

February 2014

HYDERTALES

REVIEW OF MIRCHI 2013. HIGHLIGHTS FROM MYSORE. RAHUL GANDHI IN MCDONALDS

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Dear Friends,

Salaam ~ Namaste!

Welcome to the CIEE Hyderabad Arts and Science program at the University of Hyderabad. On behalf of the CIEE Hyderabad Study Center, I am delighted to send you the latest CIEE newsletter: the Hydertales.

This newsletter is a compilation of various student pieces, ranging from short stories to inspiring photo essays, of their travels, perspectives, and experiences. Please take a moment to look around and read our students' stories about life and learning during their time abroad. A big thank you to all the students who contributed to this newsletter!

Thank you from everyone at the CIEE Hyderabad Study Center for reading this Hydertales' edition.

KAVITHA GOOTY VENKATA
Resident Director



EDITORS

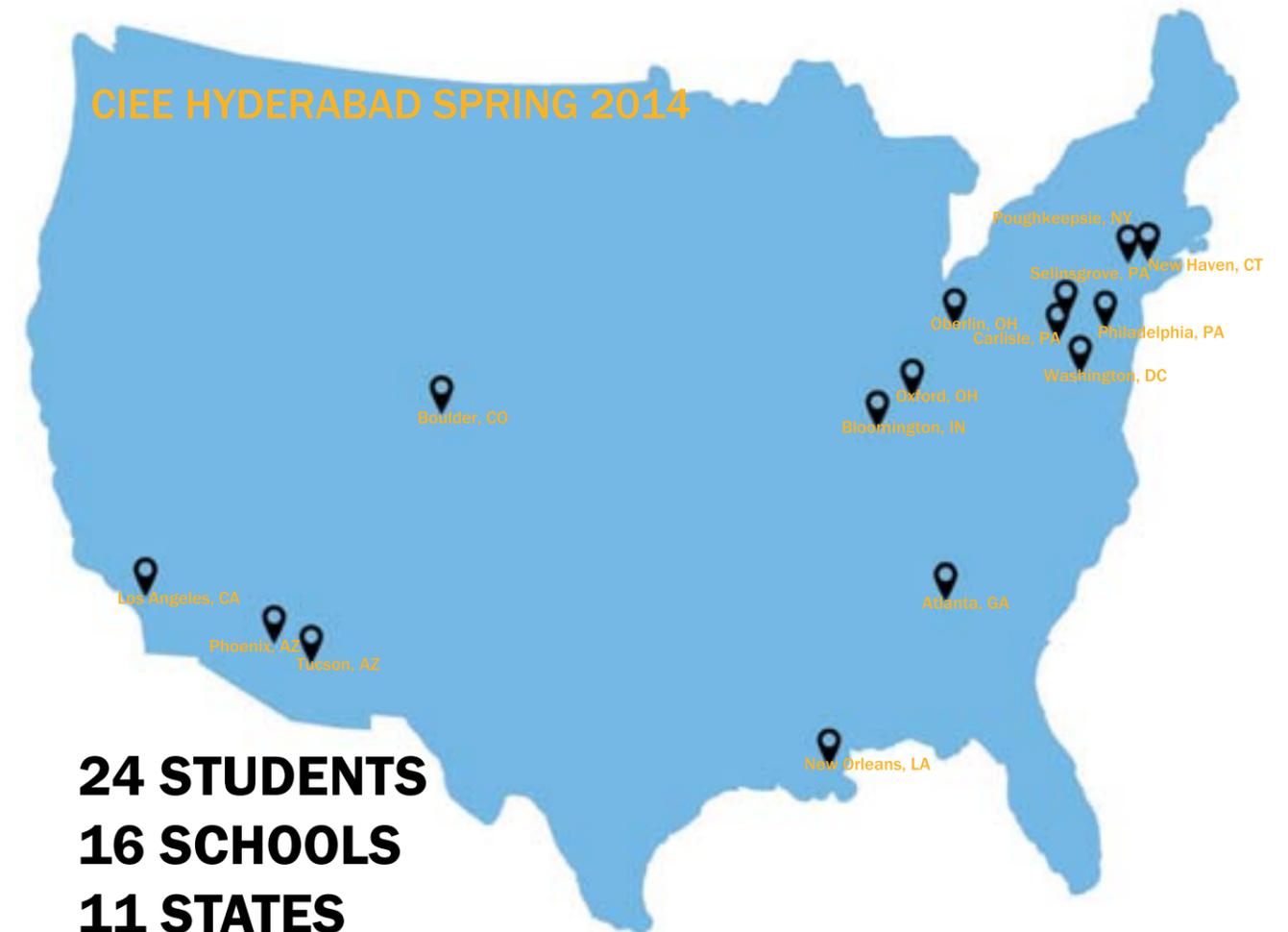
Huizhong Wu (University of Pennsylvania)
Huy-Liem Nguyen (Dickinson College)

IMAGE CREDITS

Map markers by Maheeb Fouda
Sandwich from Food Navigator Asia
Photo under poem by Debbie Leter

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CIEE HYDERABAD SPRING 2014



24 STUDENTS
16 SCHOOLS
11 STATES

REPRESENTED SCHOOLS

Arizona State
University
Dickinson College
Emory University
George Washington
University
Haverford College

Indiana University
Miami University
Oberlin College
Occidental College
Susquehanna University
Tulane University
University of Arizona

University of
Colorado-Boulder
University of
Pennsylvania
Vassar College
Yale University

Weekend in Mysore

During the first week of February, the group took a trip to Mysore, Karnataka.



Tippu Sultan's Summer Palace, in Srirangapatna. The palace is located on an island in the middle of the Cauvery River.

Danielle Burley (Dickinson College) walking amongst the streets of Melkote.



Alec Martin (University of Colorado-Boulder) looking at the intricate details of Chennakesava temple.

Golden Temple in Bylakuppe, the largest Tibetan settlement in India.



Our bodies slide down the steps,
one by one dashed on the rocks.
Dry river runs across our path with
Dead leaves buried under the stream.

Painted lotus greets us in bloom as
vessels loom over Shiva's stony face.
Submerged in mountain veins he
searches the waters for ashes' taste.

Where the three rivers meet
we'll unite with the streams of the earth.
These restless bones shiver before
ten thousand urns churning toward heaven.

Lost students learning in a strange land
leapt into a new home like the urns to water.
Floating on the euphoria of the scenery they
feel the same breeze blowing from home.

Under the same sky the rivers feed
using the sun to gate the tide green.
Unmatched by any man-made Xanadu
unless nature grew itself a gardener.

No person can bring this picture of death to life.

Submerged Shiva

By Patrick Schlee
(Dickinson College)



Mirchi: Your Host Mom's "Favorite Movie"

by Ben Poor
(Occidental College)

It's time to sit back in your factory plastic covered chairs and say yes to everything your host mom asks because we've got our first ever edition of Homestay Movie Review coming your way!

After last week's stunning and tear-jerking screening of *Your Host Parent's Wedding* (the Two-Disc Collector's Edition), tonight we've got something of a more recent fare for you – the 2013 Telugu smash hit, *Mirchi*! Subsequently, the film that everyone should come to my homestay and watch the next time it's on tv. Just make sure you tell your mom you won't be home for dinner! Actually though, that would be very rude. She prepared food for you.

Mirchi stars Tollywood's Young Rebel Star, Prabhas. With his playful grin and thin beard, I think we can guess why your host mom calls this her "favorite movie"! He plays the role of Jay (also Jai), or as I call him, Running Jesus. Running Jesus can solve any problem in the world, just by running. Is a group of drinking university students about to get in a fight? Let Running Jesus run across campus and resolve it non-violently! Is Indian Ben Affleck's (I.B.A.) vehicle convoy going to be attacked? Let suit-wearing Running Jesus run to the exact three locations where I.B.A.'s enemies have plotted to attack him and murder everyone with a katana! Running Jesus carries the movie, which at 161 minutes is quite a running time!

That's probably the kind of joke that would be made by the film's comedic core, Brahmanandam. He'll have your host family laughing their lungs off and have you smiling along with them. Silly faces are funny in any language! When your host brother tells you the comedic star has been in every movie, it's not like the time he said your room was haunted by ghosts – Brahmanandam holds the Guinness Word Record for most screen credits for a living actor. To prove it, just switch channels during the commercial break! (Your brother will probably take care of that as he hunts for Power Rangers). I guarantee that Brahmanandam is in at least one other simultaneously airing movie. Just don't forget to flip back within four minutes or your host mom will start shouting really angrily!

The plot itself? Full of clichés, of course. Like the single-file attacking method that the hordes of goons so expertly use while attacking Running Jesus. If you liked *Romeo and Juliet*, then you're a regular human being and luck would have it that this film is also about two feuding families. However, allegiances build and break faster than you can remember who's related to whom! Keep your eyes peeled for Indian Ben Affleck and Indian Liam Neeson. I.B.A.'s quasi-paternal (but we all know it's homoerotic) affection for Running Jesus highlights the most interesting parts of the film for me but unfortunately Running Jesus seems more into the two girls he kisses in the film. Maybe one day Indians can

have a gay movie star – until then, go watch *Mirchi*!

That's all for our review this month – join us next time for *Either The Same Cricket Match Or A Different One!*



Mirchi (2013)
Starring: Prabhas
Richa Gongopadhyay
Anushka Shetty
Directed by: Koratala Siva
Language: Telugu

Most Likely

By Charlotte Ahlin
(Oberlin College)

“I’m not saying that I wouldn’t,” said Serenity, picking a hair out of her fish curry.

“No,” Anne agreed. She shifted in her seat and tried to ignore the damp patch between her legs. If she could ask Serenity for her unused napkin and make an excuse for the bathroom again? But Serenity would only point out that water is more hygienic than toilet paper.

Serenity lowered her tone. “I just think it’s, like, a complex issue.” She tried to flick the hair away, but it stuck to her fingers.

“It’s yours,” said Anne.

“What?”

“The hair.”

“Oh.” Serenity inspected the strand and shrugged, as though she was not the only blonde in the restaurant. She wiped her fingers with the napkin. Anne’s damp feeling intensified.

“What’s complex?” asked Taylor. They sat in the front part of the restaurant, six of them, on the sand with big wicker chairs and low coffee tables for eating off of, so that a dollop of curry landed on Anne’s skirt every time she took a bite.

“I thought we were playing a game,” said Arjun.

“What’s complex?” asked Taylor again.

“Oh,” said Serenity. She touched the lone dreadlock imbedded in her tangle of blonde hair, then the beads of her Buddhist rosary. She did not look at the two Indian men across the circle.

“The bindi thing,” said Anne.

Serenity took an anxious sip of beer.

“Not again,” said Marcus, slouching down in his wicker chair for emphasis.

“I took it o-off,” protested Taylor.

“No, I know,” said Serenity at once. This time her fingers went for her rope bracelet, shrunken from salt water. “I didn’t mean to, like, judge.”

“No, I know,” said Taylor. “I’m the worst!” she added, smiling broadly at the two Indian men.

“I don’t think you offended anyone,” said one of them. His name was Arjun, or probably Arjun. Beer had fuzzed Anne’s memory.

“No, you didn’t,” said the other, looking up from his blackberry. He wore a polo shirt and jean shorts and Anne had forgotten his name.

“We were playing a game,” said Serenity.

“I’m already du-runk,” said Taylor. She tossed another grin to Arjun. They say in an oblong circle: Taylor, then slouching Marcus, Serenity and Anne and then Polo Shirt and Probably Arjun, two men they’d met on the beach that day, who did something in business or grad school. Anne had her back to the water. If she glanced over her shoulder quickly, with her beer-smearing eyes, the sky and sea blurred into one inky expanse. No horizon. Their stretch of beach could be a ribbon of sand floating through a void. If Anne looked straight forward she could see Taylor chewing on her fingernail.

“Are we still playing?” Arjun asked Taylor.

“Yes!” said Taylor, fingernail forgotten. “My turn.” She made a show of cracking her knuckles, which made Serenity wince, then whispered something in Marcus’s ear.

“Um,” said Marcus. “Ummm. That’s dumb. I don’t know.”

“Just say someone,” Serenity suggested.

“Ok... Serenity,” said Marcus, without bothering to look at her. Serenity let out a hollow giggle and took a swig of beer. “Ok, I drank. What’s the question?”

“She asked...” Marcus started.

“Who’s most likely to run off with a rickshaw driver?” Taylor cut in.

“That was the question.” She glanced slightly at Arjun, to see if he found her charming.

“You gu-uys! Why me?” asked Serenity, who seemed to have gotten her hair caught in her Buddhist rosary and was trying to extract herself.

“Any auto driver should be so lucky,” said Arjun. Serenity giggled again, into her hair. Taylor remained pointedly silent.

Anne tried to remember if it had been Taylor who had hooked up with Marcus last weekend. Taylor was pale, thin and sharp featured, brown hair cropped short, pretty because she was

young, with a nose stud like a large metal pimple that Anne would like to pop.

“Marcus’s turn,” said Serenity, still blushing.

“I’m so tan,” Taylor told Arjun.

“I’m thinking,” said Marcus. He

lifted his headband to scratch his head. An older white couple stumbled past the restaurant, hand in hand, in matching sarongs. They looked as though they had started in the 60s and never stopped.

“I’m going to get a weird kurta tan, being here. In the city, where we study? We wear kurtas,” said Taylor. Anne wondered if it was the beer that made her speak so slowly and loudly to Arjun.

“Kurtis,” corrected Serenity, and then immediately began picking at a loose thread on her caftan, as though she had crossed a line.

“You like wearing kurtas?” asked Polo Shirt, still focused on his blackberry. Taylor smiled and nodded. Serenity scanned the sand floor for the least offensive answer. Marcus and Anne shrugged.

Anne realized that if it ever came to be her turn, she would ask Polo Shirt a question. He was not tall, but not unattractive either. Anne wondered what his neck would smell like when she whispered in his ear.

“Somebody go-o,” commanded Taylor.

“I don’t have one because this is a stupid game,” explained Marcus, slouching further still.

Taylor threw her hands up to appeal to the canvas ceiling. “Here, I’ll ask again” she said, and leaned over Marcus to whisper in Serenity’s ear.

Serenity’s face crumpled slightly. “Oh no, I don’t want to sound mean,” she said. Her fingers flexed, searching for something to fiddle with.

“It’s just a game,” said Taylor, glancing at Arjun to confirm.

“Can I pass? I pass,” said Serenity.

“You can’t pass,” said Taylor. “You can’t pass,” confirmed

Arjun.

“She can if she wants to,” said Polo Shirt.

Marcus began to snore softly.

“Just say someone, Serenity, we won’t be mad,” said Anne. Out of the corner of her eye she could see a red lantern sailing up into the wall of sea-sky.

“Oh gosh,” said Serenity, yanking at her knot of hair. “Oh, I’m sorry, but... Anne.”

“A-annel!” sang Taylor.

“I heard,” said Anne. She took a gulp of her beer, bitter taste overpowering the scent of salty air. “Ok, shoot.”

“Ooh,” squealed Serenity.

“I’m sorry Anne!”

“I asked her who’s most likely to go home,” said Taylor.

The brief silence was punctuated by a snore from Marcus.

“Like go home when?” asked Anne.

“Like before the program’s over. Like go home early. Like wash o-o-out,” said Taylor.

“I’m sorry! I just had to pick someone,” said Serenity. Her face had gone so red that her freckles were nearly invisible.

“No, it’s fine, I’m not mad,” said Anne. She took another sip of beer.

“She’s not mad,” affirmed

Taylor.

Serenity was saying something else, as Taylor did her best to accidentally brush knees with Arjun, and as Marcus settled into a peaceful slumber, but Anne

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focused on the tempo of the wave-crash behind her and said nothing. Polo Shirt looked up from his blackberry to smirk.

“They’re wrong,” she muttered to him, hating how her words sounded heavy with beer and melodrama.

His smirk turned friendly, and he tilted his head to the side just once before returning to the blackberry with an adolescent hunch.

Anne smirked back at his half-popped polo collar, and sunk her toes into the sand. She closed her eyes against the jangle of Serenity’s anklet, and breathed in the breeze off the Arabian Sea.

Rahul Gandhi Orders a McAlloo Tikki Sandwich

A One-Act Play

By: Ben Poor (Occidental College)

Note: Famously withdrawn politician and scion to the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty Rahul Gandhi recently sat down for his first ever tv interview. The expected Congress party Prime Minister candidate was outright bizarre at times, including speaking in the third person and refusing to answer if he feared opposition leader Narendra Modi. We hope you enjoy our new favorite political satirist Ben Poor’s take on how Gandhi would handle himself in a less formal setting. - Ed.

Scene: Interior of a McDonalds. MCDONALDS EMPLOYEE stands behind a counter. Enter RAHUL.

RAHUL: ... [Stands in front of counter nodding affirmatively].

MCDONALD’S EMPLOYEE: Welcome to McDonald’s, sir. May I take your order?

R: [Mumbles something and continues nodding affirmatively].

M: I’m sorry, I didn’t catch that sir.

R [Slightly louder, but still barely above a whisper]: Rahul Gandhi would like a McAlloo Tikki Sandwich.

M: Alright sir, one McAlloo Tikki Sandwich. And anything to drink for sir?

R: [Pauses for a longer than expected time] Rahul Gandhi would like a small water.

M: Yes sir. Would you like fries with that?

R: Hmm.

M: Sorry sir, I didn’t catch that.

R: Ahhh... hmm. Ahh.

M: Anything else with your order sir?

R: To understand that question you have to understand a little bit about who Rahul Gandhi is and what Rahul Gandhi’s circumstances have been and if you delve into that

then you will get an answer to the question of when Rahul Gandhi wants fries and when he does not want fries.

The real question is what I am doing standing here. You are a fast food worker, when you were small you must have said to yourself, I want to do something, yet you decided to become a fast food worker at some point, why did you do that?

M: [Frustrated] Because the economy is terrible and this is the best I can do, sir. Will that be all?

R: [Long pause] Rahul Gandhi would like a McFlurry. That is all.

M: All right, your total is 1,440 rupees. Cash or Credit?

R: [Leans away from counter] MOMMMMMMMMMMMMM?

Scene.



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