Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, edited by Anthony J. Parel

Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*

Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan*

Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World* (Penguin Classics edition, 2005)

Omprakash Valmiki, *Joothan*

E-reserves:

  Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence* (pp. 29-52, 53-
    65, 109-125)

  Partha Chatterjee, 'The Moment of Departure: Culture and
    Power in the Thought of Bankimchandra,' ch. 3 of his
    Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World

  Partha Chatterjee, 'Whose Imagined Community?', ch. 1
    of his *The Nation and its Fragments*

  Harold Coward, 'Gandhi, Ambedkar, and Untouchability,' in
    his *Indian Critiques of Gandhi*

  Stephen Hay, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 2, pp. 324-
    48.

    Ashis Nandy, 'Final Encounter: The Politics of the
    Assassination of Gandhi' in A. Raghuramaraju, *Debating
    Gandhi*

  Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, ch. 3

    Jawaharlal Nehru, *Oxford India Nehru* (pp. 3-48, 110-
    137, 207-210, 263-294)

  Arundhati Roy, 'The End of Imagination' in her *The Cost of
    Living*. 93-126.

Book review project

At two points during the semester, each student will submit a
three-page review of the critical responses to a recent
monograph dedicated to some aspect of contemporary India
(for some ideas, see the selection of titles at the end of this
syllabus). After first familiarizing themselves with the contents
and basic argument of the work they have chosen, students
must find and read two critical (preferably scholarly) reviews
of the book. The review they submit should include (1) complete
bibliographic details for the book they have chosen as well as
for the two reviews read, listed at the top of page one; (2) a
brief précis identifying the author and argument of the book;
and (3) a summary of the critical reception of the book. What
have critics said about it? Have they praised it? If so, why?
Have they found fault with it? If so, why? Do critics agree on
the value of the book? Can you relate this book to the concerns

of other books or authors? Would this book be of interest to other students in this course? If so, why? Photocopies of the two reviews must be attached to the review you submit. NOTE: every effort should be made to find scholarly reviews from recognized professional journals; failing this, recourse can be made to established review sources such as *New York Review of Books*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Economic and Political Weekly* or the *New York Times Book Review*. Short book notes, brief notices from popular sources, or random internet reviews will not be accepted. **DUE DATES: the first review must be submitted on or before February 27; the second must be submitted on or before March 30.**

Briefing

Students will present to the class a short briefing (approx. 10 mins.) on a major figure, movement, or historical moment in modern Indian history not directly covered in the regular course readings. These briefings have two goals: One, to deepen familiarity with modern Indian history; two, to promote collective discussion by relating the briefing to issues or concerns taken up in the course. Suggested topics for briefings are listed at the end of the syllabus. Note: each student must choose topics from two of the four major categories listed in the syllabus or receive the instructor's permission for a topic of their own choosing. To assist in preparing for briefings, students will receive a handout indicating the type and range of information they will be expected to present. Briefings will be graded on the evidence of careful preparation and on the quality of the presentation. Have you provided an accurate and representative portrait? Have you presented material in a clear and engaging manner? Have you tried to connect your briefing to issues raised in this course? Have you raised questions for the class to consider?

Research project

As a final exercise, students will write an **8-10 page** essay exploring a topic of their own choice related to the issues raised

by this course. The project is intended to promote careful research and critical analysis of a social issue, political movement, artistic work, historical event, or major figure relevant to the construction of modern Indian identity. The project will be staged across the final weeks of the semester and will require initial identification of topic, creation of a preliminary bibliography, and submission of the final essay. Further information will be provided on sequencing your work and formatting the paper, as well as on grading criteria.

Classroom policies

Please respect your instructor and your classmates. Turn off your cellphone before class. If you wish to bring a drink to class, that's fine, but please avoid bringing in food. If you are sick, please do not come to class or to my office; if necessary, go to the health service. If you need to miss class for an IWU event, I should be notified by your coach or program director. If you have to miss class or leave campus for a family emergency, please inform the Dean of Students office. They will notify all your instructors on your behalf.

Course Schedule

Wed., 1/7 Introduction
Fri., 1/9 Visual tour: India 1987/India 2007
      Read: Sen, chs. 1-2
Mon., 1/12 Film: 'India Rising' PBS Now, with David
      Brancaccio (30mins)
      Read: Sen, chs. 3-4
Wed., 1/14 Europe in India
      Read: Sen, chs, 6-7
Fri., 1/16 Theorizing Colonialism and Nationalism
      Read: Chatterjee, 'Whose Imagined Community?'

Swadeshi

Mon., 1/19 Bengal and Bankim
      Read: Lipner, 3-26
      Recommended: Chatterjee, 'The Moment of
        Departure'

Wed., 1/21 Discuss *Anandamath*

Fri., 1/23 Discuss *Anandamath*

Sunday, 1/25: FILM: 'Mangal Pandey: The Rising' '
    (Beckman Auditorium)

Mon., 1/26 Bande Mataram: Song, Anthem, Icon
        Read: Lipner, pp. 59-108

Wed., 1/28 Tagore and Swadeshi
        Read: Sen, ch. 5

Fri., 1/30 **Briefings**

Mon., 2/2 Discuss *The Home and the World*

Wed., 2/4 Discuss *The Home and the World*

Fri., 2/6 **Briefings**

Mon., 2/9 Film: *'The Home and the World'* (scenes)

Wed., 2/11 Film: *'The Home and the World'* (scenes)

Fri., 2/13 **Briefings**

Swaraj

Sun., 2/15 FILM: 'Shatranj ke khilari' '
        (Beckman Auditorium)

Mon., 2/16 Film: "Gandhi: End of an Empire"

Wed., 2/18 NO CLASS
        Read: *Hind Swaraj*, pp. xiii-l

Fri., 2/20 **Briefings**

Mon., 2/23 Discuss *Hind Swaraj*

Wed., 2/25 Discuss *Hind Swaraj*

Fri., 2/27 **Briefings**
        Last day to turn in Book Review #1

Partition

Mon., 3/2 FILM: '*Division of Hearts'*

Wed., 3/4 Discuss *Train to Pakistan*

Fri., 3/6 **Briefings**

Mon., 3/9 Recovering Partition
        Read: Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, pp. 29-52

Wed., 3/11 Memories of Partition
        Read: Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 53-65,
            109-125

Fri., 3/13 **Briefings**

3/16-20   Spring Break

Independence
Mon., 3/23 Film: *'Gandhi,'* dir. R. Attenborough (scenes)
Wed., 3/25 Discuss Nandy, 'The Final Encounter'
Fri., 3/27 **Library work on research projects**
Mon., 3/30 Nehru's quest
        Read: Nehru, *Discovery of India*, ch. 3
        Last day to turn in Book Review #2
Wed., 4/1 Nehru's India
        Read: *Oxford India Nehru*, pp. 3-48, 110-137
Fri., 4/3 Nehru, Independence, and Gandhi
        Read: *Oxford India Nehru*, pp. 207-210, 263-294
        Research project—topic due

Power and oppression
Sun., 4/5 FILM: 'Sholay' (Beckman Auditorium)

Mon., 4/6 Inequality in India
        Read: Amartya Sen, chs. 10-11
Wed., 4/8 Ambedkar, Untouchability, and the Indian
        Constitution
        Read: Hay, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, pp. 324-48
Fri., 4/10 Gandhi and Ambedkar
        Read: Coward, 'Gandhi, Ambedkar, and
          Untouchability'
Mon., 4/13 Discuss Valmiki, *Joothan*
Wed., 4/15 Discuss Valmiki, *Joothan*
Fri., 4/17 Discussion of Arundhati Roy, 'The End of
        Imagination'
        Research project—bibliography and thesis due

Mon., 4/20 Wrapping up

Fri., 4/24: **Research project due by 4 pm**

Some recent titles on modern India for possible book review projects

Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed* (2004)

Rajmohan Gandhi. *Revenge and Reconciliation: Understanding South Asian History* (1999)

Leela Fernandes, *India's New Middle Class* (2006)

Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (2004)

Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (2007)

Dipankar Gupta, *Mistaken Modernity: India between Worlds* (2000)

Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (1999)

Sudhir Kakar, *The Colours of Violence* (1996)

Suvir Kaul, *Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* (2002)

Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (2007)

Shanti Kumar, *Gandhi Meets Primetime* (2005)

Pankaj Mishra, *Temptations of the West* (2007)

V. S. Naipaul, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1992)

Ashis Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self* (1994)

P. V. Narasimha Rao, *Ayodhya: 6 December 1992* (2006)

Gail Omvedt, *Dalit Visions: The Anti-Caste Movement and the Contruction of an Indian Identity* (rev. ed., 2006)

Gyandendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (2006)

Gyandendra Pandey, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (2006)

Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics after Television: Religious Nationalism and the Making of a Hindu Public* (2001)

Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism* (2001)

Aseema Sinha, *The Regional Roots of Developmental Politics in India: A Divided Leviathan* (2005)

Lisa Trivedi, *Clothing Gandhi's Nation: Homespun and Modern India* (2007)

Pavan Varma, *The Great Indian Middle Class* (1998)

Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (2003)

Transnational Voyages:
Reflections on Teaching
Exodus to North Korea

Adam Cathcart
Pacific Lutheran University

Few courses are more difficult to teach than Modern Japan. While the myths, stereotypes, and deep sensitivities that cling to Japanese history might be held responsible for this difficulty, no less culpable are the relentlessly churning printing presses. The whole idea of "staying current" with scholarship on modern Japan, and the quest for the perfect combination of course texts, seems always out of reach and remains intimidating for scholars trained primarily in Chinese or Korean history. Naturally, reading the latest scholarship in order to lard one's lectures with new details is a joy, but preparing to teach from a completely new monograph is a different and more daunting matter. And so my colleagues can be forgiven for being dismissive when a recommendation is advanced for yet another text to read and incorporate into their syllabi on modern Japanese history. In an environment of turbulence, transformation, and controversy, *not* changing one's syllabus might be considered a mark of serenity and success.

In preparing the spring semester 2008 I acted against my better judgment and assigned Tessa Morris-Suzuki's *Exodus to North Korea: Shadows from Japan's Cold War* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) to a class of about twenty undergraduates at Pacific Lutheran University. Assigning the text was a somewhat impulsive act, one based upon a few blurbs, the notion that the book would fit into my course themes, and my faith in the Australian scholar's reputation and previous articles. On

the face of it, the book appeared to be a convenient means of coasting to the end of an indeterminate semester, as well as a somewhat selfish way of gratifying my own desire to know more about North Korea. I called the campus bookstore, slapped up a page of publicity on my office door, and picked up a copy of the book to read on my own research sojourn to Northeast Asia.

As a research monograph, the text uses interview data and newly opened archives of the Red Cross Society in Geneva to argue that the Japanese government was guilty of complicity with the repatriation of some 100,000 Koreans from democratic Japan to totalitarian North Korea (the DPRK) in 1958-1960. But these research data are interwoven with a secondary story— that of the researcher herself, in a personalized meditation on her quest for historical truth in the early 21st century. I wondered if my students would embrace, tolerate, or rebel against the text's peripheral premise in its unorthodox manner of delivery.

My experience in teaching *Exodus to North Korea* was both rewarding and difficult. I believe that this text contains supreme advantages that make it an ideal point of entry for modern Japan classes and student researchers in those courses. However, sheathed in these advantages are difficulties which I also wish to share. What does this book tell us about transnational East Asia? Further, how does this text uniquely illuminate what we do as scholars?

Making the Case for Significance: North Korea-Japan Relations

In teaching any book, it is a good idea to prompt students to express explicitly the significance of the topic under study. This process is especially necessary—and fun—with this book. Through discussion with my students, I came to believe that Morris-Suzuki's text was important on a number of levels:

1. The book adds depth to understanding of the problems of Koreans in Japan and the institutionalization of anti Korean sentiment in Japan.

2. The book lends insight into the nature of the North Korean state and diversifies our view of what might before have been viewed in monolithic terms as "the North Korean people."

3. Morris-Suzuki challenges the notion of North Korea's perpetual isolationism by showing that, although Japan still lacks diplomatic relations with the DPRK, this absence of a government relationship did not prevent some extensive people-to-people relations between Japan and North Korea in the 1950s.

4. The text prompts discussion of the Japanese phobia toward North Korea today, mainly over abduction issues but also over the North Korean nuclear program. (This can be juxtaposed against the "[South] Korean Wave" which is sweeping Japan concurrently.)

5. The book invites discussion of the moral ambiguities encountered by members of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating inside of North Korea. (This latter question is an important aspect to discuss for students considering global careers for such international organizations such as the Red Cross or the UN World Food Program.)

6. The narrative format of the text prompts discussion of the nature of history, historical research, and the method of story-telling.

Successful use of Morris-Suzuki's text in the classroom is predicated upon prior attention to the issues surrounding the Zainichi, or Korean population in Japan. I attack this problem from multiple angles in my Modern Japan course. After briefly addressing Hideyoshi's traumatic invasions of the peninsula in the 1590s, I encapsulate the early Meiji debate over Korea as part of Japan's cordon of security. Saigo's unsuccessful arguments to his fellow genro in 1873 to invade Korea are easily tied in with a lecture on this central figure of the Satsuma Rebellion. I then spend a full day on the impacts of the Sino-Japanese War and the Treaty of Shimonoseki, with readings

assigned from James Huffman's incomparable *Modern Japan: A History in Documents* (Oxford, 2006) and online Historical *New York Times.* Students thereby gain a sense of Korea's strategic importance to Japan. The human ties between the two are more deeply engaged via a lecture on the Japanese colonization of Korea. Now that the students are primed, my first full-scale engagement with Koreans in Japan comes via an essay by ASIANetwork member Jin Hee Lee about the massacre of Koreans after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. Students are asked to write a 600-word response to Dr. Lee's article. Issues of postcolonialism are then engaged through readings in John Dower's *Embracing Defeat* and via research in primary documents from the U.S. occupation regarding treatment of Koreans and Taiwanese as "third country nationals." As far as the syllabus is concerned, the issue of Koreans in Japan is then left dormant until arriving at Morris-Suzuki's book.

Using *Exodus to North Korea* was an excellent way to lend continuity to these semester-long themes, and deepened student grasp of the concept of Koreans as an important "other" in Japan. But bringing North Korea into focus as a kind of "wild card" with only 15% of the semester remaining brought another, unexpected benefit: It supercharged and reinvigorated my students by presenting North Korea to them as a new counterfoil to Japan, and lent some urgency to the end of the semester. (For instructors who see value in this technique, but wish to tackle the subject of contemporary Koreans in Japan more rapidly, a fleet alternative to Morris-Suzuki exists in the form of a *manga* series entitled *Nambul: War Stories*.)

Few countries are simultaneously as obscure and as barnacled with misperceptions as North Korea. Students are surprised to hear about the deep connections between Japan and North Korea, and none have thus far complained that Modern Japan courses should stick only to Japan. By and large, students are glad to pivot and examine a facet of Japan's foreign policy and understand better the relation of Japan with its internal population of Zainichi Koreans.

Fortunately for scholars whose primary research areas lie outside of Japan, the transnational turn has made it more logical to focus on the breadth of Japan's foreign relations as a binding theme. Courses that allow students to see how Japan's internal development in the 20th century as linked to its colonial process can reveal also how contemporary Japan remains linked to its colonial past. Yet the Cold War witnessed the political fragmentation of the East Asian region that had previously experienced a high tide of unity "under the black umbrella" of Japanese imperialism. Now, as Asia moves toward integration, it remains to be seen if Japan's impetus will be to participate in or attempt to remain apart from this process. Japan's entanglement with, and mutual perceptions of its neighboring states constitute a significant component in determining which direction will be taken. Morris-Suzuki states that "[s]ea currents know no frontiers" (p. 54), a reference to the uncertain national status of the Koreans who came to the DPRK from Niigata, crossing the frigid Sea of Japan. Her research illustrates to our students the importance and the difficulty of intermingling transnational histories with the politics of the past in Japan.

Finally, Morris-Suzuki's unapologetic use of the personal pronoun, her conveying of her own struggles and experiences in research, and her penchant for self-inquiry caused me to reflect on my own mission as a scholar. My recent research in the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive on Chinese attitudes toward Japan, my department's emphasis on war crimes research in World War II , and my university's connections with China and emphasis on global reconciliation—all these factors have firmly convinced me of the need to place modern Japan's "history problem" front and center in my course in various ways and, in so doing, to situate contemporary Japan within its many bilateral relationships.

MEDIA RESOURCES

Editors' Note: We have invited David Tyler from Adam Matthew Digital in London to write this brief synopsis of a new online document resource that we think may be of interest and utility to our members and their students in pursuing research on the early years of the PRC.

Foreign Office Files for China, 1949-1976:
Complete FO 371 and FCO 21 files from The National Archives, Kew

David Tyler
Adam Matthew Digital

"The era from 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party won power, until Mao Zedong's death in 1976, is a colossally important period in modern Chinese history. Britain was one of very few western countries to maintain diplomatic relations with China and from 1950 onward, and from their vantage point in Beijing British diplomats reported on the turbulent and confusing political, social, and economic developments. Making these records available in digital, searchable form will be exceptionally valuable to all scholars and students of post-1949 China."

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Dr Priscilla Roberts
Department of History
The University of Hong Kong

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This collection from Adam Matthew Digital makes available the complete digitized images of all British Foreign Office Files dealing with China, Hong Kong and Taiwan in this period. These files are particularly important because Britain was one of the

first countries to recognize Communist China, had special interests in the region, and often took a different policy approach from that of the United States. The project includes a full-text search facility and detailed meta-data.

Published in three sections covering the periods 1949-1956, 1957-1966, and 1967-1976, this digital project addresses a crucial period in Chinese history, from the foundation of the People's Republic, in 1949, to the death of Zhou Enlai and Mao, the arrest of the "Gang of Four" and the end of the Cultural Revolution
in 1976.

The digitized files for 1949-1956 provide excellent material on the following subjects:

- the Communist Revolution and all the major figures involved;
- China and the Korean War;
- the economic situation in China, industrialization, and the first Five Year Plan, 1953-1957;
- *HMS Amethyst* and the blockade of the Yangtze River;
- the differences between British and American policy on China;
- Hong Kong, Nanjing, and Shanghai;
- Agriculture, Land Reform, and redistribution, benefitting some 60% of the population, but persecuting another 5% who were landlords;
- American military support and financial aid for Taiwan.
- Quemoy, the Matsu islands, and the First Taiwan Straits Crisis;
- railway and road construction in China; and
- the US embargo on exports to China.

From the seizure of power by the Communists forces, with dramatic accounts of the civil war years, the fall of Nanking, the fate of *HMS Amethyst* on the Yangtze River, and the

repercussions for international companies with a strong presence in China, through to the Communist Party's first attempts to implement a Soviet-style, centrally planned economy with the emphasis on heavy industry, the material in Section I provides extensive coverage of major events with regular analyses by British officials.

There is a constant exchange of information between London and the British Embassy in Beijing and its consular outposts. This communication is augmented by a continual dialogue on issues relating to East Asia between Britain and America as well as with European and Commonwealth partners. Sino-Soviet relations also become a very important consideration in the Cold War era.

By early 1950 China was firmly under Communist control (apart from a few pockets of Guomindang resistance), and the new Government enjoyed "a wide measure of support from the great majority of the people." Internationally, although China was not popular with Western countries, an increasing number were recognizing the new regime at the expense of the Nationalist Government, and despite the hostility of the United States, the People's Republic was not without friends. The Soviet Union and its satellites were quick to establish links with the Beijing Government, and various treaties were signed to strengthen the growing body of countries that were joining the Communist camp.

The files show that China's involvement in the Korean War had a crippling effect on the Chinese economy and put pressures on the leadership as it tried to carry through land and industrial reform. Nationwide planning began in 1953 after political control had been consolidated in rural and urban areas. Official pronouncements suggested a determination to build a powerful industrial economy based upon the Soviet model. Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, and Liu Shaoqi were the key figures in pushing forward these policies in the early years of the PRC.

Interesting sources include Sir John Hutchinson's report on conditions in China compiled during his 18 months' stay as HM Chargé d'Affaires in Beijing, filed in 1951, a paper

comparing Chinese and Soviet Communism, and Humphrey Trevelyan's annual report for 1953 from the British Embassy in Beijing, with its assessment on the first year of the first Five-Year Plan:

> In 1953 they set about building the new industrialised Socialist State.... There has been mismanagement in the State industries and in the distribution of goods, and inadequate financial control, which had been fully reported in the Chinese Press under the system of public confession, but it appears probable that the deficiencies are disproportionately emphasised in the non-Communist Press. Development will no doubt be uneven, and lacking in the administrative and technological refinements of more advanced countries, but it would be a mistake to discount the progress made.

With the documents in Sections II and III it is possible to look at how Mao Zedong rejected Stalinism in the late 1950s and began the process of hammering out a Chinese economic alternative. There are files on the "Great Leap Forward" campaign of 1958-1962, further details on the Chinese production of steel, coal and electricity, the collectivization of agriculture, and reports on the political machinations of Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi, the launch of the Socialist Education Movement, the Red Guard factions, the "Down to the Countryside Movement" encouraging "young intellectuals" to move from the cities to the countryside, the final downfall of the "Gang of Four" and the re-emergence of Deng Xiaoping.

Section I: 1949-1956 has just been released. Files for Section II: 1957-1966 and Section III: 1967-1976 are currently being digitized. For more information please see: http://www.amdigital.co.uk/collections/FO-China/Default.aspx?collectionSection=detailed

ASIANetwork is a consortium of over one hundred seventy North American colleges and universities that strives to strengthen the role of Asian Studies within the framework of liberal arts education to help prepare succeeding generations of undergraduates for a world in which Asian societies play prominent roles in an ever more interdependent world. The unique teaching mission of the undergraduate liberal arts institution poses special opportunities and challenges in the development of Asian Studies. ASIANetwork seeks to encourage the study of Asian countries and cultures on our campuses and to enable our students and faculty to experience these cultures first hand. In a time of fiscal constraints, ASIANetwork facilitates conversation among faculty and administrators concerning the development and strengthening of Asian studies programs, as well as ways to foster collaboration among institutions.

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