

## **Monash Asia Institute Bulletin** (5/2009)

15 June 2009

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### **News from Monash Asia Institute and Monash University**

#### **Item 1. Obituary**

*A Father Figure in the Indian Community, a Helping Hand to All*

Dr. Martand Shripad Joshi  
Honorary Consul for India, Academic, Hindu Priest  
23.6.1931–25.5.2009

Dr. Martand Joshi was born at Dharwad in the then State of Bombay, India. After completing his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from India, he attended Princeton University as a Fulbright scholar. Two years later he moved to the University of California where he obtained his Doctorate in Geology. For the next three years, he taught in the US, before moving in 1970 to RMIT as a lecturer. He retired as a professor from RMIT in 1999.

Martand was a dear friend and outstanding scholar for many of us working in the field of South Asian Studies. In 1993 when Kim Beazley set up the National Centre for South Asian Studies, seven universities were included in the original consortium. But within a year that had grown to eight, thanks to the personal efforts of Martand; RMIT joined as a loyal and enthusiastic partner represented by Dr Joshi. As an optimist, he shared with us the belief that South Asia—in particular India—was a region of growing importance to the world of global politics and economics. That optimism has been justified and again showed the extent to which Martand appreciated the changing scenarios through which we have lived in the Asia Pacific.

At a more practical level, Dr Martand Joshi provided invaluable support and advice to many Australian universities and departments on the now sensitive subject of Indian overseas students. He was among the first to promote Melbourne as an overseas destination for young Indians and also one of the

first to recognise and act on the difficulties that they had in settling.

At another pragmatic level, Martand was a good friend of scholars by giving them timely advice on matters to do with Indian visas and related issues. On one desperate occasion a young expatriate Indian couple was returning to India for a wedding. On reaching Singapore they realised to their shock that now that they were citizens of Australia they needed an Indian visa—which they did not have. Martand's immediate response to this kind of personal emergency—often in the middle of the night—made him a loved and famous source of wisdom and problem solving. He acted selflessly and sometimes without even knowing the people whom he was assisting.

Whatever he did, Martand approached it with boundless enthusiasm and optimism. He will be fondly remembered by Geology graduates of RMIT as perhaps their best lecturer and, more importantly, a close friend whom they could trust with their problems. His annual barbeques at his home for students were legendary.

Martand was immensely proud of his Indian heritage and his Hindu upbringing. Coming from a Brahmin family, he received early training in Sanskrit and Hindu rituals throughout his childhood. This proved most useful to him in Melbourne where he acted as a Hindu priest for almost 40 years for the growing Hindu community in Victoria. It would have been very difficult for a lesser person to successfully handle teaching and research in Geology, working as the Honorary Consul for India and conducting life-cycle rituals for the Hindu community simultaneously, but Martand managed all of this with ease, a sense of fun and dignity.

Our greatest regret is that Martand never had time to take up the job of translating late medieval texts from old Kannada into English. He had been appointed as a Research Fellow of the Monash Asia Institute on his retirement as Honorary Consul in Melbourne and was keen to bring to world attention these important texts. But the heavy demands on his time, especially by Indian students and the Hindu community meant that he had to delay this work time and time again. The great problem now is that such Kannada texts themselves are in danger of disappearing unless another Martand Joshi comes along.

Amongst Martand's many awards and accolades were the Aryabhata award for contribution to the Kannada community (2009), the Australia–India Business Council Award (2006), the Bharat Gaurav award (2005), the Navarattan Award for Exemplary Services for the Welfare of Human Beings (2006) and Hind Ratan Award made by the International Congress of Non-Resident Indians (2005). The last three were awarded for meritorious and selfless service to humanity.

With Martand's demise, the Indian community has lost a friend, mentor and priest, his wife, Zofia, a loving husband, and his daughter, Suman, a loving and caring father.

Obituary by Marika Vicziany and Jayant Bapat

## **Item 2. A briefing about the Asian University for Women**

Hosted by Monash Asia Institute and  
Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash  
University

Friday 19 June 2009, 10:00 am  
Room SG02, Ground Floor, Building 11 (Menzies Bldg),  
Monash University Clayton Campus.

Recently, a new women's university has been established in Chittagong, Bangladesh. The Asian University for Women (AUW) provides unique opportunities for Asia's most promising young women, regardless of their background. It offers scholarships to support talented female students from poor, rural and refugee populations from around Asia. The aim of AUW is to 'prepare women of high ability and potential to meet society's challenges and effect positive change through an innovative rigorous curriculum that encompasses the liberal arts, sciences, and professional training, and develops thoughtful and ethical leaders'.

This briefing at Monash University aims to create awareness about, and generate support for, this unique venture that is poised to change and uplift the face of women education in Asia. In the seminar, we hope to generate ideas and support to further advance this remarkable project.

Enquiries: Sharif As-Saber, PhD, Convenor, Bangladesh Studies Group,  
Monash University, [Sharif.As-Saber@buseco.monash.edu.au](mailto:Sharif.As-Saber@buseco.monash.edu.au)

## **Item 3. 7th International Congress of Morita Therapy**

4–6 March 2010  
Sebel Albert Park Hotel, Melbourne, Australia

<http://www.conferenceworks.net.au/morita-therapy/>

Abstracts invited; registration will open soon

The International Morita Therapy Congress is being hosted in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time. This 7th Congress will put Shoma Morita, MD squarely in the circuit of historical figures in psychiatry, and demonstrate how Morita Therapy is a culturally viable treatment outside Japan. A sequence of 'roundtable' discussions on the overriding theme, 'Contexts' for Psychosocial Health, aims to generate interactive, dynamic and enjoyable exchange. A selection of conference papers, following a double-blind review process, will be published in a university press journal, Morita Therapy Congress, Melbourne 2010: Theory, Practice and Research.

The congress is chaired Associate Professor Peg LeVine, Monash Asia

Institute, Monash University  
Conference Enquiries: Conference Works, Suite 2, Level 1, 120 Railway  
Avenue, Ringwood East, VIC 3135  
PH: + 61 3 9870 2611  
email: [events@conferenceworks.net.au](mailto:events@conferenceworks.net.au)

#### **Item 4. A book on Chinese traditional customs and beliefs**

Through the bamboo window  
Leon Comber, PhD  
Published by the Singapore Heritage Society, 2009

Despite the quest for modernity and the discouragement of many old customs and superstitions in Singapore and Malaysia today, Chinese traditional customs and beliefs are alive and well. In this new collection of four classic books written in the 1950s on Chinese life and culture in the Malay archipelago, the reader will discover the rich heritage of the overseas Chinese community's roots and attitudes to life and death.

Fully illustrated with original sketched and photographs from the author's collection, this is an unpretentious but meticulous journey through the Chinese calendar of festivals, fortune, magic, superstition, ancestral worship and temples.

**Dr Leon Comber** has long held an interest in Chinese life and culture in Singapore and Malaysia dating back to the time he spent in the area from the end of the Second World War.

He is an Adjunct Research Fellow of the Monash Asia Institute and a regular Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. He has published several books and papers about Singapore and Malaysia. His most recent paper includes the foreword in 'Light on the Lotus Hill: Shuang Lin Monastery and the Burma Road' by Chan Chow Wah.

To purchase Dr Comber's book, 'Through the bamboo window', contact [shs.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:shs.secretary@gmail.com)

#### **Item 5. New addition to the MAI Family**

We announce the happy arrival of Amira Victoria Schottmann, first child of Shahida and Sven Schottman, our PhD student. Amira (which means 'princess' in the Arabic language) was born on Sunday 24 May just minutes before Islamic dawn prayers. The MAI family extends a warm welcome to the Amira and congratulates Shahida and Sven on their new journey of parenthood.

### **News from other institutions**

#### **Item 6. The 40th Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest -**

## **Victorian State Final 2009**

Organised by:

The Steering Committee of the Japanese Language Speech Contest, Victoria;  
Consulate-General of Japan, Melbourne; The Japan Foundation, Sydney

Saturday 5 September 2009

Carrillo Gantner Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre  
University of Melbourne.

The contest is open to Japanese language learners aged 17 and over (no age limit applies to Year 11 and 12 students) in Victoria.

The organizers and sponsors are pleased with the very high standards achieved by the contestants in recent years and wish to make this year's contest another great success. It will be an especially memorable event to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest.

Entries close on Wednesday 26 August 2009.

The winner of each division will proceed to the National Final, which will be held in Sydney on Saturday 10 October 2009.

The Information Package is available at:

<http://www.melbourne.au.emb-japan.go.jp/index.html>

Contact:

Kumiko Toyama, Program Coordinator  
Japan Information & Cultural Centre, Consulate-General of Japan  
(Tel) 03-9639-3277

[k.toyama@nexnet.net.au](mailto:k.toyama@nexnet.net.au)

### **Item 7. Website of the month**

<http://www.securityanddevelopment.org>

The Conflict, Security and Development Group at King's College London is involved in a broad range of research, policy influencing, training and capacity enhancement activities that cut across the security and development domains. The projects on governance and security traverse Africa, Asia and Latin America. Institutional partnerships with key actors in both the South and the North are highlighted on this site.

## **About the MAI Bulletin**

The Monash Asia Institute Newsletter incorporates news items from the research centres of the Monash Asia Institute, partner organisations and other groups working to promote Asian Studies in Australia.

For further information about the Monash Asia Institute and this newsletter:  
<http://www.monash.edu.au/mai/>

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<[MAI.Enquiries@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:MAI.Enquiries@adm.monash.edu.au)>