Drugs and Prayers

The Sufi shrine of Mira Datar in North Gujarat is a large pilgrimage centre specialising in healing possession madness/mental illness. Recently, it has also become a site of experimenting with new forms of community care in the mental health sector. The NGO "Altruist" facilitates communication between the mental health department, shrine dignitaries, psychiatrists and patients suffering from diverse kinds of mental troubles who seek help from the saint. Under the heading of "Dava & Dua" Altruist promotes psychiatric services at the shrine parallel to the cures of possession illnesses offered by ritual specialists.

The film documents exchanges between different actors at the shrine (patients-psychiatrists, psychiatrists-ritual specialists, patients-ritual specialists), listens to the stories of afflicted persons and presents diverse views on the presumed causes of mental illness as well on the benefit or non-benefit of medicine and/or ritual practices as perceived by patients and their relatives.

contact | Helene Basu, Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, Hbasu_01@uni-muenster.de, religionundpolitik@uni-muenster.de

This digital video disc including the soundtrack is protected by copyright. All rights are reserved, unless a license has been obtained by the copyright holder. Unauthorised copying, hiring, lending, public performance, Radio or TV broadcasting of this video is prohibited. Any violation is punishable by law.

Drugs and Prayers

by Helene Basu

A film by:

author | Helene Basu
camera | Philipp Offermann and Helene Basu
Editing | Angelika Schlöndorf, Andreas Samland, Helene Basu
subtitles translations | Basant Srivastav and Vasudeo Paralikar
layout | Verena Ilger
photos | Helene Basu
running time | approx. 55 min.
subtitle version | English

copyright © 2009, H. Basu
Drugs and Prayers

The Sufi shrine of Mira Datar in North Gujarat is a large pilgrimage centre specialising in healing possession madness/mental illness. Recently, it has also become a site of experimenting with new forms of community care in the mental health sector. The NGO “Altruist” facilitates communication between the mental health department, shrine dignitaries, psychiatrists and patients suffering from diverse kinds of mental troubles who seek help from the saint. Under the heading of “Dawa & Dua” Altruist promotes psychiatric services at the shrine parallel to the cures of possession illnesses offered by ritual specialists.

The film documents exchanges between different actors at the shrine (patients-psychiatrists, psychiatrists-ritual specialists, patients-ritual specialists), listens to the stories of afflicted persons and presents diverse views on the presumed causes of mental illness as well on the benefit or non-benefit of medicine and/or ritual practices as perceived by patients and their relatives.

contact | Helene Basu, Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, Hbasu_01@uni-muenster.de, religionundpolitik@uni-muenster.de

This digital video disc including the soundtrack is protected by copyright. All rights are reserved, unless a license has been obtained by the copyright holder. Unauthorized copying, hiring, lending, public performance, Radio or TV broadcasting of this video is prohibited. Any violation is punishable by law.

copyright © 2009, H. Basu