

# THE SILC TIMES



Newsletter of the School of India for Languages and Culture (SILC)

### Hold that thought

If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions, I should point to India.

- Max Mueller

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### How Much Do You Know About India?

A SILC Quiz for Kids – for kids age5 - 9)

By: Mahima Gupta

**What are the colors of the Indian flag? (In order and not including the spinning wheel)**

- A. Saffron, White Green
- B. White, Green, Saffron
- C. Green, White, Saffron
- D. Green, Saffron, White

**What year did India become independent?**

- A. 1996 B. 1947 C. 1966 D. 1938

**How many spokes are on the Dharma Chakra.**

- A. 24 B. 20 C. 22 D. 25

**Who was India's first prime minister?**

- A. Indira Gandhi
- B. Jawaharlal Nehru
- C. Manmohan Singh
- D. Mahatma Gandhi

**What is Mahatma Gandhi's real name?**

- A. Mahatma Gandhi
- B. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
- C. Mohammad Chand Gandhi
- D. Jawaharlal Gandhi

### Last Newsletter Quiz Results

There are four correct responses to the quiz from last news letter (matching the teachers faces to the names). A \$10 gift card (Barnes and Noble) will be given to one of the following in a lottery.

- Preeti and Priya Moorthy
- Akshay Nambudiripad
- Elli Seltzer
- Shwetanshu Das



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## **SILC Mela**

*By: Suparna Mafia*

This is my first year in SILC, so when I heard about the SILC Mela (fundraising program), I was very excited. I heard there would be games, auctions, henna and face painting, and food! I could not wait for it to come.

Later that day in SILC, my friends and I were asked if we would like to be a volunteer in the Mela. I was very excited to attend it, but even more excited to get a chance to volunteer. My friends and I all said yes right away. They signed up for face painting and games, while I signed up for Mehendi (Henna). I thought it would be a great experience to volunteer for that and for a change, be on the *other* side of the Mehendi booth!

On the day of the Mela, my sister and I were really excited to attend! We got up early so I could be on time for my shift. When I got there, it was amazing to see all the booths set up and ready for games! It was different from a day of regular SILC, but in a good way. I went to my booth and saw a bunch of Mehendi tubes, paper towels, and other tools needed for Mehendi. It felt like I would be a professional!

My friends started arriving, and so did a lot of other people who were pretty excited for Mehendi. It was a lot of hard work, but it was definitely worth it. I learned how to do the Mehendi so well! After the first shift, I was expected to go and play games. I saw a lot of volunteers all around at different booths - some face painting, some conducting games, and more! But since there were only two people doing Mehendi, including me, I stayed on for the time period of the second shift also. But I really didn't mind, it was a lot of fun!

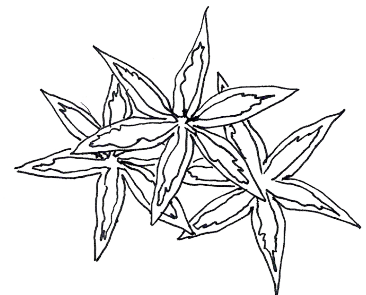
After a while, it was definitely time for me to go eat some lunch. As I walked through the doors to the cafeteria, I saw all the auctions. There were items spread out around the

tables. It was amazing how many things people donated. We raised \$1200 which was extremely good. We all ate food and then painted tea light holders. It was a great time to have fun with friends also!

The SILC Mela was an excellent experience, and I hope there is another one coming up soon!

### **Current Events Of India**

- Michael Jackson wanted to work with A.R Rahman
- Prianka Chopra won as best actress in the movie Fashion
- India win against Bangladesh in cricket 2-0
- Due to so many walkers in India, Mumbai has made over 50 elevated skywalks for indoor treatment and less population on the sidewalk
- 22 killed after a bus into the gorge of the northern mountains of India
- 40 dead after the collapse of an Indian bridge
- Lighting strikes killing 3 people in Mumbai
- India test fires the Astra missile
- Asian countries call for global money
- Jaipurs queen Gayatri Devi dies at the age of 90
- Former president R. Venkataraman dies at the age of 98



### **SILC Important Upcoming Dates**

February 13..... Social Studies Day  
March 20..... Holi Celebration  
March 27..... MN History Center Presentation  
April 3... Iron Ring - Children's Theater/ No SILC

## Book and Movie Reviews

### Editor's Note:

These are reviews of books read by students in SILC's Literature class. The first 1/2 of them are printed here, the rest of them will be printed in the next newsletter.

### **Life of Pi by Yann Martel**

*Book Review by Jyoti Kumar*

My book review book is Life of Pi. In it, a boy named Pi Patel. Pi as only a boy practices three religions after begging his parents. But Pi you see in no ordinary boy for his father owns the local zoo.

His father gets a letter from a zoo in America. After a week of planning, his father says yes. So Pi, his brother Ravi, his parents and animals from their zoo went aboard a ship to America. Pi thought it was marvelous.

For some time everything was fine. Then in the middle of the night Pi hears strange sounds. He goes below deck to investigate. He then finds himself in the engine room with the Captain and the crew. Pi asks "What's wrong?" The Captain takes Pi's hand and then throws him into a life board. All of a sudden Pi starts yelling "Richard Parker! Richard Parker!" Pi found himself starring at a 450 pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker.

**On the life boat, there was a hyena, a zebra, a tiger and an orangutan. To find out what happens next, you will have to read the book!**

### **Krishna & Sudama**

Retold and illustrated by

Abrar Nori and Rudra Prada Warriar

*Book Review by Nandu Nambury*

The story I read was Krishna & Sudama. Sudama is an extremely poor person. He was childhood friends with Krishna. So then he goes to Krishna's palace in Dwaraka which is an extremely rich city.

His wife makes Sudama bring beaten rice (which was Krishna's favorite food when he was younger) which he gives to Krishna. Krishna then eats two handfuls of rice, but when he was going to eat the third handful, Rukmini (one of his wives) stopped him.

The whole point of him going to the palace was to get Krishna's help to give him money, food, clothes etc. So when he goes back where his house would be, there is a palace. His wife calls out for him and explains the gold and guards came out of no where.

Sudama immediately realized that when Krishna ate the beaten rice, each hand of rice Krishna ate made Sudama richer.

**I would rate this book five stars because I am spiritually connected with this book because I am Hindu. I recommend this book to everyone and any age.**

### **The Mouse, the Mongoose and the Snake**

*Book Review by Manu Achar*

Once there lived a mouse named Budhivantha who was constantly attacked by a snake named Dushtabudhi that lived nearby. One day, fed up with the snake, he began asking his friends and family how to get rid of Dushtabudhi. One of his friends, Vaksharatha, told him to lure a mongoose to Dushtabudhi so that, since mongooses worst enemies are snakes, it would kill him. Budhivantha knew a mongoose that lived nearby, so he went to the mongoose's home and laid a path of fish (because mongooses eat fish). He did this so that the mongoose would follow the path of fish and kill Dushtabudhi. The mongoose came down the path of fish to the evil snake. After a long battle with Dushtabudhi, the mongoose finally killed him. Budhivantha then came back to his home relieved that he would not be attacked again.

**Moral – You do not need to be mighty to win**

## **The Adventures of Feluda**

by Satyajit Ray

*Book Review by Danielle Raikar*

There are four stories incorporated into The Adventures of Feluda. Pradosh Mitter, who is known as Feluda, is a detective living in Calcutta. The author gives him the qualities of a real sleuth. Feluda makes observations on his surroundings and of people. He is also said to have a photographic memory. Feluda's cousin, Tapesh, is the narrator of the stories and isn't as detective-like as Feluda. The first story is about a kidnapping which is when they meet Lalmohan Ganguly. This man is a writer who has never really experienced adventure. The second story is about how Lalmohan Ganguly sells his story to a man to make into a movie. A mysterious character asks him to deliver a package but Lalmohan Ganguly delivers the wrong one and is threatened. The third story is about a man who is left blind after an accident in a lab. His house is broken into and later when Feluda comes to investigate, the man's science research and money is stolen. Their neighbor is also murdered.

These stories were just stories to me. They didn't hold much meaning and I didn't feel they were written very well. The author doesn't leave much place for ambiguity or interpretation. I also felt that even though there were many action scenes where characters are held at gun point, I didn't feel any suspense. These stories didn't catch my interest much because of this. The characters in the story have many different names and it can get confusing at times.

The first two stories go from event to event and weren't written in very amazing ways. Although the third is still pretty simple to comprehend, I felt it was better than the others. It was also the "simplest" in the way it started as a burglary. But this story delves into theme and meaning more than the others. The author also shows character change which made it better. Feluda is usually so confident, Tapesh also changes where he is able to be more

detective-like and be more observant. Character change can help catch interest so I thought that story was better than the others.

My recommendation is reading this book isn't a total waste of time, but I didn't enjoy it very much. I didn't read the last story so maybe I would've liked it more if I read that. But overall I don't think this is one of my favorite books.

## **Dil Bohle Haddipa**

*Movie Review by: Meera Viruru*

Dil Bohle Haddipa is a sweet movie which compiles dreams, sports, love, and obviously there are great songs (it can't be a Hindi movie without songs). It is the perfect family movie and is on the top five Hindi movies I have ever seen. The story is about a spirited woman named Veera (Rani Mukhrjee) who lives in a small village in Punjab and her biggest dream is to play cricket. On the other hand the man who coaches the village mens' team (Anupam Kher) is preparing for his annual cricket match against Pakistan called the Peace Cup. When the match finally comes Pakistan beats India by a landslide. So the Coach of the village team calls his son all the way from England to create a new village team so that they can beat the Pakistani cricket team. The son whose name is Prem Roshan (Shahid Kapoor) comes to his fathers aid. When Veera (the village girl whose dream is to play cricket) hears that the team is having reselection she is so thrilled that she goes straight away to try out. Unfortunately for Veera the security guard kicks her out for being a girl and her dreams are shattered. At her house people aren't very consoling and make her dress up like a man for a play they are in charge in. She hates the idea but does it for her family. Because she has to dress up like a man for the play she thinks, 'Why don't I try out for the cricket team dressed as a man?' She does and makes it on the team but being on the team is not like she imagined, the coach Prem Roshan is very strict and she obviously has to go into the mens' locker room which is not a place for a girl even if she is dressed like a man. Of course her disguise is also something to worry about. Then there is the love between Prem and Veera but I don't want to give away the whole story.

Dear SILC Families,

Some of you may recognize me as the person who carries a pen and a notebook around SILC, jots notes, asks questions, and is curious about everything! I want to thank everyone for including me in the SILC community and for being so supportive of my research. For those of you I haven't peppered with questions yet, I want to take a moment to share with you what I am doing at SILC.

My name is Sarah Hansen and I am a third-year doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota. My research interests include the educational experiences of Indian youth and their families in U.S. schools and communities. In September, I began collecting data at SILC to answer two research questions: 1) What significance do parents give to their children's participation at SILC? and 2) How does this significance relate to their larger experiences with U.S. schools?

To answer these questions, I have been participating and observing each week at SILC. I spend most mornings in the Hindi Level I class and then participate as a volunteer teaching assistant in the Literature class. I also engage in conversations with people between classes and in the common areas. Additionally, I interview parents who volunteer to be in my study. (These interviews have been so helpful and insightful! Thank you to all who have participated so far.) To document my data, I write field notes and transcribe the interviews. I then use two levels of analysis (grounded theory and critical discourse analysis) to look for patterns in the data.

So far, the data reveal several patterns, including the significance parents give to youth learning a regional Indian language (and what practical and emotional meanings this has for families), and the sense of community fostered by SILC. The interviews have also indicated several areas of U.S. school experiences, such as parents' interactions with teachers, along with parents' assessments of curricula and pedagogy, that warrant further investigation.

A lot of you have asked me the million dollar question: "So what?" You wonder what I am going to do with my findings and how I will use the data I collect at SILC to make change. It's a good question and one that I ask myself daily (and nightly when I am kept awake by grad student angst! I have qualifying exams this semester—please cross your fingers for me). As much as I would like to, I can't promise that I will accomplish grand things with my research project. But I believe every little drop in the bucket helps.

So here's my plan: 1) I will use the data I collect this year at SILC to submit papers for publication in educational research journals and for conference presentations. This will help other educators and researchers get a better idea about parents' experiences in this particular community organization and in schools. 2) I will use data from this year to help frame my dissertation work, which I hope (if the SILC community gives me permission) will focus on youths' experiences at SILC, in their communities, and in their schools. My dissertation research will result in further journal and conference publications.

Right now, Indian youth and their families are underrepresented in educational research. More data will help flesh out what educators "think" they know about Indian youths' experiences in U.S. schools and communities. I believe youths' experiences are much more complex than what research suggests—and as some of my interview participants have indicated, the Indian community has much to share and contribute to the field of education. These contributions promise to enrich teaching and learning not only for Indian youth, but also for the larger community.

Grad students are notorious for talking way longer than they should to make a point (even after their listeners' eyes have glazed over), so thank you for patiently reading this letter. I am so grateful to be a part of this community and I look forward to talking with you more at SILC.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Hansen

Dearest Students, Volunteers, Parents and Guardians:

We are half way through our academic year and we are having a great year so far. We have got some more new families join SILC and we have crossed 130 registrations. Please extend warm welcome to the new families.

On behalf of SILC Board, I wanted so share some updates with all of you.

[1] Helping hands are holier than praying lips.

As a non-profit organization run by volunteers, SILC lives by the above saying. SILC wants to help Haiti earthquake victims, in the capacity and means it can. Any contribution — be it a \$1, or \$2 or \$5 — given by its students and parents will be matched by SILC to a maximum limit of \$500. I am hoping that we can collectively donate over \$1000 towards helping Haiti. Please hand over your donation to your teacher or Principal on February 13th (social studies day). Our plan is to donate this amount through UNICEF. For further details on UNICEF channel, please see <http://www.unicefusa.org/news/releases/unicef-urgently-appeals-for.html>

[2] Unleash your Creativity. And HELP a Child in NEED.

Another exciting event is Vibha Kalakaar 2010. SILC participated in this event last year and we would like to continue this tradition.

SILC students can participate and enter in different categories - Painting, Short Story writing, Essay writing, Photo Contest and Essay Writing. SILC will be paying the registration fee for all SILC students who submit an entry. And students can participate in more than one category as well.

Please visit <http://wiki.vibha.org/Minnesota:Kalakaar-10> for further details. The deadline to submit the entries to Vibha is March 6th. Please handover your submissions to Principal or your teacher on March 6th. And wear your thinking caps now and start working on your Vibha submissions.

[3] Yay! SILC is going on a field trip

SILC is organizing a special field trip to see the Iron Ring on 04/03 at Children's Theatre Company. Erin has blocked 50 tickets for this show. These will be given out to SILC families on a first come, first served basis at the price of \$10 for children and \$15 for adults (Note that this is heavily discounted price; Rest of the ticket price will be picked up by SILC). If interested in this field trip, please send an e-mail to Erin and let her know how many people in your family will be attending by this Saturday 02/06.

[4] SILC at Minnesota History Center

Our first formal performance by our dance students (adult, youth and children) will be on March 27th in "Global Hotdish Variety Show" at Minnesota History Center. Please visit <http://www.mnhs.org/historycenter/programs/globalhotdish/> for further details about the program. This is Minnesota History Museum's first invitation to SILC to participate in "Global Hotdish Variety Show".

And some final words before I wrap up! I hope you are all checking SILC blogs for your respective classes and also the main blog <http://silc0910.blogspot.com> You can always find all these announcements at this blog.

Yours Sincerely,  
Siva R Jasthi, Principal