

# International Agenda

Magazine of the Schoolcraft College International Institute (SCII)

Volume 17, Number 1 Winter 2018



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## Spirituality and Religion in Today's World: The Brightness— and the Shadow Cast

*Coverage of this Focus project for 2018 is found on pages 6-37.*

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# International Agenda

Published once per semester by the International Institute (SCII)

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## International Institute

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The mission of the Schoolcraft College International Institute is to coordinate cross-cultural learning opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and the community. The Institute strives to enhance the international content of coursework, programs, and other College activities so participants better appreciate both the diversities and commonalities among world cultures, and better understand the global forces shaping people's lives.

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## Take Our Survey!



After looking through these pages, kindly complete a brief online survey about *International Agenda*. The survey collects feedback about this issue, and suggestions for future issues.

The survey can be accessed at this URL:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QRKMBBL>

## SCII Meeting Schedule

International Institute meetings are open to all who want to learn or to help out. New folks are always welcome. Meetings are on Fridays at 12-2 pm in the Liberal Arts Building. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:

- January 26, 2018
- February 16, 2018
- May 4, 2018.

## GlobalEYEzers

GlobalEYEzers, a group affiliated with SCII, meets each semester over lunch to discuss current events relevant to international/ intercultural issues. Faculty and staff, as well as students and members of the community, are invited to participate.

Meetings are on selected Fridays at 12-2 pm in the Liberal Arts Building. For more information, contact English Prof. Anna Maheshwari at [amaheshw@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:amaheshw@schoolcraft.edu) or 734-462-7188.

## Campus News & Kudos

# Colleen Pilgrim Awarded Grant for Research in Indonesia

Congratulations to SC Psychology professor **Colleen Pilgrim**, who was awarded a competitive fellowship in early October by the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS). To carry out her project, “Attitudes about Science and Medicine: Seeking Treatment for Mental Illness in Indonesia”, Dr. Pilgrim will travel to Jakarta to conduct surveys and interviews with students and mental health professionals. A goal of AIFIS, which is based in Ithaca, NY, and Jakarta, Indonesia, is to “foster scholarly exchange between Indonesian and U.S. scholars, to promote educational and research efforts by U.S. scholars in Indonesia”. The fellowship provides up to \$6,000 for travel, accommodation, and support of the research activity. Funding is provided by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. State Department through a grant from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC).

Kudos also go out to the **Asian Student Cultural Association**, its faculty advisor **Anna Maheshwari** (English), and **Todd Stowell** (Student Activities Office), who led in organizing Schoolcraft’s 11<sup>th</sup> annual Navratri Garba celebration. All proceeds went to the Schoolcraft Student Food pantry to help students in need. Roughly 700 students, faculty, and community members enjoyed the event on Friday, Sep. 24 at 6–11 pm in the VisTaTech Center. There was a catered dinner, authentic music, costume, and dance, and a marketplace. The Hindu Navratri festival is traditionally a nine-day event at the beginning of Autumn, regaling the goddess Durga in hopes of a bountiful harvest.

The **Black Student Union**, founded by SC student **Ashley Robinson** and with **Crystal Brown** as President, had a successful Fall semester of activities. The group focuses on social events, promoting academic achievement, and helping the community. The BSU organized regular Thursday night study tables in Lower Waterman. It held a 1970s-retro “Get Down” dance there on Oct. 5 to gather donations for the “Just One” project, which provides school supplies to needy kids. On Oct. 24 in Liberal Arts room 200, the BSU hosted a guest presentation by Darnell Blackburn, a Criminal Justice instructor at Macomb Community College, about law enforcement in urban African-American communities and efforts to increase diversity in police departments. And the BSU teamed up with Service Learning, Student Activities, and Food Service to pull off a Chili Cookoff on Nov. 15, with proceeds going to the Radcliff Campus Food Pantry for students in need.

In conjunction with the 2017-18 Great Michigan Read, the **Pageturners Book Club** organized a campus read of *X: A Novel*, as well as a “Meet the Author” conversation and book signing with its co-author Ilyasah Shabazz on Oct. 12 in Kehrl Auditorium. Ilyasah, the

third daughter of Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, is an educator, activist, motivational speaker, and author. *X: A Novel* (2015), which she co-wrote with Kekla Magoon, is a fictionalized account of the early years of Malcolm X, much of which he spent in Michigan. Pageturners, which is directed by SC English Prof. **Elzbieta Rybicka**, is reading this Winter two additional books about the African-American struggle in the 1960s: *March: Book One*, the first part of a graphic novel trilogy by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell; and Margot Lee Shetterly’s *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* (movie showing also scheduled). For additional information, visit the group’s website, <https://sites.google.com/site/scpageturners/>.

The **Native American Cultural Club** organized a lunchtime celebration of the Mexican *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) festival on Nov. 1 in Liberal Arts room 200, featuring a potluck supper, a traditional *ofrenda*, and a screening of the PBS-TV documentary “Food for the Ancestors”. Prof. **Karen Schaumann-Beltrán** (Sociology and Anthropology) is faculty advisor for the club. Students from her Sociology 209 class attended the event, along with others from Prof. Helen Ditouras’s section of English 102 and Sandy Roney-Hays’s section of Anthropology 211. (Interestingly, “Coco”, the new Disney/Pixar animated film based on *Dia de los Muertos*, was a box-office smash last Fall in the U.S., Mexico, and several other countries.)

The campus Chapter of the **Phi Theta Kappa** student honor society organized a benefit at the local Chipotle Restaurant to help fund clean drinking water in Puerto Rico after it was struck by Hurricane Maria in late September. The restaurant agreed to donate 50% of its dinner revenues on Nov. 15 toward the campaign to bring water filters and purification systems to families, classrooms, and communities on the island facing a continuing water crisis.

The **International Student Organization** (ISO) held an international fashion show, street fair, and potluck meal on Nov. 17 in Lower Waterman. The street fair, a new feature this year, included traditional African bracelets and jewelry, free head-wrapping and henna styling, and an ISO Step and Repeat Wall. The ISO also works with Schoolcraft’s **Language Fellows** program to facilitate Global Companions, in which ESL students are paired with foreign language learners for conversation and companionship to deepen language learning. For further info, visit <https://www.facebook.com/SchoolcraftISO/>.

That same day, Nov. 17, the **Civil Rights Action Club** organized a showing of the film “Miracle Rising: South Africa” (2013) in Liberal Arts room 200. The documentary traces the political transformation in South Africa that culminated in its first free and fair elections in April 1994. •

# Students!



## Enter the Winter 2018 International Agenda Writing and Artwork Contest

First Prize: \$250 Scholarship  
Second Prize: \$125 Scholarship

...in each of the two categories, writing and artwork.

### Winners from Fall 2017

First Place, Artwork: Haley Snyder (see p. 33)

First Place, Writing: Garrett Spease (see p. 38)

Second Place, Artwork: Elise Lys (see p. 44)

Second Place, Writing: Miles Brown (see pp. 39-40).

All funds are provided by the Schoolcraft College Foundation.

**Submission Deadline: April 2, 2018**

### Guidelines:

1. Students (or their faculty mentors) may enter essays, research papers, persuasive writing, creative writing, poetry, or 2D or 3D artwork suitable for publication in *International Agenda*.
2. Works may deal with any topic of international or cross-cultural interest.
3. Submit a digital version of the writing or artwork as an e-mail attachment to the address below.
4. Submissions will be judged by a panel of faculty and staff volunteers based on content, originality, and aesthetics.
5. Entrants will be asked to sign a form affirming that the work is their own and permitting it to be used in the magazine.

For copies of the entry form and the complete set of rules, go to <http://www.schoolcraft.edu/scii/international-agenda> or else contact:

Randy Schwartz  
[rschwart@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:rschwart@schoolcraft.edu)  
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# Readers!



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Whether you're an on-campus or off-campus reader, we urge you to take out a free e-mail or postal subscription. This will ensure that you continue to receive the magazine twice a year, and will also strengthen your link with Schoolcraft College and its International Institute.

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# The Brightness— and the Shadow Cast:

Spiritual and religious beliefs and practices are woven deep into the cultural fabric of every human civilization. Naturally, every person wants to know how his or her life might fit into a larger design, perhaps into an invisible moral order that guides the universe. And every community wants its members to observe a code of behavior that preserves order where there might have been social chaos, perhaps by inculcating various stories, rituals, and other traditions. Much of what is happening on our planet today— not to mention throughout history— has been shaped by the persistent human faith in spiritual or religious forces.

Last May, the International Institute selected the theme of “Spirituality and Religion in Today’s World” as a campus-wide focus of study for calendar year 2018. These focus projects have been hugely educational, challenging, and fun, helping to spread global awareness on campus and in the surrounding communities.

## No One Has a Monopoly on Truth

The subject of world religions is immense, varied, and filled with controversy. This is an opportunity not only to learn about different faiths that we’ve never really encountered, but also to really listen to what our fellow humans are saying and to practice respect even when we disagree with them.

Virtually all forms of spiritual belief, even those with small followings, have something for us to learn from if we delve into them honestly. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, the famous 13<sup>th</sup>-Century Persian Sunni poet and scholar, went further and said that all religions come from the same basic impulse:

We can’t help being thirsty,  
moving toward the voice  
of water.

Milk-drinkers draw close  
to the mother. Muslims, Christians, Jews,  
Buddhists, Hindus, shamans,  
everyone hears the intelligent sound  
and moves, with thirst, to meet it.

Clean your ears. Don’t listen  
for something you’ve heard before.

Invisible camel bells,  
slight footfalls in sand.

Almost in sight! The first word they call out  
will be the last word of our last poem.

— freely translated by Coleman Barks in his *We Are Three: New Rumi Poems* (Maypop Books, 1987).

It’s also important not to overlook particular faiths that might be absent from some approved list of “Great World Religions”. In her article that begins on p. 8, “Lessons of the Great Lakes Anishinaabe”, Margaret Noodin, a professor at the Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee who is of Anishinaabe descent, writes that Ojibwe ways of knowing can contribute not only to contemporary art and literature but also to the resolution of modern problems, such as crass consumerism and environmental destruction. Wendy Geniusz, an Ojibwe professor at UW-Eau Claire, defended the modern relevance of such traditional wisdom in her book, *Our Knowledge Is Not Primitive: Decolonizing Botanical Anishinaabe Teachings* (Syracuse Univ.

Press, 2009). Two programs in Ann Arbor this January will describe how several judges have adopted indigenous outlooks regarding justice (see next page under “Events in the Surrounding Community”).

## See Both the Light and the Dark

Religion isn’t all about glory and enlightenment; there are plenty of dark episodes in its history and its current reality. Blind faith has often been used to persecute groups of people or to obscure what’s really going on in nature and society. Listening respectfully to all opinions also means the opinions of critics, skeptics, and unbelievers.

We would be remiss to ignore such voices, and they get their share of space in this issue of *International Agenda*. Today, heart-wrenching instances of religious persecution and oppression include the attacks on the Christian Copts in Egypt (see article on pp. 10-12 of this issue), on the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar (pp. 27-33), and on Muslims in Gujarat and Kashmir, India (pp. 34-35).

There are also small but heartening examples of tolerance and coexistence that defy prevailing hostilities:

- The Caribbean coastal nation of Suriname is one of the most multicultural and tolerant spots on earth. Most of its residents descend either from Christianized African slaves, Sephardic Jews who migrated from the Netherlands, or Hindu and Muslim contract laborers brought in from colonial India and Indonesia after the abolition of slavery.
- In March 2011, when an earthquake and tsunami triggered a nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, a Buddhist temple there recruited members of a small nearby Muslim community to leap into action, serving as medical first responders and delivering *onigiri* (bundles of flavored rice) to hungry victims.
- In a year in which the Christian governor of Jakarta, Indonesia, was imprisoned for “blaspheming” Islam, the *New York Times* (Oct. 5, 2017) reported on the friendship between the Sunda Kelapa Grand Mosque and St. Paul’s Protestant Church, which sit across from each other on a narrow street in the oldest district of the city.

As a sweeping generalization, we could say that the importance of religion has gradually waned with the advance of modernization and urbanization. On the other hand, many religious trends have gained more fervent followers and much greater social and political clout in the last four decades, a seemingly worldwide phenomenon. In her piece in this issue, “The Crisis of Fundamentalism in India and Across Asia” (pp. 34-35), Indian student Titas Biswas suggests that the “pull” of traditional beliefs might increase in periods of social uncertainty, especially political and economic crisis coupled with the lack of social trends that pose strong alternatives to religious fervor.

## How You Can Participate

Faculty, students, and other readers can participate in this Focus project in a variety of ways.

Instructors can integrate relevant topics directly into coursework and campus programming by developing presentations, course readings and assignments, or student

# Spirituality and Religion in Today's World

projects. Use the concepts and resources contained in this and issue of the magazine as a jumping-off point. With a little creativity, instructors in many disciplines can participate fully.

Focus Series Coordinator Helen Ditoura has played the lead role in organizing a free, year-long speaker series on the Schoolcraft College campus for students, staff, and the general public. A brief roundup of the scheduled Winter presentations is given below; watch for more complete details on the SCII website and on campus bulletin boards. The entire faculty is urged to recommend this series to students as an excellent way to gather insight and information. Some instructors might want to bring a whole class to a given event in the Focus Series; contact Helen at 734-462-7263 or by e-mail at [hditoura@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:hditoura@schoolcraft.edu). Others might want to fold these into extra-credit opportunities for selected students.

Also listed below are a number of off-campus Winter events in our area that are relevant to this theme.

To supplement these events and the articles in this magazine, you can extend your learning using materials from the Bradner and Radcliff Libraries on our campus:

- The library staff can help you locate a wide variety of books, videos, and other resources.
- For online hunting, you might want to start with Schoolcraft's Library Guides: visit <http://libguides.schoolcraft.edu/> and click on "Humanities".

If you have relevant expertise or experience, offer to write an article for this magazine or to be part of our speaker series.

Let us know how you and your colleagues bring some global and multicultural perspective into your coursework this year!

## Talks at Schoolcraft College

- Jan. 30, 2018:** "Islam and the *Hijab*", by Dr. Ibrahim Kazerooni, Imam of the Islamic Center of America (Dearborn, MI) and adjunct instructor at the Univ. of Detroit Mercy
- Feb. 12, 2018:** "Is Spirituality Compatible with Atheism?", by Dr. Mark Huston, Prof. of Philosophy at Schoolcraft College
- Mar. 16, 2018:** "Spirituality and Student Development", by Dr. Debra Harmening, Prof. of Higher Education at the Univ. of Toledo
- Apr. 17, 2018:** "Religion and Culture in the Modern World: Using Film to Analyze the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict", by Dr. Steven Berg, Prof. of History and English at Schoolcraft College.

## Events in the Surrounding Community

- Nov. 18, 2017 – Feb. 18, 2018:** "Glorious Splendor: Treasures of Early Christian Art". This exhibit features some 30 masterpieces of Late Roman art that captivate viewers with glittering gold and silver, stunning oversize carved garnets and rubies, and dazzling rings and necklaces. Toledo Museum of Art, 2445 Monroe St., Toledo. For more info, call 419-255-8000 or see <http://www.toledomuseum.org>.
- Jan. 2018:** "Ancient Teachings for a Modern World" is a pair of free programs about how people are using Native American values to help solve problems in the criminal justice system. Both programs are at 7 pm in the Ecumenical Center and International Residence (ECIR), 921 Church St., Ann Arbor. For more info, call 734-662-5529 or visit <http://www.ecir.org/educational-programs/cultural-engagement>.
- Jan. 23, 2018: Screening of the award-winning documentary "Tribal Justice", which premiered on PBS-TV's "POV" last

Aug. 21. Abby Abinanti (chief judge of the Yurok Tribal Court in the Klamath River Valley of far northern California) and Claudette White (chief judge of the Quechan Tribal Court in the Southern California desert) explain how they use traditional concepts of justice to address the root causes of crime, reduce incarceration rates, foster greater safety for their communities, and create a more positive future for youth.

- Jan. 30, 2018: "Paths to Peace" is a joint presentation by Timothy Connors (Presiding Judge of the Washtenaw County Peacemaking Court, and former Judge Pro Tem for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians) and Homer A. Mandoka (member of the Tribal Council of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi). The Washtenaw County Peacemaking Court Program is a model created to replace the limitations of an adversarial court system with more comprehensive solutions that integrate the repairing of harm, healing of relationships, and restoration of the individual within their family and community. Honoring tribal court traditions, it integrates four intrinsic values— Relationship, Responsibility, Respect, Redirection— as a means to resolve conflict and return balance and harmony to human relationships.

**Feb. 3 – May 6, 2018:** "The Mummies: From Egypt to Toledo". This special installation traces the history of Egyptian mummies, from their lives and burial rituals in Late Dynasty Egypt to their rediscovery during the Napoleonic era and the resulting Egyptomania for subsequent generations. Historical context is provided via additional Egyptian objects from the TMA collection and from other institutions. Toledo Museum of Art, 2445 Monroe St., Toledo. For additional information, call 419-255-8000 or visit <http://www.toledomuseum.org>.

**Feb. 15-18, 2018:** "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot", a darkly comic play written by Stephen Adly Guirgis and first staged Off-Broadway in 2005, tells the story of a court case over the ultimate fate of Judas Iscariot, the disciple of Christ whose ultimate betrayal of him led to the crucifixion. The play uses flashbacks to an imagined childhood, and lawyers who call for the testimonies of such witnesses as Mother Teresa, Caiaphas, Saint Monica, Sigmund Freud, and Satan. Featuring students from the UM Dept. of Musical Theatre. Arthur Miller Theatre, Univ. of Michigan, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. For additional information, visit the website <https://events.umich.edu/event/42735>.

**Apr. 9-10, 2018:** "Materializing Ancient Judaism". Attention to things, material practices, and materiality has moved to the center of academic inquiry in the humanities and social sciences. This two-day multidisciplinary conference considers how people in the ancient Mediterranean world, Jews among them, related both to matter itself and to issues of materiality. How did they conceptualize the relationships between word and thing, language and action, text and artifact? How did they sense, understand, and construct material entities such as quotidian or sacred artifacts, human or divine bodies, built or natural environments? How did non-Jews perceive or represent the relationships between Jews and matter? Organized by the UM Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. Conference Rooms, Rackham Building, Univ. of Michigan, 915 E Washington St., Ann Arbor. For additional information, visit the website <https://events.umich.edu/event/46884> or e-mail [JudaicStudies@umich.edu](mailto:JudaicStudies@umich.edu) or call 734-763-9047.

**Apr. 15, 2018:** जगृथि (Awakening) is a collaborative ensemble of six musicians, half from India and half from America, rooted in a wide range of musical and cultural traditions. The group creates new music steeped in these traditions, with a focus on music's potential to foster a spiritual reawakening of mankind. 4-6 pm. Varner Recital Hall, Oakland Univ., 371 Varner Dr., Rochester, MI. For more info, visit <http://www.oakland.edu/mtd/events/2018/041318-world-music-concert-with-robert-chappell> or call 248-370-2030 or e-mail [mtd@oakland.edu](mailto:mtd@oakland.edu).

# Lessons of the Great Lakes Anishinaabe

by Margaret Noodin

Spirituality

*Dr. Margaret Noodin (previously Noori) is Director of the Electa Quinney Institute for American Indian Education and Assoc. Professor of English at the Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She serves as Editor of [www.ojibwe.net](http://www.ojibwe.net), a site that popularizes the use of the endangered language Anishinaabemowin. Her most recent books are Bawaajimo: A Dialect of Dreams in Anishinaabe Language and Literature (Michigan State Univ. Press, 2014) and Weweni: Poems in Anishinaabemowin and English (Wayne State Univ. Press, 2015). Previously, Dr. Noodin served as Director of the Comprehensive Studies Program at the Univ. of Michigan.*

In 1856, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft began his collection, *The Myth of Hiawatha*, by noting his surprise that the stories that he collected in the Great Lakes region showed “kindlier affections” in the allegory and poetry of people typically assumed by most American readers to be “a cruel and blood-thirsty race.” The fact that he included both phrases in his text shows how little connection and communication between the cultures there was at the time.

In the decades since then, continued separation between the many different American Indian cultures and American culture broadly has caused a near reversal of views. American Indians are no longer seen as an enemy and danger to society, although the use of some mascots can be viewed as part of that original misunderstanding. Today, American Indians are frequently viewed representing a simpler, more pure past, with a special connection to nature. The challenge is to move toward a point where the views of American Indians as scientists, storytellers, religious leaders, and politicians are a part of modern discussions, perhaps even policy decisions.

Thinking about how this might happen in the Great Lakes, modern readers can turn again to Schoolcraft’s *Myth of Hiawatha* as an interesting place to begin. Schoolcraft surveyed many nations and frequently blended the views and ideas of different indigenous cultures, but he also made clear that he wished to place these cultures in a global context and ensure that they remain a part of the way humanity is understood. A first step in unraveling his tales, which remain valuable for their proximity to a time when settlement had only just begun, is to trace just one of the many cultural and linguistic perspectives that he represents.

Unquestionably the culture most familiar to Schoolcraft was that of the Great Lakes Anishinaabe, including the Odawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe. We know that the Anishinaabe stories he recorded, and their translations, were altered by numerous editorial influences including Henry’s wife Jane (Obabaamwewegiizhigokwe) and his mother-in-law, Susan Johnston (Ozhaagashkodewikwe). We also know that the stories were comparable to parables and teaching tales in many global cultures and had been handed down through many generations before Schoolcraft’s publication appeared. In these stories we can find the core spirituality, science, sociology, and psychology that are still sustained by the Anishinaabe people.

Schoolcraft understood *manito* to be at the center of Anishinaabe theology, and in this he was correct. He explained that “the belief in their multitudinous existence exerts a powerful influence upon the lives and character of individuals”, which could still be considered true. However, today the word is spelled slightly differently, *manidoo*, and can be a noun or verb. It can be the word used by Anishinaabeg who practice Christianity and refer to God as *Gichi-manidoo*. It could also be the Creator referenced by Anishinaabeg who continue traditional celebrations with prayers of thanks to *Gizhe-manidoo*.

Actual practices vary widely, and if there is any central truth it is that there is no single authority. Individuals learn from the elders in their family what has always been done, and then apply these practices to their own lives in order to *mino-bimaadiziwaad*, to live well. A particularly insightful book on Anishinaabe spirituality is Basil Johnston’s *The Manitous*, written in the late 1990s after he had spent many years listening to elders across the region. In his words, “in addition to spirit, the term also meant property, essence, transcendental, mystical, muse, patron and divine” (p. 2).

Science

It is often suggested that everything has a spirit in Anishinaabe cosmology, and this is both right and wrong. It is right if one likens this view to theories of quantum physics that recognize the presence of energy at a subatomic level. It is wrong if one imagines that the Anishinaabe worship everything in sight.

Schoolcraft’s volume includes many stories that describe the universe, meteorological phenomena, and most especially the observation of the seasons and interaction of all members of an ecosystem. The stories “Osseo, Son of the Evening Star” and “The Star Family” correctly identify seasonal constellations and the timing of their appearance. Many of the stories speak of connections that animals have to one another and to the land, connections between humans and animals, and the way that all of life is connected to water. Water is the source of life and, in fact, is mentioned over 100 times in Schoolcraft’s collection.

If we look for signs of these beliefs in today’s Anishinaabe world, we find the work of many poets and storytellers. But we also find the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, which is a partnership between 11 Ojibwe tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan who continue to hunt, fish and gather, and several state and federal agencies connected to science and environmental preservation. Together, the nations monitor the health of plants and animals in the region. From fish to forests, this partnership represents the continuation of Anishinaabe practices related to sustainability. Another prominent group working to raise awareness of traditional values in the modern world are the walkers who follow the grandmothers on the Mother Earth Water Walk, which has traced each of the Great Lakes and many of the rivers in the watershed that we all share.

*continued on page 16*



## Mixing of Beliefs in Mexico City

In the left photo, people of Aztec heritage are demonstrating ancient rituals outside a major Catholic cathedral. A man in a bright, colorful outfit shows how incense smoke is used to cleanse one's body and spirit before entering a sacred dance circle. The man in the background is blowing a *quiquiztli*, or conch-shell trumpet, which in Aztec mythology was the instrument played by the feathered serpent Quetzalcoatl (god of wind and learning) to defeat Mictlantecuhtli (lord of the dead) and reclaim the ancestral bones of humanity.

In the photo to the right, people are seated in the pews of a tabernacle adjacent to the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, which is the largest cathedral in the Western Hemisphere. The complex was built on top of the former sacred precinct in Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital. After the Spanish conquest in 1521, the Catholic Church permitted certain trappings of earlier beliefs to be incorporated into Christian practices; such melding of religious elements is known as *syncretism*.

In the bottom photo, a family has made a trip to a cemetery to build a mausoleum for a family member. The reverence shown in Mexico for the memory of departed loved ones is most visible in the late-October *Día de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead. That celebration is rooted in Pre-Columbian practices, notably an Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess Mictecacihuatl. After the conquest, such rituals became identified with the Catholic "All Saints' Day" and were merged with it.



### Photos by Chris Cavaliere



These are a few of the photos taken by local photographer Chris Cavaliere last July, when he was part of a church-sponsored trip to Mexico City and vicinity. Chris has generously shared his photos from around the world for many previous issues of this magazine, and his "Portraits of Haiti" exhibit was on display in Lower Waterman in March 2014. In September, Chris retired his business, Greater Love Photography (Farmington Hills, MI). He is planning to study photojournalism at Western Kentucky Univ., and we wish him every success!

# Coptic Christians in an Age of Globalization

by Eliot Dickinson

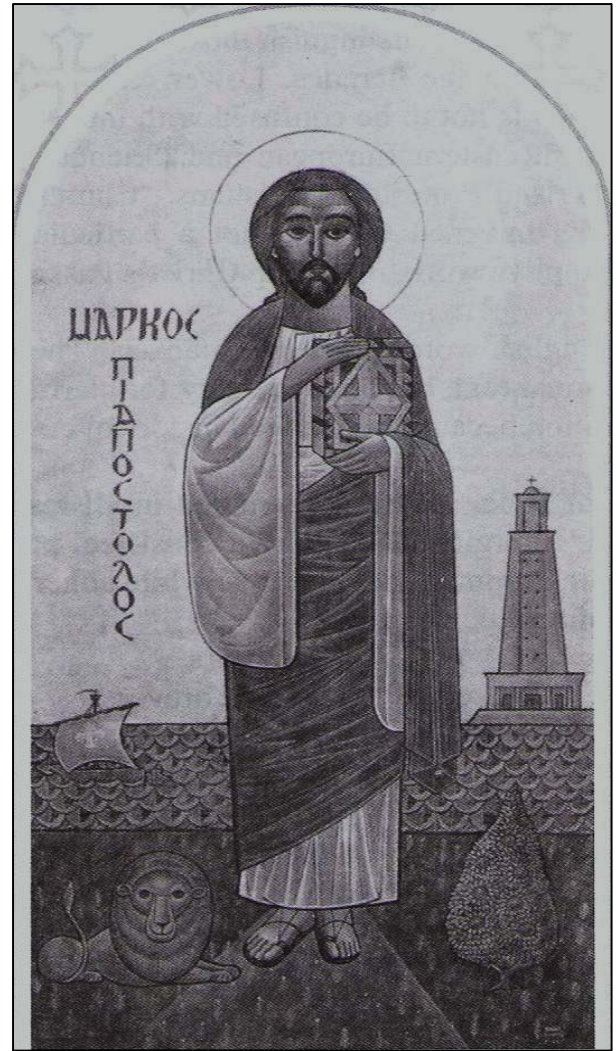
*Dr. Eliot Dickinson is professor of politics at Western Oregon Univ. He earned a Ph.D. in political science from Purdue Univ. and worked at the Univ. of the Witwatersrand in South Africa and at Hope College in Michigan before moving to Oregon. He is author of *Copts in Michigan* (Michigan State Univ. Press, 2008) and, most recently, *Globalization and Migration: A World in Motion* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017). His current research focuses on human migration and the global refugee crisis.*

Back in 2007, when I first approached Michigan's Coptic Christian community and said I was going to write about them, they told me they believed I had been sent by God. It was an endearing response and an auspicious start to a project that profiled the Copts as an ethno-religious immigrant group and ultimately led to publication of a short book entitled *Copts in Michigan*.<sup>1</sup> While conducting this research, however, ominous events were occurring in the Middle East that provided a sobering background to my work. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—bloody, murderous, and hateful to the last degree—were raging out of control. To those who felt that war was not the answer, who were not caught up in the chauvinistic, gung-ho militarism peddled by Fox News, it was a time of reckoning with what America was really doing.

Iraq, site of the biblical Garden of Eden, had been destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children had been killed, maimed, widowed, orphaned, and traumatized. Millions more were being forcibly displaced and turned into refugees. On top of it all, the wars were also being interpreted by many in the Muslim world as a larger war against Islam, perpetrated by the West. Predictably, this had a devastating effect on Christians in the Middle East. In a tragedy of epic proportions, the Assyrian, Chaldean, and Syriac Christians in Iraq were systematically expelled from their homes, massacred by Islamist extremists, and nearly wiped out. And in nearby Egypt, the unfolding calamity exacerbated the already critical plight of the Copts, the largest Christian minority in the Middle East.

## Coptic Identity

Simply put, the Copts are Egyptian Christians who trace their history back to the time of the pharaohs and the birth of Christianity. The name “Copt” is likely derived from the ancient Egyptian capital city of Hikaptah, whose inhabitants the Greeks called *Aigyptios*. The roots of these words—kapt and gypt—later evolved into Qubt in Arabic and Copt in English, and meant Egyptian. When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, he not only named the city of Alexandria after himself, he also made Greek the official language. This was a crucial step, because the Greeks then transcribed the Egyptian hieroglyphics using the Greek alphabet, which evolved into written Coptic. Over the ensuing centuries, the Coptic language became an enduring symbol of the Copts' culture and identity. Although spoken Coptic died out in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, it is still recited in the liturgy today, and the script can be seen in Coptic translations of the Bible.



A Coptic icon of St. Mark the Evangelist

The Copts belong to one of the oldest branches of Christianity in the world. According to biblical tradition, Baby Jesus and the Holy Family spent time in Egypt, where Jesus lived among the Copts, spoke the language, and drank from the Nile River. It is further believed that St. Mark the Evangelist came to Egypt in 41 CE, where he was the first patriarch of what was to become the Egyptian Church and later the Coptic Orthodox Church. He has since been succeeded by an unbroken line of 118 Coptic Popes, all the way down to the current Pope Tawadros II. Following Pope Shenouda III's death in March 2012, Pope Tawadros II was selected by a blindfolded altar boy who drew his name from a chalice in an elaborate selection ceremony in St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo.<sup>2</sup>

When Islam emerged in the 600s CE, it spread rapidly across the Middle East and North Africa and marked the beginning of a long decline of Coptic life in Egypt. Most Copts were forced to convert to Islam at the point of a sword, and by the end of 800s they no longer made up a majority of the Egyptian population. Copts were forced to pay a special tax, or *Jizyah*, for being Christian, and those who continued to speak Coptic ran the risk of having their tongues cut out. Today the

<p><b>THE OFFERING OF EVENING AND MORNING INCENSE</b></p> <p>The priest uncovers his head, stands at the door of the sanctuary, and says:</p> <p>Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, the Father, the Pantocrator. All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.</p> <p>O Lord, God of the powers, be with us, for we have no helper in our tribulations and afflictions but You.</p> <p>Then he says the Lord's Prayer.</p> <p>Our Father who art in heavens, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.</p> <p>In Christ Jesus our Lord, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.</p>	<p><b>Παλαο Ὑπὲρθεύοντι ἡτε Ἐληάρουσι Νεμ Ἐληάρουσι</b></p> <p><b>Πατρις ὁ Παντοκράτωρ: Πανὰντῖα Ὑτριάς Ἐλεῖσον ἡμάς.</b></p> <p><b>Πβοις Φρωτῆ ἡτε Νιχοῦν θρωπι Νεμαν: Χε ἡμον ἡταν ἡονθιοῖθος θεν Νεῖθλιψις Νεμ Νεμροχρξεχ Ἐβηλ Ἐροκ.</b></p> <p><b>Χε Πενιωτ ετθεν Νιφιοτι: μαρεττοῦβο ἡχε πεκραν: μαρεσι ἡχε τεκμετωρο: πετερνακ μαρετρωπι ἡφρητ θεν Ὑφε Νεμ εἰχεν πικασι: Πενωικ ἡτε Ραστ ἡνιϋ Ναν ἡφροῦτ: οτοξ χα ἡνιτερον Ναν Ἐβουλ: ἡφρητ θων ἡτενξω Ἐβουλ ἡνιτε οτον ἡταν Ἐρωφωτ οτοξ ἡπερεντεν Ἐθων Ἐπρασμοξ ἀλλὰ ἡεμεν Ἐβουλ χα Πιπετρωφωτ.</b></p> <p><b>θεν Πιχριστοξ ἡνσοξ Πενβοις: Χε θωκ τε ἡμετωρο Νεμ ἡχου Νεμ Πιφωφ θα ενεξ ἄμην.</b></p>	<p><b>رفع بخور عشية وياكر</b></p> <p>يكشف الكاهن رأسه ويقف أمام باب الهيكل ويقول:</p> <p>يقول الكاهن:</p> <p>إرحمنا يا الله الآب ضابط الكل. أيها الثالوث القدوس ارحمنا.</p> <p>أيها الرب إله القوات كن معنا لأنه ليس لنا معين في شدائدنا وضيقاتنا سواك.</p> <p>ثم يقول الصلاة الربانية:</p> <p>أبانا الذي في السموات، ليقدس اسمك ليأت ملكوتك لتسكن مشيقتك، كما في السماء كذلك على الأرض، عيزنا الذي للغد أعطنا اليوم، واغفر لنا ذنوبنا كما تغفر نحن أيضاً للمذنبين إلينا ولا تدخلنا في تجربة لكن نجنا من الشرير.</p> <p>بالمسيح يسوع ربنا، لأن لسلك الملك والقوة والجد إلى الأبد. آمين.</p>
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The Lord's Prayer in English, Coptic (middle), and Arabic

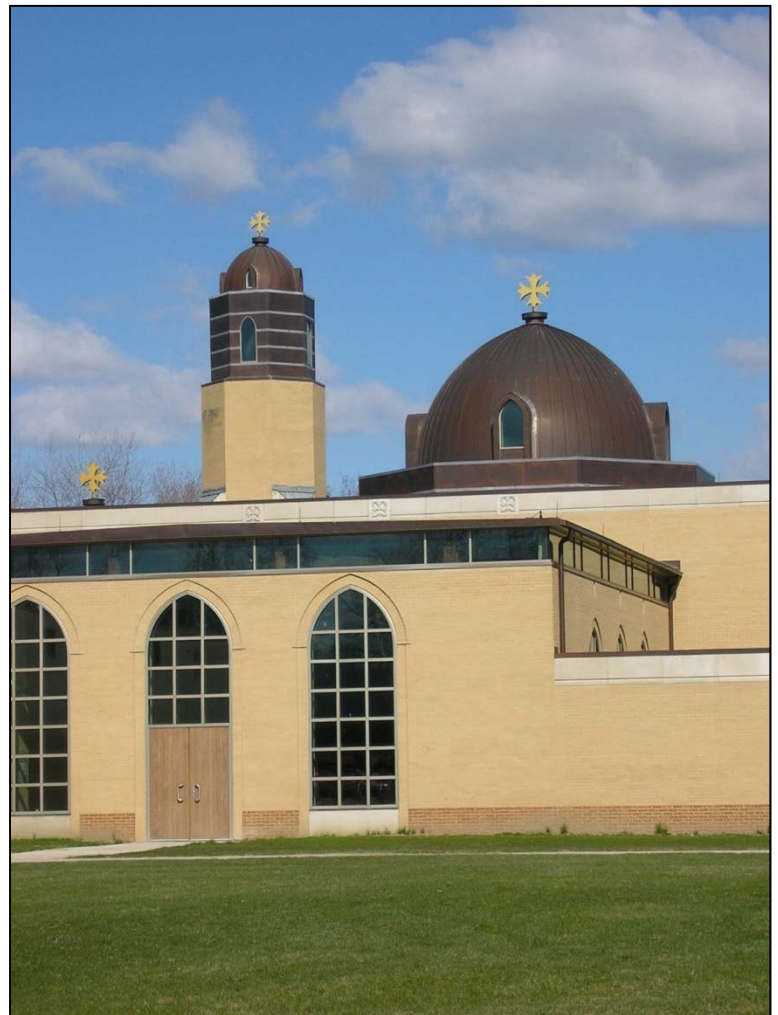
Michigan has a Coptic community of several thousand living mostly in the Detroit area. By all accounts, they are thriving and flourishing, raising families and running businesses, studying and worshipping freely in ways that would not be possible back in Egypt. Coptic life is centered around St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church on Livernois Road in Troy, the wealthy northern suburb of Detroit, where Fathers Mina Essak, Maximus Habib, and Mark Ibrahim lead the church and guide the growing flock. They offer a range of activities including 5:00 a.m. mass, choir, school tutoring, town hall meetings, Arabic Bible study, and Coptic language classes. As one would expect, the church functions as more than just a place of worship. It is where people socialize, network, integrate newly-arrived immigrants, prepare the youth for future leadership and, of course, meet, date, and marry.<sup>3</sup>

**What Will the Future Hold?**

Most Copts point out that they love Egypt, their ancestral homeland, more than any other place in the world. Those who emigrate do so only reluctantly, usually for a combination of reasons including abject poverty, lack of opportunity, religious

*continued on next page*

St. Mark and St. Mary and St. Philopater Church in Troy, Michigan



Copts in Egypt speak Arabic, although they do not self-identify as Arab, which is associated with being Muslim. Many have a small Coptic cross tattooed on the inside of their right wrist as a symbol of their Christian faith and identity.

**The Coptic Diaspora**

It is hard to say precisely how many Copts now live in Egypt. The uncertainty comes from the fact that the Egyptian government has traditionally undercounted the Coptic population, while the Copts themselves have routinely exaggerated their numbers. Best estimates range from a low of about 6% of the population, if you believe government census counts, to a high of 25%, if you believe the leaders of the Coptic community. While the true number is likely somewhere near the middle, it is commonly reported in the mainstream media that Copts make up about 10% of the current Egyptian population of 95 million.

It is also unclear how many Copts live in the United States because the U.S. Census Bureau counts Egyptian immigrants, but not Egyptian Christians as a category. As a result, estimates usually run between 250,000 and one million, with the actual number again probably somewhere near the middle. The vast majority of Coptic immigrants in the U.S. arrived after implementation of the 1965 Immigration Act, which liberalized American immigration law by removing race as a criterion of entry. They settled primarily around large cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and Detroit. Like other immigrants, they followed jobs and educational opportunities as they built new lives in their new country.

## Coptic Christians *continued from page 11*

persecution, and extreme prejudice. In recent years, mob violence against the Copts in Egypt has worsened considerably. One reason for this is the aforementioned war in Iraq, which marked the beginning of a new era of radicalization in which Coptic Christians were targeted and killed by Islamist extremists. Another reason is the Arab Spring, the revolutionary uprising that began in Tunisia in December 2010 and swept across the Middle East. Hosni Mubarak, the U.S.-backed dictator of Egypt, was forced out in 2011 after 30 years in office. He was followed in rapid succession by Armed Forces Chairman Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, Mohamad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood, Adly Mansour, and now Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. In this dangerous fog of political upheaval, the Copts have not fared well.

Space does not permit a full listing of all the deadly terrorist attacks against the Copts that have occurred in Egypt lately, but a brief look at just a few of the more egregious examples will suffice to give an idea of the extent of the problem. In December 2016, a suicide bomber killed 29 people, mostly women and children, inside St. Peter and St. Paul's Coptic Church in Cairo.<sup>4</sup> On Palm Sunday 2017, Islamic State militants attacked St. Mark's Coptic Church in Alexandria and St. George's Coptic Church in the Nile Delta town of Tantra, 60 miles north of Cairo. Suicide bombers walked into the two churches during mass and blew themselves up, killing a total of 45 worshipers and seriously wounding more than 100.<sup>5</sup> In May 2017, Islamic State gunmen stopped a bus full of Coptic pilgrims on their way to St. Samuel the Confessor Monastery in the western province of Minya and mercilessly executed 28 people.<sup>6</sup> In sum, the Copts have become the Islamic State's "favorite prey" at a time when the Egyptian government is either unwilling or unable to afford them protection.<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult to say for sure what will happen to the Copts

in Egypt, but it seems likely that their numbers will dwindle over time as a result of persecution and emigration. In this age of intensifying interconnectedness and globalization, however, they must know that they are not alone. The global Coptic diaspora is appealing to national governments in Europe and North America for help. The United Nations is advocating for greater protection of the Copts and all persecuted minorities. Pax Christi International hears the cry of the Copts and is actively working on their behalf. In my own little corner of the world I am using the power of the pen, trying to raise awareness, and walking the narrow path of nonviolence—and if I ever decide to get a tattoo, it will be a small Coptic cross on the inside of my right wrist.

### Endnotes

1. Eliot Dickinson, *Copts in Michigan* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2008).
2. For a brief video, see "The Coptic Christians of Egypt", *60 Minutes*, 15 December 2013, available online at <https://www.cbsnews.com/videos/the-coptic-christians-of-egypt/>.
3. For a closer look at St. Mark and St. Mary and St. Philopater Coptic Orthodox Church in Troy, MI, see <http://www.stmarkmi.org/>.
4. Ruth Michaelson and Harriet Sherwood, "It's a War on Christians': Egypt's Beleaguered Copts in Sombre Mood Before Papal Visit", *The Guardian*, 27 April 2017.
5. Taylor Luck, "Copts Attacked: Can Egypt Resist Incitement of Sectarian Strife?", *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 April 2017.
6. Declan Walsh and Nour Youssef, "Gunmen in Egypt Force Coptic Christian Pilgrims from Buses and Kill 28", *New York Times*, 26 May 2017.
7. Samuel Tadros, "Coptic Christians: Islamic State's 'Favorite Prey'", *New York Times*, Op-Ed page, 26 May 2017.

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Left: Midwest Coptic Orthodox Youth Conventions have been held annually since 1984.

Right: An English and Arabic advertisement aimed at the Coptic community in Michigan.

# A Glimpse of Tibetan Buddhist Landmarks

text and photo by Uta M. Stelson

*Originally from Germany, Dr. Uta Stelson is a lawyer, consultant, and educator in Portland, OR. Since 2015 she has been teaching English at a high school in Hefei, China, through an arrangement with Green River College, a community college in Auburn, WA. In Fall 2015, Dr. Stelson and two companions took a holiday trip from China to Tibet. She kindly gave us permission to publish excerpts, below, of her informal account of the journey, which she wrote at the time for family and friends. Our Fall 2016 issue included her account of her teaching experiences in Hefei, China.*

On Oct. 1-7, all of China has a week off for the autumnal full-moon holiday. This is the longest time in the Chinese year that people usually have off, so it's a major occasion for holiday travel. My friend and colleague Terri (who lives and teaches in a city 40 minutes away by high-speed train) and her daughter Cami and I decided to use the holiday to travel together to Tibet. It's something I've really looked forward to!

For any Westerner traveling to Tibet, it is required to have a travel permit and a government-approved travel guide. Before we could get the travel permit, Terri and I also needed to get a statement from our schools that we worked in China and would be returning to our jobs after the trip. We booked a private tour in Tibet that included our own guide and car. Everybody warned me about altitude sickness in the Himalayas, but I figured I would be okay as I have been to nearly the same altitude several times in the Alps, although I still kept my fingers crossed.

## The Journey to Lhasa

We started out on Oct. 3 with a night train ride on the slow train from Hefei to Xi'an. We had booked a "hard sleeper" reservation, which meant that we'd at least be able to lie down during the 15-hour overnight trip. But when morning arrived, we were all sort of glad that the mostly sleepless night was over.

In Xi'an we had several hours of layover, and took the opportunity to visit a museum within the city walls, called the Forest of Stelae Museum or Beilin Museum. The thing that Terri wanted to see most was a Nestorian tablet dating to 781 CE, which is the earliest recorded account of Christianity in China. The museum was very beautiful, although the Nestorian stela is a bit bland unless you can decipher ancient Chinese writing. According to my guide book, the Nestorians professed that Christ was both human and divine, for which they were booted out of the Church in 431.

A 35-km. taxi ride got us to the airport, where we boarded our plane for a three-and-a-half-hour flight to Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Once landed, we found our travel guide and the car easily, and drove from the airport to the city in about 45 minutes.

Our guide, Namge (NOM-gay), was ethnically Tibetan,

although his parents had sent him out of the country when he was 11 years old. He first went to Nepal with other refugees, and was entered there into a UN-sponsored program to go to India. While in India, he completed school and university, where he earned a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Philosophy specializing in Tibetan Buddhism and Meditation. He was a perfect match for our small group: Cami is a Buddhist, Terri studied religions, and I'm generally interested in other religions and cultures. Terri asked him a few questions about the political situation in Tibet right away, and his answers were very guarded. I told him that his silence was enough of an answer for us. Eventually, Namge seemed to understand that we were not sent as spies by the Chinese government to test his loyalty, and he opened up more.

At our hotel that night, I noticed that each of the doors had a curtain hanging on the outside, with symbols of some sort written on each of them. I later learned that these symbols were the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism: an endless knot, lotus flower, victory banner, wheel of Dharma, treasure vase, pair of golden fishes, parasol, and conch shell.

## Potala Palace

Our first stop the next day was Potala Palace. This is the key image that is always shown in any presentation of Tibet [see Uta's own photo on p. 15]. It is the palace in which the current Dalai Lama, and his predecessors, lived before he went into exile in India in 1959.

The palace exterior has three distinct colors: white, red, and yellow. The Red Palace was devoted to the religious practices. The yellow parts, which appear only in small portions to the right and left of the Red Palace, were the living quarters of the lamas who lived in the palace. The white of the palace was devoted to the administrative branch of the Dalai Lama's government. Remember that the Dalai Lama was both the religious and the secular leader of Tibet before Tibet was annexed by China in the 1950s.

Notice all the stairs? We had to climb all of them!!! The top of the palace is at an elevation in excess of 4,000 meters (13,000 feet)! Terri and I had been warned by co-workers about how high we were going to be, and we'd started taking NSAIDS a few days prior as a precaution against altitude sickness. Long story short, we all did fine. The only time any one of us got queasy was when we were in an area without ventilation but with lots of people AND lots of yak-butter candles. Not only did the people and candles take up oxygen, the candles also gave off a somewhat rancid smell that contributed to the queasiness. Our guide was always quick to get us into fresh air and find a place for us to sit down for a while until we got better.

As you can imagine, the palace is just chock-full of beautiful Tibetan artwork, and there are still monks praying in various areas. People leave offerings all over the place, and we asked our guide whether we should leave offerings, too. His explanation was that the offerings would be collected by the government and that the government 'provided for' the mona-

*continued on page 15*

## His Goodness Rains Down Like Nectar: *Bodhisattva*

Goodness is brought to human affairs not by an intervening god but instead by an enlightened human— a sage or *bodhisattva*. That is the Buddhist worldview. These sages live their lives in meditation, and they support themselves by begging for food or other goods. The major event in the life of Buddha was his enlightenment, and this symbolizes a moment of awakening in which a hero becomes godlike, i.e., in which a person’s inherently divine nature “finds its way out”. Achieving such a state requires a protracted period of diligent spiritual exertion (*yoga*), passing through many stages. In the highest stage of *dharma* (virtue), called *dharma megha* (the “cloud” or “rain” of virtue), the great goodness of the *bodhisattva* rains down on the earth like nectar, cool and sweet. This metaphor was explained in the following passage from a very early text from India, the *Milinda Pañha*, which was first written around 150 BCE. King Milinda (known as Menander in Europe), ruling from what is now Pakistan, is posing questions to a *bodhisattva* named Nāgasena.

— RKS

12. ‘Venerable Nāgasena, those five qualities of the rain you say he ought to take, which are they?’

‘Just, O king, as the rain lays any dust that arises; just so, O king, should the strenuous Beggar, earnest in effort [*yoga*], lay the dust and dirt of any evil dispositions that may arise within him. This, O king, is the first quality of the rain he ought to have.

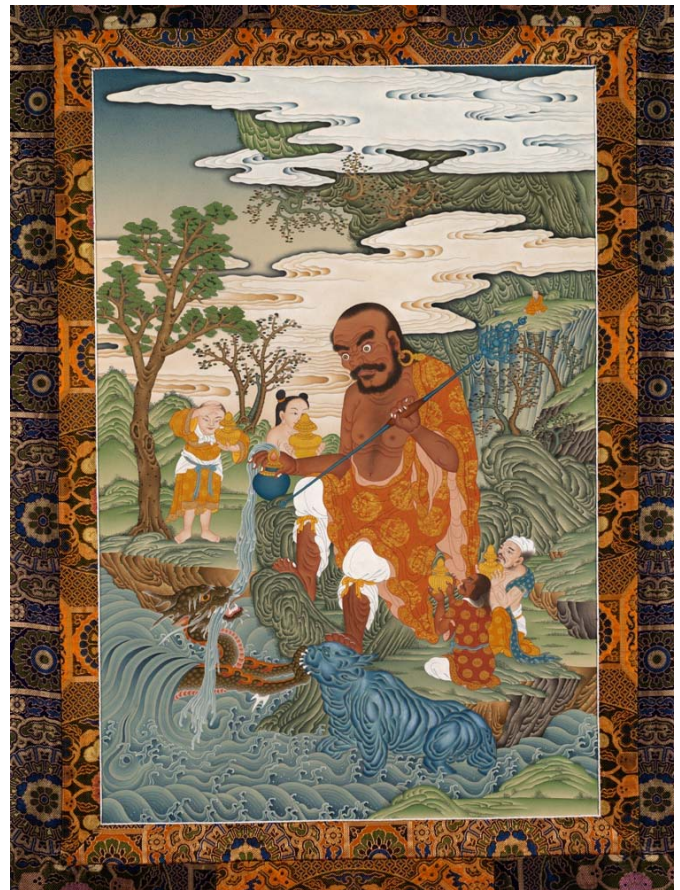
13. ‘And again, O king, just as the rain allays the heat of the ground; just so, O king, should the strenuous Beggar, earnest in effort, soothe the whole world of gods and men, with the feeling of his love. This, O king, is the second quality of the rain he ought to have.

14. ‘And again, O king, as the rain makes all kinds of vegetation to grow; just so, O king, should the strenuous Beggar, earnest in effort, cause faith to spring up in all beings, and make that seed of faith grow up into the three Attainments, not only the lesser attainments of glorious rebirths in heaven or on earth, but also the attainment of the highest good, the bliss of Arahatsip. This, O king, is the third quality of the rain he ought to have.

15. ‘And again, O king, just as the rain-cloud, rising up in the hot season, affords protection to the grass, and trees, and creepers, and shrubs, and medicinal herbs, and to the monarchs of the woods that grow on the surface of the earth; just so, O king, should the strenuous Beggar, earnest in effort, cultivating the habit of thoughtfulness, afford protection by his thoughtfulness to his condition of Samanaship, for in thoughtfulness is it that all good qualities have their root. This, O king, is the fourth quality of the rain that he ought to have.

16. ‘And again, O king, as the rain when it pours down fills the rivers, and reservoirs, and artificial lakes, the caves, and chasms, and ponds, and holes, and wells, with water; just so, O king, should the strenuous Beggar, earnest in effort, pour down the rain of the Dhamma according to the texts handed down by tradition, and so fill to satisfaction the mind of those who are longing for instruction. This, O king, is the fifth quality of the rain he ought to have.

Nāgasena, one of the eight original followers of Buddha, is depicted below in a Tibetan *thangka*, a devotional image painted on fabric. According to custom, he is shown holding in one hand a pot for collecting his alms, and in the other hand a *khakkhara*, or sounding staff. The jingling of the rings attached to the head of the staff alerts followers that there is a sage within earshot in need of alms, and also alerts insects and other small sentient creatures to move from his path so that he won’t step on them by mistake.



[http://thangkass.net/nagasena\\_web.jpg](http://thangkass.net/nagasena_web.jpg)

Translated from the Pāli language by Thomas William Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, vols. 35-36 of the series “The Sacred Books of the East” (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1890-94).



Potala  
Palace  
in  
Lhasa,  
Tibet

## Tibetan Buddhist *continued from page 13*

series and the monks. That put a damper on our willingness to make offerings.

After we descended again from all those steps we had climbed earlier, we met our car and were taken to a restaurant for lunch. The restaurant offered a variety foods, including Indian and Tibetan foods. Our guide Namge is a Buddhist, so he did not eat meat, and none of us had been brave enough to select a dish featuring yak meat from the menu. But after we had all made our orders, he ordered a yak meat pie for us as an additional dish to try. It was similar to a British meat pie, but was much thinner. The dough was flaky and crunchy with a thin layer of minced, seasoned yak meat in the middle. I quite liked it. As a drink, we had some milk tea (tea leaves steeped in milk), which is similar to Indian *chai* minus the spices.

### Jokhang Temple and a *Thangka* Shop

After lunch, we visited the Jokhang Temple, which is considered the spiritual heart of Tibet since it contains the Buddha statue that was brought to Tibet by the Nepalese bride of the 33<sup>rd</sup> King of Tibet, as well as another Buddha image brought by the King's Chinese bride, the Princess Wencheng.

The temple has a large plaza on the outside which, according to our guide, is used by the Buddhist faithful for the purpose of prostrating themselves as many as 5,000 time a day! For Buddhists, a full prostration involves getting from a standing position briefly to a kneeling position and then sliding into a full face-down position and back up again to kneeling and then standing. At 5,000 times a day, that's quite an exercise regimen! Our guide said that he does 100-200 prostrations a day.

Inside the temple, as in every Buddhist temple, there was basically one statue of Buddha after another. Some of them had different facial expressions or different hand gestures, and there was an occasional gallery devoted to either demons or previous Dalai Lamas.

After we were done seeing the temple, we sat on a bench outside on the plaza. A few Tibetans joined us on the adjacent bench and started up a conversation with our guide, obviously about us. We found out that they wondered what we knew about the Tibetan uprising in 2008. We had our guide tell them that we were not well-informed on that particular uprising, but knew in general about the struggle of the Tibetan people against the Chinese invasion and that we were on the side of the Tibetan people. After that, the men all wanted to have their picture taken with us (thank you for smartphones that work even in remote areas of the world!).

After this, we visited the Barkhor shopping district, which was adjacent to the temple's plaza. We had told our guide that we were mostly interested in finding authentic Tibetan items, rather than the cheapest stuff, so he took us to a store where Tibetan *thangka* are painted. A *thangka* is a Buddhist painting that often depicts an image of the Buddha or other sage, or else an artistically inscribed *mantra* (sacred utterance). Our guide explained that when these images are produced by Tibetans, the painter cleanses himself first and uses meditation before beginning the design and painting process. The design process is important as the *thangka* have to follow specific proportions. The much cheaper *thangka* produced in Nepal do not follow the proportion requirements, and are mass produced by many artists, while Tibetan *thangka* are always created by a single artist from conception to completion.

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## Drepung and Sera Monasteries

On our second day in Lhasa, I tried breakfast at our hotel, which was a mix of western and Tibetan/Chinese food. There was the Chinese breakfast staple of rice gruel (*deyihuk* in Tibetan), and steamed buns, but we were also offered an omelet. There was plain yoghurt and granola, as well as toasted barley flour (*tsampa* in Tibetan), which is typically eaten for breakfast in Tibet, where it is mixed into a paste with yak-butter tea. You may have heard of yak-butter tea. I tried it, and I can honestly say that I don't need or care to try it again. The yak butter makes the tea taste very rich, even more so than putting 40%-fat whipping cream into tea, but the yak butter itself has a rancid aftertaste that I don't like. That same taste also presents itself in its smell, as we experienced in the streets outside the hotel, where several stores sold yak butter, as well as in the monasteries, where yak butter is used as fuel for candles.

After breakfast, our guide picked us up again at 8:30 a.m. for another day of sightseeing. On the agenda were two monasteries, both built by disciples of one of the preeminent lamas of Tibet: the Drepung Monastery and the Sera Monastery.

Close to the entrance of Drepung Monastery, the monks offered some items for sale and I purchased a couple of small good-luck charms that can be used in the house or the car. Later, I also found someone selling door curtains decorated with the auspicious Buddhist symbols (similar to those we'd seen in our hotel), and I purchased one of those.

Drepung Monastery, which at some point was home to more than 7,000 monks, now houses less than 10% of that number. We meandered through the monastery and saw all the different images of Buddha and of the past Dalai Lamas. One chapel had a monk who, according to our guide, would bless anything we wanted, so I had him bless my door curtain. The blessings were given free of charge, and donations were completely voluntary, but I donated to the cause anyway.

In another chapel at Drepung, we saw a very large Buddha statue receiving a fresh new coat of gold paint. Our guide explained that the paint was made with actual gold and that some of the Buddha statues receive a fresh coat every day, making some of them weigh several tons of gold. WOW! Next to this statue was a monk whose job it was to bless everyone who came close enough, so we all received a Buddhist blessing. Then Terri was told to cover her shoulders: apparently one of the monks had concerns that her bare shoulders might raise unchaste thoughts in his colleagues.

An unlucky bite from a dog that Cami petted required a long search for a precautionary rabies shot. That put us behind schedule for our visit to the second monastery, Sera, so we got to see only the exterior of it. But our guide explained that the inside would be very similar to Drepung, as both monasteries had been built by disciples of the same lama. We went to get a late lunch, and this time the yak-meat feature was another meat pie-like dish, which Nange referred to as a "Tibetan donut" since it was deep-fried. That, however, was the only similarity with a donut. It was tasty, though. Afterwards, we went back to the hotel. I'd had enough excitement for one day!

## Sociology and Psychology

Schoolcraft's stories of the "Foam Woman" of Lake Michigan and "The Magician of Lake Superior" record earlier histories along the lakeshore, while the stories of today reflect the concerns of our times. The Anishinaabe values of humility, respect, and partnership with all of the life around us can be found in the old stories, but they are also evident in the new stories that are needed as we look toward the future.

One example is the story, *Ajjaak Babaamise Naamitigong: Crane Flying in the Land Beneath the Trees*. One of many recent examples of language revitalization combined with cultural continuity, the story is set in a marsh along a creek that has been polluted by factory runoff. Working together, the animals voice their collective concern and ask for:

Gaawin wiinichigaagesinoo.  
No more pollution.

Gaawin bichibokigaadesinoo.  
No poison.

Gaawin mindaweshkaasii.  
No greed.

Gaawin baapinodasiin aki.  
No disrespect to the land.

Gaawin baapinodasiin nibi.  
No disrespect to the water.

Gaawin baapinodasiin ziiibiins.  
No disrespect to the creek.

Eventually, as a result of their work, and undoubtedly some changes to policy and business models, "maajii'aabiziiwijiwan o'o ziiibiins (the creek begins to heal)". The emphasis on teamwork, a relational model of success, and a need to plan for the future are all lessons from traditional Anishinaabe stories that are applicable today.

Anishinaabe stories have always reflected and preserved a particular way of being in the world, one that has been shaped by centuries of survival along the shores of many waterways and within a complex system of many lives. As all of the citizens of the Great Lakes look for ways to communicate across cultures, there is value in looking back at the wisdom and words of elders no longer with us. There is also value in finding the Anishinaabeg of today who continue to adapt old ways to new problems, working now as teachers, publishers, and artists.

As complex as the world might be, there is always time to stop and consider the ways we are all connected.

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# Sand Mandala Painting in Tibet

by Sarolina Shen Chang

Each of the millions of grains of sand  
 Crushed from the marble  
 Dyed with 14 different shades of colors  
 The thematic red, yellow, black, white, for fire, earth, wind, and water  
 Receives and delivers the blessings from ancient time  
 As it flows from the slender tip of the funnel  
 Onto the geometric design of the wheel of time  
 An exercise of focusing in meditation  
 In following the path to enlightenment  
 In finding the balance of body and mind  
 For six weeks, six hours a day, six days a week  
 Bending close to the outlines of the mandala  
 Merely a few inches from each circle each square  
 Inside a bigger circle bigger square  
 Your breaths timely measured blend into each  
 Meticulous movement of eyes and hands  
 In detailing this great wheel of time  
 In presenting a positive energy to the world  
 In extending a message of compassion and wisdom for world peace  
 The first grain of sand actually marks the beginning of the end  
 For the sand painting will be dismantled at its completion  
 To symbolize the *impermanence of existence*  
 The blessed sands will be dispersed into a body of water  
 To begin another cycle of existence  
 To spread the healing energies throughout the world



Born and raised in the harbor city of Keelung, Taiwan, Sarolina Shen Chang has worked at Schoolcraft's Radcliff Library since 2001. She has been writing and publishing Chinese-language poems, short stories, and essays for more than 40 years, some of them under the pen-name Si Li.

In 1998, Sarolina began writing poems in English as well. She has published these in the U.S. in numerous literary journals and in three chapbooks— two of them from March Street Press and one from Finishing Line Press. The poem here is from the chapbook *They Return* (Finishing Line Press, 2009).

Portion of a sand mandala painting in the Sera Buddhist monastery in Lhasa, Tibet.  
 Photo from Sep. 2013 by R. Thiele, via Wikimedia Commons.

# A Mosaic of Faiths: May 2017 Study Tour in Northern India

by Gary L. Hauck

*Dr. Gary L. Hauck is Dean of Arts and Sciences at Montcalm Community College (Sidney, MI), where he also teaches World Cultures and Geography, Religion, and Humanities. He is a member of the board of the Midwest Institute for International and Intercultural Education; President of the Michigan Liberal Arts Deans Association; and serves on the planning committee of the World Affairs Council of West Michigan. Dr. Hauck, who holds a Ph.D. from Michigan State Univ., is the author of the book, Exploring Humanities Around the World: In Celebration of the Human Spirit (iUniverse, 2008). He has visited 67 countries and all 50 United States, and has taught college courses in China, Ecuador, and Russia.*

It was December 26, 2004, when I first flew to India to attend a convention and enjoy a humanities-oriented tour of Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur. That was the same day as the horrible tsunami that devastated major parts of that region of the world. As images of the tragedy streamed across TV screens in our hotel rooms, we were told to continue with our convention and tour, as the nearest point of crisis was still a thousand miles away. We did.

India struck me as a land of enchantment. The smells of fresh-cut flowers and spices, eerie tunes of snake charmers, and colorful saris of bright orange, blue, and yellow filled my senses with excitement and pleasure. I remember watching in awe as elephant taxis paraded down the streets, weaving among the tuk-tuks, rickshaws, cars, buses, and occasional cow or two in the middle of the street. It was the India I imagined.

Following our meetings in the hotel each day, we toured palaces, meandered through forts, strolled the markets, and marveled at majestic mosques, temples, and garden tombs. Of course, the Taj Mahal was at the top of the list, and it did not disappoint!

“Will you bring your students to India?” asked a recent graduate of Agra University.

“I wish I could” was my reply. “But I’m afraid the cost would be prohibitive. Most of our students cannot afford several thousand dollars for even a short-term, study-abroad field trip.” And I returned to the States with my photos, souvenirs, and graphic memories.

Then, during the Summer of 2015, Montcalm Community College was contacted by Dr. Brijender S. Panwar, President of the M. S. Panwar Community and Technical College. This college is located in Solan in far northern India, a town perched at the lower heights of the western Himalaya mountains in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Dr. Panwar expressed an interest in partnering with a community college in the U.S. for a mutual exchange. It didn’t take us long to explore the possibilities. As part of our newly-established partnership, MCC invited Dr. Panwar to be a guest instructor during Summer 2016, and to

work together on a short-term exchange program for our students and faculty.

In September 2016 we completed an articulation agreement between the two schools, secured a grant from the MCC Foundation to subsidize a short-term field trip for students and staff, developed the curriculum and activities schedule for a three-week visit, and purchased airline tickets for 10 students and five staff members. Our plan was simple: an initial three-week visit by MCC to the college in Solan in Summer 2017, followed by a reciprocal visit of five students and two staff members from M. S. Panwar to MCC in 2018.

Since May is MCC’s hiatus between Spring and Summer terms, the college selected May 6-29, 2017, as the dates for this adventure. The trip would cost no more than \$2,000 per participant (including airline tickets, passports, visas, and incidentals) if the MCC Foundation would cover the costs of board and room in India. With Dr. Panwar’s plan to place the students and most of the staff in homes, the amount necessary to be underwritten was deemed suitable at \$400 per person. MCC’s Cultural Events and PR departments produced recruitment materials and conducted information sessions for students and staff. By January 2017 our team was in place: eight regular community college students, two early college students, and MCC’s President, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the Business Dept. Chair and his wife (a nurse educator).

## Academic Preparations

Each student on our study abroad team enrolled in either BUSN 271 (Study Abroad in Business) or HUMN 271 (Study Abroad in Humanities). These two courses have the same basic catalog description, which emphasizes activities and structured observations that allow students to explore differences and commonalities between the foreign country and the U.S.

Although the trip itself was planned for May, class activities and field trips began in January 2017. During the initial meeting, team members learned a little about each other, received an overview of the course, and engaged in a visa application workshop, completing all necessary pre-trip forms.

Required readings from *The DK Handbook* (Pearson Education’s courseware on writing and research) began immediately, and an “image paper” was assigned to give each student an opportunity to express pre-conceived notions, expectations, personal goals while in India, and a personal learning plan, including proposed interviews, investigations, and observations. Students also took several field trips to a local Hindu temple, Sikh *gurudwara*, and Indian restaurant.

As a fundraiser and cultural foretaste, students hosted an India Night Program and Dinner on the MCC campus, complete with chai, naan, basmati rice, curried vegetables, and chicken masala, which they prepared and served. Over 100 guests attended and listened to the music, information about



At the Bön Monastery, a Buddhist facility in the Himalayan region of India, each team member was greeted and blessed with a white stole from the abbot, Menri Trizin, center, the religious leader of the Bön movement.

All photos courtesy of Gary Hauck.

monks, and store owners. Each student kept a journal, took countless photos, and noted personal observations.

For group projects, the 10 students broke into four learning teams named after Hindu gods (Ganesh, Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva). Using a “Cultural Analysis Toolkit for Study Abroad” by Dr. Deirdre Mendez (Center for Global Business, Univ. of Texas at Austin), each team engaged in a cultural analysis of the people of India and compared them to the U.S. population. Students were unanimous that the number one difference between the two cultures is that Americans are schedule-conscious, whereas Indians are highly fluid and spontaneous. Early college student Heidi Simon observed, “People in America seem to be more individualistic in their focus and pursuits, while the people of India appear to be more collectivistic by nature— thinking mostly of the good of the community.”

Our field trips explored Indian art, sculpture, literature, fashion, domestic art, architecture, music, dance, film, culinary arts, philosophy, education, and religion. The business students also observed production, marketing, management, distribution, recycling, advertising, and sales.

In what follows, I focus on our observations of religious sites.

#### A Monastery of Bön Buddhism

One of the team’s favorite trips was to the historic Bön Monastery, the second largest of its type in the world. Bön Buddhism is one of the earliest forms of Buddhism, and incorporates elements of indigenous Tibetan beliefs that far preceded the birth of Siddhārtha Gautama Buddha further south, in India. Buddhism disappeared from most parts of India after the Muslim conquests (1100s – 1500s). Today, it is the fifth most common faith in India, with over 8 million followers, mostly in the far south and in the Himalayan regions of the far north.

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India, and an overview of the trip. A similar luncheon was conducted for staff and fellow students at the college.

During a final orientation that presented in detail what to expect, how to prepare, and what to pack, a recent traveler to India also met with the team to show pictures and share his own experiences with the people and culture of India.

#### Getting Situated in Solan

After a 15-hour flight, our welcome in Delhi was a gusty, late-evening dust storm that gave us some practice wearing the facemasks that we’d brought to endure pollution. We stayed that night at a youth hostel near the airport, then took a short domestic flight from Delhi northward to Chandigarh, and from there hopped on a small bus to negotiate the winding mountainous roads of the Himalayas.

When we arrived in the beautiful village of Solan, our first stop was the one-building campus of the M. S. Panwar Community and Technical College, built into the side of a steep mountain and overlooking the valley below. A crowd in the school’s courtyard greeted us with flower necklaces, rose petals, and a gracious “Namaste”, a greeting of respect that is said with folded hands and a warm smile. Following introductions, a candle ceremony inaugurated our official partnership, and a two-hour program ensued with live music, dancing, recitations, and prayers.

During our three weeks in India, the team attended special classes in the Hindi language and Indian culture, and took various field trips in the afternoons. Team members interviewed the host families and others that we met along the way, including business leaders, museum curators, clergy,

## Northern India

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## Hindu Temples

The Bön Monastery is considered to be one of the most picturesque monasteries in the world. We were given a tour of the entire complex, and even witnessed the monks' prayer meeting. Inside the main temple is a very large statue of Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche, considered to be a founder of the Bön tradition. Prayers are read to the steady beat of a praise drum, and worshippers move in a clockwise direction around the monastery's inner sanctuary.

We had the privilege of a private audience with *Menri Trizin*, the abbot of the monastery and religious leader of the Bön movement. He presented each of us with a ceremonial white stole, and explained the history of the monastery as founded in 1969 by Abbot Lungtok Tenpai Nyima. (The abbot *Menri Trizin* would pass away at the age of 88 on Sept. 14, only four months after our visit.)

After visiting the monks' prayer meeting and our audience with the abbot, we spent time in the impressive museum and library, and then were treated to an amazing dinner of Indian cuisine, prepared and served by the monks. The monks spent considerable time with us, answering our many questions and asking about life in the U.S. and in Sidney, MI.

One monk, who identified himself simply as "Michael", told two of our students:

You might find this hard to believe, but we as monks are no different than you, except for our religious devotion. We all have iPhones, are on Facebook and use Snapchat. We'd love to come to the U.S. someday and pay a visit to your campus in Michigan.

Hinduism is the most widespread religion in India today, comprising about 80% of its population. We made two visits to the Jatoli Shiv Temple, also within the Solan district, one of the highest-altitude Hindu temples in all of Asia. This very beautiful structure is part of a much larger worship complex that contains several buildings and a cave shrine dedicated to its founder. We observed many worshipers, made some new friends, and learned much about the Hindu religion.

Dr. Panwar explained that the Jatoli Shiv Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, the "destroyer of evil and the transformer" within the Hindu divine trinity, which also includes Brahma the creator and Vishnu the preserver. He went on to comment that he personally views all of the gods as one:

You see many gods around this Hindu temple. But not all Hindus are polytheists. I, myself, am a Hindu, but believe that there is one god who reveals himself in many forms. So, I see all of these representations as of the same god.

Until this conversation, most of our team had not been aware of monotheistic beliefs within Hinduism. As it turns out, Hinduism is a religion that embraces a broad range of traditions regarding god(s), including polytheism, monotheism, pantheism, humanism, atheism, and others.

During our second visit to Jatoli, we enjoyed a Community Luncheon where literally thousands of people throughout the day were served a meal of rice, curry, and naan flatbread. When it was our turn to be served, we sat on the floor, and a gentleman used his hand to scoop cooked rice from a bucket onto our paper plates. Someone else served us the curry sauce, and a final one handed us a piece of naan. It was delicious!

The team observed this monks' prayer meeting at the Bön Buddhist Temple.



The Mohan Shakti National Heritage Park, near the town of Kandaghat in the Solan district, is also dedicated to the Hindu religion. The site is surrounded by beautiful mountain ranges and, as a result, our journey there was a bit scary: many squeals could be heard inside our bus as it drove along very narrow roads without guardrails, thousands of feet above the valley visible below us.

The National Heritage Park includes a major temple along with many outdoor shrines. The park itself is a work of art, and we watched several artisans carving beautiful designs into the marble and polished rock. A smaller shrine, the Shakti Temple, was nestled high in the mountains above nearby Shim-



The Montcalm Community College study team is about to enter the Jatoli Shiv Temple, one of the highest-altitude Hindu temples in Asia. At right is Business Dept. Chair Bill Bishop.

la, where we braved a thunderstorm to visit its unique setting. This is one of many temples in India that are devoted to Shakti, the goddess of creative power and energy, or to other Hindu goddesses.

While in the beautiful mountains of Shimla, we also visited the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), a research institute housed in the 1884 former palace of the Viceroys, or governors-general, of British India. It was there that the fateful plans were laid in 1947 to partition the region upon independence from Great Britain: India was designated as a majority Hindu country, and Pakistan as majority Muslim. Some 15 million people became refugees or displaced persons as a result, and about one million others perished in the spasms of violence directly sparked by the partition.

#### Sikh and Christian Sites

Because of our interest in learning about many different religions in India, our team experienced additional services in the Temple of Brahma Kumaris and in a Sikh *gurdwara* or place of worship (literally, “door to the Guru”). Brahma Kumaris is a Hindu reform movement, nearly a century old, that emphasizes “soul-consciousness”, an awareness that all souls are divinely good regardless of gender, caste, or nation. Sikhism is a

monotheistic religion that arose in the 1400s in Punjab, a large geographical and cultural region in what is now Pakistan and northwestern India. The Sikhs rarely seek converts, but they welcome people of all faiths into their *gurdwaras*. They are the fourth largest religious group in India today, with about 20 million people.

Christianity is the third most common faith in India, with over 25 million adherents, or a little more than 2% of the population. Some of the Christian communities in India date back to the first few centuries after Christ, while others arose during the period of colonization by British and other European powers. We visited a service at St. John’s Church in Solan. This church is of the Anglican faith and tradition, now aligned with the National Church of India. The pastor was pleased to have our team visit, and asked our leaders to say a few words on behalf of the two colleges. After participating in the singing and service, the pastor invited us to mingle with the congregation and to have group photos taken both outside and inside the church. Everyone enjoyed the warm interaction.

Exploring India’s educational system was another objective of our trip, and we visited several schools, colleges, and universities. Among them were St. Luke’s Parochial School, the Hindu University, and the Government Dileep Boys’ Secondary School. At the Dileep Boys’ School, we observed over 1,000 students beginning their school day with exercises, prayers, and ceremony. We were all awarded trophies as visiting educators, and hosted to a party with dancing and food.

We traveled to the Dr. Y. S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, a “land-grant” university patterned after Michigan State Univ. There we met with administrators, faculty, and students, and learned more about Parmar University from an alumnus, Dr. T. D. Verma, who is now Dean at M. S. Panwar Community and Technical College, our partner school. We also observed the children’s academy at that college.

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The Shakti Temple, high in the Himalayan mountains above Shimla, is a shrine to the Hindu goddess of creative power and energy.



## Northern India *continued from page 21*

In the closing ceremony held for us at M. S. Panwar College, we shared our testimonials, our Cultural Analysis, and expressed our thanks to the college, to our host families, and to all of our new friends. We were presented with roses and were given gifts of caps and scarves. Then we headed back to Chandigarh, where we toured Panjab University and prepared for our final weekend, which we would spend in Agra and Delhi.

### The Muslim Legacy in Agra and Delhi

Agra is situated in the northern “U.P.”— the state of Uttar Pradesh. It’s most famous as the site of the beautiful Taj Mahal, which we toured in 107° temperatures, even venturing inside the iconic structure. In the mid-1600s, the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan had this gleaming white mausoleum built to house his wife’s tomb. The Mughal Empire was a Muslim dynasty that ruled most of South Asia and Afghanistan roughly from 1526 to 1857, leaving a legacy of great wealth and culture to that region and the world. Today, Islam is the second-largest religion in India, at over 14% of the population.

In Delhi, we visited two other landmarks built by the same Shah Jahan: the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid. The fort is a spectacular palace that was the center of Mughal power during the empire’s final two centuries. The masjid, or mosque, India’s largest, is majestic with its three domes and two towering minarets of red sandstone and white marble. In Old Delhi, we visited the elegant garden tomb of the earlier Mughal Emperor Humayun, which is surrounded by a building of red sandstone; it was this tomb that inspired the Taj Mahal.

Also in Delhi we visited the famous India Gate (a WW1 memorial) and the resplendent Lotus Temple, built in 1986 as the central house of worship for people of the Bahá’í faith in India. The Bahá’í religion, founded in Iran in 1863 and now with about 6 million followers worldwide, emphasizes the unity and equality of all people and the essential worth of all religions.

Back home in Michigan after our three-week study tour, the team members participated in several steps of debriefing and reflection. Teams collectively wrote a 10-page paper of lessons learned, selected the top 50 photos to document the shared experiences, and presented PowerPoint presentations and slide shows to an audience of family, friends, supporters, and members of the community. An assessment session was conducted to evaluate the extent to which objectives were addressed and met, and the course, instructors, and students were evaluated.

The MCC study team at the Taj Mahal in Agra, a mausoleum of white marble from the Muslim dynasty of the Mughals. At right is Dean of Arts and Sciences Gary Hauck.



## Great Lakes Anishinaabe *continued from page 16*

Read the old stories, look for chickadees, and consider taking time to sing:

Gijigijigaaneshiinh ayaa gawaandag  
The marsh chickadee is there in the white pine

noondaagozid noondenimiyangidwa  
calling out and flirting with us

manidookeyaang manidoowiyaang  
life is a ceremony, a way to be alive.

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# A Light in the Darkness: My Spiritual Journey as a Muslim

by Ruby Arrine

*Hanafya Arrine, known as Ruby, earned an associate degree in Child and Family Services at Schoolcraft College, followed by a bachelor's degree in Family Services at Oakland Univ. in Rochester, MI. She is currently enrolled in a master's degree program at OU in clinical mental health counseling, and she plans to work in marriage and family counseling. In addition to raising her three biological children, she is busy raising foster children.*

This article is about my spiritual journey— where I started, where I am now, and where I am headed. It's about the role and influence of religion in transforming me, and about my changing understanding of my faith, Islam. During most of my childhood and my teen years, I lived a life of ignorance, not knowing much about my faith. My journey toward understanding it began in college, but it took many more years of incessant questioning until I was fully transformed in a positive way. It was only after completely grasping the true essence of my faith that I understood the mark that culture had left on Islam, and that I understood my place as a human and my rights as a woman.

Above all, I came to understand that the fundamentals of Islam require much more than just observing the Five Pillars of the faith, which were commonly practiced and emphasized. I understood how to live my best self and constantly check my thoughts, actions, and words. I understood my responsibility to explore my God-given talents and abilities, and how to use those for the betterment of the self and the society. I realized that being a devout Muslim means that I have to contribute my part in creating a happy, healthy, just, and moral society for all of humanity.

## Negative Examples in Pakistan

I was born as a Muslim in Pakistan, formerly part of India. Pakistan is one of only two countries on the globe that were created solely on the basis of religion— the other being Israel, and in the same year, 1947. It was officially named “The Islamic Republic of Pakistan”. The forefathers and the foremothers (yes— there were many women working side by side with men during the Partition) worked hard, and many people gave their lives or were brutally murdered to secure an independent state for the Muslims of South Asia.

The founders were very optimistic about a future Pakistan rising as a model nation in the world, practicing all the morals and virtues of Islam. But contrary to these beliefs, the next generation could not keep up this vision and mission, and within a few years of the founders' passing, the country fell into an ocean of corruption, materialism, liberalism, and greed. Above all, the government officials were puppets loyal to their foreign masters. In addition, some Pakistani religious leaders would play the game of divide and rule, promoting sectarian violence through misinterpretation of the scripture. This contributed to chaos and instability in the nation.



Ruby Arrine with her late mother.

The true Islam, the sole reason for the existence of Pakistan, was lost. In most households, the Holy Qur'an was wrapped in a decorative cover and kept on a high shelf out of respect. Occasionally, some older members of the family would bring it down and recite it in a language no one understood. Then it would be wrapped up again and put away.

When I was born in the 1960s, faith and family were the most important part of one's life in Pakistan. Many aspects of faith were commonly understood and practiced and had become part of the culture: respect for parents and teachers; taking care of the elderly and neighbors; prohibition of alcohol, adultery and gambling; and modesty in clothing and language. But other aspects of Islam were not that popular and were slowly fading from our society: the duty to gain knowledge; the duty to serve

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## My Journey as a Muslim *continued from page 23*

the community; the accountability of one's actions; and excellence of character in every aspect of life, from relationships to business.

No one bothered to independently understand the religion. The majority relied on religious scholars and were blind followers. True, the religious holidays were observed with great

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*In most households, the Holy Qur'an was wrapped in a decorative cover and kept on a high shelf out of respect. Occasionally, some older members of the family would bring it down and recite it in a language no one understood.... No one bothered to independently understand the religion. The majority relied on religious scholars and were blind followers.*

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enthusiasm, and Friday sermons were important— but no one knew the significance of these rituals. Furthermore, the mosques were exclusive to men only: women were totally excluded from participation at a mosque.

### Marriage Was Arranged for Me

I was lucky that I had been born into a relatively well-educated family. My mother was only a high school graduate when she got married, but her love for education did not cease. Despite giving birth to eight children, she finished her master's degree. My father, who understood the fundamentals of the faith and respected the rights of women, supported her at every step.

When I graduated from high school my parents felt that I was one of the smart ones among their eight children, so they insisted that I take pre-med classes in college in order to get into medical school. Despite this, they were also aware of the cultural norm for young women to get married, and they didn't want to refuse good marriage proposals coming to me. Therefore, I was engaged as soon as I graduated from high school. Out of all of the proposals for marriage, with my permission my parents chose a man who was a medical school student and lived in a different state of India. His father was a landlord, and his mother worked in our state and happened to live in our neighborhood. He frequently visited his mother and made good friends with my brothers. He was in his first year of med school.

At the time of our engagement, my parents made it clear that they didn't want their daughter to marry young. They said they envisioned holding the wedding after my future husband had completed med school, and I would be ready to start med school then myself. He and his parents agreed to this arrangement.

However, during his visits my fiancé, Javaid, convinced me to give up the idea of going to med school. In a way, I was happy with this because I was starting to realize that studying

medicine was not for me: I was extremely bored in physics and chemistry classes, and dissecting a frog, an earthworm, or a cockroach in biology classes nauseated me. Besides, in that period of my life I was easily swayed. In no time, my parents' dreams for me were crushed.

### Majoring in Islamic Studies

After I announced to my family that I would change my major from medicine, one of my brothers suggested Islamic studies as a major and education as a minor. He said that these

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*I constantly questioned my fate, and I asked God: If women were meant only to serve a man and bear children, why were they given a mind to think and reflect?*

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were easy and common-sense subjects, and since my future looked like that of a traditional girl who would get married, become a homemaker, and raise kids, why bother to take the most difficult classes? I listened to him.

After I switched from science to liberal arts, I felt very comfortable and relaxed. The Islamic studies classes required us to read, translate from Arabic, and give a good explanation of some of the chapters of the Holy Qur'an. I was deeply invested in reading and understanding the scripture, and I was lucky that my parents had at home many translations and explanations of the Qur'an by a variety of authors. Little did I realize at the time that these studies were the first sparks that would ignite a passion in my heart and would lead me toward a spiritual journey. I thoroughly enjoyed my last two years of college, and graduated on the honor roll.

But my yearnings to learn, to understand my faith, and to educate myself soon died when I got married, moved to a different state, and started having babies. My husband, despite being highly educated, was a traditional man; in this and in other ways, he was very much a product of his landlord culture. He had high expectation of me being a fully devoted wife, mother, and homemaker. I gave up the dream of going to graduate school and completely absorbed myself in wifely duties. Yet I constantly questioned my fate, and I asked God: If women were meant only to serve a man and bear children, why were they given a mind to think and reflect?

Finally in 1991, a breakthrough came in my life when my husband decided to join his aunt, a physician in Chicago. Every time she would visit us, she would encourage my husband to try to do his residency program in the United States, where it would be far more valuable. My husband was always very impressed by western culture and its ways. He decided to apply for a visa, and invested a great deal financially by selling off some of the land that he had inherited from his father. It wasn't too long before we received U.S. visas for our whole family, including our three little girls Farayha, Ayesha, and Maria.



## Muslim Childrearing in the U.S.

Life in the U.S. was very different, very lonely, and very challenging for us. In fact, it was a cultural shock, and we experienced the clash of eastern and western civilizations first-hand.

We had come from a culture in which faith, family, and community were seen as more important than individual benefit, whereas here in the U.S. we saw that individuality was promoted and practiced. We also noticed that the exercise of parental control and wisdom was not very common; childrearing was more about the rights and freedom of the children.

Since my husband was extremely busy taking exams and starting his medical residency, I took on all of the responsibilities of running the household and parenting our three daughters. In Pakistan, faith and morals had been integrated into everyday life, and there was no need to specifically teach these; most kids knew automatically the boundaries of faith and the authority of parents. However, I realized it was a lot different in the U.S. Many teenagers were involved in dating, drinking, and other inappropriate behaviors, and most parents were unable to stop them.

I started to look for a cultural and religious place that could help keep my daughters away from negative influences and impart an Islamic identity to them. Soon I found a mosque in one of the Chicago suburbs and enrolled them in its Sunday school. My husband was never thrilled about religion, and he did not like the idea of me leaving the house every Sunday. I somehow was able to convince him that if I didn't give these girls a community and an identity, then they would probably soon be following the norms of society and start dating. He reluctantly agreed, and this commute became the launch pad for my spiritual journey.

I would take my girls every Sunday, and since it was quite a long drive, I stayed there with other parents and attended some religious lectures offered for our benefit. Luckily, women were not excluded from this mosque like they were in Pakistan. One day, the principal of Sunday school came in and asked if any parent would help out by substituting for a teacher who had called in sick. Since I had majored in Islamic studies, I decided to volunteer.

I would never have predicted that I would love teaching so much, and that my students would love me so much! It was an awesome experience. The principal started regularly calling upon me as a substitute, and before the year ended she offered to appoint me as a regular teacher on the staff. I gladly accepted.

### The Teacher Who Begged God for Answers

As I taught regularly at the mosque and observed what went on there and in the Sunday school, I started having more and more questions. There was so much emphasis on memorizing the scripture and entering competitions! It didn't feel right to me.

I started to attend more and more study groups and lectures about Islam in my free time, but the interpretations they were promoting were not satisfying to me. I needed more explanation and more answers to my questions. I didn't want to become a



Ruby with a few of the children from her extended family.

blind follower, but sometimes the more I tried to understand things, the more confused I got. What I did know was that I didn't like the way that people were practicing Islam, not only in Pakistan but even in the mosques in the U.S. Therefore I stopped going to these groups and lectures, and I started praying with all the sincerity in my heart: "God, if you are there, please guide me, show me the right way, and answer my questions and my thirst for knowledge."

It took a few more years until my restless prayers were answered. This happened when I met some amazing people who were not religious scholars but highly educated, everyday regu-

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*I stopped going to these groups and lectures, and I started praying with all the sincerity in my heart: "God, if you are there, please guide me, show me the right way, and answer my questions and my thirst for knowledge."*

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lar working people. I was amazed by their personalities, their character, their manners, and their understanding of the Qur'an. One of them was a busy Pakistani industrialist who had some factories in Ohio and was frequently traveling between Pakistan and U.S. I happened to have a discussion with him once about the Qur'an and different interpretations. He explained many things to me the way he understood them, and it made a lot more

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## My Journey as a Muslim *continued from page 25*

sense to me. Another person who influenced me and helped me in my religious quest was a humble Egyptian Muslim who was a principal at the local high school. His knowledge, wisdom, views, and interpretations were so logical that I started feeling at peace.

I started to read and understand the Holy Qur'an in a different light, and it started to feel more and more divine to me. In one of the verses, God is addressing all mankind, saying that indeed it is He who had sent down this message, and He who will safeguard it. He will make sure that it does not get polluted and become many versions just like the messages that he sent down through Moses and Jesus. Keeping these verses in mind, whenever I travelled around the world I would make sure to look through the copies of the Qur'an in each country, and would find no difference—there was only one version of the Holy Qur'an.

### Women Are Not Men's Property

I think that Islam is the most misinterpreted and misunderstood religion, not only among the non-Muslims but among the Muslims, too. Culture and religion have mixed together in a way that makes it hard to separate them and to find the truth. Especially, the status of women in a patriarchal society has always been controversial. It's only after my new understanding of the Qur'an that I found out that in the early years of Islam, a woman had the right to education, the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to work, and the right to keep her name and not adopt her husband's name—because women were not men's property.

Once I truly understood the Qur'an, I felt so much more confident, enlightened, and powerful. My journey was long, but it was worth it. I might not have found this road of understanding my faith if I were still living in Pakistan; I would probably be a blind follower like the majority. Living in the U.S.—and, especially, confronting in such a modern society the need to understand my faith and values well enough to instill them in my children—gave me the courage and strength to question everything that I had learned previously. This country taught me the skills and gave me the tools to educate myself and to make big decisions.

At this point in my life, I feel very happy and content. There are challenges every day, but my faith helps me to stay calm and to work on finding solutions to problems that arise. I am still an active member of mosque Sunday schools here in the Detroit area, long after my children have graduated. I want to bring awareness to Muslims and non-Muslims alike about common misconceptions about Islam. I write letters to the boards of many mosques to try to improve the way the mosques and Sunday schools operate. I am also involved in some interfaith activities in hopes that even though people of different religions believe and worship in different ways, together we can help bring about peace and diminish some of the darkness of the world. •

## Fundamentals of Islam: The 7, 5, and 3 Program

As I studied my faith, I understood that the true and essential form of Islamic fundamentalism amounts to a “7, 5, and 3 Program”. That is, it consists of seven beliefs, five practices, and three duties.

The seven beliefs are:

1. Believe in one supreme God.
2. Believe in the existence of angels.
3. Believe in numerous prophets, including Adam, Noah, David, Solomon, Joseph, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad as the last in the series.
4. Believe in the holy scriptures that were given to certain prophets by the angel Gabriel, including the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Holy Qur'an as the final testament.
5. Believe in the last or final day, when all life on this earth will end.
6. Believe in the afterlife and accountability.
7. Believe in the ultimate power of the one supreme God.

The five practices commonly known as the Five Pillars of Islam are:

1. Submitting to the one true God.
2. Praying five times a day.
3. Fasting during the month of Ramadan, every day from sunup to sundown.
4. Giving some portion of annual income for charity and social welfare.
5. Making the holy pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in a lifetime.

The three duties are:

1. Gaining knowledge, which includes religious and all kinds of secular knowledge.
2. Gaining excellence of character in everyday life, which means struggling to control one's impulses and negative emotions such as anger, arrogance, power, greed, and jealousy, and to practice morals and virtues such as honesty, humility, generosity, responsibility, and dignity.
3. Community service and being a social activist for change, which includes using one's time, mind and abilities for the benefit of others, not merely being a bystander but standing against injustice and promoting equality.

The Prophet Muhammad said: “The greater jihad is the struggle against one's lower self. It is the internal fight between right and wrong, error and truth, selfishness and selflessness, hardness of heart and all-embracing love. This inner struggle to maintain peaceful equilibrium is then reflected in outer attempts to keep society in a state of harmonious order, as the early manifestation of the divine justice.”

— Ruby Arrine

# The Rohingya Muslims: Denial of Identity and Genocide

by Anique Newaz

*Anique Afshan Newaz is an independent researcher and a freelance writer and translator in Ann Arbor, MI. She and her husband, Golam Newaz, are originally from Dhaka, capital of what is now Bangladesh. Anique completed a B.A. degree in South Asian Studies at the Univ. of Michigan in 2011, and an M.Phil. in Modern South Asian Studies at the Univ. of Cambridge in 2015, with a thesis on Dhaka Univ. from its founding in 1921 to the Partition of India in 1947. She has written about the plight of Bihari refugees in Bangladesh, and she has worked with her mosque to aid Syrian refugee families in Michigan.*

This article addresses the injustice of denying the true identity of the Rohingya Muslims of western Rakhine State in Myanmar (Burma). An entire people has been subjected to grave human suffering amounting to ethnic cleansing and genocide. In Myanmar the Buddhist ultra-nationalists, the military government, and the leader of the civilian government are categorizing the Rohingya Muslims wrongly as illegal ‘Bengalis’ or Bangladeshis who do not belong in Myanmar. They are engaged in a broader campaign to strip off the identity, safety nets, and civil rights of the Rohingyas.

A tragedy of historic proportions is unfolding in Myanmar. In the latest phase of violence that began in Rakhine last August, hundreds of thousands of terrorized refugees have fled to neighboring Bangladesh, while others have fled by foot or boat to Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or the United Arab Emirates. Hundreds have died during such perilous migrations. Countless refugees have been shot indiscriminately by border security forces in Myanmar, where land mines have also been planted to discourage the victims from returning. According to a Reuters report of Sep. 6, 2017, “The independent Burma Human Rights Network said the persecution was backed by the government, elements among the country’s Buddhist monks and ultra-nationalist civilian groups.”<sup>1</sup>

It is important to address the issue of the Rohingyas in the context of major human rights violations, and to challenge the false categorization that they are ‘Bengalis’ or Bangladeshis. This article also seeks to raise consciousness among all peace-loving people about the level of discrimination, disenfranchisement, violence, and indiscriminate killing of the ethnic Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. Tellingly, although the Rohingyas include a small number of Hindus it is the Muslim members who are subjected to systematic persecution.

The de facto civilian leader of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi, who won the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize for her years of standing for peace and democracy in her country, still under military rule, has been unable to use her stature and influence to criticize and condemn the military establishment for the acts of violence against the Muslims. In fact, according to Azeem Ibrahim, a senior fellow at the Center for Global Policy and a noted expert on the Rohingyas, the massacre of the Muslim minority has continued alongside the rhetoric of democratization: “The attitude towards the Rohingyas that the Myanmar establishment displays and its hostile actions towards them are informed by a narrative that they do not have a legitimate place in the state.”<sup>2</sup>

But such a narrative is badly flawed. Ibrahim continues: “In the 2012-2013 massacres, members of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) party made the claims the Rohingyas are Bengalis and recent immigrants.”<sup>3</sup> Yet, in the census of 1961, the identity of this group as Rohingya was clearly mentioned. Further, a joint statement by the foreign ministers of Bangladesh and Myanmar, issued on April 23-28, 1992, at the conclusion of the official visit of the Myanmar foreign minister to Bangladesh, acknowledged that the Rohingyas were lawful *Burmese* residents.<sup>4</sup> The figures from a 1983 national census are known not to have included the Muslims, mostly Rohingya, living in western Rakhine State— about 1.2 million people— because they simply were not counted.<sup>5</sup> Likewise the 2014 census did not include Rohingya Muslims as an ethnic minority, even though some Rohingya still had the right to vote in 2010.<sup>6</sup>

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Rohingya Muslim refugees walking from the Myanmar-Bangladesh border last Nov. 3, seeking to shelter in camps set up in the Cox’s Bazar district of Bangladesh. In 2017, over 620,000 Rohingya Muslims fled from Myanmar to escape genocidal violence in their home country.

Photo: Tomas Munita/ *New York Times*.



## Rohingya Muslims *continued from page 27*

M. Shamsul Huq, a noted civil servant in East Pakistan and later in Bangladesh, elaborated on bonds formed between the immigrants of then East Bengal during the British period and afterwards. Despite some ethnic and linguistic differences, Bangladeshis and Burmese, separated by only 233 kilometers of land border, had durable ties rooted in centuries of shared history and culture. Links had been formed through intermarriage between Buddhist and Muslim families. The two peoples also found commonality in their lifeways, such as fishing and rice cultivation, and in various customs of food and attire (for example, both Bangladeshi and Burmese men wore the Burmese *lungi*).<sup>7</sup> Azeem Ibrahim explains how free hospitals were run by Muslims in Yangon (Rangoon), but due to propaganda and negative media portrayal by the Buddhists, the Rohingyas and other ethnic Muslims were increasingly regarded as foreigners.<sup>8</sup>

### Massive 2017 Exodus to Bangladesh Stuns the World

On August 25, 2017, the exodus of hundreds of thousands of the Rohingya from their homeland of Rakhine state shook the world. This massive flight was due to the Myanmar military government's brutal oppression of the Rohingya as "illegal Bengalis" and the horrendous physical torture and killing by Buddhist extremists, the police, and security forces against helpless and unarmed Rohingya men, women, children, and the elderly.

This latest round of depredations began as retaliation for the attack by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). On Aug. 25, ARSA forces apparently attacked military posts in defense of Rohingya people being slaughtered by the Burmese. But the retaliation by the Burmese authorities and the government police was unspeakably disproportionate. Not only did they indiscriminately target Muslim Rohingya men and young boys, accusing all of them of being insurgents and terrorists—they also shot women and children and tortured them with unprecedented viciousness. Women, young and aged, were raped, tortured, and killed, and babies were wrested from their mothers' breasts, decapitated, and flung into fires and rivers before their mothers' eyes.<sup>9</sup> Evidence shows that non-Muslim residents of Rakhine set fire to homes in villages.<sup>10</sup> Not only have the Rohingyas become homeless, but what they lost in such fires was priceless: their identification cards, which were invaluable pieces of evidence of their ancestry.<sup>11</sup>

The sheer scale of persecution of Rohingyas in 2017 compelled media around the world to delve deeper to understand the root of the killing spree. The government of neighboring Bangladesh, particularly the prime minister, Begum Sheikh Hasina, has been sympathetic to the refugees and allocated thousands of acres of land to house them in the district of Cox's Bazar in Chittagong, southern Bangladesh. The opposition leader of Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia, made a special trip to these camps to be with the refugees and to distribute relief items. The country's army has been deployed to maintain safety and security there. Others actively helping the desperate families include local religious elders, Chittagong residents, and local NGOs, human rights organizations, and relief organizations such as Helping Hand USA, Save the Children, UNICEF, and UNHCR. UNICEF



Recent exodus of Rohingyas from Rakhine state into Bangladesh.

documented the crisis of child refugees in Bangladesh and persons displaced in camps in Myanmar. Even if Bangladesh authorities are 'responding quickly and decisively', UNICEF officials observed, the challenges are overwhelming. Children live in flimsy shelters without any proper sanitation. Food shortages and contaminated water create serious health risks.<sup>12</sup>

Politicians of countries such as Turkey began to take active roles. Following the mass exodus last August, Turkey offered massive aid, and Queen Rania of Jordan visited the camps to express compassion. After an earlier 2015 massacre, the emotional reaction and tear-filled face of Turkish First Lady Emine Erdogan as she embraced the Rohingya women of Rakhine was transmitted to the world at that time via social media, focusing global attention on a grave injustice towards humanity.<sup>13</sup>

More inhuman tales unfold daily. The Myanmar oppressors responsible for years of impoverishment and marginalization of the Rohingya now steal outright their goats, chickens, rice, and grains. Rohingya women continue to be gang-raped for days, intimidated by sharp weapons. Men and women are deliberately killed in front of their children, resulting in grave psychological trauma and impairment.

Al Jazeera reported the conditions in prison-like camps in Myanmar where Rohingyas are detained and denied access to healthcare, educational activities, and proper nutrition. Many Rohingya families have been living in these camps for years, and they have sometimes been attacked by Buddhist monks. They are subjected to indignity and humiliation for their ethnicity and religion. There is a process of dehumanization of the Arakanese Muslim Rohingya, which means that they are not considered humans. This amounts to the slow strangulation of a religious and ethnic community.<sup>14</sup>

As Azeem Ibrahim notes, there have been deliberate human rights abuses against the Rohingya in Myanmar over the last 70 years. The decades of persecution and displacement have reduced the Muslim populations of certain states, districts, and townships. In the 1990s alone, some 300,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to

Photo: Tomas Munita/ *New York Times*.

Rohingya Muslim refugees crossing the Naf River to Bangladesh on a makeshift raft last Nov. 11, trying to avoid extermination.

Bangladesh, and in 2017, between Aug. 25 and Oct. 17, there was an additional flight of 600,000 refugees to Cox's Bazar.<sup>15</sup> In previous years, portions of the northern Arakan townships of Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung were torched to the ground, rendering the Rohingyas there stateless and homeless.<sup>16</sup> A *Vice* news report of 2015 documented the removal of Muslim businesses such as grocery shops in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine state; the victims were barred from treatment at hospitals and were unable to vote in the 2015 election, as their citizenship had been denied since 1982. After an earlier wave of persecution and violence in 2012, crowds of fleeing Rohingyas were pushed to the seacoasts where the UNHCR stepped in to shelter them, while Sittwe was so emptied of its resident worshippers that its largest mosque has been closed ever since.<sup>17</sup>

The 2012-14 violence also targeted Muslim communities of other ethnicities than the Rohingyas of Rakhine. On Mar. 21, 2013, a major mosque in the northern city of Mandalay was attacked.<sup>18</sup> In Meiktila, a city in the Mandalay Region, a wave of Buddhist attacks and riots between the two religious groups in 2012-15 led to the destruction of Muslim homes and mosques there and the displacement of Muslims to detention camps set up by Buddhist authorities.<sup>19</sup>

#### The Agenda of the Extremist Theravada Buddhists

Theravada Buddhist groups in Rakhine state led many of the acts of violence against the Rohingya people there in 2012-16, a crucial phase in the conflict that gave way to the Myanmar military itself moving in to take the leading role in organizing the

attacks.<sup>21</sup> Theravada is practiced mainly in Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Sri Lanka, where it makes up the majority of the respective populations. To gain power in state politics, Burmese ultra-nationalist politicians, who are mainly Theravada followers, persecute the minorities and are particularly virulent against Muslims.

Ultra-nationalist accusations that Muslim people pose an existential threat to Buddhists by their sheer population growth are fallacious, since Muslims comprise only about 5% of the Burmese population and do not pose any threat to 'overtake' the Buddhist religion.

A Buddhist organization called the Patriotic Association of Myanmar (abbreviated Ma Ba Tha) is dedicated to the "protection" of the Buddhist race and religion and openly seeks to discriminate against other religions. This cultural chauvinism causes special tension in and around the northern city of Mandalay, which is well known for its pluralistic mixture of Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Chinese people and culture.<sup>22</sup>

Many Buddhists do not support the extremist exploitation of their religion. In fact, nonviolence and tolerance are the highest principles of Buddhism. According to Azeem Ibrahim, surprisingly, Buddhism's non-threatening aspects are openly violated by the extremists. These latter even use the doctrine of reincarnation to justify the suffering of the Rohingya, claiming that they must have sinned in their past lives.<sup>23</sup>

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## Rohingya Muslims *continued from page 29*

### Discrimination Against Rohingyas

The Two-Child Policy for Rohingyas, a 2005 regulation limiting the Muslims to two children per family, is an example of gross discrimination and coercive population control carried out against the Muslim minority. It has been implemented in the northwestern Arakan townships of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. Alongside this law are regulations that force Rohingya couples to obtain permission to bear each child by paying hefty bribes to the authorities—a cruel measure since it often entails a wait of more than two years. Fear of punishment for violating this law complicates the woman's life and endangers her health, as it not uncommonly leads to self-induced abortions.<sup>24</sup>

The Rohingyas have also faced discrimination in the spheres of education and religion. At many schools, one has to be a Buddhist and be able to speak the Burmese language in order to apply.<sup>25</sup> In 2016, the Rakhine State government suddenly decided to implement a ban on construction of mosques and religious schools there.<sup>26</sup> *Time* magazine reported how interfaith programs failed to flourish due to Islamophobic propaganda spread by the abbot of Mandalay's Buddhist monastery. The interfaith programs were at first supported by progressive monks seeking an accord between Muslims and Buddhists based on the principle of unity between religions. But the monks suddenly joined the hate campaigns, and the efforts fell apart.<sup>27</sup> As Ibrahim concluded, "The underlying dynamic driving these events has been the alliance between extremist Buddhist monks, elements of the old military regime, and the silence of the official opposition. In effect, a multi-cultural, multi-confessional state is being treated as a Buddhist state dominated by one Buddhist culture...."<sup>28</sup>

In Aug. 2017, a report was issued by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, a body jointly established by Aung San Suu Kyi's office and the Kofi Annan Foundation. The report documented that Rakhine is the poorest Myanmar state, that inter-communal tensions continue to plague it, and that deep frustrations and unhappiness have been brewing for a long time in the entire population there.<sup>29</sup> Economic development in Rakhine has been stymied due to the failure to develop its rich mineral resources, compounded by restrictions on the movement of Muslims. Despite the history of poverty and resentments, there is no justification for the savage onslaught or for the total deprivation imposed on the ethnic Rohingya minority.

### The Rohingya People Has Deep Cultural Roots

Iftexhar Iqbal throws light on a problem in the just-mentioned Advisory Commission report in its categorization of the Rohingya as 'Muslims of Rakhine'. He points out that this categorization is fine in the context of asserting their universal human rights, but the failure to identify them as 'Rohingya', and the labeling of the Muslim ethnic minority group as 'Bengali', would lead to major problems with regard to their civil rights and citizenship status. In particular, it tends to ignore their historical roots in Rakhine. Iqbal goes on to provide a deeper study of the historical origins of the Muslim Rohingyas there.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, Azeem Ibrahim has shared his research using original documents from Indian national archives, which proved that the Rohingya were original inhabitants living in Arakan.<sup>31</sup>

The claim by Myanmar military and government officials, by ultra-nationalist Buddhists, and by Aung San Suu Kyi herself that Rohingyas are illegal immigrants and Bangladeshis is facile, shallow, and unjust. The Rohingya Muslims have deep roots in their historical homeland of Myanmar. Their ancestry is primarily Indo-Aryan, and secondarily Persian, Turk, Pathan, and Bengali. The Rohingya language consists of a mix of Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Chittagonian. Their religion is Islam, which had been disseminated throughout Arakan centuries ago by Arab seafarers, traders, and Sufi saints.

Arakan was an independent province for most of its history. It was a kingdom ruled by Hindu kings until the advent of Islam there in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century and the Mongol invasion in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> Century. The Magh Buddhists, known as Rakhine Buddhists, who had been persecuted by the Hindu rulers of Magadha in northern India, also settled in this region.<sup>32</sup>

In antiquity, the name of Arakan was Rakhaine, or Rohang in the Chittagonian language; from this is derived the word 'Rohingya' or people of Rohang land. Known also as Western Rakhine state, Arakan was an independent political entity from the early 8<sup>th</sup> Century until the usurpation of Arakan by Buddhist authorities in 1784. Until then, the Muslim Rohingyas, along with the Mongols and the Maghs, had been living peacefully for centuries as people of diverse religions and ethnicities.

M. M. Khan reveals a very valuable insight on the historical relationship between the Buddhists and Muslims of Arakan province. The Arakan kings engaged in a long and fruitful cultural exchange with the rulers and sultans of Bengal. For example, in late medieval times they patronized a Bengal poet, Syed Alaol, who was learned in Islamic thought, Sufism, metaphysics, Persian poetry, and much more. The "golden period" in Arakan flourished under Muslim kings in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. By the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the patronage of Muslim officials had made the largely Buddhist province of Arakan a major center of Bengali language and literature. Many of its Buddhist rulers adopted Muslim names for themselves, and appointed Muslim officials in their courts.<sup>33</sup>

### The Strife Began Under British Rule

British rulers strictly categorized and ranked their subjects along ethnic and religious lines, and their colonial policies in Asia tended to foment conflicts among the different groups.

During British rule in Burma (now officially known as Myanmar), immigration issues antagonized the Buddhist majority. Following the annexation of Burma to British India in 1886, many Indians of South Asia migrated to Burma for professional, commercial, or agricultural pursuits, as described by former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, M. Shamsul Huq.<sup>34</sup> The Indians included Bengalis from Chittagong and Tamils from India.<sup>35</sup> The Indian diaspora from Bengal is distinct from the original Rohingya community of Arakan.<sup>36</sup> "But all Indians," Huq explains, "occupying dominant positions in administration, trade and industry were regarded as an alien class of exploiters and interlopers planted by the British." There were attacks by non-Muslims in Rakhine against the East Bengali migrants as well as against the Rohingya Muslims who had lived there for centuries.<sup>37</sup>

During World War 2, when Japan invaded British-controlled

Burma, the Buddhists there allied with Japan to fight for independence from Britain, while the British armed the Rohingya Muslims to fight against the Rakhine Buddhists. Both the Japanese occupiers and their Rakhine Buddhist allies were extremely cruel to the Muslims. The violent ethnic conflicts led to separation between the non-Muslim Rakhines and the Rohingyas, polarizing the two.<sup>38</sup> For more than 75 years now, from 1942 until today, the Rohingyas have been persecuted.

After Burma was liberated from Japanese occupation, the Rohingyas felt betrayed by the British who reneged on their promise to give them independence in Arakan. When Aung San and the British signed the historic Union Treaty in 1947, Rohingya representatives were not consulted; they were deprived of the constitutional guarantee of their rights and freedom.<sup>39</sup> Buddhist nationalists were angry with the Rohingyas for having sided with the British. Their hostility increased when, following Burmese independence from the British in 1948, the Rohingyas proposed that northern districts of Arakan be included as part of the newly-created Muslim East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh). In any case, their proposal was turned down, and the Burmese Muslims decided to remain with Burma and to push for citizenship and equal rights there.<sup>40</sup>

Aung San, mentioned in the previous paragraph, was the father of Aung San Suu Kyi. He was a Buddhist nationalist fighter who led Burma's movement for independence from Britain in the 1930s. A communist at first, and later a socialist, he pursued a more open policy in a Burma that was cosmopolitan.<sup>41</sup> Rohingya statesmen such as M. A. Gaffar and Sultan Ahmed were elected to the Burmese Parliament and Constituent Assembly. Upon Burmese independence in 1948, Gaffar even called for recognition of the Rohingyas as Burmese citizens.<sup>42</sup>

#### From Loss of Citizenship to Genocide

During the years of democratic government in Burma (1948-62), Prime Minister U Nu recognized the Rohingya Muslims as an indigenous minority and nationality, similar to the six other ethnic groups in the Shan, Kachin, Kaya, Karen, Mon, and Rakhine provinces. The Constitution of 1947 awarded the Rohingyas national registration certificates with full legal and voting rights, and they were told they had no need to apply for a citizenship certificate 'as you are one of the indigenous races of the union of Burma.'<sup>43</sup>

But after the imposition of military rule in Burma in 1962, the mass persecution of Muslims advanced in a succession of waves. For example, under the Emergency Immigration Act of 1974, all members of ethnic groups were given National Registration Cards based on their respective ethnic identities, but the Rohingyas were instead given Foreign Registration Cards; thus, they were denied even being an ethnic group of Myanmar.<sup>44</sup> The cruelest reversal followed the enactment of the Burma Citizenship Law of 1982, through which the Rohingyas were disenfranchised and rendered stateless; their citizenship was revoked.<sup>45</sup> They were not considered nationals and "they were excluded from a pool of 135 ethnic groups living across Myanmar."<sup>46</sup>

In a prescient 2014 talk at Harvard, "The Slow Genocide of the Rohingya", the Nobel Prize-winning Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen shared his understanding of genocide

and how the term applies to Myanmar:

What we have to recognize is that there are two quite distinct things here. One is that genocide is really about killing people. And secondly, there are many other nasty things that are happening which are not part of genocide but which go with genocide. ... The term "slow-burning genocide"— I would even use the word "slow genocide"— is an appropriate one here. Because you deny people health care, you deny people nutritional opportunities, you deny people the opportunity to work and earn an income, make a living and to feed themselves and their family members. You deny people having medical care.... That is killing people, and in that sense it is a genocide, it's a "slow genocide".<sup>47</sup>

He went on to discuss the role of "systematic lying and propaganda". In order for an evil government to do nasty things, he said, it must first change the character of its people. The Burmese common people "have been fed lies", Sen stated, much as occurred in fascist Italy and Germany leading up to WW2 and the Holocaust.

The United Nations' Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide was formulated in response to the Holocaust and has been "in force" since 1951. Article II defines genocide as:

any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: Killing members of the group; Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingyas— a pattern of ethnic-religious persecution and discrimination, denial of identity, mass deprivation and poverty, violence and murder, and ethnic cleansing via expulsion and annihilation— clearly fits this definition.

#### What Can Be Done?

In 2017, when UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini condemned the onslaught against the Rohingyas of Myanmar as "a text book example of ethnic cleansing", it had a profound impact. UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged Myanmar to end the violence and to uphold minority rights by awarding the Rohingyas their legal status. The Muslim world has denounced Myanmar's cruel treatment of the Rohingyas.

But the rest of the world needs to do much more. The U.S., Israel, India, China, and Russia continue to sell arms to Myanmar, in part due to the country's geostrategic importance.<sup>48</sup> One U.S. representative, Ted Yoho (R-FL), called for suspending the \$63 million/year in U.S. aid to Myanmar, commenting, "We are in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and I see these atrocities going on that makes [you] not even want to be part of the human race."<sup>49</sup> In mid-October, 43 Republican and Democratic members of the House of Representatives urged the Trump administration to re-impose

*continued on next page*

## Rohingya Muslims *continued from page 31*

U.S. travel bans on Myanmar's military leaders and prepare targeted sanctions against those responsible for the harsh crackdown there. It is encouraging that there is momentum developing in Congress to pressure the Burmese military junta.

As an American citizen, I am able to express my concern about the human rights abuse of Rohingyas, and U.S. lawmakers are receptive to hear from constituents like me. In early October, I received a response to my appeal to U.S. Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI). He wrote back to me saying, "The plight of the Rohingya people, who are considered to be among the world's most persecuted, is deeply heartbreaking" and "demand[s] a forceful response from the international community, including the United States". He went on to take note of his support of a number of Congressional measures, including an amendment to the FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act that would remove a provision of the bill expanding military-to-military engagement with Myanmar; this amendment passed the full Senate on Sep. 18 by a vote of 89-8. In following up, I was able to meet Chris Matus, a Michigan Regional Director who is helping to set up a face-to-face meeting between Sen. Peters and the local Bangladeshi community. If such a meeting were to take place, we can ask our Senator to organize efforts that go beyond resolutions to take concrete actions to save the Rohingyas.

In early December, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution (423-3) condemning the "ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya" and "calling for an end to the attacks" against the Muslim minority in Myanmar. The resolution may be the first step toward congressional action to institute economic sanctions putting pressure on the Burmese military.

The recent visit to Myanmar of a moral figure like Pope Francis was full of promise in bringing the Rohingya issue front and center. But he too fell under pressure from the Burmese authorities and Catholic bishops in Myanmar to not even utter the term 'Rohingya', much less to directly address the plight of the ethnic Muslim minority there. The Church advised him to avoid saying 'Rohingya' for fear of reprisals against the Christian community in Myanmar. Because he did not call out the injustice against the Rohingyas publicly, the Pope failed to make any impact on the situation. History will tell that the Pope needed to be much more forceful in Myanmar: the victims did not receive the moral support that they deserved from such a figure, and this was an opportunity lost by the Pontiff. A moral and fearless stance on the issue is essential. The Pope was conciliatory in Dhaka after the Burma trip and asked for forgiveness from the Rohingyas.

We all have to be leaders of peace in this world in order to fight intolerance, xenophobia, and racism and to help the oppressed Rohingya people to secure their right to live. The world must pressure Myanmar's military government and Aung San Suu Kyi to end the violence and the denial of identity, so that Rohingya people can live, work, and worship with dignity, security, and justice and their culture can be allowed to thrive just like any other.

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Below, “The Sad Truth”, a statement against international sex trafficking, was created by Schoolcraft College student Haley Snyder. The dollar amounts represent the “going price” that buyers might pay sellers for each woman inserted into the trafficking network in each country. Haley, a graphic design major from Garden City, MI, made the illustration last Fall as a project for an afternoon section of Computer Graphics Technology 226 (Digital Imaging 2— Photoshop) taught by Prof. Mike Mehall.



## Opinion Column

# The Crisis of Fundamentalism in India and Across Asia

by Titas Biswas

*Titas Biswas is a student working toward a bachelor's degree in economics at Jadavpur University in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. She recently completed a three-month internship at the Global Daily Tribune in Kolkata. She has also contributed writing and media content to Anarchimedia, The Perspectives Blog, and the London School of Economics and Political Science.*

A photograph from 6 December 1992 is one of the iconic images stamped forever in the minds of young Asians like myself.

That was the day when Hindu fanatics demolished the Babri Masjid, a 16<sup>th</sup>-Century mosque in Ayodhya, northeastern India. A rally had been organized in front of the mosque that day by the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and an extreme Hindu-nationalist group, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). A mob of 150,000 *kar sevaks* (religious “volunteers” or activists) overwhelmed security forces and tore down the structure, one of the largest mosques in the entire state of Uttar Pradesh. The incident triggered religious riots that killed at least 2,000 people.

But in the iconic photo, we see nothing but smiles on the faces! BJP official Uma Bharti is hugging then-BJP President Murli Manohar Joshi in joyful celebration of the wanton destruction. Bharti, Joshi, and several others were charged with criminal conspiracy last April, not quite 25 years after the mob assault.

### A Downward Spiral of Pogroms

Unfortunately, the 1992 attack in Ayodhya was only a foretaste of much worse times to come. Since 2002, South Asia has been plagued with an essentially steady acceleration of officially-sanctioned religious fundamentalist activities.

This downward spiral began with the Godhra Kand incident, which fell on the morning of 27 February 2002. A fire killed 59 people inside the Sabarmati express train near the Godhra railway station in the state of Gujarat, western India. The train was filled with 1700 pilgrims and *kar sevaks* returning from a VHP-sponsored Hindu ceremony in Ayodhya.

That the train had been set ablaze intentionally was later confirmed by the Nanavati Commission, a task force appointed by the Gujarat state government then headed by Chief Minister and BJP activist Narendra Modi. The Godhra train fire was blamed on Muslims, and the ensuing hatred for the minority community is widely believed to have been the triggering factor for the Gujarat Riots of 2002, a three-day pogrom in which, by conservative official estimates, 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus perished.

There followed a sequence of events by which the aforementioned Narendra Modi, “one of the curators of the Gu-

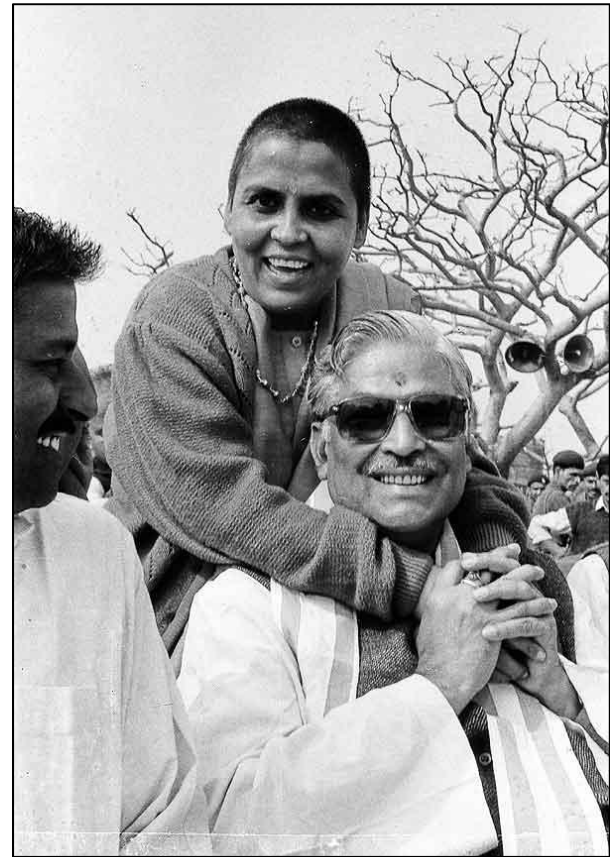


Photo: The Financial Express (India)

Murli Manohar Joshi, then-President of the Bharatiya Janata Party, is embraced by another BJP official, Uma Bharti, as they celebrate the destruction of the main mosque in Ayodhya, India, on 6 Dec. 1992.

jarat Riots”, became Prime Minister of all of India. This was thanks to his megalomaniacal glorification as the only possible savior of a subcontinent in political and financial crisis. True, the population explosion, the slow growth in GDP, the hopeless fate of the finished-goods sector, and the abysmally low Human Development Index were taking a toll on the psyche of a generation. But Modi was catapulted to power in a manner that bore an uncanny resemblance to the rise of fascist rulers the world over (a timeless phenomenon, to be honest).

Strangely enough, in these lost times, the sudden “renewal” of a blatantly nationalistic propaganda infused in the popular culture managed to cast a brilliant spell over the minds of a large section of unemployed youth and of those who work in the corporate sector. The vision of a more comfortable life, with superfast rail networks and clean, slum-evicted metropolitan areas, seemed to be a masterful case of modern advertising.

### Hindu Fascism?

Prime Minister Modi began making illegitimate claims of “bringing back to India the black money stashed in foreign banks”, deporting Muslims to Pakistan, disallowing any



Photo: Adi Weda/ European Pressphoto Agency

At a main traffic circle in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 3 Sep. 2017, activists protested the violent attacks on Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims.

Rohingya refugee to seek shelter in India, and verbally supporting the brutality of the Armed Forces Special Powers Acts (AFSPA).

An interesting case is that of Jammu and Kashmir, a northern Indian state where there is a history of often-violent protests against the central government. This land is majority Muslim in population, but also has important Hindu and Buddhist shrines. In the Summer and Autumn of 2016, massive anti-government demonstrations by Muslim civilians were brutally suppressed by soldiers, police, and paramilitaries. Four months of street fighting and curfews left 94 people dead, nearly 5,000 arrested and 17,000 injured. Perhaps most shocking was the army's use of "non-lethal" pump-action pellet guns to fire small metal birdshot, leaving several hundred children and adults permanently blind. The "pellet shower" prompted England's *Guardian* newspaper to ask in one headline, "Is This the World's First Mass Blinding?"

Most ordinary civilians in western and northwestern India (the more conservative part of the subcontinent) would readily give their consent to the Armed Forces Special Powers Acts both in Kashmir and in Manipur (a state in far northeastern India that similarly has a history of insurgency and inter-ethnic violence)—this without even realizing what meaning the term "special powers" actually and ultimately encodes. The "pellet shower" is a bitter reality-check.

The frantic behavior of a populace during times of economic crisis, and the lack of visibly distinct choices in the parliamentary sphere, has indeed stirred up what might lead to the formation of a neo-fascist state.

#### The High Cost of Free Thinking in South Asia

In the midst of all these confusing years, a certain learned atheist—Dr. Avijit Roy, a Bangladeshi-American blogger who was living in the U.S. most of the year—began talking and writing about such controversial topics as science, the philosophy of existence, government censorship, the tactics played by corrupt imams to retain control, the American champion of rationalism Carl Sagan, and the Japanese postmodernist novelist Haruki Murakami. He was brutally hacked to death during a Feb. 2015 visit to Bangladesh, followed by the subsequent murders of three other bloggers from his

website, Mukto-Mona. Members of an Islamist extremist organization in Bangladesh were arrested in connection with the murders.

In 2016, a post-graduate student from the Dept. of Biotechnology at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi disappeared on his way home. Reportedly, thugs from the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a right-wing, paramilitary Hindu nationalist group widely seen as the parent organization of the ruling BJP) had previously threatened and even physically assaulted him right inside the campus. His mother was repeatedly harassed by the authorities when she demanded justice for her missing son.

The year 2016 brought suspicious "suicides" of two student researchers who were activists against the caste system: Rohith Vemula at Hyderabad Central Univ. and J. Muthukrishnan at Jawaharlal Nehru Univ. The passive denials, or in some cases absolute silence, about these deaths on the part of the authorities raise serious questions about their stance regarding discrimination against Dalits (members of "untouchable" castes).

The cold-blooded murders of Govind Pansare (Feb. 2015), Narendra Dabholkar (Aug. 2013), M. M. Kalburgi (Aug. 2015), and Gauri Lankesh (Sep. 2017) raise an equally disturbing question: What has become of freedom of expression and thought?

- Govind Pansare was an historian and a senior communist leader based in Mumbai, and once ran an organization that encouraged inter-caste marriages. He was noted to have opposed the *putrakameshti yajna*, a superstitious Hindu ritual thought to result in a male child.
- Narendra Dabholkar was a medical doctor and author who in 1989 founded and became president of the Committee to Eradicate Superstition in Maharashtra. Following his murder, it was Mr. Pansare who persuaded the Committee to carry on with its work. It was also this murder that led to successful passage of the proposed Anti-Superstition and Black Magic Ordinance.
- M. M. Kalburgi was a controversial literary scholar and vice-chancellor of Kannada University. He had spoken out against superstitions in Hinduism, and was accused of making "derogatory references" to Basava, a 12<sup>th</sup>-Century philosopher revered by his caste group.
- Gauri Lankesh, a journalist from Bangalore, was a critic of right-wing Hindu extremism who repeatedly criticized acts of the government. She had called the Modi regime highly anti-Muslim, anti-minority, anti-Dalit, anti-poor and regressive. She was also vocal about the links between big businessmen and top BJP leaders. She was shot to death by unknown assailants outside her home, silenced before she could contribute any further to the cause of freedom of the press and of expression.

In an interview, the award-winning film director, screenwriter, and lyricist Kavitha Lankesh spoke about the resulting fear that has been injected into the atmosphere that surrounds Indian artists, journalists, writers, and scholars.

#### Buddhist, Islamist, and Jewish Fundamentalisms

Further to the east, in Myanmar, the revival of violence against the Rohingya community is another example of religious

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Opinion Column

# Onward Christian Soldiers

by Gary Detlefs

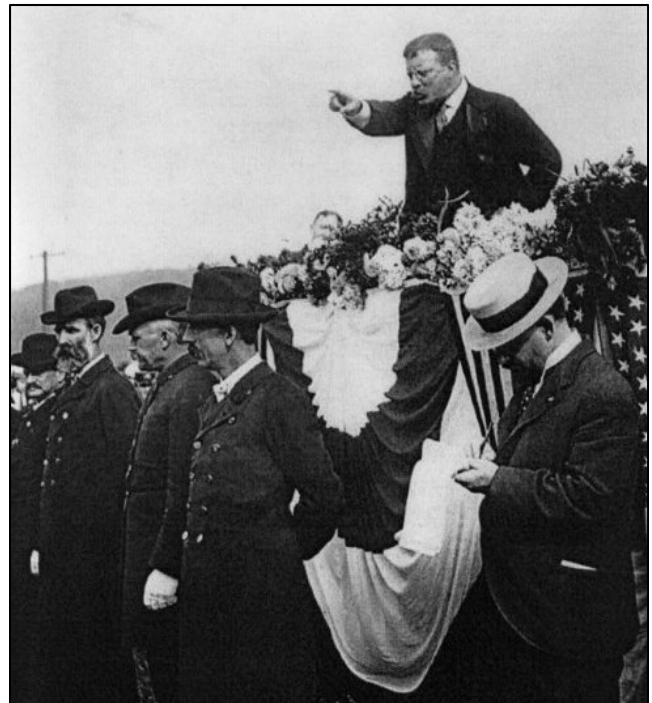
*Gary Detlefs is a teacher in the Jackson, MI, public school system. He is also a guitarist whose blues-rock bands have played at nightspots all around southeastern Michigan. Gary holds a B.A. in mathematics (2000) from Eastern Michigan Univ.*

A number of recent studies by the United Nations, the Pew Foundation, and other organizations indicate that religious persecution and intolerance continues to be a major problem in the world. Surprisingly, the data could be interpreted in such a way as to indicate that religious persecution is far more extensive now than at any time in history. Dan Wooding, in a 2010 column “Modern Persecution” for a Christian website, wrote: “In a recent article, Justin D. Long emphasized the startling fact that more people have died for their faith in the Twentieth Century than in all of the previous centuries combined.” Specifically, Long estimated that 26 million people were martyred in the 1900s, while 14 million died between the years 33 and 1900.<sup>1</sup>

To anyone even remotely aware of the mind-boggling savagery and cruelty associated with religious conflicts in world history, this is difficult to fathom. The history of this world has been a vicious bloodbath of Christians killing other Christians, Christians killing Muslims, Muslims killing other Muslims, Muslims killing Christians, Buddhists killing Hindus and, in general, each religion slaughtering all other ones and opposing sects of their own faith. Although we tend to feel that we live in more enlightened times, little has changed in regard to this fact. For example, there are more slaves in the world today than at any other time in history.

Of course, the numbers of history are always a little murky and, when one considers the explosive growth of the world’s population in the last century, it could be argued that violent persecution today is less prevalent from a percentage standpoint. For example, if only 1% of Muslims in the world today were misguidedly violent jihadists, that would still be about 15 million people. I suppose it is a matter of personal sensibilities whether one finds it more depressing to read about the slaughter of a mere 20,000 innocent men, women, and children in one afternoon (July 21, 1209) in Béziers, France, during the Albigensian Crusade or to read of the imminent starvation of millions of people in Yemen today and the displacement and murder of millions more due to religious strife and violence. For this short essay however, it is not my intent to discuss these vast subjects of world history or current events but, rather, to briefly focus on the American Experience.

I know how egregiously offensive it sounds to my fellow Christians to say so but, as a student of history, I have come to one inescapable conclusion: Christians are warmongers. There has never been a war in the history of this country that was not enthusiastically supported by the vast majority of Christian denominations. When Lucifer beats the drums of war, the Christians dance like puppets on a string. They parade the flag in-



On Memorial Day 1902, before a vast crowd at Arlington National Cemetery, Pres. Theodore Roosevelt defends the U.S. Army against charges of atrocities committed in the ongoing Philippine-American War. He insists that “this is the most glorious war in our nation’s history”, one being fought between the forces of “civilization” and “savagery”, and dismisses the Filipinos as “Chinese half-breeds”.

to their sanctuaries singing “onward Christian Soldiers” and send their armies off to die in a war for “God and Country”. Nationalism will always trump religion, with Jesus’s simple teachings of love and tolerance replaced by hatred and prejudice.

When I was coming of age during the Vietnam War, the “Moral Majority” told me that I was not a patriotic citizen or a good Christian because I was against the war. But at least I did not have to live through WW1, when people were thrown in jail for speaking out against that pointless conflict, and children were told to report anyone uttering unpatriotic opinions. As is the case today, freedom of the press was challenged by the jingoistic “patriots” who hypocritically maintained that the newspapers had no right to criticize a war that ostensibly was being fought to protect the freedoms of Americans (such as freedom of the press?). Back then it was Eastern Europeans, instead of Muslims, who were the “enemy”, and those dirty atheistic Bolsheviks were rounded up and deported with a disregard for due process that would make today’s conservatives green with envy. The ministers and pastors were all for it, of course, as they would be later in the century in their support for Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).

The almost total annihilation of Native Americans was sanctioned and encouraged by the Christian establishment on the reasoning that they were heathens and thus needed to be executed, or else simultaneously “converted” and subjugated to second-class citizenship. The same hypocritical attitude of the noble “white man’s burden” was used to justify our colonial expansions

into Asia, Central and South America, and other world regions that needed our civilizing Christian mentorship—which, to the recipients of this alleged largesse, felt more like oppression and slavery at the hands of American-owned corporations.

The Civil War was certainly a terrible tragedy—but not for the war profiteers, who made millions selling defective equipment to the army. At least it could be argued that the Northern abolitionists had a justifiable religious reason to advocate war, but few of them actually went into battle themselves, leaving that rather unpleasant task to the poor who have always formed the majority of our armies. Lincoln might have freed the slaves, but he also freed the rich from military service, allowing them to opt out by paying a \$300 fee.

During the Great Depression, hundreds of thousands of people stood in long lines suffering bitter cold weather in hopes of getting a crust of bread to eat. A lot of rich people, and their ministers as well, thought that giving these lazy bums a free handout was morally reprehensible and would destroy their work ethic. Other preachers went out into the mines, factories, and farms of America urging the workers not to unionize or strive for a better lot in this world, assuring them that salvation awaited them in the next. As the folk singer Joe Hill put it sarcastically, “We’ll have Pie in the Sky When we Die”. Unfortunately, the American religious establishment has a long history of favoring the interests of the wealthy over those of the working class.

World War 2 was, of course, “The Good War”. The sacrifices that our citizens made to ensure victory were a heartwarming testimonial to our tenacity and determination as a nation. What usually remains unmentioned, however, is that Germany could never have re-armed itself in the first place (in violation of the Versailles Treaty) without the help of American bankers and industrialists, some of whom were Nazi sympathizers. When Germany invaded Poland the troops rode in on Ford trucks; in fact, Hitler kept in his office a life-size portrait of Henry Ford, an avid anti-Semite. Companies such as Ford, GM, Kodak, IBM, Standard Oil, Chase Bank, Dow Chemical, Coca Cola, and many others continued to profit by supplying both the Allied and Axis powers simultaneously. After the war ended, GM successfully sued the U.S. government for \$33 million as reimbursement for the bombing of its German factories that were partially staffed by slave labor.<sup>2,3</sup>

Fast-forward to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. By this time, America was a far wealthier nation and people were “living on credit”. Unlike WW2 when our citizens sacrificed so much, no Americans except the U.S. troops sacrificed anything in Iraq. The “god-fearing” Christian hawks were adamant that not only should the war be waged, but no additional taxes should be assessed for its cost. Why sacrifice anything for the cause when you can charge your patriotism and then blame the resulting deficit on those lazy welfare bums and freeloading illegal immigrants? As always, the large corporations made millions while corruption ran rampant, and anyone opposed to the war was branded as an unpatriotic and unchristian reprobate.

America today has become a hotbed of hatred, racism, polarization, and religious intolerance. Hate crimes are on the rise. The obsession with Muslim terrorism obscures the fact that terrorist acts by “God Bless (white) America” would-be militiamen are far more prevalent. The assault on health care for the poor, workers’ rights, and prudent regulation of banks and

other financial institutions continues unabated. We are incarcerating a higher percentage of our population than any other country in the world in privatized prison hellholes and ignoring the plight of our homeless veterans. I am reminded of the Joni Mitchell lyric, “Oh come let’s run from this ring we’re in/ Where the Christians clap and the Germans grin” (“The Priest”, 1970).

Unfortunately, people very rarely change their minds about religion or politics. These opinions are often formed at a young age, and they get reinforced by a functional ignorance of history and a culture that glorifies war. I was reminded of this recently when teaching a fifth-grade class. These kids, who knew absolutely nothing about history or the world they live in, were gung-ho fans of the slogan “Make America Great Again”. Given America’s history, what crimes would “Great Again” actually unleash upon non-Christian people in the world? •

### Endnotes

1. Dan Wooding, “Modern Persecution”, Christianity.com, Apr. 28, 2010, <https://www.christianity.com/timeline/1901-2000/modern-persecution-11630665.html>.
2. Dustin Koski, “Top 10 American Companies that Aided the Nazis”, TopTenz.net, Jan. 2, 2015, <http://www.toptenz.net/top-10-american-companies-that-aided-the-nazis.php>.
3. “U.S. Corporations and the Nazis”, [http://iahushua.com/WOI/us\\_nazis.htm](http://iahushua.com/WOI/us_nazis.htm).

### Fundamentalism in Asia *continued from page 35*

— in this case, Buddhist— fundamentalism run amok. For State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi— who reportedly fought the country’s military dictatorship, endured years of house arrest, and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991— her position on the ethnic cleansing of Myanmar is indeed a matter of severe shame. Protests broke out in Indonesia, and people even demanded that her Nobel Prize be revoked.

Unfortunately, in several corners of eastern India the helpless Rohingyas are often deported to district jails in suburban pocket regions. Owing to their inability to speak any of the languages understood by Indians, and the lack of policies and activists who would advocate for their cause, they end up spending entire lives in dark cells, having no clue of how to protect themselves from this treatment.

In westernmost Asia, the situation in the Gaza Strip hasn’t seen any betterment for a decade now. The arms and ammunition supplied to the militant Islamist groups originate in big imperialist states like the U.S. and Turkey. The list even includes weapons used for NATO’s intervention in Libya. And to what end? To foment inter-communal hatreds— Muslims against Jews, and vice versa. This only turns the attention of “the ruled” toward artificial realities, and away from the reality of the nature of power.

The ruins of the Syrian cities of Aleppo, Buṣrā, Palmyra, and Damascus are enough to stir up tears in the spectator’s eyes. If we dream of any future at all right now, we must begin planning a sustainable one together, realizing every aspect of the importance of communal, social, and political harmony before it is too late.

# What They Say

by Garrett Spease

They say not to let them in, that they steal the food from our mouths.  
 If that is the case, then why is the food gone  
 Without them anyway?

They say the world is more connected now than ever before.  
 If that is the case, then why is it that everyone seems  
 More alone than ever?

They say we are good, and *them* are the evil.  
 If that is the case,  
 Why did we strike first?

They say we are free  
 And *them* want to take our freedom.  
 If that is the case,  
 Why are we imprisoned  
 Already?

They say “No one left behind.”  
 If that is the case,  
 Why have we always seen their backs from so far?

A woman begs from a sidewalk in Mexico City.

Photo by Chris Cavaliere  
 in July 2017 (see page 9).

*Garrett Spease is a Schoolcraft College student from Canton, MI. He thanks Joseph Miller, a librarian at our Bradner Library, for being a mentor and inspiration in his writing.*



# The Power of Art: The Early “New German Cinema”

by Miles Brown

*Miles Brown is a Schoolcraft College student from Farmington Hills, MI. He wrote this piece as a brief research paper in a section of German 101 (Elementary German I) taught by Prof. Anita Süess-Kaushik in Fall 2017.*

The exceptional ability of art to illustrate peculiarities in cultures and societies is uncanny. The cultural movement taking place in a society, regularly obfuscated by the lack of a dedicated platform for citizens to express themselves, is allowed to be put on full display when an artist uses their medium to unleash their thoughts and opinions upon audiences. When the progression of these thoughts is followed through history, large pieces of the cultural narrative start to unravel themselves.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the 1960s cultural shift in West Germany. Examining the shift on its own yields a simple narrative of new hardships and postwar troubles. But when it is examined along with the stories of the early “New German Cinema”, a generation of filmmakers born around the Second World War, a new narrative of radical cultural change becomes more apparent. The study of the new German film scene enhances the study of the then-new country of West Germany, and its cultural growth and evolution.

## Setting the Stage

After the end of World War 2, portions of Germany were aided by the Soviet Union and the United States, with the hopes that those portions would inherit their countries’ values. In that same year, 1945, Germany would be officially split into two countries: the U.S. aided West Germany, and the Soviets aided East Germany. While both countries struggled initially, West Germany would start to pull ahead as time went on.

During the 1950s, West Germany would experience an economic boom known as the “Economic Miracle”. This boom would elevate West Germany from a war-torn, devastated nation to a highly developed European nation. Its economic growth rested on the backs of migrant workers, primarily from East Germany, who were family relations to workers in the West. That arrangement would come to an end, however, when, in 1961, the Berlin Wall was erected. Built to solidify the separation between East and West Germany by preventing East Germans from migrating westward, the Wall had the inadvertent effect of slowing the economic growth of West Germany (German Historical Institute).

To fill the void left in the labor pool, and to prevent women from abandoning their traditional roles and joining the workforce, West Germany began bringing in temporary foreign laborers from countries like Turkey to do work that was undesirable to the West Germans. Despite such efforts, the economy was not progressing as fast as it once had (German Historical Institute).



*Abschied von gestern/Yesterday Girl* (dir. Alexander Kluge, 1965-66) is a black and white film based on the true story of a young Jewish woman who migrates from East to West Germany in hopes of a better life. She goes through a series of dead-end jobs, abortive attempts at thievery, and unhappy love affairs that leave her destitute and pregnant.

## A Star is Born

After the war, the United States sought to ‘Denazify’ Germany, which meant destroying all of the remnants of the Nazis, including their films and their film industry. American distributors also sought lucrative and convenient deals that allowed them to transfer money that they made in West Germany back to the United States, which meant that they didn’t have to invest in German films.

With this leverage over the low-budget German film industry, Hollywood set about releasing their back-catalog of films at cut-rate prices in order to gain dominance over the market. “The American film industry was keen to protect this lucrative new market. Measures were therefore taken to prevent the imposition of an import quota on American films and American companies remained free to flood the German market with Hollywood films” (Knight, p. 2).

*continued on next page*

## New German Cinema *continued from page 39*

German movies of this period were almost entirely about the countryside or folk heroes, as those were the only things about which the Americans couldn't make better films with higher budgets. But the low-budget nature of these films meant that audience interest was low, and this caused the West German film industry to stagnate. The stagnation would last until the early 1960s:

In 1962 a group of twenty-six filmmakers, writers and artists, spearheaded by Alexander Kluge... added their voices to this escalating condemnation of West German film. They drew up and published the **Oberhausen Manifesto**, in which they argued that given the opportunity they could create a new kind of film which would revive the dying German cinema (Knight, p. 5).

Responding to this manifesto, the West German government created a new film-subsidy agency to fund films and stimulate the industry, a project that was largely successful:

Initially the Kuratorium was very successful in fulfilling its brief. Within two years twenty-five films had been produced.... Four of these were the first features of Oberhausen signatories Alexander Kluge (*Abschied von gestern/Yesterday Girl*, 1965-66), Hans Jürgen Pohland (*Katz und Maus/Cat and Mouse*, 1966), Edgar Reitz (*Mahlzeiten/Mealtimes*, 1966), and Haro Senft (*Der sanfte Lauf/The Gentle Course*, 1967) (Knight, p. 6).

The nature of the funding they received allowed these directors to have a much greater degree of control over their films than would have been the case with strictly commercial releases. Consequently the subject matters touched upon were far more socially relevant than in previous films. Instead of tales about folk heroes or the countryside, stories involving issues such as abortion or reconciliation of Germany's Nazi past were the chosen topics. These films were critical hits (Knight, p. 6). The subject matters and social awareness they demonstrated allowed them to resonate with audience members and critics despite their meager budgets.

### The Art Was Parallel to Reality

The new generation's greater attention to social concerns was starting to become evident in West German society as well.

The problems that were being shown on the screen were becoming identical to those being debated in reality. "Students rebelled against the authoritarian control of their elders, educational overcrowding, the failure to confront the Nazi past, and American atrocities in Vietnam" (German Historical Institute).

Concerns over the rising xenophobia against the foreign workers who had chosen to stay in West Germany and bring their families were also an issue. German cinema would start to cover the immigrant experience right around the same time. Issues of sexuality, specifically concerning contraceptives and women's rights to abortions, were subjects of protest. Women also demanded greater equality, and called for a move away

from the traditional gender roles that they had been kept in as recently as a few years prior (German Historical Institute).

Cinema followed the social pulse closely, addressing these topics in various movies through the late 1960s and early '70s. Before the stark liberal shift in the culture of West Germany could be seen in the streets, it could be viewed in the theatres. The opinions of the new generation about their surroundings, lives, and government were displayed on screen before they were displayed on protest signs.

Some look at the cultural shifts of this era and say that they seem to have come from nowhere. But without a platform to express them, opinions can become obfuscated, hidden by tradition, hidden in plain sight. However, when you view the art of that society, the underlying shifts and movements in culture become more clear. In the case of West Germany, the early stages of the enduring "New German Cinema" displayed a lot about the country's changing culture.

### Works Cited

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Knight, Julia, "New German Cinema", Routledge, <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415409285/resources/newgermancinema.pdf>.

## For Students and Others: Travel-and-Learn Opportunities in Europe

Prof. **James Nissen** (Humanities) is leading his HUM 202 class (Art and Music in Western Civilization: Field Study - France) on a 9-day trip to France on June 4-12, visiting cultural sites mostly in and around Paris. This will be the 19<sup>th</sup> such overseas study tour that Dr. Nissen has led to Europe. For more information, e-mail him at [jnissen@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:jnissen@schoolcraft.edu).

Prof. **Anita Süess Kaushik** (World Languages) is co-leading a two-week, seven-country Discover Europe trip to The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, France, and England on May 17-31. This will be the 11<sup>th</sup> such overseas study tour that Dr. Süess has led to Europe, with logistics handled by Explorica. Community members are also welcome to join this trip. For more information, e-mail her at [asuess@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:asuess@schoolcraft.edu).



## Confucius Institute Comes to Schoolcraft

by John Brender

*Dr. John R. Brender has served since 2008 as Director of The Confucius Institute at Wayne State University, and now also its extension at Schoolcraft College. He has taught Spanish, Japanese, linguistics, foreign-language teaching methodology, and English as a second language. Dr. Brender has also conducted ethnographic research on international and second-generation students at American colleges (Japanese, Chinese, Chaldean, and Asian Indian), and makes frequent presentations on cross-cultural communication in China and the U.S. He holds a Ph.D. in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education from Michigan State Univ.*



Nian (Tracy) Liu, a Chinese instructor at Schoolcraft, made a presentation about color symbolism in China at the Confucius Café last Fall.

The Confucius Institute at Wayne State University has extended its programming to Schoolcraft College.

The what??? For many, the above sentence begs the following questions: “What is the Confucius Institute?”, “What kind of programming does it offer?” and, “What programming will be extended to Schoolcraft College?”

The Confucius Institute at WSU is one of more than 500 such institutes worldwide, of which approximately 100 are located in the U.S., with four in Michigan (the other three at Michigan State Univ., the Univ. of Michigan, and Western Michigan Univ.). Confucius Institutes, similar to the British Council, the Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française, and Instituto Cervantes, offer native language and cultural programming to people outside the borders of the country. Chances are that if you are interested in Chinese culture, learning the Chinese language, learning about China, or perhaps even traveling to China on a scholarship or subsidized program, then the Confucius Institute has something for *you!*

Although all Confucius Institutes offer programs related to Chinese culture, individual missions vary. The Confucius Institute at UM, for example, is dedicated to offering top-notch Chinese musical performances and art exhibitions. At MSU, staff members provide Chinese teacher education and signature programs in distance and computer learning. The Confucius Institute at WSU provides a variety of programming to K-12, university, and professional communities, including K-12 outreach programs, an annual quiz bowl and teacher conference, Chinese New Year celebrations, art contests, cooking contests, and a YouTube channel with more than 120 short videos spotlighting Chinese idioms (search for “Learn a Chinese Phrase” on YouTube).

But what programming will be available to the Schoolcraft community?

After a well-attended ribbon-cutting ceremony here last October— ten years after opening its doors on the Wayne State campus— the WSU Confucius Institute staff began offering a weekly Chinese lecture and luncheon series, known as the Confucius Café. Each Tuesday, from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 321 of the Jeffress Center, an invited speaker offered a presenta-

tion or discussion about China or Chinese culture. Chinese tea and food were provided for attendees. Topics included the Chinese family, urban vs. rural life, color symbolism in China, *Taiji* and the *I Ching*, Chinese etiquette, and tips on learning a foreign language (which was a more general presentation for students of any language).

During the Winter 2018 semester, the Confucius Café lecture series will begin at 1:15 p.m. each Tuesday, still in Room 321 of the Jeffress Center. Topics will be announced on the WSU Confucius Institute website ([clas.wayne.edu/ci](http://clas.wayne.edu/ci)) and a Chinese buffet-style lunch will continue to be available to those who join.

Schoolcraft students and community members interested in joining the Summer Service Learning Program in Rural China should contact me at [brenderj@wayne.edu](mailto:brenderj@wayne.edu) or by phone at 313-577-3035. Accompanied by Chinese university students, participants spend three weeks in China, teaching English at rural and sometimes remote sites. Discussions are currently underway regarding an academic component relevant to Schoolcraft students.

Thanks to a very enthusiastic and international-oriented faculty at Schoolcraft College, the WSU Confucius Institute will provide the following sponsored and co-sponsored events this Winter on the Schoolcraft campus, in addition to the regular Confucius Café lectures every Tuesday as mentioned above:

- Tues., Feb. 13: **Chinese New Year Celebration.** Join us for an authentic Chinese New Year celebration, complete with food and entertainment (details to be announced at [clas.wayne.edu/ci](http://clas.wayne.edu/ci)).
- Tues., Feb. 27: The Annual **K-12 Chinese Zodiac Animal Art Contest** at the VisTaTech Center from 3-6 p.m. Check out posters, t-shirts, and 3-D art projects submitted by Greater Detroit area students, commemorating the Year of the Dog! Judges will award top entries to students in four different age categories: grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.
- Sat., Mar. 3: **The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan China Quiz Bowl** at the Liberal Arts Building and the VisTaTech

*continued on next page*

## Internationalization in Chinese Education and Its Implications for the U.S.

by Yovana P. Veerasamy (SC Depts. of French and Political Science)

“Globalization foster[s] in people a growing awareness of deepening connection between the local and the distant” (Steger, 2003).

In May 2017, I spent two weeks in China in conjunction with the International Leadership Academy for students in the Ph.D. program in higher education at the Univ. of Toledo. This was a cultural immersion experience that involved visiting various types of higher education institutions in five major Chinese cities. Also scheduled were cultural visits in these cities.

As a faculty member who includes international components in her teaching, I found this experience in China to be very informative. It gave me the chance to learn how the Chinese handle international components in their courses. As such it helped shape my perspective on internationalization and globalization efforts on Chinese campuses, and improved my understanding of Chinese instructional delivery methods. I had the opportunity to socialize with Chinese educators, administrators, and students, and to exchange ideas and share experiences with them, thereby obtaining a bird’s-eye view of policies implemented on the ground.

Part of one assignment during the trip involved a joint presentation with Chinese Ph.D. students at an international workshop at Xiamen University in Fujian Province. My group presented a comparative analysis of U.S. and Chinese internationalization policies and a methodology for measuring the quality of international education components in Chinese courses.

Some institutions we visited had impressive numbers of partnerships with higher education institutions across the globe, thereby providing their students with the opportunity to travel abroad and experience different cultures and education systems. Most institutions also had scholar exchange programs to facilitate course delivery by foreign professors. While some two-year institutions had state-of-the-art robotics programs and equipment, what struck me even more was the Chinese effort to reach out to other cultures to better prepare students to face globalization.

I believe it is imperative that we follow this Chinese example at community colleges in America. But in order to do so, first we need greater clarity on how to conceive of such efforts and even how to use the relevant terms correctly.

For example, American educators often use the terms “globalization” and “internationalization” interchangeably, even though they have different meanings:

- **Internationalization** is a term used in higher education to denote cooperation between nations, students, and institutions of higher learning (Altbach & Knight, 2007). It reflects the established policies that an institution has implemented in order to oversee course globalization with global learning outcomes (GLO); globalization of co-curricular activities; study abroad programs; institutional partnerships abroad; and international student recruitment.
- **Globalization** is an objective and historical phenomenon much broader than education, referring to the increasingly

close integration of national economies, countries, and peoples of the world (Stiglitz, 2002).

- **Course globalization** (also “globalizing courses” or “course internationalization”) refers specifically to courses that are infused with a global or international perspective and are designed to achieve a global learning outcome.

While numerous lenses may be used to describe and explain interconnectedness between nations, the term globalization defines the entire process (Gopinath, 2008). According to Robertson this entails viewing “the world as a single place” (p. 9). In the context of education, campus internationalization is an important step in preparing students for a globally interconnected world. There are various aspects to campus internationalization and this involves multiple stakeholders at the institutional level. While typically comprehensive internationalization of a campus requires implementation and oversight from an international officer (CCID, 2012), the process is usually nominally underway at the departmental level when faculty inject global educational components in their courses. The motivations can be categorized as economic, social, political (Hans de Wit, 2002) or technological (Gopinath, 2008).

As vehicles of local economic growth, community colleges often partner with local corporations, many of which may be global entities (Dougherty and Bakia, 2000). In Southeastern Michigan, companies such as Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler create employment for local communities while maintaining their global connections. Consequently, global skills training must be part of college courses to help prepare students for jobs with increasingly global companies (ASHE Reader Series, Community Colleges, 2014). Preparing students for globalization can start with faculty training.

### Confucius Institute *continued from page 41*

Center. This annual quiz bowl provides a forum for non-native, non-heritage middle and high school students to test their knowledge of Chinese language and culture. Championship rounds, which are open to the public, will begin at 1 p.m. in Kehrl Auditorium. Teachers of Chinese may still register teams of three in various divisions. Information is available at [clas.wayne.edu/ci](http://clas.wayne.edu/ci).

- **Tues., Apr. 3: Chinese Cooking Contest** in Room VT-500CD. Watch teams of cooking enthusiasts compete as they prepare top-rate Chinese dishes for a panel of discriminating judges. Sample the cuisine and judge for yourself!

WSU Confucius Institute staffers plan to make themselves available every Tuesday from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. in Room 331 of the Jeffress Center. Schoolcraft students and community members are welcome to make appointments to discuss relevant opportunities, programs, events, or an interest in volunteering. Depending on demand, Chinese language tutoring might be made available on Tuesdays from 2:30-3:30 p.m.

We are excited by the enthusiasm exhibited by the Schoolcraft community thus far. While our center’s mission is to provide an exposure to Chinese language and culture, my broader lifelong mission as an educator has been to help others see things from more than just a single perspective. I hope that our offerings will serve as a vehicle to enhance curiosity not just about China, but other cultures as well.

## Saudi Educators Participate in Local Galileo Leadership Project

by Jan Keith Farmer (SC Dept. of Education)

During the Winter 2017 semester, I had the pleasure to serve as a mentor for the Galileo Saudi Arabia Leadership Project based at Oakland University (Rochester Hills, MI). Thanks to this program, 29 teachers, educators, and their families from Saudi Arabia received stipends to support six months of residence in our area, where they studied educational leadership



and participated in cultural exchange. This group of 29 was the first of three annual cohorts, totaling about 100 participants, in an effort funded by the Saudi government.

The Galileo leadership program as a whole is familiar to many readers; scores of Schoolcraft College instructors have completed Galileo programs. One notable difference is that the Saudi participants spent the first semester of the program working on English language skills pertinent to education. For instance, they studied concepts underlying such jargon as “standardized testing” and “achievement gap”, and the practical meaning of these concepts in a schoolroom setting.

During their stay, children from the participating Saudi families are enrolled in public schools in the Avondale School District, which spans sections of Troy, Rochester Hills, Auburn Hills, and Bloomfield Township. These schools have also been collaborating closely with OU over the years to provide field experiences and leadership expertise in district efforts.

Each Galileo Saudi Arabia participant develops his or her own inquiry project and explores its implementation via placement into a school in a local district such as Avondale. Their experiences there, including work with students and mentors, will be used to create school transformation plans to take back to Saudi Arabia. Abdulrahman Ozir, a Saudi school principal, said that his immersion gave him many special leadership strategies that will help him deal with educational

issues when he gets back home. Ali Asiri, a participating teacher, said that he planned to change his school environment by starting with his own classroom in Saudi Arabia and then working closely with colleagues to do the same.

The benefits of enrolling foreign nationals in the Galileo program flowed in both directions. Susan Klein, OU Asst. Prof. of Leadership and Director of the Galileo Institute for Teacher Leadership there, told the *Oakland Press*: “We want to learn how to have an effective model of professional development. ... Some of them are currently teachers, some are principals—their version of superintendents—so we’ll be able to look at our own training and we’ll learn how to be more effective.”

I personally found the participants to be willing and curious learners, who made thoughtful connections between their leadership experiences here and opportunities in Saudi Arabia. But mostly I am encouraged that we have a common human endeavor in educating all of our children so they will lead quality, healthy, and resilient lives. Additionally, I sense that educators worldwide strive to implement best educational practices that have much in common despite divergent political and cultural beliefs. The OU Galileo Saudi Arabia Leadership Project is helping to unify our common struggle to advance our knowledge about teaching and learning. •

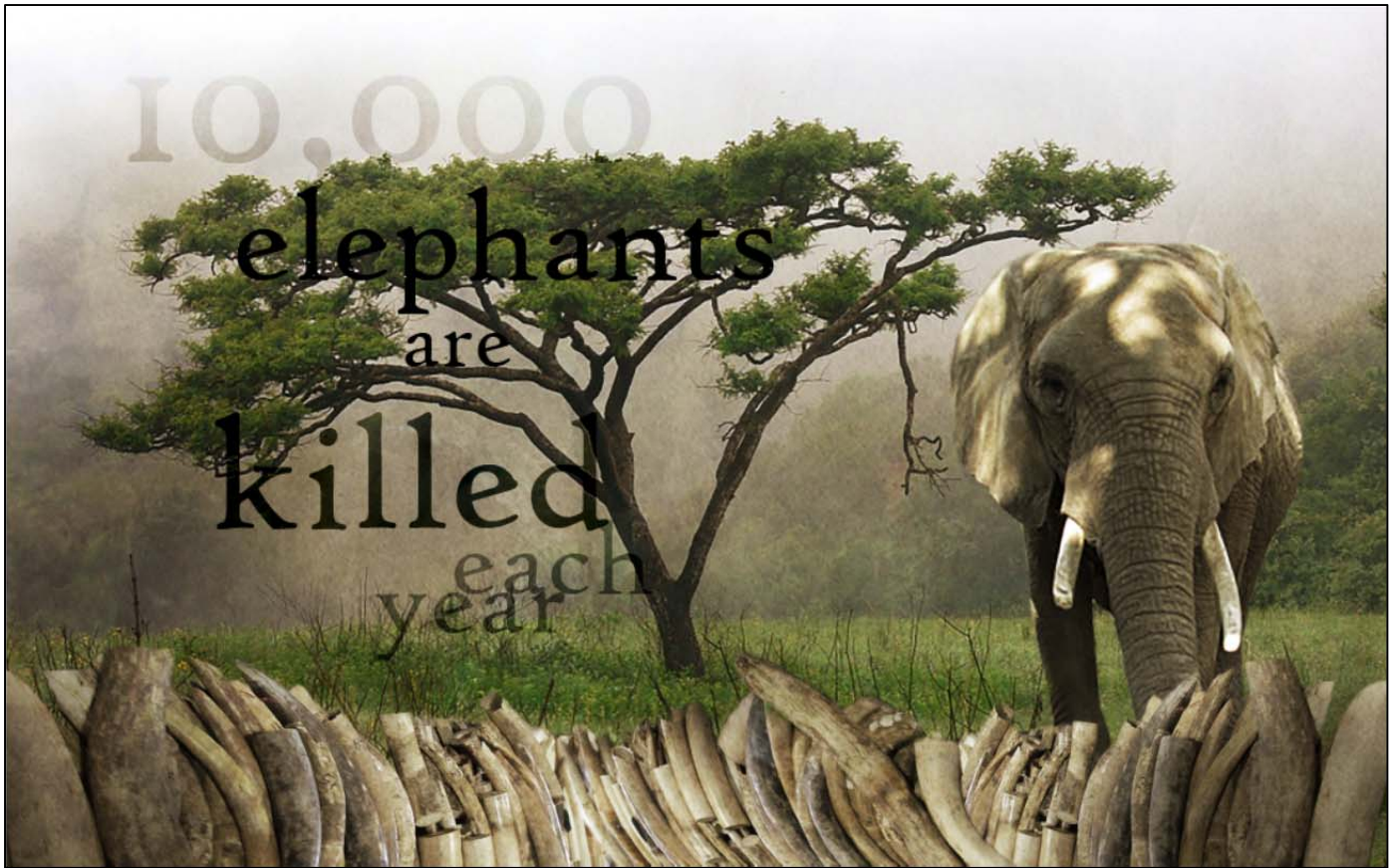
Participants in the Galileo-Saudi Arabia Leadership Project pose for a group photo during a cultural visit to Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester Hills last February. Photo by Natalie Broda, *Oakland Press*.

April  
MIIE  
Conference  
in Iowa



The Schoolcraft College International Institute cordially invites faculty members to join us at the upcoming 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Midwest Institute for International/ Intercultural Education (MIIE). The conference will be held April 6-7, 2018 at Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo, IA. This gathering will draw educators from throughout the Midwest and beyond.

For more information, contact Helen Ditousas, our MIIE representative, at 734-462-7263, or [hduitoura@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:hduitoura@schoolcraft.edu). You’ll also be able to download the registration forms and other information at <http://www.miiie.org>.



“10,000 Elephants” was created by Schoolcraft College student Elise Lys last Fall as a project for an evening section of Computer Graphics Technology 226 (Digital Imaging 2— Photoshop) taught by Prof. Mike Mehall. Elise, who lives in Northville, MI, is majoring in 3D and Video Graphics.

## NAFSA Regional Conference: “Local Connections, Global Opportunity”

by Yovana P. Veerasamy (SC Depts. of French and Political Science)

This year’s NAFSA Region V Conference was a treat for Michiganders. Held on Oct. 18-20 at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel in downtown Detroit, it provided easy access for most attendees and provided Wayne State Univ. the chance to showcase its hospitality during the opening reception. The theme this year was, “Local Connections, Global Opportunity”.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators is the world’s largest nonprofit organization focused on international education and exchange. Founded in 1948 as the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers, today it has about 9,000 members at more than 3,500 institutions worldwide, located in roughly 100 countries. Region V serves the approximately 800 members who work in Illinois, Michigan, or Wisconsin, representing more than 250 institutions.

The pre-conference workshops on Oct. 18 allowed participants to learn from experienced colleagues on a variety of practical topics such as how to launch study abroad programs, how to handle visa requirements for international students and scholars, and how to provide health care and insurance for international students. I attended the “Study

Abroad 101” workshop and welcomed the practical scenarios placed at our tables there. These day-long workshops were full of helpful tips and provided foundational knowledge in the field.

The two-day conference itself covered such topics as leadership in international education; student and scholar visa requirements; institutional compliance requirements preceding Dept. of State campus visits; and the impact of Pres. Trump’s executive orders on international student recruitment. The status of students under DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or “dreamers”) received attention in its own right and as part of other immigration issues covered during the conference.

Managing sustainable efforts to recruit international students was a prominent topic. The issue of taxation of international students was addressed to draw attention to the implications of non-compliance. Various sessions specifically addressed China, from recruitment to advising, and included mention of institutional differences. Univ. of Michigan staff members made presentations regarding best practices in fostering an intercultural climate on campus, exemplified by the UM Intercultural Development Inventory Pilot program and various aspects of international student advising.

This conference was an informational feast for international educators!

# It's a Multicultural World— Right in Our Backyard!

See also the listing of campus programs from the Confucius Institute (pp. 41-42), and the on- and off-campus programs related to "Spirituality and Religion in Today's World" (p. 7).

**Jul. 23, 2017 – 2019:** "Detroit 67: Perspectives" looks at the complex factors at work across metro Detroit during the 50 years prior to the 1967 Detroit Rebellion, the unrest that occurred in 1967, the progress and setbacks in the next 50 years, and a perspective on what lies ahead. It is based on hundreds of oral histories, the latest historical scholarship, and the assistance of many partners and diverse groups. Booth-Wilkinson Gallery, Detroit Historical Museum, 5401 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For more info, call 313-833-1805 or visit the website <http://www.detroithistorical.org/>.

**Sep. 1, 2017 – May 13, 2018:** "Rodin— 100 Years". This exhibit marks the centennial of Auguste Rodin's death with a display of his sculptures from the CMA's collection, including a monumental "Thinker", his great breakthrough "The Age of Bronze", and the magnificent, larger-than-life plaster "Heroic Head of Pierre de Wissant". Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard. For more info, call 216-421-7350 or see <http://www.clevelandart.org/>.

**Oct. 22, 2017 – Mar. 4, 2018:** "Monet: Framing Life" focuses on a DIA painting by Claude Monet, "Corbeille de fleurs" (Rounded Flower Bed), formerly known as "Gladioli" and recently retitled based on new research. It is displayed alongside 10 others by Monet and Renoir, all part of the 1870s birth of Impressionism in the Paris suburb of Argenteuil. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For more info, call 313-833-7900 or see <https://www.dia.org>.

**Nov. 2, 2017 – Mar. 4, 2018:** "Spirits and Symbols: The Art of Haiti" is an exhibit that presents three forms of artistry through which Haitians preserve and present their beliefs and customs: genre paintings, metal sculptures of Vodou spirits, and fabric art called *drapos* (flags). Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit. For more information, call 313-494-5800 or visit <http://www.chwmuseum.org/>.

**Nov. 17, 2017 – Mar. 11, 2018:** Four simultaneous exhibits of artists operating at the intersection of art and street culture: "Basquiat Before Basquiat: East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, 1979-1980", "Ryan McGinness: Studio Views", "Keith Haring: The End of the Line", and "Maya Stovall: Liquor Store Theatre Performance Films". Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. For more info, call 248-645-3323 or see [artmuseum@cranbrook.edu](mailto:artmuseum@cranbrook.edu).

**Nov. 18, 2017 – Feb. 18, 2018:** "Matisse Drawings: Curated by Ellsworth Kelly from The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation Collection". This exhibit features 45 rarely-seen works by Matisse, accompanied by nine lithographic drawings that Kelly selected from those he made in the 1960s while studying Matisse's works in France. Univ. of Michigan Museum of Art,



## Detroit Film Theatre

Among the films kicking off the forthcoming DFT season, the following were set in the regions indicated. This venue is located at the John R. Street entrance to the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For details and tickets, call 313-833-4005 or visit the website <https://www.dia.org/visit/detroit-film-theatre>.

**Jan. 19-21, 2018:**

"The Teacher (Czech Republic/Slovakia, 2016)

**Mar. 9-11, 2018:**

"Miss Kiet's Children" (refugees in Holland, 2016)

**Mar. 16-18, 2018:**

"In Between" (Israel/Palestine, 2016)

**Mar. 30 – Apr. 1, 2018:**

"Legend of the Mountain" (China, 1979)

**Apr. 6-8, 2018:**

"Vazante" (Brazil, 2016)

**Apr. 20-22, 2018:**

"In Syria" (Syria, 2017)

**May. 25-27, 2018:**

"Eight Hours Don't Make a Day" (Germany, 1972).

525 South State Street, Ann Arbor. For more info, call 734-764-0395 or see <http://www.umma.umich.edu/>.

**Jan. 6 - May 6, 2018:** "Red Circle: Designing Japan in Contemporary Posters". This exhibit displays works from the 1980s by three renowned Japanese graphic artists who sought to change the nation's image as a way to challenge persistent global Japan-bashing. Their eye-catching designs often incorporated familiar traditional symbols and motifs, notably the iconic red circle against a white background of Japan's national flag, from which this exhibition gains its name. For more information, call 734-764-0395 or visit <http://www.umma.umich.edu/>.

**Jan. 13, 2018:** Urban Bush Women present "The Hair Party" Community Workshop and Discussion. "The Hair Party" is a performance conversation between Urban Bush Women, selected excerpts from the dance "Hair and Other Stories", and residents of local host communities who initiate or continue the dialogue about hair, heritage, and agency. It allows participants to discuss closely-held beliefs about themselves and society, and to celebrate and appreciate their individual beauty. Free and open to the public. 2 pm. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit. For more information, call 313-494-5800 or see <http://www.chwmuseum.org/>.

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**Jan. 14 – May 13, 2018:** “Graphic Discontent: German Expressionism on Paper”. This exhibit plots the purpose and impact of the graphic arts within the wider German Expressionist movement. More than 50 prints, woodcuts, etchings, lithographs, and drawings present emotional views of urban life, the nude, landscape, and war. Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard. For more info, call 216-421-7350 or see <http://www.clevelandart.org/>.

**Jan. 20, 2018:** Concert by Mama Sol & The N.U.T.S., “Restoring the Soul of Hip Hop”. Hear the raw and truthful sounds of this dynamic emcee and band, who drop not only knowledge of the struggle but hope for a better future as well. 7 pm. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit. For more info, call 313-494-5800 or see <http://www.chwmuseum.org/>.

**Jan. 21 – Apr. 15, 2018:** “Ubuhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence” showcases a new form of textile art known as *ndwango*, developed by a community of Xhosa women living and working together in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. By stretching textile (*ndwango*) like a canvas, the artists transform the flat cloth into a contemporary art form colored with Czech glass beads, which create a shimmering quality that for the Xhosa also carries a particular spiritual significance. The artwork not only provides an emotional outlet for a community affected by HIV/AIDS and low employment, but allows a route for financial independence for the artists. The exhibit was developed by the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum (Washington, DC). Hodge Galleries, Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley Street, Flint. For more information, call 810-234-1695 or see <https://www.flintarts.org/>.



**Jan. 25, 2018:** Liberation Film Series, “Miles Ahead: A Tribute to Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe”, featuring a free film screening, performances by Rayse Biggs and Dwight Adams, and conversation with Quincy Troupe and Dr. Melba Boyd of Wayne State Univ. Presented in partnership with WSU and the DIA. 6 pm. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit. For more info, call 313-494-5800 or see <http://www.chwmuseum.org/>.

**Jan. 30, 2018:** Muslim and Civil Rights, a Panel Discussion. In the aftermath of renewed critiques of multiculturalism, this panel explores the ongoing challenges that the Arab American community continues to encounter. How did we arrive at this moment? What is it like to endure such treatment? What are the ways forward? 12 - 2 pm. Oakland Center, Oakland Univ., 312 Meadow Brook Road, Rochester, MI. For more info, see <http://www.oakland.edu/cas/events/2018/013018-muslim-and-civil-rights-panel-discussion> or e-mail Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo at [campoycu@oakland.edu](mailto:campoycu@oakland.edu).

**Feb. 4, 2018:** India Fest 2018. Organized by the Michigan chapter of the India League of America (ILA). 10 am - 5 pm. Farmington Hills Manor, 23666 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. For more info, contact Ramesh Gudapuri at 248-905-1809.

**Feb. 10, 2018:** National Arab Orchestra presents a concert, “Layali il-Uns”. On the Shoulders of Giants: Arab Women in Music, featuring Syrian vocalist Lubana Al Quntar, Tunisian vocalist Asma Salim, as well as Marian Layousse and Razan Ramzi. 8 pm. Main Stage, Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, 350 Madison Street, Detroit. For info and tickets, call 313-887-8500 or see <http://www.musichall.org/> or <http://www.nationalaraborchestra.org/>.

**Feb. 15 – Mar. 11, 2018:** “Marie and Rosetta”. George Brant’s play portrays episodes in the life of Sister Rosetta Tharpe, the “godmother of rock ‘n’ roll” whose fierce guitar playing and unique style of gospel influenced artists like Elvis Presley and Ray Charles. The play features electrifying music and brings us to Tharpe’s first rehearsal with young protégée Marie Knight before they set out to become one of the great duos in music history. Produced by the Detroit Public Theatre. Allesee Hall, Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For info and tickets, see <http://www.detroitpublictheatre.org> or call the DSO Box Office at 313-576-5111 or e-mail [info@detroitpublictheatre.org](mailto:info@detroitpublictheatre.org).

**Feb. 16-25, 2018:** Shen Yun 2018. Reviving 5,000 years of Chinese civilization, this extravaganza includes classical, ethnic, and folk dance as well as orchestral accompaniment and soloists. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. For info and tickets, call 844-647-4697 or see <http://www.ShenYun.com/detroit>.

**Feb. 27, 2018:** Concert by Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the celebrated South African *a cappella* group. The group borrows heavily from a traditional music called *isicathamiya*, which developed in the mines of South Africa. 8 pm. The Ark, 316 S. Main Street, Ann Arbor. For info and tickets, call 734-761-1800 or see <http://www.theark.org/>.



**Mar. 2, 2018:** Screening and discussion of the film, “Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities”. 6 pm. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit. For more info, call 313-494-5800 or see <http://www.chwmuseum.org/>.

**Mar 12, 2018:** Arts of Islam Conference, “Being Muslim: Arts and Expressions”. This cross-disciplinary symposium highlights contemporary expressive performance and visual work that engage with Islam in everyday life. Organized by UM Center for Southeast Asian Studies. 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Room 1010, Weiser Hall, Univ. of Michigan, 500 Church Street, Ann Arbor. For more information, visit <https://events.umich.edu/event/47832>.

**Mar. 22-23, 2018:** Annual Conference of the Michigan Assn. of International Educators (MAIE). Pre-conference workshops on Mar. 21. Doubletree by Hilton Bay City – Riverfront hotel, Bay City, MI. For more info, see <https://maie.us/conference/>.

**Mar. 22-25, 2018:** “The Marriage of Figaro” performed by the UM Opera Theatre and Philharmonia Orchestra. In Mozart’s comedy, Figaro and Susanna need to overcome plotting and jealousy to make it to their wedding day. Sung in Italian with English supertitles. Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, Univ. of Michigan, 911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. For additional information and for tickets, visit the website [http://smt.d.umich.edu/performances\\_events/calendar.php](http://smt.d.umich.edu/performances_events/calendar.php) or call 734-763-3333.

**Mar. 24, 2018:** The virtuoso Japanese *taiko* drum troupe TAO presents “Drum Heart”. 8 pm. Stranahan Theater, 4645 Heatherdowns Blvd., Toledo. For info and tickets, call 419-381-8851 or see <https://theaterleague.com/toledo/drumheart/>.

**Mar. 29, 2018:** 17<sup>th</sup> annual Multicultural Fair, a vibrant celebration of the international cultures on our campus. 10 am – 3 pm. DiPonio Room, VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia. For more info, contact Helen Ditouras at [hditoura@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:hditoura@schoolcraft.edu).

**Mar. 31, 2018:** Sixth annual Motor City Bhangra Competition, “Reigniting Punjabi Virsa”. An Indian dance contest featuring more than a dozen of the best *bhangra* teams from North America. Organized by Pind Production. 6 pm. Detroit Music Hall Center, 350 Madison Street, Detroit. For information and tickets, visit <http://www.motorcitybhangra.net> or e-mail [Motorcitybhangra1@gmail.com](mailto:Motorcitybhangra1@gmail.com).

**Apr. 8-10, 2018:** “1968... 50 Years Later” marks the anniversary of the May’68 youth revolts in Europe. Includes a panel discussion and three classic films about the era: Margarethe von Trotta’s “Marianne and Juliane” (1981), Louis Malle’s “May Fools” (1990), and Philip Kaufman’s “The Unbearable Lightness of Being” (1988). Organized by the Univ. of Michigan’s Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia (WCEE). For more info, see <https://ii.umich.edu/wcee>.

**Apr. 9 -19, 2018:** “African American Art: Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Era, and Beyond” displays 100 artworks drawn from the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s permanent collection: paintings, sculpture, prints, and photographs by 43 Black artists who explored the African American experience from the Harlem Renaissance through the Civil Rights era and

## University Musical Society

International music, dance, and theatre are featured in the following selections from the UMS season, scheduled at various venues mostly in Ann Arbor. For info and tickets, call 734-764-2538 or see <http://www.ums.org/>.

**Jan. 12, 2018:** Urban Bush Women, “Hair & Other Stories” (African Diaspora)

**Jan. 24-28, 2018:** “Us/Them” (a play about the Beslan school siege of 2004)

**Jan. 21, 2018:** Moscow’s Vakhtangov Theater live in HD: Chekhov’s “Uncle Vanya”

**Jan. 27, 2018:** “Russian Renaissance” (Russian folk quartet fused with other styles)

**Mar. 14, 2018:** “Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation”

**Mar. 22-25, 2018:** “Bubble Schmeisis” (klezmer concert in a Detroit bathhouse).

beyond, including paintings by Benny Andrews, Jacob Lawrence and Lois Mailou Jones, and photographs by Roy deCarava, Gordon Parks, Roland Freeman, and Marilyn Nance. The exhibit is accompanied by relevant film screenings and locally-created displays of portraits, poetry, food and wine, music, and mathematics. Room 217, J Building, Macomb Community College, South Campus, 14500 E. 12-Mile Road, Warren, MI. For more information, call 586-445-7999 or visit <https://www.macomb.edu/MMII> or e-mail [answer@macomb.edu](mailto:answer@macomb.edu).

**Apr. 13, 2018:** World Music Concert with Robert Chappell. Annual Winter concert by OU’s World Music Ensembles (Akwaaba – African Ensemble, Ngoma – World Percussion Ensemble, and Pan-Jumbies – Steel Band) featuring world percussion pioneer Robert Chappell, whose career has encompassed an inclusive range of musical styles and genres in performance, education and composition. 8-10 pm. Varner Recital Hall, Oakland Univ., 371 Varner Drive, Rochester, MI. For additional information, visit the website <http://www.oakland.edu/mtd/events/2018/041318-world-music-concert-with-robert-chappell> or call 248-370-2030 or e-mail [mtd@oakland.edu](mailto:mtd@oakland.edu).

**May 2018:** 20<sup>th</sup> annual Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festival. Organized by the Jewish Community Center of Detroit. Berman Center for the Performing Arts, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. For more info, call 248-661-1900 or e-mail [brobinson@jccdet.org](mailto:brobinson@jccdet.org) or see <http://www.jccdet.org>.

**May 12, 2018:** “Splendor of the East”. All are welcome to attend this annual showcase of festivals and cultures celebrating Asian Pacific Heritage Month. A black-tie Asian fusion dinner in the ballroom is followed by a “Michigan Got Talent” show at the theater, and capped by an afterglow party back at the ballroom. Organized by the Michigan chapter of the Council of Asian Pacific Americans (CAPA). 4:30 – 10:30 pm. Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. For more info, see <http://capa-mi.org/>.

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**May 19 – Aug. 26, 2018:** “Intersections” and “Mirror Variations”, a pair of exhibits that explore Middle Eastern influences in modern abstract art. “Intersections” is an immersive gallery installation by Pakistani-American artist Anila Quayyum Agha. It uses light and cast shadow to create dense geometric ornamentation and pattern that alludes to the Moorish palace of Alhambra in Granada, Spain. “Mirror Variations” displays artwork by Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, a woman in Tehran who fuses the geometric patterns and cut-glass mosaic techniques of her Iranian heritage with modern geometric abstraction to create objects of great beauty and depth, especially large sculptural reliefs. Grand Rapids Art Museum, 101 Monroe Center Street NW. For more info, call 616-831-1000 or e-mail [info@artmuseumgr.org](mailto:info@artmuseumgr.org) or see <http://www.artmuseumgr.org/>.



**Early June 2018:** Cinetopia International Film Festival. Over 50 films shown at venues in Detroit and Ann Arbor. For info and tickets, see <http://www.cinetopiafestival.org/>.

**Mid-July 2018:** 26<sup>th</sup> annual Concert of Colors, metro Detroit’s free, five-day diversity festival bringing together the area’s communities and ethnic groups. Musical acts from around the world, ethnic food and merchandise, musician-led workshops, a Forum on Community, Culture & Race, and a large children’s tent. Organized by the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) and partners. Midtown Detroit. For more info, see <http://concertofcolors.com> or call 313-582-2266.

**Jul. 14 – Sep. 30, 2018:** First “FRONT International”, a new art triennial based in Cleveland. This citywide art program will bring together international, national, and regional artists, curators, and scholars to create and share new work engaged with the social, political, cultural, ecological, and economic issues of our time. For more info, see <https://frontart.org/>.

## Spring/Summer Ethnic Festivals in Southeastern Michigan

**Last weekend in March:** Dance for Mother Earth PowWow. Skyline High School, Ann Arbor. <http://www.umich.edu/~powwow>.

**Second or third weekend in April:** Dance Recital of the Polish National Alliance Centennial Dancers Lodge 53, Village Theater, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. <https://pnacentennialdancers.wordpress.com>.

**Memorial Day weekend:** Saint Mary’s Polish Country Fair. Saint Mary’s Preparatory School, Orchard Lake campus. <http://www.stmaryspolishcountryfair.com>.

**First Saturday in June:** Romanian American Heritage Festival. Saints Peter & Paul Romanian Orthodox Church, Dearborn Heights. <http://spproc.org/festival>.

**First Saturday in June:** African American Downtown Festival. East Ann Street & North Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor. <http://a2festival.org>.

**Second weekend in June:** Ya’ssoo Greek Festival. Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Ann Arbor. <http://www.annarborgreekfestival.org>.

**Mid-June:** Dearborn Arab International Festival. Warren Avenue between Schaefer and Wyoming Avenues, Dearborn. <http://www.americanarab.com>.

**Mid-June:** Motor City Irish Fest. Western Graham Field, 14841 Beech Daly Road, Redford Township. <http://motorcityirishfest.com>.

**Mid-June:** Carrousel of the Nations multicultural festival. Riverfront Festival Plaza, downtown Windsor, Ontario. <http://www.carrouselofnations.ca>.

**Second weekend in July:** American-Polish Festival. American Polish Century Club, Sterling Heights. <http://www.americanpolishfestival.com>.

**Mid-July:** Saline Celtic Festival. Mill Pond Park, W. Bennett Street, Saline. <http://www.salineceltic.org>.

**Late July or early August:** Arab and Chaldean Festival. Hart Plaza, downtown Detroit. <http://www.arabandchaldeanfestival.com>.

**Late July or early August:** Highland Games Scottish Festival. Greenmead Historical Park, Livonia. <http://www.highlandgames.com>.

**Early August:** Detroit Caribbean Cultural Festival. New Center Park, 2998 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. <http://www.myccco.org>.

**Mid-August:** African World Festival. Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Avenue, Detroit. <http://thewright.org/african-world-festival>.

**Early September:** Hispanic Heritage Festival. WCCCD Downtown Campus, 1001 W. Fort Street, Detroit. <http://www.wcccd.edu/about/hispanic%20festival.htm>.

**Second or third weekend in September:** Ann Arbor Russian Festival, St. Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church, Dexter. <http://www.annarborryussianfestival.org>.