



Center for Health, Culture, and Society,
Department of Anthropology,
Department of Religion,
South Asian Studies Program

SPONSOR



Ronald Barrett, Ph.D.

(Anthropological Sciences, Stanford University)

*“Dawa and Duwa:
A Cultural Model of
Medicine as Medium in
Northern India”*

***Tuesday, September 12, 2006, 4:00 p.m.
Anthropology Bldg., Rm. 206***

People in the northern Indian city of Banaras often use the phrase “dawa aur duwa” (“medicine and blessing”) to explain the efficacy of medications when provided in highly ritualized contexts. Using the example of a pluralistic religious healer center, Barrett argues that dawa aur duwa represents a cultural model of medicine as a medium of exchange between patients and healers. By valuing the characteristics of the healer over the identity of his or her practice, this model informs multi-use treatment strategies, pragmatic concerns about the quality of services, and ritual pollution associated with certain health conditions.

Ron Barrett is a medical anthropologist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropological Sciences at Stanford University. He received his PhD in anthropology at Emory University in 2002, based upon ethnographic research on religious healing and the stigma of leprosy in Banaras, northern India. This work is about to be published in a book entitled, *Aghor Medicine: Pollution, Death, and Healing in Northern India* (2007; University of California Press). In addition, he is a registered nurse with clinical experience in hospice, brain injury, and neuro-intensive care. Professor Barrett returns to Emory to discuss an important intersection between religious and professional healing in India and its significance for the study of medical pluralism.

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