Photo courtesy of Kristoffel Lieten

IIAS NEWSLETTER

International Institute for Asian Studies

49 Pakistan

Crises of governance

Pakistan is currently faced with an intense combination of tensions, which in certain spheres is breaking into outright conflict, threatening both the viability of the Pakistani state and the economic sustainability of its people. Imran Ali examines this rapidly evolving situation and analyses the underlying factors and issues that have created and subsequently aggravated these problems.

IMRAN ALI

The multiple crises that are rapidly enveloping state and society in Pakistan are the product of various longer term and shorter term influences. One major contributing factor is the role of Western imperialism, and its interactions with Pakistan's crisis of governance. This relationship needs to be assessed in two contexts: The first is the more endemic problem of Pakistan's continuing semi-colonial position; and the second is the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and the subsequent extension of hostilities into Pakistan.

On the first aspect, the sustainability of the narrative of 1947 as the watershed separating colonial rule from an independent Pakistan is now highly questionable. For

one, unlike the territory that became India, the Pakistan area had a weakly developed and unstructured nationalist movement. No political organisation even remotely comparable to the Indian National Congress had emerged in the Muslim majority areas of British India. The Muslim League had remained the representative of a confined section, the Muslim landed elite, in Sindh and Baluchistan. In the Punjab, it was denied even this status. It was not until the climactic moments of decolonisation that a malcontent landlord faction propelled the League into Punjab politics by seeking the assistance of M.A. Jinnah, who was to become Pakistan's founding father. The weakness of the freedom struggle led to the failure to dilute the hold of the upper agrarian hierarchy on power in Pakistan, unlike India where a rapid anti-

feudal land reform reposed rural resources on the upper peasantry, the support base of Congress.

Emergence of a 'hydraulic society'

Historical processes under colonialism had retarded the emergence of nationalism in the Pakistan area. The most potent development had been the emergence of a 'hydraulic society', through the construction of an extensive network of perennial canals. By controlling the settlement of new lands through agricultural colonisation, and then through centralised irrigation management, the colonial state began to exercise a much greater degree of authority and control than in the rain-fed agricultural societies in the rest of India. The land was allotted to the rural elite and to the landholding peasant lineages. The lower caste rural masses were almost completely excluded from obtaining occupancy rights in the new agricultural tracts. Moreover, large reservations of land for military functions and soldier settlement, as well as the coercive, 'hydraulic' authority of the civil bureaucracy, firmly established the economic and institutional basis for the continued resilience of the authoritarian state in post-1947 Pakistan. In addition, the exit of almost the entire professional and com-

Contents #49

Director's note

Pakistan is a vulnerable nation, seen by many as a failed state. But Pakistan is also a frontline state, portentously positioned between Afghanistan and India, and crucial to US interests in South Asia. The country makes headlines with earthquakes, political turbulence, the battle with fundamentalists and Al-Qaeda, ethnic violence and human rights issues. Yet behind the headlines there is little understanding of this land and its people. This is reflected too in the lack of scholarship and academic interest in Pakistan. In this issue of *IIAS Newsletter* we hope to open the door a little on this complex and troubled society with a series of articles which probe deeper into underlying problems than most newspaper headlines can afford to do. I am grateful to Kristoffel Lieten for guest editing this Pakistan special.

The international financial crisis is also felt in Asia, but in a way different from the West. In his regular column, Kerry Brown explains that China will probably come out as a winner. No doubt the shifting financial balance will also lead to a shift in political power in the world.

This is the last issue of the IIAS Newsletter in the present form. The next issue will be the 50th Newsletter of our institute, and time for a new and fresh look. The name will be The Newsletter, the style will be different but it will remain recognisable as the newsletter of the International Institute for Asian Studies, made by the same editor Anna Yeadell. Most importantly, the main line will be continued: informative articles written by experts for a broad readership on all aspects of Asian societies, past and present.

Max Sparreboom,
director

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Pakistan, an abundance of problems and scant knowledge

KRISTOFFEL LIETEN

Theme Introduction

In 1988, Benazir Bhutto published her *Daughter of the East, an Autobiography*, which she dedicated to her three children and to all the children of Pakistan. In 2006, Pervez Musharraf published *In the Line of Fire, A Memoir*, written in honour of his ailing mother and for the people of Pakistan. If not their policies, their books at least were dedicated to the entire spectrum of the people of Pakistan, (although their true purpose was an effort to explain themselves to the West). Bhutto's book was widely acclaimed since it heralded the dawn of progressive democracy under the leadership of a smart-looking and verbally superb young lady; Musharraf's book received little attention, possibly because it was written by a man who had been portrayed as an unfriendly and cunning military dictator, accused of being hand in glove not only with reactionary world powers but even with the Taliban.

Scant scholarship

The actual history of Pakistan does not fully concur with the picture which both these leaders portray in their books and speeches. Unfortunately, however, little scholarship is available to provide us with a more realistic close reading of Pakistan. Or, as Stephen Cohen (2004) had warned: the US, in the midst of the war against terror in that region has "only a few true Pakistan experts and knows remarkably little about the country. Much of what has been written is palpably wrong, or at best superficial."

Scholarship within Pakistan, despite notable exceptions, also leaves much to be desired. One possible explanation for the omission is the undemocratic style of functioning of all governments in Pakistan, the civil-led administrations not less than the military governments led by Yahia Khan, Zia ul Haq and Musharraf.

Universities and research institutes have failed to function properly. Political interference and nepotism have competed in running down any academic quality that the institutions may have had in the distant past, as Aziz (1993) has superbly documented in the case of history writing. Whatever was left of the academic façade was torn down by politicisation and internecine struggles involving Muslim fundamentalists from the late 1980s onwards. Most Pakistani academicians who have withstood the political turbulence and the downgrading of the academic institutions have done so abroad.

Another explanation for the poor academic interest in Pakistan is that the country has been portrayed as a rogue state and is not high on the list of destinations for tourists or researchers. It is commonly perceived as the fount of Islamist terrorism and as a self-inclining reactionary bleakness, in sharp contrast with the attractive picture which, at least currently, is being drawn of its easterly neighbour. A study of US newspaper reporting on Pakistan (Moeller 2007) illustrates how the American press generally adopted the administration's monolithic framing of terrorism as well as "the demonizing of an entire population: in this case Pakistani Muslim men and boys".

Haemorrhaged state formation

Pakistan was a sick state to start with. At independence in 1947, all institutions had to be created: "Pakistan was not a successor state. It was a seceding state. India was the successor state" (Feroz Ahmed, 1998). It did not have an ingrained nationality and the ideology that was chosen to cement that unity - Islam - was, in practice, much weaker than the forces of regional and linguistic disunity (Khan 1985; Rahman, 1997; Talbot 1999, Jaffrelot 2004, Cohen 2004).

The unity of Pakistan, and the functioning of its state institutions, depended on two institutional forces: bureaucracy and military, and leaning on the powerful landlord class. Traders and entrepreneurs, often having migrated from British India, had to play second fiddle and share benefits with the bureaucracy. Economic power in Pakistan has remained very skewed. The nexus between the major landholding families, traders and entrepreneurs with the administration has kept the economy and the social structure under semi-feudal strains (White 1974; Omar 1990, Qadeer 2006, Hasan 2007).

Issue-focused studies

Scholarship in Pakistan has occasionally focused on ethnography, for example Grima (2004) on north-western Pakistan, Verkaaik (2004) on the Muhajirs, and Lindholm (1996) on the Swat Pathans. But recent studies have tended to focus on the one and only issue with a global concern: Muslim extremism and terrorism.

Earlier, the reconstitution of the national ethos had the focus. The imposition of martial law in 1977 and the hanging of Zulfikar Bhutto by Zia ul Haq, for more than one reason was a "redefinition of a country", as Hassan Abbas

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(2005) argues. The state, particularly its army and secret service, were ideologically reformed. The new ideology broke with secularism and imposed one specific reading of Islam, the puritanical Wahhabism as practiced in Saudi Arabia. The new religious ideology was in contradiction with the Sufist tradition and disunited the country more than ever before: "the greatest tension of all was between the state's legalistic imposition of Islam and the humanist traditions of Sufism" (Talbot 1999; Khan 1985; Schofield 2003; see also Lau 2006 and Lau and Imran Ali in this issue).

This new Pakistan, as a frontline state, played a vital role in the struggle against Soviet communism. It heralded a period of instability which lasted until Musharraf came to power in October 1999 and was confronted with a ruination of the state: "through the active fostering by Zia ul-Haq, the funding of Saudi Arabia, espousal by the US, and the venal abandon of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, the seed of religious fanaticism sown more than two decades earlier had come to confront him as fully grown trees perversely balanced by the empty coffers of the state" (Abbas 2005). That, in a nutshell, is the crisis which Pakistan is still confronted with in the post-Musharraf era.

Coverage

More academic interest in Pakistan would likely contribute to more clarity on many of the issues at stake in a vulnerable nation with many problems and which is in the midst of a political cauldron. Pakistan, on the eastern proximity of Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, is also just on the western fringe of mainstream Asia. For good reasons, therefore, the country has been taken up for special coverage in this issue of *IIAS Newsletter*. Five articles will cover political development, gender in the legal system, the aftermath of ethnic violence, the failing educational system and the life of Pakistan as migrants abroad.

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mercial bourgeoisie to India, owing to its non-Muslim composition, removed from the new state a class of people who could have advocated democratic and modernising institutions. Social scientists have failed to recognise the depth of Pakistan's historical continuities, thereby tending to misconstrue the source and nature of its present-day authoritarian structures.

That these structures remained ancillary and subservient to a continuing neo-colonial dependency, was explicated in the post-1947 period. Pakistan's failure to maintain a non-aligned position in world affairs was accompanied by its membership of military combinations sponsored by the US, such as the South-East Asian and the Central Treaty Organizations (SEATO and CENTO). The components of the British Indian Army inherited by Paki-

civilian administration were dominated by politicians emerging under a military aegis. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, later a populist leader, commenced his political career as a cabinet member in the Ayub Khan dictatorship. His commitment to democratic institutions was questionable; he rather preferred civilian authoritarianism with military backing. Nawaz Sharif was sponsored by the Zia ul-Haq dictatorship. The prime minister in the 2008 People's Party government, Yusuf Raza Gillani, himself emerged as a political appointee under Zia. The mafia-type Muhajir Qaumi Movement has links to Pakistan's controversial Inter-Services Intelligence, in addition to its active collaboration with the Musharraf dictatorship. Moreover, there has been undeniable support by the military, and earlier by the Americans, for the religious extremist parties, which have played a

even more porous, its society awash with guns and drugs, and its accountability systems further undermined. The military leadership discovered the attractions of easy corruption money and real estate acquisition, while public functionaries and political intermediaries took rent seeking to historically unprecedented levels.

The Afghan agony was even more severe than the costs to Pakistan, adding to the million odd killed during the Soviet aggression. Having secured the main prize of Soviet collapse, the Americans vanished from the scene. From what once was its largest operation outside its headquarters in Washington, USAID did not leave even a counter open in Islamabad. The people of Afghanistan were left exposed to warlord conflict and then to medievalist Taliban rule, with its own set of distortions. The

spread into Pakistan, thereby endangering its own peace and security. Already, the Swat valley had been taken over by militants, intent upon enforcing Shariah. While the militants forced Islamisation and a range of guerilla tactics, the Pakistan military was being pressurised to kill its own people. There was a perception that these militants, along with the numerous suicide bombings within the country, were being sponsored by an Indian-Afghan axis, perhaps with tacit Western support, aimed at destabilising Pakistan.

External threats have combined with internal contradictions to exacerbate Pakistan's problems of governance and sustainability. On each occasion, military rule has been followed by a grave crisis: the break-up of the country after Ayub, and the criminalised politics and economic downturn after Zia. Musharraf's legacy appears to be no less damaging. A seemingly endemic shortfall in energy generation, the inability to commence construction of the Kalabagh Dam, thus foregoing the cheaper hydroelectrical option, exacerbating the scarcity of irrigation water, hamper both industrial investment and agrarian production. Major inflationary pressure has followed, with shortages and maldistribution in food commodities, thanks to hoarding, smuggling and price speculation. The involvement even of members of Musharraf's federal cabinet effectively impeded efforts to rectify these malpractices. Economic management fell into disarray and businessmen rushed into stock market and real estate speculation. Moreover, both the trade deficit and foreign debt had risen to unsustainable levels by 2008, which began to erode foreign exchange reserves and create downward pressure on the rupee.

Apart from economic distortions, a major and tenacious political crisis threatened the country's stability. With elections looming and the need to manipulate them for returning his support group, in March 2007 Musharraf 'dismissed' the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Iftikhar Chaudhry, on whom he felt he could not rely. Chaudhry had initiated enquiries on various arbitrary state activities, including the 'missing persons' of whom many had been sent to torture facilities run by the US. A resilient lawyers and civil society movement ensued, while Chaudhry was reinstated by a judicial bench in July. Musharraf then passed the notorious Provisional Constitutional Order, under which Supreme Court and provincial High Court judges were again suspended, unless they took a further oath of allegiance. He also had himself elected President for a further five years by the outgoing parliament.

While the US continued to express full support for Musharraf, Benazir Bhutto was enabled to return under the National Reconciliation Ordinance, with corruption charges and accountability proceedings against her dropped. Subsequently,

under the weight of public sentiment, she appeared to change her approach to the 'war on terror' and question the military's counter-insurgency policies: a change of heart that probably proved to be her death sentence. Her assassination in late December 2007 threw the country into further turmoil, with widespread public disobedience, especially in Sindh. The assumption of party leadership by her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, provided a further twist to the convoluted history of dynastic politics in south Asia. Nevertheless, after a short postponement, elections were held in February 2008. By that time ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif had also been allowed to return to the country; and his party, Muslim League (N), together with the People's Party won a resounding electoral victory. Musharraf's supporters were badly beaten, denoting a popular rejection of the incumbent dictator.

Musharraf's fall from grace has been attributed to increasingly adverse economic conditions, the wrangle with the judiciary, and to his uncritical support for the 'war on terror'. However, the People's Party leadership, living under the spectre of corruption, also appeared reluctant to move against him, thereby increasing public frustration and placing the coalition with Nawaz Sharif in jeopardy. Finally, threatened with impeachment, Musharraf resigned on August 18, 2008. Soon thereafter, on August 25, the Nawaz Muslim League decided to terminate its coalition with the PPP, accusing it of delaying the restoration of the sacked judges. Meanwhile, suicide bombings and the armed struggle with militants appeared to gain further intensity. With these growing political, economic and strategic uncertainties, the salvation of 180 million people has become increasingly precarious.

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Former President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf meets President Hamid of Afghanistan.

stan were not reconfigured as a national army; they maintained their regimental structures and traditions. Western arms inflows and officers' training further enhanced the dependence of the military leadership on the US.

It could be argued that maintaining an oversized military structure of around a million people was more to meet the Western need for a defence line against presumed Soviet expansion, rather than the protracted rationale of defence against India. The excessive expenditure on the military, comprising an inequitable proportion of the national budget, thereby constituted a diversion of national resources to meet foreign imperialist needs. The denial of social sector and development expenditure, on children's schooling and basic health facilities for the poor, and of essential infrastructure investment in energy, transport and telecommunications, constituted the real costs of the massive military assistance provided by Pakistan to the US.

An essential component of this continuing dependence was the deprivation of democratic rights to the Pakistani people, starting with the failure of the electoral process in the 1950s. Protracted periods of military dictatorship followed, each accompanied by a marked intensification of relations with the US. Even the interregnums of

highly damaging role in Pakistan's social development. If Benazir Bhutto's two administrations, between 1988 and 1997, could claim to be free of military sponsorship, then their legitimacy was seriously undermined by pervasive corruption and nepotism. This perhaps did more harm to the cause of democracy than its enemies could have inflicted. Thus, Pakistan's major political leaders have, almost across the board and unfortunately again in contrast to India, been little more than appendages of the authoritarian state, a combination of military fiat and imperialist manipulation.

The Afghanistan factor

The second contributory factor in the emerging crisis of society and governance has been geopolitical dynamics, and more specifically the events unfolding in Afghanistan. The first phase was the acceptance in the late 1970s of its role in the Western game plan of destabilising the neutrality of Afghanistan, drawing in the Soviet Union, and then expediting its ultimate ruin. In the process, the seeds of many of the problems currently besetting Pakistan were sown. The task of sustaining three million refugees, the greatest act of collective hospitality in human history, now contrasts with the petty venom expressed by Washington's Kabul clients against their erstwhile hosts. To support the Afghan war, Pakistan's borders became

US and NATO invasion and occupation of Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks in New York, apparently engineered by malcontent Arabs inspired by Osama bin Laden, has led to continuing conflict, especially with the resistance movement in the southern and eastern Pashtun areas.

Over 100,000 Afghans are estimated to have lost their lives since the Western invasion. Adding this to over a million dead in Iraq, and to the series of mortifying genocides starting with the destruction of Palestine, many Pakistanis see this as a Muslim Holocaust. In Afghanistan, with a considerable escalation of hostilities, Western forces have extended the conflict to the southern provinces, where the Taliban had retreated. The war threatened to

U.S. Air Force photograph by Tech. Sgt. Joseph McLean.

Migration from South Asia to the Gulf offers important insights into understanding the complex religious, political and economic worlds inhabited by Pakistanis. For the past five years Magnus Marsden has been visiting a group of men from Chitral, Pakistan's northernmost district, who have now made the painful decision to become labourers in the Gulf. Marsden's fascinating account reveals to us not only their motivations and experiences but also a snapshot of how men from contrasting socio-economic backgrounds are sharing their lives together in Dubai's all-male 'labour camps'.

Lords of a Dubai labour camp:

Pakistani migrants in the Gulf

MAGNUS MARSDEN

Earlier work on South Asian migrants in the Gulf has explored the 'cosmopolitan' identity formations made possible by transnational migration flows (Werbner 1999). More recently, South Asian migrant experiences have been shown to be richly permeated by experiences of discrimination, both by Gulf citizens and Western expatriates (Vera 2008). Other anthropologists argue that even if migrants do imagine emitting an "aura of a sophisticated man of the world" on their return home, then everyday life in the Gulf "appears as a self-contained microcosm in which people from many different places are held together yet stand apart, separated by class and ethnicity, and so absorbed by the work at hand that they become oblivious of the world around them". (Osella and Osella 2006).

Fewer ethnographic accounts exist, however, of the forms taken by sociality and subjectivity in the physical spaces in which most Pakistani labour migrants in the Gulf live - all-male 'labour camps' (see also Humphrey 2005). These labour camps, usually large, multi-story concrete buildings, flanked by trucks and cranes, and often in a world removed from the Gulf's notoriously wealthy downtown city centres, could easily be assumed to be the types of setting where labourers would think of and do little other than "working and saving" (Watkins 2003) in preparation for their return home.

Over the past five years I have been visiting men I knew during fieldwork in Chitral, Pakistan's northernmost district, who have made the painful decision to become labourers in the Gulf. These men do not constitute any ready-made class of 'migrant labourers'. They hail, rather, from contrasting socio-economic backgrounds.

Some of them are the sons of high status families who were once employed in respectable government jobs. They fell into serious debt due to rising costs, emerging especially from the expectation that their children should be educated in English-medium, fee paying schools, and their love of a 'life of luxury', an important way in which status, authority and 'full humanity' are displayed and embodied in this one-time princely kingdom. The option then was to migrate to the Gulf. Others Chitralis in Dubai's camps appear to better fit our expectations of 'labour migrants': men from remote and relatively poor Chitrali villages with only very rudimentary levels of formal education and much former experience as labourers in Pakistan's cities.

Such men from poor and isolated backgrounds and Chitral's new middle class of government and NGO employees do share kin and friendship ties. Yet as older forms of status distinction are grafted onto new economic differences in Chitral, the expectation that men should 'sit with their own' is an increasingly vital dimension of the evaluation of proper behaviour. In Dubai's labour camps, in contrast, Chitrali men live

cheek by jowl with people from socio-economic backgrounds very different from their own. What form, then, does everyday sociality take in these camps?

Lords of labour in Dubai

Farid is a Sunni man in his early forties who is married and has five children. An evening with Farid at home in Chitral Town was always memorable: evenings as his guests almost always involved music, poetry and apricot schnapps, often with his many political friends. Farid, himself was a dyed in the wool Pakistan People's

Under construction: the Burj Dubai, the world's tallest building. The actual height is a closely guarded secret and won't be revealed until construction is completed.

Party supporter, and he'd represented the Chitral's medical association union as its elected President. Farid's life in Chitral, according to his brother-in-law, however, had become "without rule" and Farid had eventually "lost control of himself". His small medical shop was crammed with excitable politicians calling for tea, the sight of which led even his most loyal customers to flee. The hospitality often involved fried chicken and bottles of apricot schnapps (tara). So, one day, Farid, now also facing considerable pressure from his wife, approached a friend who had promised him work in Dubai, and some days later he landed in the city.

Three months after his arrival, it was clear that Dubai life was painful for Farid. He suffered 'heart explosion' (hardi phat) for his family, and reminisced about his long gone 'life of luxury'. Importantly he also found spending his days with 'labourers' a drain. He respected these men, he told me, but complained of a lack of understanding with them: "you saw how I lived in Chitral, how could they ever understand?" Farid's anxieties were added to by the nature of his job: for two years he worked in the menial post of 'store man' in a Pakistani-owned demolition company. With time, however, and having discovered that Farid was a trained

paramedic, many labourers in the camp sought out his help for their personal ailments: prescribing the right medicine for a rash here and a case of impotence there, Farid was soon honourably referred to as "Doctor Sahib". At night, however, the Doctor slept in a crowded room with seven other Chitrali and Pukhtun labourers.

Four years later Farid is happier. Above all, he has found employment with a different construction company, which employs him as an 'on site' nurse.

Pakistani workers in Dubai.

His living conditions have also transformed. He has paid off the large bank loan, which led him to Dubai. His room in the camp is now his own, and tastefully decorated with Chitrali embroidery, equipped with air conditioning, a television, DVD player, gas cooker and a fridge, and shared with only two Chitralis who help him with his guests, washing, and often also bring him food. In the evenings he sits on his 'veranda', in reality the camp's roof, often with a vodka and Sprite, and watches the labourers below. Given that Farid lives in a labour camp located in Dubai's industrial sector - al Qus - it is striking that he talks of living an enchanted life, and embodies the behaviour of a Chitrali lord (lal) sitting on a verandah (mukhen) overlooking the amusing if somewhat distasteful behaviour of the "simple" (sadah) labours beneath.

The Doctor's capacity to live in luxury causes tensions between him and other Chitralis in the camp. According to Sohail - the Chitrali in charge of the camp's laundry, and one of Farid's former roommates - until New Year's Eve, 2007, five Chitralis once lived happily together in the Doctor's room. That evening, however, the Doctor told them that they should organise a party in their room and contribute ten dirhams for rum. Sohail's elder brother, who had recently come

from Chitral and had recently been refused a place in the room on the grounds that the Doctor needed the spare bed to host his guests made Sohail pull out of the party, leaving the Doctor with the burden of buying liquor for the New Year: "your children at home in Chitral are chaffing from the cold", he told Sohail, "and you are buying alcohol, you should be ashamed!"

The Doctor had, indeed, quickly become a well known part of Chitrali migrant life in the city. He'd organised Chitrali musical programmes in the city parks that saw Chitrali labourers – including bearded Hajjis – gathering to listen and dance to Chitrali music in Dubai's beachside parks. Most recently, the Doctor Sahib had 'motivated' the wealthier of Chitralis in Dubai to pool together sufficient funds, and pay for Chitral's most famed singer to make a 'tour' of the UAE. The concerts were a success. The singer, indeed, stayed in Dubai for six weeks, mostly sleeping in the Doctor's room. Those days, according to Sohail, were "hectic" (kitigin): Chitrali guests came from all around, even from distant Abu Dhabi. And on one night the Doctor and his friends staged the music proceedings on the veranda, a decision that saw Sohail blamed by the Punjabi 'camp superintendent' for disturbing the peace.

It was not only the Doctor's love of music and mahfils (semi-formal social gatherings) that had begun to disturb the feelings of his roommates. He had not let his interest in politics slip either. From his labour camp room, Farid has also become an active member of the Pakistan People's Party, Dubai wing. In the locked briefcase underneath his bed he keeps newspaper cuttings, which named him as a participant in PPP meetings, and he showed his guests photos him meeting Benazir when she was still alive. Other Chitrali labourers in the camp find Farid's political life in

Dubai rather obscure: "here we are labouring and earning money to send home", said one, "and Doctor Sahib is spending his money on attending meetings and crying over a woman who has done nothing for any of us".

Conclusion

At one level, the Dubai which Farid and his fellow camp dwellers inhabit appears to be remarkably similar to what the Osella's have described as a "self-contained microcosm" where people from "many different places are held together yet stand apart, separated by class and ethnicity". Yet Farid's microcosm is richly shaped by creative personal initiatives on his part, as well as being informed by a dynamic range of complex social relationships that cut across what for he and his fellow Dubai Chitralis are critically important boundaries of class, status and religious difference.

At another level, Farid's changing experiences of Dubai also points toward the complex forms of sociality and subjectivity that arise in such neo-liberal spaces as Dubai's labour camps. These camps are usually thought of as alienating and as devoid of nurturing forms of sociality, which are a valued dimension of life in Chitral (Marsden 2005). Farid and others like him, however, claim to derive pleasure from camp life. In the most unlikely of circumstances, Farid cultivates and tenaciously promotes a luxurious way of Chitrali aristocratic living. Others, like Sohail, see Gulf life as offering very different possibilities for their personal development. When they return home, they talk of being eager to get back to Dubai and resume control over their own lives.

Complex interactions, thus, are taking place between very different and apparently contradictory standards of self-management and presentation, and in the most unexpected of places – Dubai's concrete and apparently dehumanising all-male labour camps.

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Pakistan's legal system has long been associated with human rights violations. In particular, the controversial Zina Ordinance[1], which made sexual intercourse outside marriage a criminal offence. The most pernicious result of this law has been the risk for 'double jeopardy' of rape victims. A woman pressing rape charges risked being convicted of adultery if the suspect was acquitted. The infamous case of Safia Bibi, is the most distressing example of this scenario. Yet, as Martin Lau reveals, there have been gradual improvements in the legal position of Pakistan's women in recent years.

The quiet evolution:
Islam and women's rights in Pakistan

Photograph courtesy of Kristoffel Lieten.

MARTIN LAU

Safia Bibi was a blind, unmarried, girl, whose pregnancy was visible proof of sexual intercourse. She accused her employer, a landlord in rural Sindh, of having raped her. At the trial, her employer was acquitted, but the court proceeded to sentence her to imprisonment. On the basis of being pregnant and unmarried, and her charge of rape unproven, she was guilty of unlawful sexual intercourse. Following international protests, Safia Bibi was eventually acquitted by the court of appeal. However, the rule of evidence that the pregnancy of an unmarried woman was admissible evidence in an accusation of Zina, was left undisturbed. The Zina Ordinance also led to the imprisonment of large numbers of women who had been rejected by their husbands without having been validly divorced. On re-marriage, the former husbands brought accusations of adultery against them, claiming that there

had been no divorce, and that therefore their 'wives' were committing adultery. In addition, the issue of so-called honour crimes - women murdered because for allegedly dishonouring their families through immoral conduct, and forced marriages[2] - has further tarnished the reputation of Pakistan's legal system in relation to the rights of women. Mention must also be made of Muslim family law as applied by Pakistani courts, which discriminates against women in many areas, such as inheritance rights and divorce.

Perhaps surprisingly, the democracy which followed the lifting of martial law and the subsequent death of Zia ul Haq in 1988, increased, rather than decreased, the role of Islam in the legal system. In the decade preceding General Musharraf's regime - 1988 until 1998 - the two ruling parties, led by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, failed to improve the legal position of women. They lacked the will but also the parliamentary majorities required to reverse the current of Islamisation. This, however, tells only half of the story, it omits the important role Pakistan's courts have played in controlling the fate of Islamic law.

The Federal Shariat Court

Most important in determining the position of Islamic law in the legal system was the Federal Shariat Court (FSC). Created, in 1980, to act as the court of appeal in all cases involving the Hudood Ordinances[3], the court was given added jurisdiction, namely the power to invalidate laws deemed to be contrary to Islam, as laid down in the two main sources of Islamic law, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah.[4] Any member of the public could approach the FSC and lodge a complaint that a particular law violated Islam and should therefore be struck down. Moreover, the new court could also examine statutes '*suo moto*', meaning that it could move itself and review a statute. This new jurisdiction was unprecedented in the legal history of Pakistan, and no other country had given its courts such wide powers.

Until the creation of the FSC, only the four high courts and the Supreme Court of Pakistan had the power to invalidate laws, and then only on the grounds that they violated the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights. Some restrictions were imposed on the types of law which the FSC could examine, but overall the effects of the rulings of the Federal Shariat Court on the legal system have been profound.

Most visible is the court's impact in the area of criminal law, where the government was forced to pass the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1997 in order to bring the law on murder and assault in line with Islamic law. As a result, the heirs of a murder victim now have the right to determine the fate of the murderer. They have three options: Firstly, to demand that the murderer is punished; secondly, to agree that he pays a sum of money as compensation, in return for which he escapes punishment; and lastly, to pardon him. A recent PhD thesis concluded that on average eight out of ten convicted murderers avoided imprisonment, or indeed the death penalty, because they were able to pay monetary compensation to the victim's family.[5] Whilst the

The Supreme Court of Pakistan.

new law can be seen as being supportive of the idea of restorative justice, and also as being in line with the customs of Pakistan's tribal areas, the consequences of this legislation have been particularly unfavourable for women, many of whom were killed by members of their own family in the name of honour. In a case where a brother had murdered his sister, it was the father who could pardon his son.

Turning of the tide

Towards the end of the 1990s, after a decade of democracy, the legal position of women living in Pakistan had become worse rather than better. It is curious that matters only began to improve after General Musharraf overturned the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and imposed a state of emergency. In what can be described as a quiet evolution, the tide of the Islamisation has turned, albeit in small, incremental steps. Amendments to Pakistan's criminal law, in the form of several acts, have improved the legal position of women under criminal law. In addition, courts, including the Federal Shariat Court, have bolstered the rights of women in the area of family law and the right to equality. While the changes, which will be described in greater detail, have not revolutionised Pakistan's legal system, they can serve as examples that it is possible to improve the legal position of women living under Muslim law without removing Islamic law from the legal system altogether.

The first significant measure taken by the government occurred in 2004, when the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004 was passed. The law extends the power of judges to punish a murderer who has killed in the name of honour. The sentence can be a maximum of 25 years imprisonment or the death sentence, and can be awarded irrespective of any payment of compensation or a pardon by the representative of the victim. In addition, the amended Article 311 of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 now provides for a mandatory prison sentence of 10 years for so-called honour killings. Aside from dealing specifically - for the first time in Pakistan's legal history - with honour crimes, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004 also made a first attempt at reforming the Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) Ordinance, 1979. It now provides that where a woman is accused of Zina " no police officer below the rank of a Superintendent of Police shall investigate such offence nor shall the accused be arrested without permission of the Court". This amendment is designed to reduce the number of women arrested and imprisoned on false charges of adultery, only to be acquitted on appeal, after having spent many years behind bars. A similar provision has also been introduced for the offence of blasphemy.

Redefining Zina

The 2004 amendment to the criminal law was followed by a complete remodelling of the law of sexual offences in 2006, when the National Assembly passed the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006. The Act does not repeal the Zina Ordinance, and therefore falls short of the demands of the human rights' community, but it does much to address the many injustices and hardships caused by the old Zina Ordinance.

Appended to the Act is a lengthy "Statement of Objects and Reasons". It takes the form of a short essay on the Hudood Ordinances which reads as an interesting exercise in putting the new thinking within the framework of Islamic ideology. Its opening statement establishes that in Pakistan all laws have to be in accordance with Islam and that the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006 is a measure to achieve

Benazir Bhutto. Photograph courtesy of Timesonline.co.uk.

just this, namely "to bring the laws relating to Zina and Qazf, in particular, in conformity with the stated objectives of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan." In an unprecedented manner, the explanatory appendix also acknowledges the criticism of the old law, stating:

> "The Zina and Qazf Ordinance have been a subject of trenchant criticism by citizens in general and scholars of Islam and women in particular. The criticisms are many. These include the lumping of the offence of Zina with Zina-bil-jabr (rape) and subjecting both to the same kind of proof and punishment. This has facilitated abuse. A woman who fails to prove rape is often prosecuted for Zina. ...Her complaint is at times deemed a confession."

The intention of the new law " is to make Zina and Qazf punishable only in accordance with the Injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah, to prevent exploitation, curb abuse of police powers and create a just and egalitarian society." The offence of adultery is the only offence which has been retained in the Zina Ordinance. It is now accompanied by the offence of making a false accusation of adultery, called Qazf. However, even in respect of the offence of adultery, there have been significant amendments to the Zina Ordinance. A new definition of "confessions" has been added, to the effect that it means "notwithstanding any judgement of any court to the contrary, an oral statement, explicitly admitting the commission of the offence of Zina, voluntarily made by the accused before a court of sessions having jurisdiction in the matter". This

new definition is designed to prevent the overlap between the offences of rape and adultery, where failed accusations of rape were converted into adultery charges, on the basis that the woman had 'confessed' to sexual intercourse when she complained of rape, as in the case of Safia Bibi.

A complaint of adultery has to be lodged directly in a court of sessions, thereby circumventing potentially corrupt police officers altogether. The judge hearing the complaint has to examine on oath not only the complainant, but also at least four adult male eye-witnesses, who have on examination satisfied the court that they are "truthful persons and abstain from major sins". These four men have to testify on oath that they witnessed the act of penetration. It is only then that the court can issue a summons for the appearance of the accused. Even at this stage, it is still open for the judge to dismiss the case if he finds that, in his judgement, there are insufficient grounds for proceeding.

New interpretations

Courts are increasingly interpreting Islamic family law in a way which promotes women's rights. This is most visible in the area of divorce laws, where the right of a Muslim woman to dissolve her marriage has been extended by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2006. In *Naseem Akhtar v. Muhammad Rafique* [PLD 2006 SC 293] a wife's suit for dissolution of her marriage, on the grounds that she had developed a hatred for her husband, had been dismissed by the family court and also by the Lahore High Court. The lower courts had consistently dismissed her application on the grounds that she had been unable to substantiate the alleged hatred and aversion. The Supreme Court, however, allowed her appeal and dissolved her marriage, holding that the fact that the lady had started a suit for dissolution of marriage "itself is demonstrative of the fact that the petitioner does not want to live with her husband which indicates the degree of hatred and aversion". The precedent has been set: the act of asking for a divorce is evidence enough of a wife's hatred and aversion towards her husband and the court has no choice but to grant the divorce.

Equally significant is the case of *In Re: Suo Moto Case No. 1/K of 2006 (Gender Equality)* [PLD 2008 FSC 1] where the Federal Shariat Court took objection to the Citizenship Act 1951, according to which only men were allowed to obtain Pakistani citizenship for their foreign spouses. The FSC found the discriminatory provision to be contrary to Islam and invalidated it. It is worth quoting from the decision, since it illustrates the changing attitudes towards Islamic law:

> "Islam is a universal religion. The last sermon of Holy Prophet is the first Charter of Human Rights wherein all human beings are equal. Mankind is one. Allah says in Holy Qur'an that 'He created man and woman from a single being (7:189)' and for HIM 'whose doeth good work, whether male or female and he (or she) is a believer, such will enter paradise. (4:124)' ... We are of the view that section 10 of the Citizenship Act is discriminatory, negates gender equality and is in violation of Articles 2-A and 25 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and also against international commitments of Pakistan and most importantly is repugnant to Holy Qur'an and Sunnah." (p. 16)

In conclusion, amendments to criminal laws combined with the decisions of the high courts, the Supreme Court and the Federal Shariat Court have lead to a gradual improvement of the legal position of Pakistan's women in recent years. Will they last? Musharraf resigned as President in August 2008. Given that many of the positive developments in the law are closely associated with his reign, there is a risk that a differently constituted judiciary and democratically elected governments may reverse this trend. The Federal Shariat Court could, for instance, declare the amendments to the Zina Ordinance to be contrary to Islam. Based on the experience of the 1990s, there must be at least some doubt about the willingness of elected governments to face the wrath of the religious establishment and to press for further improvements of women's rights in the near future.

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Notes

1 For a thorough legal anlysis of the Zina Ordinance see Jahangir, Asma and Hina Jilani. 1990. *The Hudood Ordinance, A Divine Sanction ?* Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.

2 For a comprehensive review of these issues see the Pakistan section of Human Rights Watch, *Global Report on Women's Human Rights*, New York, 1995.

3 The Hudood Ordinances were enacted in 1979 as part of Zia-ul-Haq's Islamisation process. They were intended to implement Islamic Sharia law, by enforcing punishments mentioned in the Quran and sunnah for Zina (extra-marital sex), *Qazf* (false accusation of *Zina*), offences against property (theft), and prohibition (the drinking of alcohol).

4 See Lau, Martin. 2006. *The Role of Islam in the Legal System of Pakistan*. Leiden: Brill.

5 To be published as Wasti, Tahir. 2008. *The Introduction and Application of Shariah in the Law of Culpable Homicide in Pakistan*. Leiden: Brill.

For more than 60 years Pakistan has had a constitutional commitment to providing all children with free and compulsory education. In 1947, M. A. Jinnah stated that "the importance of education and the type of education cannot be over-emphasised"[1], and it was agreed that free and compulsory education would be achieved within a decade, and universal primary education (UPE) by 1967. Ever since, governments have repeatedly come up with policies that claim to be aimed at achieving UPE. The government now expects the target for males to be achieved by the year 2015[2].

Primary education, lagging behind

Following the 2005 earthquake Plan Nederland established a school in a tent camp in Dharyal village in Pakistan's Siran Valley.

Afke de Groot and Kristoffel Lieten

Despite this government commitment, the number of out-of-school children in Pakistan remains significantly high. UNICEF estimates almost 13 million, out of the 27 million children of primary school age (5-9), remain out of school. 7 million of these out-of-school children are girls (SPARC 2004). Furthermore, Pakistan's adult literacy rate of 50 is considerably below the South Asian regional average of 58 (UNICEF 2007). Pakistan's low ranking on the world Human Development Index (HDI) scale (number 136) is due to Pakistan's poor performance in education and in child health care (Lieten 2004; Khan 2005; UNDP 2007). In addition to gender disparities and a low adult literacy rate, education in Pakistan is characterised by urban-rural inequalities, low enrolment, and a high dropout rate. Many institutions within Pakistan, including the government, recognise the poor condition of Pakistan's education system. The Social Policy and Development Centre (SDPC) describes the state of education in Pakistan as "deplorable" (Social Policy and Development Centre 2003).

How can this poor state of education in Pakistan be explained? Experts usually cite the high costs of education, parental disinterest due to social and cultural norms (especially for girls), and the low quality of education due to disinterested teachers, lack of proper physical infrastructure, over-

crowded classes and irrelevant curricula. An additional curse in Pakistan's education system, as Ghuman and Lloyd (2007) have argued, is the fact that teachers are often absent; in their sample from Northwest Frontier Province and Punjab about 35 percent of teachers in government girls' schools and 22 percent of teachers in government boys' schools were absent during unannounced school visits.

Escaping the cycle of poverty

In 2006, the Foundation for International Research on Working Children (IREWOC) conducted an anthropological study at household and village level in rural Pakistan concerning non-enrolment, non-attendance and/or dropout (De Groot 2007). One of the research settings was a fishing village on the coast of Karachi-West in Sindh province. Anticipating a troublesome future, many villagers here believe education to be important, and a means with which their children will be able to break free of their current style of livelihood, and to gain access to other occupations. A worried mother of two young boys explained:

I do not want my son to be a fisherman like his father. The job is very hard. When a fisherman is young and strong, he has to do hard work. When he gets old and weak, he cannot work and will be without a source of income.

However, even though education is perceived by parents and children alike as a way to escape current poverty, many children are still found out of school. The first explanation relates to the child's own calculations. Another explanation relates to the expected future opportunities. Ever since education until class 10 (secondary level) has been available in the village, a significant number of young men and some girls have completed secondary school, but do not seem to be able to escape the cycle of poverty. If they found a job, it was at an abysmally low salary. As a fisherman's wife explained: "Many boys in this village passed class 10, but there are no jobs available to them. In this way education is not good." Some boys therefore chose to become fishermen after all: "It is better to fish, than to be jobless! But now I work as a fisherman. We are from a poor family, so we cannot afford to go to the city for further education."

Quite a number of villagers, however, do perceive education as relevant for everyone, including those involved in traditional occupations. They value how educated men know how to take fish to the market and how to sell it with profit and how they can control all the counting. They realise the benefit of learning Urdu in school, which makes it easier to communicate with people from outside their Balochi village, and they also believe that school teaches them to respect others. Also, the villagers recognise how reading and writing will reduce their dependency on others, and help them to learn

about the world. Reading and writing skills are thus perceived as important by the majority of the village population. Basic skills such as knowing what is right and wrong are perceived as useful for everyone. However, these skills can already be attained with just a few years of schooling, and do not necessarily require ten years of education.

Boys and girls who are not enrolled in school believe that jobs in the city are out of their reach, and they expect to become like their fathers and mothers. They would rather spend time on the beach with friends and relatives, than in a school environment which they find unattractive, and where they cannot learn what they learn in real life.

Most parents have never been to school and they quite often fail to grasp the importance of regular attendance, particularly if teachers are often absent. In a village where men are out at sea, sometimes for more than

Nonetheless, a large number of young girls, not yet old enough to assist in any household work, are still out of school. Some parents consider the distance from their house to the school an unsafe walking distance for their children, and some children are afraid that other children will bully them. Girls themselves also express a fear of punishment by teachers. Others do not know what school is, and are simply not interested in going; especially if none of their siblings, nieces, or friends go to school. Thus, educating girls has not yet established itself as a social norm.

Parents explained that in Balochi culture there should be at least a separate school for girls, which at the time of research was not available in the village. This school should have female teachers only, which is especially essential once a girl grows up. Girls who are out of school replied that the skills they need for the future include cooking, stitching, embroidering,

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Notes
1   Statement made during the First National Education Conference, 1947.
2   Human Rights Commission of Pakistan 2006.

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Dharyal school. Photograph courtesy of Kristoffel Lieten.

Photograph courtesy
of Kristoffel Lieten.

20 days, and where the women tell their children to go to school in the mornings, but then leave the village to fetch water and wood for fuel, who makes sure that the child actually goes to school? In the absence of supervision, the children are somewhat free to decide for themselves what they do all day. If a boy would rather be on the beach, many parents do not concern themselves with his choice. It is therefore also relevant to consider the perspectives of the children themselves. Why do they, or do they not, go to school?

The boys who are normally found on the beach rather than in school can be divided into two groups. First of all there are a number of boys who are asked by their caregivers to help earn money for the household. These boys often show an interest in school, but have come to terms with the fact that school is not an option for them. Secondly, there are the boys who are not interested in school and who generally come from households that do not require them to work or to earn money for their daily needs. These children can be found playing on the beach, or trying to catch some fish from the shore. In their eyes this is a much more exciting activity compared to attending classes where teachers scold or even beat them.

The girl child

Women are not expected to be involved in the fishing profession. The importance and relevance for the girl child in this fishing village has to be seen in a different context. Educating girls is a relatively new concept and it has less priority than the education of boys. Many villagers share the view that it is okay to educate younger girls until they become teenagers and are old enough to help their mothers in the household; from that point onwards they should prepare for their futures as a mother and housewife. Nevertheless, even though educating women is a relatively new concept in the village, the number of girls enrolled in school is increasing. A 16-year-old girl who recently passed class 10 and who was then appointed as a teacher served as an example to others. Unfortunately, many people still disapprove of this trend, as they believe that women belong within the household. Having reached the age of 12, girls are considered to have grown up and are expected to help their mothers with work such as cleaning, fetching water and wood, and taking care of younger siblings. A household with around eight children is normal and it is considered the eldest daughter's duty to assist her mother until she herself gets married and has her own household to maintain. In the case of younger girls, however, it is often easier to just send them to school. Elder girls complain about their younger siblings: "They should go to school, because they have no work and are now just in our way: hanging around the house, and playing!"

washing, and cleaning, which they can learn at home from their mothers. A minimum level of education would be sufficient for a girl to learn how to read and write. Such education might be helpful for girls of all ages, "but not for a job", as was often stated. However, traditions can give way and women's liberation has its advocates, such as Haqim, a father of small children, who considers education as important for his girls as it is for boys:

> Now women do not know anything. They do not speak Urdu. Urdu would help them, for example when people from Karachi come here for a picnic, or when they have to go to Karachi for shopping or to see a doctor. Now they are like animals. They can only speak Balochi.

The considerations among poor people in a poor community in Pakistan help to explain why, in addition to all other constraining factors, the country is far from achieving Millennium Development Goal-2 (achieving universal primary education), which in Pakistan has been a constitutional commitment for more than 60 years.

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Muslim school girls in
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Once synonymous with the 'revolutionary' violence that galvanised Mohajir youth in the Karachi conflict (c.1985-2002), since 2002, MQM-in-government has pursued a modernising agenda of 'progress' and 'development', transforming Karachi's youth culture. MQM's new agenda is not just a question of militancy or modernisation, but rather strategic, historical practices with shared motives and outcomes. Practices reflecting common desires for social advancement, expressed simultaneously in the discourses and practices of violence and of romantic love. This paper is concerned with the ways individuals have been recruited to MQM's agendas of militancy and modernisation.

Violence and love:
the mobilisation of Karachi's Mohajir youth

NICHOLA KHAN

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) is Pakistan's third largest political party representing Pakistan's ethnic Mohajirs, the predominantly Urdu-speaking Indian Muslims who migrated to Sindh following the Partition of India in 1947, and their descendents. Originally formed as the All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organisation (APMSO) at Karachi University, MQM was founded by Altaf Hussain in 1984, who has retained his premiership ever since.

Mohajir militancy was associated not only with the anomaly inflicted by the unequal development of centre-province power relations, and a political generational struggle between Islamic orthodoxy and modernism, but also with the profound failures in democratic political legitimacy over the course of post-independence history. In addition, explanations have accounted for the context of a city at breaking point. In the eighties this was due to the proximal effects of massive economic and demographic transformations, the ethnic competition in Karachi's transport and housing sectors, expanding arms and narcotics trades, and extreme living conditions; in the nineties, it was internecine warfare and military repression (Gayer, 2007). These circumstances produced a dynamic, militant youth culture (Verkaaik, 2004). Karachi's Mohajirs first mobilised an organised, violent response to these pressures in the Mohajir-Pukhtun riots of 1985-6, propelling MQM into the political limelight.

The advent of Pakistan's ethno-nationalist Mohajir party, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), to provincial government in Sindh in 2002 marked a shift in the oppositional basis of political identity. Violence had characterised its political and military involvement in around 15 years of conflict in Karachi. Comparing aspects of that conflict with MQM's term in government, this paper explores practices and discourses around dynamic forms of social and cultural change in urban youth communities in Karachi.

In contrast to MQM's violent transformative agenda in the conflict, more recently the party has structured its strategies for social and political change around a project of 'modernisation', 'progress' and 'development'. These processes, occurring in the last five years, have transformed Karachi's public landscape and culture, especially for its youth. Yet both discourses and political cultures are not as different as they may appear. Modernisation and militancy both have been produced by political agendas and reflect dynamic, strategic variations relevant for MQM's

designs for political power in diverse historical circumstances.

Eruption of violence: the locality
This paper draws on fieldwork and interviews I conducted in a local context, in Liaquatabad, a semi-formal Mohajir settlement in Central Karachi. Known interchangeably as Laluqhet, Liaquatabad runs alongside the Lyari River between 'old' *sabzi mandi* (vegetable market) and *Teen Hatti* bridge, on two sides of S. M. Taufiq Road. It is separated from *sabzi mandi* and the largely Pukhtun squatter settlement *Nashtar basti* by a bridge. A historical site of violent militancy, Liaquatabad experienced severe consequences in the conflict, in the form of inter- and intra-ethnic riots and military repression. Many of Laluqhet's youth are poor and unemployed but educated. Their frustrations were cited as a crucial motivational force for mobilisation to violence within MQM, in a highly contested 'kalashnikov culture'. Now that unemployment, overcrowding, food and rent hikes are again urgent concerns for Karachi's Mohajirs, *sabzi mandi* has become a centre for a dynamic, very different youth culture.

Individual motives
The Mohajir-Pukhtun rioting of October-December 1986 has been described as virtual ethnic warfare, 'unprecedented since the partition of the subcontinent' (Hussain, 1990). MQM mobilised violent responses and in Liaquatabad, Arshad swiftly joined the momentum, marking his initiation as a political militant:

> "One morning in Aligarh Colony and Orangi Town the Pukhtuns killed more than 280 Mohajirs in their homes. By the evening all Karachi knew what the Pukhtuns had done, so the Mohajirs stood up to kill. Our blood was hot, we wanted revenge. I remember that night, it was 14 December 1986... We went to find some Pukhtuns, of course innocent Pukhtuns... We were fourteen boys in four cars. We killed as many as we could find and it was reported in the morning newspapers. That's how I started killing people."

Others joined forces, not for political reasons, but to defend themselves and, later, for the respect and social standing violence entailed. Faisal revealed:

> "We were terrified. The police and army couldn't protect us. Honestly, I felt I had no choice. I was terrified because Laluqhet is next to sabzi mandi market, run by Pukhtuns and Punjabis. I couldn't sleep for five nights, terrified I'd be killed in my home. I bought two guns easily. My father saw the gun in my hand but said 'we have no choice, we must protect our women.' When people feared for their lives I protected them, with my

friends. I risked my life for strangers, so they respected me like a hero. I was protecting innocent people from killers. I had so much respect."

Third-class citizens into power
The intersection of these contexts of ethnic conflicts, political mobilisation and violence, raises questions relating to the diverse range of motives for violence and to the way violence is collective, idiosyncratic and variegated. For Shakeel, they revolved around economic gain and status:

> "We had many weapons and did robberies to finance buying more. We raised money for MQM but undertook ventures to raise personal expenses. There was no law and order in those times. Our group became renowned because we killed several influential police chiefs who had carried out operations and killed our workers. We became famous overnight."

The militants used organised violence to respond to the situation but also to develop a unique identity and gain circumscribed, but effective, power and autonomy. In doing so, they became respected men of the social and political community, usurping their fathers' authority. Their interviews suggest that violence represents a solution to problems they experienced relating to ethnic exclusion, poverty, unemployment and military authoritarianism, especially brutal police practices and military crackdowns, but also that the men played an active role in shaping practices of opposition to their problems.

Extreme violence and killings, beginning with the Mohajir-Pukhtun riots, may thus constitute a rational response to conventional desires for social mobility, careers, status and respectability which have been effectively blocked. Violent action, during conflict, was a potent lever to re-organise exclusionary, repressive practices, respond to violent threats, and to achieve deep (personal and political) desires for transformative change.

The militants become the retainers of MQM's violent ethno-nationalist discourse and acquired social, political and economic advantages. In participating in the performative arena of violent conflict, young Mohajirs forged a reactionary identity that could provide them status and purpose in an alternative world.

Young love's progress
Since my fieldwork in Liaquatabad, Karachi politics, society and public culture have undergone a radical change. MQM has completed a five-year term in provincial government, continues to govern in the city and has undergone a radical turnabout. Having faced the loss of its long-term violent opposition (at least officially) to the state, MQM is faced with having

to generate new ways for creating power and sustaining support. In government, MQM supports state institutions it previously desecrated. In place of 'exclusion' and violent reversal, current discourses emphasise a non-confrontational, modernising rhetoric of 'progress' and 'development'. Alongside the construction of roads, bridges and malls, MQM is also funding, convivially, 'love' marriages and collective marriages (MQM News, 2005). Young Mohajirs, and Karachiites, as Hasan (2007) notes, are increasingly pursuing an upward social mobility through activities that include status-consumerism and romantic love.

These processes of social and cultural re-organisation in MQM have contributed to the emergence of a new apolitical, urban youth who are conspicuous in the rapidly changing landscapes of public space. This is strikingly evident in the city's new green spaces such as *Bin Qasim* Park in Clifton and *Sabzi Mandi* Park, which was developed after *sabzi mandi* market was moved to the city's peripheries, ostensibly to reduce the flow of heavy traffic. Here, 20 years after the Mohajir-Pukhtun riots, young couples enact romantic visions of a better future, assisted by the 'MQM' security guard who ensures they are not disturbed. Irfan and Rizwana visit *Sabzi Mandi* park regularly. They shun the former militant 'heroes' of the conflict and politics generally. Yet, in the light of MQM's achievements in Karachi, they pledge their continued support. They dream of marriage, owning a home, car, private education for their children and foreign travel. The couples share an individualist desire to achieve for themselves what successive governments have failed to provide.

Yet forebodingly, their dreams occur against a backdrop of increasing unemployment, street crime, housing problems, inflation and food shortages. Indeed, by contrast, other residents are experiencing modernisation's more brutal effects. For example, the construction of the new Lyari Expressway, designed to re-route heavy through-traffic, via Liaquatabad, has resulted in the destruction of homes, the burning of settlements and the loss of a quarter million livelihoods (Hasan, 2006). Many more buildings are scheduled for demolition and several former activists are

litigating against the road construction, their former idealistic hopes that MQM would usher in an equitable, just society, in tatters.

Deeper discontent
Thus, militancy and modernisation in MQM express diverse strategies and desires for social advancement and societal transformation, at different historical periods, and have been instrumentalised differently by different social actors. MQM's political shift from a stance of radical militancy to a more conformist position reflects the need to adapt its methods for acquiring political power to being in government. For individuals, violence expresses variegated motives commonly structured around desires for personal and political transformation. Romantic love, reflecting an individualist, progressive agenda, involves similar concerns. Yet, as recent events indicate, development, modernisation and romance within MQM are in tension with continued violence, pointing to people's deeper discontents, deep fissures in the city's well-being, and MQM's political struggles over power.

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MQM activists in A-Area Liaquatabad, 1995. Photography courtesy of the author.

Western Europe has the world's oldest population and most prominent trend of demographic ageing over the next 20 years. Japan is second, which suggests potential for comparisons with Asia and lessons from evaluating European advanced ageing policy. To what extent have Europe's welfare systems achieved socio-economic security in old age? Is its approach to sustainability viable? Are there alternatives? What can Asia learn from the European experience?

A lesson for Asia?
Maintaining socio-economic security in old age:

a European perspective

Alan Walker

Western Europe's combination of declining fertility and death rates have resulted in increased longevity and population reduction. Many of its regional populations stopped growing in the late 20th century, and most will level off or decrease before 2030. By 2015 some will have average ages of between 44 and 50. Until recently policy makers and the public did not grasp the implications of these remarkable transformations. Scaremongering apocalyptic demography prevented rational debate about societal ageing and led to short term fixes rather than long term planning.

Overall, Western Europe's approach is successful, with an average at risk of poverty in old age rate of 12%, but with variations. Countries with corporatist-conservative regimes – Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands – have a poverty risk that declines with age; as pension systems matured, poverty risk shifted from older generations towards younger one-person households and those with two or more children. In contrast, under liberal and southern regimes, particularly Ireland, Greece and Portugal, poverty rates among older people are substantially above the average. Countries with social democratic regimes have the lowest poverty rates for all age groups.

Old age socio-economic security is not purely a function of development but also of social policy. In other words, politics matter. Across Western Europe poverty in old age is a minority problem but with well-known structural divisions: highest poverty incidence occurs among older women, particularly widows; higher poverty risk occurs among the very old; old age income inequalities mirror differences in former employment statuses; and low incomes and poverty among older migrants is a growing problem (Walker and Maltby 1997). Deprivation is higher among the elderly than other age groups across all European countries, but older people themselves give Western Europe's state pension schemes high marks.

The European approach to pension system sustainability

How can this policy be sustained? EU pension systems are continually subject to reforms; the compromise between the original system's aims and the reforms' ideological impetus is precarious. This reform process is part of global sustainability discourses and policies, reflecting the goals of international governmental organisations (IGOs) – the World Bank, IMF and WTO. The IGO role in framing the sustainability discourse should be subjected to close scrutiny. Stone (2004) argues that IGOs function like epistemic or knowledge-based expert communities, echoing the role of national think tanks, though with greater resonance. They have purveyed what look like single-minded policy prescriptions. Directly intervening in Eurasian transition economies and Latin America, they identify issues, help shape global and national debates and propose solutions with authority enhanced by globalisation. The World Bank's 1994 report *Averting the Old Age Crisis*, for example, set the pension reform agenda in the name of sustainability for both North and South (MacKellar 2000; Ervik 2005). Even within the EU these prescriptions have been influential, such as in Italian and Swedish pension reforms (Scharpf 1999; Scharpf and Schmidt 2000; Streeck 1999; Daly 2001).

There is no evidence that European welfare systems are converging towards a neo-liberal regime in which the state's role is residual to the market; restructuring has not undermined their institutional design and core principles (Barbier 2004). However, given the policy direction within Member States, neo-liberal ideas and policy prescriptions dominating current debate over welfare state sustainability could lead to the European social model's fundamental revision (Walker 2005). The UK leads in systemic reforms: labour market deregulation, privatisation, marketisation, switching from universal social security to selective or means-tested benefits, from universal services to a combination of self-help and user changes, and an emphasis on activation. Welfare policy's engine has shifted from social justice to economic investment (welfare's productive role). Most Member States have adopted the 'Third Way' politics of welfare 'modernisation'. Moreover, the 2004 and 2006 accessions of new Member States from Central and Eastern Europe introduced welfare systems transformed by neo-liberal policy directed by the World Bank (Ferge 2002). All this reform activity dented confidence in Europe's pension systems, yet no radical departures have occurred. The economic interpretation of sustainability dominates, but ample references to social policy issues suggest awareness of the risks of 'modernising' the European social model.

Developing a new sustainability paradigm

Global neo-liberal hegemony, which in its pursuit of market interest increases inequality and insecurity, favours the powerful and socio-economically secure, and breaks down the state's role as provider, may undermine the original EU pension system goal of universal socio-economic security in old age. To prevent this, a new approach is necessary. The narrow basis of sustainability discourses and policies – that economic sustainability drives pension and social protection reforms – must be rejected, as this neo-liberal interpretation (the public is by definition not sustainable) entirely lacks a social dimension.

Photograph by Chalmers Butterfield

The 'social quality' paradigm inspires a new approach (Walker 2007). Social quality is 'the extent to which people are able to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of their communities under conditions which enhance their well-being and individual potential' (Beck et al. 1997: 16). Achieving individual social quality depends on socio-economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion and social empowerment. Theoretically, what constitutes the 'social' are the interdependent processes of self-realisation (always gained in a social context) and collective identities that the individual encounters (families, communities, companies). The 'social' is thus the starting point for all relations and policies regardless of whether they are labelled economic or social. Furthermore, social quality's key realm is people's everyday lives.

Four elements of social welfare's potential contribution could establish a framework for a new approach to welfare sustainability. First, in contrast to the present tripartite approach – economic, ecological and social – social quality provides a holistic conception. The economic and ecological dimensions are embedded in social relations and, therefore, within social quality. With social quality as the goal, a combination of ecological, economic and social policies are obviously required, as only a comprehensive

approach will achieve the necessary steps to sustainable social quality. It may be possible to liberate discourses from their economistic straitjacket that in welfare terms offers only a race to the bottom. This paradigm shift would be particularly helpful in Asia, where institutional welfare has negative associations (Gough 1999; Chau and Yu 2005).

Second, a social quality perspective stimulates discussion about conflicts between the ecological, economic and social dimensions of sustainability and sets an agenda for policy makers regarding the impact of all three on social quality. Third, it emphasises outcomes for citizens (socio-economic security, inclusion), which helps to democratise policy making. As citizens gain access to tools to understand and measure their conditions and well-being, policy making is transformed: sustainability gains a political dimension. Fourth, social quality transcends the inherent conservatism of welfare sustainability discourses by raising questions about what is being sustained. Typically, different welfare arrangement outcomes, in terms of social quality, are weighed, and only then is how to sustain them addressed. This spawns many normative issues, for example, the basis for distribution and redistribution. Social quality is open about its normative dimension, permitting variations in social quality goals depending on national development, culture and values. Thus social quality's measurement and policy goals differ across the globe. Core theory and conditional factors remain the same, but their measurement and policy implications are subject to developmental and cultural context.

Transformational power

Social quality can potentially liberate present discourses into a more holistic and participative framework. Rather than focusing only on economic or environmental policies and trade-offs, policy makers would need to test all policies for social quality impact and openly discuss how to achieve social quality and the costs of failure. Economic or financial sustainability, rather than dominating, becomes one question among several addressing society's nature and citizen well-being, entailing a paradigm shift in both social policy analysis and policy making. This is as true and necessary in Asia as it is in Europe. In either, the economy repeatedly subverts social priorities (Walker 1984; Beck et al. 1997; Yang 2003).

The social quality concept's transformational power is illustrated by the EU's main positive policy response to population ageing and pension system sustainability: 'active ageing'. It contrasts with negative retrenchment and emphasises the demand side, especially the neglected fourth pillar of retirement income (Reday-Mulvey 2005). Within a narrow economistic paradigm, however, active ageing policy mainly makes people work longer, which most citizens, especially older people, reject. From a social quality perspective it is possible to reconstruct the active ageing idea into something more comprehensive and potentially liberating. WHO took a step in this direction with its health-oriented approach, which can be expanded into a life course perspective that privileges social relations and interprets economic relations in social terms. Thus it is possible to switch attention from economic/financial goals to broader social considerations, such as the conditions in which people grow old. This refers not only to socio-economic security but all four conditions that determine later life's social quality. This shift also allows older people (and others) to define social quality's objective and normative aspects.

The European concept of social quality has global potential. Asian welfare regimes will never mirror European ones, but dialogue (and comparative research) from our different perspectives can produce a common template to assess everyday circumstances and well-being and develop appropriate policies to ensure the social quality of later life in both East and West.

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ALAN WALKER

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The dialectical relationship between the nation state and zones of relative autonomy isn't unique to mainland Southeast Asia, but it is of particular salience there, demarcating the social cleavage that shapes much of the region's history: that between hill peoples and valley peoples. It led to a process of state formation in valleys and peopling of hills, and left the latter largely absent from the historical record.

'Stilled to silence at 500 metres':
making sense of historical change in Southeast Asia

JAMES C. SCOTT (EDITED BY LEE GILLETTE).

'Non-state spaces' are where the state has difficulty establishing its authority: mountains, swamps, mangrove coasts, deserts, river deltas. Such places have often served as havens of refuge for peoples resisting or fleeing the state. Only the modern state possesses the resources to bring non-state spaces and people to heel; in Southeast Asia it represents the last great effort to integrate people, land and resources of the periphery and make them contributors to the gross national product. The state might dub it 'development', 'economic progress', 'literacy', 'social integration', but the real objective is to make the economic activity of peripheral societies taxable and assessable – to make it serve the state – by, for example, obliging nomads or swidden cultivators to settle in permanent villages, concentrating manpower and foodstuffs. Thus the padi-state was an 'enclosure' of previously stateless peoples: irrigated rice agriculture on permanent fields helped create the state's strategic and military advantage. In fact, the permanent association of the state and sedentary agriculture is at the centre of this story (a story by no means confined to Southeast Asia, which this article targets). The vast 'barbarian' periphery became a vital resource: human captives formed a successful state's working capital. Avoiding the state used to be a real option. Today it is quickly vanishing.

Zomia: stateless highlanders

Southeast Asia's non-state spaces are much diminished, yet one of the world's largest is the vast Southeast Asian *massif*. Sprawling 2.5 million square kilometres across mainland Southeast Asia, China, India and Bangladesh, it's home to 80 million people,[1] hundreds of ethnic identities and at least five language families. It occupies altitudes of 200 to 4,000 metres and can be thought of as a Southeast Asian Switzerland, except that it's not a *nation*; it lies far from major population centres and is marginal in almost every respect. Willem van Schendel argues that these cumulative nation state 'shards' merit consideration as a distinctive region, calling it 'Zomia', a term for 'highlander' common to several Tibeto-Burman languages.[2] It seems an unlikely candidate for region status. Its complex ethnic and linguistic mosaic has presented a puzzle for ethnographers and historians, not to mention would-be rulers. Yet it's impossible to provide a satisfactory account of the valley states without understanding the central role played by Zomia in their formation and collapse. This co-evolution of hill and valley as antagonistic but connected is essential to making sense of historical change in Southeast Asia.

Hill populations are far more dispersed and culturally diverse than valley populations, as if the terrain and isolation encourage a 'speciation' of languages, dialects and cultural practices. Forest resources and open, if steep, land allows more diverse subsistence practices than

in the valleys, where wet rice mono-cropping often prevails. Swiddening (slash-and-burn agriculture), which requires more land, clearing new fields and shifting settlement sites, is far more common in the hills. Social structure is more flexible and egalitarian than in the hierarchical, codified valley societies. Hybrid identities, movement and social fluidity are common. Early colonial officials were confused to encounter hill hamlets with several multilingual 'peoples' living side-by-side, and both individuals and groups whose ethnic identity had shifted, sometimes within a single generation. Territorial administrators were constantly frustrated by peoples who refused to stay put.

But one factor brought order to what seemed to the outsider an 'anarchy' of identity: altitude. As Edmond Leach suggested, looking at Zomia in terms of lateral slices through the topography elucidates a certain order.[3] Many groups settled at a particular altitude range and exploit the agro-economic possibilities within that range. The Hmong settled at high altitudes (1,000-2,000 metres) and plant the maize, opium and millet that thrive there. From overhead or on a map groups appear randomly scattered because they occupy mountaintops and leave mid-slopes and valleys to others. Specialisation by altitude and niche led to this scattering, but travel, marriage alliances, similar subsistence patterns and cultural continuity fostered coherent identities across considerable distances. The Akha along the Yunnan-

A Hmong village.

Thai border and the Hani in northern Vietnam are recognisably the same culture though separated by more than 1,000 kilometres, having more in common with each other than either has with valley people 50 kilometres away. Thus Zomia coheres as a region not by political unity, which it utterly lacks, but by comparable patterns of diverse hill agriculture, dispersal, mobility and egalitarianism.

What most distinguishes Zomia from bordering lowland regions is its relative *statelessness*. While state-making projects have abounded there, few have come to fruition. Hill peoples, unlike valley peoples have neither paid taxes to monarchs nor tithes to a permanent religious establish-

ment, constituting a relatively free, stateless population of foragers and farmers. Zomia's location at nation state frontiers has contributed to its isolation and thus to its autonomy, inviting smuggling, contraband and opium production, and spawning 'small border powers' that maintain a tenuous quasi-independence.[4]

Resistance, refusal, refuge

Politically, Zomia's hill populations have, according to van Schendel, 'resisted the projects of nation-building and state-making of the states to which it belonged'. This resistance has roots in the pre-colonial cultural refusal of lowland patterns and in lowlanders seeking refuge in the hills. During

the colonial era, Europeans underwrote the hills' autonomy as a makeweight against lowland majorities resentful of colonial rule. One effect was that hill peoples typically played little, no or an antagonistic role in anti-colonial independence movements. Lowland states have therefore sought to exercise authority in the hills: military occupation, campaigns against shifting-cultivation, forced settlements, promoting lowlander migration, religious conversion, space-conquering roads, bridges and telephone lines, and development schemes that project government administration and lowland cultural styles.

The hills, however, are also a space of cultural refusal. If it were merely a matter of political authority, hill society might resemble valley society culturally except for the former's terrain-imposed dispersed settlement. But hill populations don't generally resemble valley centres culturally, religiously or linguistically. Zomia's languages, while exceptionally diverse, are distinct from those of the plains. Hill people tend to be animists who don't follow the 'great tradition' salvation religions of lowland peoples. When they do, however, it's likely either different from (e.g. Christianity) or a distinctly heterodox variant of lowland religions (e.g. Karen or Lahu millenarian Buddhism). The absence of large, permanent religious and political establishments makes for a flat, local sociological pyramid compared to valley society where status and wealth distinctions tend to be supra-local and enduring, while in the hills they're confined and unstable.

But something more fundamental is at work. Fernand Braudel cites an unbridgeable cultural gap between plains and mountains:

'The mountains are as a rule a world apart from civilizations which are an urban and lowland achievement. Their history is to have none, to remain always on the fringes of the great waves of civilization…which may spread over great distances in the horizontal plane but are powerless to move vertically when faced with an obstacle of several hundred meters'.[5]

Compare Braudel's assertion that civilisations can't climb hills to Oliver Wolters's nearly identical assertion about pre-colonial Southeast Asia:

'…many people lived in the distant highlands and were beyond the reach of the centers where records survive. The mandalas [i.e. court centres of civilization and power] were a phenomenon of the lowlands…Paul Wheatley puts it well when he notes that "the Sanskritic tongue was stilled to silence at 500 meters"'.[6]

Scholars have been struck by the limits the terrain, particularly altitude, has placed on cultural or political influence. Paul Mus noted, of the spread of the Vietnamese

ZOMIA

Map courtesy of Willem van Schendel.

and their culture, that '...this ethnic adventure stopped at the foot of the high country's buttresses'.[7] Owen Lattimore also remarked that Indian and Chinese civilisations travelled well across plains – 'where concentrated agriculture and big cities are to be found' – but stopped cold at rugged hills.[8]

Such hills also helped make Zomia a *region of refuge*.[9] Far from being 'left-behind' by the valleys' progress of civilisation, hill peoples have chosen to place themselves out of state reach, finding freedom from taxes, corvée labour, conscription, and the epidemics and crop failures associated with population concentration and mono-cropping. They have practiced *'escape agriculture'*: cultivation designed to thwart state-appropriation. Even their social structure could be called 'escape social structure' in its design to aid dispersal and autonomy and ward off subordination. Hill peoples are generally not remnants of 'ab'-original peoples but 'runaways' from lowland state-making. Their agricultural and social practices are techniques to make good on this evasion.

tribes of mainland Southeast Asia are best understood as a fugitive population that came to the hills over the past millennium and a half not only from the Burman, Tai, and Siamese states but especially from the Han Empire when the Tang, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties pressed into southwest China. Their location in the hills and many of their economic and cultural practices could be termed a 'state-effect'. This is radically at odds with older prevailing assumptions of a primeval hill population abandoned by those who moved downhill and developed civilisations. Meanwhile, the valley centres of wet-rice cultivation may be seen as a 'hill-effect' because, historically speaking, the valley states are new structures, dating back to the middle of the first millennium C.E.; because they were formed from an earlier in-gathering of diverse peoples not previously part of an established state; and because early *mandala* states were less a military conquest than a cultural space available to those who wished to conform to its religious, linguistic and cultural format. Perhaps because such identities were newly confected from many cultural shards, the

relationship is also contemporaneous and quasi-oppositional. Older understandings and popular folklore about hill 'tribes' portray them as 'our living ancestors', 'what we were like before we discovered wet-rice agriculture, learned to write, developed the arts and adopted Buddhism'. This grossly distorts the historical record. Hill societies have always been in touch with imperial states in the valleys or via maritime trade routes. Valley states have always been in touch with the non-state periphery – what Deleuze and Guattari call 'the local mechanisms of bands, margins, minorities, which continue to affirm the rights of segmentary societies in opposition to the organs of state power'. Such states are, in fact, 'inconceivable independent of that relationship'.[10]

Griaznov made the same case for the Central Asian steppes: the most ancient nomads had abandoned cultivation for political and demographic reasons.[11] Lattimore insisted that pastoral nomadism arises *after* farming, drawing grassland-edge cultivators who 'had detached themselves from farming communities'.

'...'marginal' tribalism...[is]...the type of tribal society which exists at the edge of non-tribal societies...the inconveniences of submission make it attractive to withdraw from political authority and the balance of power, the nature of the mountainous or desert terrain make it feasible. Such tribalism is politically marginal. It knows what it rejects'.[12]

But in Southeast Asia the view from the valley gains credibility because the modern nation state has, since the Second World War, increasingly occupied the ungoverned periphery. Before that, however, the valley view is at least half wrong, as life outside the state was more available and attractive. Oscillation, not one-way traffic, was the rule. This largely untold story has been obscured by the hegemonic civilisational narrative, despite its historical importance, mainly because of how history gets written.

Toward an anarchist history

Though Southeast Asia has been marked by the relative absence of states, histories of states persistently insinuated themselves in place of histories of *peoples*, because state centres, and their characteristic sedentary agricultural settlements, are the political units that leave the most physical evidence. The more rubble you leave behind, the larger your place in the historical record. Dispersed, mobile, egalitarian societies, regardless of sophistication, and despite being more populous, are relatively invisible in the record because they spread their debris widely. The same logic applies regarding the written record. In a truly even-handed chronology of pre-colonial, mainland Southeast Asia, most of the pages would be blank. Are we to pretend that because there was no dynasty in control there was no history? Moreover, official *mandala* histories systematically exaggerate the dynasty's power, coherence and majesty (as Indrani Chatterjee pointed out to me, such chronicles thus do the symbolic work of the state). If we take them as fact, we risk, as Richard O'Connor noted, 'impos[ing] the imperial imaginings of a few great courts on the rest of the region'.[13]

What if we replaced these 'imperial imaginings' with a view of history as dominated by long periods of *normative* and *normalised* statelessness, punctuated by short-lived dynastic states which left in their wake a new deposit of imperial imaginings? Anthony Day points us in this direction:

'What would the history of Southeast Asia look like...if we were to take the turbulent relations between families as normative rather than a departure from the norm of the absolutist state which must "deal with disorder"?'[14]

He's talking about establishing the *elementary units of political order*. Depending on location and date, such units might indeed range from nuclear families to segmentary lineages, bi-lateral kindreds, hamlets, larger villages, towns and their hinterlands and confederations. All were in nearly constant motion; dissolving, splitting, relocating, merging, reconstituting. Is an intelligible history possible under such circumstances? It's surely more daunting than dynastic history, but studies exist that seek to grasp the logic behind the fluidity.[15] That's the challenge for a non-state centric history: specifying conditions for the aggregation and disaggregation of its elementary units.

If this fluidity inconveniences historians, state rulers find it well-nigh impossible to exercise sovereignty over people constantly in motion, with no permanent organisation or allegiances, ephemeral leadership, pliable and fugitive subsistence patterns, and who might shift linguistic practices and ethnic identity. And this is just the point! Their economic, political and cultural organisation is a *strategic adaptation* to avoid incorporation in state structures. And since state structures (or their ruins) write history, they leave such people out of it.

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When the nation state was born, many hill people continued to conduct their cross-border lives as before. The concept of 'Zomia' marks an attempt to explore a new genre of 'area' studies in which the justification for designating the area has nothing to do with national boundaries (e.g. Laos) or strategic conceptions (e.g. Southeast Asia) but is rather based on ecological regularities and structural relationships that cross national frontiers.

The symbiotic history of hills and valleys

Examining lowland societies as self-contained entities adopts the hermetic view of culture that lowland elites wish to project. In reality, lowland states have existed in symbiosis with hill society, thus it's impossible to write a coherent history of one that ignores the other. Many valley people are 'ex-hill people' and many hill people are 'ex-valley people'. Movement in one direction or the other didn't preclude subsequent moves. Groups have disengaged from a state and later re-affiliated themselves or been seized by the same or another state; a century or two later they might again be beyond state grasp. Such changes were often accompanied by shifts in ethnic identity.

Facets of either society have often been an effect of the other. The so-called hill

An Akha woman. Photography by Thorpi Hennar.

resulting valley self-representations were at pains to distinguish their culture from populations outside the state. Thus, if hill society could be termed a 'state-effect', valley culture could be seen as a 'hill-effect'.

Despite this symbiosis, including a centuries-old, brisk traffic in people, goods and culture between hills and valleys, the cultural divide remains stark and durable. Both populations generally have an essentialist understanding of their differences that appears at odds with historical evidence. How can we make sense of this paradox? First, by emphasising that their symbiotic

Far from being stages in social evolution, such states and nomadic peoples are born simultaneously and joined in a sometimes rancorous but unavoidable embrace of paired symbiosis and opposition.

Ernest Gellner offered a long overdue corrective to 'the view from the valley' or 'the view from the state centre' which deems the 'barbarian periphery' a diminishing remnant drawn sooner or later into 'civilisation'. Political autonomy is, Gellner insists, a choice, applying the term 'marginal tribalism' to emphasise how marginality can be a political stance:

Elephants feature strongly in the mythologies of Hindu and Buddhist literature, and captive elephants have served as symbols of political power throughout South Asia. Historically, the state has sponsored captive elephant management, engendering oral traditions of expertise codified in the *Gaja Sastra* literature. Evidence of this textual tradition is found in Nepal where the Tharu people became the local specialists, dominating the capture and management of elephants, which have served as a commodity for imperial tribute, vehicles for regal hunting safaris, and recently as resources for biodiversity conservation and nature tourism.

Captive elephant management, the Tharu, and the Nepali state

PIERS LOCKE

"The king who is for the welfare and wellbeing of the elephant will be victorious everywhere. The elephant is equivalent to the soul of the king, and so the elephant is to be protected. There is no other thing in this earthly world besides the elephant which has a greater power. To be without elephants is like a night without the moon, or the earth without sunfed paddy. Likewise, if there is a huge army without any elephants, then it cannot be one of any great importance and grandeur."

This encomium from a veterinary treatise issued by the Nepali Royal Palace sometime prior to 1923, is typical of the rhetoric in praise of elephants to be found in such Sanskrit works as *Kautilya's Arthasastra*, the *Hastayurveda* and *Nilakantha's Matanga-Lila*, as detailed in Franklin Edgerton's *The Elephant Lore of The Hindus*[1]. This Nepali treatise is consistent with the ordered information on elephant types and castes, elephant anatomy, elephant capture, and elephant ailments and treatments typical of the *Gaja Sastra* literature.

Edgerton's book is important for constructing the history of captive elephant management, not only because he understands the *Gaja Sastra* texts as constituting a genuine Hindu elephant science, but also because he argues that their substantive content represents the codification of orally-transmitted traditions of practical knowledge. In support of this contention he notes that although their rhetorical form is typical of *pandit* authorship, signature texts such as the *Matanga-Lila* contain over 130 technical words for which there are no clear Sanskrit etymologies. This includes terms applied to elephants in each decade of their working lives, which he concludes must have derived from elephant handlers' own vernacular terminology.

Edgerton also notes that much of this encoded knowledge is evident in practical traditions of elephant keeping where knowledge of the technical literature has fallen into abeyance. This he supports by reference to George Sanderson's *Thirteen Years Among The Wild Beasts of India*[2]. Sanderson had been in charge of elephant catching operations in Mysore and Bengal for many years and was one of the few British commentators to pay serious heed to indigenous understandings. Sanderson reported a modern elephant lore that bore a striking resemblance to that which Edgerton found in the Sanskrit literature - as I too found in my research amongst the mainly Tharu elephant handlers of Nepal, where only moribund traces of the *Gaja Sastra* tradition can be found.

Constructing a history of captive elephant management in Nepal

Edgerton's work enables us to suppose that this textual tradition also exerted influence in Nepal, even if much of its wisdom now only persists in the practice of handlers' orally transmitted tradition. Little is known about the history of captive elephant management in Nepal. It has been a neglected topic among scholars, and sources with which to construct a history are few. Those we do have, however, are crucial for understanding the development of the *sarkari hattisar*, or government elephant stable.

A report issued by the Nepali Royal Palace in 1985 contains material indicative of the antiquity of elephant keeping in Nepal[3]. It suggests that elephant-keeping practices were established by the 6th century. It cites records attesting to the Lichchhavi King Mandev (464-505) building a bridge across the Gandaki River in order to transport hundreds of war elephants. Similarly, some of the architectural edifices of the Malla dynasty (12th to 18th centuries) which superseded the Lichchhavi suggest the regal significance of captive elephants. Most notable perhaps is a statue of King Pratap Malla of Kantipur (1641-1671) riding a decorated elephant[4].

Besides their use in war and as regal symbols, records also attest to captured elephants as a currency of exchange in relations of imperial tribute. In his 1924 book *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia*, Wessels cites a report from 1672 that either the kingdom of Morang or Makwanpur paid an annual tribute of seven elephants to the Great Mughal[5]. Although this reference is vague, we can nonetheless be sure that the elephants would have been captured from the sparsely populated, malarial jungles of the Tarai, which were under the nominal control of Nepali hill states.

The Tharu and captive elephants

These elephant capture operations would have been performed by the Tharu, the primary indigenous population of the Tarai, known as malarial-resistant pioneer agriculturalists who cleared jungle, captured and raised boar, and fished from the rivers. The *Panjiar* documents attest to this. A remarkable collection of 50 state-issued documents gathered over a period of 20 years by a Tharu man named Tej Narayan Panjiar, they provide the first definitive records connecting the Tharu to the capture and management of elephants in state-sponsored stables[6]. From these documents we learn that ultimately all elephants were royal property, that the elephant stable or *hattisar* was an institution of the state that received funds for the upkeep of elephants and salaries of staff, that the capture of elephants was rewarded with grants of land, that locals were required to supply their labour for elephant hunts in lieu of tax obligations, and also about the origins of some of the ranks and roles that structure the contemporary *hattisar*.

Although elephants were kept in the state *hattisar*, there is evidence that rights of usufruct were granted to individuals. Gifts of elephants were sometimes made for services rendered, especially since the Tharu were allowed to use elephants in their agriculture and logging. Indeed, this privilege was supposed to justify taxing local communities on their harvests when not providing obligatory labour (*jhara*) in elephant hunts (*hatti kheda*).

But some captured elephants were simply too precious to be awarded to locals, as in the case of Daya Raut who presented the King a one tusked elephant (*ek danta hatti*) during a royal visit at Hariharpur. Such an elephant was auspicious due to its likeness to Ganesh the elephant headed god, typically represented with a broken tusk. According to a document issued in 1827, for this Daya Raut was awarded the revenue collecting rights to Babhani village within Cherwant *praganna* (an administrative area) in Bara district. This was in addition to a previous document from 1820 in which he was awarded a grant of land and a turban of honour (*pagari*) for his service to the state. Clearly, involvement with the elephant business could yield considerable wealth and power in this era.

The aforementioned document of 1820 has further historical utility. It urges Daya Raut to continue performing capture operations according to the *jaghiya* and *khor kheda* methods (the former involving chasing, lassoing and tethering; the latter herding into a prepared enclosure), to obey the instructions of the *daroga* (the stable manager), and to enjoy the customary taxes and income from performing the elephant training function (*sidhali rautai*). Besides the *raut* and the *daroga*, other documents refer to the *subba* (another term for a manager, not specific to the *hattisar*), and indeed these designations still persist in the institution of the *sarkari hattisar* in contemporary Nepal.

The age of Shikar and after

Another key source is Evelyn Arthur Smythies' 1942 book *Big Game Shooting in Nepal*[7]. Chief Conservator of Forests for Uttar Pradesh in British India, Smythies also served as an advisor to the government of Nepal. His book is primarily a hagiographic account of the hunting exploits of Juddha Shamsher Rana, the ruler of Nepal, said to have killed over 550 tigers during a 33 year period. It is significant for its accounts of regal hunting (*shikar*), such as occasions entertaining King George V in 1911, and Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India in 1938.

Smythies describes the ring hunting technique, considered unique to Nepal. It probably developed from the *khor kheda* method of elephant capture, in which prey would be encircled by about 300 elephants, into which the hunter would enter to shoot from the back of an elephant favoured for bravery. During my field research, Bhagu, a famous retired handler known as 'The King's Mahout', recalled participating in such a spectacle as recently as 1960, when King Mahendra entertained Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom. The staging of such grand events reveals the need to maintain a large population of captive elephants through an extensive network of *hattisars*.

This last episode in the age of *shikar* represented an opportunity for the recently re-instated Shah monarchy to assert itself after the ignominy of the rule of the Ranas (ousted in 1951 in the wake of Indian independence). Indeed, the numbers of *sarkari hattisar* had shrunk during the early 20th century, re-expanding at the behest of the resurgent Shahs[8]. This also represented a transition into a new era with elephants serving new purposes. Forests were no longer protected as hunting reserves, but as national parks dedicated to biodiversity conservation and nature tourism. King Mahendra granted the hunter John Coapman permission to establish the Tiger Tops safari lodge in 1963, from which guests viewed wildlife from elephant back, shooting with cameras rather than rifles, thereby pio-

Phanit bathing his elephant. Part of an elephant's daily routine is to be taken for at least one bath. An experienced handler will be able to bathe his elephant without himself getting wet. Courtesy of the author.

Elephant handlers are responsible for more than just meeting their elephants' basic nutritional needs; they are total carers, and this can even extend to giving them a pedicure! Courtesy of the author.

Bishnu Chaudhury with Erawat Gaj. Bishnu Chaudhary has worked with elephants for 17 years, and driven Erawat Gaj for 14 years. Erawat Gaj is the tallest male elephant in Chitwan and plays a key role in the training of young elephants. Courtesy of the author.

neering a new tourist industry in Nepal. And years later, the ring method was again deployed from 1986 until 2003 during the rhino translocation programme which helped re-establish breeding populations of the Asian rhino in the Bardia National Park and the Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve in the western Tarai.

This modern era of captive elephant management has seen elephants deployed in service to the new network of national parks and wildlife reserves, the embrace of western veterinary management, and the establishment of a captive breeding programme. The *hattisar* has also changed from a relatively autonomous and exclusively Tharu institution towards one increasingly integrated with the bureaucracy of nature conservation. With in-migration to the Tarai in the wake of deforestation, the USAID

anti-malarial programme and Rapti flood refugee resettlement in the 1950s[9], the ethnic demography of the *hattisar* has also changed, so that Tamang and Newar peoples are additionally represented among the ranks of *hattisare*. Nonetheless, my research shows that the *hattisar* retains its distinctively Tharu character, and that the regulating authorities are yet to appreciate the full extent of the handlers' indigenous skill and knowledge in caring for elephants. A current epidemic of elephant tuberculosis holds out the possibility of greater co-operation and mutual understanding, as well as the impetus to recover threatened traditions of ethno-veterinary care and specialist local environmental knowledge[10].

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10 Elephant Care International are working with Nepali authorities to combat the TB threat (which is not limited to Nepal's elephants), see: http://www.elephantcare.org/tbnepal.htm

This article is based on a forthcoming monograph entitled '*Servants of Ganesh: Elephant Handlers in Nepal*'.

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Kunal Basu is the Indian author of three acclaimed novels - *The Opium Clerk* (2001), *The Miniaturist*, (2003) and *Racists* (2006). His most recent work, The Japanese Wife (2008), is a collection of short stories, the title story of which has been made into a film by a fellow Bengali and filmmaker, Aparna Sen. Ahead of his arrival in the Netherlands to attend the Amsterdam India Festival (12-30 November 2008), Rituparna Roy caught up with Basu in his native Kolkata.

In conversation with Kunal Basu

RITUPARNA ROY

RR: You were born and brought up in Kolkata. How much has this city shaped your sensibility?

KB: Substantially. Particularly because I grew up at a time when this city was in turmoil - the 70's. The 70's brought together lots of different things: experimental theatre, a burst of poetry and poetry magazines, college activism; it brought urban violence, rebellious students. And all of that left its mark on me. I was a political activist; I was a theatre actor and director; I wrote poetry and brought out [poetry magazines]. I arranged film shows on campus and interviewed film directors. So, as an insider – the city seeped into me in every possible way.

RR: You have very illustrious parents?

KB: They were uncharacteristic for their age. They belonged to the middle class, but did not have typical middle-class sensibilities or values. They were avant-garde. Both had actively engaged themselves in literary, cultural and political works. My father was a member of the Communist Party and a publisher, my mother an actress and an author. Their friends were authors, poets, politicians, theatre people. And so, they were unusual for their times. Bohemians in their own way.

RR: And how have they influenced you?

KB: This was very much a household of the arts. My mother was a stage actress and my father was very broadly read. He knew many languages. So, he would bring the world to our dinner table. They were not different, but they had their own inputs into my cultural portfolio.

RR: You started with poetry, continued with the short story, then came to the novel. Did you set out to be a historical novelist?

KB: I started writing in Bangla. I used to write Bengali poetry. I am a bilingual author; not one of those Indian writers who practices his craft only in English. I was definitely influenced by historical novels. How can you not be when you are a Bengali? Romesh Chandra Dutta, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. I'm sure they have all tainted my palette. Dickens, Zola, they must have tainted my palette in some respects too. It's not a question of taking a conscious decision, " I'm now going to write a historical novel. I'm now going to write a contemporary novel. I'm now going to write a Bengal novel." No, I just think of stories.

RR: How much of a scholar does one need to be in order to be a good historical novelist?

KB: One must tread with caution. If you are too good a scholar, then you lose the novelist in you. And if you are completely oblivious to research, you'll make mistakes and your readers will find out. I need research for two reasons: One, to make the story that I've contemplated in my mind believable to an audience. You see, if I wrote a story that is set in Akbar's reign and write, "Akbar was assassinated". OK. It would be so patently wrong that people will say, "No no no. This is wrong." And this confirmation of that historical fact will render my tale useless. I'll not be able to carry the reader with me. So, you need research in order to bring the reader along. The second reason why historical research is interesting for me is that it fertilises my imagination. I read about different things - maybe a snippet of a character somewhere, maybe a small event - and I say, "What if that event was positioned differently in a story? How would that turn out to be?" So, it fertilises imagination, but one shouldn't be too hung up with historical research.

RR: Which novel has been the most challenging in terms of recreating the past?

KB: Each have been challenging in their own way. When I was writing *The Miniaturist*, a friend of mine said, "How are you going to write dialogue for them? You haven't seen the Mughals. They were Muslims, you're not. How would you write dialogue for them". And I said, "Hopefully, the story would seep into me enough that when I speak with my pen, it would be the words of Bihzad and Zuleikha and others." I shouldn't try too hard. If I tried too hard to construct what the sentences should look like, I would miss the thread. *Racists* was particularly challenging because it's a novel of

the 19th century. Very little of Asia. Very little of India, in fact. Not only was it a challenge with history, but also a challenge of relationship. A romance between a European man and a European woman. How would I be able to recreate their romance? So, that was a challenge in itself.

RR: Is romance essentially different in different parts of the world?

KB: I think that fundamentally it isn't. But I think its manifestations are different. You know, when it rains, we romantic souls from the valley, we conjure up certain manifestations of romance. Like we have Radha-Krishna, etc. etc. But when it rains, what does a European conjure up? And a lot of communication is non-verbal. I intuitively know how I would communicate with somebody I was romantically interested in, in the non-verbal sense. Would it be the same for the Europeans?

RR: Reading your work, I think two qualities stand out: You seem to have no overt thematic preoccupations. Your first book was about opium trade in Asia, second about a Mughal artist, third about racial science. In terms of time, place, theme, they have nothing in common. Secondly, nothing of your personal life is transmuted directly into fiction. Do you see these as fundamental qualities of your writing?

The Amsterdam India Festival takes place 12 - 30 November 2008.
For more information www.indiafestival.nl

KB: Some commentators have said that a thread that runs through my writing is the theme of compassion. And the power of compassion to overcome personal tragedies, personal circumstances, as well as civilisational challenges. In *The Opium Clerk*, certainly; in *The Miniaturist*, differently, at a personal level; and in *Racists*, at a cross-civilisational level. Again, you know, I don't consciously think too much about what the connectivity is; what the unifying themes are. I'm moved by stories. And I'm sure there's deep autobiography. You know, I would like to make a distinction between surface autobiography and deep autobiography. I'm a person moved by social justice, I'm a person moved by romance, by inspiration, by compassion. And those will somehow make their presence felt in my books. But I don't have a plan. I don't have a grand strategy.

RR: Who are the authors you most admire? And why?

KB: Many of them actually. I've said this many times. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. He, to me, is a complete package. His characters, his settings are unique and different. In some sense, curiosity evoking. He never wrote classics of the kitchen sink. Which is something that I often get into for trouble saying, but I say it. I'm not interested in writing classics of the kitchen-sink. And I think it is Bankim Babu's influence on me. He

Kunal Basu. Courtesy
www.kunalbasu.com

can evoke visual, aural and situational cues - you can actually hear nature, you can see it. The sensuous quality of his writings is very strong, which I quite admire. He is great in creating drama. His dialogues are brilliant. And the way he way he steps out of his writings and takes the reader into confidence... Rajsingha – "Pathak, tumi ki byakul chakhhu dekhiyachho?" (Reader, have you seen anxious eyes?). So, definitely Bankim; no question.

I'm definitely moved by Dickens because of – again – the descriptive richness. In *Edwin Druid*, for example, that feeling that you are walking in the docklands of London...and remember, most of us who've read Dickens in India had never been to England. And he created a landscape which was very identifiable. Two people who'd read Dickens could identify that, in their mind's eye. So, definitely Dickens. And Dostoevsky - peeling the onion! The nuances of the characters are never quite what they seem to be. All of these people have been great influences. Somebody was telling me yesterday that I always name Latin Americans: Marquez, Llosa, Isabella Allende. But my writing doesn't resemble them at all. But I love them. And the reason I admire the Latin writers is because they re-affirm, for me, optimism about life and love. That, despite the darkest of despairs and circumstances, you can see the spark of life. You can laugh at things. They are mischievous, you know. There's a playfulness in that writing.

RR: I would like to come to The Japanese Wife now. It's a collection of short stories. Your first collection to be published in English. Was it a deliberate break from novels?

KB: It was purely circumstantial. When Aparna Sen [Bengali actor and film director] decided to make *The Japanese Wife*, it wasn't published, but it had been written, way back in 1996. It came up in conversation in 2006, and Aparna wanted to film it. It seemed to me that it would be odd if the film comes out "Based on the story by Kunal Basu" – but where's the story? And so, she got me to bring out my short stories from my desk draw and work on them. I wrote three new stories for the collection. The other nine were written at different times.

*RR: Two recent novels – Salman Rushdie's The Enchantress of Florence and Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies are about epochs and characters that you've already covered. Akbar is one of the protagonists of Rushdie's novel. The Mughal Emperor, however, first made an appearance in Indian-English fiction in The Miniaturist, which came out in 2003. Ghosh's latest novel is set in the backdrop of the first Opium War. It's about the opium trade, which is again, something you'd dealt with in your very first novel, **The Opium Clerk**, published in 2001. Have you read these books?*

KB: No. Not because I didn't want to read them but because - and that's the casualty of writing fiction for me, something I'm not happy about - in my other life, I also write academic non-fiction. I've no time to read other people's fiction. Which is a sad confession to make, but it's true. I'd be lying if I said otherwise. I've no time to read lots of great authors, lots of great books, cover to cover. I have only skimmed pages of Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; I haven't read Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*; I haven't read cover-to-cover, *Shadow of the Wind*, which is a very interesting book. I haven't read the latest books by lots of authors. There is a cost to everything. And the cost of my writing life has been that I haven't kept up with contemporary fiction.

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To read the full interview with Kunal Basu visit www.iias.nl/newsletter

In conversation with Kunal Basu

FULL INTERVIEW

Kunal Basu is the Indian author of three acclaimed novels - **The Opium Clerk** (2001), **The Miniaturist**, (2003) and **Racists** (2006). His most recent work is a collection of short stories, The Japanese Wife (2008), the title story of which has been made into a film by a fellow Bengali and filmmaker, Aparna Sen. Ahead of his arrival in the Netherlands to attend the Amsterdam India Festival (12-30 November 2008), Rituparna Roy caught up with Basu in his native Kolkata.

Rituparna Roy

RR: You were born & brought up in Kolkata. How much has this city shaped your sensibility?

KB: Substantially. Particularly because I grew up at a time when this city was in turmoil - the 70's. The 70's brought together lots of different things: experimental theatre, a burst of poetry and poetry magazines, college activism; it brought urban violence, rebellious students. And all of that left its mark on me. I was a political activist; I was a theatre actor and director; I wrote poetry and brought out [poetry magazines]. I arranged film shows on campus and interviewed film directors. So, as an insider – the city seeped into me in every possible way.

RR: You have very illustrious parents?

KB: They were uncharacteristic for their age. They belonged to the middle class, but did not have typical middle-class sensibilities or values. They were avant-garde. Both had actively engaged themselves in literary, cultural and political works. My father was a member of the Communist Party and a publisher, my mother an actress and an author. Their friends were authors, poets, politicians, theatre people. And so, they were unusual for their times. Bohemians in their own way.

RR: And how have they influenced you?

KB: This was very much a household of the arts. My mother was a stage actress and my father was very broadly read. He knew many languages. So, he would bring the world to our dinner table. They were not different, but they had their own inputs into my cultural portfolio.
We learnt about Engels when we were very young. I started reading Jean Paul Sartre when I was 12.

RR: That was precocious.

KB: Very precocious.

RR: But you understood it?

KB: I'm sure I didn't. I was reading **Being and Nothingness** which is one of Sartre's most difficult books. And my father said, "What are you reading?" And I said, "I'm reading **Being and Nothingness**. And to his credit, he said, "Oh".

RR: He didn't make fun of you?

KB: No. And so a lot of that was... the world being imported on our dinner table. My mother being a practitioner in Bangla Sahitya, my father, too, published a lot of Bengali authors. including Manik Bandyopadhyay, whose birth centenary it is this year.

RR: He published all his books?

KB: No. He published "**Uttarkaler Galpo Sangroho**" – his collection of short stories. He was very much known to our family. In fact, [my mother] has just written a small piece on Manik Bandyopadhyay - a sort of memoir. He died in 1956 - the year I was born. So, I'd like to believe that – if one believes in the transmigration of soul - he just might have migrated in my direction.

RR: You started with poetry, continued with the short story, then came to the novel.

KB: I started writing in Bangla. I used to write Bengali poetry. I am a bilingual author; not one of those Indian writers who practices his craft only in English.

RR: I will just interrupt you here and say that I find you and Kiran Nagarkar a study in contrast. Because he started with Marathi and then left Marathi for English. As far as your novels are concerned, you started with English and are now (if I'm right) contemplating a novel in Bangla.

KB: Yes, I would very much like to.

RR: In this context, I would like your take on the vexed question of 'English vs. vernacular' which has been raging in India for decades somehow and never seems to end.

KB: I'd disagree with you on that. I don't think it is a vexing question. It's a question which is quite irrelevant. Indians are a very strange breed. We are the only people on earth who are truly bilingual. And by truly bilingual, I don't mean people who can read and write a standard English and whatever their local language be – in our case, it is Bangla – but we live in two streams of consciousness. I mean think of our greats. Think of Rabindranath Tagore. Think of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. Think of Michael Madhusudan Dutta. A whole number of social scientists - think of Amartya Sen - have made great contributions in both languages. This is our suit. This is our strength.

A large part of the reading public does not care about these arguments. There'll always be detractors. Regardless of what you do, there'll always be detractors. And, you know, this is no bad thing. Sometimes you need to keep the pot boiling. And there will always be people who will take different views. I refuse to concede that this is a significant debate. It is not. Look around, who's debating it? A few journalists, once a year or twice a year, somebody would say something. I don't think this is an important thing in our consciousness.

RR: Did you set out to be a historical novelist – or it just happened to you because you were innately attracted to the genre?

KB: I was definitely influenced by historical novels. How can you not be when you are a Bengali? Romesh Chandra Dutta, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. I'm sure they have all tainted my palette. Dickens, Zola, they must have tainted my palette in some respects too. It's not a question of taking a conscious decision, "I'm now going to write a historical novel. I'm now going to write a contemporary novel. I'm now going to write a Bengal novel." No, I just think of stories.

RR: But how do you account for the fact that 3 of your novels have been historical?

KB: Because I am in love with history.And my fourth one might still be a historical novel. So, who knows? My 12 short stories are not historical...

RR: How much of a scholar does one need to be in order to be a good historical novelist?

KB: One must tread with caution. Because, if you are too good a scholar, then you lose the novelist in you. And if you are completely oblivious to research, you'll make mistakes and your readers will find out. I need research for two reasons: One, to make the story that I've contemplated in my mind believable to an audience. You see, if I wrote a story that is set in Akbar's reign and write, "Akbar was assassinated". OK. It would be so patently wrong that people will say, "No no no. This is wrong." And this confirmation of that historical fact will render my tale useless. I'll not be able to carry the reader with me. So, you need research in order to bring the reader along. The second reason why historical research is interesting for me is that it fertilises my imagination. I read about different things - maybe a snippet of a character somewhere, maybe a small event - and I say, "What if that event was positioned differently in a story? How would that turn out to be?" So, it fertilises imagination, but one shouldn't be too hung up with historical research.

RR: Which novel has been the most challenging in terms of recreating the past?

KB: Each have been challenging in their own way. When I was writing *The Miniaturist*, a friend of mine said, "How are you going to write dialogue for them? You haven't seen the Mughals. They were Muslims, you're not. How would you write dialogue for them". And I said, "Hopefully, the story would seep into me enough that when I speak with my pen, it would be the words of Bihzad and Zuleikha and others." I shouldn't try too hard. If I tried too hard to construct what the sentences should look like, I would miss the thread. *Racists* was particularly challenging because it's a novel of the 19th century. Very little of Asia. Very little of India, in fact. Not only was it a challenge with history, but also a challenge of relationship. A romance between a European man and a European woman. How would I be able to recreate their romance? So, that was a challenge in itself.

RR: Is romance essentially different in different parts of the world?

KB: I think that fundamentally it isn't. But I think its manifestations are different. You know, when it rains, we romantic souls from the valley, we conjure up certain manifestations of romance. Like we have Radha-Krishna, etc. etc. But when it rains, what does a European conjure up? And a lot of communication is non-verbal. I intuitively know how I would communicate with somebody I was romantically interested in, in the non-verbal sense. Would it be the same for the Europeans?

RR: At the end of your first novel, you cite sources. And I observed that in the next two you haven't. Is it because you were more confident of your material? Or is it that it didn't matter to you anymore?

KB: Actually, in the first novel – the sources fertilised my imagination a lot. The clipper ships, Canton, reading about Canton, Kuching – which I've never visited. Therefore, the literature was a very significant part of my writing.

I don't think I read as much for *The Miniaturist*. I don't think there were those very significant non-fictional works that I read and said, "Yes, actually I can trace my inspiration to that." But I can trace – I forget the titles now - the clipper ship journey from Calcutta to China in *The Opium Clerk* to some very boring, functional books that I'd read up about the opium clippers.

RR: And as an Indian, probably, you were already very familiar with Mughal history?

KB: That was the most surprising thing. That I completely forgot how much I knew about the Mughals, until I started working on it. And for **Racists** as well. I just wanted to read enough about Racial Science in order to locate the debate between Bates and Belavouix. But then I wanted to move away as far as I can, as far as I could from Victoriana – because I didn't want to sink in Victoriana. You can actually drown in Victoriana – there's so much literature, that I actually wanted to move away from it. So, the sources were not all that inspiring for me to list at the back of the book.

RR: Reading your work, I think two qualities stand out: You seem to have no overt thematic preoccupations. Your first book was about opium trade in Asia, second about a Mughal artist, third about racial science. In terms of time, place, theme, they have nothing in common. Secondly, nothing of your personal life is transmuted directly into fiction. Do you see these as fundamental qualities of your writing?

KB: Some commentators have said that a thread that runs through my writing is the theme of compassion. And the power of compassion to overcome personal tragedies, personal circumstances, as well as civilisational challenges. In **The Opium Clerk**, certainly; in **The Miniaturist**, differently, at a personal level; and in **Racists**, at a cross-civilisational level. Again, you know, I don't consciously think too much about what the connectivity is; what the unifying themes are. I'm moved by stories.
And I'm sure there's deep autobiography. You know, I would like to make a distinction between surface autobiography and deep autobiography. I'm a person moved by social justice, I'm a person moved by romance, by inspiration, by compassion. And those will somehow make their presence felt in my books. But I don't have a plan. I don't have a grand strategy.

RR: Who are the authors you most admire? And why?

KB: Many of them actually. I've said this many times. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. He, to me, is a complete package. His characters, his settings are unique and different. In some sense, curiosity evoking. He never wrote classics of the kitchen sink. Which is something that I often get into for trouble saying, but I say it. I'm not interested in writing classics of the kitchen-sink. And I think it is Bankim Babu's influence on me. He can evoke visual, aural and situational cues - you can actually hear nature, you can see it. The sensuous quality of his writings is very strong, which I quite admire. He is great in creating drama. His dialogues are brilliant. And the way he way he steps out of his writings and takes the reader into confidence... **Rajsingha** – "**Pathak, tumi ki byakul chakhhu dekhiyachho?**" (Reader, have you seen anxious eyes?). So, definitely Bankim; no question.

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RR: Which is your own favourite among your novels? Do you have one?

KB: I haven't written my favourite novel yet.

RR: Do you go back to them? Do you read your own books for pleasure?

KB: Very rarely would I do that. Once in a while, if I… when I feel depressed, I go back to parts of *The Miniaturist* because it reminds me what Bihzad went through. Because, in many ways, that is the challenge of all creative people. Creative people want recognition. "See me. Read me. Love me" – that's what people want. And that's what he wanted. And never got it. But it took a long time for him to realise why was he engaged in painting, anyway?
I haven't reached that stage yet.

RR: I would like to come to *The Japanese Wife* now. It's a collection of short stories. Your first collection to be published in English. Was it a deliberate break from novels?

KB: It was purely circumstantial. When Aparna Sen [Bengali actor and film director] decided to make *The Japanese Wife*, it wasn't published, but it had been written, way back in 1996. It came up in conversation in 2006, and Aparna wanted to film it. It seemed to me that it would be odd if the film comes out "Based on the story by Kunal Basu" – but where's the story? And so, she got me to bring out my short stories from my desk draw and work on them. I wrote three new stories for the collection. The other nine were written at different times.

RR: And how was it like working with Aparna Sen?

KB: I didn't write the screenplay - she wrote the screenplay. I would give her my impressions and my views. She would write parts of the screenplay and e-mail it to me. We had copious e-mail exchanges. Sometimes we met as well. When I was here [in Kolkatta], passing by.
It was great. I think she recognised the story for its essence.

RR: She calls it 'a modern-day fairy tale'.

KB: We were both on the same page - in terms of what the essence of the story was - there were no quarrels, there was no falling out, because we knew that this is what the story is about.

RR: Your association with films has been a long one. You've acted - as a child – in Mrinal Sen's films; you've written, narrated and directed documentaries. But which have you enjoyed more?

KB: I don't enjoy being a director. In fact, my directorial foray was very limited.
I think filmmaking is very arduous. It's very challenging. For me, it's working with lots of people and getting everybody to move in one direction and get something done. I can barely live with my own mind, let alone the minds of so many people. So, that's not my forte at all. But I quite like the notion of an author who has a toe into cinema largely because I think the sibling arts are important for me. You see, I'm not attracted by authors who never dip into art or into performances or into music, or by artists who never read anything.

RR: You've acted on the stage. You know, a critic likens you to one of the characters in your novel, *The Miniaturist* - the character called the Afghan. He's a sort of chameleon, and the critic says, "Basu is a bit of a chameleon himself, a shape-shifter." Do you agree with that?

KB: Not any more. I think that when I was growing up I was into many different things. If that makes me a chameleon, I'm happy to be a chameleon. But if a chameleon means a

dilettante, I don't think I'm a dilettante. Whatever I've done, I've done fairly seriously and reasonably well. But I think writing is my key passion.

And what do you think about publishing in India? Is it looking up?

I'm hugely optimistic about publishing in India. Publishing in India will show the world what publishing should be in the future. In the rest of the world, publishing is jaded. In India, publishing is like an infant which is just learning to crawl. So, it's full of ideas. It wants things. It wants to gobble up. It wants to grow. Sometimes it does things that, you know, some people would say, "Well, this is not the right things to publish. This is not the right way of doing a book." But regardless, it has life and enthusiasm. Whereas in the UK, and in other parts of the world, for a whole variety of reasons, publishing is cautious, publishing has aged and it's risk averse. It wants to ensure everything – which is why it's moved into the domain of imitation. If Harry Potter works, create 200 Harry Potter's. If Dan Brown works, create 200 Dan Brown's. The safe way. Whereas, in India, people want to read new things. I'm hugely optimistic.

RR: So, will there be a reverse trend now? Previously, at least as far as Indian-English authors were concerned, you first had to publish outside to get attention here.

KB: It's already changing. There are so many authors from India and Asia who are being shortlisted for the Asia Man Booker Award. I think the pendulum has started to swing. I think the rest of the world - not only in technology and other hard-core domains, but in the arts - is beginning to turn towards the East. And I'm very happy for that. There's one other thing I used to say about this: that the Britishers have lost their Empire, but they control the literary pages of this world. You know, I don't think that's going to be the case. In a few decades, Indian publishers and Indian readers will form the core of readership in this world.

And what's your next novel about?

It could be about one of 3 different things. One is a contemporary novel – set in some of the most dangerous parts of the country - Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar - some of the more dangerous parts. It could be a contemporary Indian novel based in those parts. I won't tell you the story – but it's located there. It could be another historical novel which is set away from India, with no Indian connection whatsoever and I've thought of a story like that. And the third one is slightly controversial... I don't want to say anything more on that.

RR: Two recent novels – Salman Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence* and Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* are about epochs and characters that you've already covered. Akbar is one of the protagonists of Rushdie's novel. The Mughal Emperor, however, first made an appearance in Indian-English fiction in *The Miniaturist*, which came out in 2003. Ghosh's latest novel is set in the backdrop of the first Opium War. It's about the opium trade, which is again, something you'd dealt with in your very first novel, *The Opium Clerk*, published in 2001. Have you read these books?

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RR: Kunal Basu, thank for your time and conversation.

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In literature studies interest in the Rgveda (RV) is typically based on the observation of the regular occurrence in hymns of certain textual features, treated as evidence of homogeneity of their genre. It is argued that verbal formulas are "the vehicles of themes and… in the totality of these we find the doctrine, ideology, and culture of the Indo-Europeans" (Watkins 1995), including the Indo-Aryans. Results of a recent computer-aided study[1], however, suggest that the hymns show a less conformity in terms of their lexical structure than previously believed.

Ancient corpus under digital scrutiny:

## deciphering lexical structure of the Veda

ALEXANDRE SOTOV

The qualitative/quantitative divide is not at all foreign to Vedic studies. In the traditional approach style emerges as the mastery of figures of speech: the purpose of the hymns was "to give delight, to both the deity addressed and the listener in general" (Mainkar 1966). This intention, along with the belief in the power of the spoken word as a means of attaining human goals, formed a poetical practice in which different kinds of repetition were central. According to Gonda's study (1959), a stylistic analysis of the *Veda* should go beyond such devices, since their use is constructive rather than ornamental. This laid a foundation for the functional method, which tries to link stylistic features and the production of texts. Elizarenkova analyses the hymns in relation to the structure of the poetic message (Elizarenkova 1995). The formal devices, studied by Jakobson (1960) within his theory of self-orientation of the poetical language, thus acquire a communicative purpose: the hymns dealt with the situation of a gift exchange between the poets and the divinity (Elizarenkova 1995). Similarly, Watkins (1995) treats the technique and the purpose of literary creativity "in the Indo-European times" as a part of the social function of the Indo-European poet as "the custodian and the transmitter" of the tradition.

On the other hand, linguistic features can be analysed irrespective of their function. Bloomfield et al. (1934) describe grammar in recurring *mantras* in terms of formal and, notably, stylistic variants. Quantitative data presented by Wüst (1928) is also descriptive: the distribution of countable features in the collection is its important empirical characteristic, although it is meaningless without a valid category of comparison. Furthermore, corpus approach to lexical analysis was established in Vedology long before the arrival of digital humanities (cp. (Grassman 1964) and more recently (Lubotsky 1997)). Together with the Indological tradition of quantitative research (Fosse 1997) this suggests the necessity of a data-driven analysis of the Vedic lexis, semantics, genre and discourse.

Lexical analysis of the ancient corpus

Uncovering whether or not there is empirical evidence of a relationship between word usage and an interpretable typology of hymns may help to better understand the phenomena, which influenced the choice of vocab-

Fig.1

Fig.2

Fig.3
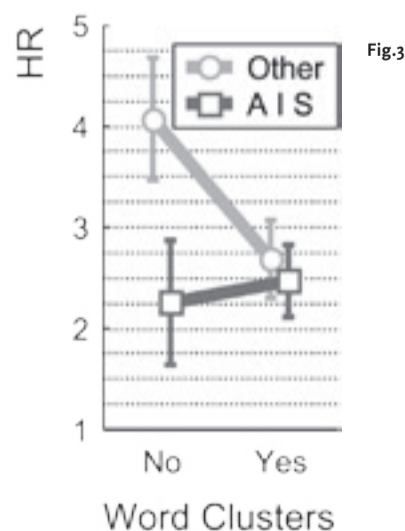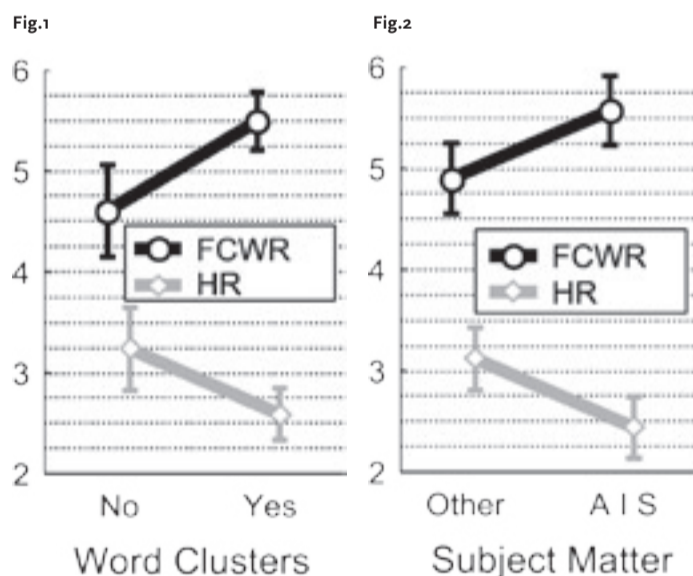
ulary by the Indian rhapsodes. The hymns are part of a unique corpus, which features traditional lists of subject matter and authors, as well as certain schemes of internal arrangement (Witzel 1997). The texts' subject matter and indications of poetic family attribution, refrains and the location of a text in the 'family core', are obvious candidate categories of comparison of the lexis of the hymns. The latter can be studied with the help of various statistics of lexical diversity or richness, such as the type-token (TTR) and *hapax* (HR) ratios, which show how inclined the authors were to repeat the same words and to use rare, highly specialised vocabulary (see Biber 1995). Another such measure is the ratio of frequent content word tokens (FCWR), since common lexical items correspond to the vocabulary of the typical formulas and mythological representations. In a sample of size-adjusted *pāda* texts, around 25 per cent of the collection, lexical diversity differs significantly between the hymns to 'popular' deities, Indra, Agni, and Soma, where repeated text fragments (clusters) were found, and those dealing with other topics and void of repetitions. The former texts exhibit a higher rate of frequent content words and contain fewer hapaxes. The differences are minute, yet statistically significant: Figures 1-3 show results of the ANOVAs comparing means in the respective groups of hymns. Books appear to differ as well: family core scores higher on TTR (see Figure 4)[2].

Fig. 4
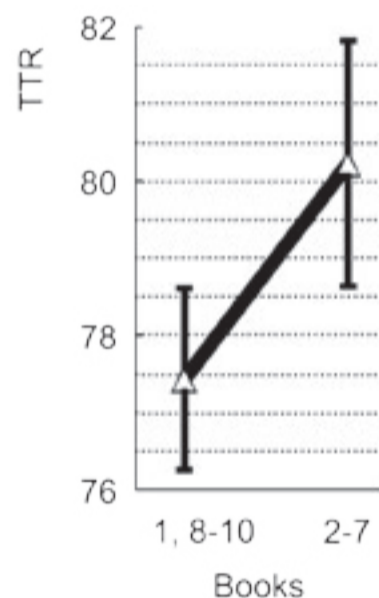
Another point of interest are the so-called collocations (Stubbs 1995) of high-frequent content words: *índra-*, 'the head of the pantheon', *agní-*, 'fire and its personification'; *soma-*, 'the Soma plant, ritual beverage, and a deity', *áp-*, 'deified water', and *dyú-*, 'the sky'. These last two are important cosmological concepts, while *índra-*, *agní-*, and *soma-*, are the actors of the creation myth (Kuiper 1960). Statistics has it that association of words with these lexemes is accounted for by a single factor. A highly positive loading on it is shown for the verb roots 'to purify' and 'to kill', nouns 'a hero', 'an enemy' and 'a cow'. They are seen more often with the 'deity' headwords. In contrast, a highly negative loading on this factor is exhibited by 'the earth', 'the sun', 'a plant' and 'a descendant', which scored more on the association with 'nature'. This could be due to the attribution of the lexemes to various components of mythology rather than to characters. Jamison notices that in the Vedas there are "thematic building blocks that function as episodes in a number of different myths", and that "in these the action or situation remains constant, but the participants vary" (Jamison 1997). If this roughly Proppian model (Propp 1968) is adopted, the division between the agon and etiology would seem to be pivotal.

Aryan verbal contest and strategies of discourse

Altogether, such facts suggest a systematic variety within the genre of the *RV*. The poets may have practiced different creative strategies that shaped the complexity of the genre. They tended to adjust vocabulary to major topics, although there was probably a striving for a freer choice of subject matter and lexis, represented by magical charms, occasional or 'abnormal' hymns, i.e. *RV* 10.106. The ability of the genre to contain heterogeneous texts, conservative on the one side and challenging on the other, may be due to the competitive nature of this form of poetry. The characteristics of the speech situation, essentially a verbal contest, should be taken into account, especially the setting and the norms of interaction. Pictured by Kuiper (1960) and Thompson (1997), Aryan verbal contests were a grand spectacle of the force of words. In such a situation lexical choice must have been strategic, while conservative handling of discourse by the poets might account for the stability of their favourite themes.

Many important questions remain unanswered, as getting more interpretable statistical results is problematic in a corpus of circa 165,000 tokens. The diachronic nature of the collection also has to be reconsidered: hymns in the family books are viewed by scholars as the oldest. Is the wider repertoire of vocabulary (and grammar forms) in such books connected with factors of time or geography? And yet it remains to be demonstrated empirically that an approach, which embraces cultural categories and natural data, presents an alternative to a literary theory based on deductive constructs, such as the poetic function.

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Notes

2   In Figures 1-4 points represent the means for each group; vertical lines indicate the 95% confidence limits; n=255.

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Recently returned from field research in Central Asia, Irina Morozova offers us glimpses of nation-building in the region, and provides us with fascinating insights on how geo-political space and historical time are reflected in national monuments built in the cities of Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia.

National monuments and social construction in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan

Irina Morozova

In the changing geo-political arena of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia have shown signs of adopting the neo-liberal corporate power model practiced by their more powerful neighbours, Kazakhstan and Russia. The so-called 'Tulip revolution' - the overthrow of A. Akayev's presidency in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005 - was perceived by Central Asian governments as a destabilising and threatening power transition scheme and a turning point in the course of economic reform. While the new Kyrgyz President K. Bakiev has tended to consolidate elite around the access to strategic assets, the ruling party of Mongolia - the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) - initiated discussions on changing the country's political system from a parliamentary to a presidential republic. Privatisation of Kyrgyzstan's energy sector and disputes over nationalisation of natural resources in Mongolia indicate a possible shift of power model towards corporate elite structures. What directions might the nation-building policies take? What lexicon do the political elites choose to promote their interests among wider sections of the population? What symbols are adopted? And how do temporal interests coincide with and impact upon historical memory?

Chinggis khan, Manas and geo-politics in Bishkek and Ulaanbaatar

At the beginning of the 1990s, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia found themselves in similar economic circumstances. Having been largely dependent on Soviet budgets, investments and trade, now the resource-producing republics were in need of foreign assistance to cope with collapsing economies and a drastic fall in living standards. The governments were forced to let the international markets and financial institutions in and open the public domain to international human rights organisations and various NGOs. Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia adopted the IMF reforms and underwent shock price liberalisation and hyper-inflation and found themselves in the lists of countries with high levels of poverty. Till about the mid-1990s, Kyrgyzstan had been known as an 'island of democracy' surrounded by autocratic post-Soviet Central Asian Republics; and Mongolia is still viewed by many as the most open society in East Asia.

At the same time, however, Kyrgyzstan presented a poor example with social and ethnic conflicts continuously being escalated on its territory, while the MPRP reconsolidated its rule in Mongolia, claiming to be a guarantee of socio-political stability. While economic reforms in the two countries followed similar schemes, their political cultures and nation-building processes appeared to be very different: with a greater normative respect for tradition, an apparent willingness to compromise and a considerable degree of independency

Sükhbaatar monument and new high-tech buildings surrounding Sükhbaatar Square, Ulaanbaatar. Photograph courtesy of the author

within the international socialist system, Mongolia found itself in a more lucrative position after the USSR's disintegration. In the 1990s, in both countries diverse groups in power, including ruling elite and intellectuals began revising the historical past and searching for symbols capable of uniting their populations, demoralised by poverty and social marginalisation.

In Kyrgyzstan, attempts to expand the image of the legendary epic hero Manas into the symbol of national unity did not bring the desired results. In many parts of the country, there is a tradition of performing or reciting parts of the Epos of Manas, a traditional epic poem with close to half a million lines. But not everywhere. So a decision by the former President Akayev to build monuments to Manas not only in the capital Bishkek, but in other cities, such as Batken, in the southern region where many communities do not follow the tradition of performing the epos, had little resonance with the people. In the end, the affirmative actions to promote the Manas epos, as well as other ideas promoted by the President, such as the "uniqueness of nomadic culture" and "Kyrgyzstan - a country of mountains" were not supported by many sedentary communities, especially in the south, and consigned to history alongside their architect, Akayev. In Mongolia, the

cult of Chinggis khan had not only existed among the general population in various narrative and epic forms, but it had been developed by historiographers over the centuries and become a form of nationalist pride among the Khalkha, the dominant Mongol group, living in Central Mongolia and in the capital Ulaanbaatar.

In 2006, a monument to Chinggis khan was built in Ulaanbaatar central square, to mark the celebration of 800 years of Mongolian statehood. Today, this monument is seen as the starting point for every excursion around the capital, but certainly not the last grand project in honour of the Great khan. The figure of Chinggis in the centre of the monument is surrounded by his son and grandson, Ögödei khan (who inherited the core Mongolian lands from his father) and Qubilai khan (the founder of the Yuan dynasty). If the inclusion of Ögödei does not raise questions, the appearance of Qubilai does: his transfer of the Mongolian capital to Beijing in 1271 is perceived by nowadays' Mongols as a betrayal of national interests. Despite certain nationalistic and anti-Chinese sentiments among Khalkha Mongols, the Chinese were hired in to renovate the central square prior to the Chinggis monument appearing on it. Interestingly though, the Mongols did not commission the Chi-

nese constructors to restore the socialist monument to the revolutionary hero D. Sükhbaatar which was left in its original place in the centre of the square. (The Mongols also left intact the monument to Kh. Choibalsan, the "Mongolian Stalin", in front of the National University of Mongolia). Currently a Northern Korean project to restore the Sükhbaatar monument is being discussed in Ulaanbaatar.

Geo-political pluralism, albeit selective, is still working in terms of Mongolia's balancing act between the two great powers – Russia and China – and the involvement of a 'third force' - the US or any other state that demonstrates interest in Mongolian land. For example, the prospective reconstruction of the Mongolian Parliament Building – an example of socialist monumental architecture – is believed to be funded by Qatari investors. A host of new high-tech buildings are under construction in the area surrounding Sükhbaatar square, all funded by various foreign investments and it would seem without much urban planning. These buildings are not only changing the face of the city, but marking Mongolia's adoption of a neo-liberal model for its weak economy.
While certain features of the monument to Chinggis khan may be criticised some, it's safe to conclude that most Mongols view

the statue with respect. The same cannot be said of the national monuments in the Kyrgyz capital, which provoke self-deprecating and even bitter jokes. While there is some sympathy towards the monuments dedicated to epic heroes such as Kozhumkul baatyr, (1889-1955), a legendary wrestler known for his extraordinary strength and courage, the newly invented symbols of Kyrgyz statehood, such as the Erkindik (independence) monument in the capital's Ala-Too Square, are regarded as a failed attempt by the state at collective national identity construction. The search for genuine historical figures who could be propagandised as contributors to Kyrgyz statehood has also proved, so far, to be less than successful, partly due to the legacy of Soviet historiography and its focus on the fighters for national liberation. The monument to Kurmandjan datka (1811-1907), known as the 'Alai queen', situated in the centre of Bishkek, is supposed to portray a wise, powerful and independently-minded Kyrgyz female ruler, who struggled to sustain her people's existence during the war between the Kokand Khanate and the Russian Empire. Yet, the fact that Kurmandjan eventually capitulated and allowed her territory becoming a Russian protectorate does not ring true with such a triumphant image.

The present Kyrgyz President Bakiev has neither been persistent nor inventive in creating a new national ideology, leaving space for discussion among different intellectuals and political groups about the best nation-building project. However, most of the concepts put forward were too local or marginal, and thus unsustainable and unworkable at a national level.

Regional nationalisms: the cases of Khovd and Osh

Scholarship reveals that every Mongol tribe had its own historic nationalism. The Western Mongols, the Oirat tribes,

Galdan Boshogt khan (1644-1697), made huge efforts to unite the Mongol tribes under their command and managed to sustain the independency of their small polity – the Junghar Khanate, from the early 17th century to the mid-18th century. In Khovd, the capital of the Western Mongolian aimag (province) Khovd, the portrait of Galdan Boshogt khan adorns the office walls of officials and politicians (in contrast to the Chinggis khan portraits which dominate in Ulaanbaatar). In the city's central square there is an impressive monument of Galdan Boshogt with a sabre. Western Mongolian pride and confidence in their

Republic) is married with tolerance. Ethnic tolerance - Khovd *aimag* is among the most ethnically diverse in Mongolia, with around 16 ethnic groups sharing territory without much dispute; religious tolerance - one can see a Kazakh mosque in proximity to a Mongol Buddhist temple; and cultural tolerance – reflected, for instance, in the Khovd Mongols' acceptance of Chinese food (while in Ulaanbaatar it is unpopular). Their regional exclusiveness and self-sufficiency confirmed, Khovd politicians and intellectuals promote trans-border integration projects that aim at economic cooperation and exchange with China, Russia and

are regarded as the second largest ethnic group in the south of Kyrgyzstan. In 1990, against the background of a collapsing economy and social deprivation, ethnic diversity divided rather than consolidated communities, and bloody clashes occurred between Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Slavic populations living in Osh and the surrounding areas. Later, while the majority of Slavic people left the region, the Uzbeks re-established their business domains and showed tendencies to political consolidation. Their leaders, periodically, tried campaigns to mobilise nationalism among their communities, while the state authorities, especial-

tions to history.

Generally, Mongolian nation-building policies are seen as 'successful' and the Kyrgyz state example seen as 'failing'. However, the view that Mongolia is the only post-socialist country in Asia that has managed to avoid sharp social confrontation has recently changed (particularly in the light of the riots in Ulaanbaatar in June 2008, following parliamentary elections). The centralisation tendencies (also reflected in discussions on the transition to a presidential republic) and nation-building policies in Mongolia will fail to become truly meaningful if they are not supported by

Lenin monument in the Central Square, Osh. All photographs courtesy of the author

The former silk factory, Osh. The socialist slogan on the building says: "More good commodities for the people!"

Kozhumkul baatyr monument in Bishkek.

are renowned for the longest and most determined resistance against the Manchu conquest. Their leaders, and in particular

historic past and independent existence (the Western Mongols were also the last to be integrated in the Mongolian People's

Kazakhstan in the framework of a broader Altai region concept.

One experiences quite a different picture of 'provincial life' in the southern Kyrgyz city of Osh. To start, a clear link with a historical group that founded a famous polity is missing. The rulers of the Kokand Khanate, which encompassed the Osh area before Russia's conquest and annexation, preferred to link their genealogies with Emir Timur, a famous 14th century Turkic conqueror of Central Asia, to whom the Uzbeks trace back their genealogies. At present, the Osh Kyrgyz are believed to belong to *ichkilik*, according to them, a core Kyrgyz tribe. The Kyrgyz from the northern regions, in turn, like to stress their tribes' key role in history and culturally oppose themselves to the southern Kyrgyz. The genealogical trees of Kyrgyz exhibited in the National Museums of Osh and Bishkek are sketched differently to stress the importance of one regional group's origin over the others. Some ethnographers have presented substantial evidence that the population of the Ferghana valley, where the city of Osh is situated, and the adjacent mountainous areas was completely recomposed and renewed in the 19th century (Abashin 2007) (due to the arrival of, among others, the Junghars). In the 20th century many groups were classified as Uzbeks, who nowadays

ly those in Bishkek, used demobilisation political technologies to neutralise Uzbek nationalism in the struggle for power.

Several international organisations operating in Kyrgyzstan regularly publish their expert assessments on the mood of the various population groups in the country. These surveys reveal the prevalence of positive expectations, as well as the potential for protest and unrest among people in the south, including Osh. Under President Bakiev, many 'southerners' believe they have a better chance for political representation and gaining more social prestige. For the last two years private construction has been booming in Osh: the city is seeing ever more opulent houses being built by local businessmen, officials, high-ranking academicians and other 'wealthy' groups.

Yet there has been little municipal construction in both Khovd and Osh in the last two decades. The factories of the former Soviet/socialist state have been left in ruins, the odd communist slogan daubed on buildings still visible. The monuments from these times remain intact: one can still see Lenin in the central square of Osh and the Mongolian revolutionary Ayush next to Galdan Boshogt in Khovd. People's attitudes towards these monuments reveal a recognition of these figures' contribu-

social reform and campaigns. Are the new nation-building symbols referring to a heroic past, genealogies or cultural exclusiveness empowered to convince people the state has chosen the correct political course? Or, are these monuments and buildings insignificant against the background of minimal social construction? With neo-liberal reform imposed upon Mongolian society the country would, probably, reach the moment, when even Chinggis khan looses his consolidating image in the eyes of the new urban citizens.

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The juxtaposition of Buddhism and modern technology tends to induce surprise and even humour: visitors to Buddhist countries, for example, often photograph monks in the act of using cell phones or computers, as such images defy preconceived notions. But Buddhism and technology actually share a long, cooperative history.

Early adopters:
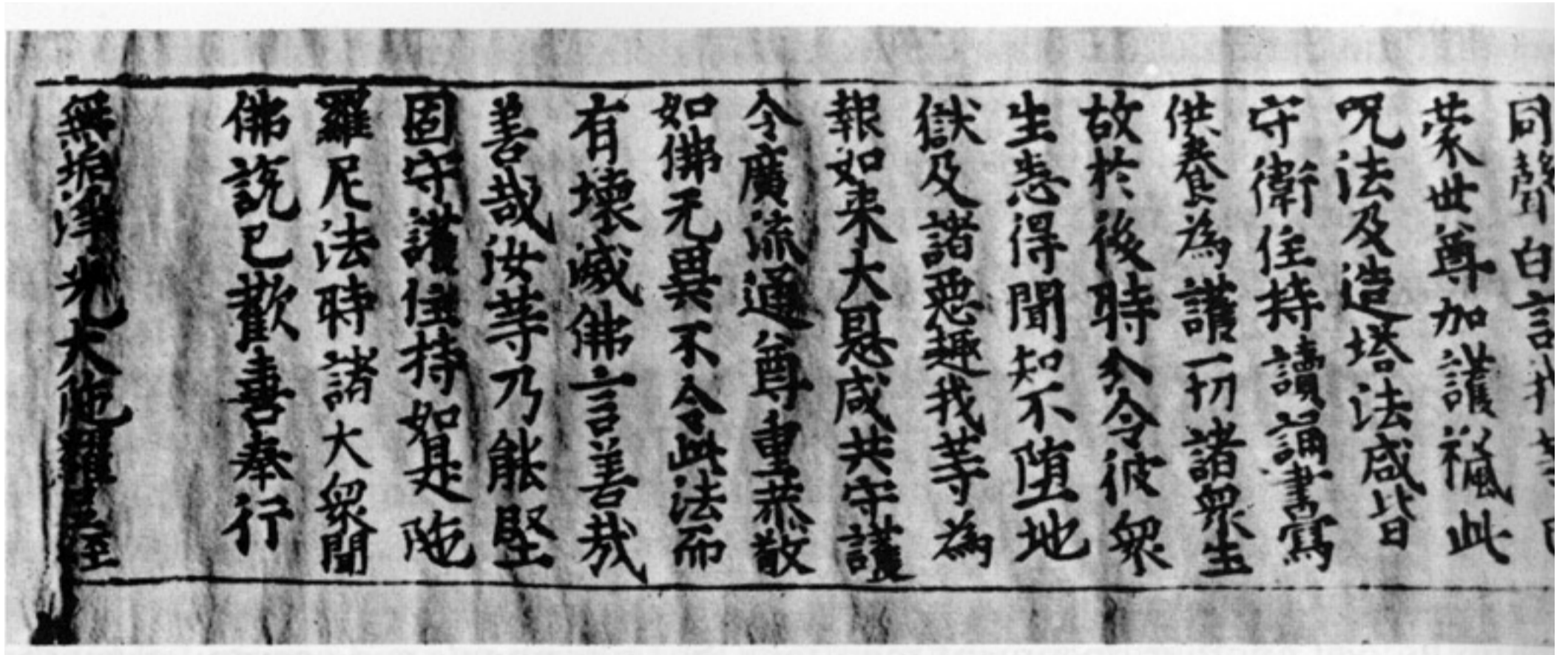## debunking stereotypes of Buddhist attitudes toward technology

Fig.1 The world's oldest extant specimen of a printed text is a Buddhist charm scroll or dharani from Korea. Image from Tsien, T. 1985. Paper and Printing, Cambridge University Press.

ANDREW GLASS

Stereotypes cloud the perception of Buddhism's relationship to technology. John Dwyer, on the Urban Dharma website, writes, 'In strict monastic societies, almost all forms of technology are considered useless since they do not further one's spiritual journey'. Peter Herschock writes in his book on Buddhism in the information age, 'Buddhist technologies...have been predominantly social technologies rooted in the training of awareness, the perfecting of attention' (Herschock 1999: 111). These views are not wrong, per se, but refer to idealised notions of Buddhism. In general, the Buddhist tradition has been keen to adopt new technology that serves the Buddhist mission, including dramatic innovations such as the introduction of writing and printing, the digital revolution, and examples from art and architecture.

A means to posterity: writing

Writing was introduced to India some time between the Buddha's death and the reign of Aśoka (273-232 BCE), who famously carved his edicts at sites around India. The earliest known Buddhist inscriptions are on stone at Bhārhut, in central India, dating from the mid-3rd to mid-2nd century BCE, and record the names of new building construction sponsors including monastics. It's unknown whether monastics at Bhārhut also wrote on ephemeral materials. The earliest mention of writing down the Buddhist canon comes from the chronicles of Sri Lanka, which report that in the 1st century BCE, during the reign of

King Vattagāmaṇī Abhaya, the three Piṭakas and the Commentary upon them, 'in order to ensure the long life of the Law', were 'recorded in books' (Mhv. 33.100-1, Lamotte 1988: 369). Recently discovered Buddhist manuscripts in Kharoṣṭhī script, from Gandhāra (ancient north-west India), have been radiocarbon-dated to a range from the 2nd century BCE to the 3rd century CE. The first to come to light are believed to date to the Common Era's first 50 years. Comprising 29 manuscript fragments written by many different scribes, this collection probably represents a deposit of old, worn out manuscripts. Some show signs of being copies: mistakes, such as haplography – the inadvertent omission of a repeated letter or letters – are best explained as copying errors. Additional factors suggest the manuscripts originate from the written tradition's inception in Gandhāra: each scribe's handwriting is unique, while in later periods it's difficult to impossible to tell one scribe's handwriting from another's; the earliest manuscripts are written on birch bark scrolls, a crude, easily damaged material relative to the 2nd-3rd century palm leaf manuscripts from Bamiyan and the paper introduced via Central Asia as early as the 3rd century; and lines of writing often stray diagonally, while in later periods scribes drew guidelines to neaten manuscript appearance.

Thus these Gandhāra manuscripts appear to represent immature writing technology. Gandhāran Buddhists likely began using manuscripts simultaneous to the first writing in Sri Lanka, in the 1st century BCE,

mentioned in the Pāli chronicles, making Buddhism the first Indian religion to do so, perhaps by 800 or more years. The oldest surviving Vedic manuscript is less than 1,000 years old (Witzel 1997: 259). The earliest known writing of Jain and Zoroastrian texts is from the 8th or 9th century (Kellens 2006: 23). Evidence from Sri Lanka indicates the canon was written down to ensure the posterity of the Buddha's teaching. Manuscripts could also be used to spread the teaching, and were imported to China and Tibet in great numbers. Dào'ān, a pivotal figure in early Chinese Buddhism, encouraged Chinese monks to visit India in search of manuscripts. Fǎxiǎn , possibly Dào'ān's disciple, visited India between 399 and 413 and copied many manuscripts, as did Xuánzàng between 629 and 643. Much later Marpa and others took manuscripts from India to Tibet.

Imparting authority, increasing efficiency: printing

Used throughout the ancient world to mark authority, seals and sealings were an important precursor to printing. Several ancient monastery seals prove Buddhist institutions used them. By the 8th century, making heavily text-laden seals was combined with stamping designs on silk and decorative paper, leading to printing. The earliest examples, driven by the 'enthusiasm of the Buddhist devotees for producing a great multitude of sacred texts' (Tsien 1985), are Chinese and associated with Buddhism, as the scripture itself encouraged copying and distributing the texts.

For example, the Lotus Sūtra, translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 406, reads, 'If there is anyone who preserves, recites, explains, or copies even a single verse of the Lotus Sutra, or who respects this Sutra as if it were a Buddha...know, O Bhaiṣajyarāja, that this person has already paid homage to tens of myriads of [crores] of Buddhas of the Past!' (Kubo and Yuyama 1993: 169; T no. 262). An extension of the written word's power, copying a single verse, is equated with the merit of worshipping countless past Buddhas. Printing innumerable copies created even greater stores of merit.

Dated to 704-751, the world's oldest extant specimen of a printed text is a Buddhist charm scroll, or dhāraṇī, found inside a stone stūpa at Kyongju, South Korea. The most famous example of early printing is a copy of the Diamond Sūtra found in Dūnhuáng 敦煌 by Aurel Stein in 1907, the earliest complete printed book bearing a date: it ends with the 868 CE benediction, 'On the fifteenth day of the fourth moon of the ninth year of Xiántōng 咸通, Wang Jie reverently made this for blessings to his parents, for universal distribution'. The entire Chinese Buddhist canon was first printed in Chéngdū 成都 between 971 and 983, the Kāibǎo 開寶 edition, requiring more than 100,000 printing blocks. Only a few volumes survive. At least six other complete printed editions were produced in mainland China and Korea over the next three centuries.

Printing spread to Buddhists in Japan, where Empress Shōtoku 称德天皇 (718-

769) ordered a million printed dhāraṇī scrolls between 764 and 770, and via the Silk Road to Central Asia, where from around 1300 Buddhist texts were printed in Sanskrit, Uighur, Tangut and Mongolian (Tsien 1985: 305). The Tibetan canon's first woodblock edition, the Yongle bka' 'gyur, was produced in Beijing in 1410, based on the first bka' 'gyur: the Tshal pa manuscript written 60 years earlier (Harrison 1996: 78-81). Many subsequent Tibetan bka' 'gyur and bstan 'gyur editions were produced on woodblocks until the 19th century. But printing didn't entirely replace writing: in Tibet, complete canon manuscript editions were produced alongside printed versions.

East and Central Asian Buddhist printing zeal wasn't matched in South and Southeast Asia, where printing was barely known until the 16th century European arrival. Even then, it wasn't used for Buddhist texts. Siam's King Chulalongkorn ordered the Pāli canon's first printed edition only in 1893 (Bechert and Gombrich 1984: 78), perhaps inspired by the European edition in roman script, initiated in 1881. The Sri Lankan, Cambodian and Burmese editions followed in the 20th century.

This contrast in the acceptance of printing between these two Asian regions mirrors the traditional fault line between northern Mahāyāna Buddhism and southern Theravāda Buddhism. Cultural attitudes towards books and writing esteemed in China were generally debased in India, in deference to oral tradition. Also, though written in the 1st century BCE, the Pāli canon remained

an essentially oral tradition up to modern times. Its limited scale and homogeneous nature were easier to memorise and recall, and since only educated monks could access texts – through their memories – they were protected against miscopying and apocrypha, and group recitations prevented errors. As Theravāda Buddhism spread throughout Southeast Asia, Pāli rema
ined the canonical language, in contrast to China and Tibet, where the texts were translated. Monks, who had learned the teachings in Pāli, provided explanations in the vernacular to convey particular teachings, safeguarding the canon's purity. In modern times it has been translated and printed in Sinhalese and Southeast Asia's major languages.

Moveable type was invented in the mid-11th century by Bì Shēng 畢昇 and perfected in Korea almost 200 years later, but it didn't eclipse block-printing among China's Buddhists. Movable type was popular for commercial printing, but temples avoided it, perhaps because it offered few advantages and conversion would have introduced many errors. The traditional method of making new xylograph editions usually involved pasting printing copies upside-down onto boards and carving the latter, maintaining accuracy over centuries. In Japan, however, a complete copy of the Chinese canon, the Tenkai 天海 edition, was produced with moveable type between 1637 and 1648 (Mizuno 1982: 180). Since one purpose of moveable type was to eliminate storing thousands of printing blocks, there was only enough type to set a few pages at a time. Once a page had been printed, the forme containing the type was dismantled to produce the next page. Thus only one set of copies could be made. By contrast, the second Koryŏ canon's blocks, carved in the 13th century, were used to print a new edition between 1957 and 1976.

Going digital: ancient utterances captured by the modern world

In the early 1990s Theravāda Buddhism was the first Buddhist tradition to digitise its canon. Remarkable for being instigated by Buddhist temples and organisations rather than scholars, four independent projects in Thailand, India and Sri Lanka digitised their respective versions of the Pāli texts. Today's most widely used Pāli canon version was produced by the Vippassana Research Institute (VRI), a largely decentralised organisation of meditation centres, which in 1990 began printing a new edition in the Devanāgarī script in order to reintroduce it to India. Typeset using computers, it was released electronically in 1997 on CD-ROM free of charge. CD search features benefit scholars, while a dozen different writing systems allow access to adherents throughout South and Southeast Asia.

Two American-led projects are digitising the Tibetan canons and religious literature: Geshe Michael Roach's Asian Classics Input Project started in 1987, and Gene Smith's Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center began in 1999. Each has a different focus but shares the goal of preserving Tibetan culture primarily for Tibetans, though much of their work is available to scholars as well.

In Japan, digitising the Chinese canon began in 1996, when Tokyo University Professor Yasunori Ejima 江島惠教, funded by the Japanese Ministry for Education, commenced input of the standard Taishō edition. Two years later the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA) began digitising the same Taishō edition at Taiwan National University's Buddhist Research Center. The two projects agreed to cooperate, completing the project in 2003. The Tuệ Quang Wisdom Light Foundation hopes to produce the Buddhist canon's first Vietnamese translation by transliterating the CBETA data into Vietnamese script (http://tinyurl.com/24g4ej).

Serving the faith

Why has Buddhism adopted new technology? It begins with the Buddhist message of the four noble truths: suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering. To reach an audience, a message must be communicated in a way its audience understands. Since Buddhism doesn't target a particular group, it is in principle open to anyone. In the Vinaya, the Buddhist monastic code, the Buddha instructs his disciples, 'I command that the word of the Buddha be learned by each one in his own mode of expression (*sakāya niruttiyā pariyāpuṇitum*)', as opposed to Vedic Sanskrit (*chandas*) [Vin II.139], which was the domain of Brahmanism. Loosely interpreted, preserving old ways simply for the sake of tradition is not important; communicating the message in a way that people understand is. Therefore, a new means of perpetuating the transmission, whether a new language or medium, is encouraged.

Second, throughout history Buddhists have been concerned about the disappearance of Dharma, the record of the Buddha's teachings. This basic fear may also underlie instructions to copy texts and drive the adoption of new ways to preserve and distribute them. Third, as technology changed, new practices and rituals developed which incorporated it. Writing and printing became empowered with the capacity to protect, for instance via amulets made from texts, and the power to transfer merit, as in dedications connected with an act of donation.

Finally, as Buddhism became institutionalised, monasteries needed financial and material support for monks and nuns. Adopting technology which could attract support benefited the institution and helped fulfil its primary function of spreading the Buddha's teaching. Human nature respects power, including the increased power that comes with learning new technology. Technology was and remains a powerful way of inspiring generosity.

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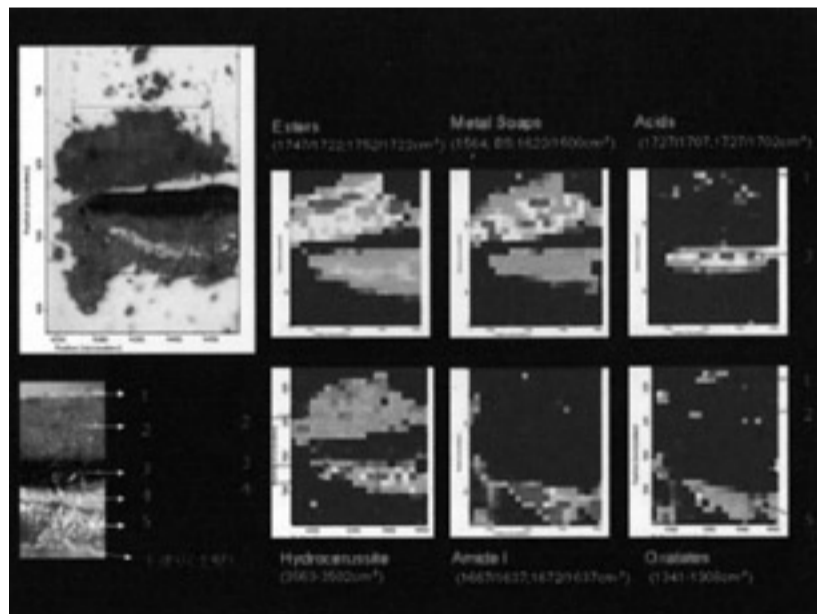asg@u.washington.edu

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Beyond literature
What other technologies have Buddhist communities embraced?

In the last year, researchers from the Japan Center for International Cooperation in Conservation reported that tests conducted on 7th century Buddhist murals in the caves of Bamiyan, Afghanistan, revealed oil-based pigments, making them the world's oldest oil paintings, predating European and Mediterranean examples by more than 100 years (*National Geographic*, 6 February 2008).

In Gandhara, suspending large stone umbrellas on pillars above their sttpas required monastic authorities to use the latest technology.

Ghandara's Buddhist art is well known for incorporating Greco-Roman techniques and models. The Buddha's image itself may have been developed in Gandhara under foreign influence. Photograph courtesy of www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk

The exhibition, Indians in Singapore: A Picture Story, curated by the author, was on view at the National Museum of Singapore from June 9 – July 27, 2008. It was a visual narrative about the diverse socio-cultural practices of the Indians in Singapore. The story of ten communities, identified predominantly through their languages, was set against the backdrop of Singapore's early history. Vidya Murthy outlines some aspects of the exhibition.

Singapore Indians, a brief note

Fig. 1: Tanjong Pagar docks c.1890. G R Lambert & Company 1993-00285-022

Fig 2: Portrait of a family. 1905. G.R. Lambert & Company. 2001-03515

Fig 3: A group of Indian and Chinese coolies c. 1870. 1994-05110

VIDYA MURTHY

The story of the Indian diaspora is integral to Singapore's early history. Stamford Raffles's entourage in 1819 included sepoys, washermen, milkmen, tea suppliers and domestic servants. Following them, several Indians arrived first as prisoners, who were later hired to work on buildings and roads for the colonial empire. The ship illustrated here is typical of the vessels that brought travellers from India to Singapore. *(Fig. 1)* The Tanjong Pagar Dock Company owned the dock, which was opened in 1868. The number of Indians migrating into Singapore was small compared to that of the people from Southeastern China, Malaya and Indonesia.

However, the Indians were a complex and diverse group of people and included labourers, servants, traders and merchants during the colonial period. Moreover, Indian sailors, fishermen and merchants had travelled over the Indian Ocean even before the British rule in South and Southeast Asia. They journeyed from the coasts including Gujarat, Malabar, Coromandel, Orissa and Bengal among other places. As a result of these maritime activities, many Indian communities including the Gujaratis, Chulias, Maapilas, and Chettiars had made their presence felt in Southeast Asia. In the early 19th century, with the entry of the British, the nature of these migrations changed. The commercial interests of the rulers began to take precedence.

The colonial government began to make systematic efforts to create a knowledge database, which included visual documentation. This enterprise gave rise to specific representational modes. Stiffly posed, the Indian subjects were presented without reference to any locale or context. Their occupation was indexed in their dress or tools. Thus the people were turned into ethnic types who could be classified. *The People of India: A Series of Photographic Illustrations, with Descriptive Letterpress of the races and Tribes of Hindustan*, London, emerged out of one such colonial project. The book was the last among a series of eight volumes that was published between 1868 and 1875. The depiction of a Shanar Christian couple, included in this volume, best illustrates the colonial strategy described above. The Shanars hailed from the Tinnevelly district in Tamil Nadu and southern Travancore in Kerala. Their

traditional occupation was extracting toddy from palm and making jaggery. They were one of the many distressed communties in South India who were converted to Christianity in 1800s. Some of the educated Shanars migrated to Malaya among other places where they took up jobs in the colonial government. In the hands of colonial photographers including the well known G.R. Lambert & Company in Singapore, the Indian subjects became exotic types. *(Fig. 2)* The Indians in the colonial period, were represented as either ethnic or exotic types or sometimes both.

Later with the need for workers on plantations including rubber in British Malaya, indentured labourers were brought largely from South India, especially the present Tamil Nadu. Although slavery was abolished in the early 20th century, workers were brought in through agents or foremen known as *Kanganys*. *(Fig. 3)* There were also free migrations undertaken especially by merchants and entrepreneuers who went on to establish themselves as prominent businessmen. *(Fig. 4)* As the community became more settled, they also intermarried and raised families. In the late 19th and early 20th century, Singapore was still thought of as a temporary home by the Indian migrants. Most of them came and worked for a few years and all the while maintained ties back in India.

Despite this transient nature of their presence, the early Indians built many places of worship. These religious sites extended as centres of social and cultural life, which enabled the migrants to ease their ways into the new land. The Masjid Al Abrar and Nagore *Durgha* on Telok Ayer Street served as a site for the Tamil Muslims who built them. *(Fig. 5)* The *Durgha*, which was a shrine for the important South Indian Sufi, Shahul Hamid Sahib, is in fact a replica of the original in Nagore in Tamil Nadu. The Sri Mariamman Temple in China Town was another important place for the migrants. *(Fig. 6)* It served as a refuge for newcomers who could stay there till they found accommodations. The other temples in Singapore also reflected in part, the village and caste backgrounds of the people. For instance, the major devotees of the Sri Mariamman temple included harbour workers who came from the Tanjore district.

Fig 4: Photograph of a Khoja Muslim family. 1917. Donated by the Jumbabhoy family. 2005-00390

Fig 5: A view of Telok Ayer Street with Nagore Durgha on the right and Masjid Al-Abrar on the left. 1868. 1993-00285-015

Fig 6: Sri Mariamman temple. Late 19th century. xxxx-00297

Fig. 7: *Purandara namana* - remembering the poet saint, Purandaradasa, 2008. Image courtesy of Singapore Kannada Sangha

Today, the Singapore Indians are not discrete entities isolated from each other or from the larger society. On the other hand, they are living groups of people who negotiate their lives every day by selecting and adapting social practices. In the course of such adaptations their native languages, too, have been constantly changing and expanding. Most Singapore Indians are bi-and multi-lingual and are adept at mixing Malay and Hokkien words in their speech. Language is a powerful means for the Indian diaspora in Singapore to define itself: each community tries to ensure that the younger generations learn and speak the mother tongue. The complex linguistic diversity of the Singapore Indians is illustrated by the numerous languages spoken in Singapore including, among others, Bangla, Gujarati, Hindi (Bhojpuri), Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil and Telugu. Although Tamil is one of four official languages, the Singapore state has recognised the importance of several other non-Tamil languages. As a result, five languages including Bangla, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu are offered as second language choices for students who wish to study their mother tongue. This official support extended to non-Tamil languages has strengthened the migrant Indians' commitment to their use of native languages. The numerous language associations and schools in Singapore further attest to this concern.

An enquiry into the linguistic practices will also help to circumvent generic ethnic categories such as "Indian", as employed in formal and popular discourses. Although, any single frame of reference to identify a heterogeneous community remains inherently artificial and inadequate. Still, Singapore Indians constantly select and adapt social practices from the larger society. In the course of such adaptations they have shaped for themselves a highly syncretic culture and simultaneously contributed towards making the Singapore society truly hybrid. This, for instance, can be illustrated in the annual music festival that is organised by one linguistic community, Singapore Kannada *Sangha*. Kannada speakers have been coming to Singapore since the mid-80s, mostly as part of the professional white collar labour force. They have origins in the south western state of Karnataka, where Kannada is the official language. The community organisation, Singapore Kannada *Sangha*, was founded in 1996 and hosts numerous social and cultural festivals through out the year. They also conduct the the annual music festival, *Purandara namana*. Held in memory of the Kannada poet-saint, Purandaradasa (1485-1565), this festival attracts music teachers, students, performers and connoisseurs from all over the island. *(Fig. 8)* One

of the important *Haridasas* of the Vaishnava bhakti tradition in Karnataka, Purandaradasa is also credited with consolidating and structuring the South Indian Music system. People from other communities also participate and the festival starts with students and the audience singing the poet's graded compositions, called the *Pillari Geeta*. Not only does the festival bring together people from other communities, but it also ensures that narrow linguistic borders are crossed.

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In 1997, Tokyo University's Historiographical Institute established the Centre for the Study of Visual Sources to apply new technologies to the study of historical pictures and maps. Of particular interest is the Centre's collection of photographs with an emphasis on portraits from the Bakumatsu to Meiji Restoration periods (1840s-1860s), gathered from sources both in- and outside Japan. Tani Akiyoshi guides us through some of the stories behind the images in the collection and shows how it's possible to un-layer almost archaeologically successive stages of development and practice in Japan's history of photography.

Pioneering portraits: early photography in Japan

Tani Akiyoshi (translation and editing by Oliver Moore)

Among those who played a role in introducing early photography to Japan was Nakahama Manjiro (also known as John Manjiro), a fisherman from Usaura bay (now Tosashimizu on the southwest tip of Shikoku). Manjiro's first contacts with the West date to 1841 when, following his shipwreck on the far-flung Pacific island of Torishima, he was rescued by an American whaler. Dubbed by the crew John Mung, Manjiro worked his passage to Honolulu and then on to the United States. It was during his time in America that Manjiro turned his on-board learning into a more formal study of English and a wide range of new subjects.

He became a proficient navigator and much respected cultural interpreter, before cautiously returning to Japan in 1851 (technically, his unauthorised emigration remained illegal). In 1853, following his promotion to a senior rank of samurai, Manjiro was recommended as a possible interpreter for the Shogun's trade negotiations with the US Naval officer, Commodore Matthew Perry. However, it appears that the Tokugawa Shogunate objected to his presence in the talks, and eventually his skills were never put to use.

Mastering the Ambrotype

In 1860, Nakahama Manjiro was posted with the first official overseas delegation to visit the United States. He sailed aboard the *Kanrin Maru*, the famous steam-propelled warship constructed in a Dutch shipyard and delivered to the Shogun government in 1857, and the first modern Japanese ship to cross the Pacific ocean.

Some time after the delegation made landfall in San Francisco, Manjiro bought a camera, with which he soon mastered the process of Ambrotype photography. (The major discovery in England in 1851 that collodion was a viable support for images captured on glass impelled a new photographic invention. The Ambrotype was a 'wet plate' photograph taken on a glass plate emulsified with collodion and further sensitised with silver nitrate. The process, first promulgated in America in 1854, undercut the costs of daguerreotyping, but it was famously messy, since the operator had to take the photograph and develop it before the emulsified side of the plate had dried.)

Some of the images that he produced are now owned by the Egawa Archive in Shizuoka. Via quite a different legacy, the same archive also safeguards a collection of *cartes-de-visite* assembled by Shibata Hyuga, a leading diplomat in the Tokugawa Shogunate, during a separate diplomatic mission to Europe. This collection includes a photograph of Shibata and the rest of the Japanese delegation during their visit to the Netherlands in 1862. More will be said at the end of this article about the voyage to Holland, for it yields useful comparative insights into Manjiro's activities in America and Japan.

What follows is a brief examination of a series of photographs on albumen paper and two ambrotype photographs (figs. 1 and 3) which portray men typical of a class of doctors and translators who, taking the Dutch Studies *(Rangaku)* as their point of departure, pioneered the study of photographic techniques in Japan.

From records of formal engagements contained in the administration transcripts of the Egawa *Daikan* (the official in charge of the territory immediately surrounding the Shogun at Edo), we know that the photograph of the samurai Ozawa (fig.1) was taken on the 1 September, 1860 in the Egawa mansion in Edo, and it is clear that Manjiro took the picture when he was still employed by and living in the grounds of the Egawa *Daikan*.

Records indicate that Manjiro stayed at the Egawa mansion itself for almost a fortnight in September 1860 during which time he was continually obliged to take photographs of a stream of visitors. Among the subjects were Matsudaira Oki (chief of the Shogun's escort) and other important members of the military government who called at the Egawa residence.

Interestingly, other records by these various guests also show that prior to his sojourn at the mansion - during the period in which he had already returned with the *Kanrin Maru* - news had already spread that Manjiro was in Edo producing photographs every day.

On the protective paper enveloping the portrait of Ozawa is a note: "In the

first year of the Manen reign period [1860], on the 16th day of the seventh month (1 September) at the seventh hour (i.e. 16:00), the photographer accepted a commission to take this photograph." The evident techniques for this photograph bear all the hallmarks of what Manjiro's eldest son Nakahama Toichiro was later to recollect; namely, that his father produced clear photographic portraits by either using a dark backing cloth or by spreading a black resin on the glass plate, either of which processes corresponded to practices then current in Europe and America.

By the end of the Edo period, Ambrotypes made in Japan were numerous. Most Japanese ambrotypes were produced by putting a black cloth or black paper between the glass photograph and the photographic case. An alternative technique was to paint Japan lacquer (a natural lacquer

Fig.1 Ambrotype photograph of the samurai Ozawa taken by Manjiro, 1 September, 1860. Dimensions: 8.4 x 7.1 centimetres and 1/6 plate size.

collected from the Urushi tree) on the glass side of the image [the non-emulsion side] which turns it a tea-brown colour yet also increases the reflectivity of the tonal contrast. (Un-backed or un-lacquered, the fully developed Ambrotype image resembles a negative on glass. This image can be displayed against a dark background at which point the image converts to positive, since the light-sensitised silver on its surface - dark areas - reflect light and appear pale, while the un-sensitised areas allow the dark background to show through).

The reverse - non-emulsified - face of the Ozawa photograph, smeared as it is with a black resin resembling asphalt, is unlike any other example of the same period from either Edo or Yokohama (a centre for Japan's early photographic studios).

Almost without exception, whenever this technique of using black resin is manifest on Japanese photographs of this period, it can be read as the decisive tell-tale of an ambrotype photograph taken by Manjiro.

Chemistry experiments

During the same period of Manjiro's activities in Edo, Ueno Hikoma, who would later open a photographic studio in Nagasaki in 1862, and his co-researcher Horie Kuwajirō staged a presentation in the Edo residence of Lord Fujido, one of Japan's leading feudal lords (*daimyō* of Tsu-han, now Mie Prefecture of Tsu City). They demonstrated the technique of wet plate photography which they had learned from the Swiss photographer P. Rossier after his arrival in Nagasaki in late 1859. Not long previously, Ueno and Horie had conducted chemistry experiments under the guidance of Doctor J. Pompe van Meerdervoort, a surgeon from the Netherlands, at Nagasaki's Naval Academy. The pair's technical mastery now assured, they arrived in Edo with wet plate photographic cameras purchased from the Dutch merchant A.J. Baudin. From a letter, dated 27th July,1861, written by the scientist Utagawa Kyosai, describing photographic demonstrations

that he had witnessed at Lord Fujido's residence one month earlier, it is evident that Ueno Hikoma and Horie had arrived in Edo in June of the same year.

Most notable among the results of Ueno Hikoma's activities in Edo is an ambrotype portrait attributed to Horie Kuwajirō (now located in the Department of Art, Nihon University), which shows Ueno in Fujido's residence with medicine bottles in front of him. This photograph, the glass side of which has been coated with a black resin, is the only one of its type that can be associated with Ueno. Ueno Hikoma remained in Edo from June, until 20 October 1861, when he followed Fujido back to his domain.

Convergence of techniques

Figure 2 is a portrait of the samurai Sadamichi. It is thought that Manjiro took the picture in July of 1861 at the Egawa mansion in Asada, Edo, and that subsequently he left Edo January 1862. During this period, supposing that Manjiro and Hikoma had exchanged the technology that each had acquired in the previous year, then the same period could also have provided the opportunity to demonstrate the technique of adding black resin. Evidently, wet plate photography in Japan emerged from two directions: a commercial process obtained by Manjiro in the portrait studios of the US; and the Dutch Studies' process learned by Ueno Hikoma and his followers in their own country. These two techniques converge in Edo in 1861. The wet plate technique, first invented in England in 1851, arrived in Edo having circumvented the globe east- and westwards.

Figure 3 is of the samurai and interpreter of Dutch and English, Moriyama Einosuke. Moriyama was also the translator of a second edition of A Short Explanation of the Camera, a technical treatise on photography transmitted to posterity as part of the Shimazu Family papers (now located in Tokyo University and designated a national treasure). In 1854, during Commodore Perry's second visit to Japan, Moriyama - who would eventually sign the formal reply to the American President - took part in the negotiations between both sides.

Moriyama took the opportunity to report to Shimazu Nariakira whatever daguerreotype techniques he could glean from the American visitors. (Shimazu Nariakira was a Japanese feudal lord (*daimyō*) of the Edo period, the 28th in the line of Shimazu clan lords of the Satsuma domain. Renowned for his interest in Western learning and technology, he also researched the daguerreotype). This can be surmised from 'Daguerreotypes: a new method of picture-taking' (*Shazō shinpō dageriutipe*), which is appended to the rest of his report now included with the Shimazu Family Papers.

Among other figures featured in the 'photographic techniques' papers of the Shimazu family are Matsuki Kooan (fig. 4) from the Satsuma domain and Kawasaki Dōmin (fig. 5), a doctor from the Saga domain, both of whom are figures linked to photographic research in Japan. Kawasaki's life bears similarities to that of Manjiro. Kawasaki was also a member of the 1860 delegation to America. Although he returned to Japan somewhat later than Manjiro, he too used his newly acquired wet plate methods to make ambrotype portraits of his personal friends and other contacts. In fact, in 1862 Matsuki Kooan and Kawasaki joined the imperial mission to Europe, and, during the mission's residence in Holland, they visited the photographic studios of Robert Severin in The Hague (fig.6). The Records of Industrial Techniques (seiren kata kiroku), compiled in the Saga domain (ruled by the *Nabeshima* family), contains a miscellany of items for research into photographic method. Recent research shows that among these records we can identify items which derive directly from a leading early Dutch treatise entitled *Photophilus*.(Breda, 1855).

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Figure 2: Photograph on albumen paper of the samurai Sadamichi.
Taken by Manjiro in July of 1861

figure 3: Ambrotype portrait of the samurai and interpreter Moriyama Einosuke.

figure 4: Photograph on albumen paper of Matsuki Kooan from the Satsuma domain. Kooan was
a member of the 1862 imperial mission to Europe.

figure 5: Photograph on albumen paper of Kawasaki D min, a doctor from the Saga domain
and member of the 1862 imperial mission to Europe.

figure 6: During the 1862 imperial
mission to Europe, Kawasaki and
Kooan visited the photographic stu-
dios of Robert Severin in The Hague.

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Chinese Poetry in Times of Mind, Mayhem and Money is a groundbreaking contribution to scholarship, well-suited to classroom use in that it combines rigorous analysis with a lively style. Covering the period from the 1980s to the present, it is organised around the notions of text, context and metatext, meaning poetry, its socio-political and cultural surroundings, and critical discourse in the broadest sense. Authors and issues studied include Han Dong, Haizi, Xi Chuan, Yu Jian, Sun Wenbo, Yang Lian, Wang Jiaxin, Bei Dao, Yin Lichuan, Shen Haobo and Yan Jun, and everything from the subtleties of poetic rhythm to exile-bashing in domestic media. This book has room for all that poetry is: cultural heritage, symbolic capital, intellectual endeavour, social commentary, emotional expression, music and the materiality of language – art, in a word.
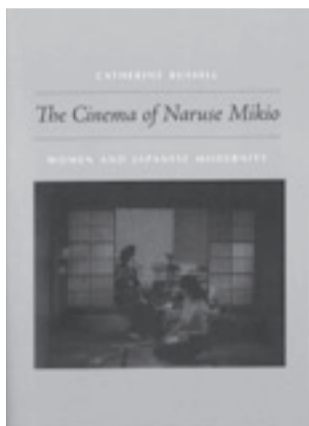
The Cinema of Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Modernity.

By Catherine Russell

Duke University Press. 2008.

ISBN 978 0 8223 4312 7

One of the most prolific and respected directors of Japanese cinema, Naruse Mikio (1905-69) made 89 films between 1930 and 1967. Little, however, has been written about Naruse in English, and much of the writing about him in Japanese has not been translated into English. With The Cinema of Naruse Mikio, Catherine Russell brings deserved critical attention to this under-appreciated director.

Many of Naruse's movies were "women's films". They have female protagonists; depicted women's passions, disappointments, routines, and living conditions; and emphasized the rigid gender norms of Japanese society. By assessing the critical reception of Naruse in Japan and drawing on the cultural theories of Harry Harootunian, Miriam Hansen, and Walter Benjamin, Russell shows that Naruse's portrayals of the changing roles of Japanese women in the public sphere and his depictions of an urban, industrialised, mass-media saturated society make his films key texts of Japanese modernity.
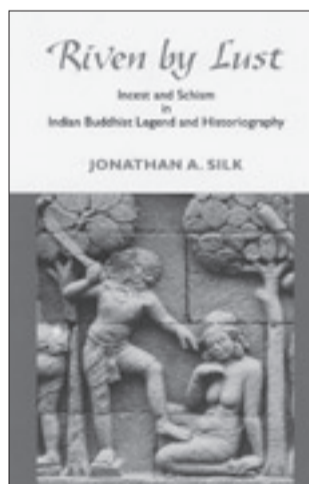
Riven by Lust

By Jonathan Silk

University of Hawai'i Press. 2008.

ISBN 978 0 8248 3090 8

Riven by Lust explores the tale of a man accused of causing the fundamental schism in early Indian Buddhism, but not before he has sex with his mother and kills his father. In tracing this Indian Buddhist Oedipal tale, Jonathan Silk follows it through texts in all of the major canonical languages of Buddhism, Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese, along the way noting parallels and contrasts with classical and medieval European stories such as the legend of the Oedipal Judas. Simultaneously, he investigates the psychological and anthropological understandings of the tale of mother-son incest in light of contemporary psychological and anthropological understandings of incest, with special attention to the question of why we consider it among the worst of crimes.

In seeking to understand how the story worked in Indian texts and for Indian audiences—as well as how it might work for modern readers—this book has both horizontal and vertical dimensions, probing the place of the Oedipal in Indian culture, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, and simultaneously framing the Indian Oedipal within broader human concerns, thereby contributing to the study of the history of Buddhism, the transmission of narratives in the ancient world, and the fundamental nature of one aspect of human sexuality.

Starting from a brief reference in a polemical treatise, Riven by Lust demonstrates that its authors borrowed and intentionally adapted a preexisting story of an Oedipal antihero. This recasting allowed them to calumniate their opponents in the strongest possible terms through the rhetoric of murder and incest. Silk draws on a wide variety of sources to demonstrate the range of thinking about incest in Indian Buddhist culture, thereby uncovering the strategies and working methods of the ancient polemicists. He argues that Indian Buddhists and Hindus, while occupying the same world for the most part, thought differently about fundamental issues such as incest, and hints at the consequent necessity of a reappraisal of our notions of the shape of the ancient cultural sphere they shared.

Provocative and innovative, Riven by Lust is a paradigmatic analysis of a major theme of world mythology and a signal contribution to the study of the history of incest and comparative sexualities. It will attract readers interested in Buddhism, Indian studies, Asian studies, comparative culture, mythology, psychology, and the history of sexuality.

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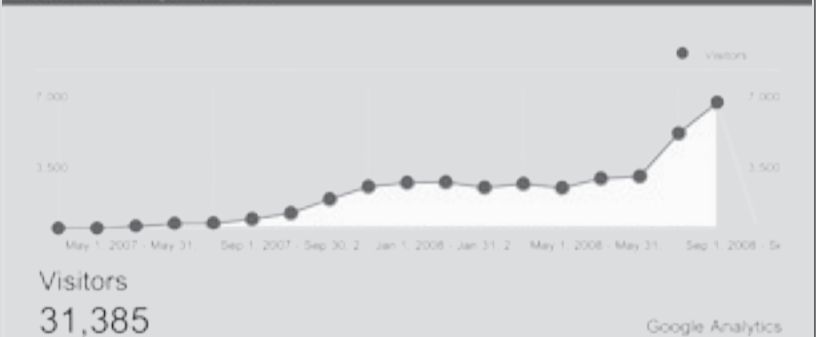
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Thomas Voorter
New Asia Books

How the West will cope with the 'Asian Century'

THOMAS S. WILKINS

Kishore Mahbubani, Singaporean Professor, former UN Ambassador and public intellectual describes a world fundamentally transformed since the end of the Cold War. In it, Asia and Asians are re-claiming the prominent role they played before the surge of Western industrial and imperial power over the last two centuries. This is a world in which Asian countries are no longer the 'objects' of international relations to be acted upon by the Western powers, but 'actors' in their own right. Mahbubani contends that the rise of Asia is 'unstoppable'. By 2050 three of the four world's largest economies will be Asian: China, India, and Japan, alongside the United States. We are therefore facing a seismic shift in the redistribution of power from the West to the East. This, Mahbubani is careful to point out, does not mean that the West will not remain a major global force, but it will lose the predominance of economic, political, and institutional power it has enjoyed to date. He argues that this should be a positive development overall, but everything will depend on how the West responds to its relative loss of global hegemony.

Three scenarios

To this purpose the book's first chapter outlines three scenarios, in order of their likelihood, of how the West may react to the rise of Asia. Scenario one: the 'march to modernity' identifies how Asia is developing in loose correspondence with the technological and libertarian model engrained in the Western enlightenment project. Many Asian states seek to replicate the 'best practice' of the West to achieve their modernisation goals, albeit in accord with their own social and cultural norms. Gracious acceptance of this fact by the West ushers in the prospect of 'absolute gains' for all. The second scenario is one in which the Western powers feel overtly threatened by rising Asian power and 'retreat into fortresses'. In this case political and economic protectionism by the West might be perceived as a way of preserving their relative position, but this will forfeit the absolute gains possible through openness and cooperation with Asia. This, Mahbubani argues, is already underway to some extent in the US and EU. The third scenario - 'the triumph of the West' - entails a reassertion of the hubris exemplified in Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History* (1992) where Westerners believe the only acceptable model for development is replication of their own socio-political model. A key flaw in this triumphalist thesis is that it does not work. Even in Europe the cherished notion that democracies prevent war was disproved in the Balkan conflicts. Attempts to actively export democracy at the barrel of a gun, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, have not met with success. Indeed, these Western conceits can be downright harmful to the supposed beneficiary (or 'target') societies.

Having set the context for debate in Western terms, the author examines more closely 'why Asia is rising now' (Chapter 2). He recognises seven mutually reinforcing 'pillars' of Western wisdom behind the miraculous advance of Asia: 'free market economics', 'science and technology', 'meritocracy', 'pragmatism' a 'culture of peace', 'rule of law' and 'education'. Adherence to these seven pillars allows Asia to reproduce the success experienced by Western states in their own ascent to power. Mahbubani considers this a cause for pride and celebration on the part of the West.

The loss of Western credibility

Chapters 3-5 return to the challenges faced by Western powers in adapting to this power shift. In 'why is the West not celebrating' (Chapter 3) Mahbubani identifies the tension between what he calls the 'philosophical West' (or Western values) and the 'material West' (interests). He poses the question: 'The rise of Asia creates a real dilemma for Western states: should they be guided by their material interests and cling on to power, or should they be guided by their values and begin to cede and share power?' (p. 103). He observes that the 12% of the population that live in the West control the primary instruments of world order such as the IMF and World Bank, G-7 and the UN Permanent Security Council (UNSC), underwriting this control with overwhelming military force. Here the author also lays bare the hypocrisy and abuse of power by the US, in particular. Washington eschewed participation in the International Criminal Court (ICC) rightly discerning that this would expose American military personnel to prosecution. The selective exhortation of democracy and human rights, coupled with the commission of human rights violations and torture in an 'illegal' (non-UN sanctioned) war in Iraq has demolished the international credibility of the US and any moral pretence it had to world leadership. Undermined by these legitimacy deficits and political miscalculations the

claim to world leadership by the West is becoming unsustainable. In Chapter 4: 'de-Westernization and the return of history' the author buttresses his case for the relinquishment of the instruments of world order by the West. In some aspects this is an elaboration of the philosophical stance he propounded in his work *Can Asians Think: Understanding the Divide between East and West*. (2008) Once, Asians may have believed in the innate superiority of Western civilisation. Now "The rest of the world has moved on...The mindsets of the largest populations within Asia - the Chinese, the Muslims, and the Indians – have been changed irrevocably" (pp. 130-131). The author points out that Western absolutes such as 'freedom' and 'democracy' are interpreted and applied differently in Asia, nuances neither recognised nor understood by Western observers. They also fail to apprehend the limits to their own freedoms such as widespread political imperatives toward self-censorship. In this chapter the author discourses at length on the Islamic world in which US actions have had catastrophic resonance among its populace.

In Chapter 5 - 'Western incompetence, Asian competence?' - the author

The rise of the West transformed the world. The rise of Asia will bring about an equally significant transformation' (p. 1)

'Today, the 5.6 billion people who live outside the Western universe will no longer accept decisions made on their behalf in Western capitals.' (p. 5)

shatters the assumption held by many Westerners that the rest of the world is the incubator of most of the global problems and the West itself is the solution. Quite the reverse Mahbubani argues - the West plays a major part in many global problems (p. 175). The damage done to international law by the US-UK invasion of Iraq is condemned as 'a seismic error, one of the greatest acts of folly of our age' (p. 177). It raises the question of how violators of the UN's principles can also be the enforcers of them? He goes on to provide a litany of American policy blunders from short-sighted domestic populism, flouting of world opinion on global warming, selective application of free trade principles, to ideologically driven and impractical diplomacy (e.g. Iran, North Korea). In contrast, the book argues that Asian countries are much more adept in their management of international problems. He cites Beijing's responsible approach to the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-8 and its great acumen in winning allies throughout Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. In Mahbubani's view Asia is outperforming the West in the skilful conduct of its diplomacy and statecraft.

Achieving a just and workable world order

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with a roadmap of putative solutions to many of the impasses identified in the previous chapters. Mahbubani argues that the time to restructure the world order has come. A just and workable world order can only be achieved if the West shares some of the instruments of world governance with the great powers of Asia. In return the Asian newcomers can shoulder some of the heavy burdens that sustaining world order entails. Reform of the UNSC is critical. He states that 'the UNSC should preferably reflect the great powers of 2045, not of 1945' (p. 249). Furthermore, Asian personnel should become candidates for the IMF and World Bank, positions that have invariably been occupied by Americans and Europeans, respectively. Mahbubani recognises the difficulties but argues that the West must have the courage (and good grace) to make such concessions.

The New Asian Hemisphere makes some powerful and provocative arguments and is one of several recent books - Fareed Zakaria's *The Post American World* (2008) being a close complement - that captures the 'Asia rising' *Zeitgeist*. There are some evident weaknesses in the overall thesis however:

Mahbubani largely avoids confronting the diversity and discrepant progress of 'Asia' in this book. The accomplishments of China and India

(uneven in themselves) are showcased to underline the strengths of Asia, while the deplorable conditions and prospects of Burma, Pakistan and Bangladesh, for example, are skimmed over. Furthermore, 'Asia' as conceived by Mahbubani seems to incorporate what most observers would separately distinguish as the 'Middle East'. This serves to undermine Mahbubani's case against the West since the most egregious examples of hubris and ineptitude are drawn from US misbehaviour in this region, not 'Asia' proper. To exclude Middle Eastern countries from 'Asia' would have deprived the author of some of his anti-Western ammunition.

Second, this reader was dismayed that the author fails to highlight the growing fissure in the West itself between the US and EU. It is Washington, not Brussels (harmful protectionist practices notwithstanding) to which the majority of the most ignoble foreign policy adventures may be ascribed. Yes, in some respects the EU and the US collaborate against joint dangers, but it is obvious to any European that they and Americans do not think alike and are implacably opposed on many issues, especially human rights and international law. Europe and the US should not be conflated: we are not 'All Americans Now'.[1]

The author is also selective in his use of historical and contemporary evidence to illustrate the positive facets of Asian development. This reader takes particular issue with the author's admiration of Japanese 'competence' in its occupation of Singapore 1942-45, one of the key examples cited being their efficient management of the botanical gardens! (pp. 180-81). This of course occurred in the context of a brutal conquest of Asia in which the Japanese exhibited extreme incompetence both in their conduct of the war and the operation of their 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere'. The occupation of Singapore, like Hong Kong, Shanghai and others was a hopelessly inefficient and wretched enterprise. The author's selective extraction of examples from the historical record cannot be taken at face value.

By any measure this is an incisive and important book. It confronts perhaps the most significant international question of this century: how will Asia develop and how the West will respond? The author asserts that 'the primary purpose of this book is to explain the world as it is seen through non-Western eyes, so that the 900 million who live in the West appreciate how the remaining 5.6 billion people view the world.' (p. 8). In this respect it is a conspicuous success. In contributing to this lively public and academic debate on the future of East-West relations Mahbubani does not pull his punches. As an interested Asian observer of the US, this book is intended as much as a wake-up call to the West as a statement of Asian confidence in their future. While the book may well upset or anger many Western readers Mahbubani has rendered them the valuable, if unwelcome, service of shaking them out of their complacency and provoking necessary self-reflection.

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References

1   See Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, (New York: Vintage, 2004).

Two journeys to the centre of the colonial project

Joost Cote

The two volumes under consideration here take the moral problematic of the link between technology and development within a colonial context as their central theme. Their titles signal the diverse ways in which they have approached their task. Ravensteijn and Kop establish their parameters in terms of 'profit and prosperity'; Suzanne Moon contrasts 'technology and ethical idealism'. Both signal in their introduction their intention to engage positively with the question of colonial modernity although their conclusions are significantly different. Immediately evident are the different historiographical traditions which these volumes represent. The voluminous multi-authored tome edited but Ravensteijn and Kop has all the hallmarks of the diligent and detailed harvesting of the colonial archive, for which contemporary Dutch colonial historiography is noted. Moon's slim, single-handed argument is reflective of the anglophone, more specifically the Cornell, school of scholarship, and is shaped by contemporary postcolonial discourse almost completely absent from the former.

Aid for the Anglophone historian?

Wim Ravensteijn and Jan Kop provide the anglophone historian with an extensive and much needed overview of the history of technological innovation introduced by Dutch colonial engineers in the Dutch East Indies colony. Both internationally recognised scholars well established in their fields, they have gathered a team of historians specialising in various fields of history of technology. The volume includes essays on the main elements of public works - road, rail, bridge and harbour construction and aspects of water reticulation, including irrigation works, drinking water and sanitation; and also five essays broadly dealing with the legacy of colonial technology for the post-colonial state, including one Indonesian scholar not included in notes on authors and editors. Suzanne Moon's volume, on the other hand, focuses on a single aspect of what is generally perceived as a marginal, but she argues, crucial, aspect of technological intervention: small-scale agricultural development projects. Apart from their coverage, what distinguishes these publications is the significantly different stance that each takes in dealing with the colonial archive - if not the colonial project - which raises broader questions about the writing of (Dutch) colonial history in general.

The Ravensteijn and Kop volume, a weighty, suitably illustrated, 560-page hard back, is a translation of a previously published Dutch language volume entitled *Bouwen in de archipel: burgerlijke openbare werken in Nederlands-Indië en Indonesië, 1800 - 2000* that appeared in 2004. It is as much a celebration of the legacy of the colonial Indies Public Works Department as of the Delft University of Technology which produced most of its leading engineers. As it moves across to an international readership however this characteristic feature takes on a new meaning. The transition of the title from what originally translates as 'Building in the archipelago: civil public works in the Netherlands Indies and Indonesia' into the English challenges (or ignores) established contemporary postcolonial perspectives. Any reader of Rudolf Mzárek's *Engineers of Happy Land* (2002) - of which the 'global reader' will be immediately reminded - will be struck by the self-congratulatory tone of this summation of Dutch colonial achievement, this 'lasting testimony to the work done in this field in Indonesia' (p. 43). This is despite Ravensteijn's concern to distance his volume from a related late-colonial classic, *Daar werd wat groots verricht* (literally: Something grand was created over there) also discussed by Frans Hüskens in an epilogue that sits rather self-critically at the end of this volume. That achievement is summarised in Ravensteijn's introduction and more conveniently restated in a later essay[1]:

> Dutch East Indies state formation took place between 1800 and 1950 and civil engineering works were dominant in the technology involved. Dutch engineers in public service constructed 67,000 kilometers of roads, 7,500 kilometers of railways, many large bridges, modern irrigation systems covering 1.4 million hectares of rice fields, several international harbours and 140 public drinking water systems n the archipelago.[2]

Indonesians, not Dutch engineers, were of course the ones who did the constructing, but that aside, herein essentially lies a well-worn argument about the physical foundations of the post-colonial Indonesian state relevant - according to the title - until 2000. This may be argued and Hüskens, who provides the volume's Afterword, appears to dispute this. The crucial

issue, though, hinges on one's views about the role of historiography. For Ravensteijn doing history is 'placing oneself in the position of Indonesia as it was in the time of the Dutch East Indies ... and by assessing and sensing the developments of that time in their true historical perspective' (p. 43). Mrázek claims to do the same but comes to a significantly different sense of that colonial past.

'Pernickety' intervention results in small-scale change

Suzanne Moon also attempts to 'understand history as it was'. Her slim volume also excavates the Dutch colonial (and Indonesian) archive and Moon comes to this writing with the support of an appropriate range of technological institutions. Her examination is motivated, as she makes clear in the introduction, not by a concern to document the work of the colonial engineers *per se*, but by a concern to understand the colonial origins of Indonesian and to a certain extent, international developmentalist thinking. Like Ravensteijn and Kop, Moon finds literal, not simply analogical, connections between colonial and Indonesian (and even international) approaches to 'developmentalism' although discussion of this in detail necessarily lies beyond the scope of both books.

Moon's focus is very specific: she concentrates on those technologies that were designed to make 'small scale change' rather than on the 'roads and bridges' technology one usually associates with technologies, or indeed 'progress'. In this, perhaps unintentionally, she identifies the truer character of Dutch colonialism. Moon suggests it was the small scale technology - what might be characterised as the 'pernickety-ness' of Dutch intervention - rather than the more robust 'transformative projects' that provides the key to understanding the impact of Dutch colonialism and its legacy.

Central to Moon's argument is an identification of what we all know as the 'ethical policy', that much debated, rhetorical, practical and legislative cocktail that lies at the heart of late Dutch colonial practice. Drawing heavily on the writing of the pre-war English historian, JS Furnivall, who in turn was largely informed by the Dutch colonial 'revisionists' of his day, Moon draws attention to its long gestation in religious, philanthropic and humanitarian thought - rather than its short term political, pragmatic and self-interested birth - and against this 'policy' - actually a discourse - measures 20th century colonial policy. Like Ravensteijn, Moon finds support here in the influential writing of the Dutch scholar, JAA van Doorn, who, it may be noted, found that anglophone historians 'sometimes revealed themselves insufficiently conscious of the problematical aspects of an Indocentric persepctive'.[3]

Characteristic of Moon's approach to the history of colonial technologies is a concern to examine contemporary debates about their use. Her empirical focus here is the aims and practice of the colonial Department of Agricultural Science and its 'discontents' - specifically the opposition from the colonial sugar lobby but also from within its own ranks. This obviously gives the lie to a view of history that suggests a unilinear or predetermined interpretation. Given its nature, the activities of this colonial department and its field officers had the potential to have a far greater impact on more Javanese lives than any other of the colonial technological innovations. But it was also a technology with which, as Moon points out, Javanese farmers were specifically involved and of whose agency therefore, colonial directors and field specialists had to take cognisance.

In the final two chapters, following standard historiographical periodisation Moon examines the legacy of the ethical ideal in the 'post-ethical' period. Recognising this break in the on-going, changing, and always equivocal colonial 'native policy' leads her into a useful discussion of the much discussed JH Boeke thesis. Under the influence of the economic depression and the growing conservatism of pre-war Europe, the radicalisation of the Indonesian Independence movement, and growing disillusionment with the hubris of the 'idealists', a belief in a bipolar colonial order gained dominance. This maintained the inevitability of a dual economy and society - which in one version was expressed as a respect for tradition, and in the other, as the impossibility of assimilation.

Focusing on its human impact provides Moon with a way to reconsider, in a highly nuanced way, the layers of meaning within the discourse on development. But Moon manages, at the same time, to provide 'the facts'. Focusing more specifically on the technologies themselves, on the other hand, as each of the descriptive chapters in the larger volume do, pro-

vides one with a more robust factual account. While not without some recognition of their impact on Indonesian society, as a whole each of the descriptive chapters in the larger volume reflect the positivist orientation of Ravensteijn's introduction. This is perhaps hardly surprising given that Ravensteijn authors or co-authors five of the fifteen contributions, including the two introductory and one of the three concluding 'considerations'. There is too much in the larger volume to do justice to any particular chapter, and each will need to be considered in their specific field. Suffice here to briefly comment that each chapter provides an excellent factual overview of a specific field of technological endeavour by individual authors already well represented in their field. Marie-Louise ter Horn-van Nispen writes on road building, Augustus Veenendaal on rail and tram networks, Michael Bakker, on bridges, Arjan Veering, on port construction, Maurits Ertsen with Wim Ravensteijn on irrigation works, Pauline van Roosmalen on town planning, Jan Kop on sanitation, drinking water and flood control projects. Five of the authors are listed as staff members of the Delft University of Technology. Not given a biographical note is the only Indonesia contributor, Harry Patmadjaja, representing, it appears, a team of Indonesian scholars from the Institut Teknologi, Banung and Petra Christian University whose chapter provides a welcome Indonesian assessment of this legacy of colonial engineering

Questions of orientation aside, the Ravensteijn and Kop volume provides the anglophone reader - and not least the interested Indonesian reader for whom the Dutch colonial archive remains closed - an important addition to their knowledge of Dutch colonial technologies. Excavating the colonial archive as these various expert authors have done requires both the linguistic skills to trawl the vast files of the colonial bureaucracies, and specialist knowledge. Before 'interpretation', it could be argued, we need the facts. Quite correctly Ravensteijn suggests one needs to thoroughly understand the work and intentions of these engineers before assessing their legacy. All too often the postcolonialist historian is criticised for ignoring the facts - not least by historians who, in this case, may find in Ravensteijn and Kop a welcome antithesis to Mrázek's 'Happyland'. Except of course that 'the facts' are themselves often no more than ideological constructs.

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Notes

1   Ravensteijn, Wim. 2007. 'Between Globalisation and Localisation The case of Dutch civil engineering in Indonesia 1800 - 1950', *Comparative Technology and Society*, 5 (1).

2   ibid, p. 32: abstract. The detail is substantially repeated on the opening page of the present volume.

3   van Doorn, JAA. 1994. *De laatste eeuw van Indië: Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.

Audible lessons in self

Constantine Sandis

In this new, clearly-written, book (on some counts his 73rd) Noble Peace prize winner Tenzin Gyatso - known to most as 'Kundun' or 'His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama' - sets out to explain the Buddhist doctrine of *Paticca Samuppada* (translated here as 'Dependent-Arising') and what it entails regarding the nature of the self, the world and our place within it. In so doing this pacifist 'simple Buddhist monk' - who has his own website (http://www.dalailama.com/) and travels with bodyguards - aims to help the reader overcome a self-deception that he believes is the fundamental source of a variety of "destructive emotions that lead to actions contaminated with misperception" (p.46). The origins and nature of the false conceptions thought to give rise to such afflictive emotions is best understood within the context of the Buddhist philosophical tradition from which Gyatso's thought has emerged.

Buddhist philosophy traditionally divides into five interrelated writing genres: *Prajñāpāramitā* Sutras (scriptures dealing with the perfection of wisdom), *Madhyamaka* or *Śunyavada* Sutras (scriptures advocating a middle way between nihilism and eternalism as a method for approaching *Prajñā pāramitā*), *Vinaya* Sutras (advocating the *Theravada* code of strict rules for monastic discipline known as the *Patimokkha*), *Abhidharma* Sutras (metaphysical scriptures that attempt to construct a systematic description of all phenomena e.g. the final book of the *Tripitaka* canon of the *Theravada* school of Buddhism), and *Pramana* Sutras (scriptures dealing with the sources of knowledge).

The 'middle way'

While it engages with themes from all five genres, *How to See Yourself* is founded upon the *Madhyamaka* 'middle way' tradition of denying that the nature or essence of any phenomenon is independent from that of any other. This outlook was most famously expressed by the hugely influential Indian Buddhist philosopher Nagarrjuna (c. 150-250 CE) and his later follower Chandrakirti (c. 600-650 CE), who through his commentaries on Nagarrjuna's work developed the *Prasaṅgika* ('logical consequence') approach. This approach involved establishing ultimate truth by first eliminating all views with absurd or contradictory logical consequences. This contrasts with the *Svatantrika* approach, which begins with positive assertions about that nature of phenomena (e.g. that they may possess inherent existence without possessing absolute existence). This method reaches conclusions by eliminating alternative views through the use of *Reductio ad Absurdum* arguments viz. arguments that aim to demonstrate the absurd consequences of following views and arguments to their logical extremes. There are parallels here with the reason employed by Sherlock Holmes in Arthur Conan Doyle's novel *The Sign of Four* (1890): "When you

have eliminated the impossible, that which remains, however improbable, must be the truth".

Gyatso's application of the 'logical consequence' heuristic leads him to claim that phenomena are "empty of their own inherent existence" in that they "do not exist in their own right" (p. 81). Hence the aforementioned notion of Dependent-Arising: phenomena do not exist independently of the causes and conditions from which they arise. What is less clear is whether, on this view, it is *all* phenomena that arise dependently or merely those that tend to capture our attention. While Gyatso asserts that "*all* phenomena arise dependently" (p.49 my italics) referring to external conditions as well as to "the fact that all phenomena – impermanent and permanent – exist in dependence upon their own parts" (p. 56), he often makes more qualified claims such as that "all *impermanent* phenome-

na...come into existence dependent upon certain causes and conditions" (p.51, my italics).

There are several possible explanations for this oddity, complicated further by the fact that the text uses the phrases "does not exist as it appears" and "does not ultimately exist" interchangeably (cf. p. 160). The simplest, perhaps, is that something has been lost in the generally fine translation by Jeffrey Hopkins. Another possibility is that - like the captain of the HMS Pinafore who in Gilbert and Sullivan's musical boasts that he's "never, never sick at sea" but when questioned ("what, never?") immediately qualifies his claim: "well, *hardly* ever!" – Gyatso finds the exceptions unimportant. A third, more plausible, explanation is that while Gyatso typically uses the term 'phenomenon' to refer to any object, state of affairs, or occurrence *that may be perceived* by the senses, he occasionally also uses it in a looser sense which also covers what Kant called 'noumena' viz. the things that make up the underlying reality which causes us to perceive phenomena. In short, there may be things that do not arise dependently but which, being imperceptible, would not count as phenomena in the narrow sense.

While it is not self-evident that the permanent/impermanent distinction maps onto the perceptible/imperceptible distinction perfectly, there is a long philosophical tradition, that dates at least as far back as Plato in the West and even further in the East, according to which eternal but imperceptible forms (such as those of Truth and Beauty) exist inherently while the impermanent phenomena that make up the world of sights and sounds exist only in so far as they relate to the former.

Illusory phenomena

Whatever its precise scope, Gyatso's claim is not merely that phenomena owe their existence to certain causes (in the sense that they would not have come into existence without them) but the considerably more radical thesis that phenomena are *illusory* (or '*like* illusions' to use the translator's phrase) because, contrary to

appearances, they have no independent existence (they do not exist *in and of themselves*). Radical though this thesis may be, it should not be confused with the anti-realist view that they are illusions (i.e. that they do not exist at all, but only appear to do so):

> "[A]lthough persons and things are empty of existing the way they appear to be established in their own right, they are not utterly nonexistent; they can act and can be experienced. Therefore being like an illusion is not the same as appearing to exist but actually not existing, like the horns of a rabbit, which do not exist at all". (p. 176ff.)

Indeed Gyatso uses *Prasaṅgika* to point out that if phenomena are empty of existence because they *arise* dependently on various (real) causes and conditions then they themselves must be real enough (p65).

So why should we think of *all* phenomena as dependent-arising? One obvious answer, which finds its modern Western expression in the chaos theory notion of 'sensitive dependence on initial conditions' - popularly known as the *Butterfly Effect* (the term originates from Ray Brad-

bury's short story Sound of Thunder in which the killing of a pre-historic butterfly alters human history) - is that everything in the universe is causally interlinked in a way that makes it incoherent to suppose that any one part of it could have been different without this having a deep impact on the whole.

Amour fati

While such thoughts have their origins in early Buddhism, they have appeared in various guises throughout the centuries, from Homer's *Iliad* to Hollywood's *Sliding Doors*. Sartre, for example, warns further that there is no clear dividing line between facticity and its transcendence, each new situation we find ourselves in being the result of both. A similar thought motivated Nietzsche's *amour fati* and the desire for eternal recurrence which follows from it (cf. *The Gay Science*, § 341) since,

given such interdependence, to wish for any aspect of the past to be otherwise is to desire a self-negation that only tragedy could call for. Other thinkers influenced by related Buddhist insights include Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristotle, Chrysippus, Virgil, Kant, Schopenhauer, Freud, Jung, Heidegger, and (more recently) Galen Strawson.

To give a rather simplistic illustration of the dependence in question, my being identical to the author of this review is dependent on numerous phenomena including not only an incredibly long (if not infinite) string of events without which I would never have been born, brought up, taught English, trained in philosophy etc., but also the entire prehistory that brought about the existence of the 14th Dalai Lama and all the further events (and the people they involved, each with their own strings of prehistory and personal history) that collectively made it possible for him to write this book and when he did, the life and work of his translator Jeffrey Hopkins, the word-processing technology

we rely on, and so forth. Each of these in turn arises from a dependence on a vast number of other dependent phenomena. More importantly, my writing this book review may (directly or indirectly) come to affect both my character and my relation to other people in such a way that I could not rationally come to regret writing it unless I also regretted the majority of effects this came to have on me (many of which I may not be aware of). It would seem that to rationally wish away any part of the history of the world that led to this moment is to (knowingly or otherwise) be willing to negate any part of my current self that was formed as a result of the events in question.

While such thoughts concerning interrelatedness are central to Gyatso's outlook, they do not capture the force of his 'logical consequence' approach in its entirety. After all, thoughts regarding dependence might - for all that has been said so far - motivate one (as it arguably did in Nietzsche's imagination) to treat certain others as obstacles to be defeated or removed at any cost. Yet nothing could be further removed from the Buddhist ideology which not only permeates this book but clearly manifests itself throughout Gyatso's personal life (think of his attitude towards China and the recent Olympics held there). By demonstrating that interrelatedness implies oneness - in the sense that none of us are held to exist in and of ourselves (Chapter 11) - Gyatso aims to show that s/he who knows thyself will stop acting selfishly as they come to realise that we are over-dependent upon things that we detach ourselves from and too attached to things that we misidentify with, thus wanting to possess them. This view is motivated by a combination of the Socratic suggestion that all vice stems from ignorance and the somewhat suspect conflation of dependence and identity (p. 82) which gives birth to a metaphysics of interpersonal identity at a global level (p.6).

So it is that Gyatso's view of the world leads to his philosophy of the self. In order to fully understand how the world relates to us it is not, we are told, sufficient to understand the nature of the (so-called 'external') world; we also need to also see *ourselves* as we really are. Thus we are led into various issues in the philosophy of mind pertaining to what we might call *logic* of the self. Gyatso begins by arguing that:

> "There is no person to be found either separate from mind and body or within mind and body" (p.127).

He calls this view "name-only", but takes care to distinguish it from nominalist views according to which terms such as "mind" and "I" do not refer to actual things. If anything, both his general outlook and the underlying methodology of examining the logical relations between mental concepts is reminiscent of that employed by the post-war Oxford linguistic philosopher Gilbert Ryle who in *The Concept of Mind* (1949) attacked the Cartesian concep-

Tenzin Gyatso, 'His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama'

Longchenpa (c.1308-1364), a major teacher in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. His major work *Seven Treasures* encapsulates 600 years of Buddhist thought in Tibet.

tion of a mind as a ghost residing within a machine-like body: "it seems to you that there is a Jane who owns her mind and body...this perspective is mistaken". The question is not *whether* minds or selves or persons exist but *in what sense* they can be said to: "They definitely do exist; how they exist is the issue" (p.161)

Gyatso's arguments in the second half of the book support an answer to this question already familiar to us from the first half: "dependently". While they all strive towards the same conclusion they are uneven in quality. For instance, the whole book is littered with gobbets of wisdom from past Buddhist masters – a heuristic not easily distinguished from that of appealing to authority. On p.49, for example, he quotes approvingly Nagarrjuna's claim that "when there is long, there has to be short. They do not exist through their own nature". Yet this only makes sense as a claim about our *concepts* of being short and long, not about short and long things themselves. Elsewhere (earlier in the book) he conflates the notion of a person with the ever-elusive self or "I" that persons are sometimes said to have, which subsequently leads him to the absurd conclusion that people are not located anywhere (p. 63). At other times he simply relies on unquestioned assumptions that are central to the teachings of Buddhism. The following piece of reasoning is a paradigmatic example:

> '*If "I" and the mind-body complex are exactly the same, it would be impossible to think of "my body" or "my head" or "my mind" or surmise that "my body is getting stronger." Also, if the self and mind-body are one, then when the mind and body no longer exist, the self would no longer exist*' (p. 141)

What exactly is wrong with the view that the self ceases to exist when both mind and body cease to exist? Nothing, other than the fact that it contradicts the fundamental Buddhist belief in reincarnation (p.142). Given that he is himself supposed to be the reincarnation of the reincarnation of each of the previous thirteen Dalai Lamas of Tibet, this is hardly a belief that he might be expected to readily abandon. Still, an argument that hinges on it is unlikely to convince many, certainly not the religious and political leaders diagnosed as self-deceived in the book's Introduction.

Obstacles to enlightenment?

Perhaps this is why each chapter of the CD and book end with a number of meditative reflections intended to assist with the internalisation of the Buddhist outlook. The repetitiveness of the book is no doubt also intended to perform the meditative function of helping the reader to overcome habitual association (see Gyatso's *How To Practice, Stages of Meditation*, and *The Dalai Lama's Book of Daily Meditation*). If you plan to meditate, I would especially advise you to stay clear of the audio-CD version of the book. Indeed I found Hopkins' narration so irritating that after listening to just the first CD I could no longer tolerate being dependent upon it. In this I do not seem to be alone. As a reviewer at *Audiophile* Magazine put it: "Jeffrey Hopkins's slow and tired narration creates an obstacle to appreciating the lesson. The fact that he's the translator and a preeminent Dalai Lama scholar doesn't compensate for this flaw in his performance".

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Cribb, Joe and Georgina Herrmann, eds. 2007. *After Alexander: Central Asia before Islam.* **Proceedings of the British Academy 133. Oxford: Oxford University Press.**

After Alexander

ANDREW GLASS

This volume brings together many of the papers given at the conference *After Alexander: Central Asia Before Islam: Themes in the History and Archaeology of Western Central Asia*, which took place at the British Academy from June 23rd to 25th, 2004. This conference was convened in recognition of the new era of archaeological collaboration with the Central Asian republics that became possible following their independence from the Soviet Union in 1992, and to draw attention to this important but under-supported area of study.

The book begins with an introduction in which the editors summarise the history of the field of Central Asian archaeology, highlighting the roles of the Soviet/Russian archaeologists Boris Marshak, Boris Stavisky and Yevgeny Zeymal to whom the volume is dedicated. The remainder of the introduction explains the background to the conference, and the structure of the present volume under five themes: nomad, city, invasion, money, and religion. This thematic structure serves to unite the papers, which are, with few exceptions, reports of current work by specialists in the fields covered by the conference, namely, archaeology, numismatics, and art history. The themes, therefore, represent the broad strokes in the history of the region connecting the dots provided by the papers themselves. In combination, the structure and contents begin to justify the broad and ambitious title of this book, which might well be applied to an encyclopaedia rather than a single volume.

The first article, "Central Asia: West and East" by Sir John Boardman, lies outside the thematic structure, and therefore serves as a second introduction. It opens with a summary of the role Central Asia has played in fascinating the minds of Europeans from Marco Polo to Marlowe to Stein, before addressing another dominant theme in Central Asian studies, that of the crossroads between Europe, China and South Asia. This has been illustrated through an iconographical study which traces Greek and Chinese influences on a couple of Central Asian artworks.

Nomads, cities and invasions

The first paper (by Claude Rapin) in the Nomad section includes an introduction which provides background and places the theme in context. The main focus of this paper, and also of the following one (by Kazim Abdullaev), is tracing nomadic tribes in the archaeological record. Both authors have drawn on Graeco-Roman and Chinese sources to provide necessary historical detail. The third paper in this section (by Sebastian Stride) is striking for its originality in combining the study of geo-systems with archaeology in order make determinations about the potential of a given landscape to support civilization. The most interesting result of this work seems to show that the city of Termez was too big to be supported by its surroundings and so must have depended on imports from the territories of the successive empires of which it was a part. Therefore, prior to the establishment of an imperial border near the city, it would have had little reason to exist. This is a point borne out in archaeological investigations described by Leriche and Pidaev later in the book (chapter 8).

The City section is introduced, appropriately, by an article entitled "Bactria, Land of a Thousand Cities" (Leriche), a reference to Apollodorus which has generally (esp. Tarn) been accepted to refer to the process of urbanisation initiated by the Greeks. Leriche combines the historical records with the latest archaeological data, and shows, contra Tarn, that most of the cities in the region date to the period after the decline of Greek power. This section also includes a description of the creation of a three-dimensional computer model of Ai Khanum (Guy Lecuyot), which includes vivid colour plates recreating the ancient city. Other contributions in this section describe archaeological discoveries at Nisa, Termez and Shahristan.

Unlike the previous sections, the first article in the Invasion section does not serve as an introduction to the topic.

Instead, Michael Alram surveys Ardashir's coinage which he uses to show the eastward expansion of the Sasanian empire. The next contribution provides a report on a newly discovered Sasanian relief found at Rag-i Bibi in northern Afghanistan. This fascinating paper, part adventure story and part scholarly report, details the circumstances of the discovery and study of this important relief, as well as its art-historical significance. The four other papers in this section are reports from excavations at Gobekly-depe, Gorgân and Dehistan, as well as Gyaur Kala (Merv).

Money and religion

Joe Cribb's article introducing the Money section gives a survey of the coinage of the region throughout the period covered by the book. It is a well-conceived piece which could easily stand alone as a short introduction to the topic for future students of Central Asia. Contributions by Natasha Smirnova, Edvard Rtveladze and Helen Wang complement this section with focused numismatic studies of Merv, northern Tokharistan (Surkhan Darya and southern Tadjikistan), and eastern Central Asia (Xinjiang and Gansu).

The Religion section appears to have been named in an afterthought, as it is based on the conference section on the movement of ideas. It lacks an overview of the diverse religious history of this vast region. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis's paper on the Iranian coins argues for rooting their iconography in the Iranian/Zoroastrian tradition rather than Hellenism. The next two papers also concern Zoroastrianism, but from an archaeological perspective, being reports on a fire temple at Tash-k'irman Tepe and a tower of silence from Bandiyan. The final paper "Buddhism and Features of the Buddhist Art of Bactria-Tokharistan" is one of only three papers in the book that are completely devoid of illustrations. In this case, the lack is symptomatic of a paper that appears to have been hastily put together for presentation and which received little further attention prior to publication. The author advances several important suggestions without any supporting evidence, for example, "it is likely that the anthropomorphic image of the Teacher [the Buddha] was not rejected out of hand in the early period of Buddhism" (p.476). A further statement which is not as contentious states: "the artists . . . were professionals, and they were probably not Buddhists" (p.480). This view is repeated in the conclusion without the uncertainty: "most of the work on the decora-

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tion of Buddhist monuments at that time was undertaken by professional artists, who did not belong to the Buddhist community," (p.483) which is surprising when it appears alongside "the influence of Buddhist iconography on non-Buddhist art was minimal" (p.483). Accordingly this author considers that the "non-Buddhist" professional artists working on Buddhist monuments were separate from the artists creating non-Buddhist art, or at least did not carry over influences from their work on Buddhist projects. The question of influence can be tested, but I am not so sure that we can know much about the religious beliefs of the artists responsible for the Buddhist monuments.

There are a few problems elsewhere in the book with the transfer from conference papers to articles, but overall the project is a successful one. The contributions will be of interest to specialists and a few may serve as valuable introductions for a more general audience and students.

Finally, some minor editorial points: the book uses footnotes rather than endnotes, a welcome choice, and the bibliographical references follow individual contributions rather than being unified at the end of the volume is helpful. The main issues which I disagree with are explained in a note at the end of the introduction that states "we have not sought to standardise spellings in all instances and have chosen to omit the use of diacritical marks" (p. 7). One can sympathise with the former problem which is exacerbated by having many contributors, but transliteration systems ought to be standardised within a single article, yet this is not always the case. For example, we find both Yuezhi and Yueh-zhi on page 19, and the odd spellings Buddiyskye and buddiskih on page 484. Good reasons for omitting diacritics would be that the book is aimed at a general audience rather than scholars, or because of technical limitations. Neither of these should apply in this case. Fortunately, diacritics have been retained for French throughout, and for other languages in some contributions. Otherwise, the book is produced to the high editorial standards we would expect from the British Academy. The book contains many black-and-white images, seven colour plates, and a detailed index.

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'You don't have to be English to play Elgar':
The globalisation of Western music

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Mari Yoshihara, Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, tells us that, like many middle-class girls in the Japan of the 1960s and 1970s, she learned the piano: her 'musical sensibility' was 'Western', her 'identity' the piano (p.viii). She did not, however, go to conservatory. The kind of femininity associated with so doing had no appeal. That, her growing political awareness, and, as she amusingly admits, her "utter frustration" with a Liszt Paganini étude, led her to enrol at the University of Tokyo and major in American Studies. Subsequently she wrote her book Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism (2002). Then she decided to return to music and also to write a book on Asians and classical music. What she had so far done in her life turned out to be good preparation for that task, and she has written a good book, without too many jargonistic cadenzas and only a few rather jarring notes from a not very apposite Pierre Bourdieu.

Aspirations and application

The globalisation of Western music is indeed an excellent topic, open to research historical and sociological as well as musicological. Its extension does not derive solely from its potent aesthetic appeal, but also from political, economic and social changes in the imperial and post-imperial worlds, as a result of which it was spread from the European to the non-European world and made welcome there. Many people of Asian origin now pursue the art form abroad as well as at home, as a visit to a Western conservatory or attendance at an orchestral concert in the West will readily confirm. Their aspirations, as Yoshihara argues, are shaped by structural factors – such as the opportunity to be 'modern' in their own society, their need to find a place in a different society – as well as by the presence of personal talent and the capacity for unremitting application.

Much of her book depends on interviews carried out with 'Asian American' musicians working in the New York area. Yoshihara at first thought her analysis of their 'investment' in classical music would rely on familiar academic concepts and categories, such as class, race, gender, imperialism, hegemony. Though those clearly continued to affect her work, she happily realised that they were not sufficient: "the profound and real connections that music – and musicians – create among people of different parts of the world seemed irreducible to categories like race, nation and imperialism" (p.xii). The vocabulary she was using was both too big and too small to encompass the musicians' relationship with music. Happily, too, her own return to piano-playing led Yoshihara both to reflect on her own questions – "in all honesty, where and how I grew up felt rather irrelevant as I was trying to distinguish the tone colour in different voices in the Rachmaninoff D-major prelude" (p.xiii) – and to empathise with those to whom she put the questions.

Most of them were pianists or string-players, and most were women. First in Japan, and then in South Korea and China, the piano after all became, as in 19th century Europe, a proper family acquisition, an indicator of social prestige, a domestic focus. Singers are not numerous. Some of the respondents are major figures – like Kent Nagano and Cho-Liang Lin – while others are at a less advanced stage in their career. Their experiences are diverse, their attitudes less so.

Questions of identity

'Identity' was an initial focus of the interviews. Questions of 'identity' are indeed fashionable in academe as in government, and like other fashions themselves pass without much question. What does the word 'identity' mean? The recent census in the country in which I live was keen to find out with which 'ethnic group' respondents 'identified'. I wrote that I could not answer. I was not sure which group I 'identified' with, or indeed if I 'identified' with any. And I was not at all sure that governments should be encouraged to divide their citizens up in that way or to imply that we found our 'identity' in that way. 'Identity' is, if I understand it, a complex rather than a simple matter. Probably, given the chance, I would put 'historian' first among several constituents.

The majority of Yoshihara's respondents seemed to feel something similar. They thought of themselves above all as musicians. "[T]his musical identity is a more salient factor than socially defined categories such as race or identity". Other aspects of Asians' identity were 'highly fluid'. (p. 227) Yoshihara seems at times a little disappointed, pointing out that the musicians had little academic training other than in music, lacked historical knowledge. But it might also be that, though in very different circumstances, they thought rather as I did in facing the New Zealand census, that it was not that kind of identity that came first. Their dedication was to music, and it was through music that they 'found' it.

The question of 'identity' had no doubt another origin besides fashion. When Asian musicians appeared in the West in numbers in the 1970s and 1980s, it was sometimes argued that, though technically expert in classical music, they could not truly enter its spirit. Questions of 'ethnicity' were a softer version of the 'racism' that implied. The argument was never, however, convincing, smacking too much of sour grapes. Different training, the traditions of different conservatories and of different orchestras, different schools of instrumental playing, were at issue, not race or ethnic identity. You did not have to be English to play Elgar. He had, after all, been pioneered by Germans and admired in Germany. Possibly, too, a different approach revealed an additional aspect of his genius. Our contemporary globalisation may lead to diversity not to uniformity.

Forthright responses

Some of the most prominent Asian musicians that Yoshihara contacted declined to be interviewed, she tells us. It seemed that they thought she was "trying to make an argument for the racially and culturally based nature of music-making, a view with which they did not wish to be associated". (p. 199) Those that did respond come out well in this book, thanks to their own forthrightness and the author's honesty. "I found that most classical musicians' everyday lives and work do not revolve around their Asian identities or the politics of East-West relations. ... what occupies them the most is the painstaking work of becoming better musicians". (p. 231)

The book is almost entirely concerned with musicians from East Asia, though a few others appear. There is plenty of scope for further work that would provide a comparative context. How do Asian musicians fare in Europe or in Latin America? And is the story an 'Asian' one or an 'East Asian' one? In Southeast Asia, for example, the Malaysian Philharmonic vies with the Singapore Symphony, and Bangkok Opera is working its way through a Ring cycle. Yoshihara seems to share the rather widespread gloom about the future of classical music, talking of ageing audiences and deficient funding. But in some ways the prospects are exciting.

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One of the musicians interviewed by Mari Yoshihara was the Japanese American conductor Kent Nagano.

NETWORK ASIA

COMMENT

Win-win for China?

KERRY BROWN

What will the credit crunch and financial crisis in Europe and North America mean in Asia, and in particular in China? That must have been one of the questions posed in the meetings held in Beijing over the last month by China's leaders. As well as assessing how the Olympics went, they will almost certainly have been thinking about the 30 years of reform since December 1978 when China started its economic liberalisations. As 2008 comes to a close, there will be more public events 'celebrating' this turning point in China, Asia, and, as it turns out, the world's development. But external events, more than usual, will have taken their attention.

China could either be in a win-win, or lose-lose position. As things stand at the moment, its economy is still growing by 9%, a 1% drop on the earlier part of the year, but still way and afar ahead of the developed world, where there is likely to be zero or negative growth this year. Its banks, insulated by the non-convertibility of the Chinese Yuan, and already cleaned up after nearly imploding during the Asian financial crisis almost a decade ago, are in decent shape – or more decent than their Western counterparts, many of whom have shares in them. China has 2 trillion in foreign reserves, a massive war chest against any economic downturn. And its proportion of public debt to GDP is, in comparison to Japan, the UK, or the US, tiny. There will be some cheap assets going in the next few months, which Chinese may well be poised to take either a minority, or a majority share in. Suddenly, China the saver, the hoarder of massive bank deposits, looks like a champion of prudent fiscal policy and stability. Its investments might even be seen as one of the few areas where the world's economy can be kick started in the months and years ahead.

But there is a downside to China for all of this. Shrinking overseas markets for China's manufactured goods in the US and EU is a bad thing. Already factories are closing in the Pearl River Delta. Manufacturers, put off by inflation and rising transport and labour costs, and complaining about the restrictions placed upon them by the Labour Law passed in January this year, are starting to look to places like Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Chinese people, while their consumer spending is up a healthy 20% on last year, are still not quite able to supply domestically the sort of market China had found abroad for its goods. And Chinese overseas investment policy has been marked, since the big losses last year from stakes in the US fund Blackstone and Barclays, by caution. The 'netizens' of China at least have been vociferous in their criticism of a government that seems to

only be able to lose money when it operates abroad. For a few moments in September, during the worst of the crisis, it looked like China might even buy a large stake in Morgan Stanley (it already owns 9%). But the moment came and went. China feared, no doubt, both the risk of losing yet more money in the short term, and the possibility of major political backlash in the US. The time is still not right.

A stable, benign international environment was what Deng Xiaoping, in the 1980s, said was most necessary to allow China to continue to develop its own internal capacity, and sort out its own formidable contradictions. Seeing the economies of the major powers in the rest of the world take a dive is not, most policy makers agree, in China's interests. The last thing it wants to see is major unemployment, lay offs, and investment dry up. Its strategy has been to move towards the higher end of manufacturing, create something approaching a knowledge economy, promote Chinese brands in the global market place. But these remain projects which will reach their fruition a decade or more in the future. At the moment, the Chinese economy is a work in progress. What is happening outside China in the global financial markets is a very unwelcome interruption.

The other major issue discussed in October which relates to China's own internal development is agricultural land reform. Every inch of land in the People's Republic of China currently belongs to the state, though in the last 30 years there have been increasingly long periods of lease available. In 1978, when the reforms first started, more than 85% of Chinese still lived in the countryside, working on the land. Very ironically, because of mass campaigns to send young people out of the cities, the late period of Maoism witnessed a process of de-urbanisation. In 2007, official figures show that something like 55% of Chinese, at least according to their registered place of abode, live in the rural districts. When the 'floating population' of up to 200 million is taken into account though, it is probably true to say that now more Chinese live in urban areas than in the countryside.

In October, China's leaders proposed legislation that would allow farmers to use their land and the leases on it as security for loans. This is a major step away from state control of a fundamental part of the economy. And it reflects how the reforms really took off three decades ago, with the largely accidental creation of Town and Village Enterprises, a by-product of the massively improved efficiency in the agricultural sector, meaning that tens of millions of farmers were able to devote their energies to other business rather than working on

the land. During his visit to Shenzhen as part of the famed 'Southern Tour' in 1992, Deng was to admit that this was a wholly unplanned part of the liberalisation process, and it's most successful. Such an outcome, he went on to say, showed the flexibility of socialism, with Chinese characteristics.

Whether the current reforms will have such a dramatic effect won't be known for several years. Land figures large in Chinese history. Mao Zedong and his fellow Communists in the late 1920s and 1930s were to make land reform a key component of their new liberation. Peasants then were saddled with massive rents. As a consequence of consolidation over history, landlords who owned larger tracts of land appeared. This process continued after the revolution in 1949. By 1956 China's land was nationalised. But its use, and legal treatment, remains a bedrock cause of unrest. More and more rural land is being put over to industrial or building use. The way some of it has been appropriated by village and town officials and business people has caused major discontent. Of the thousands of protests each year, a good proportion arise from land disputes. Here the Chinese are not so different to people in other countries, many of whom feel so passionately about their land rights they will pursue cases for only a few inches of land they believe belong to their borders through the courts for years, at risk of massive expense.

Will we see Chinese laden with large mortgages and debts the way so many in developed countries are? It seems unlikely. As the government is cautious in its approach to investment abroad, so Chinese middle class seem conservative and cautious in their decisions about their own financial affairs. Even so, it is likely in the years ahead that, just as China was reflecting on the meaning of its recent 30 years of history, ironically a considerable portion of global economic power was suddenly to shift towards it, and other Asian powers. In the months and years ahead, there will be fewer self-righteous lectures from economists and commentators in the West about the doomed Chinese system, in view of what has happened recently. And for that reason, win-win or lose-lose, China still comes out a winner of the events of the last few months.

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Asian Laureates announced

Since 1997 the Prince Claus Fund Awards are presented annually to artists, thinkers and cultural organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The focus of the 2008 awards is culture and the human body. With this theme the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development celebrates ingenuity in forms of expression that touch on the human body, particularly by individuals, groups and organisations that are positively engaged with their surroundings and society.

2008 Principal Prince Claus Award to Indian writer, Indira Goswami

Indian writer Indira Goswami (1942, Guwahati, Assam) will be presented with this year's Principal Prince Claus Award of € 100,000.

Goswami, in the judgement of the Prince Claus Award jury, is an outstanding writer who reveals the lived experience of ordinary people. Through powerful graphic descriptions and haunting images she shows how central the body is in human affairs; how political, religious and cultural systems are codified through the body; and how life process, gender, age, poverty and conflict are defined physically.

Indira Goswami is a scholar of Assamese and Ramayana literature, a former professor and Head of Modern Indian Languages and Literature at Delhi University. She works together with others to translate her works into English, to make English literature available in Assamese and vice versa.

She is a courageous public intellectual, speaking in defence of disadvantaged groups. Through her mediation of recent peace talks in Assam, she has worked hard in trying to help resolve a conflict that has caused 10,000 deaths. A woman of remarkable insight and conviction, Indira Goswami (Mamoni Roisom Goswami as she is popularly known) is honoured for the unique quality of her writing, for identifying and expressing the inscription of cultural norms in the body, and for her influential social

and cultural activism through literature. Asia's talent was also represented among the ten 2008 Prince Claus Awards of € 25,000, with Asian laureates announced in the fields of visual arts, photography and film and performance, fashion and dance:

Li Xianting (b. 1949, Jilin Province, China)

Curator and critic, Li Xianting is a pillar of modern Chinese art. At a turning point in his country's history, he recognised and encouraged emerging talent, promoted new trends and organised ground-breaking exhibitions. He edited and wrote for fine arts publications, bringing contemporary Chinese artists to national and international attention. He challenged the authorities, opened space for experimentation and fought for reform of the national arts system. A lifeline for many independent artists, he continues this work as director of the Songzhuang Art Museum.

Li Xianting is honoured for his lifetime dedication to the development of contemporary art in China, for his rigorous analytical thought and for championing individuality and freedom of spirit.

Venerable Purevbat (b. 1960s, Tov Aimag, Mongolia)

 Venerable Purevbat, an outstanding artist and teacher of the Vajrayana Buddhist tradition, brings scholarly discipline in Buddhist aesthetics to his art. He is also a great innovator, adding modern influences to create a dynamic and distinctive style. Purevbat founded a school to train artists and teachers in many fast-disappearing traditional Buddhist arts and established the Zanabazar Mongolian Institute of Buddhist Art, which mounts exhibitions, documents historical sites and undertakes restoration projects. His inspirational activities and dissemination of knowledge have created a renaissance in Mongolian cultural identity.

Venerable Purevbat is honoured for the rigorous authenticity of his methods and techniques, for re-establishing an important 'un-modern' aesthetic practice, for his dedication in fostering future generations, and for nurturing local identity through artistic tradition and culture.

Dayanita Singh (b. 1961, New Delhi, India)

Dayanita Singh is a master photographer who offers an acute vision of contemporary Indian realities that have been hidden or ignored. Her diverse works range from the daily routine of a girl in a Benares ashram to

the rising wealthy class, as well as the fading old elite of Goa. The photobook *Myself Mona Ahmed* (2001), broke new ground, combining photos gathered over 13 years in the life of an Indian eunuch with the subject's own descriptive texts.

The quality and control of her compositions and the intellectual insight and subtle social commentary in her portrayals of the private and the interior, have won international recognition and influenced a new generation of local photographers.

Dayanita Singh is awarded for the outstanding quality of her images, for providing a complex and well-articulated view of contemporary India, and for introducing a new aesthetic into Indian photography.

Ma Ke (b.1971, Changchun, China)

A bold voice in contemporary fashion design, Ma Ke asserts the cultural and social dimensions of clothing the human body. While studying, Ma Ke found that unique designs incorporating local cultural value, using sustainable materials and skilled craftsmanship, were considered 'wu yong' (useless). She defied the clothing and fashion industries, producing simple, organic and locally inspired casual wear. Her 'Wu Yong' collection of powerful, sculpted forms draws on China's rich history and demonstrates highly creative conceptual design. It is a strong statement against both the superficiality of international fashion and the cheap, highly industrial production of clothing.

Ma Ke is honoured for the superb craftsmanship and aesthetic quality of her work, for highlighting the complex interactions of clothing, culture and the body, and for promoting socially, culturally and environmentally sensitive design and production.

The awards ceremony will take place on the 3rd of December in Amsterdam.

C Fonds

Prins Claus Fonds voor
Cultuur en Ontwikkeling

3rd IIAS Fellow Symposium

The third IIAS Fellow Symposium will take place on 25 February 2009 in Amsterdam. This unique event is an opportunity to showcase the wide-ranging research carried out by our fellows in the field of Asian Studies. The IIAS Fellow Symposium is designed to give academics, and all those interested in 'all things Asia' the chance to get to know our researchers and join in lively discussions about diverse subjects.

Lectures planned for the day include Dr Mehdi Amineh talking about Energy Programme Asia, the IIAS Research programme established in 2007 to address the domestic and geopolitical aspects of energy security for China and the European Union; Dr Dipika Mukherjee on the Surinamese-Indian Community in the Netherlands; Ms Yetty Haning on Timor Sea border issues and Dr Yen Fen Tseng on migration in and out of Taiwan.

The day will also host two book launches. For further information www.iias.nl or email s.jans@iias.nl

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IIAS welcomes Ian Buruma

November sees Dutch/British journalist, author and political commentator Ian Buruma on Dutch soil again. Buruma, who writes regularly for The New York Review of Books, The New Yorker, The New York Times, Corriere della Sera, The Financial Times, and The Guardian is in Holland to receive the prestigious Erasmus prize. This distinction is awarded annually by the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation to a person who has made an especially important contribution to culture, society or social science in Europe. Previous laureates include Henry Moore (1968), Claude Lévis-Strauss (1973) and Václav Havel (1986). The award ceremony takes place on 7 November. Ian Buruma is author of a number of books including Inventing Japan: 1853-1964 (2003), Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies (2004) and the novel The China Lover (2008). He studied Chinese at Leiden University and returns to his alma mater on 26th November to give the 2008 Cleveringa lecture. IIAS welcomes Ian Buruma as IIAS fellow for the month of November.

IIAS Research

Programmes

Science and History in Asia

The complex links between science and history in Asian civilisations can be studied on at least two levels. First, one can focus on the ways in which the actors have perceived those links; how, on the one hand, they have used disciplines that we now categorise as sciences, such as astronomy, for a better understanding of their own past; and, on the other hand, how they have constructed the historicity of these disciplines, giving them cultural legitimacy. Secondly, one can reflect on historiographical issues related to the sciences. How can the sciences be incorporated into historical narratives of Asian civilisations? This question is crucial, given the dominant 19th and 20th century view that science is a European invention, and that it has somehow failed to develop endogenously in Asia, where "traditional science" is usually taken as opposed to "Western" or "modern science". This project will address various approaches to the issue by organising five international workshops in Cambridge, Leiden and Paris.

Sponsored by: NWO Humanities, Needham Research Institute, Recherches Epistémologiques et Historiques sur les Sciences Exactes et les Insitutions Scientifiques (REHSEIS), and IIAS

Coordinators: Christopher Cullen (Needham Research Institute) and Harm Beukers (Scaliger Institute, Leiden University)

Asia Design

This programme consists of a number of individual projects related to graphic design - from classical graphics in art and communication to the rapidly emerging fields of cyberculture (New Media, videogames, etc.) and animanga (anime and manga) in East Asia - and architectural design in Asian megacities. The projects address both the physical and social aspects of design.

Institutes involved: IIAS, Modern East Asia Research Centre (MEARC), Delft School of Design (DSD)

Sponsored by: IIAS and Asiascape

Coordinators: Chris Goto-Jones and Manon Osseweijer
c.goto-jones@hum.leidenuniv.nl
m.osseweijer@iias.nl

Catalogue of Sanksrit manuscripts

In 1929, two crates of 17th and 18th century Sanskrit manuscripts arrived at the Kern Institute, University of Leiden. This Gonda/IIAS project is preparing a scientific catalogue of the roughly 500 South Indian Sanskrit manuscripts written on palm leaves in ancient Indian scripts such as Grantha, Telugu, Malayalam, Nagari and Nandinagari.

Coordinator: Saraju Rath
s.rath@iias.nl

Energy Programme Asia - EPA

Established in September 2007, this programme addresses the domestic and geopolitical aspects of energy security for China and the European Union.
The geopolitical aspects involve analysing the effects of competition for access to oil and gas resources and the security of energy supply among the main global consumer countries of the EU and China. The domestic aspects involve analysing domestic energy demand and supply, energy efficiency policies, and the deployment of renewable energy resources. Within this programme scholars from the Netherlands and China will visit each other's institutes and will jointly publish their research outcomes.

Institutes involved: Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)
Sponsored by: KNAW China Exchange Programme and IIAS

Coordinator: Mehdi Parvizi Amineh
s.rath@iias.nl

Gender, migration and family in East and Southeast Asia

Developed from an earlier research project on 'Cross-border Marriages', this project is a comparative study on intra-regional flows of migration in East and Southeast Asia with a focus on gender and family. It aims at studying the linkage between immigration regimes, transnational families and migrants' experiences.
The first component of the project looks at the development of the immi-gration regimes of the newly industrialised countries in East and Southeast Asia. The second component looks at the experiences of female migrants in the context of the first component. To investigate these issues, this project will bring together scholars who have already been working on related topics. A three-year research project is developed with an empirical focus on Taiwan and South Korea as the receiving countries, and Vietnam and the PRC as the sending countries.

Coordinators: Melody LU (IIAS) m.lu@iias.nl
WANG Hongzhen (Graduate School of Sociology, National Sun Yat-Sen University, Kaoshiung, Taiwan)

Illegal but licit: transnational flows and permissive polities in Asia - IBL

This research programme analyses forms of globalisation-from-below, transnational practices considered acceptable (licit) by participants but which are often illegal in a formal sense. It explores limitations of 'seeing like a state', and instead privileges the perspectives of participants in these illegal but licit transnational flows.
Sponsored by: NWO and ASiA

Coordinator: Willem van Schendel
h.w.vanschendel@uva.nl

Socio-genetic marginalization in Asia - SMAP

The development and application of new biomedical and genetic technologies have important socio-political implications. This NOW/ASSR/IIAS research programme aims to gain insight into the ways in which the use of and monopoly over genetic information shape and influence population policies, environmental ethics and biomedical and agricultural practices in various Asian religious and secular cultures and across national boundaries.
Sponsored by: NWO, IIAS, ASSR

Coordinator: Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner
m.sleeboom-faulkner@sussex.ac.uk

Searching for sustainability in Eastern Indonesian waters

The threat of biodiversity depletion calls for the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), especially in rich natural environments like the marine space of eastern Indonesia. Most approaches to the establishment of MPAs, however, are science-based. Several interconnected developments demand a constructive analysis of the societal impacts of a predominantly technical and science oriented approach to the establishment of MPAs around the world. This new programme focuses on MPAs in eastern Indonesia (Wakatobi, Komodo, Derawan, Raja Ampat) and will facilitate the exchange of Dutch, Indonesian, German and Austrlian researchers. The aims of the programme are to (1) engage in a methodological training workshop for the three Indonesian partners plus six of their colleagues/staff members and (2) to collectively write a research proposal (2009-2013) on the social-economic and governance conditions of Marine Protected Area development.

Sponsored by: KNAW, IIAS, Wageningen University, Australian Research Council, Center for Tropical Marine Ecology Bremen (ZMT), Germany Partner institutes: Wageningen University, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), The Nature Conservancy, Murdoch University (Perth, Australia), ZMT (Bremen, Germany)

Coordinators: Leontine Visser (WUR/IIAS) and Manon Osseweijer (IIAS)
leontine.visser@wur.nl
m.osseweijer@iias.nl

Networks

Ageing in Asia and Europe

During the 21st century it is projected that there will be more than one billion people aged 60 and over, with this figure climbing to nearly two billion by 2050, three-quarters of whom will live in the developing world. The bulk of the ageing population will reside in Asia. Ageing in Asia is attributable to the marked decline in fertility shown over the last 40 years and the steady increase in life-expectancy. In Western Europe, ageing populations developed at a slower pace and could initially be incorporated into welfare policy provisions. Currently governments are seeking ways to trim and reduce government financed social welfare and health-care, including pensions systems, unleashing substantial public debate and insecurity. Many Asian governments are facing comparable challenges and dilemmas, involving both the state and the family, but are confronted with a much shorter time-span. This research programme, in short, sheds light on how both Asian and European nations are reviewing the social contract with their citizens.

Research network involved: Réseau de Recherche Internationale sur l'Age, la Citoyenneté et l'Intégration Socio-économique (REIACTIS)
Sponsored by: IIAS

Coordinator: Carla Risseeuw
c.risseeuw@iias.nl

ABIA South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology index

The Annual Bibliography of Indina Archaeology is an annotated bibliographic database for publications covering South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology. The project was launched by IIAS in 1997 and is currently coordinated by the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology of the University of Kelaniya, Colombo, Sri Lanka. The database is freely accessible at www.abia.net. Extracts from the database are also available as bibliographies, published in a series by Brill. The project receives scientific support from UNESCO.

Coordinators: Ellen Raven and Gerda Theuns-de Boer
e.m.raven@iias.nl
www.abia.net

Islam in Indonesia: the dissemination of religious authority in the 20th and early 21st centuries

Forms and transformations of religious authority among the Indonesian Muslim community are the focus of this research programme. The term authority relates to persons and books as well as various other forms of written and non-written references. Special attention is paid to the production, reproduction and dissemination of religious authority in the fields of four sub-programmes: ulama (religious scholars) and fatwas; tarekat (mystical orders); dakwah (propogation of the faith); and education.

Coordinator: Nico Kaptein
n.j.g.kaptein@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Announcements

Call for papers

The Humanities Reborn: Chinese Humanities in the 1950s and their Foundations

Workshop , March 2010
Asien-Afrika-Institut,
University of Hamburg

Deadline for abstracts: 1 March 2009

This project examines the content and rules of academic work in China during the 1950s, specifically the then newly established fields of history, literary criticism, and philosophy. The 1950s are considered as crucial for the formation of PRC humanities.
In an interdisciplinary approach the workshop also invites scholars working on the humanities in the early phase of the Soviet Union in order to discuss similarities and differences in the development of the humanities. The workshop will focus on the following topics:

1) Interrelation between party line and academic discourse
   What were the aims and means in conducting campaigns such as anti-Hu-Shi-campaign with regard to the humanities? Are there any patterns of ritualized communication? Party line and academic discourse: top down and bottom up relation?

2) Institutions and academic associations and networking
   What were the working conditions in Chinese academia? What was the role of the academic associations? What kinds of bonds and networks did there exist?

3) Academic conventions
   What were the new forms of academic writing in terms of conventions of quotation, argument, and proof? Which new terms were introduced as standard?

4) Academic content elements
   Which were the underlying theories and ideologies? Which works were considered as canonical within socialist humanities?

Papers can be submitted in either English or Chinese.
Deadline for abstracts (English or Chinese): 1st March 2009

Contact: Yvonne Schulz Zinda, Marie-Theres Strauss, Wang Weijiang humanitiesreborn@gmail.com

Husi Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of our Ancestors

The art and craft of Timor-Leste - Arte no artesantu Timor-Leste
22 November 2008 - 12 July 2009

Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory
Darwin, Australia

This international exhibition will present the traditional and contemporary art and crafts of Timor-Leste. The national collection of Timor-Leste will be complemented with works from the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. This comprehensive, collaborative exhibition of the textiles, ceramics, wooden carvings and body adornment of Timor-Leste will give insights into the distinctive living cultures of this young nation.

A Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory exhibition in partnership with the national Directroate of Culture, Timor-Leste
(Detail) Timor-Leste, Ceremonial Mask, 20th Century, Hand-carved hardwood, 22 cm x 15.5 cm x 9 cm

For further information: http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/museums/exhibitions/upcoming.html

The 18th New Zealand Asian Studies Society International Conference 2009

6-8 July, 2009
Victoria University of Wellington,

This will be an open, multidisciplinary conference. Participants are invited to submit panel or paper proposals presenting original research on any Asia-related topic. Proposals for panels are welcome. We can accept only one paper submission per person. Emerging scholars and postgraduate students are particularly welcome. For more information, please see the conference website: http://www.nzasia.org.nz/conference.html

Paper presentations will be allocated 30 minutes (20 minutes presentation and 10 minutes discussion). Shorter papers with more time for discussion are welcome. Panels will normally comprise three paper presentations.

Submission of Abstracts

Paper abstracts, single spaced and no longer than 200 words, must be submitted electronically as Microsoft Word email attachments before 15 March 2009 to the chair of the organising committee:
stephen.epstein@vuw.ac.nz

On your abstract please indicate the following:
- Title of paper or panel
- Author(s) and/or panelists
- Contact details for the author(s) and panelists
- Three to four keywords

The IISS Announces 5th Regional Security Summit: The Manama Dialogue

12 – 14 December 2008
Bahrain

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) is pleased to announce that the 5th Regional Security Summit: The Manama Dialogue will take place from 12 to 14 December 2008 in Bahrain.

The Manama Dialogue is the primary security forum in the Gulf and facilitates the engagement of the national security and foreign policy establishments of the region with critical external powers. In 2008, the 5th anniversary meeting will draw together the highest concentration to date of policy-makers involved in regional security, and delegations will once again comprise a measured blend of prime ministers, defence ministers, foreign ministers, national security advisors, and military and intelligence chiefs.

On- and off-the-record events designed to foster the advancement of foreign policy characterise The Manama Dialogue. The skeletal agenda is available at: http://www.iiss.org/conferences/the-iiss-regional-security-summit/iiss-regional-security-summit-agendas/.

This summit will be held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Manama. Attendance and participation is by invitation only. Press invitations will be issued at the end of October.

For information on providing press coverage or to receive additional information, please contact dialoguepress@iiss.org or reference http://www.iiss.org/conferences/the-iiss-regional-security-summit.

The Wellington Conference on Contemporary China Institutional Dynamics and the Great Transformation of China

13-15 April, 2009
Victoria University of Wellington
Wellington, New Zealand

An international conference sponsored and organized by the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre

The New Zealand Conference on Contemporary China is an annual event organized by the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre. The conference series brings together leading China scholars every year to examine, debate and advance scholarship on key issues in contemporary China studies. This year's conference is held in Wellington, New Zealand and the theme for the conference is the role of institutions in China's great transformation.

Over the past 30 years since the launch of economic reform and opening in December 1978, China has seen fundamental economic transformation and unprec-

edented social and political changes. The grand scale and contested nature of the transformation has generated great scholarly interest. Of particular scholarly value is the growing interest in the role of institutions in the shaping of the new economy, new politics and new society of China.

Today, few scholars would dispute that institutions matter. The question is perhaps how exactly they matter in particular national and historical settings. Moreover, institutional analysis is increasingly facing challenges from diverse national experiences and institutional environments. On the other hand, there are a large number of studies on China's transformation, but not many from a unifying intellectual approach involving a multi-disciplinary investigation. There is also a great deal of scholarly interest and research activities in China itself on institutions and Chinese political economy, but this has not received the wider scholarly attention it deserves.

This conference is designed to address these issues. We hope to bring institutional analysis and China studies together to address some of the core questions interesting to both China scholars and those of institutional theory.

We are inviting paper proposals on any aspects of the conference theme and welcome participation of scholars from any discipline of the social sciences, particularly in economics, political science, sociology, law and international relations. We will publish selected papers as an edited volume by an international publisher.

We are particularly interested in case studies on more specific issues such as property rights, the hukou system, the danwei system, the dual-track system, politics and markets, constitutional order, party and electoral systems, international organizations, rules and norms etc. Participants will address some of these questions:
- How do institutions form, evolve or change in the institutional environment of China?
- Does China's transformation vindicate the distinction between formal and informal institutions?
- What is culture from an institutionalist point of view?
- How do institutions relate to what we want to explain: as causes, effects, or more as party to a dynamic interaction?
- How do we measure institutional change and effects?
- Does evidence from China challenge the basic premises of the new institutionalism or does it provide an opportunity for us to improve on its conceptual frameworks and methodology?
Many of these questions have been asked elsewhere, but the China phenomenon arguably provides an ideal empirical basis to search for clearer answers.
Those interested to give a paper at the

conference shall forward their paper proposals (title and 150 word abstract) to Dr Xiaoming Huang (xiaoming.huang@vuw.ac.nz), Chair of the Conference Organising Committee, no later than 30 January 2009.
Registration details for the conference and acceptance letters will be sent shortly after that.

Third International Sanskrit Computational Linguistics Symposium

15-17 January 2009
Hyderabad, India

The third International Symposium on Sanskrit Computational Linguistics will take place at the University of Hyderabad on 15th and 16th January 2009, followed by a one day workshop on 17th January 2009 on issues related to tagging of Sanskrit linguistic resources at various levels.
This symposium follows upon the successful two international Sanskrit computational linguistics symposia hosted by INRIA, France and Brown University, USA in October 2007 and May 2008 respectively.

For more information : http://sanskrit.inria.fr/Symposium/Symposium3.html

Tribal Cultures at the British Museum and SOAS

23 October 2008 – 13 April 2009

'Between Tibet and India: cultural diversity in the eastern Himalayas' runs from 23 October 2008 to 13 April 2009 at the British Museum in Room 91. This exhibition is the result of a SOAS research project funded by the ESRC and directed by Dr. Stuart Blackburn (South Asia). Admission is free

The exhibition displays the diversity of tribal cultures in Arunachal Pradesh, a little-known state bordering on Tibet in northeast India. The state is home to about 1 million people, consisting of approximately 35 tribal groups who speak (with one exception) Tibeto-Burman languages. Many practice a form of animism; some practice Tibetan Buddhism or Theravada Buddhism; a few follow Hinduism or Christianity.

The exhibition focuses on two tribes, the Tibetan Buddhist Monpa and the animist Apatani, highlighting their ritual practices and material culture in historical perspective.
The show features contemporary and historical photographs, old and new textiles, audio recordings of a shaman's chant and rare film footage from the 1940s, plus an early 20th century painted, cotton map of a pilgrimage site where Tibetans exchanged valuable objects (metal bells, brass plates, beads) with local populations.
Tibetan cultural influence is evident throughout much of the state, especially in these objects traded across the high

Himalayas and invested with high value by local populations who believe them to be 'tibetan.' India, continuing trends begun in the colonial period, has been the source of civil administration, market economy, literacy, Hinduism and, recently, Christianity.

Social Sciences in Asia Monograph Series, Brill

edited by Vineeta Sinha and
Syed Farid Alatas
Department of Sociology
National University of Singapore

We invite contributions to the interdisciplinary Social Sciences in Asia Monograph Series. It publishes original materials and the revised editions of special issues of the Asian Journal of Social Science. A double blind process, two experts would appraise each manuscript. The Social Sciences in Asia Monograph Series welcomes submissions from specialists on any facet of Asia, including sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, economists, geographers, and historians.

The Social Sciences in Asia Monograph Series was the initiative of the editorial team of the Asian Journal of Social Science at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. It was initially the Asian Social Science Series, with Brill and the Times Academic Press co-publishing the first three volumes between 2001 and 2002. In 2003, the Series became Social Sciences in Asia and henceforth carries only the Brill imprint.

Founded in 1683 in Leiden, Holland, Brill is an academic publisher of repute. It publishes about five hundred new manuscripts and reference books, as well as more than a hundred journals every year. For all queries, please contact Kiat-Jin Lee, the Editorial Assistant, at soclkj@nus.edu.sg. In addition, for inquiries about the aptness of your virtually concluded manuscript, please dispatch a book proposal. Furthermore, for questions regarding the suitability of your proposed monograph, please enclose a 150-word abstract.

Welcome to Hong Kong! Call for Papers for the 10th Asian Urbanization Conference

The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong SAR, China
August 16-19, 2009
www.hku.hk/asia2009
Deadline for submission of abstracts:
15 February 2009
Conference Themes: Theoretical or empirical studies on urban form and process, urban population change including migration, urban systems, quality of life, sustainable development, city marketing and economic development, social justice, urban governance, applications related to GIS, comparative urbanization, and environmental conditions in Asian

cities. Other papers which contribute to an understanding of Asian urbanization are welcomed.
Paper Abstract Submission and Registration: Abstract should be 100 to no more than 200 words and should be submitted online. The abstract should provide information on the research problem, study area, data, methodology, findings, and significance of the research. While the format of your abstract may vary from this format, these contents are useful and informative to the conference participants. Co-authored papers should indicate who is the main presenter and author. Submission of complete paper is strongly encouraged. Selected papers will be considered for publication after the conference.

Conference Secretariat:
Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning Tel: (+852) 2859-2721
The University of Hong Kong
Fax: (+852) 2559-0468
Pokfulam Road Email:
asia2009@hku.hk
Hong Kong SAR, China
Homepage: www.hku.hk/asia2009

Detailed information of the conference is available at www.hku.hk/asia2009. Please contact the Conference Organizers, Professor Anthony G. O. Yeh or Dr. Roger C. K. Chan of the University of Hong Kong. You may also contact Dr George Pomeroy (Asian Urban Research Association (AURA) Secretary-General) if further information is needed.

'Imag(in)ing the Buddhist Brain'
Leiden Institute for Brain and Cognition
Conference, 20 March 2009

Is brain research beginning to produce concrete evidence for something that Buddhist practitioners of meditation have maintained for centuries, namely that mental discipline and meditative practice can change the workings of the brain and allow people to achieve different levels of awareness? Such transformed states have traditionally been understood in transcendent terms, as something outside the world of physical measurement and objective evaluation. But over the past few years, researchers working with Tibetan monks have been working toward translating those mental experiences into the scientific language of high-frequency gamma waves and brain synchrony, or coordination. The Leiden Institute for Brain and Cognition (LIBC) will organize, on 20 March 2009, the symposium "Imag(in)ing the Buddist Brain" to address recent developments in this area, among them the question: What claims do meditation traditions make, and are the results of meditation measurable?

Autumn is a hectic time for the ICAS Secretariat. We have to inventarise the books submitted for the ICAS Book Prize and send them off to the members of the Reading Committee. It offers distraction from the tension which builds up as the deadline for ICAS registration draws near. Two days to go and only 300 registrations? But then the 'ICAS miracle' occurs: All of a sudden, over a 36 hour period, registrations come pouring in from across the globe. It comes to an end as abruptly as it started...

The 'ICAS miracle':
Preparing for ICAS 6 in Daejeon in August 2009

PAUL VAN DER VELDE

The registration count for ICAS 6 in Daejeon now stands at 1200: 700 individual registrations and 500 through the more than 100 organised panels which have been submitted. As I write, the deadline for the institutional panels has not yet passed but extrapolating from ICAS 5 in Kula Lumpur we expect between 30 to 50 panels of this kind. The number of expected participants (excluding observers, visitors, exhibitors and so on) will be in between 1100 and 1500.

There were just over 200 applications for financial assistance, which is meant, in particular, for young scholars not older than 35. In the end, it's likely that around a hundred of the applicants will qualify for funding. It's been noticeable this time that 80 percent of the applicants are from India. Does this mean that the Indian government is not actively supporting the participation of Indian scholars in international conventions? We also noted that applicants have been hesitant about using the new online 'Colleagues Calling' facility, but we hope that for the next ICAS, participants will come to appreciate this as a useful forum for making contact with colleagues.

ICAS Book Prize (IBP)

A rich harvest of books has reached the desk of the secretary of the IBP. In all 89 books were submitted by 24 publishers worldwide: 42 in the category Humanities and 47 in the Social Sciences. For the first time more books in the social sciences were submitted which clearly marks a shift in field of research from traditional to contemporary Asia studies. It came as no surprise that many of the books are about East Asia (39), but surprisingly Southeast Asia is the subject of 27 books while South Asia counts 13 publications. Eleven books are about Asia in general. Noticeable is that no books on Central Asia were submitted. Popular themes dealt with from different disciplinary or comparative angles are: art and culture, (auto)biography, colonies, diasporas and migration, economy, education, gender and identity, health and medicine, international relations and politics, law, literature, media, religion and society. Clearly there is shift from traditional to contemporary studies Asia studies. In all only five edited volumes were submitted but it should be pointed out that ground breaking edited volumes certainly stand a chance of winning one of the ICAS book prizes.

In the category best PhD only 12 theses were submitted which must be a fraction of all theses written on Asia. For the fourth edition of the ICAS Book Prize in 2011 we will estab-

lish a separate reading committee consisting of three young doctors from Asia, America and Europe who will scout for theses and use their networks to at least triple the number of theses in 2011.

For the 2009 Colleagues Choice award we have set up an online voting compass to streamline the process and point you in the direction of books you might want to vote for. Simply ticking buttons on topics, themes and regions leads you to the books you are interested in. We also hope authors will mobilise their networks for the Colleagues Choice award.

The longs lists of the IBP will be announced on the ICAS website at the beginning of February and the short lists will most likely be announced at the Annual Meeting of the AAS in Chicago 26-29 March 2009. The prizes will be awarded during the opening ceremony of ICAS 6 on 6 August 2009.

ICAS Publications Series

The ICAS Secretariat is in constant touch with the editors of ten books based on contributions to ICAS 4 in Shanghai and ICAS 5 in Kuala Lumpur, which will find their way into the ICAS Publications Series, published by Amsterdam University Press. They will be ready before August 2009. The titles vary from State, Society and International Relations in Asia to From Marginal to Mainstream: Asian Literary Voices and from Reframing Singapore: Memory, Identity to Trans-Regionalism to Asian Material Culture. We hope many participants of ICAS 6 will send in their papers for the edited volumes which will come out of ICAS 6. On the ICAS website you will find the guidelines for the preparation of articles.

The ICAS 6 Secretariat

The local host, Chungnam National University Center for Asian Regional Studies, in close cooperation with Daejeon City and the Daejeon Convention Centre, is working hard to have its secretariat fully operational by the beginning of December. A Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) is in charge of the practical organisation. From December onwards all questions relating to ICAS 6 should be directed to the ICAS 6 secretariat. On the ICAS 6 website (www.icassecretariat.org) you will find practical information on hotel deals, how to pay the registration fees and how to get there. The first task of the ICAS 6 Secretariat will be sending out letters of acceptance to participants. This letter will include practical information on ICAS 6.

IIAS fellows

Central Asia

Dr Irina Morozova
Moscow State University, Russian Federation
Stationed at the Branch Office Amsterdam & Leiden
Sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung
Conflict, Security and Development in the post-Soviet Era: Towards regional economic Cooperation in the Central Asian Region
24 April 2003 - 31 December 2008

East Asia

Dr Mehdi P. Amineh
Stationed at the Branch Office Amsterdam & Leiden
Programme Coordinator of Energy Programme Asia (EPA)
Sponsored by KNAW/CASS
Domestic and Geopolitical Energy Security for China and the EU
1 September 2007 - 1 September 2010

Prof. Wim Boot
Leiden University, the Netherlands
Japanese and Korean Languages and Literatures
1 September 2006 - 1 September 2009

Prof. Chistopher Cullen
Needham Research Institute, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Sponsored by NWO/NRI/REHSEIS
History of Chinese Science and Medicine
1 September 2008 - 31 December 2010

Prof. Hsin-chuan HO
National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan
IIAS Professor, holder of the European Chair of Chinese Studies
Sponsored by BICER and the Ministry of Education Taiwan
The Debate between Liberals and Neo-confucians in the modern Chinese-speaking World
1 September 2008 - 1 September 2009

Dr Catherine Jami
REHSEIS, Paris, France
Sponsored by NWO/NRI/REHSEIS
Circulation of scientific Knowledge between Europe and China, 17th and 18th Centuries
1 September 2008 - 31 December 2010

Dr Masae KATO
Leiden University, the Netherlands
A comparative Study on Socio-genetic Marginalization: Japan in "Asia" in relation to the "West" as a Reference Group
1 May 2008 - 1 September 2009

Prof. Hui-wen KOO
Department of Economics, National Taiwan University, Taiwan
Sponsored by the National Science Counsil
The Deer Hunting License and Its Impact in Taiwan under the Dutch Rule
1 August 2008 – 30 June 2009

Dr Shao-li LU
Department of History, National Chengchi University, Taiwan
Sponsored by the National Science Counsil and IIAS

Homo Alchemy: Japan's Chemical Industry and the Transformation of the Culture of Body in Colonial Taiwan
1 October 2008 - 10 March 2009

Dr Melody LU
Sponsored by MEARC and IIAS
Gender, Migration and Family in East and Southeast Asia
1 February 2006 - 1 September 2009

Prof. Tak-Wing Ngo
Extraordinary Chair at the Faculty of History and Arts, Erasmus University, Rotterdam
History of Asia
1 May 2008 - 1 May 2012

Prof. Carla Risseeuw
Leiden University, the Netherlands
Ageing in Asia and Europe
1 January 2008 - 1 January 2010

Prof. Yang SHEN
Department of Chinese Studies, Peking University, China
China Exchange Programme
Sponsered by KNAW
10 January 2009 - 10 March 2009

Prof. Hyun Joon SHIN
Institute for East Asian Studies, Sungkonghoe University, Korea
IIAS Professor, holder of the European Chair of Korean Studies
History and Present of Popular Culture in Korea from Inter-Asia(n) Perspective
21 January 2008 - 21 January 2009

Dr Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner
Programme Coordinator of the Socio-genetic Marginalisation in Asia Programme (SMAP)
Sponsered by NWO
Human Genetics and its political, social, cultural and ethical Implications
17 September 2001 - 1 September 2009

Dr Takayo TAKAHASHI
Waseda University, Japan
Ethnic Identity of Okinoerabu Islanders in Japan
1 January 2008 - 31 December 2008

Dr Yen-Fen Tseng
Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University, Taiwan
Stationed at the Branch Office Amsterdam
Sponsored by the National Science Counsil and IIAS
New Patterns of Migration in and out of Taiwan
10 January 2009 - 10 April 2009

South Asia

Prof. Jan Houben
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France
Vedic Ritual in Asian-European Context
1 July 2008 - 1 July 2009

Dr Alex MacKay
School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, United Kingdom
The History and Culture of the Indo-Tibetan Himalayas
1 October 2000 - 1 May 2009

Dr Prasanna Kumar PATRA
Research fellow within the Socio-genetic Marginalisation in Asia Programme (SMAP)
Sponsored by NWO
Cross-cultural comparative Study of genetic Research in India and Japan
15 December 2005 - 1 September 2009

Dr Saraju Rath
Sponsored by GONDA
Scanning, Preservation, and Translitteration of Selected Manuscripts of the Taittirya Tradition
5 January 2004 - 1 January 2010

Dr Ellen Raven
Leiden University, the Netherlands
Researcher within the South and Southeast Asia Art and Archaelogy Index (ABIA)
Sponsored by the J. Gonda Foundation
Art, material culture and archaeology of South and Southeast Asia
1 June 2003 – 31 December 2011

Dr Rituparna Roy
From across the Shadow Lines: Tracing the Trajectory of Bengali Hindu Refugees in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh
1 January 2008 - 31 December 2008

Dr Markus Schleiter
Sponsored by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung
Localized Statehood: Social and Cultural Practices of a 'Tribal' Development Project in India
1 April 2008 - 30 September 2009

Dr Marta Sernesi
Sponsored by the J. Gonda Foundation
A Preliminary Study of the Collected Works (gSung-'bum) of Blo-Idan sNying-po (14th Century): a Contribution to the Study of the "latter Transmission Period" (phyi-dar) based on Bon Textual Evidence
1 October 2008 - 28 February 2009

Prof. Alexander Stolyarov
Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, Russian Federation
Annotated Database of Early Mediaeval North Indian Copper Plate Grants
1 October 2008 - 30 November 2008

Dr Shilpa Sumant
Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, India
Sponsored by the J. Gonda Foundation
A Joint Edition of the First Section of ridhara's Karmapanjik (General Paradigms of Ritual) with Arlo Griffiths
1 October 2008 - 31 March 2009

Ms Gerda Theuns-de Boer
Researcher within the South and Southeast Asia Art and Archaelogy Index (ABIA)
Sponsored by the J. Gonda Foundation
South and Southeast Asian Art and Archaelogy Index
1 November 2002 – 31 December 2011

Mr Vincent Tournier
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France
Sponsored by the J. Gonda Foundation
Enriching an Ongoing Study on the textual History of Mah vastu I.1-338 and the Settlement of a specific Conception regarding the

Career of Bodhisattva
1 December 2008 - 30 April 2009

Mr Rajesh Venkatasubramanian
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India
Sponsored by the J. Gonda Foundation
The Recovery and Reception of Classical Tamil Literature in late 19th and early 20th Century Colonial Tamilnadu
1 October 2008 - 31 December 2008

Southeast Asia

Dr Birgit Abels
Ruhr University Bochum, Germany
Stationed at the Branch Office Amsterdam
Of Islam, Ancestors, and Translocality in Borderlands: Identity Negotiation and the Performing Arts among the Bajau Laut of Southeast Asia
1 October - 31 December 2008

Dr Michele Ford
The University of Sydney, Australia
In the Shadow of Singapore: The Limits of Transnationalism in Insular Riau
1 January 2008 - 1 January 2010

Ms Yetty Haning
Centre for Studies & Advocation of Human Rights of Nusa Cendana University, Indonesia
Sponsored by UNDANA
Timor Sea Border Issues
1 September 2008 - 1 September 2010

Prof. David Hill
Murdoch University, Australia
Stationed at the Branch Office Amsterdam

Indonesia in exile: The Indonesian Left abroad during the late Cold War
2 - 22 November 2008

Dr Hashim Ismail
Academy of Malay Studies, University of Malaya, Malaysia
The Malacca Law: Collections of Manuscripts at Leiden University
10 October – 10 November 2008

Dr Nico Kaptein
Leiden University, the Netherlands
Islam and State in the Netherlands East Indies: The Life and Work of Sayyid 'Uthmân (1822 - 1914)
1 May 2006 - 1 May 2009

Dr Lenore Lyons
Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies, University of Wollongong, Australia
In the Shadow of Singapore: The Limits of Transnationalism in Insular Riau
1 January 2008 - 1 January 2010

Dr Dipika Mukherjee
Negotiating Languages and Forging Identities: Surinamese-Indian Women in the Netherlands
1 December 2006 – 30 June 2009

Ms Rita Setianingsih
Akademi Pariwisata Medan, Indonesia
The Management Model of Eco-Cultural-Tourism Through the Empowerment of Archaeological Remains
10 October 2008 - 10 January 2009

[a d v e r t i s e m e n t]

International Conference Agenda

December 2008

9 December 2008
Centre for Intercultural Studies, Portugal
International Conference on Intercultural Studies
conference
convenor(s): Clara Sarmento, CEI
organized by Centre for Intercultural Studies, CEI
contact: Clara Sarmento
cei@iscap.ipp.pt
www.iscap.ipp.pt/~cei/congresso.htm

15 - 18 December 2008
Yogyakarta, Indonesia
The First International Graduate Students Conference on Indonesia
conference
convenor(s): Gadjah Made University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
organized by Academy Professorship Indonesia in Social Sciences and Humanities (KNAW-AIPI) Gadjah Mada
contact: S.N. Hidayah
figcindonesia@gmail.com
www.api.pasca.ugm.ac.id

January 2009

8 - 10 January 2009
Kaoshiung, Taiwan
Multiculturalism in Taiwan
conference
convenor(s): Prof. Tak-wing Ngo (Erasmus University) & Prof. Hong-zen Wang (National Sun-yet Sen University)
organized by NSC/IIAS
contact: Allen Chao
anchao50@gmail.com
www.iias.nl

9 - 12 January 2009
Honolulu Hawaii, United States
7th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities
conference
convenor(s): Hilton Hawaii, USA
humanities@hichumanities.org
www.hichumanities.org

21 - 23 January 2009
The Hague/Leiden, Netherlands
Multiculturality, religion and legal status in the Dutch colonial world, c. 1600-c. 1960
conference
convenor(s): Dr Gerrit Knaap (ING), Dr Rosemarijn Höfte (KTILV), Prof. Henk Schulte Nordholt (KITLV)
organized by ING/KITLV
www.inghist.nl

February 2009

5 - 7 February 2009
Lisbon, Portugal
4th International Sinology Forum: Rock-Paper-Scissors: Dynamics of Modernity in China
forum
organized by The Portuguese Institute of Sinology
contact: Dora Martins
ipsinologia@gmail.com

12 - 14 February 2009
Oporto, Portugal
4th International Sinology Forum: Rock-Paper-Scissors: Dynamics of Modernity in China
forum
organized by The Portuguese Institute of Sinology
contact: Dora Martins
ipsinologia@gmail.com

13 February 2009
The Hague, Netherlands
Connecting Japan with the Netherlands and Europe, Past & Future
conference
organized by IIASL/MEARC/IIAS
www.mearc.eu

19 - 20 February 2009
Leiden, Netherlands
The History of chronology
conference
convenor(s): prof. Harm Beukers
organized by NRI/IIAS/Scaliger Institute/REHSEIS
www.iias.nl

March 2009

6 March 2009
Amsterdam, Netherlands
The First World War and the End of Neutrality
conference
organized by Netherlands Institute for War Documentation & UvA
contact: S. Kruizinga
s.f.kruizinga@uva.nl

April 2009

7 - 9 April 2009
Leiden, Netherlands
Indonesia's cultural history, 1950-1965
workshop
organized by KITLV
www.kitlv.nl

10 - 11 April 2009
Leiden, Netherlands
The Cultural Politics of the Life Sciences in Asia: Opportunities, risks and the changing body
conference
convenor(s): Dr Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner
organized by IIAS
contact: Martina van den Haak
m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl
www.iias.nl

18 - 19 April 2009
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, United States
6th Annual Global Health & Development Conference 'Achieving Global Goals Through Innovation'
conference
convenor(s): Yale University New Haven, Connecticut
organized by Unite for Sight
www.uniteforsight.org/conference

May 2009

21 - 23 May 2009
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Fourth Annual Tamil Studies Conference
conference
organized by University of Toronto
tamilstudiesconference@gmail.com
www.tamilstudieconference.ca

June 2009

18 - 20 June 2009
Leiden, Netherlands
24th AKSE Conference
conference
convenor(s): Dr Coen de Keuster
organized by Centre for Korean Studies, Leiden University / IIAS
www.iias.nl

August 2009

6 - 9 August 2009
Daejeon, Korea,
Democratic peoples republic of ICAS 6
conference
organized by Chungnam National University (CNU) / Center for Asian Regional Studies (CARS)
www.icas6.org

WWW.IIAS.NL