

在谈到大数据时，我们常常忽略了影像这一重要元素；而事实上，视听媒体已开始与信息爆炸的“云时代”崭露头角。硅谷正建立起一个个卫星舰队，它们在环绕地球的同时拍下数以千计的高清图像及影像——这种应用曾仅限于军事用途。在景观设计学领域，视听媒体正逐渐承担起设计及分析过程中的重要角色。景观影像以及景观音频正延展着景观表现的能力，带来超越传统二维数据所能提供的视觉、听觉和感知的新方式。

在本期中，来自苏南达·巴特的《追寻一方热土：人类与景观的对话》以及吴沁沁的《抵达的风景》，探寻了新媒介在景观感知与表现中的作用、景观的感官维度、视听媒体的氛围性呈现及空间性应用。通过传统神话与生态学之间建立联系，将当代热点议题置于某一特定环境之中，苏南达·巴特——备受赞誉的纪录片《你见过阿拉纳吗？》的导演——以影像为媒介，为我们呈现了位于印度南部的瓦亚纳德地区，人与自然相互交织的历史。在这一受到肆意发展威胁的极富生物多样性的地区，巴特的团队历时五年，记录下变化的景观中人们生活的转变。在本期的第二个项目中，吴沁沁——哈佛大学设计学院的应届毕业生——记录了从深圳到武汉历时五小时的火车旅程。在这一项目中，作者仅仅使用了手机自带的摄像功能进行拍摄，并将原始视频片段重新剪辑，创作了“抵达的风景”这部影像装置作品。吴沁沁用这一广泛普及的手机摄像功能，既唤起了火车旅行的集体记忆，也开启了对“速度与流动”这一当代议题的探讨。这两个项目的共通之处不仅在于利用“影像”作为记录景观的方法，而且均以某一公共交通方式作为记录的结构线索。透过公共汽车车窗（《你见过阿拉纳吗？》）或是火车车窗（《抵达的风景》）所看到的形形色色的风景都是那样平静，它们衬托着跃动在车厢之内生命的能量。在这两部影像作品中，车窗框定了窗外的风景，勾勒出车厢中的乘客所生活的背景。当影像记录逐渐成为“大数据”集中举足轻重的元素，其在记录时间、空间及距离的过程中保存下环境中人的情感与经历，从而将“艺术”与“数据收集”、“景观”与“事实科学”区别开来。

Video has been largely ignored in the conversation about big data, yet the cloud is exploding with audiovisual information. Silicon Valley is building fleets of satellites — previously a strictly military project — that will orbit the earth while taking thousands of high-resolution photos and videos. The role of audiovisual media in design and analysis is increasing in Landscape Architecture. Landscape video and landscape audio have helped expand the capacity of landscape representation towards new ways of seeing, hearing and perceiving beyond the 2D mode.

In this issue, “Tracing a Terrain: Conversations of People and Landscape” by Sunanda Bhat and “Arriving Landscape” by Qinqin Wu explore the role of new media in landscape perception and representation; the sensuousness of landscape; the atmospheric phenomena of audiovisual media and its spatial implications. Linking mythical past with ecology, integrating contemporary concerns with contours of a terrain, Sunanda Bhat, director of the award-winning documentary, “Have you seen the arana?” uses video to unravel the intertwining histories of people and landscape in Wayanad, South India. Through five years of the research, the film follows the people of a region rich with bio-diversity and threatened by indiscriminate development. In the second project, Qinqin Wu, a recent graduate from the Harvard GSD, documents the five-hour train trip from Shenzhen to Wuhan. Using only a cell phone camera, the raw video clips are recomposed into the video installation “Arriving Landscape”. The ubiquitous cell camera conjures a collective memory of train travel and a contemporary sense of speed and mobility. Both projects use video as a single method of documentation and are recorded via a single method of public transportation. The diverse terrains seen through bus or train window feel extraordinarily calm, a foil to the energy of life that pulsates within the bus or train. In both, the window to the external landscape becomes a frame for contextualizing the human narratives within the videos. As video recordings become a greater and more essential aspect of Big Data collection, maintaining palpable human emotion and experience in the context of recordings of time, space, and distance will separate art from data collection, landscape from factual science.



© Songline Films

**追寻一方热土：  
人类与风景的对话**  
**TRACING A TERRAIN:  
CONVERSATIONS  
OF PEOPLE AND  
LANDSCAPE**

苏南达·巴特 《你见过阿拉纳吗？》影片导演、制片人  
Sunanda BHAT Director and Producer of Have You Seen the Arana?

1. 《你见过阿拉纳吗？》电影海报
1. Film poster of Have You Seen the Arana?

#### 摘要

《你见过阿拉纳吗?》是一部当代叙事与部落神话交织在一起的长篇纪录片,探讨了快速改变的景观对人类生活和生计的影响。这部影片拍摄于位于印度南部的瓦亚纳德,那里有着丰富的生物多样性,同时也受到肆意“发展”的威胁。

本片荣获了诸多大奖<sup>①</sup>,其中一个奖项这样评价到:“……这部优雅的影片经历了数年的酝酿与积累,通过影片微妙细腻的镜头展现出其背后的深深思考。导演慢慢引导着观众,去探寻与领会存在于人类与其赖以生存的生态系统之间,那种部族式的、神秘的联系。”<sup>②</sup>

本片最初的构思是反映印度农业危机。然而,长达5年的研究经历使我对瓦亚纳德人民所面临的众多挑战的复杂性有了更为深刻的理解。通过传统神话与生态学之间建立联系,将当代热点议题置于某一特定环境之中,我的这部作品试图找到能够将交织于人类与景观之间的多重议题展现在观众面前的方式。

#### 关键词

电影;当代叙事;部落神话;农业危机;发展

#### ABSTRACT

"Have you seen the Arana?" is a feature length documentary that interweaves contemporary narratives with a tribal myth, exploring effects of rapidly changing landscapes on lives and livelihood. The film is set in Wayanad, a region in South India, rich in bio-diversity and threatened by indiscriminate "development".

Winner of several national and international awards<sup>①</sup>, one citation reads: "... is elegant, patient, meditative, and subtle. The director gently moves her audience towards a deep appreciation of the tribal, mythical connections between humanity and the ecosystems that sustain us all."<sup>②</sup>

Initially conceived as a film on the agricultural crisis, my experiences over five years of research helped in understanding complexity of challenges faced by the people of Wayanad. By linking mythical-past with ecology, integrating contemporary concerns with contours of a terrain; I looked for ways to unravel multiple layers of meaning intertwining people and landscape.

#### KEY WORDS

Film; Contemporary Narratives; Tribal Myth; Agricultural Crisis; Development

译 董青 陆小璇 涂先明

TRANSLATED BY Qing DONG Xiaoxuan LU Xianming TU

景观讲述着美妙的故事——那是关于文化与自然相互交织的故事。在读完记者帕拉贾米·赛尼斯<sup>③</sup>关于当地农业危机的一系列报道之后,瓦亚纳德——这个位于印度南部的拥有丰富生物多样性的地区——引起了极大的兴趣。2006年,瓦亚纳德发生了一连串的农民自杀事件,民生及其土地陷入一片混乱。影片拍摄的初衷是展开一项关于这场危机对失去土地的劳动者的影响的调查;然而,影片最终演变成了对于人类、知识系统与amp;环境这三者之间不断变化的关系的一种探索。《你见过阿拉纳<sup>④</sup>吗?》这部影片见证了在“发展”的名义下,印度西部山区脆弱的生态系统的迅速转变。

### 地区特征

瓦亚纳德地处印度南部的喀拉拉邦,海拔高度700~2 100m。本地有许多被称作阿迪瓦西<sup>⑤</sup>(原住民)的土著部落。这一地区生态系统脆弱,其广袤的常绿阔叶林涵盖了

从湿生到旱生的多样景观类型。这个在历史上曾被视为“卡克那达”(意为“难以进入之地”)的地区,在过去的几个世纪以来,土地所有权和使用方式的几经转变在景观上留下的诸多痕迹:为进行有组织耕作而进行的森林砍伐、移民的大量涌入、城镇和村庄的迅速扩张,以及近年来以“发展”的名义进行的开发而带来的景观巨变。

### 发展中的挣扎

在1991年实行新自由主义经济政策以来,印度经历了城市地区的大规模发展。在此过程中,农业挣扎着去适应市场经济的需求。大部分瓦亚纳德地区的原住民在失去其土地后,被从事不可持续的、商业性生产的农业公司所雇佣。在农业危机期间,他们被迫离开瓦亚纳德去外地务工。毫无节制的发展和不可持续的农耕导致生态环境在过去几十年遭受到严重破坏。印度作家、活动家阿兰达蒂·罗伊曾指出,与其说是这种困境



© Samyananda Sahi / Songline Films

2. 瓦亚纳德起伏的地形
- 3-1. 公共汽车车窗外的景色
- 3-2. 瓦亚纳德公共汽车上的乘客

2. Undulating terrain of Wayanad
- 3-1. Passing landscape through the bus window
- 3-2. Passengers in a bus in Wayanad



© Samyananda Sahi / Songline Films



© Samanda Bhat / Songline Films

难以改变,不如说是以“惊人的速度”在发生改变,而且“这种强制性的改变给诸如阿迪瓦西部落这样的传统社会”带来了严重的后果。

### 在景观中寻找电影的主题

最初,本片试图对那些失去土地的原住民在种植园中务农的情况展开调查。在经济和性方面受到虐待、剥削的情况,在他们的故事中层见迭出。纵使这些故事意义重大,但是在叙述中却难免仅将原住民视为不幸的受害者——大众媒体在报道此类事件时的视角大抵如此。然而,这只是我在研究中所遇到的一个方面。长久以来,生活在这片充满活力景观中的人们,在面对无法扼制的发展中都表现得无比坚韧;这能够反射出长期以来其知识、文化的积累与演进——这在我看来,是一个同样值得讲述的故事。几经周折之后,我意识到需要改变过去那种“看待”原住民的方式。我试图找到一种途径将

他们视作这片土地上平等的利益相关者,而不仅仅是利益之外的牺牲者。

这部影片是在与这片土地的长期接触中完成,并仅使用了唯一一种当地交通工具——公共汽车。乘坐公共汽车展开研究的过程,通常意味着在各种各样的地带中穿梭:山谷里的稻田、山坡上的茶叶和橡胶种植园,以及最终抵达山顶上的茂密森林。透过车窗所见的各式景观,与车厢内跃动着的生命活力相重叠。这一个个的公共汽车之旅,成为我的沉思时光:车窗变成了一个取景框,透过它,我不仅观看着沿途的风土人情,还思索着影片的构思。

### 创立一种表现方式——神话与公车旅行

我需要找到一种表现方式,以客观叙述我在瓦亚纳德旅行时所经历的方方面面。在整个调查研究过程之中,我深深着迷于一个古老的部落创世神话<sup>⑥</sup>:这首为纪念逝者而作的《逝者哀歌》一直流传至今,歌中讲述

① 该片所获奖项包括:2014年孟买国际电影节金海螺奖国家单元最佳纪录片、最佳摄影、最佳音效;2014年Tinaï生态电影节最佳纪录片;2014法国多维尔绿色奖提名;2013年巴黎第32届让鲁什国际电影节世界关怀奖及国际评委团的人类学与可持续发展奖;2013年多伦多关注地球国际电影节马克哈萨姆奖最佳纪录片;2013年雅加达环境、卫生与文化国际电影节荣誉奖;2013年约翰·亚伯拉罕国家奖最佳纪录片;2013年喀拉拉邦国际纪录片与短篇电影节;2013吉维卡亚洲民生电影节最佳摄影及最佳剪辑;喀拉拉邦德里久尔国家短篇及纪录片奖最佳纪录片及最佳导演;喀拉拉邦电视奖最佳纪录片及最佳导演。

② 出自2014年孟买国际电影节最佳纪录片奖。

③ 帕拉贾米·赛尼斯是一位屡获殊荣的记者,他撰写了大量关于印度农村的报道。他是“印度农村人民档案”网站(<http://www.ruralindiaonline.org>)的创始人及编辑。

④ “阿拉纳”在喀拉拉邦的马拉雅拉姆语中意为“小蜥蜴”。

⑤ 阿迪瓦西(原住民)是印度多个部落的总称。

⑥ 编剧及作家K·J·贝比在他的小说《Mavelimntram(意为:桃花源)》(1991年出版)中描绘了这些口述历史的片段。

① The awards of this film include: Golden Conch for Best Documentary, National Competition and Best Cinematography and Best Sound Awards, Mumbai International Film Festival, 2014; Best Documentary, Tinai Eco Film Festival, 2014; Nominated for the Deauville Green Award, France, 2014; "Monde en Regards" Award and a Special Mention by the International Jury of the Anthropology and Sustainable Development Prize, 32nd Jean Rouch International Film Festival, Paris 2013; Best Documentary, Mark Haslam Award at Planet in Focus Film Festival, Toronto, 2013; Honorable Mention, International Film Festival for Environment, Health and Culture, Jakarta, 2013; John Abraham National Award for Best Documentary, 2013; International Documentary & Short Film Festival of Kerala, 2013; Best Cinematography and Best Editing, Jeevika Asia Livelihood Film Festival, 2013; Best Documentary & Best Director, National Short & Documentary Film Awards, Thrissur, Kerala; Best Documentary & Best Director, Kerala State Television Awards.

② Best Documentary, Mumbai International Film Festival, 2014.

了神话中的一对夫妇穿越瓦亚纳德的旅行。神话咏唱着一种愿望，希望逝者的灵魂可以回到祖先身旁。

从许多方面来看，公共汽车旅行和这一部族神话是息息相通的。当公共汽车上售票员喊出当地的地名时，会让我联想起神话人物曾经到过的地方——这一联系成为这片土地的“歌之路线”，并将那古老的神话融入当今时空。在一个不平等的社会中，不同社会群体交汇的公共汽车就是其缩影。

在当地研究者的帮助下，我们开始了对这个古老故事的大量探索阶段。这个故事以口口相传的方式流传，因而存在着众多不同的版本。其中一个版本是由一位老者<sup>7</sup>讲述的：“在一个古老的寺庙庭院中，诸神用泥土创造了人类躯体，却无法给予他们生命；于是，诸神向女神求助。女神被描述成一个雄伟的形象；她有着大象般的鼻子，她的双耳像田地里簸谷粒的筛子，她的眼睛又圆又大宛若硅石，她的指甲像座座山峰；她在天地之间架起了一座虹桥，降临到寺庙中。看到这骇人的一幕时，泥人们惊呼尖叫而获得了生命；其中一些泥人因受惊过度而消逝。”

在这一神话中，女神被同时描述成创造者与毁灭者，这与自然的轮回相呼应。阿迪亚尔<sup>8</sup>部落中所流传的这个奔放的传说，成为连接起人类和其土地的现代故事的线索。

### 故事的发掘——三位主人公

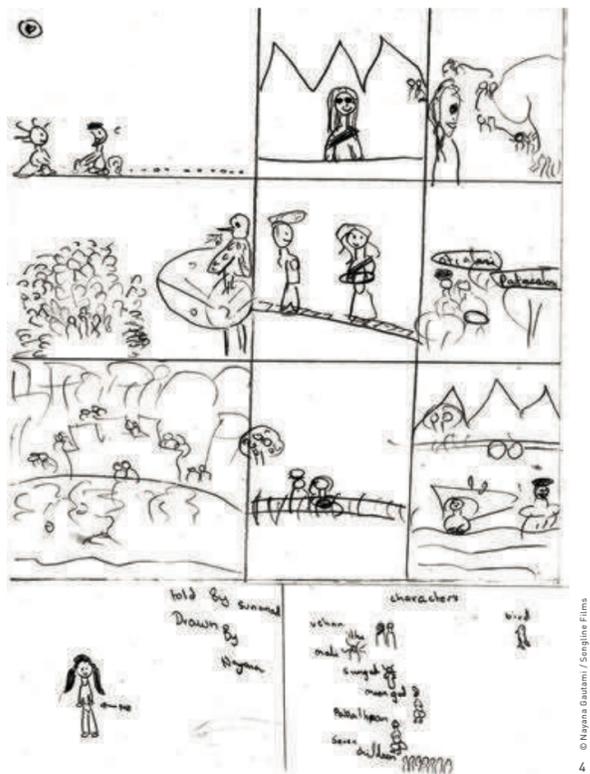
我试图将我在瓦亚纳德所经历的正能量融入电影之中。我开始探索如何通过将当地居民描述为“改变的目击者”，从而使观众

得以了解居民、社区和环境之间不断演变的关系。我决定通过讲述那些生活在当地不同类型的景观中的“普通人”的生活，来诉说瓦亚纳德的故事——一位稻农以有机方式栽培传统品种坚持；一位经济作物种植者在农民自杀风潮中的挣扎；一名女性治疗师对森林中药用植物消失的忧虑。这部影片通过分析主人公们在经济、社会，以及环境各个方面受到的影响，来呈现他们的生活方式。这些当代叙事与创世神话交织在一起，讲述了这片土地的故事——知识系统、生活方式，与景观的消逝。

这一耗时5年的漫长而深入的研究，使我在面对这个地区问题的复杂性时变得非常敏锐。这也许使得我与受访者之间的交流能够处于较为轻松自在的状态；这一点从他们面对摄像机镜头的反映可以看出。“滋养与忽视”成为了讲述这三个故事的过程中的重要共同议题。

尽管种植经济作物已经变成主流，稻农拉曼·彻如瓦伊仍然致力于延续传统的耕作方式。他的田地处于山谷之中，被低矮的、连绵起伏且植被茂密的山峰所环绕。他开辟出一块块小田地，用于种植家庭日常所需的咖啡、生姜、木薯和蔬菜。拉曼意识到传统知识正在迅速消失，因此急于把这些知识传给他的子孙们，并谆谆教诲他们应对自然心怀敬畏。拉曼说，“我们必须理解土地，土地也必须理解我们”，他的孙子在一旁认真地聆听着。

年轻的农民乔治·约瑟夫的居所与拉曼家相距25km。受到可以迅速赢得收益的承诺的蛊惑，乔治把妻子的首饰抵押了出去。他乘坐公共汽车从位于山区的家乡来到邻省



- 7 来自瓦亚纳德北部的施内斯里瑞的M·P·卡兰在该片中演唱了他的版本。
- 8 阿迪亚尔为瓦亚纳德地区的重要部落之一，其他部落还包括帕尼亚斯、库鲁马斯、库瑞恰亚斯、奥瑞丽斯，以及卡图那卡普斯。
- 9 阿奴拉达·马瑟为宾夕法尼亚大学景观系教授。
- 10 该影片的拍摄团队包括：Saumyanada Sahi（摄影师）、Tanushree Das（灯光指导与剪辑）、Bina Paul（特约顾问）、Christopher Burchell（现场录音）、Sibi Pulpally（研究员及当地翻译）、Arun P.A.（研究员及当地翻译）、P. M. Satheesh（音效）。

的平原地区种植生姜。但是生姜的价格跌落到了历史最低点，他周围的农民宁愿让姜烂在地里也不去收割；与此同时，农民自杀事件也深深地烙印在这片风景之中。摄影机跟随着乔治一路拍摄，他的生活充满了紧张不安，而他的妻子正在焦急地等待他回家。

在传统治疗师乔赤的带领下，我们深入瓦亚纳德茂密丛林之中。乔赤是当地一个致力于对迅速消失的药用植物展开再生工作的部落倡议组织中的一员。乔赤见证了当地旅游业的迅速扩张，她对药用植物从森林里和人们的记忆中迅速消失的现状深深忧虑。乔赤因与她在旅游景区工作的女儿不断发生冲突，其生活一片混乱。

在瓦亚纳德的旅行中穿插着我与朋友和家人的讨论。在我与景观系教授阿奴拉达·马瑟<sup>9</sup>的讨论中，他曾说：“我认为，她（苏南达）这一历时5年的辛苦研究，以一种既慎重又自由、使景观与人去‘讲述’故事的方式，已发展成为一种震撼人心的叙事策略——公共汽车旅行、车内车外的风景、或干或湿的四季景象、土地的特征和人物的面庞——所有这一切共同塑造了一个景观、人物和农耕交织的复杂体，它们本质上相互联系却又彼此脱离。”

### 人和风景的叙事记录

依照水稻种植的周期，该影片的实际拍摄持续了一年。才华横溢的、年轻的摄制团队<sup>10</sup>将我的最初设想进一步拓展，用敏感又细腻的描绘方式来表达景观及其居民们间关系的复杂性。在水和土地的肌理的映衬下，镜头温柔捕捉了环境中微小的生物，如蜻

蜓、毛毛虫和螃蟹。我们把焦点故意放在这些常常被忽视的微小而平凡的生物上，因为它们它们在自然经历迅速转变时最先消失。唱着《逝者哀歌》的老者的特写镜头，则唤起人们对这片土地特征的回忆。

对于影片的拍摄来说，每一个角色都是同等重要的贡献者。这些普通人的生活图景在不同层次的景观中逐渐显现。神话的结构、生与死的循环，它们是得以将多层次内容交织在一起的主线。影片由湿润的景象开始：潮湿的土地、播种插秧、养育和照料视觉画面慢慢地转换为收获、遗失和最终的消亡——即农民自杀——的场景，最终以重生和新生命的诞生作为结束。

随着山峦被夷为平地、森林消失、传统知识系统被遗忘，影片提醒我们景观和生活方式的多样性有可能永远地消逝，并被单调且不可持续的方式所取代。

在印度瓦亚纳德地区，影片《你见过阿拉纳吗？》在包括原住民部落及外界社区广为播放。这部影片深受欢迎，特别是受到孩子们的青睐——他们被自然界中的任何细微之美所吸引，并从中能获得乐趣。此外，本片已在印度国内和世界各大电影节多次巡展。**LAF**

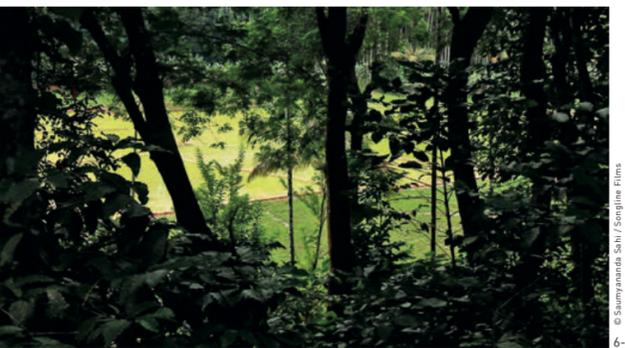
#### 致谢

感谢阿卡斯塔·西华古玛与拉杰西·伦格纳坦协助撰写、修订本文。

#### 注释

可以通过电子邮箱songlinefilms@gmail.com联络出版商购买该影片。更多信息请参见www.songlinefilms.com。

- 4. 在我研究神话故事的表现方式时，我9岁的女儿纳雅娜绘制的手绘图。
- 5. 拉曼·彻如瓦伊和他的孙子
- 6. 山谷中的稻田被繁茂的植被所环绕。
- 4. Trial sketches by Nayan, my then 9 year old daughter, when I was exploring ways to represent the mythical story.
- 5. Raman Cheruvayil and his grandson.
- 6. Rice fields in the valley surrounded by dense growth.





© Saumyananda Sahil / Sangline Films

Landscapes tell wonderful stories, operating at the intersection of culture and nature. I became interested in Wayanad, a region in southern India, rich in bio-diversity — after reading journalist Palagummi Sainath’s<sup>3</sup> articles on the agricultural crisis there. Back in 2006, there had been a spate of farmers’ suicides in Wayanad, leaving their lives and land in perilous disarray. What began as an inquiry into the effect of this crisis on landless laborers would eventually turn into an exploration of shifting relations between

people, their knowledge systems and the environment. “Have you seen the Arana<sup>4</sup>?” is a journey through a fragile ecosystem of the western mountain range that is witnessing rapid transformation in the name of “development”.

### The Region

Wayanad is about 700 to 2,100 meters above sea level in the southern state of Kerala. It is native to indigenous groups,

7. 乔治·约瑟夫在他的生姜田中  
8. 乔赤在森林中

7. George Joseph in his ginger farm  
8. Jochi in the forest

③ Palagummi Sainath is an award-winning journalist who has written extensively on rural India. He is the founder and editor of People’s Archive of Rural India (<http://www.ruralindiaonline.org>).  
④ Arana is a “skink” in Malayalam, the language spoken in Kerala.  
⑤ Adivasis (original inhabitants) is the collective name used for the many tribal groups in India.

known as “Adivasis”. Ecologically fragile, the evergreen forest is host to a variety of landscapes that transition from wet to dry. Once known as “Karka Nad” (a place difficult to access), these lands have over centuries seen shifts in ownership and use, leaving traces on the terrain — forests cleared for organized cultivation, influx of migrants, mushrooming of towns and villages, and more recently the drastic transformation of landscapes in the name of “development”.

### Grappling with Growth

After the neoliberal boom post 1991, India experienced large-scale development in urban areas, while agriculture struggled to meet the demands of a market economy. The “Adivasis” of Wayanad, being landless were largely employed in unsustainable, commercial farming. During the agricultural crisis they were forced to move out of Wayanad in search of work. As a result of unregulated growth and unsustainable practices, the ecology has been significantly affected over the last few decades. As Arundhati Roy, author and activist, has noted, the predicament is not so much that change occurs; it is the “astonishing speed” at which change is occurring, and “the compulsions it brings to traditional societies like that of the Adivasis” that is crippling.

### Finding the Film’s Subject in the Landscape

The film began as an inquiry into the condition of landless adivasis who worked as farm labor in plantations. Abuse and

exploitation, both economic and sexual, is rife in their stories. While significant, this falls into the trap of depicting them only as hapless victims, as is often done in popular media. But this is not the only side I encountered in the course of research. Tenacity in the face of unrestrained development of the people in this vibrant landscape, entwined in deep histories that reflect their learning’s over time, emerged as an equally important story to be told. Through a process that often felt tortuous, I became aware of the need to expand ways in which I was “seeing” the Adivasis. I looked for means to represent them as equal stakeholders in the land, and not just victimized bystanders.

The film developed through a long engagement with the land, as discovered

via a single mode of local transportation. A bus journey during the course of research would often mean traversing diverse terrains; rice fields in the valleys, tea and rubber plantations along slopes, ending in dense forests on hilltops. The varied terrains when seen through the window juxtapose interestingly with the energy of life that pulsed within the bus. These travels were a time for contemplation — where the window became a frame through which I viewed not only the passing landscape and people but also reflected on ideas related to the film.

### Developing a Means of Representation — Myth and Bus Journeys

A form of representation had to be developed that did justice to the various



© Saumyananda Sahil / Sangline Films



© Siba Pujari



© Songline Films

9. 摄影团队与拉曼·彻如瓦伊，从左至右分别为：Sunanda Bhat、Christopher Burchell、Arun P. A.、Saumyananda Sahi、Tanushree Das。
10. 剪辑过程中的照片脚本
11. 在原住民社区中放映
12. 部落中的孩子们观看影片

9. Filming crew with Raman Cheruvayil: Sunanda Bhat, Christopher Burchell, Arun P. A., Saumyananda Sahi, Tanushree Das (from left to right).
10. Photo storyboard for editing
11. Screening in an Adivasi community
12. Tribal kids watch the film

layers that I experienced during my travels in Wayanad. All through the research phase I was fascinated by an ancient tribal creation myth<sup>6</sup>. Sung for the dead, even in present times, this "Song for the Dead" traces the travels of a mythical couple across Wayanad. The myth is chanted in the hope that souls of the dead will find their way back to their ancestors.

The bus travels and the myth were interconnected in many ways. The calling out of names of places by the bus conductor brought to mind locations traversed by characters in the myth, becoming in a way "songlines" of the terrain and contemporizing this ancient story. In an unequal society, the bus is a microcosm, a space where paths of different communities intersect.

With the help of local researchers, an intense period exploring this ancient story followed. Being an oral tradition many different variants were discovered. One of the narratives told by an elder<sup>7</sup> goes as follows: "In the courtyard of an ancient temple, the Gods create humans from clay but are unable to give them life. They approach the Goddess for help. The Goddess is described as a magnificent figure; her nose like the trunk of an elephant, her ears like sieves used in the fields to winnow grain, her eyes huge and round like silica stones, her nails like mountains. Bridging the earth and sky she runs towards the temple. On seeing this terrifying form the clay figures scream and come to life. Some are terrified and fall dead."

The myth depicts the Goddess as both

creator and destroyer, echoing the cycles of nature. This lyrical story of the Adiyar<sup>8</sup> tribe became the thread linking contemporary stories of people and their land.

### Unearthing the Stories — Three Protagonists

I looked for ways to bring in the positive energy that I experienced in Wayanad, into the film. I began to explore strategies by which narratives of inhabitants as "witnesses of change" could provide a glimpse into the evolving relationships between people, communities and the environment. I decided to tell the story of Wayanad through lives of "ordinary" people, engaged with different landscapes — A rice farmer's commitment to growing traditional varieties organically, a cash crop cultivator's struggle to survive amidst farmers' suicides and a woman healer's concern over the disappearance

of medicinal plants from the forest. The lifestyles of the protagonists were explored through their economic, social, and environmental impact. These contemporary narratives were interwoven with the creation myth to tell a story of this place — the loss of knowledge systems, livelihoods and landscape.

The length and depth of research over five years made me sensitive to the complexity of issues in this region. This probably resulted in a level of comfort with the subjects, which is visible in their interactions with the camera. "Nurture vs. neglect" emerged as a significant theme in the telling of these three stories.

Raman Cheruvayil the rice farmer is committed to traditional cultivation despite shifting trends towards cash crops. His fields are situated in the valley surrounded by low, undulating hills, with dense growth. Small areas have been cleared for planting

coffee, ginger, tapioca and vegetables for home consumption. Raman is conscious of the rapid loss of traditional knowledge and is keen to pass on these ideas to his grandchildren; inculcating in them an appreciation of nature. When Raman says, "We have to know the soil, and the soil has to know us", his grandson listens intently.

Just 25 kilometers from Raman, lives George Joseph, a young farmer who lured by the promise of quick returns, mortgages his wife's jewels. He travels by bus from his hilly hometown to the flat plains in the neighboring state to cultivate ginger. But prices have slumped to an all-time low, farmers around him abandon their land without harvesting, and incidents of farmers' suicides are slowly marking the landscape. The camera follows George, whose life is fraught with tension, while his wife waits anxiously for him to get home.

Jochi, the traditional healer takes us

- 6 K. J. Baby, playwright and writer, brings in fragments of this oral history in his novel "Mavelimantram" (1991).
- 7 M. P. Kalan from Thrissilery in North Wayanad sings his version in the film.
- 8 Adiyars are one of the prominent tribal communities in Wayanad, others being Paniyas, Kurumas, Kurichyas, Ooralis, and Kattunaikkans.



© Anwar / Songline Films



© Sunanda Bhat / Songline Films

deep into dense forests of Wayanad. She is part of a local tribal initiative that helps to regenerate medicinal plants that are fast disappearing. Jochi is an witness to the rapid spread of tourism and is vehemently opposed to the disappearance of medicinal plants from the forest and from memory. Jochi's life is in turmoil, as she remains in conflict with her daughter who works in a tourist resort.

Travels in Wayanad were interspersed with discussions with friends and family. One of them, Anuradha Mathur<sup>9</sup> had this to say: "I believe her (Sunanda's) struggle to gather five years of work in a manner that is deliberate and yet free to allow the landscape and people to 'speak' has developed into a very compelling strategy — the bus journeys, the landscape within and outside, the wetness and dryness of seasons, the contours of the land and the textures of faces — all working towards building a complexity of landscapes, characters and practices that are intrinsically related and yet dislocated."

### Filming Narratives of People and Landscape

Filming was completed over the course of a year, following the cycle of rice cultivation. A talented, young crew<sup>10</sup> lifted the initial ideas into a sensitive and nuanced portrayal of complexities in the relationship between landscape and its inhabitants. Minute creatures like dragonflies, caterpillars, crabs were beautifully captured against textures of water and earth. Focus was intentionally on the small and ordinary, often overlooked yet amongst the first to

disappear when nature undergoes rapid transformation. Tight close-ups of the elder singing the "Song for the Dead" recall contours of the land.

The characters were equal collaborators in the making of the film. Textures of lives of these 'ordinary' people gradually emerged through the layers of landscape. The structure of the myth, the cycle of life and death, was the lens through which the film was woven together. Beginning with images of wet, moist earth, sowing and transplanting, the visuals of nurture and care gradually shift towards scenes of harvest, loss and eventual demise, in the form of farmer suicides...ending with regeneration and birth once more.

As hills flatten, forests disappear and traditional knowledge systems forgotten, the film reminds us of the diversity of landscapes and lifestyles that could disappear forever; only to be replaced by monotonous and unsustainable alternatives.

"Have you seen the Arana?" has been seen widely in Wayanad within the indigenous community spaces and outside. It has been very well received, especially among children, who are able to absorb every nuance and find delight in stories of the natural world. This documentary has also traveled to several film festivals in India and all over the world. **LAF**

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks Akshita Sivakumar and Rajesh Renganathan for assistance in writing and editing the text.

#### NOTE

Write to [songlinefilms@gmail.com](mailto:songlinefilms@gmail.com) to purchase a copy of the film. For more information please visit [www.songlinefilms.com](http://www.songlinefilms.com).

- <sup>9</sup> Anuradha Mathur is Professor at the Landscape Architecture Department at University of Pennsylvania.
- <sup>10</sup> Film Crew: Saumyanada Sahi (cinematographer), Tanushree Das (gaffer & Editor), Bina Paul (consultant editor), Christopher Burchell (location sound recordist), Sibi Pulpatly (researcher and location translator), Arun P.A. (researcher and location translator), P.M. Sathesh (sound Design).

## 抵达的风景 ARRIVING LANDSCAPE

吴沁沁 哈佛大学设计研究生院批判性保护方向设计学硕士  
Qinqin WU MDes of Critical Conservation, Harvard Graduate School of Design



1. 作者于高铁途中所拍摄的第一张车窗外的景观。
1. The first picture that the author captured through the window frame during the high-speed railway trip.