

IIAS

International Institute  
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# theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

Genomics 52  
in Asia 2

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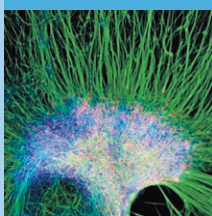
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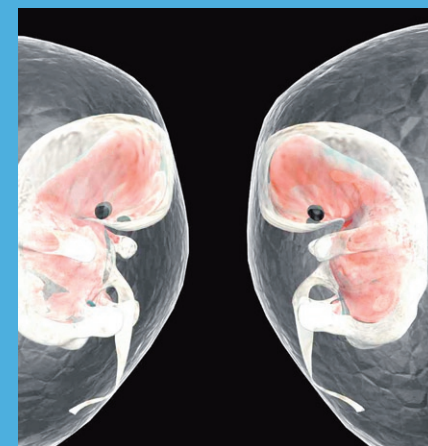


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## Reminder

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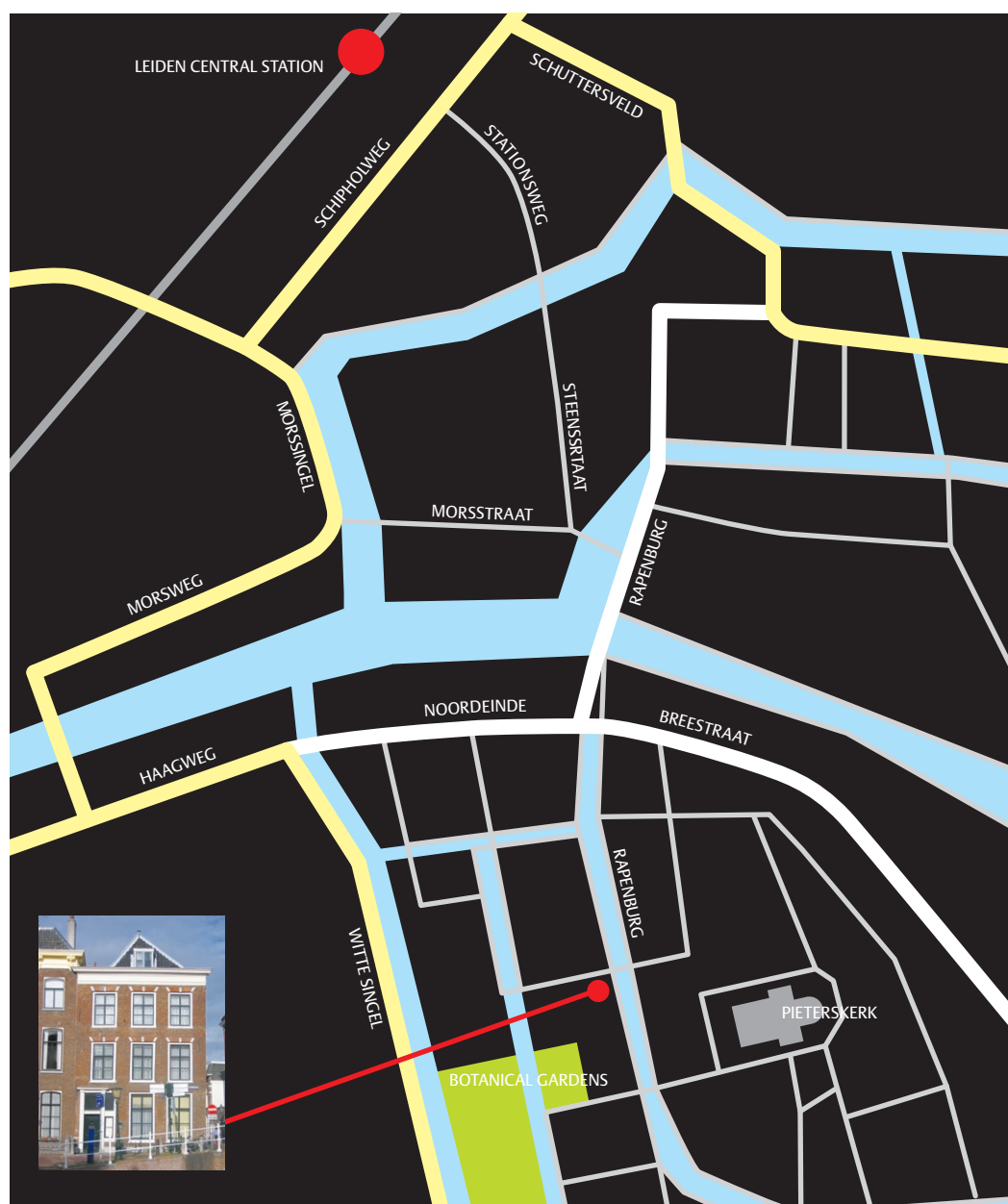
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4 The Study

# The Shanghai model

More than 50 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas. However, the view that the world can be simply divided into urban and rural is somewhat naïve. The urban environment embraces a huge range of varying types, from the rural village to the glittering global metropolis. Even the urban fabric itself contains a bewildering array of types, everything from the sleepy suburb to the 24-hour dynamo that spins at a city's centre. Gregory Bracken examines the factors which shape our cities and offers Shanghai as a model for future megalopolises.

Gregory Bracken



SOME URBAN ENVIRONMENTS are certainly more dynamic than others, some are more important, larger, or simply more urbane. And while there are any number of factors that determine a city's importance, be it economic or infrastructural, it can also be something less tangible, such as culture or history, or even freedom of expression or quality of life. Cities are graded according to a wide variety of factors and Saskia Sassen has highlighted one of them in the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Group's ranking system in *Global Networks, Linked Cities*. In this system the world's major metropolises are divided into alpha, beta, or gamma, with London and New York as alpha cities, Hong Kong and Singapore as beta, and Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta as gamma. This global grading system takes into account a number of important factors and yet all it is doing is reflecting the sophisticated and highly ordered system of self-organisation that operates between these cities. In many ways this is much the same as the way in which cities organise themselves internally, by a sort of autopoiesis.

*Globalisation is not quite as new as some may think. The international financial markets of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were as massive as today's – this is certainly true when volumes are measured against the national economies of the time.*

One thing nearly every city has in common in the 21st century is that they will be interacting ever more closely in an increasingly globalised economy. What makes this interaction particularly vital is the fact that this global economic system has become more and more homogenised simply because it has no real alternatives: China's embrace of capitalism in the 1970s followed by the collapse of Soviet-style economics in the 1990s means that the world can be said to operate one economic system, i.e. that of global capitalism. And yet globalisation is not quite as new as some may think. Saskia Sassen has estimated that the international financial markets of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were as massive as today's – this is certainly true when volumes are measured against the national economies of the time. The world at the end of the 19th century was a surprisingly globalised one, the difference with today is that this globalisation took place within different imperial systems: the British, French, Russian, Japanese, etc. The cities of these empires were also organised according to strict hierarchies, each with its metropolitan centre, such as London or Paris, serviced by colonial enclaves, like Hong Kong or Hanoi. Of course, then as now, some parts of the world fell outside the influence of the international markets, either because they were too inaccessible, or too poor, or because they chose to isolate themselves for political or religious reasons.

**The global city**

Saskia Sassen sees global cities operating as a unified system rather than simply competing with one another, and what competition there is is tempered by strategic collaboration, with a division of labour that enables these cities to fit into the global hierarchy. Mobility of capital has led to new forms in the mobility of labour with the result that there is a degree of centralisation in some cities. This is hardly surprising, people go to where the jobs are; what is surprising, however, is that no one saw it coming. The new technologies that have enabled long-distance management and services seem to have actually increased the importance of certain cities. Why is this? If we are able to interact with colleagues anywhere in the world at the touch of a button then why have certain cities become even more important as nodes in the global network? Why not simply stay home and communicate at long distance? The answer is simple: people require face-to-face contact in order to do business; people need to meet one another in order to establish relations of trust.

This is what Manuel Castells refers to in his trilogy *The Information Age* as 'informationalism'. He sees the new economy as producing information, as opposed to the old economy, or 'industrialism', which preceded it (where the main sources of productivity were labour, capital, and natural resources). Castells sees informationalism as inseparable from the new social structures that have given rise to what he calls the Network Society. Information technology has turned producer services into tradeable goods, and cities that provide these new and increasingly mobile services have become not simply nodal points in the coordination of these global processes, they have become sites of production in their own right.

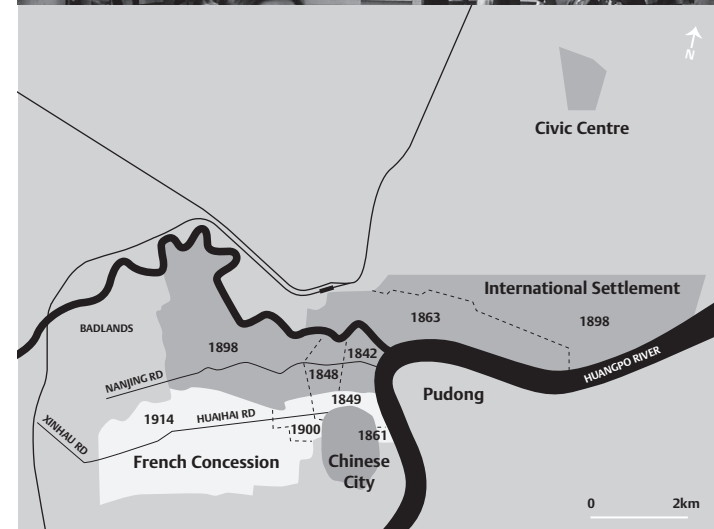
In order to produce and disseminate information, complex physical infrastructure is required. Certain cities have a strategic advantage because this infrastructure is extremely immobile. The management of the complex interaction between massive concentrations of material resources that information technologies allow have reconfigured the interaction between capital fixity and hypermobility, with the result that cities that were already major global players find themselves with a new competitive advantage. These are the cities where the global players congregate, so this is where you will have to go if you want to do business with them. Or, as David Harvey puts it in *The New Imperialism*, fluid movement over space can only be achieved by fixing certain physical infrastructures in space (physical infrastructure can mean roads, railways, airports, and port facilities, cable networks and fibre-optic systems, as well as electricity grids and sewerage systems, etc.). These require a lot of capital to set up and maintain, and the recovery of these investments depends upon their use *in situ*.

Harvey also sees an identifiable territorial logic of power arising from this infrastructural centralisation, which he terms 'regionality'. He sees this as the necessary and unavoidable result of the molecular processes of capital accumulation in space and time, with the result that inter-regional competition and the specialisation in and among regional economies becomes one of the fundamental features of capitalism. One of the side effects of this is that the global city becomes increasingly isolated from its hinterland. K. Anthony Appiah puts this even more forcefully in his Foreword to Saskia Sassen's *Globalization and its Discontents*: these global cities can become not only increasingly isolated from, but actually actively antagonistic to their regional cultures and economies. David Harvey gives us some examples of this: the Pearl River Delta in China (Hong Kong, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen) as well as the Lower Yangtze region (Shanghai), he sees these as areas that encapsulate dynamic power centres that are economically (though not necessarily politically) dominating the rest of the country.

**Colonial to global**

Modern telecommunications have not created networks out of nothing. The nodal points in the global city network have formed themselves in places where networks already existed, cities such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and Shanghai. Shanghai is an interesting case in point, whereas Hong Kong and Singapore made the almost flawless segue from colonial entrepot to global city, Shanghai was cut off from the rest of the world after 1949. The city found itself forced to operate as the engine for Chinese development under the Communists. Ironically it was only after the Open Door economic reforms of 1978 that Shanghai began to have its position undermined, when it began to fall behind new national rivals like Shenzhen. The staggered series of economic reforms introduced to the city from 1984, culminating in the development of the Pudong Special Economic Zone in 1990, eventually allowed Shanghai to pick up the threads – the city is once again being taken seriously as a global player. Perhaps it will never regain its once pre-eminent position in the region – even the Chinese leadership no longer refers to it as the coming New York of Asia – but as we have seen from Saskia Sassen's analysis, global networks depend for their success on the strength of interaction *between* cities, not the pre-eminence of any one of them. (That's not to say there isn't specialisation – Singapore's foreign exchange markets spring to mind – but there are no benefits to the network by one city's utter dominance.)

So what has enabled some of these key cities to become so important? Manuel Castells sees geopolitics as providing the grounds by which the politics of postcolonial survival became successful developmental policies, paving the way for some of the tiger economies that so startled the world at the end of the



ABOVE: Shanghai's colonial growth.



BELOW: China's Treaty Ports and colonies.





ABOVE: Jingan Villa  
lilong main alleyway



ABOVE:  
Shikumen



TOP LEFT: Pudong  
MIDDLE LEFT: The Bund

BELOW: Jingan Villa  
lilong side alleyway

20th century. This can be taken as a sign that there is an important link between colonial networks and global cities. Ackbar Abbas has also investigated this phenomenon, taking the specific cultural spaces of Hong Kong as his point of departure. His work has highlighted the important link between Hong Kong, the colonial enclave, and Hong Kong, the global city. In fact, he is convinced that colonial networks make useful foundations for global ones.

One other important point, and one which ties back into Saskia Sassen's analysis of global cities, is the fact that the construction or improvement of information and communication-technology networks cannot substitute for social networks. What facilitates these social networks in the case of a city like Hong Kong – the stability of the business environment, the investment in infrastructure, and the adherence to international standards of business law – is the fact that they were all founded by the British to service their colonial city and went on to act as the foundation for the territory's global pre-eminence today.

One important element in this continuity of development is identified by Manuel Castells as being Hong Kong's civil service, the administrative class of elite scholars recruited by the colonial service in Britain, usually from the better colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. These people had strong social and ideological cohesion, as well as shared professional interests and cultural values. They ran Hong Kong for most of its history, and their power was exercised primarily in the service of Hong Kong's business community, a group which enjoyed far greater freedom in its operations than most others in the international capitalist system during the second half of the 20th century, something which has helped Hong Kong become the global leader it is today.

Ackbar Abbas has also pointed out that colonialism has pioneered the methods required to incorporate what were pre-capitalist, pre-industrial, non-European societies into the world economy; establishing ways of dealing with ethnically, racially, and culturally different societies. In *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* he states that colonial cities can be viewed as the forerunners of the contemporary global city, suggesting that it was colonialism that allowed imperialism make the leap into globalism. This is true, think how much more cosmopolitan a place like Hong Kong or Shanghai was in the 19th century, compared to the likes of London or Paris at the same time. As global capitalism rose from the ashes of empire, some cities of these erstwhile empires found themselves perfectly placed to become global players.

#### Shanghai

If Hong Kong managed to turn itself from a colonial entrepot into the very model of the global metropolis in the second half of the 20th century, perhaps we can look to Shanghai for the way forward in the 21st. Shanghai in the colonial era was a unique urban entity, consisting of three separate jurisdictions: a self-governing International Settlement, a French Concession, and a Chinese city. This odd arrangement resulted in some administrative anomalies, such as the fact that policing in each jurisdiction was separate, so that a criminal could evade capture simply by crossing from one part of the city to another. Apart from idiosyncrasies such as these, the city seems to have operated as a seamless whole.

Shanghai was in an ideal position to become East Asia's most important commercial hub. Its geographical position, halfway up China's coast and at the mouth of the Yangtze River, enabled it to operate as China's gateway. It was Shanghai's success as a commercial centre that drew the attention of Western powers in the 19th century, particularly Britain's. Western powers wanted a share in the lucrative trade in tea, porcelain, silk, and cotton, but this trade began to be a drain on Western resources, particularly Britain's (which took to tea more than most). The British decided they'd better redress this imbalance, notoriously deciding to import Bengali opium to balance their books. When the Governor of Canton destroyed Britain's stocks of the drug in 1839 it sparked off the First Opium War, resulting in a humiliating defeat for China three years later. The Treaty of Nanking, which ended the war, opened five Chinese cities to international trade; known as the Treaty Ports, the two most important of these were Hong Kong and Shanghai.

The first British arrived in Shanghai in 1843, their settlement consisted of 140 acres along the Huangpu River, north of the old Chinese city. The Americans established an unofficial settlement further north, on the other side of Suzhou Creek. Along the western bank of the Huangpu ran a muddy towpath, the British, using the Hindi term for a waterfront, promptly renamed it the Bund. At first there was a no-man's-land between the British settlement and the old Chinese city, but the French arrived in 1849 and squeezed themselves into this leftover space. The Second Opium War (1856-60) was a joint British and French effort and ended in another humiliating defeat for China. The subsequent Treaty of Tientsin opened up the Yangtze to Western trade and also forced the Chinese government to allow tariffs on opium imports – effectively legalising the drug trade. Stocks of opium were then stored on a pair of sailing hulks moored off the Bund, while opium dens, known as 'divans', proliferated – a habit which had long been tolerated as an upper-class vice spread rapidly to all levels of society, with devastating social consequences.

Shanghai's growth continued to be prodigious throughout the 19th century, with its population doubling between 1895 and 1910, and again nearly tripling by 1930. This growth put the different parts of the city under enormous pressure. The Chinese, under the modernising influence of the Nationalists, planned a new Civic Centre to the north of the city in 1931. It was intended to draw attention away from the foreign concessions, facilitating business, as it was closer to the mouth of the Huangpu. Designed by an American-educated Chinese architect called Dong Dayou, it incorporated Chinese and art deco elements attractively in the few (now sadly neglected) buildings that were built. As a plan it failed, mainly due to the

fact that the Japanese invaded the city in 1932. The Japanese were rebuffed but tried again in 1937 and this time were successful. They took over everything except the foreign concessions, which became known as the Lonely Island. This lonely island eventually fell when Japan declared war on America in December 1941.

After the Allied victory in 1945 Shanghai was once again open for business, but civil war between the Nationalists and Communists meant that the smart money had already begun to move out. The Communists won the war in 1949 – the Nationalists fleeing to Taiwan – and Shanghai promptly disappeared behind the Bamboo Curtain. The city became the engine of development for the rest of the country, following Marxist economic lines, but two years after Mao's death in 1976 China instigated its Open Door policy which saw the beginnings of Western-style economic reform. Shanghai was gradually opened up to foreign investment in the 1980s and it was the decision to develop Pudong in 1990 that finally enabled the city to reassert itself globally.

#### A new Hanseatic League?

Colonial networks set up in the 19th century still link cities like Hong Kong, Singapore, and Shanghai to each other and the rest of the world. These cities used to trade in the goods of empire, now they increasingly trade in information. 19th century infrastructure, such as rail and telephone, are being used alongside and sometimes as the basis for 21st century technology, like fibre optics. Some cities, like Hong Kong and Singapore, have other advantages, including the use of the English language, as well as the civil service probity and rule of law we saw highlighted earlier. Perhaps it is time for these cities to organise themselves properly, instead of cooperating willy nilly as they currently do. Perhaps they could be organised along the lines already seen in the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Group's ranking system. This would make places like London, New York, and Tokyo A-grade cities, while Hong Kong and Singapore would have a B-grade listing, and so on. If this grading system were to be organised according to independently assessable factors, and administered by an international body under the governance of something like the United Nations, then these global cities could be grouped together more advantageously, meaning that the network as a whole would operate more efficiently and for the cities' better mutual benefit. A city could apply to be listed, much like a company lists on a stock exchange, and once it met certain criteria it would be accorded its status, A, B, or C (with different requirements and privileges according to these groupings). If it subsequently failed to live up to these requirements it could then be de-listed until it had corrected its shortcomings.

This would not be unlike the Hanseatic League, a union of 200 or so cities in Northern Europe at the end of the Middle Ages. The Hanse, even without a strong institutional structure, managed to act as a powerful force for economic growth, providing mutual support for cities in a hitherto poor and unconnected part of the globe. The result was an upsurge of trade and economic activity, bringing them back to levels not seen since the fall of the Roman empire.

In an increasingly globalised world, any attempt to recover the discipline of urbanism under conditions of urban transformation and economic crisis is going to require bold and imaginative new thinking. Think how much faster cities in such a closely linked global network would be able to react under conditions of global crisis? Freed from having to move at the slower pace of their geographical hinterlands (from which they could be separated politically and economically – while still obliged to aid and service them) these nodes in the global network could well be able to react fast enough to staunch or even head off the downward spiral before it degenerated into the sort of crisis we saw in 2008. Shanghai's foreign concessions operated such a system, divorced from yet benefitting, and in turn, servicing their hinterlands. Faster reaction time will not guarantee the prevention of future crises, but this system could well diminish their magnitude and misery.

The downside of choosing Shanghai as a model, as anyone familiar with the city's history will tell you, is of course the poverty and depravity that existed alongside its wealth and glamour. This proposal is being made as part of ongoing research into the feasibility of establishing such a regulatory system for global cities, one of the aims of which would be the eradication of the sort of inequality seen in 19th century Shanghai, as well as the eradication of the sorts of problems that have resulted from the unfettered competition of global capitalism. How this could work would perhaps be for other, better qualified people to decide, I am merely pointing out that it could well work.

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# Thailand's acrimonious adjacency to Cambodia (Part 2)



From the moment the French imposed their boundaries on the Thai-Khmer border in the 19th century the region has been in dispute. Later, the border became a fault line in the Cold War. In the first of two articles on this Southeast Asian hotspot Eisel Mazard examined American support for Cambodian Communism and its influence on two decades of conflict. In this concluding essay, Mazard suggests that ideas of a 'greater Thailand' and military interests in maintaining low-level hostilities on the border are some of the reasons behind Thailand's latest aggression against Cambodia.

Eisel Mazard

THAILAND'S SUPPORT FOR SINO-AMERICAN POLICY resulted in an infamous game of international aid, arms-trading, and atrocities along its Cambodian border for roughly 20 years. This came to public attention with the televised documentaries of John Pilger (e.g., *Cambodia: The Betrayal*, 1990) showing that there was blood on the hands of many UN agencies and American allies (such as West Germany and the UK) and that these unnecessary evils were being carried out in support of the notorious Pol Pot himself.

As with so many Cambodian tragedies, the Thai border was the easiest part of the story to capture on film. The refugee camps proved to be important sources of 'secret' information, yet the Thai perspective on the very existence of the border has been lost in much of the moralising and agonising that this subject inspires.

Perhaps because we are habituated to 'post-colonial' recriminations, Western observers tend to refer all question of the Thai-Khmer border to the French aggression of 1893, if the history is mentioned at all. This was the prelude to an Anglo-French accord in 1896, ending the long-simmering possibility of a war between Empires over control of mainland Southeast Asia, followed by more comprehensive settlements between Thailand and France in 1902 and 1907.

Aside from vague regrets about the imperialist enterprise as a whole, entailing that borders established in that period may be 'unfair' in principle, one newspaper column after another seems to express a postured disbelief that anyone could even regard the border as a subject of dispute. The Thai nationalists' perspective is precluded on the simplistic grounds that such matters transpired over a century ago and that the UN, with its presumably unimpeachable moral authority, has already spoken. Beyond the odious fact that the UN did so much to discredit itself on that same border, this approach omits most of the truth, along with some important fictions.

The argument for a 'greater Thailand' does not rely on the complaint the Thais have suffered as a weak power, with borders imposed upon them by the French in the 19th century. They can also appeal to the fact that they defeated the French and dispensed with those borders in the 20th century.

The victory of 1941 was of monumental importance to the Thais themselves, even if overlooked overseas, and has served to justify a bellicose border policy before and since. One direct result was the Thai disavowal of the separate existence of Laos and Cambodia at the newly-formed United Nations at the close of World War Two. The UN convened the Franco-Siamese Conciliation Commission to settle the question of Thailand's eastern frontier in 1947, and the Thais mustered all available

*The imperative for a 'greater Thailand' denoted by Suvannabhumi antedates the ad hoc alliances of the cold war, and will endure long after the hysteria of anti-Communism has faded.*

evidence to support the theory that their borders included all of Laos and a large part of Cambodia (Ngaosyvathn, 1985). A significant part of the Thai population was convinced, although the UN Commission was not.

Sivaram, 1941, is an example of primary-source Thai propaganda composed in English. Already at this early date the border issue was broached in terms of the nationalist myth of Suvannabhumi, evoking the illusion of a longstanding unity of Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos, prior to French intervention. What this means is that the claim in contention here is not one temple nor one mountain pass: the Thais do not merely consider themselves entitled to Preah Vihear, but certainly to Angkor Wat, and their briefly-held province of Battambang in-between.

Suvannabhumi is not just the name of Bangkok's new airport: it is a fiction loosely inspired by the findings of James Prinsep in 1837 and, contrary to what is now widely believed in Thailand, the legend of this imaginary empire is no more ancient than that date. Suvannabhumi is one of many modern pseudo-histories that sprang up across Buddhist Asia, making creative use of the first translations of the inscriptions of Ashoka. Bangkok's brand new 'National Discovery Museum Institute' (NDMI) credits Prince Damrong as the first to venture this fable, and, unfortunately, the exhibits reprise it for a contemporary audience.

At any rate, it was rather bold diplomacy for Thailand to lay claim to their neighbour states in 1947, as Thailand had just been defeated in the process of annexing the Shan States and only withdrew their forces of occupation from three Cambodian provinces in '46. Conversely, we may say that Thailand's eastward expansion was of renewed importance as their designs on the western frontier seemed forever lost with the end of Japanese rule over Burma.

This Thai tradition of 'False Irredentist-ism' has also justified territorial claims extending beyond Shan State to Southern Yunnan with wild theories of a lost homeland projected back along this path, by stages, all the way to the Altai mountains of Mongolia. In the 20th century, racist narratives of such lost empires were both influential and popular. Apart from written history and required curricula, Thailand is home to what could objectively be called a Fascist tradition of the performing arts and broadcast media (e.g., Luang Wichitwathakan's Fine Arts Department).

While it may be self-evident to any outsider (even UNESCO officials) that the 'native people' surrounding the Preah Vihear temple on both sides of the border are ethnically Cambodian, and that everything about the monument itself is historically

Cambodian, these mere facts do not contradict the assumptions of the Thai nationalists. For them, Cambodia's separate existence is an accident of history, created by French intervention. Their claims are thus posed as irredentist, though based purely on ideology.

## Lingering armies on porous borders

The prospect of annexing Burmese territory ended with the Japanese occupation, but dreams of northward expansion were kept alive by the expectation of invading Yunnan for decades thereafter. The US maintained a mercenary army comprised of former KMT troops on Thai soil, adventitiously gathering together the marooned veterans of the war against the Japanese (who were unable to retreat to Taiwan from Thailand or Burma). These lingering armies were intended to serve as a bulwark in a possible war with the PRC, but proved instead to be pawns in the opium trade and ensuing hostilities against Laos. Nixon's alliance with the PRC ended the possibility of northward expansion forever, but propelled Thailand toward the outright invasion of Laos in the 1980s (first in 1984, then on a larger scale in 1987-8) and set the stage for its current incursions into Cambodia.

Apart from the overall pattern of Thailand's army serving as its permanent government (interspersed with ephemeral periods of parliamentary democracy) the country's rural periphery is regularly home to military autonomy of another kind. Whether in forestry policy, opium eradication, or border patrols, Thailand has a fantastic history of special military units operating as authorities unto themselves, and then developing many features of a small state. Such secret armies' self-funding activities tend to entail the direct control of small civilian populations. An excellent new study (Thibault, 2009) sheds light on the latter, important factor. The Thai military units controlling the Khmer border actively delayed the return of tribes and villages (officially deemed Cambodian refugees) who had been employed in a range of paramilitary and smuggling operations, along with homestead farming, as residents of a borderland where the Thai military were the sole authority.

Of course, the big money in this game came from directing the material support for Pol Pot, flowing in from America and its allies, often through border camps bearing the regalia of the UN and WFP, amounting to tens and hundreds of millions per annum. Although a glimpse of that game reached the world through the films of John Pilger, its gradual end was not until 1999, when the Thai army was still trying to hold on to the populations who had effectively become 'citizens' (or serfs?) of their small duchies along the border.

## War or peace? Cui bono?

Thailand's acts of war against Cambodia have not come about by accident: a highly professional army, with decades of experience along a disputed border, has made a series of clear moves to re-arm the frontier, scarcely ten years after the death of Pol Pot. The motives are not difficult to understand, if we can begin by recognising that these are strategic decisions – though certainly made by authorities other than Thailand's elected parliament. That parliament has had a somewhat intermittent existence over the past three years, but even if this had not been the case, there is no reason to suppose they would have initiated this war any more than they initiated the invasion of Laos in 1987-8. The latter is an important precedent, in principle disputing the same 'French' border, and UN decisions were as impotent in averting that dispute as they have been in this one.

Like America, Thailand has an elected government that lags behind the foreign-policy initiative of a largely unseen political class, closer to the military than the common man. However, there can be little doubt that an invasion of Cambodia would be a popular war in Thailand, as the invasion of Laos was before. The imperative for a 'greater Thailand' denoted by Suvannabhumi antedates the ad hoc alliances of the cold war, and will endure long after the hysteria of anti-Communism has faded. Even without a single victory, the perpetuation of low-level hostilities against Thailand's neighbours benefits a military that has become accustomed to profiting from such occupations, and can provide a pretext to either pre-empt or dissolve an already weakened parliament at any time.

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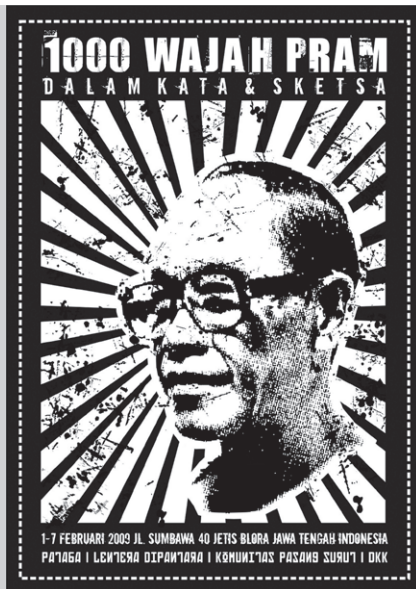
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# Indonesian literature in exile, 1965-1998

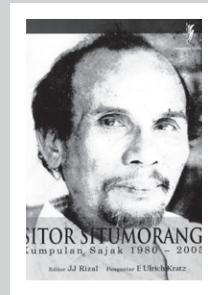
The events of September 30 1965 had a profound impact on the lives of many Indonesians, including a group of intellectuals and writers who were compelled to live in foreign countries in the aftermath. Despite their political exile, authors refused to be silenced and continued to write and publish poetry, prose and essays. Dorothea Schaefer's research sheds light on this relatively unknown part of Indonesian literature and examines these exile writings in the wider context of contemporaneous Indonesian literature.

Dorothea Schaefer



ABOVE:  
Image of Pramodya Ananta Toer on a political poster.

BELOW:  
Jonie, Mawie Ananta. 2005. *Anak Minang itu bercerita*. Jakarta: First November.



ABOVE:  
Sitor Situmorang.

BELOW:  
Exile journal *Kreasi* Vol. No 3 (1989), Amsterdam: Stichting Budaya.



THE EVENTS OF 1965 forced approximately 20 Indonesian writers to seek refuge overseas. Subsequently, much was written by Indonesian exile writers in the former Eastern Bloc, in particular Russia, the People's Republic of China, Albania and Vietnam, where they continued to publish their works in journals and newspapers. Only in the late 1980s did many of the writers leave these countries and settle in Western Europe, where they were granted asylum or citizenship. Foundations to support the publication of exile writings were established, and consequently it was possible for exile authors to publish their works in a more structured way. Around the time of *reformasi* in the late 1990s, writings by exile authors started to appear on the Internet forming a large volume of 'grey' literature via webgroups, websites and blogs. Since 2000, exile writers have been able to publish in Indonesia once more. The group includes names such as Agam Wispi, Utuy Tatang Santani, Sobron Aidit, Asahan Alham (Aidit), Z. Afif and Soepriyadi Tomodihardjo, who, in 1965, were among the promising and established writers of the time.

## Studies on Indonesian exile literature

The existence of these exiled authors and their writing have been acknowledged by various scholars. In particular at Australian universities, academics studying the modern history, politics and culture of Indonesia, and with a concern for those that were marginalised during the Suharto presidency, took up their case. Until now however, no thorough documentation of Indonesian exile literature has been attempted. Available studies have mainly taken a historical, political or biographical approach as the study on the cultural institute Lekra (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*) by Foulcher (1986), Stephen Miller's PhD study and David Hill's research illustrate (Hill 1984, 1991). Hill recently embarked on a new project at IIAS on the development of diasporic left-wing communities of Indonesian exiles (Hill 2008). Michael Bodden currently works on the genre of Lekra drama, first studied by James R. Brandon.

Some former Lekra authors and other political prisoners under the Suharto regime were able to publish their works in Indonesia after their release in the late 1970s (albeit with difficulties), and works by Pramodya Ananta Toer and Sitor Situmorang, who had not been a member of Lekra, were available in Indonesia already at this time. Yet it was only after 2000 that a number of compilations and anthologies of exile writing appeared in Indonesia. The first anthology, which was widely reviewed in the Indonesian media and caught my attention, was *Di Negeri Orang* (Alham et al. 2002). It is the work of a team of exile authors and presents, to a wider readership in Indonesia, what they consider the best of exile poetry. *Menagerie 6* provides English translations of selected works by exile authors for an international audience (McGlynn and Ibrahim 2004). Additionally, I am aware of at

least three more compilations of exile writing published in Indonesia. All the same, this material represents only a fraction of what has been written and published in difficult circumstances.

Identifying works published in exile is challenging. Texts published in countries of the former Eastern Bloc are mostly inaccessible. I have discovered and collected more works from the later period of exile because texts are available from the writers themselves, individual collectors or selected archives in Western Europe. The majority of this material exists in the form of photocopied or stencilled pamphlets or loosely-bound journals. Many texts, anthologies of poetry or short stories were self-published in the cheapest possible way. The fact that exile writers have made extensive use of the Internet as a forum for their works presents another challenge when collecting data. Essays, poems and short stories by exile writers are dispersed over various websites, webgroups and online journals or newspapers. The willingness of exile writers to communicate with me and share their knowledge has been extremely valuable. Exile authors have provided detailed information on their literary activities and their lives, and they have often granted me access to their published and unpublished texts.

The anthologies of exile writing published in Indonesia are a valuable source of reference, even though I consider them to be highly selective representations as they merely scratch the surface of the abundant material available and present differing points of view. I have benefited greatly from the material published by Indonesian and Western academics. Contemporary Indonesian literary critics have commented on exile literature on the Internet, and exile writers have also presented their views on the subject both in exile journals and various online forums. Related studies on Lekra, former Lekra members, political prisoners and the political culture of Indonesia have also been very useful for my initial research (including Budiawan 2004, Nilsson Hoadley 2005).

My study concentrates on the literary analysis of texts written by Indonesian authors in exile which to date has come second to political aspects, such as the human rights violations during Suharto's presidency, and the study of individual life stories. My doctoral research aims to fill this gap and examines these texts in the wider context of Indonesian literature.

## Exile writing in the context of Indonesian literature

My study employs a text-focused approach to evaluating exile literature, and I am interested in the self-perception of Indonesian exile writers, their views on and their place in the context of Indonesian literature. Chronologically tracing the literary activities of former Lekra intellectuals in exile from the 1950s onwards into the early 21st century, with a particular emphasis on the large corpus of works written and disseminated abroad, I analyse the texts produced and the language used in relation to the 'widely received' canon of Indonesian literature (Kratz 2000a). I critically examine the claims made about the nature of exile literature, political affiliation of the authors and the role of the venues of publication.

In the 1950s, Indonesian critics wrote extensively about their opinions and definitions of modern Indonesian literature, and a polarisation amongst Indonesian writers in two groups – Gelanggang and Lekra – became apparent. Taking into account the essays by Indonesian scholars (Kratz 2000b), I intend to use the concept of modern Indonesian literature as it has been perceived by Indonesian writers and critics to provide a

thorough analysis of exile literature. I have ascertained that in the 1950s and 60s, writers of both groups sought to publish their poems or short stories in journals and newspapers that were generally considered as venues for 'high-quality' literature. I am struck by similarities in the style and form of the works published by authors of 'opposing' groups. Whilst writers were engaging in fierce polemics, it is evident that their differences did not extend to their understanding on what constitutes literature of good quality. Works share similar criteria in terms of linguistic and stylistic means and forms, suggesting that their writers also share a similar perception regarding standards of literary quality. I expand this analysis to include the content and themes of works written by Lekra and non-Lekra authors alike.

A 'social commitment' to Indonesian society is apparent in the majority of works by Indonesian writers. The main difference lies in the degree to which politics is used to shape and influence literary works. Lekra authors were encouraged to make politics the guiding principle when writing poetry and prose. My study seeks to define the exile writers' understanding of, and in turn their contribution to, modern Indonesian literature. Analysing fictional and non-fictional work to determine their views that are explicitly or implicitly expressed, I seek to establish how exile authors relate their writing to Indonesian literature at large. My research suggests that they have continued to consider their works a part of Indonesian literature, although they were marginalised, neglected and misunderstood. I suggest it is clear that they never ceased to see themselves as Indonesians and have continuously been engaging with Indonesia on an intellectual level. Pramodya Ananta Toer's *Buru Quartet*, published after his release from prison was well received because he was able to capture and incorporate those important changes in the use of Indonesian language that had taken place during his imprisonment. I seek to investigate if exile writers followed a similar path, particularly after 1998 when their writings were made accessible for the majority of Indonesians and after many had returned to Indonesia albeit on brief visits. The extent to which exile writers have been able to connect and integrate their writing with contemporary Indonesian literature will be a major focus of my research.

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# Journey through the archipelago

The original black and white travel pictures from the photographer and film director Alphons Hustinx (1900-1972) give us an impression of his many travels through Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Middle East in the 1930s and 50s. Hustinx left his negatives, films, letters and diaries, full of notes, to his family. Through these egocentric documents and images, the world of this Limburg bachelor is brought back to life. In this article, his biographer, Louis Zweers, presents a snapshot of Hustinx's visit to the former Dutch East Indies in 1938.

Louis Zweers



ABOVE: Dutch family in the garden city of Menteng. Batavia (Jakarta), West Java, Dutch East Indies, 1938.

RIGHT: Sand storm on the dry plane of the sand sea at the Bromo volcano. Tengger Mountains, East Java, Dutch East Indies, 1938.

BELOW: Wayang Wong dancer. Surakarta (Solo), Java, Dutch East Indies, 1938.



HUSTINX BECAME FAMOUS for his documentary films about non-western countries. He was a self taught photographer and film director – something that was not uncommon at that time – who became a versatile professional. In the 1930s and 50s big clients such as the *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland* (Dutch Steamship Company), KLM, Shell and BPM bought his pictures, but his reputation was limited to a small circle of experts. Hustinx's black and white travel pictures show us that he had a gifted compositional eye and much interest for other cultures.

In July 1938 Alphons Hustinx started on a journey to the Dutch East Indies. He had received an assignment from the *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland* (Dutch Steamship Company) to make a promotional film (in colour) about a journey to the East. He shot ten thousand metres of 16mm film, both in colour and in black and white, with a total duration of about 20 hours. This material was edited by Hustinx and

resulted in the film *Kleur en Glorie Onzer Tropen* (Colour and Splendour of the East – 1939). This film starts with a journey on the luxury passenger ship *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt* and continues with a journey by car through Sumatra, Java, Madura and Bali. With this film *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland* wanted to promote tourism to the tropical archipelago. The two hour feature, one of Holland's first colour films, was screened with much success by Hustinx himself in the Netherlands.

Early one morning in August 1938 Hustinx arrived in Tandjong Priok. The townscape pictures he made of Batavia (Jakarta) show grand government buildings, renowned hotels and beautiful white plastered villas beside well-maintained roads, American cars and white men in lightweight suits. Some buildings of pre-war Batavia can still be admired today. But the park-like atmosphere and tranquility that was once there has gone forever. From Bandung he made various trips to the volcanoes that lie south of Garut, a popular vacation resort. In one picture he is standing in front of the wooded hillside of the Papandajan in the Preanger highlands. On a wooden plank it says: 'Smoking in the crater is prohibited'. From the top of the mountain, at a height of more than 2600 metres, he focused his camera on the white clouds of smoke and the bubbling lava in the imposing crater. Hustinx shows us tranquil landscapes, mountain lakes and volcanoes in the Preanger.

#### Freezing in the tropics

In order to escape the tropical heat, he stayed at the Grand Hotel at the Tosari hill station, located at about 2000 metres in the Tengger mountains of East Java. This location boasted a panoramic view of a magnificent landscape with wooded mountainsides, deep ravines and active volcanoes. During clear weather one could also see the flat lands near Surabaya and the sea. From Tosari one could make trips to the Bromo volcano with its sand sea. During his daytrips to Bromo, Hustinx hired powerfully-built Tenggers to carry his photo and film equipment. Various photos were made of Hustinx wearing winter clothes, surrounded by a guide and several carriers, the latter barefooted but heavily clothed against the cold and the wind. Hustinx wrote about this journey in the cold early morning: 'The wind is blowing terribly hard.'

*'Five months in the Dutch East Indies, it felt like it was only five weeks. Time went by like in a dream.'* Hustinx more or less lived in his own world and only saw the exotic beauty of the Indonesian archipelago... His travel pictures and films were produced for the sole purpose of promoting tourism in the Western market.





## Photographs of the former Dutch East Indies

I am completely frozen. The carriers are also shivering with cold... Finally we arrive at the sand sea. It is as if we are entering the hell of Dante.' In spite of the storm, Hustinx managed to make some photo and film shots. In one picture we see the Tengger carriers standing in the desolate and windy landscape of the sand sea. However freezing it may be, it is still unmistakably a tropical picture.

Of course Hustinx also visited the world renowned Buddhist structure the Borobudur and the old Hindu temples on the Dieng plateau. He wrote in his notebook: 'There are several very beautiful Buddha statues here... The light is good and I am making good shots. The weather is terribly warm and oppressive.' Hustinx meticulously captured images of the big stupas on top of the temple complex, the unique wall reliefs portraying the life of Buddha and the elegant Buddha statues. Beautiful because of its simplicity and directness is the portrait of a young Javanese man next to a sculpted head of Buddha. Tirelessly Hustinx also filmed and photographed temples, decorated temple gates, sculptures, processions and dance performances in Bali. Later on, much to his dismay, he discovered that parts of the film he shot in Bali were a failure.

The last month of his journey to the Dutch East Indies was spent in Sumatra. Hustinx was interested in the culture and people of Minangkabau, with their colourful traditional dresses and beautiful houses with pointed roofs and artistic decorations. He visited Fort de Kock (*Bukittinggi*) and the calm mountain lakes of Maninjau and Singarak in the Padang highlands of West Sumatra. Later on, in Painan, a coastal town about 30 kilometres south of Padang, he rented a small boat to take him to Tjenko island. Hustinx: 'A beautiful small island à la Robinson Crusoe, where one wishes one could stay for the rest of one's life.'

### Of interest to the western eye

Only things that were interesting to the western eye were photographed, like the beautifully dressed Minangkabau women from West Sumatra and the Batak women in the surrounding area of the Toba Lake. On New Year's Eve of 1938 Hustinx started his journey back to Europe by boarding a ship at the Belawan Harbour in Medan. In his notebook he wrote: 'Five months in the Dutch East Indies, it felt like it was only five weeks. Time went by like in a dream.' Hustinx more or less lived in his own world and only saw the exotic beauty of the Indonesian archipelago. He showed little interest for the social and political situation in the East. This doesn't mean that he idealised the colonial period. His travel pictures and films were produced for the sole purpose of promoting tourism in the Western market.

The Limburg photographer and film maker Alphons Hustinx started travelling through the Middle East, South East Asia and Africa in the 1930s. He didn't work for press agencies or press photo bureaus but went at his own expense or on assignment for big companies. The groomed bachelor stayed at reputable hotels or with friends who were businessmen or diplomats. In remote areas Hustinx, a devout catholic, also stayed at missionary posts. He captured images of foreign cultures and people with an aesthetic and almost ethnographic eye. His photos are not just a reflection of a far-away foreign world, they also create a longing towards it.

He often used his visual material when giving lectures in the Netherlands about far-away countries and foreign ethnicities. These lectures with slides and films were generally well-attended, at a time when there was no television yet. The courteous Hustinx was very popular among the curious public. Even during the war years he was a much requested speaker with his slides and films.

In the early 1960s, when television became more and more available, he stopped definitively with his lectures. His photos and film images, however, remain an impressive witness of a world that has disappeared.

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Art and photohistorian Louis Zweers is the author of the catalogue and curator of the exhibition 'Travels of the Past'. The exhibition held in the Dutch Cultural Centre Erasmushuis in Jakarta (June-July 2009) and the French Cultural Centre in Surabaya (August 2009) consists of a selection of travel photographs, made by Alphons Hustinx in the 1930s and 1950s.

Catalogue: Louis Zweers, *Travels of the Past, photographs by Alphons Hustinx*, Erasmushuis, Jakarta, 2009 (English and Bahasa Indonesia).

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ABOVE:  
Decorated racing  
bulls. Madura, East  
Java, Dutch East  
Indies, 1938.

BELOW LEFT:  
Women on bamboo  
rafts doing laundry.  
Batavia (Jakarta),  
West Java, Dutch  
East Indies, 1938.

BELOW RIGHT:  
Restaurant-car of  
the South Sumatra  
Railway Company.  
South Sumatra, Dutch  
East Indies, 1938.



All photographs from the  
Vintageprints collection,  
Louis Zweers, Rijswijk.



# A tale of two systems

## Questioning land tenure reform in China

China maybe transforming into a fully-fledged market economy, but there are still many who see the commune as the only safeguard of land rights and livelihoods. At the same time, the market-oriented individualist approach to land tenure reform – subcontracting land to individuals – appears to work against sustainable rural development. Yongjun Zhao examines the case of Yakou village, Guangdong, which provides an alternative model of land tenure reform: a combination of commune ownership, management of land resources and a collective approach to taking full advantage of the market.

Yongjun Zhao



THE INTRODUCTION of the Household Responsibility System (HRS) marks a watershed in China's rural policy. A deliberate move from the collectivisation embodied in the People's Commune of the 1960s, HRS granted stable and long-term land tenure to individual households. The policy rolled out between 1978 and 1984 and resulted in dramatic increases in rural incomes by 15 percent per year. However, land allocation also saw the rapid loss of arable land to non-agricultural sectors and, consequently, increases in peasants' incomes began to slow down, contract and in some regions even reverse.<sup>1</sup> In the last decade, it is estimated that 1.5 million people have lost their land each year, triggering massive land conflicts.<sup>2</sup> Landless peasants, especially in poorer regions, have found it extremely difficult to pursue other economic opportunities. Alongside land loss, soil erosion, desertification and the downgrading of farmland have further constrained sustainable rural development. The continued economic pressures on the land and other resources have weakened the already fragile agriculture and ecology and even pose a direct threat to national food security.

In many parts of the country, the assumption that HRS would strengthen individual households' land rights and cultivate their interests in land investments has proved to be wrong. Rather, it has led to irresponsible farming and a degraded agro-environment.<sup>3</sup> In fact, some villages in China choose not to adopt HRS. A case in point is Yakou village in Guangdong, where the commune system has been the mainstay of the village economy since 1977.<sup>4</sup> The Yakou village of the Nanlang Township, Zhongshan City, is situated in the Pearl River Delta – the most developed economic region of southeastern Guangdong province. With a population of 3131 and 928 individual households, Yakou has eight natural villages consisting of 13 groups or 'production teams'. Endowed with rich natural resources such as fertile soil, water and forests, it is blessed with 3,000 *mu* (15 *mu*=1 hectare) of paddy rice land and 20,000 *mu* of tidal land. Whilst the paddy fields are cultivated collectively by the peasants, for the last 20 years the tidal land has been leased to others (mostly from other provinces). Yakou is a village of two economic systems – the commune inherited from the past, and the land leasing which followed market reform.

*By granting all peasants equal rights to land use and management, and by providing them with social security, few peasants in Yakou feel the need to move to the cities.*

**ABOVE LEFT:**  
A public meeting in Yakou village hall.  
**ABOVE RIGHT:**  
Yakou village is situated in the Pearl River Delta an area rich with fertile soil, water and forests.

On the eve of market reform, Yakou had experienced peasant outmigration to developed regions like Hong Kong. The majority of those peasants remaining were not capable farm labourers but were elderly people, women and children. Given their limited farming abilities, the village Party secretary (still in his position today) strongly believed that HRS could fragment the village and weaken its capacity for pursuing collective solutions to sustainable rural development. He contended that the village's land assets should not be distributed to individual households, whose conflicting interests could not be easily accommodated. Instead, collective land arrangements provided a safety net for the poor, who were vulnerable to economic, environmental and political changes. Following heated debates on the future of the village, a consensus on the continuation of the commune system was reached. While choosing to maintain the fundamental characteristic of the people's commune – equal distribution of economic revenues – the village leadership also made efforts to build a new model that could deal with economic uncertainty and chronic poverty.

### Hybrid land tenure system

Paddy rice farming remains the village's highest priority in order to ensure food security. Farming is organised on three tiers: the administrative village (often called 'the brigade'); the natural village ('the production team') and households. Each production team is accountable to the brigade, which, in turn, is responsible for target setting, technical support and overseeing production. Division of labour depends on demographic differences and no tasks are forced upon commune members. Labour input is directly linked to the distribution of wages and grain rations. Peasant migrants, who can no longer secure work in the cities, are always allowed to return to the village and work on the land. As a result, Yakou land is well preserved and cultivated, ensuring the equitable distribution of grain produce. Moreover, collective land management has been successful in deterring local authorities and businesses interested in acquiring the land.

Yakou peasants have taken full advantage of their tidal lands to develop fisheries. As most of the local people do not possess skills in this industry, it was decided that this land should be leased to those who can operate on it effectively. As a result, many people from other provinces are leased land and pay their dues to the commune. To maximise the benefits of this arrangement, a land shareholding foundation was established in 2002, managed by the village committee and peasant shareholders. Land shares can be inherited but not transferred to outsiders in order to protect the integrity of land management and local resources. The village committee decides on what to invest in the land, who the land should be contracted to, and how to redistribute the benefits to the shareholders equally. Other land is also leased to industries constituting another source of revenue for village shareholders.

The village committee upholds the principle that the village itself should not be involved in manufacturing, to avoid capital and management costs. Moreover, no large-scale industries are allowed to enter the village, in order to prevent air and water pollution. Transparent village governance and land management, characterised by full-cycle peasant participation, minimise peasant discontent and enhances management efficiency. For instance, decisions over budgets are made not only by the village committee, but in consultation with representatives of each natural village. More than 70 signatures are collected before a decision is made. In Yakou, transparent village government means effective and equitable land use and management, in contrast to the corruption of the village committee and local authorities seen in many other villages.

By granting all peasants equal rights to land use and management, and by providing them with social security, few peasants in Yakou feel the need to move to the cities. By keeping their rural status, they have the full access to the social welfare package provided by the commune. In addition, they believe that because of the commune, poverty has been reduced. In fact, the peasants managed to donate 110,000 Yuan to the Sichuan earthquake victims and their families in May 2008. This amount was higher than that of neighbouring villages.

### Criticisms and challenges

This commune system has, however, been criticised regarding the use and management of farmland. Some peasants – especially young people with technical non-farming skills – contended that it would be better to lease the land to them so that they can sell it to outsiders for a quick profit. They could use that money to pursue making an income in whichever way they choose, since they do not have to rely on farming. Concerns were also expressed about the commune's inefficiency in farming. For many elderly people, however, keeping the commune intact provides a social security net. The village leadership believes that in an era of economic uncertainty, the commune plays an essential role not only in the rural economy, but in all kinds of activities and relations that can safeguard the peasants' best interests. In particular, the commune is

seen and actually used as an effective weapon against the illegal land takings found commonly in many other parts of the country. Also, the stronghold of communal land governance has deterred the local government from acquiring the land for economic development purposes. In this sense, the commune is an effective institution or weapon of the weak peasantry in keeping their landed livelihoods, in great contrast to HRS which weakens their capacity in economic and social organisations.<sup>5</sup>

In response, the village leadership strive to achieve sound land management, which requires its strong leadership over a democratic governance system as exemplified by their management of village affairs and elections. Primarily, the village Party secretary is recognised by the commune members as a leader without any involvement in corruption. With discipline and passion for helping the poor and a strong belief in the power of collective force in village development and governance, he is described as the most important person for the commune. Without him, the commune could have been dissolved long time ago.

Political divisions within the commune itself over its future direction, are, however, rampant. Some members want better distribution of benefits arisen from land management. Witnessing the land seizures taking place in neighbouring villages, and in some cases the large amounts of compensation paid to them, there are voices casting doubt on the profitability and sustainability of communal land management. Some believe that individual ownership is the only way to guarantee livelihoods. They fear that the imbalance of power between the commune and the local authorities will eventually lead to the abolition of the system.

The Yakou commune is an outstanding example of an alternative land tenure model, providing social protection of its members.<sup>6</sup> Yet, with rapidly-changing national and global economies, it faces greater uncertainties concerning the land and its agricultural future. Population growth is another threat to their current



level of livelihoods with fixed land and resources. Without wider societal support for improved efficiency and better governance in land resources management, the village leaders will no doubt face increasing pressure on how to sustain the commune system. Above all, the empowerment of the peasants in decision-making and institutional building has to be given more attention. An in-depth study of the commune can uncover more issues concerning rural land relations, with far-reaching implications for the understanding of collective and individual action in rural transformation as well as land tenure reform in China.

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### Notes

This article is based on author's fieldwork in Yakou Village in 2008. Participant observation and formal and informal interviews with peasants, the village committee and the local government were used during the fieldwork.

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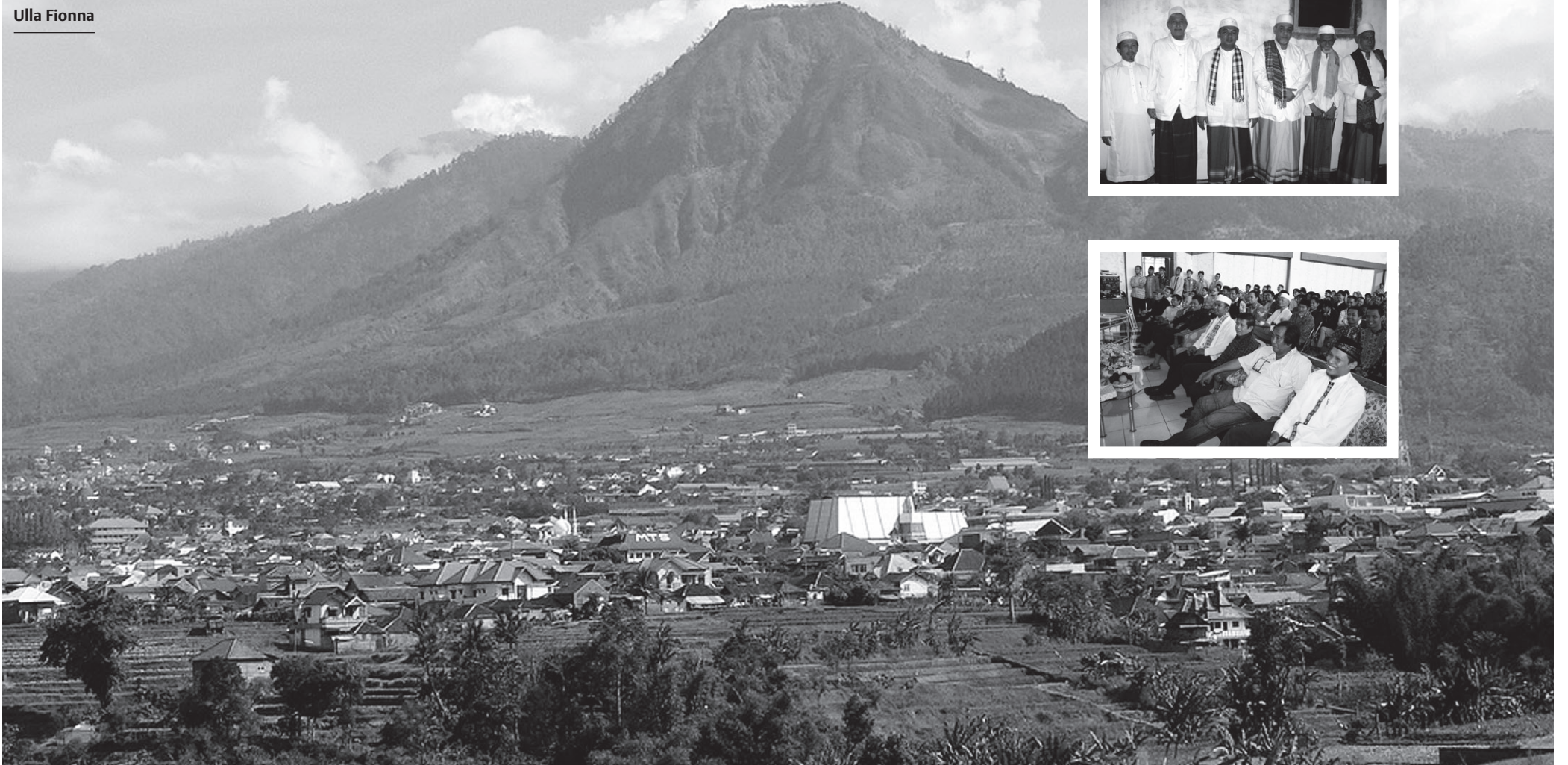


# Local party procedures

Field notes from Malang

Having decided to focus her PhD on Indonesian political parties at the grassroots, Ulla Fionna knew that fieldwork would be challenging. Her perceptions, based on parties from the New Order era, were that local branches usually disappeared after the party rallies and elections had taken place. Fionna had concerns about gaining contact and cooperation from party members, but decided to adopt an optimistic approach. Her notes offer useful insights to anyone about to embark on fieldwork and are sure to evoke memories of similar experiences in many others.

Ulla Fionna



EVEN WITH SUCH OPTIMISM, I decided it was important to be as prepared as possible before I flew to Indonesia. A stroke of luck revealed that an old high school friend is now on Megawati's staff (*staff ahli*), and I decided to shamelessly exploit the opportunity and contact him for the first time in 12 years. Luckily he was helpful and supportive and assisted me not only in getting formal permission for my research on the Indonesian Democratic Party Struggle (PDIP), but also by putting me in touch with two other parties which were to be the subject of my study – Partai Golkar and PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*/Prosperous Justice Party). I had to find other avenues to contact PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional*). At this point, however, I decided that contacts for three parties was a good enough and flew to Indonesia.

It turned out that permission from the PDIP was not only the easiest but also the fastest to obtain – full credit for which should be given to my long lost high school friend. As for the PKS, after calling its provincial office I was advised that because my research was going to be conducted in Malang I should contact these branches directly. The *kodya* (municipal) office asked me to produce a letter from my university, after which permission was received within a few days. When the same thing happened at the PKS *kabupaten* (district) office I felt I was on a roll, however, my luck with the party branches had just run out.

## Battling bureaucracy

Although Partai Golkar was easy enough to find, and the *kodya* office was actually located near to my grandmother's Malang house, they were adamant that I had to seek research permission from the central office in Jakarta. With the *kodya* office insisting that this was the proper procedure, but providing little help to put me in touch with the Jakarta office, I ended up making tens of calls to my Partai Golkar contact in the capital. Since nobody seemed to know who had the authority to grant research permission, my request was tossed around from one person to another. Before I knew it, *Ramadhan* (fasting month) and the feast of *Lebaran* (*Idul Fitri*) were upon us and I simply had to stop hassling people about this matter. I eventually

received permission in December, about five months after my initial request to Partai Golkar. Remembering the words of the *kodya* office, I did not bother to contact its *kabupaten* office, thinking that I would find myself repeating the whole procedure again. The irony is that once started work, I discovered that the *kabupaten* office had adopted a different policy. They told me that I could have started my research at *kabupaten* level much sooner, since the office provided the permission locally!

My experience with PAN was even more interesting. After contacting its central office, I was told that I need to get the permission locally. A search for the branch office ensued. Finding a physical office proved to be a challenge. Offices for which addresses were given by the central office were empty and padlocked – although party signage was evident. It was only by asking the PDIP personnel that I got the idea of looking for PAN cadres at the local Malang assembly's office (*kantor DPRD kodya Malang*). When I finally found them, they informed me that they were looking for a new *kontrakan* (place for rent), as the lease on the old one had expired.

The *kabupaten* office was a one-man show. The office secretary (who months later was elected chairman) took care of everything. This included surrendering his house to be used as a party office, handling all enquiries and at the same time looking for a new office for the branch. He was extremely helpful and not only granted permission promptly but promised to contact me to let me know when the cadres would come together for a meeting, so that I wouldn't have to travel all over – a much-appreciated gesture given that many places were more than two hours drive away and some of the villages were flooded at the time.

My interaction with the *kodya* office, however, was much more complicated. My PAN *kodya* contact was really hard to meet, (he was not always at the local assembly's office), and he only occasionally answered his mobile phone. Eventually he did take my call, only to tell me that I had to wait until after *Lebaran* for my request. Understanding how important *Lebaran* is to most

people, I waited patiently until the festivities had finished only to be frustrated again. When I called him, he told me that the paperwork had been lost because they didn't have an office and so I would have to resubmit my request. Adding insult to injury he then informed me that he was no longer in charge of this matter and I had to contact someone else. The one silver lining to all this was that a new office had been found and so at least I no longer had to roam around the halls of the local assembly looking for PAN cadres. I decided to visit the new person in charge at his residence in order to make sure my request was not lost again. After a long drawn out process I was finally granted permission for my research on PAN.

I can conclude that reform-era parties differ from their New Order counterparts. They are more active in general and they don't disappear after elections. However, my interaction with them indicates that, at least for some of parties, local organisation is in dire need of improvement. Their management is erratic and their personnel are at times reluctant to handle party matters. This attitude is perhaps understandable given that for most of them party activities are voluntary and come second to their regular jobs. However, efficiency in handling external requests reflects the state of their organisation, and my experiences suggest that they need to shape up badly.

Dealing with local parties demands an extremely open mind. Most of the parties are still young, and they are still learning about local management and organisation. Even among the incumbent parties such as Partai Golkar, different branches might have different policies. My advice to any researcher wanting to take the same path as I did is to be prepared for surprises along the way but not to be disheartened. After all, the parties are well worth the trouble and they make a fascinating research subject.

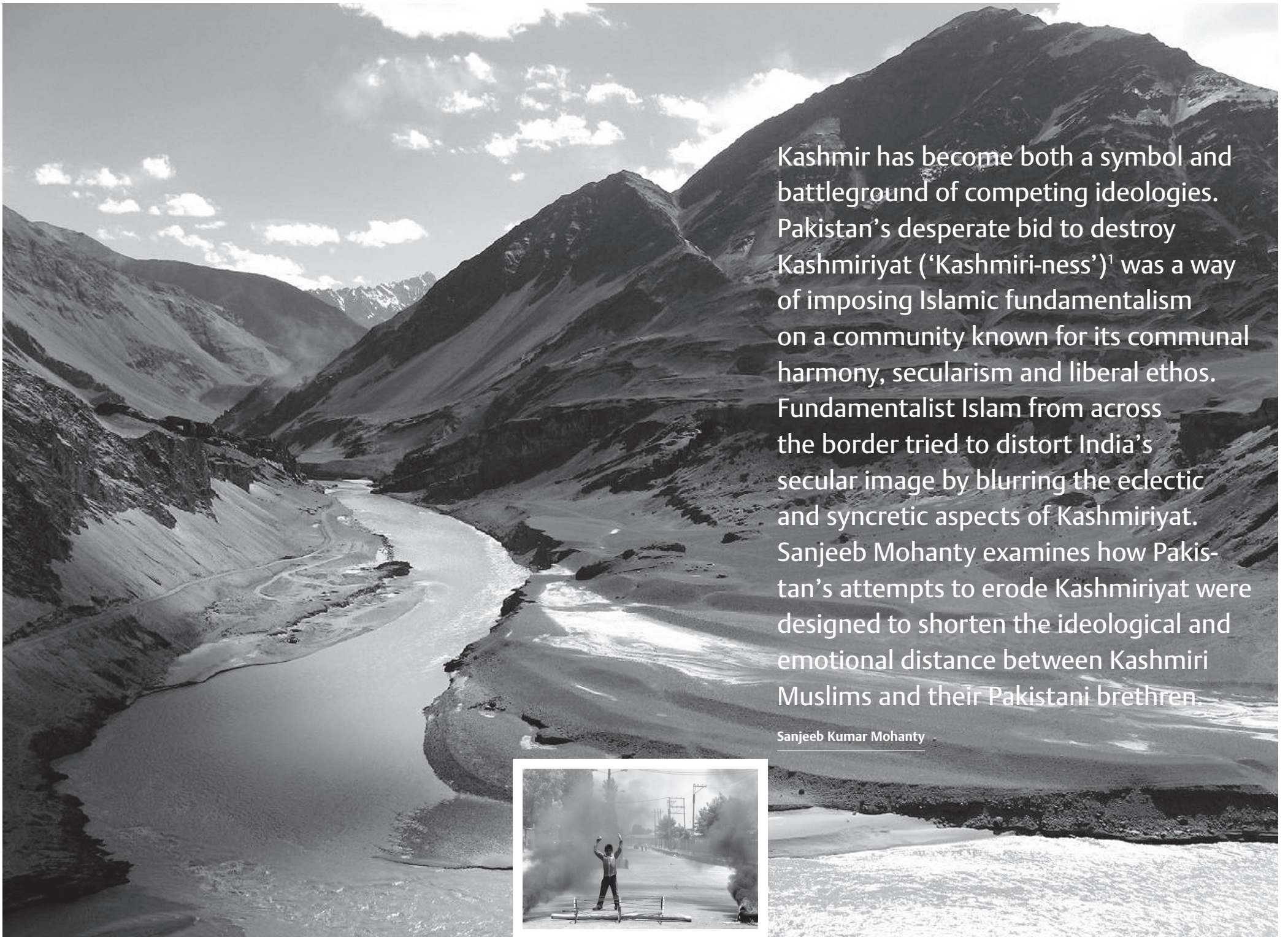
*Dealing with local parties demands an extremely open mind. Most of the parties are still young, and they are still learning about local management and organisation.*

INSET TOP:  
Members of Islamic PKS (Prosperous Justice Party) in Malang. Photograph courtesy of author.  
INSET MIDDLE:  
Religious leaders in Malang. Photograph courtesy of author  
INSET BELOW:  
Members of PKS at a mayoral rally in Malang. Photograph courtesy of author.

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# Eroding Kashmiriyat



Kashmir has become both a symbol and battleground of competing ideologies. Pakistan's desperate bid to destroy Kashmiriyat ('Kashmiri-ness')<sup>1</sup> was a way of imposing Islamic fundamentalism on a community known for its communal harmony, secularism and liberal ethos. Fundamentalist Islam from across the border tried to distort India's secular image by blurring the eclectic and syncretic aspects of Kashmiriyat. Sanjeeb Mohanty examines how Pakistan's attempts to erode Kashmiriyat were designed to shorten the ideological and emotional distance between Kashmiri Muslims and their Pakistani brethren.

Sanjeeb Kumar Mohanty



*In India, we have seen Islamic fundamentalism's most ugly face in Kashmir where a violent secessionist movement has been engineered by Muslim radicals supported by Pakistan.*

PAKISTAN'S VIEW OF INDIA through the prism of bigoted Islam has been guided by its communal and non-secular mindset. This mindset questions the reality of Kashmiriyat (the ethno-cultural identity and values of Kashmiris). The challenge from Pakistan has essentially been related to Kashmir's ethno-cultural assertion in a plural society. Pakistan has achieved considerable success in transforming the nature of Islam in Jammu and Kashmir, from a more tolerant Sufi kind into something more Arab Sunni in character. This was necessary for sustaining militancy in the state, and to mobilise Kashmiri sentiment in favour of Pakistan and away from political forces supporting independence. However, the effort to change the nature of Islam in the valley was also intended to make the resolution of the political problem of Jammu and Kashmir still more difficult. Pakistan's aim of grabbing Kashmir has remained constant but the manner of doing so has been changing from military to militancy. The Pakistani backed separatists tried all possible means to break Kashmir's connection with India by tearing apart the fabric of Kashmiriyat tradition. The on-going conflict in Kashmir has deeply affected this centuries-old Sufi-Sant thesis of the brotherhood of man.

In fact, centrality of Islam as the basis of its ideological belief created this problem in Pakistan. The late 1980s saw the seeds of Islamic fundamentalism taking root in the valley as a sequel to the late Zia-ul-Haq's seminal strategy to incite the locals into militancy so that Kashmir would be on fire from within. Since the 1970s, Islamabad has been training Sikh and other Indian separatist movements as part of the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's strategy of 'forward strategic depth'<sup>2</sup> and also as a part of its effort to avenge its 1971 defeat and bifurcation. By 1983, Zia's preparation for covert operation against India, first in Punjab and subsequently in Kashmir was ready. Zia believed that the Kashmir dispute would be solved 'within the context of an Islamic government in Afghanistan, a struggle in Kashmir and an uprising in Punjab'.<sup>3</sup> However, the 1971 Bangladesh war set the tone for Pakistan's long-term strategy to bring about mass insurrection in the valley through propagation of 'Islamic brotherhood' as against the prevailing notion of Kashmiriyat. The initial unrest got turned into a mass uprising, led by fundamentalist Muslims, by the end of 1990.

**ABOVE INSET:**  
A child in Indian-administered Kashmir. Photograph by Abid Bhat.

**LEFT:** High alert status: Kashmiri Muslim school girls walk past Indian paramilitary soldiers in Srinagar. Picture courtesy of EPA.



### Secular identity vs. Islamic identity

Indeed, Kashmir was the only area in India where, as of the mid-1980s, Islamic revivalism had taken a radical political stance and where the slogans of the Islamic state have been publicly raised and received with growing popularity. There was a marked erosion of the secular Kashmiri personality and a Muslim identity with fundamentalist overtones started emerging rapidly. Therefore, it also became imperative for emerging separatist leaders to give the struggle a pan-Islamic character.<sup>4</sup> Syed Ali Shah Gilani of the Jammata-e-Islami of Kashmir, a prominent secessionist leader, openly supported the idea of Islamic brotherhood and his pan-Islamism was based on the concept of *Ummah* (unity based on Islamic solidarity).

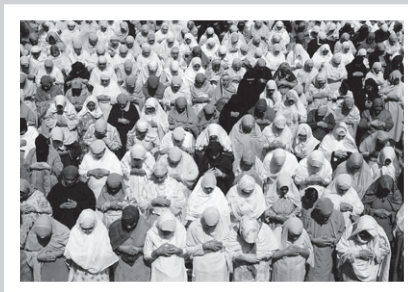
During the first phase of militancy which started in 1989, the Pakistani-backed Islamist militant groups tried to bring 'structural changes at cultural levels of Kashmiri society',<sup>5</sup> in an effort to Islamicise the socio-political set up in the valley. The Islamist orientation of insurgency became more pronounced with the forced displacement of Hindu Kashmiri Pundits, which impacted the socio-cultural set up and secular polity of Kashmir. Pakistani sponsored Islamists had a clear objective to cleanse the state of non-Muslim minorities. Their other aim was to eliminate the traditional social and religious practices of Kashmir Muslims, who trace their origins to Kashmiriyat. By the end of 1990, the issue of Islamic brotherhood had fetched increased international support particularly from Islamic countries. General Zia did not want to see that the resistance in Jammu and Kashmir to New Delhi's rule should acquire a credible secular edge. So, he played the Muslim card to distort the secular image of India. India, on the other hand, has been emphasising that Pakistan is fanning controversy in Jammu and Kashmir merely because it has an ideological bias against secular politics.

### From soft Sufi to radical Islam

Pakistan tried to indoctrinate the gullible masses in Kashmir with selected discourses on radical Islam as opposed to the tolerant facets of Islam represented by Sufism. Since Sufism preached universal brotherhood, irrespective of creed, faith or temporal denomination, the hardcore Islamists from Pakistan overturned everything that soft Sufi (liberal Islam) stood for. Indian Islam, in fact, has its own indigenous flavour and it finds its best expression in the Sufi way of life in the Kashmir valley. Kashmir Islam is renowned for its commitment to tolerance of all streams of thought. To many Kashmiris, Kashmiriyat embodies religious and social harmony and brotherhood. The syncretic aspect of Kashmiriyat has been a gift of Rishi-Sufi order, which is an expression of Hindu-Muslim solidarity and religious harmony.

Pakistan's policy makers initially tried to prolong the conflict in Kashmir, terrorise the minorities and taint the Kashmir freedom struggle with communal colour, but did not try to dislodge India from the state. Their immediate plans were designed to buy time for a long-term strategy and the crux of this strategy has been to undermine the forces of Kashmiriyat, by dividing them and depriving them of their religious underpinnings. Indirectly, Pakistan employed dreadful coercive methods to blur the 'ethno-religious identity of Kashmir',<sup>6</sup> and substitute the Islamic identity enveloped in Rishi (analogous to Sufi order) traditions with a militant and violent Muslim identity. Pakistan's planners have shown a greater sensitivity to the contradictions between the Kashmiri-Sufi Islam and Pakistan's dominant Sunni version. They were also aware that the fear of imposition of Sunni Islam on them is what makes most Kashmiris stay clear of Pakistan. So Pakistan's long-term strategy during the first half of the 1990s was to eliminate this confrontation by absorbing Kashmir's special brand of Islam into the larger pan-Islamic Sunni tradition.<sup>7</sup> Islamic fundamentalism from Pakistan negates Sufism and has tried in the past to wipe out Sufi orders through mayhem and religious persecution. Pakistan's Wahhabi fundamentalists are anti-Sufi. Their argument is that the Sufi way is an impure way and their practices are non-Arabic. The Wahhabi practices, on the other hand, are purely Islamic. It is for this reason that the fundamentalists portrayed Sufism as an impure importation into Islam, not falling within the ambit of the fundamentals of original Islam.<sup>8</sup>

Historically, the leaders of the Kashmiri independence movement, including Sheikh Abdullah, never wanted a merger with Pakistan. Their movement was fuelled by the desire to preserve Kashmiriyat, their special ethno-cultural identity and way of life. The Kashmiri Pundits feel that the Kashmiriyat and Rishi cultures of Kashmir have been shattered into pieces by



Islamic fundamentalism, aided and abetted by Pakistan. Pan-Islamic fundamentalism still continues to pose a serious threat to Kashmiri nationalism. Pakistan felt that the division of Jammu and Kashmir along communal lines will strengthen the sentiments of Muslim solidarity which can then be used to undermine Kashmiriyat. In fact, 'lack of adequate support by secular national parties to the genuine aspirations of the region helped this process of communalization.'<sup>9</sup> Eventually, Kashmiri separatism and Hindu communalism in Jammu and elsewhere reinforced each other to the advantage of Pakistan, which saw the militancy in Jammu and Kashmir as jihad. Hence, both material and moral support is provided by Pakistan through the emergence of what may be described as a militant pan-Islamic jihad. Pakistan entered the scene with its theory of Islamic brotherhood and forced Kashmiri Muslims to abjure the idea of the brotherhood of man. Pakistan's message was 'love your neighbour more than your brother',<sup>10</sup> which was followed in letter and spirit during the phase of insurgency. Moreover, systematic attempts have been made by Pakistan to introduce the ideology of fundamental Islam from outside, an ideology that is alien to the culture of Muslim saints which flourished at the beginning of the 15th century. Sufism was supplanted by radical Islam. For the infiltrators from across the border, religion was merely a tool to exploit the susceptibilities of the masses and to tear apart the socio-cultural fabric of Hindu-Muslim unity.

### Strong syncretic factor

In spite of the Pakistani game plan, Kashmiriyat, the composite culture with glorious traditions of communal amity, tolerance and compassion is still flourishing. Pakistani mercenaries were under the impression that the selective killing of Hindus and Sikhs in the state would help their cause, and give a devastating blow to the secular image of India. The onset of militancy in Kashmir from 1989 led to the mass exodus of Hindu Pundits from the valley and the violent attacks against the remaining communities was an attempt by the militants to erode the fabric of Kashmiriyat. Kashmir's Muslims had faced the gravest challenge to their secular ethos following partition. Their deep commitment to tolerance and secularism emanates from composite Hindu-Muslim culture which Pakistan tried

to weaken during the insurgency phase in Kashmir. In fact, during the insurgency phase, secular India faced a unique challenge in tackling the influence of radical Islam in the Kashmir valley. But, even during the worst days of a traumatised Kashmir society, faith in this composite syncretic aspect remained unchallenged.

The advent of Islam in Kashmir gave birth to inter-sectarian conflict, religious conversion and separatism. Fundamental Islam does not permit its followers to forge links with any country and its culture. Pakistan, unfortunately, subscribes to this idea. During the insurgency, India was not fighting a war in Kashmir, but here, a purely domestic uprising was turned into a low-intensity conflict by Pakistan through training, equipping, financing, supplying manpower and encouraging cross-border terrorism in the name of Islam. There was, of course, within the militant movement, a 'strong pro-Pakistani Islamic current'.<sup>11</sup> Having designated Islam as a creed that was potent enough to challenge the communist thrust into Afghanistan, it became necessary to promote the combative and aggressive aspects of the faith (Islam) on the part of Pakistan, and India had to bear a major brunt of it in Kashmir.<sup>12</sup> In India, we have seen Islamic fundamentalism's most ugly face in Kashmir where a violent secessionist movement has been engineered by Muslim radicals supported by Pakistan. This is the biggest legacy of General Zia who wanted to make Pakistan the centre of worldwide Islamic resurgence and who brought the Islamic parties to the centre stage.

### Conclusion

Pakistan has, all along, tested tolerance by attempting to weaken the syncretic aspect of Kashmiriyat. Pakistan must realise that in the ongoing struggle between secularism and fundamentalism, the former is always the winner, since the faith in the socio-cultural fabric of Hindu-Muslim unity in Jammu and Kashmir shall remain unchallenged. We must not see the conflict in the state as being between Hindus and Muslims, but as between national and anti-national forces. Islam in India is much more syncretic than elsewhere. This inclusivist tendency has been prevalent since the pre-colonial period of Mughal rule in India. At a time when radical Islamic ideologies are trying to gain the upper hand across the world, Indian Muslims have shown their deep commitment to the secular ideal. The Pakistani strategy during the insurgency phase was to create social and communal disorder and thereby weaken the secular base of communal amity. In fact, Pakistan was under the impression that Kashmiriyat had no psychic roots in the state, except in the plural reverence for other religions. This illusion prompted Pakistan to transplant its fundamentalist ideology to combat the liberal Hindu ideal of brotherhood of man which emanates from the philosophy of '*sarvadharmasambhava*'.<sup>13</sup>

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### Notes

1. Kashmiriyat is the ethno-national and social consciousness and cultural values of the Kashmiri people. Emerging approximately around the 16th century, it is characterised by religious and cultural harmony, patriotism and pride for their mountainous homeland of Kashmir. The tradition of *Kashmiriyat* has been deeply affected by the ongoing Kashmir conflict and by communal violence between Muslims and Hindus (Source – Wikipedia).
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12. Editorial, 'A Frankenstein', *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 9 March, 1995.
13. Literally meaning that all Dharmas (truths) are equal to or harmonious with each other.

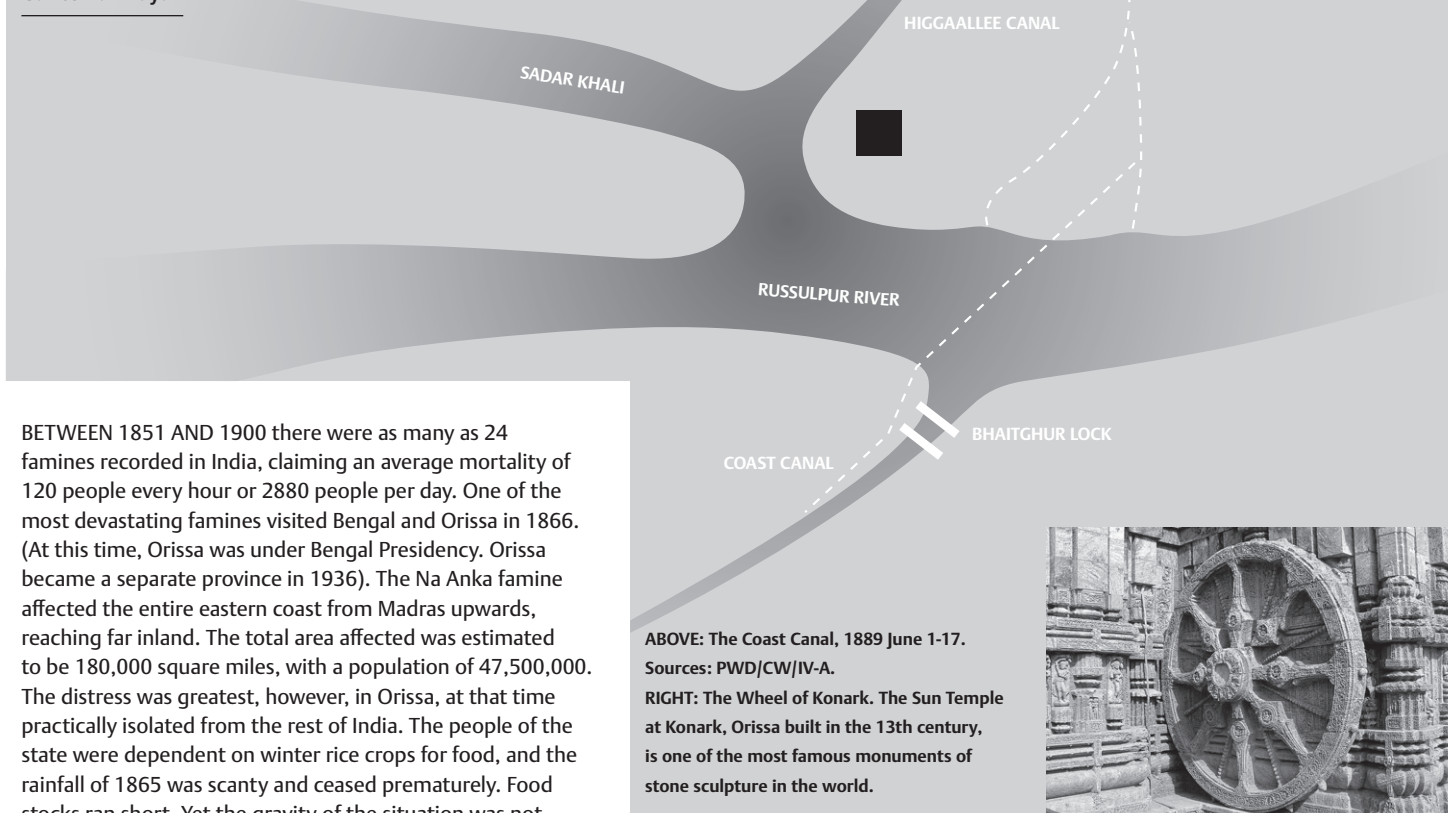
TOP:  
The Azad Kashmir Regiment, one of six infantry regiments of the Pakistan Army.  
MIDDLE:  
Kashmiri Muslim women lower their heads during prayers at Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar, Kashmir, India. Photograph by Abid Bhat.  
BOTTOM:  
Mother and her children in refugee camp in Kashmir.



# The Orissa famine of 1866

Famine dominates the pages of Indian economic history. In 1866 one of the most devastating famines – known as the *Na Anka* famine – visited Orissa, killing a third of its population. Subsequently, a Famine Commission was formed and its recommendations constitute an important milestone in the economic history of Orissa. The development of roads, railways, ports and navigable irrigation canals became a priority. Ganeswar Nayak argues that this focus on transport and communication in colonial Orissa was the precursor for the province's socio-economic transformation.

Ganeswar Nayak



BETWEEN 1851 AND 1900 there were as many as 24 famines recorded in India, claiming an average mortality of 120 people every hour or 2880 people per day. One of the most devastating famines visited Bengal and Orissa in 1866. (At this time, Orissa was under Bengal Presidency. Orissa became a separate province in 1936). The *Na Anka* famine affected the entire eastern coast from Madras upwards, reaching far inland. The total area affected was estimated to be 180,000 square miles, with a population of 47,500,000. The distress was greatest, however, in Orissa, at that time practically isolated from the rest of India. The people of the state were dependent on winter rice crops for food, and the rainfall of 1865 was scanty and ceased prematurely. Food stocks ran short. Yet the gravity of the situation was not realised by the Government which underestimated the size of the population requiring food. The reality of the situation was eventually grasped at the end of May 1865, and then the monsoon set in. Transport by sea was extremely difficult, and even when grain reached the coast it could not be transported to effected parts of the country. At great cost, some 10,000 tons of rice was imported, but this did not reach the people until September. Meanwhile the mortality rates soared. At least a million people died in Orissa alone.

Orissa's troubles did not cease in 1866. Heavy rains that year caused flooding which destroyed rice crops. When relief operations eventually kicked in they were characterised by profusion and an unprecedented absence of checks. Altogether about 40,000 tons of rice was imported. Even the most generous use could not dispose of half of this; and while it cost four times the usual price to procure the residue had to be sold for almost nothing when the monsoon of 1867, followed by an usually fine harvest, put an end to the famine in 1868. In two years about 35,000,000 units were distributed to the people on the eastern coast, at a cost of 95 lakhs (just over US\$200,000), two thirds of which was used to cover the expense of importing grain. Adding together the loss of revenue in all departments, the famine in Orissa was said to have cost about 1.5 crores (US\$10.5 million).

## The Famine Commission of 1866

An inquiry was ordered into the catastrophe and a commission was appointed in December 1866. It consisted of George Campbell, (then a High Court judge, later to become Lieutenant-Governor General of Bengal), as President, and Colonel W.E. Morton and H.L. Dampier as members. They were instructed to report on the causes, circumstances and extent of the famine and to recommend corrective measures as far as possible against the recurrence of a similar catastrophe. The Orissa Famine Commission submitted its report on 6th April 1867. On 2nd August, Sir Stafford Henry Northcote, Secretary of State for India, winding up a debate on the famine in the House of Commons said:

*"This catastrophe must always remain a monument of our failure, a humiliation to the people of this country, to the Government of this country and to those of our Indian officials of whom we had perhaps been a little too proud. At the same time, we must hope that we might derive from it lessons which might be of real value to ourselves, and that out of this deplorable evil good of no insignificant kind might ultimately arise."*

ABOVE: The Coast Canal, 1889 June 1-17.

Sources: PWD/CW/IV-A.

RIGHT: The Wheel of Konark. The Sun Temple at Konark, Orissa built in the 13th century, is one of the most famous monuments of stone sculpture in the world.

## The recommendations

The Famine Commission of 1866 directed attention to the state of communications in Orissa. It recommended measures to improve the means of communication not only as insurance against famine but also for the resurgence of Orissa's economy. The commission's report constituted an important landmark in the economic history of Orissa. It acknowledged how isolated the state was from the rest of the world; how inaccessible it was to trade, and what the terrible consequences of this inaccessibility could be during famine. With these facts in mind, the commission suggested the early execution of a trunk road from Calcutta to Cuttack. Further, it recommended steps to make irrigation canals, such as the Kendrapara canal, navigable and the development of several ports.

## Roads

Before the outbreak of famine in 1866, there were just over 99 miles of unmetalled roads in Balasore District. In Cuttack District, there were 80 miles of district roads; and in Puri District 74 miles. The Commission gave the utmost priority to the development of roads in Orissa, recommending that imperial and local roads be surveyed as early as possible and funds be assigned for their maintenance and repair. In the post-famine period, some important provincial roads (connecting one province to another) were developed, the most important of which – from a commercial and administrative perspective – was the Cuttack Trunk Road which lies partly in Balasore and partly in Cuttack and runs across eight major rivers.

After 1887, it was the turn of Orissa's district roads to receive attention. The District Boards of Cuttack, Balasore and Puri were constituted and assumed responsibility for the construction, repair and maintenance of all classified roads. In 1912 Orissa had 80 miles of metal roads, 856 miles of unmetalled roads and 698 village roads. By 1933, just prior to becoming a separate province, Orissa had 664 miles of metal roads and 1652 miles of unmetalled roads.

## Railways

The development of the railways was undoubtedly a milestone in the economic history of Orissa, but this did not come immediately after the famine of 1866. It is noteworthy that the Famine Commission emphasised the need to develop roads, ports, inland navigation and post and telegraph rather than railways.

In fact, the province of Orissa had to wait until April 1887 for any significant progress on this front. Then, the Bengal Nagpur Railway company (BNR) was awarded the contract for the construction of railways in Orissa. By the time a detailed survey of the line from Cuttack to Calcutta had been ordered five years later, in November 1892, 360 miles of extension to the tracks had been completed.

One of the first, and most important, fruits of this labour was the role the railways played in distributing food. Although the construction of the railways acted as a potent factor in the decline of maritime trade, this was arguably countered by the stimulus it provided to agriculture production. Moreover, by directly connecting

Calcutta with Madras, the railways enabled people to go further afield for education and employment. In short, the development of the railways was key to the political, social and economic transformation of Orissa.

## Ports

Orissa has just over 260 miles of coast line, dotted with numerous ports. However, the absence of a good port with protected anchorage was clearly a factor in the 1866 famine. Quite simply, Orissa's ports were not suitable for use. In the rainy season steamers were unable to land cargo on the surf-beaten shore. So the rice could not be imported in large scale through the ports of Orissa to provide relief to the famine stricken people. Ports were of little use when exposed to bad weather or any kind of emergency. Furthermore, they were inaccessible to the standard type of European vessel as they offered no protected anchorage of any kind.

Following the 1866 famine, a number of ports were developed. In fact, False Point, in Cuttack District, was eventually considered to be the best harbour along the entire coast of India. This investment not only stimulated trade and commerce but also opened up communications with the outside world. It should be noted, however, that the introduction of the railways saw Orissa's ports go into decline.

## Inland navigation

The Famine Commission also recommended making Orissa's irrigation canals navigable. It warned the government of the urgent need to complete construction of the Kendrapara Canal, as a means of providing irrigation to a large tract of the countryside and a much needed communication link between Cuttack and the Bay of Bengal. As a result, a number of canals and waterways were developed in Orissa, including the important Coast Canal which connected the river Hooghly at Goenkali (45 miles from Calcutta) with Matai at Charbatia. It ran along the seaface at a distance varying between two to ten miles from the coast. Its length in Orissa was 92 miles. The canal was partially opened for traffic in 1885 and completely in 1887. Its estimated cost was Rs. 44,74,941 (about \$US95,300). Its construction was undertaken both as a valuable insurance in times of famine and as a lucrative trade route. In fact, it was anticipated that all the import and export trade of Orissa could pass along this canal, yielding revenue of over Rs.2.5 lakh (about \$US5,300) per annum. By the end of 1929 Orissa had 205 miles of navigable inland waterways, which meant 205 miles of communication. As with the ports, however, inland navigation declined in Orissa with the coming of the railways.

## Conclusion

The roads, railways, ports and navigable canals constructed in the post-1866 famine period in Orissa brought an end to the state's geographical isolation. Export and import trade received new impetus and the fact that Cuttack was now only about a 12 hour journey from Calcutta had a salutary influence on the consciousness of the people of Orissa. Changes in transport and communication provided not only for the material development of the population but also for their intellectual development, as people travelled outside of the province for studies and business. However, there were also less favourable side effects. Increased communication and trade links allowed for an influx of foreign products into rural areas. This was to be the death-knell of indigenous industries. The salt, leather, and silk industries in Orissa all but disappeared. Poverty and lack of industrial progress compelled many to migrate to different parts of Bengal. That said, the net result was that these developments provided security against another famine by facilitating mobility of labour and importation of food.

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# International student mobility

Most of what is written on the mobility of international students focuses on two particular topics: the means by which 'providers' access the 'market' and assure themselves a flow of paying clients; and the ways in which they may or may not be encouraged to accommodate themselves to what may be different styles of learning. Nicholas Tarling believes these topics would surely be better tackled in a wider context, and there are many others also worthy of research. One possible approach, he argues, is historical.

Nicholas Tarling

PEOPLE HAVE LONG TRAVELLED in order to pursue advanced study, in Asia as well as in Europe, for personal or professional reasons or both. Students in medieval Europe were, as Charles Haskins put it, 'singularly mobile and singularly international'<sup>1</sup>

With the major changes of the 19th century – the creation of nation-states and the advent of the industrial revolution – universities took on a wider range of disciplines and obligations. The 19th century also expanded the gap between the 'Western' states and the 'traditional' states in Asia and Africa, and many of the latter fell under colonial or pseudo-colonial control. Gaining the 'knowledge' that appeared to have contributed to that outcome was a motive among non-Europeans for securing a western university education, which initially at least could be done only by travelling, though not only to the West: Chinese and Vietnamese went to Japan, which, starting to modernise, had itself sent students to Europe and the US. In 1906, Japan was the host of 15,000 Chinese students, 8,000 of them on scholarships.<sup>2</sup>

Globalisation – which may be seen as an intensification of the 19th century changes – promoted a dramatic expansion of demand in the last third of the 20th century, and right at its close from the most populous country of all, China, when it adopted more of a capitalist and individualist road to modernisation. In 1979-80 1,000 Chinese students studied in the US, 20 years later, 60,000.<sup>3</sup>

## A 'pay-at-the-door' approach

Motivation must, however, be seen from another angle as well, that of the 'providers'. Medieval European universities certainly accepted students from other parts of Europe, even those outside the Holy Roman Empire, as Haskins says, dividing them into 'nations' or guilds. No doubt one motive was the desire to advance scholarship, and probably, too, pride in achievements both individual and institutional (still a powerful motive). Was there also a monetary motive? There was a pay-at-the-door approach, though the sums were not large, nor driven by the need for buildings and equipment.

A sense of imperial obligation was something of a motivating force from the late 19th century. Students from other parts of the Empire were welcomed in Britain, though they were a relatively small number even in the then rather small university system. With the breaking-down of such formal structures as the Empire had, and the emergence of more and more independent member states, education seemed to be both a means of helping the new countries get on their feet and a means of holding the new Commonwealth together.

More generally, aid was seen as promoting 'stability' in the post-1945 world and also of fighting the Cold War that developed from 1946 onwards. In 1945, Senator William Fulbright introduced his famous bill in Congress: countries would be allowed to retain surplus US war equipment and buildings in exchange for contributing to a local educational programme. It began in Burma, and was amplified by the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which allowed for bringing students to the States.<sup>4</sup> The Colombo Plan of 1950 is perhaps remembered above all for its provision of scholarships, a feature of this period, though that was not initially its chief purpose.



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By the end of the 20th century, scholarships played only a small part in the international mobility of students. Elements in 'developing' countries were sufficiently wealthy to pay for or 'purchase' education overseas, and 'developed' countries saw reasons for selling it to them. The movement was associated with the concept of education as a 'commodity' to be bought, sold and traded in a market and with an ideology that (over) stressed that at tertiary level it became a 'private' good more than a 'public' one. But how did these associations develop?

Two countries have so far been the focus of research at the New Zealand Asia Institute. One is the UK. Our present conclusion is that decisions were made more on the basis of pragmatism than theory. The university and further education systems came under pressure from increasing demand at home and abroad at a time when Britain was in economic decline. Something had to give.

## Public rather than private

The systems were essentially public rather than private, sustained by substantial grants from the Treasury, delivered through the University Grants Committee, or by local education authorities. Foreign students from developing countries were aided by full scholarships, under the Colombo Plan or otherwise, or by tuition fee scholarships administered by the British Council. But another, far greater source of aid, was indirect. Private students could also enrol, and, until 1967, they paid the domestic fee. And that covered only a relatively small proportion of the full cost of tuition. It was primarily in order to make savings that the Wilson government introduced a differential fee in 1967: overseas students would pay £250, as against an average domestic fee of £70. They would still be 'heavily subsidised'.<sup>5</sup>

The move, however, was seen as 'discrimination', and attracted much criticism. The £250 was raised once or twice in subsequent years, but not by as much as inflation. But the Labour government that had taken over in February 1974 was to face a major economic crisis. By 1976 the Government's search for savings covered spending departments like education, and a very substantial increase in the fees for overseas students ensued. The fees for domestic students increased even more substantially, however, so that the differential was reduced to £100, further diminished by the decline in the value of the pound.<sup>6</sup>

The Conservative government under Mrs Thatcher, elected in May 1979, decided as part of urgent cuts in expenditure, to increase overseas fees for 1979/80 by 20% on top of a 9% increase Labour had announced.<sup>7</sup> Then, in November, it promulgated its full-fee policy.<sup>8</sup> New overseas students – but not EEC students – would pay the full cost of their courses from the start of the 1980/1 year. At the same time, the grants to institutions were reduced, making it necessary for them to recruit overseas students at the new fee levels. It was through this that they were drawn into the 'market'.

The full-fee policy was initially a regulative measure, the aim of which seemed to be to curb the influx, but it quite quickly became one, as Alan Smith and others put it, 'of even encouraging the influx provided that the students concerned pay'.<sup>9</sup> Ideology seemed to play no more than a supporting role.

The other country NZAI has investigated is, of course, New Zealand.<sup>10</sup> Alongside those on Colombo and other scholarship programmes, it accepted private students from the Colombo Plan area as well as the South Pacific, paying the low domestic fee, and so, like those in the UK, in effect subsidised by the taxpayer. The largest group came from Malaysia to study commerce and engineering. Predominant among them were Chinese Malaysians, deprived by ethnic quotas in their homeland of the opportunity it was deemed necessary to offer Malays.

By the late 1960s, their numbers had grown, passing 5 or 6% of the then relatively small university rolls. The New Zealand University Grants Committee set up the Overseas Students Admissions Committee, to allocate private overseas students according to quotas specified by the universities, starting with the 1971 intake. The New Zealand government thus took a different course to the UK on this matter: a smaller system made it easier to introduce centrally-administered quotas.

In the late 1970s, affected by economic and budgetary crises, the government changed course. It imposed a special fee of NZ\$1500 on private overseas students. Its initial objective – influenced by UK precedents as well as its own necessities – was again to cut expenditure. NZ\$1500 was not the full cost of a year at the university, but it was about half, depending on the faculty. Prime minister, Robert Muldoon, spoke of the earnings it would bring. In fact, it further reduced numbers, but that, after all, saved money.

The reduction in numbers by these two measures, coupled with the slow growth in domestic numbers in the later 1970s, prompted some ministers to consider a further step, not unlike the British, the sale of 'spare' places at full-cost to students more or less from any country. That notion met a great deal of opposition. Education, it was argued, was not for sale. Within government and among bureaucrats the idea was contentious, and the necessary legislation had not been passed when the prime minister sought the dissolution of mid-1984.

The Labour government of the later 1980s first abolished the NZ\$1500 fee, and then, influenced by free-market ideology, opened up the whole education system to private full-fee paying students, and encouraged private entrepreneurs to enter the field. But it was not until the end of the 1990s, when Chinese students came in large numbers, that the full-cost venture showed its financial possibilities.

The other issue that attracts the Institute's interest relates not to origins but to impact. What effect does the movement have on the countries from which the students come, and on the institutions that receive them? In the past, returning students had – as some governments had feared – a major impact: they provided a source of revolutionaries in French Indo-China, in Netherlands India, in Siam/Thailand. Not much research seems to have been undertaken on the impact of the far larger number of students who studied overseas after the Second World War and returned home, a few notorious political cases aside, the Khmer Rouge leaders, for example.

Within institutions, while there are often large numbers of international students, they are distributed unevenly across the traditional faculties, the prime focus being on business and information technology. That may further emphasise the increasingly utilitarian nature of university study. It may also add to the difficulties of sustaining a university community, and enabling it to benefit from an internationalisation more genuine and generous than one focused surely too narrowly on numbers and dollars.

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TOP: King's College, Cambridge University.  
BOTTOM: Clock tower of University of Auckland.



# Bioethics and life science in Asia

Asia is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to research in the life sciences. Asian countries play a major role both in shaping international research practices and in the formulation of bioethical research regulation in the field of biomedical research and research applications, including stem cell research, genetic testing and screening, reproductive technologies and the banking of biological materials. Not only wealthy welfare societies such as Japan and Singapore but also large developing countries such as China and India, are strong global competitors at the forefront of biomedical research and biotech applications. These new fields of research, on the one hand, promise to yield revolutionary technologies and biomedical knowledge that could enhance the health and welfare of large patient populations, including diabetes, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. On the other hand, bioethical concerns have come about due to the novel and global nature of research in the life sciences and the application of resultant technologies in some regions where even the most basic healthcare is a scarce good.

Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner

IN MANY FIELDS HOWEVER, biomedical knowledge has indeed contributed to the ability of researchers and doctors to alleviate, what is regarded as, the genetic burden of population groups at risk of certain genetic syndromes including sickle cell disease and thalassaemia (see Patra p.22, Sui p.23). Furthermore, the ability to sample and store genetic data together with information on personal life style, disease history and environment, has contributed to new epidemiological insights into the aetiology of medical and genetic syndromes. Despite these benefits, the development of these new forms of research and its applications are accompanied by old and new social, financial, and political problems, some of which take on particular forms in Asia. These problems occur exactly as a result of using new diagnostic technologies and linking personal health data to people's genetic and biological make-up. Illustrative cases discussed in this special issue of the Newsletter relate to: the increasing need for therapies; social stigma; changing life values; the increased value of biological materials; the need for bioethical procedures; and international research collaboration.

### The 'therapeutic gap'

The growing ability and practice of diagnosing and predicting diseases, such as Huntington's Disease and various forms of cancer, makes it a moral imperative to provide genetic counselling and, if possible, therapy to patients diagnosed positive. For instance, in the case of genetically inherited syndromes such as sickle cell disease and thalassaemia, diagnosis should ideally be followed by therapy or medication. Where there is no or little access to healthcare facilities post-diagnosis, we speak of the 'therapeutic gap'. The widespread existence of the therapeutic gap places a moral question mark behind the not-well-thought-through application of diagnostic technologies on carrier populations. Another problem also associated with careless diagnostic applications is that of social stigma, discussed in this special issue by [Prasanna Patra](#) in connection with sickle cell screening in India, by [Suli Sui](#) in relation to thalassaemia in China and by [Masae Kato](#) in connection with amniocentesis in Japan. When it becomes known that members of certain communities or families have a high prevalence of a certain genetic syndrome, varyingly associated with impurity, sin and uncouth behaviour,

entire households run the risk of becoming ostracised by the community. In such cases, the blaming of women for producing unworthy offspring is especially widespread.

When predictive testing leads to abortion, this can lead to a change in life values. This development is illustrated in Masae Kato's case study of the women's and handicapped people's movements in Japan, relating how groups of disabled people feel discriminated against when the abortion of fetuses with 'their' handicap becomes normalised. They experience this as a degradation of their lives. While women in Japan may believe they choose for abortion, [Jyotsna Gupta's](#) study on prenatal testing in India shows how, although the possibility of having an abortion empowers women, they may have no choice other than to have an abortion when opposition exists to raising a girl or an 'imperfect' child. Another issue related to the valuation of human life is exemplified by [Suli Sui's](#) case study of thalassaemia, which shows how parents of children with this disorder in China feel about giving birth to a 'saviour sibling'. Such dilemmas raise questions about what life people find worth supporting, a question also answered differently within Asia, with its rich cultural, political and religious variety.

### Regulating bioethics

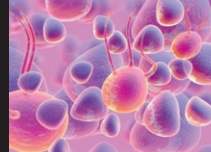
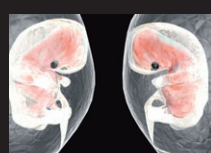
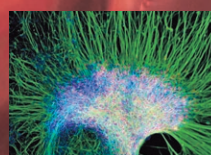
When life scientists started to collect, store and export biological materials from Asian countries on a large scale in the mid 1990s, including human tissues and DNA, the practice of taking people's samples became very controversial, after which its export has been regulated by Asian governments. At the same time, most Asian countries involved in the life sciences introduced bioethical regulation for sample taking to follow due ethical procedures, including informed consent. The taking and storing of biological materials, such as human DNA, reproductive materials, and umbilical cord blood, for the purpose of research or therapy, however, does not always take into account due procedure, as is shown by [Jan-Eerik Leppanen's](#) report of DNA sampling for the ethnic biobank in Kunming in Southwest China. An additional problem faced by developing countries, as shown by [Robert Simpson et al's](#) discussion of bioethical review in South Asia, is that the implementation

of bioethical procedures requires an institutional set up that can be expensive, labour intensive, and therefore hard to maintain.

The new developments of research and applications in the life sciences, then, are accompanied by a concern that new opportunities have come about for the exploitation of vulnerable people. This does not only refer to the use of or trade in human organs, genetic material, human tissues or information based on biomaterials, but also to the use of reproductive materials such as human ova, embryos and foetuses in human embryonic and foetal stem cell research. [Seyoung Hwang](#) and [Leo Kim](#) describe different aspects of the Hwang Woo-Suk scandal in South Korea that revealed how this well-known stem cell scientist used the ova of female laboratory assistants. Seyoung Hwang shows that the role of the public in discussions on bioethical regulation of stem cell science was hardly taken seriously in South Korea's quest to forge ahead in the field; and Leo Kim's account of a Parliamentary Life Science Research Forum illustrates how the 'global war' in stem cell science is emphasised over potential local harm.

Studies on bioethics in Asian societies indicate that life values are changing and vary from country to country. Together with the divergent ability of different countries to set up bioethics institutions, the variety in culture and development has far-reaching implications for the bioethical standards in international science collaborations, especially when countries with relatively permissive regulation become attractive to countries with relatively strict regulation. Contributing researchers of both the Socio-genetic Marginalisation in Asia Programme (SMAP), Leiden and the International Science and Bioethics Collaboration project (Cambridge, Durham and Sussex Universities) have tried to shed light on these implications, in the hope that bioethical problems will be duly acknowledged, recognised and addressed.

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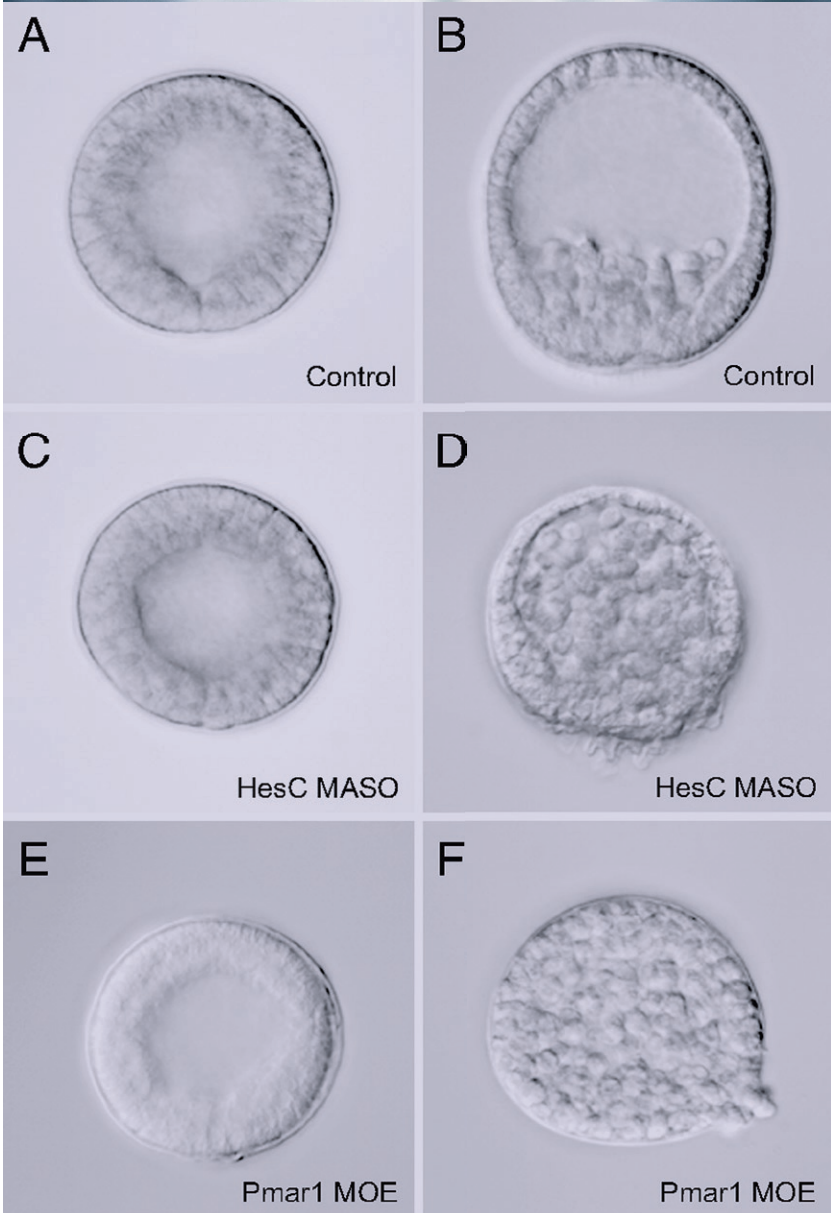




# Life without value? Voices of embryo donors for hESC research in China

Technoscientific projects feature high on the Chinese government's agenda. The decoding of the rice, chicken and most recently panda genomes have caught the attention of the media and the masses. A no less ambitious plan is the drive to establish China as a key force in human embryonic stem cell (hESC) research. While in the West hESC research has been slowed by ethical and legal debates, a highly permissive regulatory environment has been fostered in China. Achim Rosemann investigates how this corresponds to the perceptions of potential embryo donors.

Achim Rosemann



CHINESE AND OTHER EAST ASIAN political leaders have repeatedly pointed out that religion-based scruples such as those dominating Western debates on using human embryos in research do not exist in their societies (Sleeboom-Faulkner and Patra 2008). In China, to some extent at least, such ideas are reflected also among philosophers and bioethicists. According to Ren-zong Qiu (2007), for example, the Confucian-based view that a person comes into being only at the moment of birth, is still valid. The human embryo, from this perspective, is a betwixt and between entity. It is neither a person, with corresponding moral status, nor is it inanimate matter, without any moral status. For Qiu, therefore, the embryo is best described as a precursory person: a form of human biological life that deserves due respect. At the same time, however, it can be manipulated or destroyed if there is sufficient reason. From the perspective of Qiu and other bioethicists in China, such reason is amply justified by the huge therapeutic potential of hESC research.

A less philosophical explanation for the permissive regulatory approach to hESC research in China has been provided by a number of Western observers, who have linked the widespread support for hESC research to the one-child policy. Cookson (2005), for example, has assumed that as a result of the high number of abortions carried out during the last three decades in the context of the family planning policies, embryonic forms of human life are generally held to be of low value in China. Therefore, a permissive regulatory environment would be easily introduced.

A striking feature that unites these diverging assumptions is that they are formulated in the complete absence of those who are actually confronted with the decision to donate their embryos: women and couples undergoing IVF treatment. What value do these people ascribe to their embryos and what are the culturally mediated assumptions and concerns that impact their decision to refuse or accept donation of their embryos? These are the questions that I shall address here on the basis of data gathered during fieldwork conducted in February and March 2008 in two IVF clinics in South East and Central China, and on a survey carried out at that time among 74 patients of IVF clinics and a control group of 426 students from two universities in Central China. The survey included multiple choice and open-ended questions to which respondents could provide handwritten comments.

### Narratives of life, value and death

Research findings indicate that attitudes among embryo donors are much more varied and complex than the three perspectives introduced above suggest. The notion, for example, that ethical scruples regarding the use of human embryos do not exist in China cannot be upheld. Although the overwhelming majority of survey participants regarded hESC research as making meaningful contributions to medicine and science, only 45.7% of all respondents of the survey said they would actually agree to the donation of their embryos for hESC research, while 53.4% indicated that they would refuse to donate (0.9% were undecided).

Among this last group, 52.9% (28.8% of all respondents) rationalised their refusal by supporting the statement that 'using the embryo is the same as consuming a life' – an assertion that echoes one of the key complaints against hESC research in Western societies. The issue was qualified in several of the survey respondents' handwritten comments:

*"To donate an embryo to research is equal to killing a life. I think life cannot be destroyed casually".*  
(Student, Medicine, female, 25)

*"It is a moral matter. The embryo is also a life and has its right to live".* (Student, Medicine, male, 21)

An underlying reason for the widespread support of the notion that using an embryo for hESC research is equivalent to terminating a human life might be that the large majority of survey respondents conceive the starting point of the life of a human being to be located in the initial phase of embryogenesis. For instance, in reply to the question 'When do you think the life of a human being starts?' 56.8% of all respondents selected the option 'at the moment of fertilisation', while another 31.4% opted for 'when a fertilised egg cell has evolved to an embryo'. Only 6.9% of all respondents envisioned the starting point of the life of a human being to be situated at a later phase during gestation (3.3% opted for 'the development of the nerve system' and 3.6% for 'the development of organs') and only 3.9% endorsed the view that the life of a human being would start at the moment of birth (1.0% of the total were undecided).

These findings suggest that lines of ethical reasoning that depart from the Confucian idea that a person comes into existence only at the moment of birth do not correspond to the perceptions of the overwhelming majority of potential

embryo donors in China. Accordingly, ethical debates or regulations that are based on this view fall short in accounting for the actual perceptions and needs of the people confronted with the decision to donate their embryos. That perspectives on early forms of human life in China are much more complex than has been commonly suggested is confirmed also by Jing-bao Nie's (2005) study on the viewpoints of people in China on abortion, which arrives at quite similar conclusions.

### Assessing emotional consequences

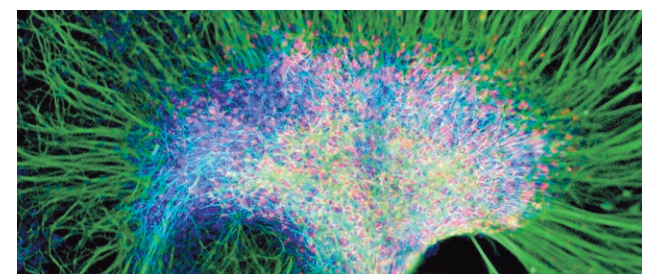
A more nuanced assessment of the subjective and embodied perspectives of the women confronted with the request to give away their supernumerary embryos came to the fore also in the responses to survey questions. Thus, 31.4% of all respondents endorsed the statement that they would 'expect some psychological or emotional difficulties after donation'. And a subgroup of 37.9% of the 293 respondents who had specified that they would refuse to donate their embryos indicated that the underlying reason for their decision was 'fear of emotional or psychological consequences in case of donation' (these are 20.2% of all survey respondents). Such fears were reflected also in several of the handwritten comments:

*"It [embryo donation] may have consequences for people in a spiritual and psychological sense. Also, it may bring conflicts with morals and ethics".*  
(Student, Chinese Literature, female, 23)

*"It may hurt mentally the person who donates".*  
(Student, Computer Science, male, 21)

That women are likely to build up a strong emotional bond with their embryos can also be seen from the following excerpt of an interview with an IVF patient. Just before our conversation, the women had heard that she had become pregnant:

*"I want to keep these [frozen surplus] embryos for a long time. I really cannot consider giving them away now. Maybe later, when my child is four or five years old... but also then I would not like to give them all away. I still would like to keep some".*  
(IVF patient, 29)



### Discussion

These findings suggest that attitudes and perceptions of the value and of the permissibility to donate and use human embryos for hESC research are much more varied and complex in China than is commonly suggested. The research participants' responses made clear that Confucian-based ideas on the starting point of human life significantly mismatch with the actual perceptions of potential embryo donors; it also became clear that arguments proclaiming that moral concerns regarding the donation of embryos for research are absent in China cannot be upheld. Equally flawed appears the assumption that due to the high number of abortions carried out in the context of the one-child policy, the value of early forms of human life are generally of low regard among Chinese people. Instead, as the findings of this study suggest, perceptions of embryonic life in China, as elsewhere, are entangled in a rich web of overlapping and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, values, emotions and social relations of which analysts, policy makers, scientists and clinical staff are insufficiently aware.

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# ‘What would you do, doctor sahib?’

In urban India, there is an increasing public awareness regarding the role of genes in the incidence of disease and the possibility of making use of pre-natal testing (PNT). PNT is associated with modernity and good parenthood. In this paper, Jyotsna Agnihotri Gupta throws light on women’s use of PNT for pregnancy management and the decision making regarding genetic testing – and whether to continue the pregnancy following a ‘positive’ test result – in order to achieve the birth of ‘healthy’ children.

Jyotsna Agnihotri Gupta



Photograph by Anjali Pinto

GENETICISTS IN INDIA could be the new pundits instead of the ones traditionally casting horoscopes after the birth of a child to predict the future course of its life. Since the second half of the 20th century genetics is slowly changing cultural understandings of health and illness, introducing a new dimension to health care. Seventy percent of India’s approximately 1.17 billion population lives in rural areas, where basic health care services are either unavailable or inadequate. India scores very low on important health indicators such as life expectancy, infant and child mortality and maternal mortality. Given the size of the country’s population, genetic diseases affect a small number of people, and when diagnosed, they are largely untreatable. However, for the families concerned they pose a considerable burden, since care and rehabilitation facilities for individuals with genetic disorders are very poor.

## Reproductive genetics

Over 25 million births occur annually in India. The infant and child mortality rate is very high, with infectious diseases being the primary cause of death. Most births still take place under the supervision of (skilled or unskilled) traditional birth attendants and there is a lack of simple ante-natal and post-natal services in rural areas. In the cities pre-natal check-ups of pregnancies occur in clinics and thus congenital malformations and genetic disorders may get diagnosed; they are increasingly reported as important causes of peri-natal mortality. If the incidence of birth defect is assumed to be two per cent, then 500,000 babies are born with some form of birth defect every year in India.<sup>1</sup> Paediatricians and geneticists argue that prevention is the best strategy, considering that cure after birth is difficult and costly. With the proliferation of genetic tests, testing is becoming a part of ‘good parenthood’ at the individual level. At the societal level, community genetics is emerging as a practice and as a future model in which the options offered by genetic testing technologies can be used optimally for the realisation of preventive health care. Certain genetic conditions are seen as a major drain on the quality of life of the individuals concerned and their families, as well as on health resources. While the prevalence of haemoglobinopathies (blood-related diseases), such as thalassaemia and sickle-cell disease and its variants has been noted in certain communities and regions of India, recent studies bear out that the primary reason for referral at genetic medicine departments is reproductive genetics. The main aim of reproductive genetics is early detection of a heightened risk of giving birth to children with a disorder which is untreatable and which could (in varying degrees) undermine the child’s quality of life and life span, depending on the severity of the condition.

## Genetic testing

Genetic testing may be carried out at different times throughout life and through the use of various techniques. In general there are four moments of genetic testing: (1) carrier testing; (2) preconceptional testing of the embryo in assisted reproduction (IVF), referred to as pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD); (3) pre-natal testing of the foetus during pregnancy (PNT); and (4) screening of neo-natals, or later in life for late onset genetic conditions.

The most common form of genetic testing is pre-natal testing (PNT). PNT refers to all methods used to ascertain the health of the developing foetus. These include biochemical screening (maternal serum alpha-fetoprotein, triple marker screening), ultrasound, chorionic villi sampling<sup>2</sup>, amniocentesis<sup>3</sup>, fluorescent in situ hybridisation technology (FISH), and DNA assays. Different techniques may be used for PNT, either individually or in combination. Some tests are not in themselves diagnostic and serve only as a first stage in screening for certain disorders; other tests, even using different methods of diagnosis, may be required to come to more or less reliable results. Genetic tests are quite expensive and not all families can afford them.

*With the proliferation of genetic tests, testing is becoming a part of ‘good parenthood’ at the individual level.*



Photograph by Anjali Pinto

## Pre-natal genetic testing in India

Increasingly urban Indian women are undergoing PNT to produce ‘healthy’ children. During my empirical research in hospitals in Delhi and Mumbai in 2007 and 2008 I found that pregnant women registering with gynaecologists in cities were increasingly being advised to have a triple marker test in the first trimester of pregnancy. A very large number of them received a ‘positive’ diagnosis, i.e. a heightened risk of the foetus being affected, and were advised to undergo further tests such as chorionic villi sampling or amniocentesis in the second trimester. Often, women seeking further testing and genetic counselling were those who had suffered repeated miscarriages, or were ‘high-risk pregnancies’ due to advanced maternal age (cut-off point used is 35 years). Also, there were pregnant women and couples with an elevated risk – with a family history of a genetic disorder, knowledge of an abnormal gene in the family, a previous child with a disorder, or suspect findings from previous tests. However, on examination of the records of the cytogenetic laboratories of the two hospitals in Delhi where I conducted research, I discovered that in 95 percent of the cases sent for second trimester testing it was a false alarm and no abnormality was detected.

PNT plays upon two fundamental desires of all couples: to become parents and to produce healthy and ‘normal’ children. Pregnant women seemed to have ambivalent feelings regarding PNT. They were not sufficiently informed regarding genetic tests and procedures and what the diseases meant in terms of reduced functioning. The very existence of these technologies, coupled with the advice of their gynaecologists and/or genetic counsellors to undergo these tests, created a kind of pressure on women. As one woman put it ‘Is it necessary to go through this [amniocentesis]? No one in the family has a genetic condition.’ While they did not want to risk giving birth to a disabled child, many women mentioned that before the technology appeared women were giving birth to healthy babies, also at an advanced age. Yet, once advised testing, many saw it as a necessary evil and complained about the anxiety caused by the tests until the results were known, the inconclusiveness of certain tests entailing the need for further tests, and the concomitant risk of miscarriage.

It is remarkable that none of the women/couples I interviewed said they would continue the pregnancy following a ‘positive’ test result. The ‘pressure’ to choose abortion after PNT was rather subtle: it arose mainly from intending parents’ own understanding that it was ‘not fair toward a child to bring it to birth with a severe disability’. The main reasons for the



## Pre-natal testing in the socio-cultural context of India

proliferation of PNT are the dearth of institutional facilities for the disabled, and absence of medical insurance to bear the costs of often very expensive therapies for a child who suffers from a genetic condition. Caring for a disabled child results in an enormous financial and care burden for families, the latter falls mainly on the women. Also, fear of social stigmatisation not only of the affected child, but its parents and the whole family plays an important role. For this reason genetic testing and genetic counselling are increasingly sought.

### Genetic counselling

Clinical facilities for genetic investigation in India are rather poor and there is a shortage of trained clinical geneticists. There are only 25 genetic counselling centres in the whole country. According to geneticist I.C. Verma (personal communication):

*"Much of the work consists of providing information – helping patients to come to a decision. Many come with some diagnosis already; we make a more specific diagnosis. It often comes as a real shock to them. They are not ready to accept that there is no treatment for the condition. They require a period of adjustment. There is no rejection of affected children once they are born. There is more acceptance here than in the West... They do express their difficulty in looking after an affected child. Having a child with a genetic disease is quite tough... Patients wonder 'why has it happened to us?' Some put all their faith in the counsellor and listen to you; some check and recheck; they doubt everything you say. Some are angry at the doctor about what has happened. Financial reason is important. Family members' views are very important. They discuss with their own parents; generally they don't want to let other family members know, because of social stigma."*

Although genetic counsellors uphold the principle of non-directive counselling, i.e. let women/couples themselves decide regarding (further) testing and whether to continue the pregnancy after an adverse test result, they say, that in general:

*"Parents want more directive advice. 'What would you do, doctor sahib, in our situation?' Non-directive advice is not acceptable, because they are not so literate about science. They say they will discuss with the family whether to go for further testing. Unlike the West, whenever there is an abnormality in a child the whole family comes for counselling here. It is very rare that only a couple comes; in fact the couple is the quietest... We try to take away the guilt of having given birth to an abnormal baby."* (Dr I.C. Verma)

In principle, genetic tests may be empowering for women who are the child bearers and carry the primary responsibility for raising children, and caring for the sick and elderly. However, there may also be negative consequences of PNT for pregnant women. In the highly patriarchal Indian society men and the woman's marital family traditionally make important decisions within the family. Women may face coercion in making reproductive choices regarding not only the number of children (quantity), but also the kind of children (quality) to be born, thus making it difficult to ensure their free and informed consent for use of genetic services. Also, the consequences of a 'positive' test may be disastrous for a daughter-in-law, as women often feel guilty or are blamed for producing a girl, or a disabled child. There were cases when husbands refused to be tested for carrier status for thalassaemia, although they were informed that the future offspring may actually manifest the disease only if both the parents were carriers.

### Enhancing informed decision making

Prevention of serious disease through genetic testing is a legitimate public health goal. It is imperative that the government invests in increasing health facilities for genetic testing in the public sector, so that for families at risk, if desired, genetic testing is affordable and accessible. Simple screening and diagnostic facilities at district health centres with the possibility of referral to specialised centres should be provided. Health literacy programmes for the public which include information on genetics and on societal implications of developments in the field of human genetics need serious attention.

*Introducing pre-natal testing as part of standard pre-natal care should go hand-in-hand with an adequate system of informing and counselling women about pre-natal screening to ensure informed decision-making.*

Developments in genetic technology concern all individuals, but since it is women who bear children and are the main carers, decisions affecting their pregnancy and outcome concern them more. Introducing pre-natal testing as part of standard pre-natal care should go hand-in-hand with an adequate system of informing and counselling women about pre-natal screening to ensure informed decision-making. Research has shown that decision aids are able to improve the quality and the level of informedness of pre-natal testing decisions and such decision aids should be developed and implemented in the pre-natal testing setting. Education materials need to be developed on genetic testing and screening that are culturally sensitive and in an accessible language. Also, the government needs to invest in institutions and care facilities for the disabled, and support for families with disabled children so that pregnant women do not feel compelled that terminating the pregnancy of an affected foetus is the only possible choice.

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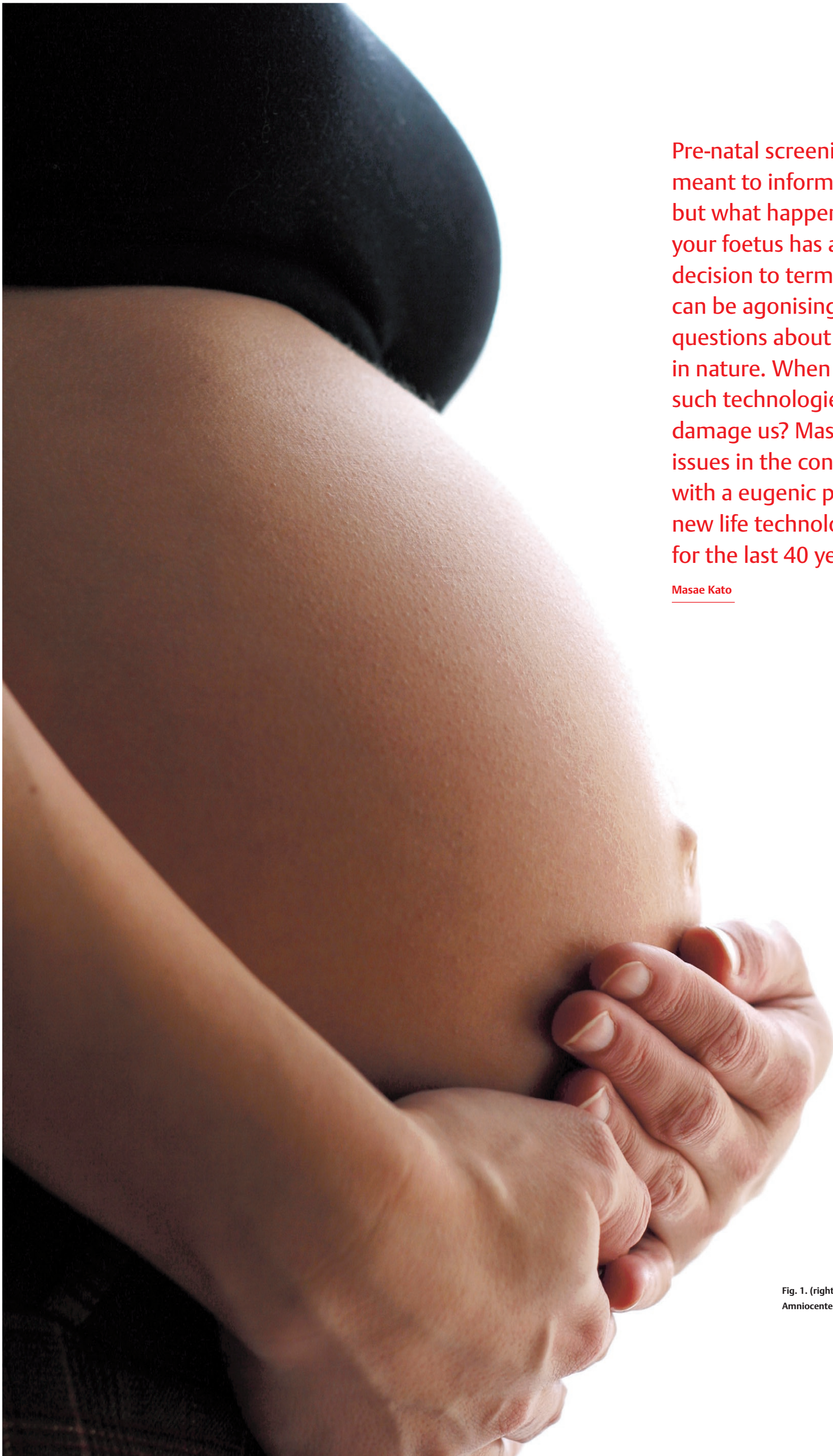
1. Verma, I.C. and Bijarnia S. 2002. The burden of genetic disorders in India and a framework for community control. *Community Genetics*, 5, 192–196.
2. Chorionic villus sampling (CVS) is a form of pre-natal diagnosis to determine chromosomal or genetic disorders in the foetus. It entails getting a sample of the placental tissue and testing it. CVS can be carried out 10-13 weeks after the last menstrual period, earlier than amniocentesis (which is carried out at 16-20 weeks).
3. Amniocentesis is a medical procedure in which a small amount of amniotic fluid, which contains fetal tissues, is extracted from the amniotic sac surrounding a developing foetus, and the fetal DNA is examined for genetic abnormalities.



Photograph by Anjali Pinto



# Selective abortion in Japan



Pre-natal screening and testing is meant to inform and empower parents, but what happens when you learn that your foetus has a disability? Making the decision to terminate the pregnancy can be agonising. It also raises ethical questions about our level of intervention in nature. When do we benefit from such technologies, and when do they damage us? Masae Kato examines these issues in the context of Japan, a country with a eugenic past, where debates on new life technologies have been ongoing for the last 40 years.

Masae Kato

AMNIOCENTESIS – a procedure involving a small amount of amniotic fluid being removed from the sac surrounding the foetus – is a common prenatal test (Fig. 1). The sample of amniotic fluid (about 30 ml) is removed through a fine needle inserted into the uterus through the abdomen. The fluid is then sent to a laboratory for analysis, mainly to test for Down's syndrome. If the results prove positive and the parents decide they don't want to have a child with Down's syndrome, then abortion is the only option at this moment. This is termed selective abortion of a disabled foetus.

When a disability is found, the decision to abort is a complex and emotional one. Many questions emerge such as, 'Will I become pregnant again if I have an abortion?' It also raises the issue of to what extent technologies can be used to inform us about unborn children. There is no absolute answer to these questions. In Japan, a country with a history of eugenic policies, there has been active public debate regarding selective abortion, and these debates are influencing policymaking and regulations on prenatal testing.

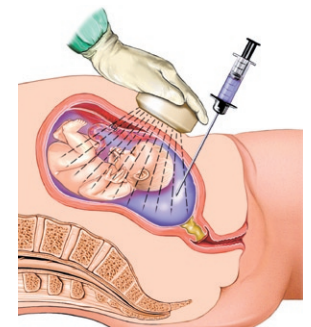


Fig. 1. (right)  
Amniocentesis

**Selective abortion 1960-2000**  
Amniocentesis was introduced in Japan in 1968, in a period of economic recovery after defeat in the Second World War. The government's primary concern was to secure not just a greater population but also a 'good quality' population in order to entrench the country's labour force. With the emergence of prenatal testing, the Japanese government has tried several times, between 1972 and





Fig 2. (right)  
Front cover of a pamphlet published by the women's reproductive health movement entitled: *Fight against the Eugenic Protection Law*.

today, to revise the abortion law so that it articulates that a disability of a foetus is a justifiable reason for a termination. Rather confusingly, at the same time, the government has also tried to limit access to abortion by regulating other reasons for termination. These attempts, however, have been unsuccessful, largely because of opposition from disabled people and the women's reproductive health movement. Much has happened in recent decades – a financial crisis at the end of 1990s that continues today, falling birth rates – but the government's attitude remains basically unchanged, in so far as it wants to encourage women to give birth, and it tries to soften regulations on the practice of new technologies, including creating possibilities for selective abortion.

The disabled people's movement and the women's movement see these attempts by the government as forms of population control (in terms of both size and quality), something they actively oppose. This opposition derives, in the main, from past traumas. For instance, the women's movement associates the government's attitude to selective abortion with Japan's military regime, under which terminations were prohibited to healthy women, but sterilisation was forced on disabled women. Under the military regime, women were told that they should be happy to give birth even where there was a chance that the would-be mother might die. A child was seen as property of the emperor and the act of giving birth was an expression of loyalty. Between 1905 and 1942, 10,617 women were criminally convicted for abortion.<sup>1</sup> In recent decades the women's movement adopted slogans such as 'revival of the militarism' (1970s), 'we are not childbearing machines' (1980s, 1990s, 2000s), and 'women decide, not the state' (since 1970s to date), in their campaigns regarding population policy and women in Japan. Fig 2. shows the front cover of a pamphlet published by the women's reproductive health movement entitled: *Fight against the Eugenic Protection Law*.

*The condition of the foetus is a major concern to pregnant women in the diagnosis room, and often a prenatal test is a way of allaying these concerns. Medical doctors believe that their practices are a response to the requests of individual pregnant women, and certainly are not about eradicating disabled people from society.*

The disabled people's movement in Japan associates the government encouragement for reproductive technologies with the country's eugenic past. Japan is one of the few countries that passed eugenic laws, in 1940 and 1948. In the name of 'preventing the birth of inferior offspring',<sup>2</sup> 16,250 disabled people were sterilised between 1949 and 1996 in order to prevent them giving birth to children with the same disorder as theirs.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes they were not even informed of the purpose of the operation.<sup>4</sup> The Eugenic Protection Law, which legally provided for the sterilisation of disabled people, was only abolished in 1996. Disabled people fear that new reproductive genetic technologies are a means of wiping out disabled people; a way of eradicating them before birth. The disability movement has been vociferous in its opposition, carrying out sit-in protests and hunger strikes in front of the Ministry of Health and Welfare and public hospitals. In fact, the movement has been successful in gaining promises from some medical doctors and public hospitals that these technologies will not be used simply as a tool for the termination of pregnancies, but rather in the context of saving the life of a foetus. As a result, any new technologies to diagnose diseases in unborn children, including embryo testing in the form of Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD), are now performed in Japan under much stricter regulations than, for instance, in the UK or US. This strictness of state regulation derives largely from a fear among policymakers and medical doctors of protests by disabled people.

Although both the women's and disabled people's movements oppose new technologies, they are not necessarily in harmony with each other either. The disabled people's movement suspects that women, especially those from outside the women's movement, would ultimately choose to abort a disabled child in the name of women's rights. Equally, the women's movement has been sceptical about the disabled people's movement

which is mainly represented by disabled men, who sometimes demonstrate an ignorance about the experiences of abortion, believing that women simply opt for abortion if a pregnancy is not convenient. This mutual distrust remains unresolved.

Nevertheless, the opposition of these two minority movements is so strong in Japan that their voices influence policymaking on the use of reproductive technologies, as well as the attitudes of medical doctors. During field research in Japan between 2006 and 2008, I interviewed more than 30 obstetricians specialised in prenatal testing. Hardly any of them stated clearly whether they perform prenatal testing, or specified the legal conditions under which selective abortion is carried out. Instead, many of them mentioned that prenatal tests are practiced cautiously in Japan as doctors fear journalists picking up on the issue and identifying them in public, causing the disabled people's movement to attack them for carrying out selective abortion. Medical doctors, then, face a dilemma. The condition of the foetus is a major concern to pregnant women in the diagnosis room, and often a prenatal test is a way of allaying these concerns. Medical doctors believe that their practices are a response to the requests of individual pregnant women, and certainly are not about eradicating disabled people from society. It is easy to see the different viewpoints of the women's movement, the disabled people's movement and the medical profession regarding prenatal testing.

#### Attitudes of individual women to prenatal testing

The disabled people's and the women's movements are concerned that the introduction of new technologies will put pressure on women to undergo prenatal testing and perhaps even result in them being directed to have an abortion in cases where a foetus is affected. I asked myself whether this is really how pregnant women experience prenatal testing. And, in fact, the interview narratives I collected from more than 60 individuals in Japan provide differing views.

Among these 60 individuals, 13% of pregnant women underwent prenatal tests. The rest consciously refused prenatal testing. The main reasons given for refusing to test foetuses were: they believed that they would not give birth to a disabled child (36%); they did not like the idea of testing their future child (23%); the couple had decided to accept the child under any circumstances (23%), and; they did not like the idea of inserting a needle into the uterus (10%).

My research suggests that the majority of those questioned felt affection for the foetus even when it had a disability, and that decisions to abort an affected child are not made easily. Even after a disability is found, 10-20% of those questioned chose to continue with the pregnancy. My research did show up cases of women who were confused and oppressed by prenatal testing, as the minority groups' movements claim, but the results also show that some women are benefitting from these technologies, too.

The interview narratives tell us that there are both positive and negative aspects to reproductive technologies. Minority groups are an important mechanism for alerting society to possible dangers in the future, and they raise important points regarding the risk that new technologies might pose to society. It is also a fact that some pregnant women experience great benefit from using new technologies. More research is required to investigate how women and couples struggle in decision-making whether to have a selective abortion, which will hopefully contribute to enhancing mutual understanding among different parties in Japan.

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#### Notes

1. Ishii, M. 1989. 'Yuseihogoho ni yoru datai gohouka no mondaiten' (Problems of abortion in Japan) in Tokyo Daigaku shakai kagaku kenkyujo kiyo, *Shakai Kagaku Kenkyu* (The Journal of Social Science), p.119.
2. This is the first sentence of the Eugenic Protection Law (1948–1996) where the purpose of the law is stated. See <http://archive.hp.infoseek.co.jp/law/1948L156-old.html> (last accessed on 7 August 2009).
3. *Asahi shimbun* (Asahi Newspaper), 17 September, 1997.
4. Testimonies of those who were sterilised without being informed of what the operation would mean are compiled in: *Yūsei shujutsu ni shazai o motomeru kai* (A group to request apology from the Japan Ministry of Health and Welfare for forced sterilisation) (ed) 2003. *Yūsei hogohō ga okashita tsumi* (Crimes committed by the Eugenic Protection Law), Tokyo: Gendai Shokan.



# Double discrimination

## sickle cell anaemia prevention programmes in India

Sickle cell disease, an inherited blood disorder, is a public health problem for many tribal and rural caste communities in India. Many community members with the condition feel doubly discriminated against – by nature and by the State. Why is this disease more prevalent among such communities? Is the disease inherent to such tribal communities, or is this a myth? As Prasanna Kumar Patra reveals, ongoing sickle cell control programmes in India seem to be better at creating social and ethical issues than they are at controlling the disease.

Prasanna Kumar Patra



SICKLE CELL DISEASE is a blood condition resulting from the inheritance of abnormal genes from both parents. Since the sickle cell gene in North and South America, the Caribbean, and Europe is usually seen among peoples of African origin, it is commonly believed to be associated with African ancestry. Similarly, wide reporting of a high incidence of the sickle cell gene among marginalised groups, such as the tribal communities and 'lower-caste' people in India, causes many to believe that it is an ethnicity specific disease. There have been many genetic health management programmes in India that are initiated by individuals, non-governmental organisations, and public and private healthcare institutions to manage the perpetuation of this disease and its carrier status. These programmes include population genetic screening, premarital genetic counselling, and medical treatments.

Those at greater risk for the sickle cell disease gene among tribal and rural caste communities in India believe themselves to be unfortunate on two accounts: first, because there is a 'faulty' gene in their population as a consequence of 'natural selection', and second, because they are not provided with proper healthcare services by the state to prevent these faulty genes from increasing. Some blame it on God, some on the government, and others on both. One wonders why it is that this disease is more prevalent among people of African ancestry or the tribal communities in India. Is it just a coincidence or a myth based on incorrect facts? Why are population-based genetic disease management programmes in India unsatisfactory, and why do they create more problems than they solve?

### 'It's not everybody's illness. It's only adivasis who get it.'

Sickle cell anemia affects an estimated 60 to 70 million people worldwide and nearly 20 million in India. Of India's 437 scheduled tribe communities, the sickle cell trait rate (carrier for the disease) ranging from 15% to 20% is found among 20 communities and it is even higher in certain communities.<sup>1</sup> One question that many tribal people ask is why is it mainly tribal people who suffer from this disease? The answer is a geographical and historical one. The distribution of the sickle cell gene coincides with areas of the world where a particularly deadly form of malaria was prevalent. The sickle cell trait has been found to be a protection against this malaria parasite. Thus, tribal people in India, and people of African origin in many parts of the world, have a higher prevalence of the disease than that of the mainstream population. Although current studies show an equally high prevalence of the sickle cell gene among several caste communities, the relatively higher frequency and wide reporting of the disease among the tribals crystallises the impression that it is a 'tribal disease', or ethnic-specific. Healthcare provisions at a local level often fail to cater adequately to the needs of the community; tribal peoples feel that the reason for such poor provision of services lies in the fact that the upper caste or mainstream population do not normally suffer from sickle cell disease, and that they are being discriminated against on a local and national level. Complaints such as the following are common across affected tribal and 'low-caste' regions:

*"You know, as you see it here, it is not a rich or high-caste people's illness. It is not everybody's illness. It is only adivasis who get it".*  
(Bhil tribal man, 34, Dhadgaon tahsil, Maharashtra)

*"We hear that there is not enough money, healthcare and research on sickle cell. It is not a disease of the people who matter. It's a poor man's disease".*  
(Village leader, Sahu-Teli caste community, Raipur district, Chhattisgarh)

### 'Our blood is pure and strong'

In medical science, sickle cell disease is defined as a genetic blood disorder, a disease inherited from both parents. But for many tribal and caste communities in India the aetiology of sickle cell disease and illness behaviour are primarily defined in terms of culture, black magic, and superstition. When the genetic nature of the disease is explained to such people as part of a genetic disease awareness campaign or a genetic counselling programme, some people find it hard to accept. Rather, they believe the disease to be a malicious attempt by programme officials and jealous neighbouring communities to give a bad name to their community. As a community member of the Bhil tribe in Dhadgaon district of Maharashtra said:

*"We Bhils are the descendants of Rajput (a princely clan/ caste), our blood is pure and strong; how can we have any deficiency in our blood? I do not believe in what these people (the medical team) say. They just talk rubbish; they have some ulterior motive, and they want to pollute our community".*

This illustrates the gap between lay people and experts regarding this problem.

### Colouring the gene

Many sickle cell control programmes distribute colour cards in rural and tribal villages that pictographically show the inheritance pattern of the sickle cell disease gene. Programme managers believe these colour cards are a useful tool to educate genetically illiterate rural and tribal people. There are two types of colour cards. The 'full yellow' colour card signifies a person as someone affected by the sickle cell disease, whereas a 'half-yellow-half-white' card indicates that the person is a carrier for the disease. The purpose of such cards is to easily identify an individual, helping doctors treating an emergency to easily know the person's sickle cell disease status. But the card is also used to regulate marriage; it's a way of avoiding marriage between two carriers through premarital counselling. This is believed to decrease the risk of spreading the disease within the population. While from a public health policy-making perspective, the distribution of colour cards make sense, in a small and closely-knit village where tribal and caste people are bounded by marital or affiliatory relations, these colour cards become a source of identification with a disease or a 'deficiency', adding stigma and discrimination to the disease burden.

### Genetic horoscopes

Genetic counsellors use the colour cards to explain the inheritance pattern of the disease to people, as a way of avoiding the same genetic combination in their future offspring. Much of the genetic counselling is directive in nature. The health officials and programme managers consider premarital counselling as a key preventive strategy. For this reason, unmarried youths and their parents remain the main target groups for counselling. Prospective couples are advised to match their genetic status during marriage negotiations, based on their genetic screening results. Since the vast majority of people in tribal and rural areas still follow the tradition of 'arranged marriage', genetic matching based on colour cards play a significant role. As one genetic counsellor working with the Sickle Project at Raipur in Chhattisgarh said:

*"Now we advise people to replace their age-old janam-kundalis [astrological horoscopes] with that of gene-kundalis [genetic horoscopes]. We believe that this will help reduce the chance of marriage between two carriers and eventually lessen the disease burden on a community. This has been our slogan in rural and urban areas as this is a cultural practice with which people can easily associate".*

In this exercise, carrier unmarried girls are especially subject to discrimination, as the genetic status shown on the colour cards clouds their marriage prospects. Prospective grooms avoid initiating marriage negotiations with a girl with a carrier gene. Though in the absence of adequate medical testing facilities for prenatal testing at local levels such counselling seems acceptable, in many localities this has created a sense of risk among all community members irrespective of their sickle cell disease status or related symptoms. This 'manufactured risk'<sup>2</sup> has brought the people in these close-knit societies into the ambit of a genetic screening culture.

### 'She will ruin my vansh (family line)'

The impact of colour cards on the marriage prospects of unmarried girls is not the only issue of stigma and discrimination based on gender. Married women who are carriers are made a scapegoat for having given birth to a diseased or carrier child. Even though their husbands are equally responsible for children with such a genetic make-up, most of the blame goes to women. Sickle cell sufferers have recurrent crises with severe joint pain that makes them sick and unable to do physical labour for certain periods of time. In rural areas where daily labour or physical work is the only source of income, women that became sick become economically dependent on their family. In such cases, they receive little sympathy from their in-laws and family members. Many mothers-in-law complain and view this as a curse on their family. As one Kondh tribal woman of Phulbani in Orissa said of her sickle cell diseased daughter-in-law:

*"She is an abhisap (curse) on my family. She has brought this problem, you know, from her family. She always remains sick. She has not been a healthy wife for my son. She ruined his life. She has given birth to two children who are also sick like her. She has ruined my vansh (family line)".*

Such statements are commonly encountered in tribal and rural areas where people have a low literacy rate, a low level of awareness about genetic diseases, have minimal access to basic healthcare, and the society is patriarchal in structure.

The disease burden is huge and it not only impacts the social and physical well-being of the affected people or community but also has a debilitating effect on the economy of the nation itself. The measures taken by the state are sporadic and ad hoc in nature. The genetic literacy gap between lay people and experts needs to be minimised with comprehensive policy programmes. The programmes should be based on an understanding of cultural sensitivities, focus on unmet healthcare needs, and provide regular follow-up treatment. The double disadvantage experienced by sickle cell patients among certain tribes and caste communities requires double effort and the state has to decide if it is ready to make that effort or not.

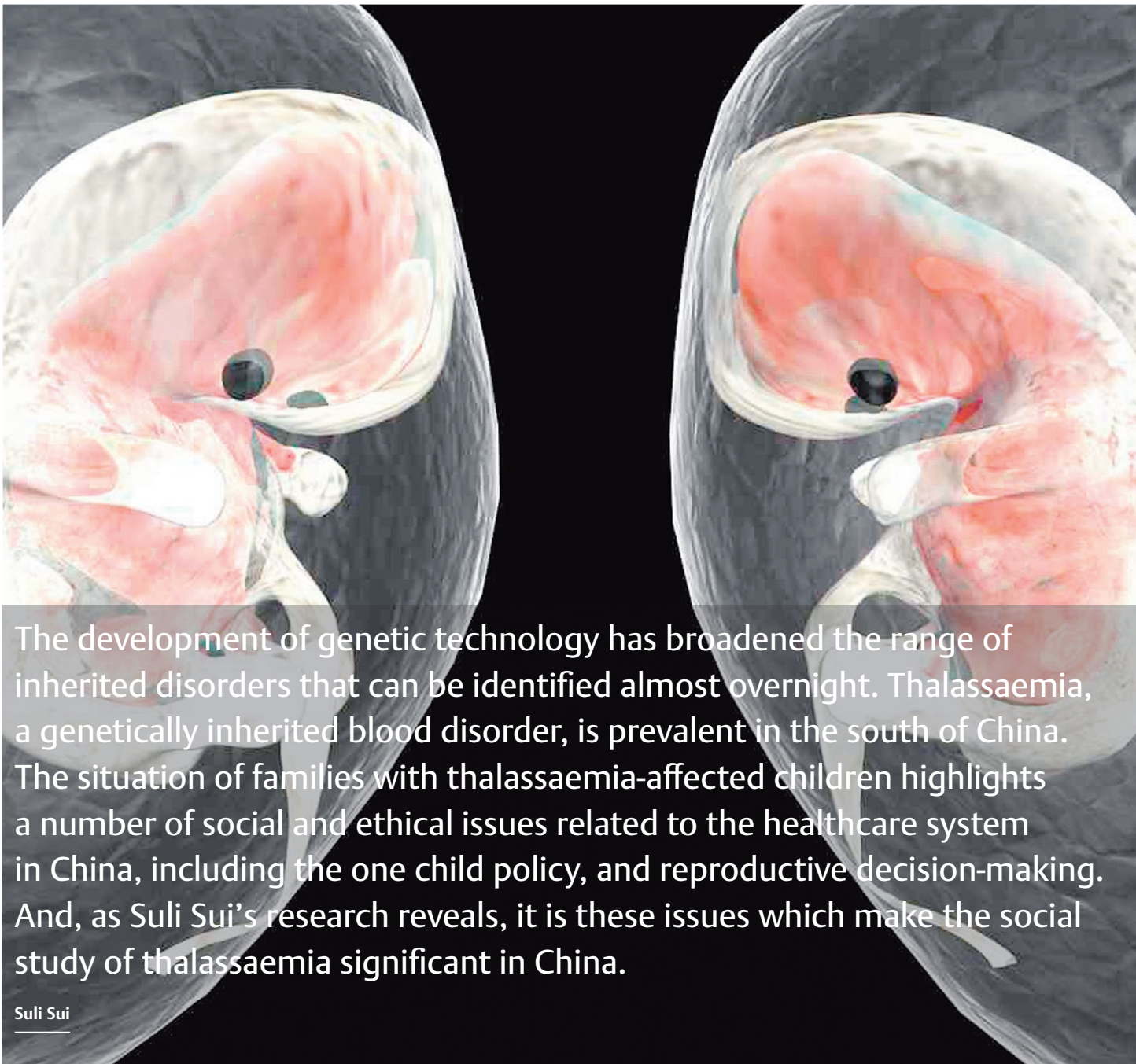
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# Creating a 'saviour sibling' in China



The development of genetic technology has broadened the range of inherited disorders that can be identified almost overnight. Thalassaemia, a genetically inherited blood disorder, is prevalent in the south of China. The situation of families with thalassaemia-affected children highlights a number of social and ethical issues related to the healthcare system in China, including the one child policy, and reproductive decision-making. And, as Suli Sui's research reveals, it is these issues which make the social study of thalassaemia significant in China.

Suli Sui

*Should human beings be welcomed and valued just as they are or also because of what they can provide for other people?*

THALASSAEMIA begins to show itself in early childhood. Children with thalassaemia cannot make enough haemoglobin in their blood. They need regular blood transfusions from infancy onward to achieve normal growth and development. If no blood transfusions are given, death at an early age is inevitable. A person who is only a carrier of thalassaemia is symptom free and appears perfectly healthy. If both parents are thalassaemia carriers, their children have a 1 in 4 chance of inheriting both their genes and developing the disorder.

#### Managing thalassaemia

Thalassaemia is prevalent in the south of China, especially in the provinces of Guangxi, Guangdong and Sichuan. According to the Family Planning Committee of Nanning, approximately 20% of the population of Guangxi Province carries the thalassaemia gene (Li Jie 2006). The usual medical treatment for thalassaemia patients is blood transfusion. If the affected children receive blood transfusion regularly, usually twice per month, the condition can be controlled. To a great extent, the life of an affected child depends on the blood transfusion. As a mother of a boy with thalassaemia said, 'My child is so cute. He is like a beautiful flower, but we have to water him with blood.' According to the Haematology Department of 303 Hospital in Nanning City, capital of Guangxi province, the costs of the twice monthly blood transfusions are approximately RMB 2,000 (US\$290). This is prohibitive for most families, and there is no national medical health coverage system (*guojia gong-fei viliao tixi*) in China. Generally, costs for medical care must be paid by patients, and in the case of thalassaemia, treatment costs will increase as the children grow up and more blood is needed. For the average Chinese family such an economic burden would be hard to bear, but for families in the comparatively poor rural areas, which are far away from the hospitals that can offer blood transfusion for thalassaemia patients, it is especially difficult.

During my fieldwork, conducted from April to August 2007 in China, I met a 10-month-old boy who was having a blood transfusion in 303 Hospital in Nanning. His parents told me that this was the second, and also the last, time that he would undergo a blood transfusion. They simply could not afford the ongoing costs of long-term treatment and other expenses, such as long-distance travel and accommodation.

#### A child is like a flower watered by blood

Thalassaemia is a lifelong condition. While blood transfusion can control the disorder it cannot cure it. In the search for a cure for their affected children, some families decide to use a treatment that involves having another unaffected child. The child is genetically matched to provide life-saving umbilical cord blood, which can be transplanted into a sick brother or sister. Such a child is called a 'saviour sibling'. Prenatal genetic testing and subsequent selective abortion can help the families avoid giving birth to another thalassaemia-affected child. Currently, the cost of umbilical cord blood transplantation in China is very high, approximately RMB 200,000 (US\$29,000), which is far beyond what most Chinese families can afford. Nevertheless, some families choose to save their children in this way. For instance, Prenatal Diagnostic Center, Guangzhou Maternal and Neonatal Hospital, in the course of five years from 2001 to 2006, treated 52 couples requiring a tissue-matching test during prenatal diagnosis to detect thalassaemia. All of these couples had already given birth to a child with thalassaemia and opted for umbilical cord blood transplantation for the affected children, if the sibling baby donors were normal and had an identical tissue match (Li Dongzhi et al. 2006). Ms Shi, the mother of a child with thalassaemia, explained her decision:

*"I cannot watch my child die. If there is a way, I would like to do anything to save my child. I worry about the fee for the transplantation, which is huge, like an astronomical number [tianwen shuzi] to us. But it is better than to worry about the death of my child. The fee for blood transfusion is also high and cannot cure the illness, which is like a bottomless hole [wudi dong] and we cannot see any hope at the end. Anyway, I hope my child will be cured".*

However, her family could not afford the fee for the transplantation. She was so desperate to raise money that she took to begging in front of the hospital.

Another case of a thalassaemia 'saviour sibling' had dramatic consequences. The first child of Ms Yin and her husband Mr Zeng was a girl with thalassaemia who died at the age of six. Their second child, a boy, was intended as a 'saviour sibling' for his elder sister. However, he also suffers from thalassaemia. Because the prenatal genetic test had failed to offer an accurate test result, the 'saviour' attempt failed. To save the boy's life, the couple then decided to try to give birth to another

'saviour sibling'. Ms Yin terminated the third pregnancy after prenatal genetic testing showed that the foetus had a positive result for thalassaemia. Ms Yin decided to become pregnant for a fourth time. On 13 March 2007, the couple gave birth to a 'saviour sibling' for their son. When Ms Yin was asked how she felt after the three births, she said, 'I had tried to give a chance to my daughter, so I should also give a chance to my son'. She added:

*"My son came to this world as a saviour sibling, and now he should be saved as well. Otherwise, it is unfair to him. As a mother, I would like to suffer instead of my child. God blessed me in giving me a healthy and blood-matching baby. The second son is not only saviour for his brother, but also the life saviour of the whole family. We will love him more".*

The younger brother not only donated umbilical cord blood but also bone marrow to his older brother. On 19 August 2008, the operation to draw bone marrow from the young brother, who was about one and half years old, took place in Nanfang Hospital in Guangzhou. On the same day, the elder brother received the umbilical cord blood and bone marrow transplantation. The total cost for the transplantation was approximately RMB 300,000 (US\$43,600). Although this family was lucky to have donors, nearly half of the expenditure was borrowed. The mother said that the family would be in debt for the rest of her life, but she was happy to have two healthy sons. I contacted the family in June 2009 and was pleased to learn that both boys are healthy.

Some cases of thalassaemia 'saviour siblings' have been reported in the media. Usually, the purpose of the reports is to praise the mother's love, arouse sympathy for the difficult condition of the families, and appeal to the public for donations. However, to some extent, the reports and presentations about the cases of 'saviour siblings', which emphasise the love of the mother for the affected child, may influence thalassaemia-carrier parents' decisions about giving birth to a 'saviour sibling'.

The doctors I interviewed during my fieldwork currently regard blood transfusion as a better choice of treatment. Receiving regular blood transfusion, a thalassaemia-affected person can lead a relatively normal life. In the UK, one thalassaemia-affected person has already reached the age of 51, has a family and children, and is in good health. Moreover, aside from the high price for the transplantation and the difficulty of obtaining a blood-matched child as a 'saviour sibling', transplantation carries certain risks and the operation does not always succeed.

#### Born as a child or as medicine?

There are concerns about the welfare of a child born as a 'saviour sibling'. The phenomenon raises issues about the meaning of human life and expectations regarding offspring. Should human beings be welcomed and valued just as they are or also because of what they can provide for other people? In the case of creating a 'saviour sibling', what is the real expectation for the offspring, a child or a child as medicine? Concerns exist that once conceived as a 'saviour', it is difficult to place limits on the extent to which it is reasonable for the child to be used for the benefit of another person. The judgement of the US Human Genetics Commission is that it is difficult to justify preventing parents who have a child with a life-threatening disorder that may be cured by a stem cell or bone marrow transplant from attempting to create a 'saviour sibling' (Genetics and Public Policy Centre 2004). Although there are ethical discussions about this in China, interviewees in my research regarded giving birth to a child for the purpose of saving its sibling as meritorious and respectable, finding it worthy and understandable for the parents to procreate a 'saviour sibling'.

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# Turning misfortune into blessing

## Public confidence in hESC after Hwang

Following the 2005 Hwang scandal, the South Korean government promised a hugely disappointed public *jeonhwawibok* – turning the misfortune into a blessing. Four years on, Seyoung Hwang reports the ways in which scientists, policy and bioethics experts anticipate the prospect of research governance and human embryonic stem cell research (hESC), and explores the place of public confidence in the current regulatory discourse.

Seyoung Hwang

THE SUDDEN FALL OF WOO-SUK HWANG, the pioneer of human embryonic stem cell research in Korea, threw the nation into turmoil. His misconduct, including the fabrication of stem cell research data and ethical violations in oocyte (immature egg cell) donation, left the public confronted (and disappointed) by the truth that the therapeutic cloning attempt had failed. In May 2006, just half a year after the scandal, the government launched the *National Plan for Stem Cell Research (2006–2015)* which identified stem cell research as one of the new biotechnologies that will enhance Korea's status as a world-leading bio-economy. Premised upon an ambitious vision to become, within a decade, one of the world's top three countries in the field of stem cell research, the core strategies included, (1) the consolidation of an effective, comprehensive system in government; (2) procurement of original technology; (3) the establishment of advanced industrial infrastructures; and (4) the establishment of bioethics and research integrity.

### Somatic nuclear transfer and oocyte donation

Somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) is a type of cloning that involves replacing the nucleus of an unfertilised egg cell with material from the nucleus of a somatic cell (a skin, heart, or nerve cell, for example). Popularly known as 'therapeutic cloning', SCNT is deemed a revolutionary approach to the generation of patient-specific embryonic stem cells that will open up a new paradigm of regenerative medicine. It was precisely this reason why Hwang's 2005 *Science* paper, in which he fraudulently claimed the success of stem cell derivation, was hailed as an international breakthrough. Since the method involves the destruction of human oocytes, policy regarding SCNT varies among countries depending on their cultural traditions and religious influence: for example Britain, Belgium and Japan permit SCNT whereas others, such as Germany and the US, do not.

The history of bioethical legislation in Korea dates back to the mid-90s when the birth of the cloned sheep Dolly caused an international sensation regarding the human cloning issue. Initiated by the pressing need to prohibit human cloning, Korea's Bioethics and Biosafety Act (enacted in 2005, amended in 2008) is the first comprehensive legal framework for bioethical issues. The dual goals declared in Article 1 – one being promotion of biotechnology, and the other protection of human dignity – suggest that the bioethical legislation is clearly motivated for research advancement. The two *Science* papers on human embryonic stem cell research (published in 2004 and 2005), that made Woo-Suk Hwang a national hero, were the result of a legislative vacuum and the absence of criticism. Consequently, the 2005 version of the Bioethics and Biosafety Act stipulates the provision for SCNT as follows:

"...no one shall conduct SCNT other than for research aimed at curing rare or currently incurable diseases, as decided by the President after review by the National Bioethics Committee". (Bioethics and Biosafety Act 2005, Article 22)

Also important is the inclusion of interim measures; that is, a clause that allows qualified SCNT researchers to continue the same research with the approval of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MoHW). In fact, only Hwang's team could meet the criteria at that time in Korea. The 2008 amendment to the Act abolished this clause. Bioethics campaigners claim that this political manoeuvring tarnished the consensus-building and democratic values crucial to the public acceptability of such sensitive research.

The conflict over SCNT resurfaced when the National Bioethics Committee resumed the preparation of Presidential Decrees for the scope of human embryonic stem cell research in 2009. The revelation that Hwang's research failed to create a single stem cell line, despite using more than 2000 oocytes, came as a blow to SCNT supporters. However, the dominance of the pro-SCNT National Bioethics Committee, whose 20 members include seven government ministers, tipped the balance in the favour of SCNT supporters.

While the law on SCNT remains permissive, it now includes a new provision on oocyte donation that forbids the use of 'fresh' oocytes, as seen in Hwang's research. Instead, only remaining oocytes extracted for in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatments can be used for stem cell research after obtaining new consent from donors. Some scientists and SCNT supporters criticise the law as 'going too far', arguing that a successful cloning depends on the freshness of oocytes (*Medical Today*, 12 June 2009). But critics point out that the grey area between donation for pregnancy and donation for research still exists, and could be abused in obtaining oocytes for stem cell research (Harmon & Kim 2008; Ku 2009). A more radical view, held mostly by Christian bioethics campaigners, argues that the very idea of oocyte donation is unethical, and therefore must be outlawed (CBCK 2008).

After three years' suspension, the Cha Medical Center was the first SCNT research group to which the new regulations applied, requiring them to obtain approval for their research proposal from the National Bioethics Committee in April 2009. Approval was granted on condition that the notion of 'treating diseases' was omitted from the research proposal in order to avoid raising people's expectations too high; also that the use of human eggs was minimised; and that their Institutional Review Board (IRB) was reorganised to ensure high-quality ethical review.

### Prospects for hESC research

Since the Hwang scandal, scientists' views on the prospects of SCNT have become both more realistic and more cautious. Now, with the development of an alternative approach – induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS) that do not require the destruction of oocytes – the feasibility of SCNT is under scrutiny. Some scientists are outspoken in their criticism of SCNT, arguing that there is a hidden agenda more about public support and financing than science. Many scientists point out that even if the derivation of stem cells is successful, and even if Korea wins the 'race' in that respect, the competitiveness of the country's stem cell science should not be overestimated. In fact, only a few research teams in Korea have the expertise to conduct hESC research despite the government's generous support. The realisation that the road to therapeutic application depends on scientific infrastructure, not just on a single breakthrough, is noted in policy statements too.

Despite lessons learnt from the Hwang scandal, the communication between policy makers, experts and the public remains poor. A media poll conducted for SBS TV in 19 July 2008 shows that more than 80% of the public expressed support for Hwang's human embryo research. In 2008, a license application by the Suam Biotech Research Foundation, currently headed by Hwang, was rejected by the government. The reasons given included the fact that Hwang's trial was ongoing and the gravity of the ethical misconduct involved. This raises the question whether the public support is simply an expression of sympathy for their disgraced hero, Woo-Suk Hwang; or is it evidence that the public still believes in the feasibility of the therapeutic application of human embryonic stem cells? Perhaps public interest in bioethical issues and the realisation of the world's first patient-specific human embryonic stem cells has never been greater?

### Ethical review

One consequence of the Hwang affair is that more media attention is paid to the workings of the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), where bioethical regulations have a direct effect. Although not unique to human embryo research, the slack governance of IRBs has become a clear target for policy action after the scandal. To reduce the gaps in IRB performance, the new provision in 2008 – the Bioethics and Biosafety Act – stipulates the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Family Affairs', (formerly MoHW) responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of IRBs. A nationwide survey conducted by the Korean Association of IRBs in April 2002 shows that IRBs review only 30% of academic research (Kim et al. 2003). This shows that the absence of IRB review on Hwang's research was not exceptional. Bioethics experts point out that even the IRB of Cha Medical Center, now under increased public scrutiny, is still not up to standard.

Evidence of improvement is noted among some leading hospital IRBs. By the end of 2008, nine IRBs in Korea gained recognition from the Strategic Initiative for Developing Capacity in Ethical Review (SIDCER) for quality ethical review. The SIDCER recognition programme is an international collaborative initiative, facilitated by the World Health Organization (WHO). The Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian and Western Pacific Region (FERCAP) was set up as its regional forum in 2000 and, since then, it has seen a notable increase in SIDCER membership in countries such as Thailand, China, Taiwan and South Korea. The fact that securing international collaboration for research and clinical trials requires the meeting of global standards clearly influences this. But given the current policy direction and relatively regularised operation of medical institutions, experts regard IRB performance as a matter of policy coordination, which is why it can yield positive outcomes relatively quickly. The combined effect of international pressure and policy action is an increasing endorsement of a sound oversight system in Korea.

Although the occurrence of major changes remains to be seen, the evasion of ethical guidelines has increasingly become a risky business. But taking place concurrently is the alienation of the wider public from bioethical discussion, as the SCNT issue shows. The post-Hwang era dictates that new bioethical issues will be dealt with within the small circle of policy makers and bioethics experts, a new profession borne out of the last decade's legislative process and also, ironically, the Hwang scandal. What is lacking is attention to public concerns, and their participation in the much needed debate.

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Woo-Suk Hwang



# Beyond Hwang 'International stem cell war' in South Korea

Stem cell research has caught the public's attention and human embryonic stem cell (hESC) research provokes headlines ranging from 'holy grail' to 'Frankenstein clone'. In less emotive terms, embryonic stem cells are more versatile than adult stem cells in developing into the nearly 200 different cell types and organs of the body. The hope is that these cells will cure numerous chronic diseases simply by replacing damaged cells. But, as Leo Kim reports, the 2005 Hwang scandal has left hESC research in South Korea tainted by controversy and impacted the science worldwide.

Leo Kim

ONE CONTROVERSIAL SIDE of stem cell research is that it requires destroying embryos, which some people regard as full human life. Furthermore, the therapeutic application of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), also known as 'therapeutic cloning', requires many human eggs for a successful implementation. Since the 'natural supply' of ova is very limited, the medical extraction of ova involves injecting hormones into women to facilitate ovulation. This process carries a risk of infertility and pain for the female.

Such ethical concerns have led to the creation of guidelines for using human eggs, including the observation of the 14-day limit for growing embryos. But the underlying motives and processes for establishing ethical guidelines are very complex. This is because the holy grail of stem cell research also promises lucrative business in medicine. Nevertheless, an important aim of the ethical guidelines is to prevent the exploitation of less advantaged people in order to obtain valuable research materials, such as embryos and ova, and to provide a guide to ensure publicly recognised ethical conduct in research.

The so-called Hwang scandal, which occurred in South Korea in late 2005, involved a breach of trust in two senses. Woo-Suk Hwang, a Korean scientist who had claimed to have successfully derived stem cell lines from 'therapeutic cloning', not only fabricated research results but was also involved in the unethical collection of ova by coercing his junior female researchers to donate their own eggs and by purchasing many others from impoverished women without proper informed consent. This disclosure has resulted in a setback not only for the stem cell science in South Korea but also for many research communities in other countries. Understandably, government officials in South Korea became very hesitant about supporting hESC research. The government's large-scale investment into embryonic stem cell science, compared to the less controversial adult stem cell research, was curtailed in 2007, a year after Hwang was convicted for fraud and other research-related crimes.

To many scientists engaged in embryonic stem cell science in South Korea the unexpected decision by the Parliamentary Life Science Research Forum to organise a workshop (16 April 2009), to explore ways to promote human embryonic stem cell research more actively in the future, came as a blessing. As the chairman, scientist Yongman Han, clearly explained, the underlying motives for this promotion were both international and domestic. US President Obama's brisk move to lift former President Bush's strict limits on embryonic stem cell research – which had included banning federal funding in the field – was a direct catalyst for South Korean scientists to reconsider its policy, as many regard the US as the benchmark model. Domestically, South Korean stem cell scientists also shared frustrations about South Korea's stem cell science policies.

They had recently witnessed some colleagues' applications for stem cell research grants being turned down by the Bioethics Committee, and the infamous Woo-Suk Hwang's team was one of the unsuccessful cases.

Dong-Wook Kim, chief of the National Stem Cell Research Centre since 2006, claimed that Obama's new policy represented the desire of the US to prevail over the rest of the world in the 'stem cell war', referring to the strong nationalistic competition in the field. In contrast to the global trend of investing in stem cell research, according to Kim, Korea's position had been weakened over the previous few years by the 'cynical atmosphere' which afflicted stem cell research following the Hwang scandal and the subsequent withdrawal of government funding. Kim diagnosed that Korean scientists are now suffering from a 'loss of war morale and ammunition'. For this reason, South Korean stem cell scientists regard a swift decision by the Korean government to increase funding for stem cell research and to loosen regulation as both urgent and necessary.

For instance, the stem cell scientist Hyung-Min Chung, who recently applied for funding for his stem cell research project, was asked by Korea's National Bioethics Committee to revise it.<sup>1</sup> Chung, a speaker at the above mentioned workshop, complained:

*"Even compared to the regulation in the UK, Korea's bioethics law incorporates excessively detailed articles, which does not respond to the rapidly changing international research situation. I think that the law should be revised to accommodate reality by containing only declarative phrases, while leaving details to secondary or tertiary orders. Also, the limitation on using ova and embryos is extremely restrictive. The law only permits using frozen embryos. This would even inconvenience the sterile patients that wish to donate fresh embryos, as they can only donate after freezing them."*<sup>2</sup>

Agree or not, it is apparent that there was a shared notion among speakers to regard the change of US policies as the 'global' trend; and a shared irritation regarding ethical regulation in Europe. Thus, Jung-Chan Rah, Director of RNL Bio and one of the speakers at the workshop, asked pejoratively: 'Why does the EU raise bioethical issues while the USA is silent?'

The panel of the workshop made it clear that the eventual purpose of the workshop was to attract interest among Members of Parliament and to secure more support, which is vital for South Korean scientists who depend on the government for most of their funding. There were conspicuous efforts by the speakers to invoke nationalistic sentiments, exaggerate prospects for medical application and profits, and profuse

expressions of gratitude to those MPs who showed an interest in this issue. They even named many of those who had not turned up but had put down their name for the workshop. Predictably, the prolonged speeches by bureaucratic scientists stirred outrage on the floor. This atmosphere provoked reactions from the panel, one of which included an unconventional speech made by the representative of a disabled group, Haesup Kim. Kim queried if society alone was to be held responsible for the 'cynical atmosphere' during the years after the Hwang scandal. He also asked whether Korean scientists had reflected upon their research approach, which is labour intensive, and mainly relies on the quantity of resources – that is, the number of ova – as well as funding, rather than improving their 'scientific' understanding.

Some other questions cross my mind. How can South Korean scientists engage in international collaboration with other scientists if they talk of this research in terms of an international war? In these circumstances it seems unlikely that the government's financial and legal backing is sufficient to clear away some of the systemic problems in South Korean stem cell research which the Hwang scandal revealed. Furthermore, would it not be problematic that South Korean scientists feel comfortable ignoring those internal cultural and institutional limitations in the science community that have hampered the set-up of transparent research practices in Korean laboratories? Regrettably, these questions were not discussed at the workshop, as chairman Han rushed to wrap up the session with a last remark: 'We should leave behind the Hwang trauma.' It is not clear, however, how the trauma is to be overcome. For the workshop showed that the lack of ethical consciousness among scientists that had failed to prevent scientific and ethical misconduct is still there. The social concerns about ethical issues that were touched upon remain mere rhetoric. Worse, for the moment, there seems to be little opportunity for open discussion with the public and experts in other fields.

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## Notes

1. The Bioethics committee pointed out that Chung's title for the 3-year grant, 'establishment of embryonic stem cell and developing therapeutic medicine', for enumerated diseases could raise misunderstanding. The committee also pointed out that the team's project requirement of 1,000 human eggs might be excessive. Chung complied by modifying the title and reducing the number of ova to 800. His application was finally accepted on 29 April, only a few days after the workshop.
2. Workbook, p.29 (<http://www.gokorea.org/bbs>).



# Human subjects in Chinese ethnic biobanks

China's ethnic minorities – *minzu* people – are intensively marketed as torchbearers of the country's human diversity. Yunnan has been designated as the exemplary province of biodiversity and human diversity alike. Tourist images of 'pure' and 'unspoiled' indigenous peoples are iconised in the state category of 55 nationality groupings. The imagery of colourful ethnic minorities in traditional dress, perceived as different from the rest of the society, has been adapted in the medical institutes of Yunnan to research activities regarding human variation.

Jan-Erik Leppanen



in the Mosuo language; the possible communication problems 'should not cause a problem'. The process of collection, according to Dr. Li, is less important than the eventual use to which these genetic samples are put.

## Research results 'not for common people'

Yunnan Laboratories (the *Laboratory*) has a significant collection of ethnic DNA, representing a major part of the ethnic diversity of the Chinese population. A person in charge of sampling work at the institute explained that there are no logistical problems during the sampling, because all the arrangements are made before the group enters the field site, leaving the *Laboratory's* researchers free to collect the samples. The lower-level hospitals are required to assist the lab researchers with the arrangements and establishing local contacts. Although the common language used during the sampling is standard Chinese, *Putonghua*, on the whole it is the minority representatives who deal with further communications with the locals.

At another meeting, I asked about the sampling protocols. When I pushed for answers, I received a better idea about the research circumstances in rural China. In the researchers' words, there is a contradiction between 'our' scientific worldview and 'their' (that of the ethnic minorities) traditional worldview, which has resulted in an overall difference in thinking. Nevertheless, these young researchers seemed to be genuinely concerned about how to build mutual understanding over the sampling, the research results, and communication between the academic community and communities being investigated.

health professionals, but there were no geneticists among them. When local hospital representatives were asked to explain the intentions of the genetic sampling implemented by their staff, they could only state that it was for 'scientific purposes'. And, because the biocollectors did not know the reason why DNA samples were collected, they were unable to inform research subjects about the purposes of the project.

## Discussing genetic issues

In the selected medical institutions in Southwest China chosen as part of this study it was not common practice to discuss genetic issues with sample populations. In addition, geneticists were not eager to educate the public about socio-biological issues. It emerged that it was important to carry out the sampling quickly and to waste no time in the field after the samples had been collected, as there is a rush to deliver the live samples to institutional facilities in Kunming. Due to this arrangement, it was explained, there was no time available to educate the research subjects or the local-level health professionals about the aims and objectives of the research project. There have been studies with different arguments about the reasons for not returning research results to the sampled populations. One view holds that it is never necessary to return results to subjects, as this is not the investigators' first priority. Another view holds that it would be too time-consuming and expensive to contact research subjects, and that this cost may even inhibit important research. This argument considers the research as more important than new genetic knowledge for individuals (Eriksson 2004:47–48). However, sound language and comprehension issues are cornerstones in taking informed consent, a standard international requirement in population sampling. Every time human variation intervention is conducted with a complicated research agenda, it is important to clearly communicate the plans and objectives to the community members in question. Individuals looking for additional clarification then have an opportunity to ask questions (Rotimi et al. 2007). 'Misunderstandings' in human variation research may occur because of the inappropriate appearance of people's participation in research (Dixon-Woods et al. 2007). The question, of course, is how to discuss genetic issues with the public. The increase in the public's involvement and the development of 'genetic literacy' (Collins & McKusick 2001) are some of the prerequisites for a sound understanding of genetic technologies and their applications.

IN EARLY 2006, the Chinese Ministry of Health announced that a database consisting of all Chinese ethnic groups had been established in Yunnan (People's Daily 2006). The headlines boasted of the 'world's largest ethnic biobank'. A biobank is a general term for a repository of biological material. Biobanks can be classified by a range of characteristics, including: objective, ownership (e.g. a university, a company), sample group, and size of the collection. Large-scale national and regional population biobanks collect data from the population of a given region or nation. Participants in the biobanks represent the population as a whole. But because beliefs about the uses of blood and tissue vary among ethnic cultures, the utilisation and storing of biological material in large population biobanks is highly sensitive and a great responsibility for the accountable institution.

## Constraints, communication and sampling

I was familiar with Southwest University (*Southwest*)<sup>1</sup> prior to my field research. I found it easiest to form contacts through official channels. The foreign affairs office of the institute introduced me to geneticists and laboratory personnel working in the field. I met two people at the Biology Faculty working on the biobanking of ethnic minorities. They focused on genetic susceptibility studies of certain genetic illnesses prevalent in the region among ethnic groups in Southern Yunnan.

Dr. Li disclosed that, together with his students, he has undertaken sampling in three villages in Southern Yunnan. The base for these operations is a prefectural centre. Considering the transportation of the samples to laboratories in Kunming, the prefecture is a convenient place: direct air routes link the city with Kunming allowing blood samples to be transported within a few hours from the sampled village to the repository at *Southwest*. Dr. Li explained that county hospitals assist with the practical matters of the sampling. However, *Southwest* has neither the capacity nor the resources to carry through the entire sampling process. After collecting the samples, 'electronic' versions are sent to genomics companies in coastal China. After analysis, the processed data are sent back to Kunming.

As there are always time constraints involved in the sampling activities, I was told that so far there had been no time to carry out a survey on the socio-cultural aspects of their projects. Apparently, Yunnan's Mosuo *minzu* represents an ideal minority population for ethnic sampling: it is seen as a homogenous community, has a compact size, and has identifiable records of ancestry. 'Mosuos are 'very special' (*feichang tebie*),' said Dr. Li, who is fairly certain that he could understand the Mosuo people when they spoke in *Putonghua*, standard Chinese, rather than

ABOVE: Mosuo woman near Lugu Lake, Yunnan.  
BELOW: cheek cells DNA

When I asked how their research and its results could eventually reach local populations, the researchers were sceptical about whether anything they publish would interest their sample population. One researcher said:

*"The results will be for small audiences, not for the common people. It would be very unlikely that results end up in public forums, such as local newspapers, educational material, or in another type of media. What researchers do has scientific relevance and is not interesting to the masses of the people".* (Interview at Yunnan Laboratories, March 2007)

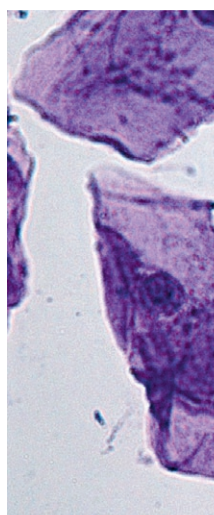
It was not regarded as necessary to educate the population being researched about genetic issues or the research results and the implications for their lives.

## 'Some ethnic groups are easy to handle'

Xishuangbanna, populated predominantly by Dai ethnic minorities in the southernmost part of Yunnan Province, is regarded as an ideal site to study Chinese minority populations because of its ethnic diversity. Mountainous topography, isolation, and its distant position have reinforced the belief about its genetically 'unique' populations. I was given permission to conduct interviews in the Banna Hospital (*Banna*) and in the Jiuoshan Clinic (*the Clinic*), both of which have participated in a regional human variation programme. In *Banna* it was suggested to me that I plan my own genetic research operation, even though it was not my intention to be personally involved in DNA data-gathering. It was stressed by the hospital staff that, as long as the permission from a minority cadre was granted, it was possible to carry forward any type of genetic research, notwithstanding the views of the community in question. It was explained that some ethnic groups are easier to 'handle' than others, and that this had an influence on the success of the genetic interventions. Possible difficulties in research subjects' cooperation with human variation researchers were associated with a 'low level of education among the ethnic and rural research subjects'. Apparently, they do not correctly understand the aims and intentions of the biobankers.

I was also granted a visit to the *Clinic*. In this medical facility, it was unclear what the various ethnic biobanking programmes being implemented in their district were about. Furthermore, the programmes were planned and administered outside their district, from the prefectural hospital. The *Clinic* was not aware of the objectives or plans of the various genetic interventions. The duty of *Clinic* personnel was simply to implement the sampling. The staff at *Banna* consisted of medical doctors and

What researchers do has scientific relevance and is not interesting to the masses of the people.



This study shows the closed nature of genetic information in the chosen medical institutes of Yunnan province, and that research subjects and the general public have little or no access to genetic and medical knowledge. Biological samples as well as genetic knowledge are kept behind closed doors in the medical institutions of the provincial capital, and research results are published in scientific journals which are out of the reach of ordinary people. My research showed that the reason why the human variation projects studied have not been under local discussion at any stage is that this type of research is simply not accessible to non-specialists. Furthermore, there appears to be no shared understanding of what the programmes are about and who is benefiting from them - be it the human variation researchers, on the one hand, or the officials executing sampling programmes, on the other. Medical doctors in regional hospitals have a first say in decisions about possible sampling interventions. Ethnic cadres come second in the hierarchy but they often have no alternative but to comply with the decisions made higher above. The extent to which health conditions of the sampling population are taken into account remains unclear.

The article is based on the author's ten months of ethnographic research in Yunnan, PRC, during 2006–2007.

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## Notes

1. Names of persons and institutions have been changed to protect the informants.

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# Biomedical research in South Asia

## Ethical review, remit and responsibility

In recent decades, research in the biomedical sciences has been increasingly located in settings outside of the global north (Petryna 2009). Much of this research arises out of transnational collaborations made up of sponsors in richer countries (pharmaceutical industries, aid agencies, charitable trusts) and researchers and research subjects in poorer ones. A recent workshop on the ethics of international collaboration, held in Sri Lanka<sup>1</sup>, confirmed that in addition to the usual concerns about the protection of human subjects in biomedical research, these engagements raise a host of new ones.

Robert Simpson

RESEARCH MAY WELL BE CARRIED OUT in populations rendered vulnerable because of their low levels of education and literacy, poverty and limited access to health care. The protections that medical and research ethics offer in these contexts tend to be modelled on a western tradition in which individual, informed consent is paramount and, furthermore, is couched in legal and technical requirements. When science travels, so does its ethics. Yet, when cast against a wider backdrop of global health, economic inequalities and cultural diversity, such models often prove limited in effect and inadequate in their scope (Benatar 2002, Bhutta 2002). Attempts to address both of these concerns have generated a wide range of 'capacity-building' initiatives in bioethics in developing and transitional countries. Organisations such as the Global Forum for Bioethics in Research, the Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asia Pacific Region and the World Health Organisation have sought to improve oversight of research projects, refine regulation and guidance, address cultural variation, educate publics about research and strengthen ethical review committee structures according to internationally acknowledged 'benchmarks' (see for example, Emanuel et al 2004, Lavery et al 2007). They are also an essential pre-requisite when it comes to attracting and hosting future collaborations, whether these are commercially sponsored, humanitarian or complex hybrids of the two.

### Bioethical capacity building

As part of a larger study of the ethics of international collaborations in biomedical research, our own work is focused on the ways in which a heightened pre-occupation with the ethics of research is playing out in contemporary Sri Lanka. Our aim is to map and to understand both the spread of international collaborative research as well as the intellectual, bureaucratic and political activity that is stimulated in the name of bioethics capacity building. However, in studying collaboration, we ourselves are also drawn into collaborations of various kinds. In this article we report on an event which was held to facilitate dialogue between ourselves and regional stakeholders in our research.<sup>2</sup> The event focused on the ethics of international collaboration and provided an important context for reflection on the current state of play and an opportunity to air some of the issues that are faced when it comes to national and regional engagement with global science and experimentation.

At one level, the workshop provided an opportunity for participants to show the considerable progress made in responding to the ethical challenges posed by the growing traffic in international collaboration and particularly where these concern the outsourcing of phase II and III clinical trials. Significantly, many of the discussions gravitated towards ethical review committees: their constitution, operation, remit and effectiveness. In conformity with the Declaration of Helsinki, such advisory groups are seen as crucial when it comes to anticipating the costs and benefits to those who are to be enrolled into biomedical research projects. Here, continuities with ethical review as a global bureaucratic form were clearly in evidence: reference to international protocols, membership of trans-national fora and operation within standard guidelines. However, what became apparent in discussions throughout the day was the difficulty that participants had in stabilising this form in practice. The field of international biomedical research is changing extremely quickly, as are the mechanisms that are put in place to regulate and ensure protection of subjects. The effect of this would seem to leave the work of ethical review in a state of

perpetual insufficiency: an ever-widening remit, not enough committees, not enough scrutiny, not enough trained people and not enough public participation. Anxieties were expressed that shortcomings in ethical review could bring charges of being 'unethical' due to 'incompetence'. Such anxieties are greatly exacerbated when operating in settings where inequalities of risk are high, for example, because of poor education and literacy on the part of subjects and where negligence, corruption and exploitation are made possible by paternalistic and poorly regulated medical systems.

Where external audiences are concerned, there is anxiety that such charges might be indexed to estimations of national development and scientific credibility. Apart from feeding unwelcome national stereotypes, appearing inadequate when it comes to the conduct of ethical review could have real consequences when it comes to the ability to attract research to the region, be this researcher-led research (funded by universities, charities, NGOs or governments) or sponsor-led research (funded by pharmaceutical companies). Where internal audiences are looking on, a different set of anxieties present themselves. Discussion of contentious cases suggested that the committees find themselves walking a fine line. On the one hand, they may be perceived as too restrictive, that is, unreasonably protective of human subjects and their interests and therefore impeding scientific and economic development. On the other hand, the expectation that ethics committees will operate as a kind of bulwark against moral and scientific imperialism might bring charges of excessive permissiveness, that is, they are not nearly protective enough of subjects and therefore are complicit in abuse, injustice or exploitation in research. Members can easily find themselves vilified from all sides. In this regard, an important question that emerged from the discussions is what happens when things go wrong following positive approval by an ethics committee and how to manage the professional and, possibly, legal ruptures that this brings.

### Ethical vanishing points?

The way to prevent 'unethical' process and outcome in the ethical review of research that was proffered by many of the participants was further resort to 'capacity-building'. Yet, it was hard to see that this strategy would not result in a remorseless game of catch-up into which all are drawn in the quest for some kind of ethical vanishing point. Indeed, as the discussions progressed, the load that ethical review was taking on seemed to get heavier and heavier, and,

as a consequence, focus fell more on operating procedures and the way that these might be tightened up to ensure effective regulation of research. The momentum appeared to be moving firmly in the direction of greater procedural elaboration, more formulaic approaches to evaluation and a consequent consolidation of power in the process of ethical review, as national ethics cultures expand to fill the ambiguous moral spaces that international research increasingly opens up.

On the evidence of the collaborative workshop, the list of competences and responsibilities that ethics committees active in the field of international collaboration might be expected to have is a long one. They must cover relevance of the trial design, its scientific validity, the balance of risks and benefits, the suitability of investigators and the appropriateness of informed consent procedures. Furthermore, the list is expanding as ethics committees strive to discharge their duties responsibly and embrace new dimensions of what it is to be 'ethical'. Here committees must, perforce, move into complex cultural territories for which there is little in the way of guidance. Examples alluded to included information sheets, the technicalities of translating informed consent documentation, insurance and compensation arrangements and the complex entanglement of voluntarism and commerce that runs through questions of payment to research participants. The waters were further muddied as participants grappled with 'social benefit' or assessing the extent that certain kinds of research might result in 'ethnic disharmony'. There was little evidence that the participants were in anyway shying away from the challenges that engaging with this agenda carries despite the considerable investment needed in terms of knowledge, time and resources. However, it was clear from the discussions on this particular occasion that those who are most centrally involved in conducting ethical review, see themselves as carrying enormous and, on occasion, impossible responsibilities and expectations. The task of making appear stable and authoritative that which is constantly evolving is a significant one. For these reasons, the emergence and consolidation of ethical review in developing world contexts is an increasingly important site in which to study the transactions in knowledge, resources and finance that currently constitute international collaboration in biomedical research.

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### Notes

1. The International Science and Bioethics Collaboration is funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council [RES 062 23 0215] and is a collaboration between the Universities of Durham, Cambridge and Sussex.
2. The workshop took place in March 2009 in Colombo and was co-organised by three researchers from Durham University along with staff of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Colombo (specifically the Human Genetics Unit and the Faculty's Ethics Review Committee). The theme for the day was the ethics of international collaboration. Case studies of international collaboration were presented by Prof. Harun Ar-Rashid (Director, Bangladesh Medical Research Council), Dr. Vasantha Muthuswamy (MD, DGO. Former Deputy Director General, Indian Council for Medical Research), Dr. Shri Krishna Giri (Secretary, Nepal Health Research Council), Prof. Hemantha Senanayake (Chair of the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka). Dr. Cristina Torres (Co-ordinator, Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asia Pacific Region) gave an overview of the challenges faced in developing ethical review capacity in the region. The audience consisted mostly of local academics, doctors and clinical researchers.

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## New for review

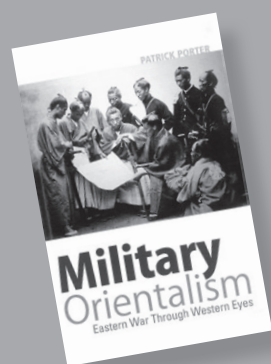
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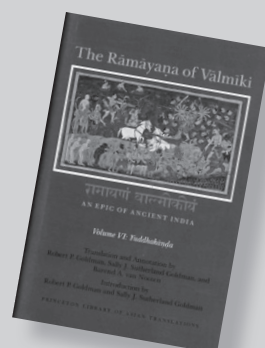
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## South Asia

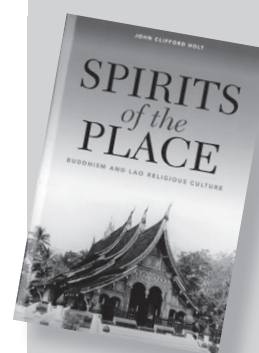
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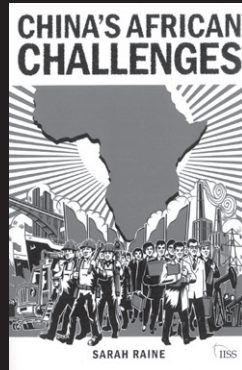
# Bookmarked

*China's African Challenges*  
Sarah Raine  
IISS and Routledge. 2009  
ISBN 978 0 415 55693 4

CHINA'S RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN NATIONS have changed dramatically over the past decade. African oil now accounts for more than 30% of China's oil imports, and China is Africa's second-largest single-country trading partner, as well as a leading lender and infrastructure investor on the continent.

Yet these developments are bringing challenges, not only for Africa and the West, but for China as well. This book examines these challenges, considering Africa as a testing ground, both for Chinese companies 'going global' and for a Chinese government that is increasingly having to deal with issues beyond its shores and immediate control. What does China need to do to protect and develop its African engagements, against a backdrop of mounting African expectations, concerns from Western actors in Africa, and the rival presence of other emerging actors? How sustainable is the momentum that China has established in this African ventures?

China's adaptations to the challenges it is facing in Africa are examined and assessed, as are the implications of these changes for China, Africa and the West. China's African engagement are certainly changing Africa, but could they also be changing China?



*Koloniale oorlog, 1945-1949. Van Indie tot Indonesië.*  
Rene Kok, Erik Somers, Louis Zweers  
Carrera Publishers, Amsterdam. 2009 (In Dutch)  
ISBN 978 90 488 0320 0

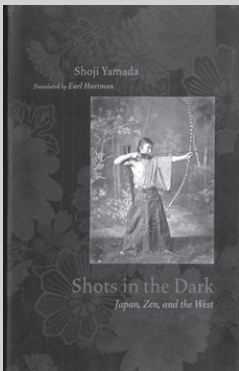
ON DECEMBER 27 2009 it will be 60 years ago since the Dutch East Indies ceased to exist and Indonesia's independence was recognised. Subsequently, Dutch soldiers and civilians were forced to leave the Indies. After the Indonesian Independence War (1945-1949), in which the Netherlands took on the Indonesian freedom fighters of Sukarno, an end was brought to more than 300 years of colonial domination. For many Dutch, the loss of the largest Dutch colony was a big shock ('Indie verloren, ramspoed geboren' – 'Indies lost, disaster born')

*Koloniale Oorlog (Colonial War)* war is more than a photography book. It offers surprising, mostly unknown photographs of a forgotten and repressed period.

During the Colonial War (the so-called 'police actions') it wasn't just the print media that was censored, but photographs and news films too. The Dutch Army Information Service in Batavia (Jakarta) played an active role in controlling the (photo) coverage of the Dutch East Indies. The department controlled text and image production almost completely. Dutch photographers and journalists were not exactly critical, and many followed the guidelines of the censor.

A good number of previously unreleased and locally made pictures by Dutch conscripts, however, have been preserved.

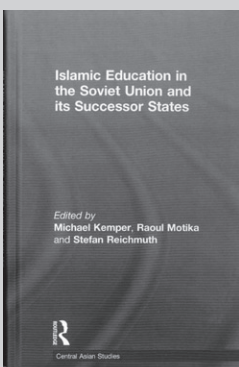
*Shots in the Dark: Japan, Zen and the West*  
Shoji Yamada (translated by Earl Hartman)  
University of Chicago Press. 2009  
ISBN 978 0 226 94764 8



IN THE YEARS AFTER WORLD WAR TWO, Westerners and Japanese alike elevated Zen to the quintessence of spirituality in Japan. Pursuing the sources of Zen as a Japanese ideal, Shoji Yamada uncovers the surprising role of two cultural touchstones: Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery* and the Ryōanji dry-landscape rock garden. Yamada shows how both became facile conduits for exporting and importing Japanese culture.

First published in German in 1948 and translated into English in 1953 and Japanese in 1956, Herrigel's book popularized ideas of Zen both in the West and in Japan. Yamada traces the prewar history of Japanese archery, reveals how Herrigel mistakenly came to understand it as a specifically Zen practice, and explains why the Japanese themselves embraced his interpretation. Turning to Ryōanji, Yamada argues that this epitome of Zen in fact bears little relation to Buddhism and is best understood in relation to Chinese myth. For much of its modern history, Ryōanji was a weedy, neglected plot; only after its allegorical role in a 1949 Ozu film was it popularly linked to Zen. Westerners have played a part in redefining Ryōanji, but as in the case of archery, Yamada's interest is primarily in how the Japanese themselves have invested this cultural site with new value through a spurious association with Zen.

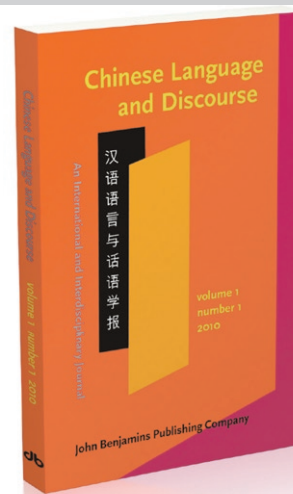
*Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and its Successor States*  
Edited by Michael Kemper, Raoul Motika and Stefan Reichmuth  
Routledge (Central Asian Studies). 2009  
ISBN 978 0 415 36815 5



THIS BOOK PROVIDES a comparative history of Islamic education in the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet countries. Case studies on Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan and on two regions of the Russian Federation, Tatarstan and Daghestan, highlight the importance which Muslim communities in all parts of the Soviet Union attached to their formal and informal institutions of Islamic instruction. New light is shed on the continuity of pre-revolutionary educational traditions - including Jadidist ethics and teaching methods - throughout the New Economic Policy period (1921-1928), on Muslim efforts to maintain their religious schools under Stalinist repression, and on the complete institutional breakdown of the Islamic educational sector by the late 1930s. A second focus of the book is on the remarkable boom of Islamic education in the post-Soviet republics after 1991. Contrary to general assumptions on the overwhelming influence of foreign missionary activities on this revival, this study stresses the primary role of the Soviet Islamic institutions which were developed during and after the Second World War, and of the persisting regional and even international networks of Islamic teachers and muftis. Throughout the book, special attention is paid to the specific regional traditions of Islamic learning and to the teachers' affiliations with Islamic legal schools and Sufi brotherhoods. The book thus testifies to the astounding dynamics of Islamic education under rapidly changing and oftentimes extremely harsh political conditions.

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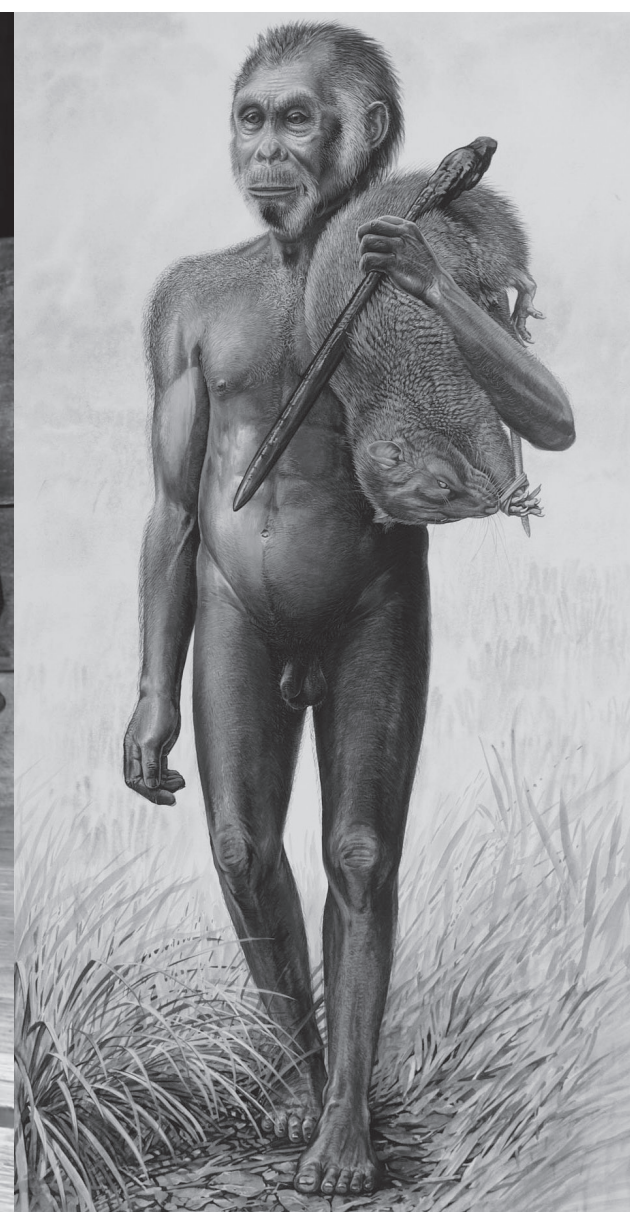
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# The folk zoology of Southeast Asian wildmen



Hairy humanlike creatures occur in many local systems of knowledge world-wide. In his latest book, anthropologist Gregory Forth explores the structure and sources of such representations, with special attention to the Flores 'ebu gogo' and its possible relationship to *Homo floresiensis*.

Raymond Corbey

**Forth, Gregory, 2008.**

*Images of the wildman in Southeast Asia.*

*An anthropological perspective.*

London and New York: Routledge. xv + 343 pages.

ISBN 978 7103 1354 6

GREGORY FORTH IS AN OXFORD-TRAINED social anthropologist and professor of anthropology at the University of Alberta. He has conducted extensive fieldwork on the Indonesian islands of Flores and Sumba, in a broadly structuralist and interpretivist vein. With an in-depth study of how the Nage of Flores categorise and otherwise relate to birds (Forth 2004) he has established himself as one of the few specialists worldwide in ethnotaxonomy and ethnozoology, the study of indigenous perceptions and dealings with the natural world. In the present book he applies this expertise to an intriguing category of hairy hominoid creatures called *ebu gogo* with whom the Nage claim to have shared their landscape until they were wiped out by humans a few generations ago. He contextualises these representations in terms of – at first sight – similar convictions in many places in Southeast Asia and beyond, from Sumatra and Sri Lanka to Madagascar, Europe, and northwestern North America. Forth was a Senior Fellow at IAS in 2005-06 where he convened a Master class on the subject matter of the present book in February 2006.

Forth criticises the tendency of anthropologists to automatically deal with such claims in terms of fantastic, imaginary beings belonging to the spiritual world, reflecting social structure and expressing symbolic meaning, while not giving serious attention to the alternative that such entities may be partly grounded in empirical realities. He does so all the more because the Nage themselves, with their extensive, highly detailed knowledge of the surrounding natural world, clearly treat the *ebu gogo* as another animal of the forest, and not as another member of the spirit world. *Images of the wildman in Southeast Asia* continuously seeks a balance between natural history and folklore, Darwinian evolutionary and Durkheimian folk taxonomy, cognitivist and constructivist views approaches in ethnozoology.

**Mysterious primate?**

Forth compares the Nage *ebu gogo* to the Sumatran *orang pendek* ('short man'), reported frequently by both Europeans and locals in colonial times, and to the European wildman, among other characters. He argues that in the case of Sumatra the claims may partly or entirely relate to sightings of orangutans, gibbons, sun bears, or Kubu hunter-gatherers living in the forests. But he keeps an open mind as to the possibility of an as yet unknown primate, as, by the way, do several well-established primatologists on the basis of their fieldwork in Sumatra. An unknown larger mammal is not as odd as it may seem in view of discoveries of quite a few new species of deer, ox, antelope, primate (!), rodent, bat, bird, etc. in recent decades – a trend which biologists expect to continue. In fact, over 400 new species of mammal have been discovered and named since 1993. Zoogeographically, in Flores, which lies east of the Wallace Line, there are no great apes, nor modern human food collectors like the Kubu, just long-tailed macaques which are much too familiar to the local population to be confused with anything else, animal, human, or spirit.

*Ebu gogo* and some other representations on Flores have been given a new twist by the discovery of *Homo floresiensis* in 2003, very probably a new species of hominid only between 13,000 and 18,000 years old. *Homo floresiensis* is very different from *Homo sapiens* and probably much closer to either *Homo erectus* or the australopithecines. Living in caves and standing only a bit more than a metre tall when adult – as a result of island dwarfism – it is uncannily similar to the *ebu gogo*, but cultural reminiscences spanning thirteen millennia are highly improbable. Did this non-sapiens hominid primate perhaps survive well into historical times, as Nage lore claims for *ebu gogo*? Or are these reminiscences of a small-stature, modern human negrito population at the basis of this image?

**Man of the woods**

Yet another relevant figure in Forth's worldwide comparative survey is the European *homo sylvestris*, literally man of the woods. While there are a number of similarities with southeast

**ABOVE LEFT:**

Gregory Forth talking to Nage villagers, 2008. Courtesy of University of Alberta.

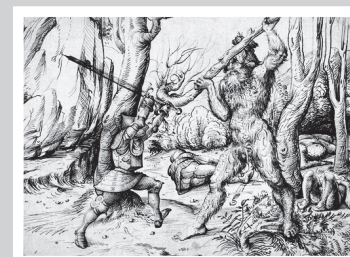
**ABOVE RIGHT:** A reconstruction of *Homo floresiensis*, courtesy of artist Peter Schouten and the National Geographic Society, with permission of the University of Wollongong.

**ABOVE INSET:** The Fight in the Forest, ink drawing by Hans Burgkmair, c. 1510.

asian beings in this case too, the roots of the imagery may be quite idiosyncratic. A European tradition of literary and artistic topoi situating hairy humanoids in woods and caves is rooted in antiquity and carries Christian overtones. In more recent centuries it influenced interpretations of great apes, non-western peoples, early hominids, and, indeed, scholarly interpretations of non-European wildman. Next to this, pre-Christian rural representations persisted which situated similar figures in the woods and mountainous regions of Europe. Woodwoses, green men, *pilosi* (hairy creatures) and the like occur frequently in paintings and engravings, on cathedrals, and in heraldic coats-of-arms, typically armed with a huge club.

In Forth's conclusions to this well-written, solid, groundbreaking exercise in ethnozoology and comparative epistemology two remarkable things stand out. First there is his unorthodox, refreshing openness to the possibility that the various hominoid figures he studies are not completely fictitious but are derivative of empirical realities, with some accretion of fantastic elements. Secondly, and complimentarily, in view of the resemblances between images from many parts of the world, he stresses the possibility of the wildman as a pan-human or universal image, 'a universal archetype of human thought existing quite independently of empirical referents' (p. 205). This certainly is an important point, although 'archetype' sounds a bit vague and too Jungian. Forth points to the possibility of connecting more massively than the framework of the present book permits to recent work in cognitive anthropology and evolutionary psychology on universally human cognitive dispositions, along the lines of, for example, Pascal Boyer, Scott Atran, and Dan Sperber. It is input from this side indeed that can be expected to give a new twist to ethnotaxonomy in general.

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# Revisiting Sugarlandia

In the historiography of the late colonial period issues concerning the interaction between colony and metropolis, and the complex relationship between the colonial bourgeoisie and indigenous people, have been central to the scholarship. This relationship was long understood through largely constructed racial, ethnic, and cultural binaries. Only recently, scholars have begun to question these and challenge the assumptions of the imperial mindset.

Ghulam A. Nadri

Bosma, Ulbe, Juan A. Giusti-Cordero and Roger G. Knight. eds. 2007.

*Sugarlandia Revisited: Sugar and Colonialism in Asia and the Americas, 1800-1940.*

New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 233 pages.

ISBN 978 1 84545 316 9

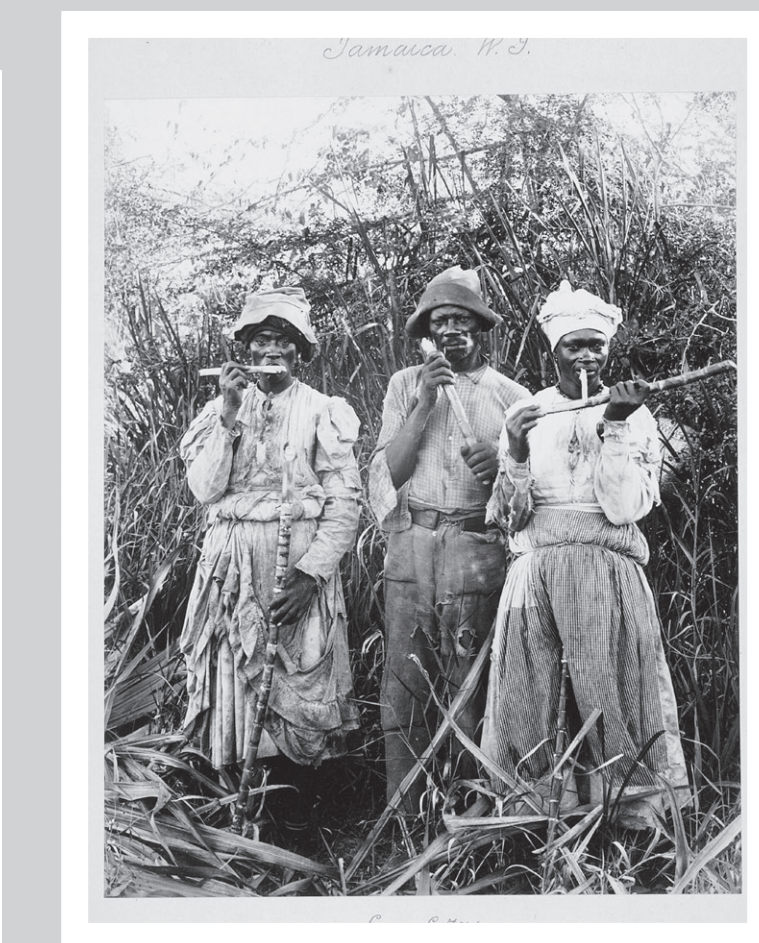
SUGARLANDIA REVISITED is the result of similar scholarly efforts to appraise the dynamics of the interaction between colonisers and colonised and between metropolis and local in the 19th and early 20th century sugar-based economies of Asia and the Hispanic Caribbean. The contributors analyse this relationship through the matrices of the sugar industry, its organisation, production technology, capital investment, and labour in Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. Separated by thousands of miles from each other and having different historical trajectories, the two groups of sugar economies nevertheless demonstrate similarities and common historical experience in the period of high imperialism.

The choice of regions such as Java, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines as the subject of study is determined by the fact that they were all sugar-based economies and the commodity played a crucial role in the politics of colonialism, local resistance, and nationalism. The book is an invaluable contribution to the study of the political economies of these regions and offers fresh perspectives on metropolis-colony interactions. It challenges the Euro/US-centric historiography that emphasises the all-pervasive capitalist system making inroads into the colonies overthrowing the local modes of economic enterprise.

## European capital and sugar production in Java

Sidney W. Mintz's foreword points out the inadequacies of what, according to him, has been the 'New World-centred history of sugar'. He emphasises the importance of studies that bring 'Asia into the world sugar system', link the 'Old World and New World sugar economies', and re-examine the 'mechanics of colonial imperial rule'. In a detailed introduction, the editors outline the historiographical context and illuminate the ways in which this study re-visits the history of sugar and its imperial implications. The authors, each focussing on a specific colony or a part of it, question some of the assumptions and conclusions of previous studies and approach the subject from a non-Western/metropolitan perspective. They derecognise the binary, constructed by earlier scholars, between the pre- and post-1900 political economy of sugar production and trade throughout Sugarlandia. Their studies show a degree of continuity between the two periods and they argue that if there was a rupture it must have occurred in the early 19th century. To substantiate their arguments, they redefine key concepts like 'plantation', 'centrals', and 'bourgeoisie' and thus discredit the oft-repeated dichotomies such as coloniser-colonised, metropolis-colony, and industrial-plantation.

The next five contributions discuss the socio-economic and political aspects of the sugar industry in Java, and the subsequent three chapters examine the dynamics of the sugar industry in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines respectively. Each contribution is unique in its choice of region and issues but the comparative approach and the authors' common concern to 'revisit' the late-colonial history of Sugarlandia knit the one with the other. In chapter three, Roger Knight engages in the issues of early and mid-19th century technological progression in the sugar manufacturing industry in Java and the role of the colonial (Indies) bourgeoisie in it. The author tracks the professional career of Thomas J. Edwards, an Englishman who was appointed by the Dutch authorities as *administrateur* of the sugar factory at Wonopringo in Pekalongan Residency on Java's north coast. By so doing, Knight refutes the idea that industrialisation in Java represents a sudden and complete break from the past processes of sugar manufacture. Instead, he emphasises a long evolutionary process spanning several



ABOVE: Slaves on a sugar plantation in Jamaica, West Indies. Date and artist unknown. Courtesy of National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

[This book] challenges the Euro/US-centric historiography that emphasises the all-pervasive capitalist system making inroads into the colonies overthrowing the local modes of economic enterprise.

decades around the mid-19th century in which the industry was equipped with technology imported from Europe. He also questions the assumption that the diffusion of technical skills was entirely from the metropolitan and contends that the skilled Chinese and Javanese workers played a crucial role in sustaining the industrialisation process.

In chapter four, Arthur van Schaik and Roger Knight delve into the dynamics of the colonial European/Dutch community in Java, which was rather stratified (Caucasian, Creole, and *mestizo*) and perpetually in flux. This was more so since the introduction of the 'cultivation system' (*cultuurstelsel*) in the 1830s which brought a large number of fresh Europeans to the region. They argue that this created apprehension and anxiety in the community, especially among the elites, but these tensions soon dissipated as the newcomers integrated with the community via matrimonial connections. The male-female disproportion and marriages across communities rendered the racial or ethnic identities fuzzy. Those in lower echelons, however, suffered more because of the limited job opportunities in the highly mechanised sugar manufactories. In tune with other contributors, Ulbe Bosma (chapter five) questions the assumptions that after the 1884 crisis in the world sugar market the metropolitan capital appropriated the sugar industry in Java and that the careless lifestyle of the 'orientalised landed gentry' was supplanted by 'white efficiency'. He argues that the impact of the crisis and the role of 'white European and overseas capital' have been overstated and shows that several families of the Indies bourgeoisie in Yogyakarta remained in control of their factories and that the locally accumulated capital was quite instrumental in sustaining the industry in the subsequent decades.

In chapter six, Sri Margana maps the changing agrarian relationships in Java as a consequence of the large-scale colonial plantation system in the 19th century. The author approaches this relationship through peasant resistance that occurred in various forms. Such occurrences were the results of the government regulations that affected the role and positions of rural peasant elites, and the differences in the perception of relationship between the colonial authorities (land leaseholders) and peasants. Joost Coté examines

(in chapter seven) the late 19th and early 20th century discourse on metropolitan capitalist ambitions that was at variance with the local political and economic aspirations. Sugar was central to this discourse because the rapid expansion of colonial capital in the industry seemingly precipitated the crisis of relationship among the differentiated colonial bourgeoisie on the one hand and between them and the indigenous society on the other. He underscores the racial, ethnic, and class dichotomies that characterised the colonial society in the East Indies and the contestations within the colonial modernity. He argues that the discourse failed to influence the policy makers and the colonial critique soon dissipated as imperialism entered a different phase in the early 20th century.

## Slaves, US capital and the sugar industry

The revisionist endeavour in the study of Sugarlandia's Atlantic and Pacific segments (the Caribbean and Philippines respectively) has yielded interpretations that remarkably correspond with those of the East Indies. In chapter eight, Manel Barcia examines the role of slaves in the sugar industry of Cuba in the 19th century. He shows that despite prohibitions the slave trade between Cuba and Africa continued on a massive scale during the middle decades of the century and that most sugar mills hosted a large number of slaves until slavery was abolished in the 1880s. The study demonstrates fairly explicitly that the incompatibility of machine-based production and slave labour is a myth. Cuba emerged as the largest producer-exporter of cane sugar with the most advanced sugar manufacturing technology in the world at a time when slavery was the dominant form of labour. The author dismisses the assumption that technological advancement is contingent on wage workers. In many parts of Sugarlandia, slaves and semi-servile labourers comprised the industrial workforce. He also underscores the dominant position of the Havana bourgeoisie in the sugar industry even after 1898 when Cuba was colonised by the US. The role of the bourgeoisie in Cuba's resistance against US colonial occupation is discussed in the next article by Jorge Ibarra (chapter nine) and compared with their counterparts in Puerto Rico. The author argues that in their perception of nationalism the Spanish immigrant elites of Cuba were in sharp contrast with those of Puerto Rico. Several factors, including their numerical strength, religious affiliation, acculturation, and the economic opportunities contributed to the distinct identities they came to form in the two US colonies. At both the places, they dominated the sugar industry in the early decades of the 20th century. The author argues that the US colonial capital did not pervade the sugar industry and reinforces the revisionist view of a fundamental continuity in the colonial bourgeoisie's control over the sugar industry between the pre and post 1898 periods. That the US occupation of the Philippines and Puerto Rico, formerly Spanish colonies, in 1898 was not a cataclysmic event or a radical rupture is also underscored by Juan Giusti-Cordero in the final chapter. Based on his analysis of Philippino and Puerto Rican sugar planters, the author argues that significant capitalistic development had taken place and they were already connected with world market much before 1898. Like the bourgeoisie in Cuba and Java, ethnically and culturally diverse and complex sugar planters of the Philippines and Puerto Rico retained their dominant position in the industry and inhibited US capital from permeating this domain.

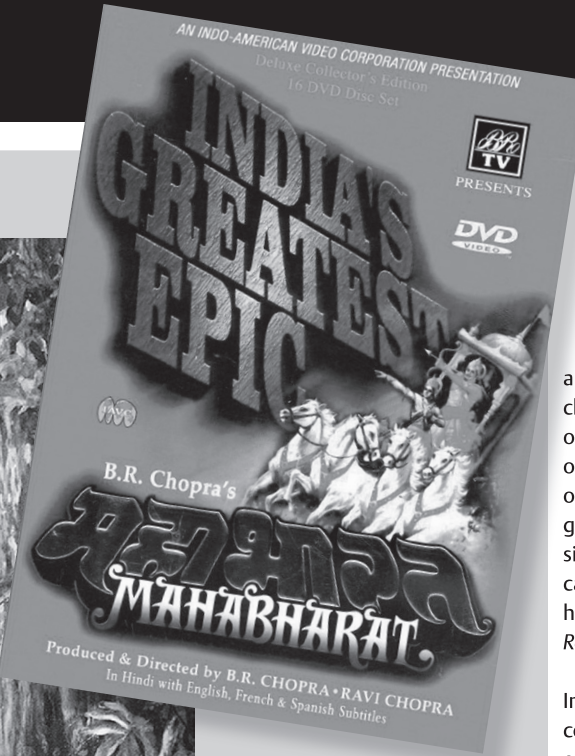
Editing a book that contains research papers from scholars so diverse in expertise, area of interest and intellectual orientation is not such an easy task. The editors of this volume have done a great job by outlining the major issues and interpretations the contributors address in their papers. The authors revisit the history of Sugarlandia and approach it with an intellectual package that is informed by their own experiences and worldviews. The studies offer a new perspective on the metropolitan-colony interactions in different parts of Asia and the Americas in the 19th and 20th centuries. This revisionist perspective aside, the focus of the papers, with the exception of Sri Margana's and Juan Giusti-Cordero's, is nevertheless on the colonial European bourgeoisie. The authors raise many issues requiring further investigation. Indeed, the readers' thirst remains unquenched because the narrative of local indigenous agency is limited to some occasional references. A fuller appreciation of the native involvement in the industry awaits scholarly attention.

The book is a valuable addition to the literature on the colonial history of this period and introduces the reader to a variety of archival sources. A map showing Sugarlandia and a glossary of non-English terms would have made the book more reader-friendly. There are some typos and grammatical inconsistencies in the texts and tables. The total in table 4.1 on page 62 should be 102 instead of 107 and in table 4.2 on page 66 it should be 30 instead of 32. These are minor errors and omissions and do not at all affect the value of the book.

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# Model mythical women



Heidi Pauwels' new book focuses on the early life of two major women figures in the mythic landscape of India, building not only on her wide knowledge of the North Indian devotional traditions, but on the awareness of their performative power and potential. She reviews the goddesses' initial meeting with their respective consorts, courtship, marriage, and their handling of the problems with other women, for the changes in their model building role through the centuries.

Vasudha Dalmia

**Pauwels, Heidi Rika Maria. 2008.**

*The Goddess as Role Model: Sita and Radha in Scripture and on Screen.*

New York: Oxford University Press. 558 pages.  
ISBN 978 0 19 536990 8

IN CONSIDERING THE LONG TRAJECTORY of the goddesses, and of 'myth as palimpsest' (Wendy Doniger), Pauwels takes on all three periods: the ancient, medieval and modern, to show the radical shifts in the understanding of what is often regarded as 'fixed'. Of Sanskrit texts, she considers the two that would become foundational for the medieval Ramaite and Krishnaite devotional traditions: the *Valmiki Ramayana* and the *Bhagavata Purana*, taking into account both the commentarial and the modern historical-critical literature on the two works. For the medieval, she considers the 16th century vernacular devotional texts which have come to signify 'tradition' for the modern: Tulsidas's *Ramcharitmanas*, Nanddas's *Dasham Grantha* and *Rukmini Mangal*, the enormous number of padas attributed to Surdas, and the works of Hariram Vyas. For the modern period, she turns to a vast corpus of films produced in Bombay and three lengthy TV serials still in circulation in India and the Diaspora – Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayana* (1987-88), Chopra's *Mahabharat*, which gripped the nation for two years (1988-90), and Sagar's *Shri Krishna* (1995-1996). All three explicitly invoke as their sources not only the Sanskrit but also several of the vernacular works mentioned above. Of films, she considers the vastly popular work of the 1990's – such as *Dilwale Dulhania le jayenge* (1995), *Hum apke haim kaun* (1994) but also many other earlier and later films, not ignoring the counter-message of box office failures such as *Lajja* (2001). There is careful selection of passages and scenes presented in the course of the discussion as well as a careful translation and analysis of them.

Though not explicitly social or political in the goals she sets herself, Pauwels writes with an awareness of both, showing her mastery of considerable literature on gender issues in South Asia, and the Bombay film industry, in addition to the secondary sources on the older material with which she has long been familiar. This is no mean feat.

Sita and Radha are two figures with an enormous, almost all-permeating presence in the Indian social and cultural imagination today. Their long history in text and performance suggests what could be seen as two antithetical social positions. Sita is the model daughter and wife, who remains within the bounds of convention. Radha is 'sensuality incarnate', the eternal lover, moving almost entirely outside convention, though in some later versions of her tale, there is a record of her marriage to Krishna. Their consorts, Rama and Krishna, are divine heroes who could also be seen as representing two opposing positions – the one is the very model of kingship and a princely upbringing, the other is pastoral, unruly and promiscuous. Though the 19th century reevaluation of tradition would elevate Rama to national status, as warrior, model ruler, and king, Krishna, sought to be similarly elevated as monarch and godly philosopher of the battle field, could never be entirely shorn of his wild past.

It follows that the positions of Sita and Radha would also come to be modified in the 19th and 20th centuries. Though Radha would be gradually domesticated, she would remain an awkward companion on the road to modernity, while Sita, held up as exemplary, would suffer a contrary fate, at least in some quarters. The 1970s feminist movement in India would seek to distance itself precisely from her domestic virtues and the stranglehold that they could exercise on the lives of women of all ages and at all times. Yet later, there would be some exemplary efforts to rehabilitate Sita and to project her as a potential ally in the fight for more equality and justice.

#### Empowering strands of tradition

Conventional wisdom today would see tradition as oppressive, with little awareness of the fluidity it once had and the liberating, empowering, potential of its varied strands. Pauwels accomplishes the rare feat of showing, in a nuanced and deliberately underemphasised way, how medieval *bhakti* or devotional tradition, with its loving, sympathetic description of women in a range of situations, actually privileged emotion, thus offering much space for women's subjectivity. The figures of the *gopis*, the cowherd-women, and Radha with their passionate outpouring of love for Krishna, with

a later consort, Rukmini, going so far as to insist on her own choice for partner, are a far cry from the manipulated figures on the big and small screen today, where adultery is tolerated only in the case of men. Even Tulsidas with his constant stress on propriety, often decried as conventional, can present with great openness and sympathy the romance of Sita's first sighting of Ram, allowing her a voice then and later, as she carries out her intention of accompanying her husband into his forest exile. The figure of Sita is stronger still in Valmiki's *Ramayana*.

In the modern mass media, Sita is depicted as yet more conservative and Radha, when she turns up, comes to be equated with Sita, behaving with due propriety 'under the spunky veneer of Western emancipation'. Pauwels shows not only the enormous vitality of tradition but also its enormous manipulation in the modern. But she does not simply juxtapose the ancient and medieval with the modern to bring out stark contrasts. She approaches 'tradition with respect – with a listening, empathetic, yet critical ear – paying attention to multiplicity of voices, seeing each in its own context' (p.501). As she points out at some length, dating the Sanskrit and *bhakti* material remains problematic. We have then, at best, a mixed picture of the older periods. But as her detailed analysis shows, there is little doubt that the TV/film representations of women's emotionality, subjectivity, and freedom to choose, are more conservative than the older material; 'under the glossy mixture of *masala*, we find iron *maryada*.'

The depth of her scholarship makes possible not only a nuanced reading of individual scenes and an inter-textuality of which most TV viewers and film-goers are not explicitly aware, but also the wider social context. She shows both where TV and film explicitly cite the older texts and where they only mirror them in whole episodes, which are almost a replay, albeit in ultra-modern garb, of situations first accosted in the epics and in devotional verses. Two major insights emerge from this detailed study. One, the deviations in the modern versions have a larger social significance, even if at first sight they seem minor. Thus in the wedding scene in the TV *Ramayana*, Sagar glosses over the fact that Sita brings dowry with her. Tulsidas shows no self-consciousness in dwelling briefly on dowry. But precisely because it has become such a major issue in feminist debate and in the wider public sphere – given the almost constant reports of bride-burning and dowry deaths – Sagar, for all his vaunted adherence to tradition, elides it, to maintain at least the façade of a politically correct position, while at the same time doing everything else to undermine it. Thus it is that in the modern media, modernity and tradition are shown to be in harmony with each other, doing violence to both, even as the one is used to support the other in ways both problematic and politically regressive.

#### Tailored tradition

And with this we come to the second major insight of the study, that tradition in TV and film has almost always been tailored to suit a more conservative position. As Pauwels shows, there is a steady progression to a narrower conception of tradition from the medieval/early modern period to the modern. For all her frolicking on the screen, Radha is always coerced into submission, subjected to a new, constricting deification, as love comes to be subordinated to duty: 'The more Radha grows in stature as goddess, the more she starts to resemble Sita' (p.147). Correspondingly, and not surprisingly, in the films where both Rama and Krishna are invoked, Rama with his dominant moral stance and stature comes to prevail over the morally more precariously balanced figure of Krishna.

It is seldom that someone with as deep, fine, and differentiated knowledge of medieval devotional literature turns to film studies. Pauwels displays enormous erudition, which is always lightly carried. I have only one complaint about this admirable study - it is too long. It should have been pared down yet more, and the results of its investigations formulated yet more boldly, so that it reach those who have most need to acquire knowledge of it. For, I know of no other analysis which has taken 'tradition', Sanskrit, medieval, early modern, more seriously and traced the relationship with the present in such nuanced detail. Pauwels' work is of immense importance for gender and film studies.

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ABOVE LEFT:

The goddesses Sita and Rama.

ABOVE RIGHT:  
B.R. Chopra's television series Mahabharat (1988-90) gripped the Indian nation for two years.

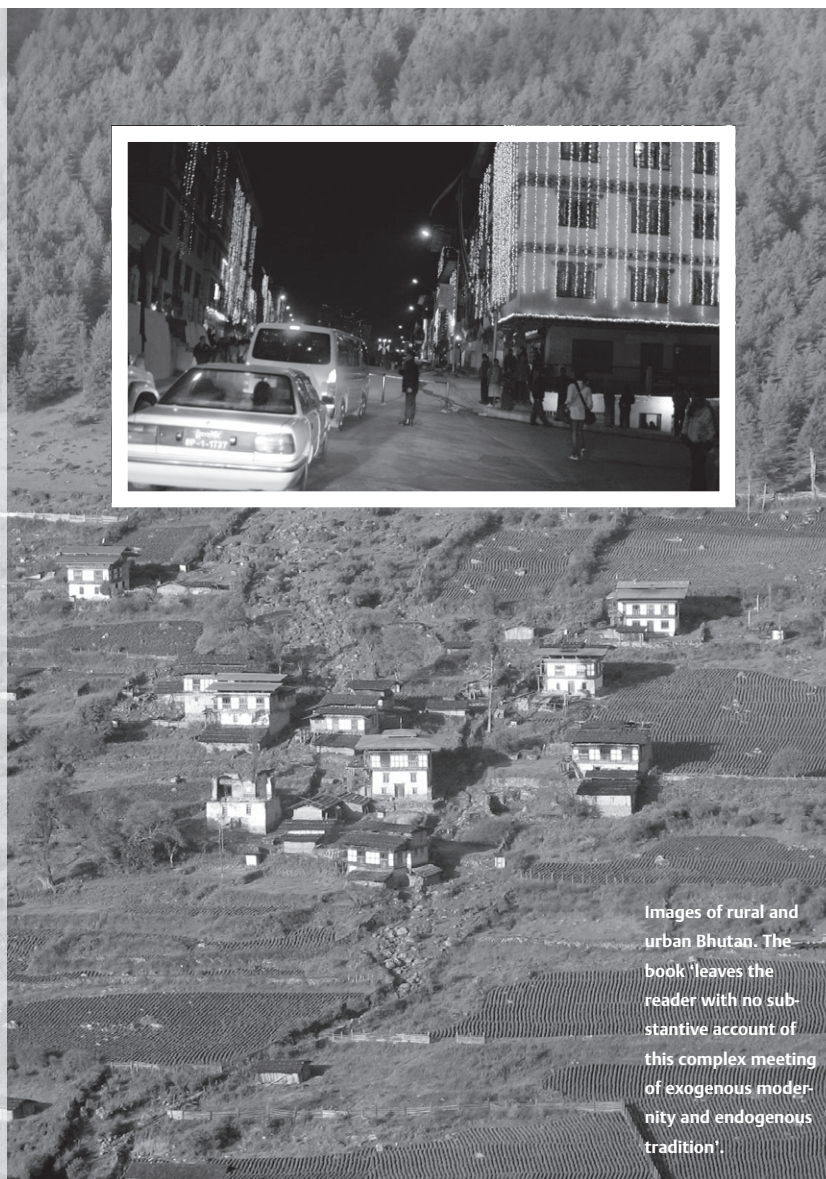
Though not explicitly social or political in the goals she sets herself, Pauwels writes with an awareness of both, showing her mastery of considerable literature on gender issues in South Asia, and the Bombay film industry... This is no mean feat.



# Is the grass greener on the 'Other' side?

A welcome addition to the handful of anthropological literatures available on Bhutan, *Meeting the 'Other'* recounts Crins' personal journey into Bhutan, interweaved with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of some western social scientists. It starts with her encounter with the unknown 'other' when she arrives in a remote village to work on an irrigation project and takes the reader through her analysis of Bhutan's culture and religion, ending with a picture of a romantic 'other' and misgivings about the country's future.

Karma Phuntsho



Images of rural and urban Bhutan. The book 'leaves the reader with no substantive account of this complex meeting of exogenous modernity and endogenous tradition'.

Crins, Rieki. 2008.

*Meeting the 'Other': Living in the present, gender and sustainability in Bhutan.*

Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers. 216 pages. ISBN 978 90 5972 261 3

IF SOCIO-POLITICAL STUDIES ON BHUTAN were to be divided into positive and negative groups, this study certainly belongs to the positive camp. Western socio-political writings on Bhutan have been astonishingly divided, to the extent that to a new student they may even seem to be talking about two different Bhutans. On the one hand, a reader finds positive accounts infused with an Orientalist picture of a Shangri-la with a benign king and happy citizens. On the other, critical accounts underscoring the injustices and excesses of a primitive and autocratic system. It is generally true that the former picture is often drawn while looking at the people, culture and ecology and the latter mainly comes from studying the power and political structures. Yet, one cannot deny that there is a problem of partiality in western portrayals of Bhutan, not only with regard to comprehensive and contextual understanding of the subject but also in imposing their own cultural preconceptions and personal prejudices. Such tension abounds in this book and is manifest in Crins' rebuttal of Wikan.

Crins uses Wikan's article 'The Nun's Story: Reflections on an Age-Old, Post-modern Dilemma' on the injustices suffered by a nun, as her point of departure. Wikan, she argues, has used a false inductive process and, by generalising an individual case as a systemic problem, has failed to paint a true picture of Bhutan. She debunks Wikan's presentation of Bhutan and claims to provide a more profound and comprehensive picture. Is she comprehensive? The answer is far from straightforward. If Wikan failed due to induction, Crins risks excessive deduction to assume that the general theories she has drawn from her cases and the conceptual norms apply to individual people in daily practice.

Her conclusion about 'living in the present' is a case in point. The few anecdotal cases, such as the answers given by her interpreter (pp.22-23), the lack of greeting at home – a Bhutanese tradition – and the belief about the past she mentions are not persuasive enough to conclude that Bhutanese live in the present. The answers her interpreter offers sound very bizarre to a Bhutanese, and are perhaps meant to be humorous. The lack of greeting is a sign of intimacy. It indicates proximity of social space rather than an attitude to time. Similarly, the avoidance of the past is a very unusual one. It may be a local custom and true in the village Crins spent time in, but is definitely not applicable to most other communities.

Perhaps a better argument for this conjecture of living in the present may be found in the Bhutanese food culture and sense of economy. Bhutanese people, compared to other people, are more inclined to enjoy the here and now rather than hoard for the future. I wonder if Crins derived her notion of living in the present from religious literatures, such as those by Dilgo Khyentse who she mentions, and assumed it to be a popular ethos. Whatever the case, one cannot help sensing a slight neo-ageist romantic tendency in describing Bhutan as living in the present, when it is a society which strongly believes in and focuses on future rebirths, as demonstrated by responses to her interviews.

#### Strengths and weaknesses

If ethnography is the distinctive method for successful anthropological study, that is also the weakest point of Crins's work. Crins appears to be faltering in ethnographic documentation and data collection due to two related barriers: language and culture. Her work is vitiated by her lack of the relevant language, something which can be said of Wikan and most other anthropologists working on Bhutan. It is a serious problem as resources to learn Bhutanese languages are scarce if not non-existent and Bhutan is fragmented with about 19 languages and many more dialects. Yet still, language is an essential tool to study a society in the way Crins did and no study can be given a great deal of credence if done without a good grasp of the language. It is quite clear from her transcriptions, anecdotes and interviews that there is a great deal of miscommunication between her and the people she worked with. The book is full of inaccurate transcriptions which she could have easily corrected by consulting a local scholar.

Since every word and phrase represents an idea, the linguistic gap entails a cultural gap. Looking at the way Crins has phrased her questions, it appears she was, perhaps unwittingly, assuming that her respondents subscribe to certain cultural and linguistic notions. For instance, how did she translate God, creator, nature, love, gender, sustainability, etc. because there are no equivalent words for them in Dzongkha? Was God rendered as *koncho* (*dkon mchog*) or *lha*? Were her respondents asked about love qua passion (*chags pa*), love qua affection (*brtse ba*), love qua loving kindness (*byams pa*) or love qua compassion (*snying rje*)? The answers to her questions clearly suggest that many of the respondents did not understand the question and often responded according to the explanation of the question provided, most likely, by Crins's interpreter. It also appears that sometimes a robust sense of Bhutanese humour is mistaken for a serious belief. Would the old monk Sonam have really believed that trees with bad karma are reborn on a cliff where they would have a much harder time growing and risk falling off?

In spite of linguistic and cultural misinterpretations, Crins manages to consolidate the Bhutanese cultural and religious values and weave a satisfactory account of the Bhutanese approach to gender relations and sustainability. Both these concepts are foreign to Bhutan, as she correctly points out, and Bhutanese ideas and values associated with these concepts are very subtle and elusive. With no significant study done to this day, these ideas and values remain diffused in a largely oral society without serious attempts to extrapolate even a general framework, let alone develop tested theoretical structures. Furthermore, they are found in numerous localised variations. It is, then, no easy task to capture and crystallise these ideas and values and to formulate them for a scholarly discourse. Crins succeeds in integrating the Bhutanese beliefs, values and practices and informing the reader about Bhutan's gender relations and approach to sustainable development, albeit in a rather chaotic manner.

#### The true story of meeting the 'other'

In the final pages, Crins touches on the impact the outside world, particularly the West, has on Bhutanese perceptions of gender relations and sustainability. The reader can only wish that she dwelt more on this as this meeting of the traditional Bhutan and the West is truly a story of meeting the 'other', and is more fascinating and significant than the meeting between a single anthropologist and a rural village. Yet, the reader can pick traces of her general point that modern western influence has introduced new gender bias in a society which was largely free of gender inequities. She argues that the traditional gender differences, where they exist, are purely seen in physical terms (i.e. menstruation) or are merely conceptual beliefs with little or no impact in real life. In real life, Crins concludes that Bhutanese societies are mostly matriarchal and women are generally equal to men, if not more important. The exposure to western education and culture has brought about changes in their lifestyles and a new pattern of gender relations, which have given rise to previously unknown gender inequities.

This is a very interesting point and benefits from a couple illustrative examples. As Crins repeatedly notes, most Bhutanese families are matrilineal, passing the family line and property to the daughter. However, in modern efforts by the state to determine citizenship and write regulations for census, a child of a Bhutanese mother is still unable to acquire citizenship without a Bhutanese father to name. Property is now commonly divided equally among the children. Besides, the requirement for official registration of marriages and the proliferation of western-styled weddings have also led to increased stigma for single mothers.

This same pattern of change is visible in many other areas including the approach to sustainability. The traditional Bhutanese approach to the environment, inspired by the pre-Buddhist animistic beliefs and the Buddhist worldview, is a very holistic and harmonious one treating nature with great respect and concern as a living organism and a sacred entity. In contrast, the modern scientific worldview, which is fast replacing the traditional beliefs, explains nature in purely physical and chemical terms and gives man the centre stage to control and use nature. This has led to the loss of fear of non-human forces in nature and man's unbridled exploitation of the ecology. Thus modern secular education (modelled on the western system) and the sweeping process of globalisation, with their materialistic and consumerist trappings, are quickly changing Bhutan's cultural landscape and causing new problems and challenges.

If the West is the source of new problems, it is also in the western systems that Bhutan hopes to find the inspiration for the solutions to these problems. Just as modern western conventions for protection of women (such as CEDAW) and policies on gender equality are sought as answers to its new gender problems, western scientific environmentalism and legislations (such as Bhutan's famous constitutional provision to keep 60% of the country under forest cover) are being sought as solutions to its environmental challenges. In a highly globalised era dominated by western world-view and culture, it is only sensible to seek the remedy in the source of the problem and to learn from the experiences of those who have been on the path.

With roads, hospitals and schools introduced effectively only about 50 years ago and TV and internet only in 1999, Bhutan's meeting with the 'other' has only just begun. Crins, with an acute nostalgia and sentimental attachment to traditional Bhutan, only seems to fear the worst but leaves the reader with no substantive account of this complex meeting of exogenous modernity and endogenous tradition and the implications it has and will have on Bhutan. Crins is very repetitive and she makes many stereotypical remarks such as 'Bhutan is the last bastion in the world that has not been ruined by modernisation' (p.174) or 'Nyingmapa monks can marry' (p.57). The book could be a lot better if it had some editorial help.

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# All at sea?

What is to be expected from an edited volume entitled: *Port Cities in Asia and Europe*? While the title gives away little about the content, the brief editorial Introduction is clear: The book is not on port cities in Asia and Europe in general; rather the processes of transformation which seaports have undergone in the global age. While some port cities have coped successfully with the required 'speed' for transactions in today's global economy (p.xv), many seaports have had to re-invent themselves in order to stay relevant; others face decline.

Hans Schenk



MAIN PICTURE: Port of Singapore. INSET: The old port of Marseille.

**Arndt Graf and Chua Beng Huat, eds. 2009.**  
*Port Cities in Asia and Europe.*  
Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.  
222 pages. ISBN 0 7103 1183 4

EMERGING FROM A WORKSHOP on port cities and city states in Asia and Europe in 2004, the editors of this volume have brought together 12 articles in five sections, ranging from 'History' to 'Beyond port cities'. However, I am forced to wonder whether the emphasis on the 'city-state' during the workshop provides sufficient motivation for five of the 12 articles in this book to deal completely or partly with Singapore and two with Hong Kong?

Similarly, I am left wanting by the fact that the editors have not attempted to discuss the concept of a port city or of the present-day global economy. This may explain why a sizeable number of the essays do not, or only marginally, touch upon the main theme of the book. The two articles in the first section on history are a case in point. They refer to the history of the port of Osaka (by Towao Sakaehara) and that of Marseille (by Laurent Metzger) respectively. The authors dig deep into the past but do not touch upon transformations of these port cities in the current global economy. It is a pity, for example, that the essay on Marseille makes no mention of the recent shift of the old port towards the new harbour in Fos, 50 kilometres west of the city, or of recent waterfront developments. Instead, we are offered a summing up of passenger and freighter ships and their VIP passengers in the past.

#### 'Curious comparisons'

The second section of the book covers contemporary developments and consists of four articles. The first is a curious comparison of the port cities of IJmuiden in the Netherlands, Banjul in The Gambia and Jakarta by Peter Nas, Timor Reijnders and Eline Steenhuisen, respectively. These authors appear to have at least posed the question: what is a port city? They discuss some approaches to the concept of a port city in terms of quays, market systems, logistics, etc and conclude that such approaches are biased and based upon West European port cities. The authors want to see a colonial harbour model introduced which would take into account relations with the colonial motherland. However, a wealth of leading studies on the concept of Asian port cities – many of them colonial in major parts of their history – is already available from authors such as Frank Broeze and Rhoads Murphy (in two volumes edited by Broeze). It is surprising then that these authors make no reference to these works in their own quest for a model of a colonial port city.

Two further studies in this section refer to waterfront development, notably in Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai, and in George Town, Penang. Dirk Schubert describes three winners in

the process of transformation from former 'insignificant colonial bases into knowledge-based and service based centres and important hubs in the worldwide network of seaports' (p.81); while Morshidi Sirat concludes that George Town has lost its importance as a port due to global industrial developments and what he describes as the re-invention of the port for 'urban heritage tourism' (p.115). It is a pity that the dozens of names of streets, quays and other landmarks that Schubert mentions for Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai are not accompanied by reference maps. Without them, this topographical hubbub seems surplus to requirements.

The section contains, finally, an account by Kacung Marijan of the transfer of political power for the port city of Surabaya, to local government in Indonesia. Despite this devolution of power, the municipal authorities of Surabaya have not taken the lead in managing their port; rather a central government-owned and financed port enterprise has remained in charge. This case study forms a useful example of the global pitfalls of decentralisation policies.

The next section: 'Contact zone', contains two interesting studies. The first one, by Yong Mun Cheong, is on the specific roles of Singapore and Hong Kong during the period between 1945 and 1949. Both cities neighboured countries in revolution and turmoil: in the Netherlands East Indies and mainland China respectively. Both cities were instrumental, perhaps vital, in the (illegal) transfer of war supplies and refugees. But one may wonder whether the editors consider this epoch in the histories of the two cities – which are so well described – as examples of transformations in the new global economy which are promised to the reader. The second contribution, by Miriam Rohde, covers the trade relations between three minor ports in Hokkaido, Japan and Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands of Russia. Since Russia and Japan have never concluded a peace treaty, officially such relations should not exist at the national level. At the regional level, however, there are flourishing *de facto* trade relations, hidden behind statistical manipulations and despite cultural misunderstandings and expressions of racism. The paper is interesting and a good example of common sense in spite of the fact that '...it may take some time for the Russian sailors to learn how to behave in a Japanese bath.' (p.153). But, it is not a global economy that makes port cities function or change; it is a regional one.

#### From movies to marketing

The section named 'Representation' contains what the author, Yvonne Schulz-Zinda, calls a 're-invention' of Shanghai in Chinese film. Shanghai's harbour has become almost virtual and served as décor for a movie culture spanning seven decades, from 1934 to 2004. Here, finally, some of the attributes of a port city are revealed: a sky line, dancehalls and prostitution and a cosmo-

politan outlook; but only via a discussion of 13 movies exhibiting the 'Paris of the East' and Western nostalgia for Shanghai. This study would be better placed in a movie magazine!

The harbour becomes even less than virtual décor in a paper by Arndt Graf on marketing the city-states of Hamburg and Singapore on the internet. Harbours are apparently not even mentioned anymore on the websites outlining the selling points of these two cities. If this is true, why bother to include this paper in a volume on port cities? And why go to even more trouble to compare a German city state with some degree of autonomy with the independent city-state of Singapore?

Singapore sells itself as one of the best places in the world for business: competitive, profitable, free from corruption and a global player. In Chua Beng Huat's paper on Singapore he explicitly mentions its huge port as a marginal factor in the economy of the city. Singapore's industrial developments have over the last decades moved in the direction of international finance, high technologies and life sciences. These movements have called for a 'cultural industry', both as an area of investment and for supporting the knowledge-based industrialisation (p. 193). Thus the arts are promoted: a dance company, an art museum, a film industry, etc. to keep the highly skilled Singaporeans and expats happy. Chua Beng Huat has an interesting paper, but struggles to make it compatible with the analysis of Singapore's internet marketing. Not a word is mentioned on 'culture' in Singapore's internet pages, according to Graf.

The final section, named 'Beyond port cities', contains just one paper. It is once more on Singapore and its author Tan Tai Yong tells of its history in relation to its insecure hinterlands. He discusses some conceptual issues of port cities and takes hinterlands as a vital aspect of an enduring port. This is a sensible essay: it poses some of the basic questions that should have been asked by the editors in the Introduction and which could have served as a guideline for selecting the conference papers for this edited volume. The volume as it is published now contains fortunately valuable essays, but in a disappointing book.

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*Singapore sells itself as one of the best places in the world for business: competitive, profitable, free from corruption and a global player.*



# National politics, local contexts

Jacqueline Vel's book provides a comprehensive account of socio-political developments in one of the most understudied regions of Eastern Indonesia. Based on extensive fieldwork over the last 20 years, Vel describes how changes in national politics have affected the conduct of local politics in West Sumba, a small district in East Nusa Tenggara province. With its broad temporal scope and its great attention to ethnographic detail, it will be an important reference for scholars working on Eastern Indonesia. However, it should be noted that a significant amount of the material presented in this book is actually not new (some data is based on fieldwork in the 1980s) and several chapters or parts thereof have already been published elsewhere.

Dirk Tomsa

Vel, Jacqueline A.C. 2008.

*Uma Politics: An Ethnography of Democratization in West Sumba, Indonesia, 1986-2006.*

Leiden: KITLV Press. 277 pages. ISBN: 978 90 6718 324 6

The book consists of ten chapters and three additional vignettes about social life in Sumba. The first two chapters provide some basic geographic and ethnographic information about Sumba and highlight the importance of the state for all aspects of life in this part of Indonesia. Furthermore, these chapters, as well as the next two chapters, also introduce the reader to some key concepts used throughout the book, for example Bourdieu's three forms of capital, notions of political class or local concepts of *adat*.

Taken together, the first four chapters make up nearly half of the book. Only in Chapter 5 does the narrative turn to events in the post-Suharto era, which is a bit disappointing given that the title indicates a focus on democratisation. Following a concise overview of the events of 1998 and how they were perceived in Sumba, this second half of the book deals with issues such as localised violence (Ch. 6), socio-economic development and civil society (Ch. 7), the desire to create a new district (Ch. 8) and local elections (Ch. 9). Last but not least, Chapter 10 provides some concluding remarks which stress, among other things, the importance of analysing democratisation processes in their local contexts.

Vel argues that despite the transformation of Indonesia's political system, the predominant style of local politics in Sumba has remained largely unchanged (p. 238ff.). Yet, as local leaders gradually adapt to the new conditions, the broader socio-political landscape of Sumba is inevitably being transformed. According to Vel, the incremental changes that have occurred in Sumba as a result of democratisation have been positive (p. 246), but she also alerts the reader to growing social inequalities which may pose new problems for Sumba in the future (p. 247).

#### A palpable familiarity

Overall, this book is a valuable contribution to the literature on local politics in Indonesia. Arguably, its major strengths lie in its comprehensiveness and its attention to detail. Having lived in Sumba for extended periods of time, Vel is intimately familiar with the political and social dynamics in this part of Indonesia, and this familiarity is palpable throughout the book. The general reader may at times be puzzled about the various local names and places, but generally the author succeeds in communicating her detailed knowledge in an engaging and readable way.

Perhaps the best sections of the book are those where Vel enriches her dense descriptions of certain events and persons with a broader comparative perspective in order to put the situation in Sumba into a wider context. In Chapter 6 on local violence, for example, the insightful analysis of the events of 'Bloody Thursday', a day of brutal violence in the town of Waikabubak, is complemented by the notion that the fighting in Sumba cannot simply be explained as yet another case of communal conflict in Eastern Indonesia. As Vel points out, there were certainly similarities with the mass violence in places like Maluku or Poso (e.g. historical continuities or the instrumentalisation of violence by local elites), but religion played no role whatsoever in Sumba.

Thus, in Chapter 6 the book lives up to its ambition, articulated in Chapter 1, to use Sumba as a case study to either confirm or challenge conclusions about 'Indonesia in general' (p. 7).

among whom I dwell. It always takes considerable effort to then 'bracket' myself and to open up to ways of life and thinking that I may or not at all appreciate. In brief, my profession is about cross-cultural encounters, about boundary crossing, about being open to new things, and about being rooted at the same time. In that sense, I am a cosmopolitan engaging distant belonging and close encounters.

#### 'Cosmo-patriots'

Most of the subjects described in the present volume – Hong Kong and Singapore queers, Indonesian *gay* and *lesbi*, skinheads of Korea, Indonesian pop-music imagings (*sic*), those exposed to media, South Korean youths – are not literally border-crossing, but stay in their places of origin. There, they are exposed to the messages of world-wide media that they distort without any attempt of opening themselves up to their original meaning; they merely invest the messages and examples they receive with the characteristics of their particular *milieu*. This demonstrates that they are rooted in a place – and like it that way – at the same time that they are exposed to cosmopolitan or global media. Contrary to the expectations of some researchers, the exposure to the wide world does not deracinate. On the contrary, it strengthens roots and identity, resulting in the 'passionate sense of belonging to a certain locale' (p.12) that the editors have dubbed 'patriotism'. Hence, the subjects described are of two worlds and can so be called 'cosmo-patriots'.

Most other chapters, however, lack this broader perspective or it is at least not articulated as clearly as in the chapter on conflict and violence. With their fairly exclusive focus on Sumba, they will therefore appeal primarily to specialists with a distinctive interest in Eastern Indonesia. They are generally well-written, but still leave a number of questions unanswered.

In Chapter 8, for example, Vel explains in great detail the motivations of various groups of people who campaigned for the creation of a new district, Central Sumba. According to the author, it was a combination of what she calls 'overseas Sumbanese', local activists and well-educated but unemployed youth who pursued the creation of this district (p. 185). The reader learns a lot about the main actors and their strategies to achieve their goals, yet there is little information about the various social forces that did not want a new district in Sumba. This is even more surprising in view of Vel's admission that only a small minority of Sumbanese actually supported the movement for a new district. But apart from some scattered references to 'outspoken opponents' and the 'rather indifferent' majority of the population (p. 185), the reader learns nothing about these critics.

Similarly, the analysis of electoral dynamics in Chapter 9 raises a number of questions. Perhaps most significantly, the relation between national and local elections is not explored satisfactorily. Vel dismisses the importance of national politics, claiming that people 'were not very involved' (p. 211). But the voter turnout of 80 percent in the presidential election seems to suggest otherwise. Moreover, there are important patronage networks between Jakarta and Sumba, as alluded to repeatedly throughout the book. Arguably these networks would be very heavily involved during the national elections, but Vel does not shed much light on this dimension of electoral politics.

#### Disputable assertions

More specifically, some of the assertions in this chapter seem to be quite disputable. Among these are for example Vel's elevation of Vedi Hadiz' 'predatory interests' argument to a general consensus in academic literature (p. 212), her discussion of the relation between political parties and presidential candidates (p. 211-212) or her sweeping statement that 'political parties generally create campaign teams to assist the [pilkada] candidates in their election campaigns' (p. 214). In fact, as various analyses of local elections have shown, parties actually often play only marginal roles in *pilkada* campaigns, leaving candidates to assemble their own teams without substantial support from the parties that nominated them.

Finally, a word on the overall presentation of the book. Unfortunately, it must be said, the editors of this book have worked rather sloppily. The first three chapters in particular are riddled with typos, missing words and grammatical mistakes, and several names are misspelled, for instance Nusa Tenggara Timur (p. 7; should be Timur), Donald Emerson (p. 8; should be Emmerson) or Ann Booth (p. 28; should be Anne Booth). More diligent editing could have prevented this kind of problem and thereby facilitated readability.

In sum, this book is probably a bit too narrowly focused to reach a wide audience, but it does provide some valuable data for scholars of Eastern Indonesia and those who are generally interested in Indonesian local politics.

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#### Modernisation theory?

It brings to mind the modernisation thesis of the 1950s and 60s. Exposure to the modern world would westernise, secularise and rationalise. Tradition, religion, and disorganisation were on the way out. Then, lo and behold, 'religion' was coming back with a vengeance, identity celebrated (and often powerfully pushed by the nation-state), and westernisation merely expressed in symbols, from skyscrapers to the fashion dictates of Paris, even as it was not impressed on the mind. From the late 1960s on, it was, therefore, concluded that exposure to world-wide modernity reinforces the local; that it prompts the religious impulse; that identity is rooted in the life-world; that life-styling is a mere fashionable fad animated by the deep-seated drive for distinction. In brief, inputs coming from the outside are localised, are adapted to the own way of life. Now, by substituting globalisation for modernisation, the whole sequence is largely restated.

Of course, this is not what editors and contributors have in mind. They aim 'to unpack the dialectics between the local, the national, the regional and the global' (p.11), which doubtlessly is a legitimate endeavour. The principal vehicle of the extra-local messages is the media, and who, these days, has the privilege of not being assailed by its coverage? So, why concentrate on marginal, often fleeting groups and artistic expression, classified under Sex, Space, Body, Race, when discussing a virtually universal phenomenon? Any peasant come to town crosses more borders than those who have their lifestyles inspired by pop



ABOVE: School children in Waikabubak.

## Reinventing the wheel

Hoodwinked by the enigmatic title, I expected to review a book on my preoccupation with anthropological field work.<sup>1</sup>

Niels Mulder

Jurriëns, Edwin and Jeroen de Kloet (eds.). 2007.

*Cosmopatriots: On Distant Belongings and Close Encounters.*

Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi B.V. 302 pages. ISBN 978 90 420 2360 4.

YES, EVEN AFTER SPENDING most of my professional life among strangers, I cannot escape from my Holland-Dutch roots and bourgeois birth. To an important extent, these decide what I first note and think, and how I'll distort the image of the people



# 'Inventing' the horse

This book is full of interest. The geographical and historical core of it may be found in the sub-title. Its chief authors, Greg Bankoff and Sandra Swart, are respectively authorities on the Philippines and Southern Africa: the former discusses the introduction of horses in the Philippines, their role in its colonial history, their impact on and adaptation to the environment; the latter the role of horses in settler South Africa and the emergence of the 'Besotho pony' in Lesotho.

Nicholas Tarling

Bankoff, G. and Sandra Swart, with Peter Boomgaard, William Clarence-Smith, Bernice de Jong Boers and Dhiravat na Pombejra. 2007.

*Breeds of Empire. The 'Invention' of the Horse in Southeast Asia and Southern Africa 1500-1950.* Copenhagen: NIAS Press. viii + 263 pages. Maps, tables, illus. ISBN 978 87 7694 014 0

COLLABORATORS in the book include William Clarence-Smith, whose concise and informative essay on the maritime horse trade of the Indian Ocean shows the connection between the two areas; Peter Boomgaard, who writes on horse-breeding and trading in the history of Indonesia; Bernice de Jong Boers, who writes illuminatingly on the horses of the Indonesian island of Sumbawa; and Dhiravat na Pombejra, who, drawing on Dutch sources for the history of Ayutthaya, reminds us that horses were not the draught animals of Southeast Asia, but were used in non-colonial states for military and ceremonial purposes. Neither Southeast Asia nor Southern Africa was, by contrast, say, to Australia, ideal for the horse. But while horses affected the environment, they also adapted to it. Typically the 'breeds' that emerged were small but their stamina was great.

## Horses and humans

The principal authors comment on the story from many points of view and offer many insights on the relationships of horse and human and also some on the relationships among humans. The role of the horse in human society is, of course, not a new topic, but it has rarely been placed in the context of colonialism. Historiography has been more familiar with those who rode into Europe – to borrow the title of the English translation of Miklos Jankovich's book (1971) – or with the feudal system that sustained the mounted knight in Europe. The age of the horse indeed did not at once terminate with the building of railways or the advent of motorised vehicles. Horses were employed and destroyed on a grand scale in the First World War.

'[T]he only thing that wrings my heart and soul', cried the composer Edward Elgar, 'is the thought of the horses – oh! my beloved animals – the men – and women can go to hell – but my horses – I walk round and round this room cursing God for allowing dumb animals to be tortured.'

'[T]he only thing that wrings my heart and soul', cried the composer Edward Elgar at its outset, 'is the thought of the horses – oh! my beloved animals – the men – and women can go to hell – but my horses – I walk round and round this room cursing God for allowing dumb animals to be tortured.' (quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar A Creative Life*, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 670). But it was true of the Second World War, too. Hitler invaded Russia with 600,000 vehicles, but, as Richard Overy points out, also with 700,000 horses. (Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, London: Pimlico, 2006, p. 264)

Perhaps our authors under-emphasise the extent to which horses have appeared in past historiography – Napoleon's Marengo is not the first war-horse whose name is remembered: Bucephalus supported Alexander the Great and Babieca El Cid (and no Antipodean author can forget the legendary race-horse Phar Lap) – and in literature – Black Beauty is preceded by Rosinante. It is not clear, in other words, that the horse has been quite so 'othered' as is suggested. Whether there is, or should be, horse-story as there may be her-story as well as history is open to question. The principal authors raise it, but do not goad us to answer. But their initiative is welcome. Could it apply to other creatures that have had the good fortune and the misfortune to be closely associated with the activities and imaginings of humankind? – the cat, the dog, or the elephant, the chicken or the hawk, the whale.

## Breeds and breeding

Our authors put some emphasis on the 'invention' of the horse and on the emergence of 'breeds' and the concept of 'thoroughbreds'. That invites the adoption of yet other perspectives. Notwithstanding the usefulness and the endurance of the horses that adapted to the conditions of Southern Africa or Southeast Asia, human beings sought to improve their 'breeding'. In the late 19th century, as Professor Bankoff points out, Spaniards in the Philippines became convinced that life in the tropics debilitated both man and beast and that 'science' had the answer. 'And just as nature needed the intervening hand of man, white man, to reverse the process of retardation, so the local population required the guidance and control of Spanish colonialism to escape from 'savagery'.' (p.121)

'It is widely accepted', Dr Swart adds, 'that human 'races' are far from natural and are in fact socially produced and shifting, but animal breeds are often a safe realm for those narratives on to which conceptions of human difference such as hierarchy, gender, class, and national character are mapped.' (p. 147) Historians of the colonial world, and indeed of the Western world, cannot ignore the looseness of thinking and talking about the 'races' of men. If, as they should, they read this excellent book, they will also be reminded how easy it has been, not only to imagine animals as humans, but to regard humans as animals, to be, in the case of 'lesser breeds' or 'impure blood' or 'bad stock', to be improved, used or disposed of, trampled down by panzers and horses' hooves.

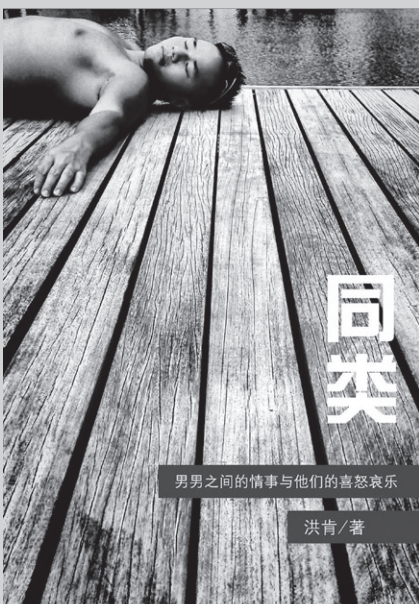
Nicholas Tarling  
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INSET TOP:  
Chinese dressage horse  
INSET MIDDLE:  
Besotho pony.  
Image by Jazz Kuschke.  
INSET BELOW:  
Napoleon crossing the Alps on his horse Marengo.



BELOW: 同类, the first anthology of Singaporean gay Chinese fiction. Written by Ken Ang.



同类

男男之间的情事与他们的喜怒哀乐

洪肯/著

stars, soccer hooliganism, gay festivals, CNN, or Hollywood. Or, for that matter, what about the ambiguity of identity of tribal groups who have to maintain identity while accommodating with dominant regional populations and languages, with the penetration of the 'nation-state', and with the national and international media to boot?<sup>2</sup>

## Ambiguity

The window is dressed by an ominous quote from Jacques Derrida on which the book opens, and in places the reader will be in for a rough ride, since many contributors eagerly theorise their descriptions of the obvious and expectable. However this may be, the best working hypothesis that emerges is that the localisation or adaptation of extraneous inputs hybridises, pollutes, betrays, bastardises, and demonstrates the dangers of essentialism or the quest for pristine purity. This implies that identities, however deeply rooted, are ambiguous and negotiable, too.

Even so, certain authors want to emphasise essences and stress the often expressed nativism of the adapters. Did

the *ligne sac* and hula-hoop crazes I witnessed in 1958 make the Japanese any less self-secure?<sup>3</sup> Most probably not. Did the soccer hooliganism of the fans of *FC Surabaya* – regularly drawing a trail of destruction through Java in the 1990s – make these fans any less Madurese, Javanese, Indonesian? It probably did, yet it may have strengthened their urban proletarian belonging. There is an element of the all-possible in the outcome of culture contact, and so I remain reticent to efforts of over-theorisation of intercultural translation or the over-interpretation of cultural essentials of which the volume offers many instances.

## Overwhelming diversity

Concretely, the collection offers readings on being gay in Chinese and Indonesian localities; on maintaining an evolving local identity in the face of extraneous modernisation and state-sponsored essentialism that tells the citizens what it is to be Chinese, Korean, Indonesian; on Indonesian and Korean pop and youth culture; on de-territorialising aesthetics in international Indonesian and diasporic Chinese art.

The rationale for this overwhelming diversity is that we may gain theoretically relevant insight through focusing on the marginal. In exploratory studies, this often is the case indeed, also because absurd outcomes have the merit of showing what things are not. This approach through serendipity would have tremendously gained in credibility if any or some of the tentative conclusions on translation, root-searching, or cultural pollution would have

been applied to mainstream situations that are, wherever in the world, subject to the same processes. Thus far, however, these marginal cases, diversity, eclectic theorising, etc., make me fear that the editors bit off more than they could chew. Granted, the question of how scholars should engage the contradictions in everyday practices and the concomitant uncertainties of identity remains as valid as ever, yet the present miscellany of divergent interpretations leaves the reader – me, at least – bewildered. Maybe I am growing old.

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## Notes

1. E.g., Niels Mulder. 2008. *Doing Thailand; the anthropologist as a young dog in Bangkok in the 1960s and 2009. Professional Stranger; doing Thailand during its most violent decade. A field diary.* Bangkok: White Lotus.
2. E.g., Nguyen Van Thang. 2007. *Ambiguity of Identity. The Mieu in North Vietnam.* Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
3. In, Niels Mulder. 2008. *Rondje Wereld in het jaar van de hoelahoep.* Rijswijk: Elmar.

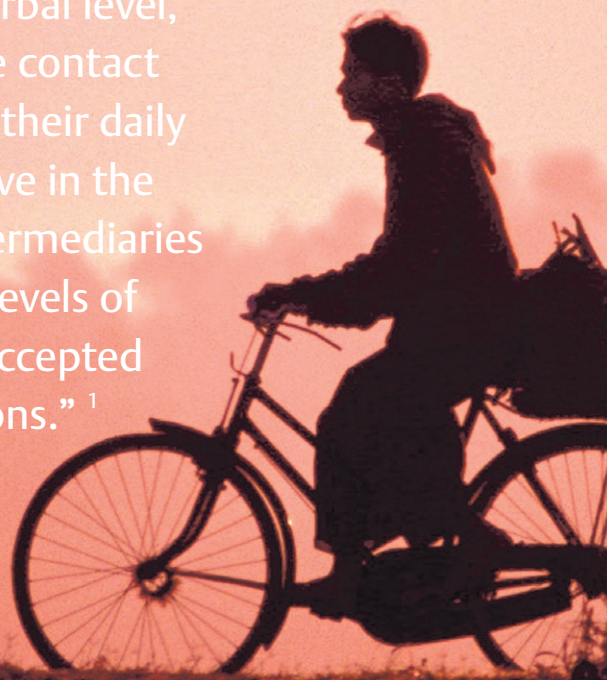


# The State and statism in Burma (Myanmar)

In 1987, veteran Burma specialist Robert Taylor published *The State in Burma*, an analysis of the country's politics beginning in dynastic times and ending with the one-party socialist state established by General Ne Win. He closed the book with the following passage:

“The all-encompassing ideology of the [Burma Socialist Programme] Party appears to be reflected in public and private discourse and, at least at the verbal level, its message is accepted... Most people have contact with the Party and the People's Councils in their daily life, and the local agents of the state who live in the community are recognized and used as intermediaries with the authorities at the middle and top levels of the state. For better or worse, the state is accepted as inevitable and dominates other institutions.”<sup>1</sup>

Donald M. Seekins



**Taylor, Robert H. 2009.**

*The State in Myanmar.*

London: Hurst and Company, xxv + 555 pages.

ISBN 978 1 85065 893

TAYLOR'S QUOTATION is faint praise (not exactly – 'I have seen the future and it works!'). But it was the author's misfortune that *The State in Burma* came out just before the massive popular protests of 1988, which led to the collapse of the Ne Win regime and the violent rebirth of the army-state in the form of a junta named the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC, known after 1997 as the State Peace and Development Council or SPDC). The new military regime proclaimed the establishment of a 'multi-party democracy' and held a general election on 27 May 1990 (though it did not recognise the results, a landslide victory achieved by the opposition National League for Democracy party led by Aung San Suu Kyi). It also opened up the country to private foreign investment, dropping into the dustbin of history the socialist ideology that Taylor claimed had been largely accepted by the people.

The book's discussion of the dynastic and colonial politics was detailed and scholarly, drawing on a wealth of sources including Victor Lieberman's studies on the dynastic state, John S. Furnivall's classic *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* and the author's own research on the late colonial period. The period from the Japanese invasion of 1942 until Ne Win's *coup d'état* in 1962 was described as a time when the state was 'displaced,' though it was during the years that Prime Minister U Nu headed a civilian government (1948-1958, 1960-1962) that Burmese citizens enjoyed the greatest personal freedom and prosperity. Taylor's last chapter, 'Reasserting the State, 1962-1987,' presented a largely uncritical description of the Ne Win regime. On ethnic minorities, he wrote:

“While promising equal treatment, the state reiterated its pledge to protect minority cultural practices as long as these did not run contrary to accepted health standards and other norms...the state carried out other steps to unify the population around symbols and institutions of a non-divisible nature. In 1965 an Academy for the Development of National Groups was opened to train individuals from the border areas to appreciate the diverse culture of the country while recognizing the need for the unity of the state...”<sup>2</sup>

However, according to fellow Burma specialist Josef Silverstein, the Academy was located in Sagaing in Upper Burma, the

heartland of ethnic majority Burman culture, and few ethnic minority people actually studied there.<sup>3</sup> National unity – both during the Ne Win period and after 1988 – has been fostered and controlled in a top-down manner by a Burman-dominated power elite that sees diversity as largely a matter of parades on 12 February, Union Day, in which people march wearing colourful minority costumes.

In 2009, Taylor has published a revised and expanded version of his 1987 book, re-named *The State in Myanmar* in recognition of the official change of the country's name from 'Burma' to 'Myanmar' in 1989. While *The State in Burma* (including bibliography and index) is 395 pages long, the revised edition weighs in at 555 pages. This includes the events of 1988 and two decades of SLORC/SPDC rule (a new chapter titled 'The State Redux, 1988-2008'); however, Taylor's editors have done him a great disservice by not insisting that he drastically condense chapters from the 1987 book before adding so much new material. Lengthy descriptions of the finances and administration of the long-dead British colonial regime are retained, even though their relevance for Burma in the 21st century is questionable.

#### 'Ponderous prose'

Academic writing doesn't necessarily have to be easy or fun to read, but the dryness and ponderousness of Taylor's prose is in dire need of some lightening up. Given his many years of firsthand experience in the country, which he describes in his Preface (pp. xv-xvii) it is surprising that his knowledge of Burma seems so textbook-ish and abstract, fitted into the Procrustean bed of comparative politics theory rather than 'lived.' There are few pungent vignettes of Burmese life like those related by the late economist Mya Maung or the journalist San San Tin.<sup>4</sup>

Taylor's focus on formal institutions (including a lengthy discussion of the SPDC-backed 2008 Constitution at the end of the book) passes rather lightly over the dynamics of Burmese politics: for example, the principle of *lukawn, lutaw* ('good people before smart people'), which Mya Maung explains was the principle behind Ne Win's appointment of subordinates: they should not be too smart or ambitious, lest they become a threat to Number One's power monopoly<sup>5</sup> – a principle also observed by the SPDC's incumbent Number One, Senior General Than Shwe, in his 2004 purge of Number Three, the talented but too-big-for-his-britches Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt. The humour, go-through-the-motions and passive resistance that characterise ordinary people's relations to the (Ne Win, SPDC) state are also neglected, which suggests that

*The State in Myanmar* would have benefited greatly from the ideas of James C. Scott on the survival tactics of the powerless, as described in his *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.<sup>6</sup>

The new final chapter, 110 pages long, is full of details on the post-1988 army-state and the opposition that emerged to confront it, gaining the sympathy of the outside world for Burma's hitherto ignored human rights problems. Taylor describes this opposition, including its exile component, the cease-fires made by the SLORC with major border area armed groups, the new 'open economy' policy, Asian economic engagement with the regime and western sanctions. He makes the interesting point that the new SLORC junta that seized power in 1988 was 'relatively open and accessible' but after its reorganisation as the SPDC in 1997 it became more closed and hierarchical, closely resembling the Ne Win-era state. (p.485) He closes the chapter by saying 'whether the aging managers of the state [the SPDC] had learned, unlike their predecessors, the necessity of renewing its personnel and policies in order to perpetuate itself was a question yet to be answered.' (p.485)

#### 'Singularly unsympathetic'

His view of the post-1988 pro-democracy movement is singularly unsympathetic. He mentions the 'Black Friday' incident in Dipeyin (Depayin), Upper Burma, when Aung San Suu Kyi and her NLD supporters were attacked by pro-regime mobs on 30 May 2003, but neglects to add that reliable reports say that as many as 80 of her people were killed. (p.418) On her role in politics, he writes that:

“From her first major public address at the Shwedagon Pagoda [on 26 August 1988] when she called the prevailing demonstrations part of a 'second struggle for independence', creating a spurious analogy between the foreign rule of British and the rule of the *tatmadaw* [Burmese armed forces], she emerged as the fulcrum of protest politics in Myanmar.” (p.404)

Why Taylor is motivated to call her comparison 'spurious' is unclear. Is it because the power elite is indigenous rather than foreign, and it was Burman and Chin troops who shot thousands of people in the streets of Rangoon rather than Sikhs and Punjabis recruited into the British Indian Army? It should be noted that even at their most repressive, the British security forces were responsible for only a handful of deaths among urban Burmese protesters before World War Two, not 1988's thousands of victims.

Indeed, colonialism in an indigenous form lives on in Burma, just as it has in Mugabe's Zimbabwe and Mobutu's Congo before it collapsed into complete chaos. In his Introduction, Taylor claims that Third World states are faced with two options, if they wish to assert their dominance over society: either open themselves up to foreign influences in the form of economic ties and military alliances (as some of the outward-looking ASEAN states such as Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia have done), though the price for acquiring support from abroad is the state's loss of autonomy to foreign actors. Or self-reliance, in Taylor's unusually vivid choice of words, 'to force the state upon the remainder of society with the few weapons at its disposal':

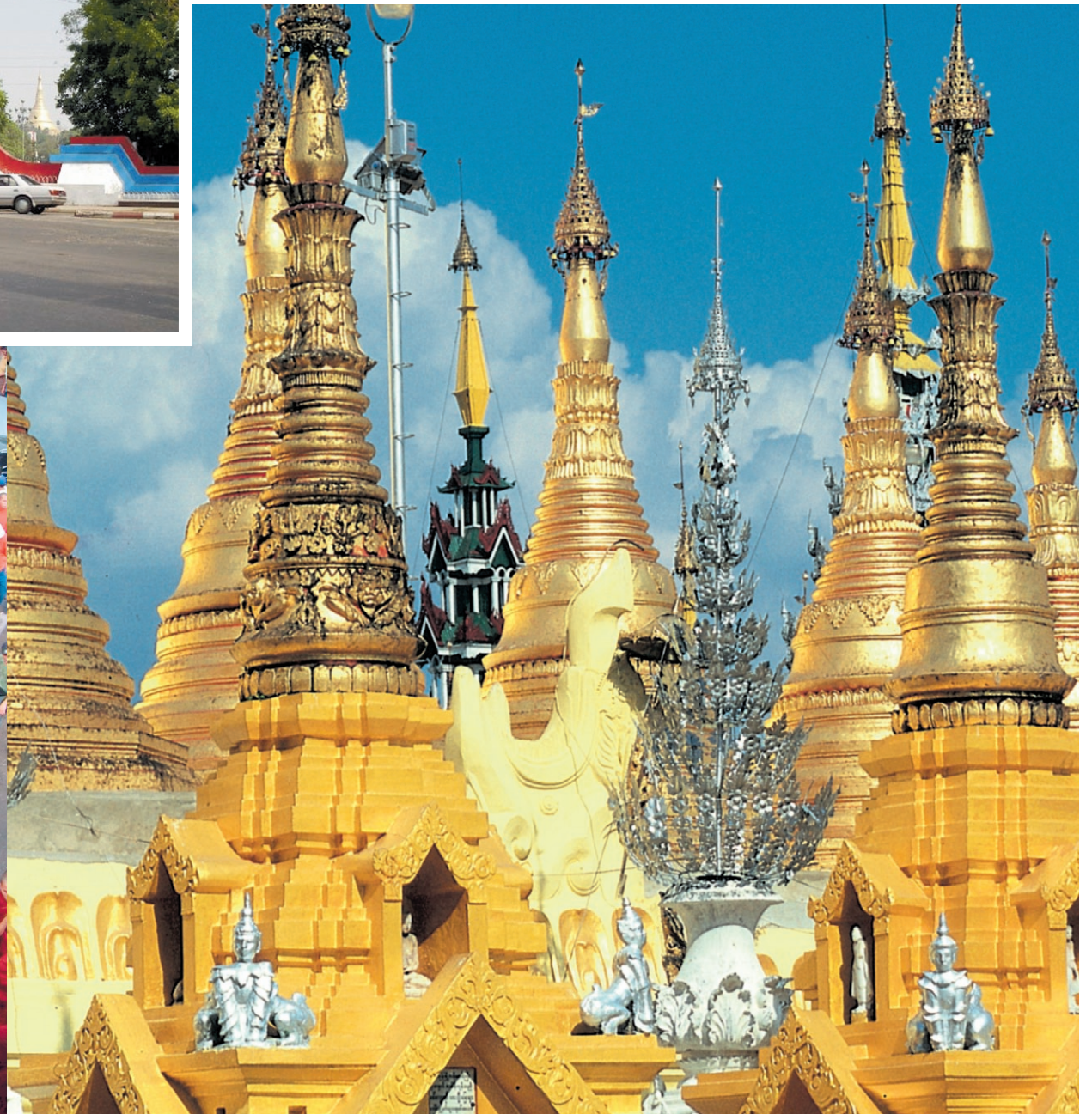
“Given the state's lack of positive inducements because of its impecunious nature, this requires eliminating its rivals through the power of the law while ensuring that the institutions permitted to exist are dependent upon the state, either through their personnel or finances, and are therefore unable to organize effective opposition to it.” (p.12)

Ne Win chose this second option, self-reliance, seeking to minimise foreign contacts and establish an autarkic economic system, though by the 1980s his regime had become highly dependent on infusions of official development assistance provided by Japan and some western countries.<sup>7</sup> But the SLORC/SPDC regime has created the worst situation out of both options: it extracts labour and resources from the population in an oppressive manner (the SLORC/SPDC's internationally criticised use of forced labour) while gaining for itself the fruits of post-1988 economic liberalisation. Far from being isolated by (largely counterproductive) western sanctions (as Taylor suggests [pp.12-13]), it has benefited tremendously from the economic and other forms of support provided by its neighbours, especially China, India, Thailand and Singapore as well as more distant benefactors such as Russia, North Korea and South Korea.

#### No questions asked

Since their top priority is rapid economic growth, Asian governments have taken a 'no questions asked' approach to the acquisition of Burma's valuable natural resources, especially natural gas and teak, despite the SLORC/SPDC's dismal human rights record (about which Taylor has little to say). Revenue from the sale of these resources has enabled the junta to carry out an





ambitious modernisation of the armed forces that continues in 2009 with growing and worrisome military ties between North Korea and Burma, including transfer of nuclear technology.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, such revenues have subsidised Senior General Than Shwe's astrologically-ordained pet project, building a new capital city and military headquarters at Naypyidaw in southern Mandalay Division, 320 kilometres north of the old capital Rangoon. But Burma remains a poor country, despite its wealth of natural resources: it sits at the bottom of Southeast Asia's per capita GDP pecking order, along with the small, landlocked country of Laos and Cambodia, which is still recovering from back-to-back wars and the horrors of the Pol Pot regime.<sup>9</sup>

Post-1988 Burma's neo-colonial relationship with its Asian neighbours is the white elephant in the room that Taylor tries to ignore while describing the army-state's struggle to achieve Myanmar identity and independence. As in British colonial times, the SPDC-era Burmese economy has been based on the export of raw materials and possesses a very weak manufacturing base, requiring, in a classic dependency relationship, imports of manufactured goods from a new 'metropole,' the more developed and industrialised Asian states. Because of foreign economic support, the SLORC/SPDC state is not only able to ignore the criticisms and sanctions of western governments, but also doesn't need (or doesn't perceive the need) to make real efforts to win the support of the local population, the malign neglect of whom has often been criminal – for example, in the wake of Cyclone Nargis, which killed almost 140,000 people in the Irrawaddy Delta in May 2008.<sup>10</sup>

Like the British colonialists, the military power elite can be described as located not *inside* society as much as *above* it, largely isolated from the concerns of most desperately poor Burmese and propped up by external powers. Privileged *bogyoke ywa* (generals' villages) resemble the cantonments and civil lines of the European colonial elite, where 'natives' were distinctly unwelcome. There is a large and growing comprador class of foreign and domestic business cronies, including the sports car-driving businessman Teza, who is close to Than Shwe and his family and has played a major role in building the new city of Naypyidaw. The mutual alienation of state and society – which intensified in central Burma during the Ne Win period – in large measure explains the brutality with which the army and riot police suppressed popular demonstrations in 1988, as well as the power elite's intense preoccupation with self-preservation, reflected in Than Shwe's decision to move the capital away from tumultuous and difficult to govern Rangoon to a safer location in the middle of the country.

ABOVE LEFT: Monks protest in Rangoon. INSET: Resistance Park, Rangoon. ABOVE RIGHT: Shwedagon Pagoda, Rangoon.

Since their top priority is rapid economic growth, Asian governments have taken a 'no questions asked' approach to the acquisition of Burma's valuable natural resources, especially natural gas and teak, despite the SLORC/SPDC's dismal human rights record (about which Taylor has little to say).

However, the fundamental problem with *The State in Myanmar* is not its pro-regime bias but its focus on the State, with a capital 'S'. In his Introduction, Taylor writes that:

"...in the approach taken in this volume, it is the interaction of the official state and non-official institutions that is being examined, and it is argued that, to judge from the evidence, most of the time it is the state which is expected to be, and is, the determining partner in such relationships. In this sense the state, through 'its continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive systems', shapes the relationship between itself and civil society, but also shapes the structure of 'many crucial relationships within civil society as well.'"

The state is thus normally able to determine what is a political issue and what is not capable of political solution, as it limits the growth of institutions that can express official or private political opinions and options. (pp.4-5)

From this perspective, based on the 'fact' of state power, Taylor slips over to a normative position very close to that of the 20th century German jurist Carl Schmitt, who said that the state is the embodiment of the 'political unity of the people.'<sup>11</sup> This is a point of view shared by many power holders in East and Southeast Asia who espouse a 'new authoritarianism' based on top-down centralisation, modern technology, a unitary concept of national identity and intolerance of alternative visions of national life.<sup>12</sup> Unlike Singapore, China, or Vietnam, Myanmar under the SLORC/SPDC has not been successful in delivering the benefits of economic growth and technical innovation to the people, which would promote social stability. Some would go as far as to say that the SPDC's Myanmar is a 'failed state' like its new ally North Korea. But the leaders of these countries all share the same assumption – judging from their attempts to quarantine their societies from disruptive external influences and suffocate independent civil society movements – that the state which holds power is, *ipso facto*, legitimate, and that those who challenge this power, who are *outside* the state, are illegitimate. The state is transcendent, a principle enshrined in the institutions of the new 2008 Myanmar constitution, which subordinates 'party politics' to 'national politics,' the latter being firmly controlled by the armed forces (i.e., the army-state reincarnated with a civilian facade).

However, to understand Burma or any other any complex society, it is necessary to focus not only on a single institution, the state, but on the broad spectrum of activities, practices, institutions and beliefs that people in society hold and which are political in nature, simply because they are oriented to,

in David Easton's words, the 'authoritative allocation of values' in that society.<sup>13</sup> One must recognise that within the political system of such a society, one can find traditions and practices of resistance to the state that frequently enjoy more legitimacy and popular recognition than the state itself.

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Notes

1. Taylor, Robert H. *The State in Burma*. 1987. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. p 372.
2. Taylor (1987: 302).
3. Silverstein, Josef . 1977. *Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press. p 114.
4. Maung, Mya. 1992. *Totalitarianism in Burma: Prospects for Economic Development*. New York: Paragon House. Wakeman, Carolyn and San San Tin. 2009. *No Time for Dreams: Living in Burma under Military Rule*. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
5. Maung, Mya (1992: 25).
6. Scott, James C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
7. Seekins, Donald M. 2007. *Burma and Japan since 1940: From 'Co-Prosperity' to 'Quiet Dialogue'*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies. pp. 55-87.
8. On the SPDC's nuclear ambitions and North Korea's assistance, see Gwynne Dyer. 'Pariahs of Asia and their nukes.' *The Japan Times*, 9 August 2009, at www.japantimes.co.jp, accessed 09-08-2009.
9. Based on figures from the US Central Intelligence Agency. *CIA World Factbook 2008*, at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook.
10. See Seekins, Donald M. 2009. 'State, Society and Natural Disaster: Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar (Burma)'. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, no. 37 (2009), pp. 717-737.
11. Jayasuriya, Kanishka 1997. 'Asian values as reactionary modernization.' *NIAS Nytt Newsletter*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies. p 24.
12. Ibid. pp. 19-27.
13. Easton, David. 1971. *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. pp. 128-134. Easton writes that 'Basically the inadequacy of the state concept as a definition of subject matter stems from the fact that it implies that political science is interested in studying a particular kind of institution or organization of life [the state], not a kind of activity that may express itself through a variety of institutions' (p. 113).



# IIAS News and comment

## New interdisciplinary research project on biofuels

IIAS HAS BECOME PARTNER in a new network called JARAK. The Jatropa Research and Knowledge Network examines claims and facts regarding socially sustainable jatropa production in Indonesia.

Jatropa is crop with promise: it can be used as a clean non-fossil diesel fuel and it can provide new income sources in marginal areas that will grow the crop. Such promise has already inspired the investment of millions of dollars in jatropa plantations and plans for further investments have been announced in newspapers and at conferences. In only a few years, an ordinary hedge plant known in Indonesia as *jarak pagar*, has been transformed into a valuable commodity for energy production: jatropa. What is behind this rapid process of commoditisation? What are the environmental requirements and consequences? How can local producers and labourers benefit from the prospective profits?

The scientific challenge of this network is to bridge the current gap between the claims on jatropa and the actual existing knowledge that would justify them.

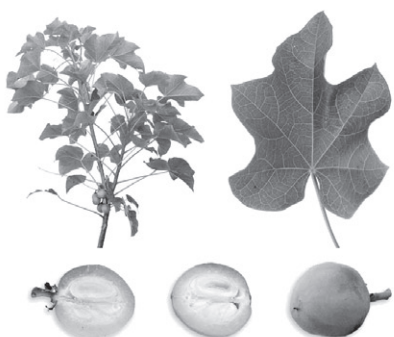
Project leader Dr Jacqueline Vel of the Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance and Development (Leiden University) has been successful in bringing together the right partners and being awarded a large grant from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

Partners in this project are:

- The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden, the Netherlands
- The Institute of Cultural Anthropology, Leiden University, the Netherlands
- The Plant Sciences Group of Wageningen University & Research (WUR), the Netherlands
- Dept. of Anthropology, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Dept. of Anthropology, Gadjah Madah University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- Dept. of Agricultural Law, UNPAR Bandung, Indonesia
- Dept. of Forestry, UNMUL Samarinda, Indonesia
- Research Center for Natural Resources and Biotechnology, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia
- International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands

The KITLV and IIAS have each provided three fellowships for international researchers working on comparative perspectives regarding jatropa or other biofuels in Asia.

**For information on IIAS fellowships please contact Manon Osseweijer, Deputy Director, [m.osseweijer@iias.nl](mailto:m.osseweijer@iias.nl)**



Children's Day is one of the most eagerly awaited events in the Indian school calendar. Celebrated on 14th November, it commemorates the birthday of 'Chacha Nehru' (Uncle Nehru), as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was affectionately called by the children he loved so well. Nehru was not just one of the foremost leaders of the Indian national movement, and independent India's first Prime Minister – his seventeen uninterrupted years in office (from 1947 till his death in 1964) known as the 'Nehruvian era' – he was also incredibly fond of children. Many of the most popular images of the leader show him talking or listening attentively to children.

Rituparna Roy

APART FROM BEING A LEADER AND STATESMAN, Jawaharlal Nehru was also an author. It had never been his ambition to be a writer but his political vocation made him one. One of the inevitable consequences of his life as a freedom fighter was long spells of incarceration. He was jailed many times in the three decades of his active political life under the British. Added together, this amounted to nine years in prison. Difficult and uncertain though this life was, there were certain advantages to be found. Nehru turned his prison cell into a sanctuary, and used his enforced solitude to read, write and reflect on both his life and the world around him. Out of his protracted time in prison came *Glimpses of World History* (1934), *An Autobiography* (1936) and *The Discovery of India* (1945).

These books are deeply introspective, meditative and original works by a restless and agile mind. But the most important among them was perhaps *Discovery*, as it ushered in a new chapter in Indian historiography. In this book, Nehru re-interprets his country's past to create a modern secular nationalist discourse for the emerging independent state of India; and it was to mould the mind of an entire generation.

*Nehru was no academic scholar. His was a beautiful mind with eclectic interests which he expressed in eloquent prose...*

But perhaps the most delightful of his books was one for children – *Letters from a father to his daughter* (1929). As the title suggests, it was originally correspondence to his daughter Indira (or 'Indu', as he called her). Indira, of course, grew up in an intensely political atmosphere, which would eventually guide her into the same world as her father (and before him her grandfather) and see her become Prime Minister.

Nehru explains that he allowed the letters to be published because, 'friends, whose advice I value, have seen some virtue in them, and have suggested that I might place them before a wider audience.' The correspondence takes place, as Nehru tells us in the Foreword, 'in the summer of 1928 when she (Indira) was in the Himalayas at Mussorie and I was in the plains below'; a period when father and daughter were unable to vacation together. This was a common experience in the Nehru household, for aside from his prison sentences, Nehru was frequently away from Indira. He tried to fill his absences with words.

Nehru's letters are most unusual – an ingenious means of educating his daughter from a distance. In them, he talks about the origins of the world, its evolution, of the dawn of civilisation and of man's place in it. He introduces Indira to the mystery of difference in the human races, and discusses at length ideas of language, culture and much else besides. As Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi recalled almost half a century later: 'My father was interested in everything and delighted in sharing his enthusiasm.' The letters indeed bear the stamp of that enthusiasm, but they contain so much more. This book shares Nehru's sense of wonder in the diversity, richness and beauty of this world, while simultaneously trying to inculcate in his young readers a scientific, liberal world-view, one that emphasised the oneness and universality of humanity. As he states in the 'Foreword', 'I hope that such of them as read these letters may gradually begin to think of this world of ours as a large family of nations.'

Nehru was no academic scholar. His was a beautiful mind with eclectic interests which he expressed in eloquent prose – whether as public orator or as an author. He was very widely read and open to influences, both past and present, foreign and Indian. Foremost among the modern Indian thinkers who shaped his mind were Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore; but there were others too, among his own contemporaries, whom he greatly admired. And as independent India's first Prime Minister, he tried to gather round him luminaries he admired from various fields to assist him in the task of nation-building.

India's great leaders are usually remembered in two ways – they either have a street named after them, or have a national or state holiday in their honour (which very often turn into little more than annual opportunities to relax or have fun). By being institutionalised within the school system, however, Nehru's birthday has been spared the meaningless rituals that most others have.

Every 14th November, school-children in India are unfailingly reminded of whose birthday they are celebrating and why. Most schools have cultural programmes for the day, often with the students in charge. Across the country, various cultural, social, and even corporate, institutions conduct competitions for children. Children's Day is a day for children to engage in fun. Teachers often perform songs and dances for their students. Children are also treated to a film and lunch. In recent years, television networks have scheduled special childrens' programmes all day long on November 14, making this day a special treat.

But perhaps the best way to celebrate Children's Day would be to introduce children (in simple and innovative ways) to the writings of the leader. That way, instead of being just an annual 'event', this day could inspire adults to reach out to the young and rouse their children to become better citizens of their country, possessing virtues which their 'Chacha' endorsed.

Rituparna Roy  
IIAS Fellow



## Multiculturalism, religion and legal status in the Dutch colonial world, 1600-1960

The Hague, 21-23 January 2009

THE INSTITUTE FOR NETHERLANDS HISTORY (ING) and the Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) jointly organised this symposium, the theme of which touches upon current research in both institutes. In the case of ING it concerns the programme 'The Dutch and Cultures across the Borders' and in KITLV the project 'A History of Twentieth Century Suriname'. This symposium provided a rare opportunity for specialists in the history of both the Dutch 'West' and 'East' Indies to come together. On this occasion, the conveners were Gerrit Knaap, Rosemarijn Hoefte and Henk Schulte Nordholt, assisted by Kirsten Hulsker. The symposium was sponsored by IIAS. The session open to the interested general public (which took place on January 21 in the auditorium of Koninklijke Bibliotheek [Royal Library]) was attended by approximately 150 people. The sessions on the other two days were attended by specialist scholars originating from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds including historians, cultural anthropologists and theologians specialised in mission history.

Three keynote speeches were presented at the public session: Professor Barbara Watson Andaya (University of Hawaii) talked about *Being Christian in Southeast Asia: Change and Continuity*. In doing so, she set the tone for the religious change aspect of the symposium. It appears that Christianity was, with the exception of the Philippines and Timor Leste, largely a 'minority religion'. Within Christianity in Southeast Asia 'localisation processes' were going on, meaning that mainstream Christianity from Europe was re-interpreted and adapted to local circumstances. Such localisation was often opposed by the official churches, and only gained momentum after independence. In *Education, marriage and apartheid in early 20th-century Suriname: The Indianization of the West*, Rosemarijn Hoefte (KITLV) drew an initial parallel between modes of managing multicultural society in the Dutch West and East Indies. This was done by focussing on the failed plans of Governor J.C. Kielstra. In the 1930s, Kielstra – intent on keeping different groups apart – attempted to transplant the East Indies' model of plural society to Suriname. This was contrary to developments in Suriname itself, where Dutch education had already achieved a certain degree of 'integration'. Gerrit Knaap's (ING) presentation *Aliran and Verzuiling: Pillarisation and plural society in Indonesia* focused on the 'verzuilde' (pillarised, columnised) character of Indonesian society during the 1950s and questioned whether this was a 'legacy' of the Dutch

colonial past. Those groups which formed part of the 1950s political constellation of Indonesia appeared to have predecessors in the pre-independence, colonial stage. However, on closer examination, pillarisation was actually the result of autonomous developments in Indonesian society. The role of Dutchmen in this process was limited.

The closed sessions saw a total of 12 papers and five bullet presentations, the last mainly being outlines of ongoing research. Among the papers there were five, which focussed on the Christian missionary effort. Topics ranged from Suriname to Papua and issues included the challenges of particular mission fields, as well as the implications of conversion to another religion on other aspects of cultural life, and cultural change in a broader sense. Conversion was often the result of a collective choice. It was usually the conversion of a whole group, a clan or a village that made the difference. This in turn led to new identities making certain islands or ethnicities conspicuously different from their neighbours, which in the case of Indonesia were mostly Muslim. Muslims were not only found in the East Indies. After the abolition of slavery in 1863, migrants from Asia, British India and from Java, also found their way to Suriname. Consequently, the multi-ethnic and multi-religious fabric of this part of the West Indies became rather complicated. The Dutch authorities were rather slow to formulate a policy to deal with Muslims and Hindus in Suriname.

The discussion in the closed sessions was broad. Some impressions: It was established that the Dutch colonial government apparatus, whether it was manned by administrators of a Christian or a more secularised character, was generally rather 'islamophobe'. This mentality meant that attempts to expand Christianity could count on the sympathy of the colonial government, provided 'rust en orde' (tranquility and order) were guaranteed. In some places this expansion caused new divisions and 'sub-cultures' in society. Within the framework of a policy of 'verdeel-en-heers' (divide-and-rule), (multi)cultural diversity was maintained, promoted and juridically preserved. The colonial government and its associates placed the cultural or religious groups into a 'hierarchically' structured system elaborating on scales or degrees of 'civilisation', 'development' and 'modernity'. Formal discrimination and segregation based on colour went hand-in-hand with such a policy. Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries usually fell into line with such thoughts, with only a few realising that such patterns of thinking should be broken - that the future was not with subjugation but with emancipation and equality for the law of the vast non-European population of the colonies.

Most of the papers will be re-worked into articles, which will be published in scholarly journals.

**Gerrit Knaap**  
**Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis**  
**gerrit.knaap@inghist.nl**

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Goethe-University Frankfurt, Germany; the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia; and the Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore invite interested scholars to participate in the following jointly organised International Seminar:

## Trade and Finance in the Malay World: Historical and Cultural Perspectives

DATE AND VENUE: University of Frankfurt, Germany, 17-18 June 2010  
 DEADLINE: Paper title and abstract: 31 Oct. 2009; full paper: 30 April 2010

No conference fee for paper presenters. Presenters are expected to find their own funding for travel and hotel costs.

### ON THE TOPIC OF THE SEMINAR:

One of the major impacts of the colonial era in insular Southeast Asia was the (partial) replacement of indigenous trading classes by foreign and migrant merchants. The cultural consequences for the historical construction of 'Malay identity' were considerable, influencing discourses in the post-colonial Malay world to the present day. This international seminar aims at discussing both the historical evidence of the replacement process as well as its discursive representation in both historical and contemporary discourses. Contributions from a multitude of disciplinary perspectives are therefore highly welcome. Conference languages: English and Malay. The organisers plan for a conference publication in English aimed toward a broader international audience. If enough Malaylanguage contributions are presented, a separate Malay-language publication might be possible.

### CONVENORS:

Prof. Dr. Arndt Graf, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Goethe-University Frankfurt, (arndtgraf@yahoo.de)  
 Prof. Dato' Dr. Abu Talib Ahmad, Dean, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia (atalib@usm.my)  
 Assoc.Prof. Dr. Farid Alatas, Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore (alatas@nus.edu.sg)

### PLEASE SEND YOUR PAPER TITLE AND ABSTRACT TO:

Secretariat of the international seminar, Trade and Finance in the Malay World  
 c/o Prof. Dr. Arndt Graf, Dept. of Southeast Asian Studies  
 Goethe-University Frankfurt, Senckenberganlage 31, 60325 Frankfurt

Tel./Fax: ++49-69-798-28445  
 Email: arndtgraf@yahoo.de

The convenors would be very pleased if you could pass on this Call for Papers to other scholars who might also be interested to participate. Thank you!



INTERDISZIPLINÄRES  
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## Better searching on www.iias.nl

OUR GOAL is that the IIAS website provides you with good quality, relevant information which you can find quickly and easily. And so we've radically improved the search functionality on the site (<http://www.iias.nl/search>). It's revolutionary and our web manager, Thomas Voorter, explains how:

The old search function listed results based on the frequency of a certain keyword in a web page document and how often the page had been viewed. This 'best-first search' forces you to guess in advance what might be available, and often leaves you with no search results at all. For example, when you search for 'ethnicity' generally, you want to bring up documents about ethnicity, rather than just those which mention the word frequently but could be about another subject.

The new search function looks at this 'aboutness' (in librarian lingo) and reacts accordingly. Now, all our Newsletter articles, fellow profile pages, events and research projects have been enriched with metadata tags, containing multiple classifications – giving an idea of what the document is 'about'.

To facilitate this, we've installed the open source Apache Solr search engine. It permanently indexes information on our web server and enables faceted search to give you more guidance. This allows you to engage interactively with your search results – by browsing through different classification schemes and filter facets such as content types, regions, article categories, and author. You can start with a broad and general search query and narrow down the number of documents, by adding facets

to the *current search* box. If you are not satisfied with the outcome you can delete some facets and add others to change your direction.

Other great Solr features are 'hit highlighting' and an inbuilt 'Did you mean...' spell checker providing you with suggestions in case of misspellings. It can also find other variants of a word and present them highlighted in the search results. For example, while searching for *ethnic* the search server also throws up *ethnicity*, *ethnicities*, *ethnical*, *ethnically*. You can save your search session as a RSS feed and load it into your favourite reader, which will notify you of new content matching your query.

Last but not least, electronic documents like PDF and MS Word files are fully indexed. This is particularly useful if you want to search through all the Newsletter issues, which are stored in our repository as PDFs. Whereas previously, the Newsletter articles were somewhat hidden in the layers of our site, now they can be effectively retrieved using the new intuitive search box on [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl). As ever, your comments and feedback on the site are welcome.

**Thomas Voorter**  
**Web Manager, IIAS**  
**t.j.h.voorter@iias.nl**

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## IIAS World Expo workshop

IIAS HAS PLANS FOR A WORKSHOP tentatively entitled *Asian Countries as Exhibited at World Expositions: Revisited in a Global Historical Perspective*. Emphasis will be given to issues regarding how the coloniser (the 'West') and the colonised (the 'East') (mis)represented and intermingled with one other at expositions held between the late 19th century and the early 20th century. We particularly welcome comparative and interdisciplinary case studies of individual Asian countries including China, India, Indonesia Japan, and Korea which disclose how they competed and struggled with each other in the pursuit of modernisation.

The workshop will take place on 25 June 2010 in Leiden, the Netherlands. If you are interested participating in the workshop, and/or have any suggestions to make, please contact:

**Prof. Youngsoo Yook**  
**Chung-Ang University, Korea**  
**IIAS Professor,**  
**European Chair of Korean Studies**  
**waldo@cau.ac.kr**



# ICAS Book Prize 2009

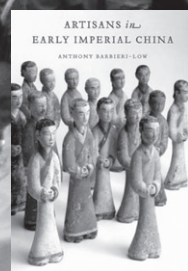
Five prizes were awarded in Daejeon, South Korea for the 2009 ICAS Book Prize (IBP): best book in Social Sciences, best book in Humanities, Colleagues Choice Award, best PhD in Social Sciences, best PhD in Humanities. The winners of the Humanities and Social Sciences Prizes were each awarded €2500. The winner of the colleagues Choice Award and the winners of the best PhD awards in the Humanities and Social Sciences will be given the opportunity to publish their theses in the ICAS Publications Series.



Laurent Pordie (left) winner of the Colleagues Choice Award, receiving his prize from Alex McKay, member of the ICAS Book Prize reading committee.



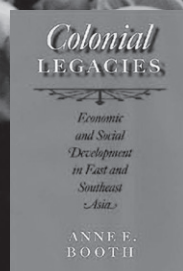
Birgit Abels (left) receiving her prize for Best PhD in Humanities from ICAS Executive Officer, Martina van den Haak.



## Best Book in Humanities

**ANTHONY BARBIERI-LOW**  
*Artisans in Early Imperial China*  
University of Washington Press, 2007

ARTISANS IN EARLY IMPERIAL CHINA is an outstanding work of original and pioneering scholarship which draws on a tremendous depth of archaeological, epigraphical and textual sources to highlight the character, role and history of the artisans who actually created the splendid material artefacts of early China. Ranging over a variety of material objects, from grave-stones to the well known figures of the Terracotta Army, the author identifies their creators, explores their training and technical processes, and situates them in their social roles and status. He does so in a manner which is clear and concise, as well as engaging and informative. While opening the field to further studies developing this enquiry he has produced a work that will inform and be enjoyed by any scholar or interested person in a wide-range of related fields. This is also an extremely well produced work, a credit to its publishers. It is beautifully illustrated and laid-out with all of the necessary academic apparatus provided; a model of its kind.



## Best Book in Social Sciences

**ANNE E. BOOTH**  
*Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia*  
University of Hawai'i Press, 2007

COLONIAL LEGACIES is an extremely valuable comparative study analysing the contrasting economic development of former American or European colonies with those of Japan. It is an original and refreshing work, broad in its scope and yet full of relevant detail and it is soundly based on a wide range of sources, while its conclusions are supported throughout by statistical tables. Ideal for students, it will also be required reading for specialists and no-one with an interest in the region, or colonial history, can fail to profit from its study. Concise and accessible, it provides a considerable body of evidence which further demonstrates the fragmented and negotiated nature of colonial rule and is thus a 'cutting edge' work. A model study that succeeds in enlivening its subject, it will become a standard text in the field.

## Colleagues Choice Award

**LAURENT PORDIE (ed.)**  
*Tibetan Medicine in the Contemporary World: Global politics of medical knowledge and practice*  
Routledge, 2008

THIS IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION to our understanding of Tibetan medicine as a global phenomenon. Its eleven papers include a wide range of perspectives by anthropologists and practitioners concerning the social, political and identity issues involved in the modern world of Tibetan medicine. Critical yet respectful discussions engage with the practice of Tibetan medicine both in Asia and the West and this well-produced volume is a landmark in the field which will be required reading for students and specialists alike. It is a cohesive collection, and its essays are fresh and original, as well as readable and highly informative. It will be a basic source for many years to come.

## Best PhD Social Sciences

**IZA HUSSIN**  
*The Politics of Islamic Law: Local Elites and Colonial Authority in Malaya, India and Egypt*

HUSSIN'S WORK IS ORIGINAL and significant for three reasons. First, it addresses a key issue in contemporary society where Islam has a significant presence: how the boundary between the public/state and the private/religious is necessitated, negotiated, or even imposed. Second, it deals with a persistent problem in modern state building where a compromise of some kind seems to be inevitable between the rule of law and citizenship on the one hand and mixed identities and attachments on the other that require preferential treatment. Third, it fills in the gap in our understanding of Islamic law which has been dominated by the monolithic view. Hussin's work makes an excellent contribution to our understanding of a key aspect of modern state building in the Islamic world.

## Best PhD Humanities

**BIRGIT ABELS**  
*Sounds of Articulating Identity: Tradition and Transition in the Music of Palau*

THIS IS QUITE CLEARLY the outstanding submission in the PhD category Humanities and is an academic enquiry of the highest order. It presents an ethno-history of the music of the Palau islands in Micronesia, and any sense that this might be of peripheral interest to wider scholarship is quickly laid to rest. The author explores the function of music in cultural identity, identifying sounds as audible symbols used in Palau to signify cultural distinctness and through this device explores not only the technicalities of musicology, but advances our knowledge of the subject culture, identity, social relationships, and history. Drawing on an extensive bibliography of secondary sources and recordings, as well as oral sources from her fieldwork, the author, within a convincing theoretical framework and in the wider context of globalisation, clearly and logically situates her subject in such a way as to demonstrate that her findings are of wide importance. It radiates enthusiasm, reflection, and critical thinking in an informed and engaging manner.



# ICAS 6th International Convention

The 6th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) was held this year in Daejeon, South Korea's research and development hub. Convened at the Daejeon Convention Center and jointly hosted by the ICAS Secretariat, the Daejeon Metropolitan City, the Chungnam National University and the University's Center for Asian Regional Studies, ICAS brought together 800 scholars from over 50 countries, who attended 170 panels or visited the exhibition hall.

**ICAS 6 – participant perspectives**  
August 6-9, 2009, Daejeon, Republic of Korea

MOST OF THE PANELLISTS came from North- and Southeast Asia, the US, Europe and India with most of the panels covering the themes Society and Identity, Politics and International Relations as well as History. Although the number of participants was less than those who attended ICAS 5 (which was held in Malaysia and gathered 1350 academics in 330 panels) the biennial conference remains one of the largest gatherings in the field of Asia-related research. According to the organisers, ICAS is the only major, regular Asia studies event taking place in Asia. The overriding motto of this year's conference was to 'Think Asia', which ought to underline the emerging significance of the world's largest continent. Reflecting also the diversity of Asia, ICAS covered a wide range of topics and research areas ranging from religion, media communications, environment and energy to law, welfare health and development urbanisation.

Keynote speeches were given by three speakers. The opening speech was given by Dominique Girard, who is the Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). While giving a general introduction into the activities of the ASEF, Girard casually commented on the problems of delineating the boundaries of the Asian continent.

He was followed by Gilbert Rozman, who is the Musgrave Professor of Sociology at Princeton University. In his talk Rozman compared the national identities of China, Japan and South Korea to disclose regional commonalities. He argued that these regional similarities reveal the presence of what he calls the 'East Asian National Identity Syndrome'. Rozman outlined a six-dimensional – ideological, sectoral, temporal, vertical, horizontal and depth – framework for the analysis of the Chinese, Japanese and South Korean national identities. Editorial constraints preclude an in-depth discussion of his approach here but, generally, Rozman's division of national identity into six fragments is problematic since the delimitation of each of the dimensions, e.g. ideological, sectoral and temporal, is unclear or the dimensions overlap. Furthermore, Rozman rightly mentioned the role of the US in affecting the national identity of China, Japan and Korea, which denotes for him the horizontal dimension, but he ignores the role of the three East Asian entities themselves for the development of a national identity. Not to mention that, for instance, Russia also plays a crucial role in regional identity formation processes. Another problem is Rozman's so-called depth dimension, in which he attempts to measure the intensity or strength of national identity in the three East Asian countries. He asserts that the intensity of national identity reached its highest level in China. Challenging here is the question how to gauge the different degrees of strength of national identity; or rather how to identify basic indicators, which could range from comparative standardised surveys to the counting of national flags or singing of national anthems in each country. It appeared also that Rozman revealed a culturalist argumentation and essentialist understanding of identity in his speech, neglecting the socially or discursively constituted character of identities.

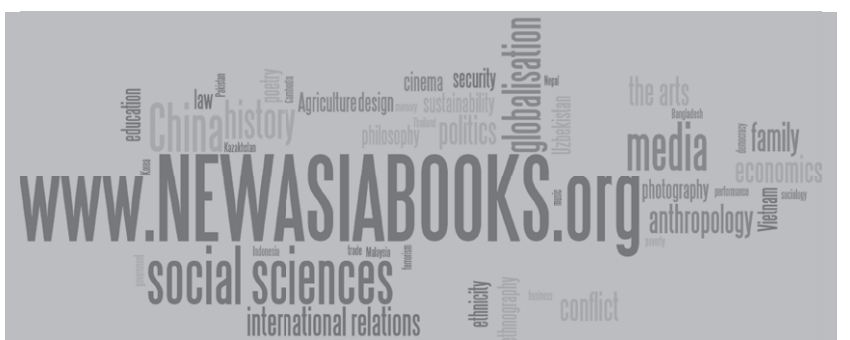
The last speaker was the Korean philosopher Kim Young-oak. In his presentation, Kim lamented that 'we have so far been too neglectful of the value of Asian identity' and campaigned for a re-evaluation of the 'entire inheritance of all of humanity within the context of the Asian Continent Civilization'. Although Kim's appeal appears somewhat overconfident he went further by co-opting or referring to specific historic developments as 'Asian'-originated achievements or ancestry, which are for him the hallmarks of a civilisation. Kim asserted that, besides Confucianism and Buddhism, every major religion of the world such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam is of 'Asian' origin. Moreover, instead of seeing Jesus merely

as a Jew, Kim proposes to conceive him also as 'an Asian who was intimately familiar with the Wisdom Tradition of Asia'. In his praise of the putative 'Asian' accomplishments and his criticism of a Eurocentric view on history Kim demonstrates that the term 'Asia', used throughout his speech, can serve as the very instance of a Eurocentric perspective since Asia, but also other hegemonic representations such as the Orient or Africa, were European (colonial) inventions. That there is no indigenous Korean, Japanese or Chinese word for 'Asia', should serve as an example of this modern concept.

In sum, ICAS 6 was a well organised conference, which also enjoyed the appreciation of the South Korean government by sending the Prime Minister Han Seung-soo, who delivered congratulatory remarks at the ICAS welcoming dinner. The next ICAS will be held in 2011 in Hawaii.

**David Shim, German Institute of Global and Area Studies**  
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**Marcus Conlé, German Institute of Global and Area Studies and University of Duisburg-Essen**  
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New Asia Books is an initiative of IIAS

## Ten new volumes in the ICAS Publications Series



All ICAS 6 participants can claim two free volumes of their choice from the ICAS Publications Series (as long as stocks last) using the vouchers in the delegate pack. Orders for further volumes may be placed with Amsterdam University Press at [www.aup.nl](http://www.aup.nl)



# Announcements

## Eastern Indonesia under reform: New topics, new approaches

### Call for Papers

Panel accepted for the  
6th EuroSEAS Conference  
26-28 August 2010  
Gothenburg, Sweden

### Panel convenors:

Birgit Bräuchler, University of Frankfurt, birgitbraeuchler@gmx.net  
Maribeth Erb, National University of Singapore, socmerb@nus.edu.sg

THIS PANEL is an attempt to update the ethnography of an area that has been described by Josselin de Jong as a field of ethnological study and that underwent tremendous (social) changes in the last few years: Eastern Indonesia. The panel not only strives to get insights into recent developments in this particular area, but also aims to explore new approaches in anthropology that are in use in current research on Eastern Indonesia. In the past, Eastern Indonesia has been

the subject of various larger research projects, some of them with a particular theoretical focus: van Wouden's and Josselin de Jong's dualism and structuralism in the 1930s, James Fox's kinship and exchange volume in 1980, a conference organized by Signe Howell on sacrificing in Eastern Indonesia in 1992, and an edited volume on resource management by Sandra Pannell and Franz von Benda-Beckmann in 1998. A volume edited by Sandra Pannell in 2003 on violence, society and the state in Eastern Indonesia focused on one topic, i.e. conflict, in primarily one region, the Moluccas. There has been no joint effort by anthropologists to explore the tremendous and multi-dimensional changes that took place in Eastern Indonesia after the stepping down of Suharto, and the onset of the so-called reformation era. Hence an updated volume with a re-examination of the region, the effect of the massive political, economic and social changes over the past decade, along with possible reappraisals of the earlier studies is overdue.

What we would therefore like to do in this panel is to bring together anthropologists conducting research in various parts of Eastern Indonesia in this new era and thus produce a thematic and methodological update. We would also like to reflect on whether it is still

legitimate to conceptualize Eastern Indonesia as a 'field of ethnological study'. We encourage paper submissions that deal with contemporary issues in Eastern Indonesia such as decentralization, political reforms, economic developments, conflicts and conflict management, tourism, (new) media, revival of tradition, the increasing importance and influence of the world's principle religions in the area, and so forth, and with the new methodological approaches these research questions challenge us to develop. Papers should draw on ethnographic fieldwork and be theoretically well-founded at the same time. As stated above, the hopes of the organizers are that this panel will result in a volume that will offer an updated look at this fascinating and vibrant ethnographic region.

Please email your abstract of about 300 words plus a short biosketch to both convenors by February 1, 2010. This autumn, 2009, the pre-registration process for the conference will start and those who submit their abstracts early can have them uploaded already during the autumn. For more information on the conference and upcoming deadlines go to [www.euroseas.org/platform/en/content/the-6th-euroseas-conference-gothenburg-2010](http://www.euroseas.org/platform/en/content/the-6th-euroseas-conference-gothenburg-2010).



## Oceans of Sound: Sama Dilaut Performing Arts

### Call for Papers

September 9, 2010 Amsterdam  
Hosted by IIAS and the University of Amsterdam

THE MARITIME SAMA PEOPLES are one of the most widespread cultural groups within the southeast Asian island region. They can be found in the Philippine Sulu Archipelago, southwestern Mindanao, Sabah, Borneo, east Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, and across many of the eastern Indonesian islands. One specific, 'sea-nomadic' Sama group refers to itself as the 'Sea Sama' (Sama Dilaut, also known as Bajau Laut).

This conference will look at the Sama Dilaut's performing arts, focusing on *kulintang* and other types of instrumental music, song repertoire, and dance. Music and dance are central to the Sama Dilaut's identity negotiation and maintenance of cultural memory. Music and dance are direct tools in the processes of identity negotiation that localise the Sama Dilaut 'in-between' rather than 'here' or 'there'.

Other topics we would like to hear about include continuity and transformation in the Sama Dilaut performing arts; issues of globalisation and identity negotiation through music; transnational flows and their impact on Sama Dilaut music and dance; the relationship of the Sama Dilaut performing arts with those of surrounding communities; and the impact of constructions of nationhood on Sama Dilaut music-making.

If you have been researching Sama Dilaut performing arts, or the 'musical relationship' between other regional communities and the Sama Dilaut, then we welcome a proposal for a 20-minute paper from you.

Please send abstracts of 300 words, including AV requirements, by Friday, January 15, 2010, to Dr. Birgit Abels, at [birgitabels@gmail.com](mailto:birgitabels@gmail.com).

Very limited financial support may be made available to specific scholars residing in Asia. If you would like to be considered for a grant, please submit with your abstract a short letter motivating your request.

## 'Addressing environments'

13th International conference  
on Maharashtra: Culture and Society  
17-19 June 2010  
Bratislava

TOO OFTEN WE FOCUS on the main topic of our research, forgetting that it exists (with)in rich and varying sets of relations. Clusters of these relations may be conceived in terms of various environments around the topics of our research. The goal of the 13th International conference on Maharashtra will be to address these environments.

The proposed change of perspective asks those who research Maharashtrian culture and society to concentrate on what surrounds those many little/great things/people/processes etc. that we meet while studying Maharashtra, and on the effects of the surrounding environments on these objects of study and also on us as observers, analysts, or interpreters.

What surrounds can be called environment (*parisa*), but can also more broadly be thought of as environments – people, spaces, places, things. Yet it can also be called surroundings (*sabhovār, sabhovatāl*), surrounding atmosphere (*vātavarāṇ*) or network (*jāle*), or even world (*lok*), condition (*paristhiti*) or context (*sandarbhā*). By addressing the environments around the 'things' that research usually conceives as its subjects, we may succeed in breaking through the common assumptions often found in academic perceptions and discover more of what creates or shapes these perceptions.

Participants are invited to reframe one or more of their particular research problems in terms of the environments in which they find the problem(s) located. Explore the environments of your research – the ideas, texts, beliefs, practices, rituals, processes, even political movements or social and economic structures that relate to spiritual and intellectual achievements, or the products and materials of daily use, the houses and architecture, the clothes, fine art, places, spaces, or natural conditions that relate to cultural life or social history.

Scholars of social sciences and humanities are invited to relate any aspect of Maharashtrian culture and society to the conference theme. We also welcome those who would like to examine culturally relevant theoretical approaches to environments. In this way we hope that we may come to know Maharashtra, its culture and society, differently than we usually think we can.

For more information contact:  
[mahaconference@gmail.com](mailto:mahaconference@gmail.com),  
[anne.feldhaus@asu.edu](mailto:anne.feldhaus@asu.edu)

## Facing Asia: histories and legacies of Asian studio photography

An international two day conference on early photographers and their studio practices in Asia, and cross-cultural exchanges in the Asia-Pacific region.

Presented by the Research School of Humanities, Australian National University and the National Gallery of Australia.

Call for papers  
Deadline 24 February 2010

WITHIN A FEW YEARS of the public announcement of the daguerreotype process in 1839, its earliest practitioners were already active in the major commercial centres of Asia. From the beginning, the studio photographic likeness was the pre-eminent genre of the successful enterprise. Photographs of local subjects in the studio – whether as foreign tourist mementos, anthropological or ethnographic documents, statements of indigenous political authority, or for domestic use and circulation – were produced, distributed and collected in their millions.

In the wake of postcolonial critiques of the camera's objectivity, such colonial-era photographs have often been interpreted as symptomatic of colonialist attitudes and fantasies toward their subjects. However, local communities and indigenous elites quickly adopted the technology for their own domestic purposes and nationalist agendas. Enterprising indigenous studio photographers such as Francis Chit in Bangkok, Afong in Hong Kong, and Uchida Kuichi in Tokyo, also catered to appreciative foreign clients and markets, reversing the initial relations between photographers and customers in the studio. While the studio often served as a space of cross-cultural encounters between photographers and sitters, its practices and procedures were often inflected by local cultural preferences and traditions.

This symposium aims to explore the photographic portrait in the first hundred years of the medium in Asia. It intends to promote inter-regional comparative analyses between scholars working in diverse cultural and national contexts. The symposium will not only analyse photographic representations of Asian peoples for the global market, but also consider the domestic adoptions and adaptations of the visual technology for local forms of self-representation and cultural practice. It will also consider the studio photograph as collaboration between photographer and sitter, and the diverse performed identities invoked in photographic sittings.



Responses to the theme FACING ASIA: histories and legacies of Asian studio photography might consider: are there distinctive practices and conventions that informed and characterised regional photographic portrayals of sitters? In terms of both production and reception, how did the personal associations between photographers and sitters inform the resultant photographic portraits? How did the increasing traffic of people and representations across national borders, both within and beyond the Asia-Pacific region, inform and alter studio practices and photographic imagery? How were such practices of studio portraiture informed by traditional depictions of the human subject? In what ways was studio photography transformed through its interaction with other visual media in specific contexts?

FACING ASIA refers to the significance of the camera in the historical depiction of the peoples in Asia, whether defined in such historical terms as types, costumes, portraits, icons or mug shots. We wish to invoke debate on the photographic likeness – its producers, subjects, viewers, and collectors – which will highlight and enhance our understanding of the histories and legacies of such visual materials across national borders. Facing Asia also intends to provoke debate on the theoretical approaches and contemporary claims to such archives in a field of growing academic, curatorial and collecting interest.

### Possible topics include:

- Early Asian photographers and their studio practices
- The exhibition and reception of photographic portfolios
- Collected portfolios of Asian peoples
- Photographers of the Asian diaspora active in California, Australia and elsewhere.
- Photographic portraiture and identity
- Cross-cultural photographic exchanges within the Asia-Pacific region
- Asian photographic archives and their histories

### Call for Papers

Closes Wednesday 24 February 2010. Please send abstracts of 200-300 words and a 100 word biographical statement to: Dr Luke Gartlan, University of St Andrews, Scotland [lg321@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:lg321@st-andrews.ac.uk)

## World Oral Literature Project Workshop, with a Focus on Asia and the Pacific

15-16 December 2009 Cambridge, England

Conference convenor: Dr Mark Turin  
Organised by the World Oral Literature Project, University of Cambridge  
[www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/940](http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/940)  
[oralliteratureproject@gmail.com](mailto:oralliteratureproject@gmail.com)



# IIAS research

## Programmes

### IIAS CENTRE FOR REGULATION AND GOVERNANCE

The IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative and comparative research on theories and practices and focusing on emerging markets of Asia. The Centre serves as a focal point of collaborative research between European and Asian scholars. Its multidisciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, and sociology in the comparative analysis of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities.

Currently the Centre facilitates projects on State Licensing, Market Closure, and Rent Seeking; Regulation of Intra-governmental Conflict; Social Costs, Externalities and Innovation; Regulatory Governance under Institutional Void; and Governance in Areas of Contested Territoriality and Sovereignty.

**Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo**  
t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.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 immigration 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)

### ZHANGZHOENG

This sub-project of Dr Henk Blezer's Vidi project 'Three Pillars of Bön' focuses on Zhangzhoeng scripts (end of the first millennium A.D., in West Tibet), which later became closely related to the identity of the Bön religious minority group. The researchers in this project study the diachrony of these allegedly old scripts from the perspective of the development of scripts in the wider region and from the perspective of Bön textual sources.

**Coordinator: Henk Blezer**  
h.w.a.blezer@hum.leidenuniv.nl

### 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) c.cullen@nri.org.uk and Harm Beukers (Scaliger Institute, Leiden University) h.beukers@hum.leidenuniv.nl**

### PLANTS, PEOPLE AND WORK

This research programme consists of various projects that study the social history of cash crops in Asia (18th to 20th centuries). Over the past 500 years Europeans have turned into avid consumers of colonial products. Production systems in the Americas, Africa and Asia adapted to serve the new markets that opened up in the wake of the 'European encounter'. The effects of these transformations for the long-term development of these societies are fiercely contested. This research programme contributes to the discussion on the histories of globalisation by comparing three important systems of agrarian production over the last 200 years. The individual projects focus on tobacco, sugar, and indigo in India and Indonesia.

**Institutes involved: University of Amsterdam, International Institute of Social History (IISH, Amsterdam), and IIAS. Coordinators: Willem van Schendel h.w.vanschendel@uva.nl and Marcel van der Linden mvl@iisg.nl**

### SENSHI SOSHO

This project, funded and coordinated by the Philippus Corts Foundation, aims to translate a maximum of 6 official Japanese publications of the series known as 'Senshi Soshō' into the English language. From 1966 until 1980, the Ministry of Defense in Tokyo published a series of 102 numbered volumes on the war in Asia and in the Pacific. Around 1985 a few additional unnumbered volumes were published. This project focuses specifically on the 6 volumes of these two series which are relevant to the study of the Japanese attack on and the subsequent occupation of the former Dutch East-Indies in the period of 1941 until 1945.

**Coordinator: Jan Bongenaar**  
iias@iias.nl

### ASIA DESIGN

This programme consists of individual projects related to graphic design and architectural design in Asian megacities.

**Institutes involved: IIAS, Modern East Asia Research Centre (MEARC), Delft School of Design (DSD). Sponsored by: IIAS and Asiascape.**

*Asia Design: Translating (Japanese) contemporary art*  
Takako Kondo focuses on (re)presentation of 'Japanese contemporary art' in art critical and theoretical discourses from the late 1980s in the realms of English and Japanese languages, including artists' own critical writings. Her research is a subject of (cultural) translation rather than art historical study and she intends to explore the possibility of multiple and subversive reading of 'Japanese contemporary art' in order to establish various models for transculturality in contemporary art.

**Coordinator: Takako Kondo**  
t.kondo@hum.leidenuniv.nl

*Asia Design: The post colonial global city*  
This research examines the postcolonial cities of South, East and South-East Asia, and how some of them have made the successful segue from nodes in formerly colonial networks to global cities in their own right. This is intended to be an inter-disciplinary approach bringing together architects and urbanists, geographers, sociologists and political scientists, as well as historians, linguists and anyone else involved in the field of Asian studies. The research concentrates on cities that have successfully made the transition from colonial to postcolonial nodes in the global network (e.g. Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai). A key factor in the research is architectural typology. Architecture is examined to see how it can create identity and ethos and how in the postcolonial era these building typologies have been superseded by the office building, the skyscraper and the shopping centre, all of which are rapidly altering the older urban fabric of the city.

**Coordinator: Greg Bracken**  
gregory@cortlever.com

### 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**  
m.p.amineh@uva.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](http://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](http://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* (propagation of the faith); and education.

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

## Conceptualising 'Friendship', its meaning and practice in time and place

30 September – 2 October 2010  
Leiden, the Netherlands  
Call for Papers deadline 15 January 2010

THE CONFERENCE will involve contributions from the field of Philosophy, European Classical Antiquity; studies on South and South East Asian classical texts and the social sciences on contemporary East and West. Geographically the focus is on Asian and Euro-American cultural traditions and practices. Contributions on ancient classical sources, middle age; recent history and contemporary are welcomed.

Specific sessions planned are:  
(a) Asian classical sources and traditions (mainly Indian, China and Japan);  
(b) Classical Western (Ancient Greek and Latin) traditions (c) Studies on contemporary contexts in East and West  
(d) An additional session on specific case-studies in relation to war, migration, diasporas and persecutions.

Although a term like 'friendship' can be called universal, in the sense that it finds its local, varying expressions in time and place, in many respects it remains an elusive concept. In anthropology for example, it seems even more evasive than the much analysed and debated concept of 'kinship'. The local moralities in which 'friendship' is embedded are contextual and shifting. To find appropriate concepts to express its fluidity and shades of permanence becomes a genuine challenge.

Still, universally it tends to be seen as a valuable relationship of some kind.

The aim of this conference is to further our understanding of the various meanings and practices that can be attached to the term 'friendship' both in different social and cultural contexts and historical periods.

**Convenors:**  
-Prof. Carla Risseeuw, IIAS Fellow (anthropologist) For further information on content of the conference please e-mail: [c.i.risseeuw@iias.nl](mailto:c.i.risseeuw@iias.nl)  
-Dr. Silvia d'Intino, Indologist, Senior Researcher CNRS, Paris (Session convenor on Classical Asian sources and traditions).  
-Tazuko A. van Berkel, researcher Ancient Greek and Latin Studies, University of Leiden (Session convenor Classical Western (ancient Greek and Latin) traditions).

For the complete text of this call for papers including detailed information about the sessions: [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)

**Please send an abstract (max. 400 words) including the session title and a short resume/CV (max. two pages) to Martina van den Haak at [m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl](mailto:m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl).**



# 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 Apr 2003 – 31 Dec 2009**

## 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 Sep 2007 – 1 Sep 2010**

DR HOSSEIN AZADI  
Environmental Science  
Research Institute,  
Shahid Beheshti University,  
Iran – Centre for Development  
Studies, Faculty of Spatial  
Sciences, University of  
Groningen, the Netherlands  
*Global Land Grabbing for Food  
and Biofuels: Consequences  
of China Rise on Developing  
Countries.*  
**1 Nov 2009 – 01 Feb 2010**

DR GREGORY BRACKEN  
Delft School of Design,  
TU Delft, the Netherlands.  
Sponsored by IIAS.  
*Urban Complexity in Asia.*  
**1 Sep 2009 – 1 Sep 2011**

DR RICHARD BOYD  
IIAS Centre for Regulation  
and Governance.  
*Rent Seeking and Development  
in East Asia.*  
**16 Nov 2009 – 16 May 2010**

PROF. CHRISTOPHER CULLEN  
Needham Research Institute,  
Cambridge, United Kingdom.  
Sponsored by NWO/NRI/REHSEIS  
*History of Chinese Science and  
Medicine.*  
**1 Sep 2008 – 31 Dec 2010**

DR CATHERINE JAMI  
REHSEIS, Paris, France.  
Science and History in Asia.  
Sponsored by  
NWO/NRI/REHSEIS.  
*Circulation of scientific  
Knowledge between Europe and  
China, 17th and 18th Centuries.*  
**1 Sep 2008 – 31 Dec 2010**

DR MASAE KATO  
Leiden University,  
the Netherlands.  
*A comparative Study on  
Socio-genetic Marginalisation:  
Japan in 'Asia' in relation to the  
'West' as a Reference Group.*  
**1 May 2008 – 1 Sep 2009**

MR WILLEM VAN KEMENADE  
Clingendael, Netherlands  
Institute of International  
Relations, the Netherlands.  
*China-Asia Relations.*  
**16 Nov 2009 – 4 Dec 2009**

MS. TAKAKO KONDO  
Department of Japan Studies,  
Leiden University, the  
Netherlands. Sponsored by  
Asiascape and IIAS  
*Japanese Contemporary Art:  
Translating Art, Culture and Nation  
in the Age of Globalization.*  
**1 Sep 2009 – 31 Aug 2012**

DR YA-PEI KUO  
Sponsored by NWO.  
*Cultural Wars: Conservatism in  
Early Twentieth Century China.*  
**1 Feb 2009 – 31 Dec 2009**

DR MELODY LU  
Sponsored by the Asia  
Research Institute Singapore.  
*Gender, Migration and Family  
in East and Southeast Asia.*  
**1 Feb 2006 – 1 Sep 2009**

PROF. HIROCHIKA NAKAMAKI  
National Museum of Ethnicity,  
Osaka, Japan.  
Sponsored by NIHU and IIAS.  
*New Religious Movements.*  
**8 Feb 2010 – 15 Feb 2010**

PROF. TAK-WING NGO  
IIAS Extra-ordinary 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 Jan 2008 – 1 Jan 2010**

DR MARGARET  
SLEEBOOM-FAULKNER  
University of Sussex,  
Brighton, UK.  
*Human Genetics and its  
political, social, cultural  
and ethical Implications.*  
**17 Sept 2001 – 1 Sept 2010**

DR WENDY SMITH  
Monash University, Melbourne,  
Australia. Sponsored by IIAS.  
*New Religious Movements.*  
**8 Feb 2010 – 22 Feb 2010**

PROF. TSEING THAR  
Department for Tibetan  
Studies, Minzu, University  
of China.  
Sponsored by NWO.  
*History of Bon Religion.*  
**1 Dec 2009 – 20 Dec 2009.**

PROF. SHUXIAN YE  
Chinese Academy of Social  
Sciences.  
Sponsored by KNAW.  
*Creation Mythology project.*  
**1 Apr 2010 – 30 Apr 2010**

DR HUNIB YIN  
Chinese Academy of Social  
Sciences.  
Sponsored by KNAW.  
*Creation Mythology project.*  
**1 Apr 2010 – 30 Apr 2010**

PROF. YOUNGSOO YOOK  
Chung-Ang University,  
Korea. IIAS Professor,  
holder of the European Chair  
of Korean Studies.  
Sponsored by the Academy  
for Korean Studies.  
*From a Hermit Kingdom  
to an Enlightened Nation?  
Fin-de-Siècle Korea As Exhibited  
at the Paris Exposition of 1900:  
Revisited.*  
**20 Aug 2009 – 20 Aug 2010**

PROF. CHAN-LIANG WU  
National Taiwan University.  
IIAS Professor,  
holder of the European  
Chair of Chinese Studies.  
Sponsored by IIAS,  
BICER and the Ministry  
of Education Taiwan.  
*Zhu Xi and Sung  
Neo-Confucianism,  
Counter-Enlightenment  
in Modern China.*  
**16 Sep 2009 – 16 Sep 2010**

DR RUI WU  
Institute of History,  
Chinese Academy  
of Social Sciences.  
Sponsored by KNAW-CASS.  
*How did Thought Grow  
develop in Early China.*  
**16 Nov 2009 – 15 Dec 2009**

## South Asia

MR KALSANG GURUNG  
Leiden University, the  
Netherlands.  
Sponsored by NWO.  
*The Founder of Bon:  
The Birth of a Myth.*  
**1 Jan 2009 – 1 Jul 2009**  
**Affiliated from  
1 Jul 2009 – 30 Jun 2010**

PROF. RICHARD HAYES  
Department of Philosophy,  
University of New Mexico,  
Albuquerque, USA.  
Numata visiting professor  
in Buddhist studies.  
*The evolution of Indian  
Buddhist philosophy and  
its relation to practice.*  
**1 Sep 2009 – 1 Dec 2009**

PROF. JAN HOUBEN  
Ecole Pratique des  
Hautes Etudes,  
Paris, France.  
*Vedic Ritual in  
Asian-European  
Context.*  
**1 Jul 2008 – 31 Dec 2010**

DR SARAJU RATH  
Sponsored by NWO.  
*Scanning, Preservation,  
and Transliteration of  
Selected Manuscripts  
of the Taittiriya Tradition.*  
**5 Jan 2004 – 1 Jan 2010**  
**Affiliated from  
1 Jan 2010 – 1 Apr 2010**

DR ELLEN RAVEN  
Kern University of Indology,  
Leiden University,  
the Netherlands  
Researcher within the  
South and Southeast  
Asia Art and Archaeology  
Index (ABIA).  
Sponsored by the  
J. Gonda Foundation.  
*Art, Material Culture  
and Archaeology of South  
and Southeast Asia.*  
**1 Oct 1996 – 31 Dec 2011**

MS GERDA THEUNS-DE BOER  
Leiden University, the  
Netherlands. Researcher  
within the South and  
Southeast Asia Art and  
Archaeology Index (ABIA).  
Sponsored by the J. Gonda  
Foundation.  
*South and Southeast Asian Art  
and Archaeology Index.*  
**1 Nov 2002 – 1 Jun 2011**

## Southeast Asia

DR BIRGIT ABELS  
Ruhr University Bochum,  
Germany. Stationed at the Branch  
Office Amsterdam. Sponsored  
by Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.  
*Of Islam, Ancestors, and  
Translocality in Borderlands:  
Identity Negotiation and the  
Performing Arts among the  
Bajau Laut of Southeast Asia.*  
**1 Oct 2008 – 1 Feb 2010**

DR AMANDA ACHMADI  
University of Melbourne,  
Australia. Sponsored by  
KITLV and IIAS.  
*Exploring Bali's Hidden Urban  
Middle Class Culture and Cities*  
**1 Jan 2010 – 28 Feb 2010**

MR AZHARI AIYUB  
Aceh-Indonesia Artist in  
Residence. Sponsored by Prince  
Bernhard Cultural Foundation,  
The Ludo Pieters Guest Writer  
Fund, Poet of All Nations (PAN)  
Holland and IIAS.  
**4 Jan 2010 – 4 Jul 2010**

DR. TOM VAN DEN BERGE  
KITLV, The Netherlands  
*H.J. van Mook, 1849-1965:  
Een vrij en gelukkig Indonesie*  
**1 Jun 2009 – 31 May 2010**

DR MICHELE FORD  
The University of Sydney,  
Australia.  
*In the Shadow of Singapore:  
The Limits of Transnationalism  
in Insular Riau.*  
**1 Jan 2008 – 1 Jan 2010**

MS YETTY HANING  
Centre for Studies &  
Advocation of Human Rights  
of Nusa Cendana University,  
Indonesia.  
*Timor Sea Border Issues.*  
**1 Sep 2008 – 1 Sep 2010**

DR LENORE LYONS  
Centre for Asia Pacific  
Social Transformation Studies,  
University of Wollongong,  
Australia. Stationed at the  
Branch Office.  
*In the Shadow of Singapore:  
The Limits of Transnationalism  
in Insular Riau.*  
**1 Jan 2008 – 1 Jan 2010**

DR DIPIKA MUKHERJEE  
*Negotiating Languages  
and Forging Identities:  
Surinamese-Indian Women  
in the Netherlands.*  
**1 Dec 2006 – 31 May 2010**

PROF. GERARD PERSOON  
IIAS Extraordinary Chair,  
Institute of Cultural  
Anthropology,  
Leiden University.  
*Environment and  
Development: indigenous  
peoples in Southeast Asia.*  
**1 Jul 2009 – 1 Jul 2014**

DR. ERIC C. THOMPSON  
Department of Sociology,  
National University of Singapore.  
*Associating Southeast Asian  
Nations: Regionalism as a  
Cultural Process.*  
**1 Oct 2009 – 1 Dec 2009**

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Zhiqun Zhu

**Political Rights in Post-Mao China**  
Merle Goldman

**Gender, Sexuality, and Body Politics in Modern Asia**  
Michael G. Peletz



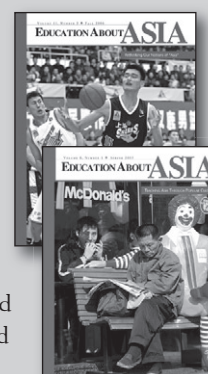
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## Education Empire

Call for Papers  
6th Galway conference on colonialism  
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The aim of this interdisciplinary conference is to explore the role of education in shaping, promoting, and challenging imperial and colonial ideologies, institutions and processes throughout the modern world. We invite papers that address the following themes:

- the role of educational institutions, ranging from primary schools to institutions of higher education such as universities, missionary colleges, engineering and medical schools, and so on, in shaping imperial, colonial and global processes
- the relationship between imperialism, colonialism and the development of modern knowledge systems, including new disciplines and new techniques of rule, particularly in areas such as science.
- the development of curriculum innovation to meet the needs of empire
- education about imperial history (during and after empire)
- education and imperial and (post-)colonial models of childhood

- education and the creation of professional diasporas
- types and patterns of knowledge transfer within the framework of empire, including publications and broadcasting relating to education, science, technology, health and government, both between metropolises and colonies and within and between colonies
- the insecurities or failures of imperial and colonial educational and knowledge practices, as well as of resistances to these practices
- transitions in educational practice, either from pre-colonial to colonial or colonial to post-colonial eras

This conference is partly funded by a grant from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences to explore the relationship between empire and higher education in Ireland. Papers which explore the particularity of Irish institutions of higher education in shaping the above processes, and of the role of higher education in shaping Ireland's ambiguous coloniality are especially welcome.

Please submit an abstract of not more than 300 words, to Fiona Bateman and Muireann O'Connine at [www.conference.ie/](http://www.conference.ie/) before 31 January 2010.

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- A comprehensive guide to Asia-related print and digital resources, including movies, documentaries, books, curriculum guides, and web resources.
- Thematic issues on topics of particular interest, such as Islam in Asia, marriage and family in Asia, youth culture, religion in Asia, economics and business in Asia, visual and performing arts, and a special series on Asia in world history.

'Key issues in Asian Studies' booklets are designed to complement *Education About Asia*, and serve as vital educational materials that are both accessible and affordable for classroom use (\$10 each). Booklets in the series tackle broad subjects or major cultural and historical themes in an introductory but compelling, jargon-free style appropriate for survey courses, written to encourage classroom debate and discussion.

Concise yet comprehensive, Zhiqun Zhu's booklet, *Understanding East Asia's Economic Miracle's*, is the perfect introduction to the political economy of East Asia for undergraduate and advanced high school classes. Zhu's analysis of the economic 'miracles' of Japan, South Korea, China and Taiwan takes into account both domestic factors and the international environment, and is sensitive to the similarities as well as differences between the developmental experiences of these nations.



"EAA is the best publication in the market for teachers interested in teaching about Asia. I've employed information from it many times in my teaching."  
Douglas P. Sjoquist, Lansing Community College, Lansing, MI

*Gender, Sexuality, and Body Politics in Modern Asia* by Michael Peletz addresses topics of importance for students and scholars of multiple disciplines – including anthropology, sociology, gender studies, Asian studies, religion, geography, political science, and history. This engagingly written booklet – designed for use in undergraduate humanities and social science courses – has great potential for use in the classroom. It will also appeal to specialists in the field owing to Peletz's ability to present sophisticated yet accessible discussions of a broad range of topics.

"*Political Rights in Post-Mao China...* is a wonderfully accessible overview of the highly charged debates (among Chinese and Westerners alike) concerning political rights in contemporary China," says Elizabeth J. Perry of Harvard University.

"Merle Goldman's informative booklet has much to say to scholars and advanced graduate students in the field of Asian studies, but its greatest use is likely to be in college and high school classrooms. Professor Goldman has performed an invaluable service in supplying to students and their teachers a clear and compelling account of China's impassioned struggles over the meaning and practice of citizenship."

The AAS plans to publish 2–3 'Key Issues' booklets each year. Forthcoming titles include: Caste in India; Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization; Traditional China in Asian and World History; Global India, Circa 100 CE; Korea in World History; Art, Culture, and Society in Modern China; and Imperial Japan, 1850–1945.

The Association for Asian Studies (AAS – the largest society of its kind, with more than 7,000 members worldwide – is a scholarly, non-political, non-profit professional association open to all persons interested in Asia. It seeks through publications, meetings, and seminars to facilitate contact and an exchange of information among scholars to increase their understanding of East, South, and Southeast Asia. It counts among its members scholars, business people, diplomats, journalists, and interested lay persons.

For more information on the Association for Asian Studies and its publications go to: [www.asian-studies.org](http://www.asian-studies.org).

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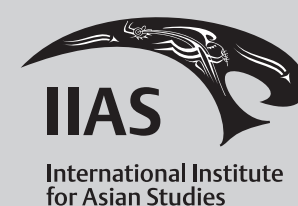
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# Kazakh embroidered wall hangings



LEFT: Interior of summertime yurt displayed in the recent exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS. The yurt was transported from Bayan-Ölgii aimag in 2008, and furnished with Kazakh textiles from Bayan-Ölgii. With kind permission of SOAS.

In western Mongolia, the summertime yurt of the Kazakh minority is elaborately decorated with textiles. Brightly-coloured felt carpets cover the grass floor, densely embroidered wall hangings (*tus kiiz*) decorate the lattice walls, and many other embroidered pieces and woven ribbons decorate the yurt. These textiles are made by girls and women in daily life. A recent exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London focused on these craftswomen and their textiles.

Anna Portisch

FROM THE 1860S INTO THE 1940S, tens of thousands of Kazakhs fled Russian and later Soviet interventions in Kazakhstan, many thousands settling in western Mongolia. Today, some 80,000 Kazakhs live in the western-most province of Mongolia. The Kazakh are the largest minority in Mongolia, making up just over four percent of the population. They have maintained Kazakh as their first language and many of their unique cultural traditions.

During the winter, Kazakhs live in log cabins or mud brick houses, and from June to September in yurts. Households usually have a variety of *tus kiiz*, displayed on the walls in the summertime yurt, and sometimes also in the winter house. Women make *tus kiiz* for their own households, but these wall hangings may also have been passed down as heirlooms or given to the couple on the occasion of their wedding, in which case an embroidered dedication to the husband or wife may be read amongst the elaborate patterns. Craftswomen also usually embroider the year the *tus kiiz* was made and their own name in amongst the patterns. Often, individual family members have a favourite *tus kiiz* which hangs next to their bed.

*Tus kiiz* are made in the home, as part of the daily routine. Cotton fabric is divided into sections and each section is then filled in with a pattern drawn free hand or using a stencil with flour. The pattern may then be outlined further using milk and a matchstick, a crayon or soap. A section of the fabric is then stretched taut and sewn onto a metal (or wooden) frame. The section that is stretched over the frame is embroidered with a hooked needle (*biz*), creating a chain stitch along the outline of the already drawn pattern. After one section has been completed, the fabric is taken off the frame and realigned so that a new section can be embroidered.



ABOVE LEFT: behind the beds of each family member, a wall hanging (or sometimes a factory-made pile carpet) is hung. Winter coats are bundled up under embroidered pieces at the centre of the bed, and some beds have curtains. ABOVE RIGHT: detail from a *tus kiiz* with an embroidered red velvet central piece, made in the 1930s by an unknown craftswoman. LEFT: Kazakh craftswoman selling her *tus kiiz*.

*Tus kiiz* feature stylised patterns inspired by plants and animals, such as flowers and ram's horns. Certain patterns are also named after the internal organs of animals, for instance liver, kidney and heart patterns. The patterns are often arranged to mirror one another, and no space is left 'blank'. The main embroidered field is framed by a red velvet border on three sides. Some women say that the fourth side is left unfinished since it merely hangs behind the bed and goes unseen. Other women suggest that if the fourth side is finished with red velvet, this indicates that the craftswoman has completed her life's work; that is, she is ready to die.

Working a few hours a day, it can take up to a year to complete a *tus kiiz*, although some women work more intensively and can finish in as little as a month. Many elderly women explain that their eye sight has deteriorated over the years, due to the long evenings spent embroidering by candlelight. To help with the extensive embroidery work, experienced craftswomen may enlist their daughters or daughters-in-law, thereby also teaching them to make these textiles. Several women often contribute to a single embroidery, and their different styles of embroidering or completing a pattern can be seen in the detail.

Women often recycle and innovate. During the period of Soviet-backed socialism (until 1990) materials were often in short supply. Many *tus kiiz* from that period are therefore embroidered with thread extracted from existing fabric or garments. Similarly, certain tools are made from recycled materials. Since the 1990s, it has become fashionable to make *tus kiiz* and other embroidered panels in a 'fluffy' style (*tukhty keste*) using old veterinary syringes (rather than a hooked needle). The threaded needle is pushed through the fabric leaving a little loop protruding on the other side, creating the 'fluffy' style. These embroidered pieces are made with brightly coloured thread imported from China, and the patterns are often taken from new sources of inspiration. Kazakh women take a pragmatic approach

to textile production, using the tools and materials that are available. They recycle and innovate in different ways, often creating astonishing pieces of work from the few materials that are available to them and given the practical constraints that characterise their lives.

Further information about the exhibition and associated events is available from [www.kazakhcraftswomen.co.uk](http://www.kazakhcraftswomen.co.uk). For more images of Kazakh wall hangings go to [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl).